

Which one is the Real Tool?

Fifth Estate Collective

2003

Fueled by the massive international antiwar demonstrations of February 2003, people have increasingly turned to the Internet, lured by the hype of a global virtual community, to organize resistance against the murderous plans of the corporate state. Yet in most cases, the results have been demoralizing. Like the empty promise of television's "global village," the seductive power of computers is having a destructive effect on human community.

Since the demonstrations, organizers, armed with web pages and extensive email lists, are dismayed when small numbers of people turn out for anti-war actions, benefits, strikes and meetings. Could it be that what appears as lethargy and lack of concern, is really digital blow-back? That the outrage of millions of demonstrators has been transformed into frustration and isolation by the quest for an ever elusive digital community? A web based "community" where individuals, alone in rooms lit by computer screens, sit isolated, believing that they are participating in actions, when the real activity lies just outside their door. Where people are seduced by a manufactured sense of place, while direct human engagement continues to diminish.

In a world sculpted and driven by machines, the Internet is a double-edged sword with one blade dull—email and information, the other razor sharp—anti-social and invasive. Yet at a time when the last remnants of human community are under attack, we remain blinded to the fact that a new, more humane world cannot grow out of a reliance on inherently anti-social machines.

We don't need more web pages, bigger email lists and more information, but rather an authentic counterculture. A renewed gathering of people in cafes, homes and on street corners, creating an alternative culture that is not driven by a dependence on machines and stands in defiance and opposition to the existing social structure. Warm bodies that walk out of the cyber-world to create a real and living opposition to global capital.

If we don't, we surely will become the tools of the machines we created.

You can't download a revolution.

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