

making non-returnable containers in the first place: to slip us the bill for getting rid of them.

All of which leads to one conclusion: pollution is not a people problem. If it was, countries like India which have many more people and less area than America would be dying from pollution. It is the industrial countries of the world that are polluted, but even among those some are much more polluted than others. And none of them—not even Japan—compares with America.

The cause of pollution is the way machines and technology are used.

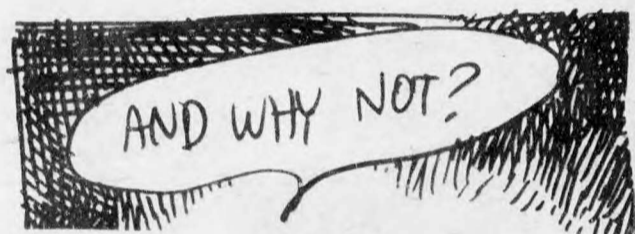
EXPANDING CORPORATIONS

In America, most of the machines and technology are controlled by corporations. The goal of these corporations is to make more and more profits. And in order to do this, they have to grow bigger and produce more. This is what determines how they use the machines and technology and land that they own. This is capitalism.

Our economy is like a person built leaning forward who must keep running ahead or he will fall over. Businesses can't keep making and selling the same things all the time because people would soon have most of the products they need, and demand would fall off. Which means profits would fall. Then workers get laid off, plants shut down, and you've got a recession or depression. Which makes profits drop more.

Corporations have to make more things, and convince people to buy more, in order to keep making profits. They *must* keep growing.

America has the world's largest "Gross National Product." That means that America makes more things than any other country in the world. And every year, the GNP gets bigger.



Twenty percent of America's industrial GNP is devoured by military production. Most of these war products—planes, missiles, ABM systems, submarines—are enormously expensive and are never used. They sit around for a few years and become "obsolete"; then new models are produced to replace them. On the other hand, to use these deadly weapons would bring on the death of the world—or at least of America.

The military goods that are used are either dropped in the jungles of Southeast Asia and Latin America or sold to dictators and other buyers around the world.

Big corporations have made billions of dollars in profits from military production. For the rest of us, the cost has been enormous. It goes far beyond the 70¢ out of each tax dollar we pay that goes for war or war-related production. The industries of war—oil, steel, chemicals, plastics and manufacturing—are the dirtiest of all, and military production accounts for over 1/5 of their output.

Think of all the acids and smoke added to our rivers and air while steel is made for missiles, and submarines, and bombers. How much of the poisonous chemicals that we drink and the deadly gasses that we breathe originated in the manufacture of military hardware? The stupendous amounts of weaponry that we create wage war on our own bodies as well as on our paychecks.

Still, most of what America makes is for the consumer, not the Army. It is the stuff of which the so-called American Dream is made. What

kinds of goods does Business sell us, and what kind of life does it bring?

We spend thousands of dollars on cars, refrigerators, TV sets, stoves and washing machines that can be made (labor included) for a fraction of their price tags. And then, while we're working overtime to keep up with our payments, the things break down. Or some new and jazzier model comes out.

Advertisements are always yammering at us about some new product that's supposed to make us look and feel sexier, or younger, or stronger, or more important. The ads are very clever, being scientifically designed to play on our weaknesses, our desires, our vanities. They're nothing but psychological pick-pockets and purse-snatchers.

Many of us go into debt to buy all the things the ads tell us we need. No matter how much we have, we never have enough. There's always something else we're urged to buy. There's always a new set of Joneses we're supposed to keep up with.

So consumer goods and military hardware form the heart of the gigantic American economy. Why are these things produced?



Business must keep growing to make profits. Profits come from sales. The critical problem for corporations becomes "How can we increase sales?" They have found several ways.

They build their products to break down in a relatively short time, because this increases turnover. Scholars call this "planned obsolescence." We can call it *waste*.

They spend billions of dollars on advertising (and tack the cost onto the price-tag) to convince us to buy new things, often things we don't really need. This too we can call *waste*.

They back the politicians and newspapers that push for expensive new defense systems, which collect dust for a few years and are replaced. What else could we call it but *waste*!

Our enormous, expanding economy powers itself by creating waste!

Look at all the metal objects which surround you and consider how many of them you really need. While you do this, keep in mind that 650,000 gallons of America's water are degraded making one ton of steel; 130 million tons are produced each year. It's part of the cost—*your cost*—that companies don't tell you about.

Thumb through the daily paper and notice all the advertising pages. You pay for these ads. Not only do the companies tack the cost onto the price-tag, but 240,000 gallons of water and thousands of trees go into making one ton of newspaper. 61% of all newspaper goes for ads, consuming well over 5 million tons of paper each year. That's your cost also. *Waste exhausts the resources of the land—and of the people.*

There are other, less obvious ways in which we pay the price of an illogical system fueled by greed:

How much better off are we?

Businessmen are much better off. In the last 5 years, big corporations have grown 31%.

But inflation has crippled many of us. It's left us running on a treadmill. Many of us are even going backwards: working people can't even buy as much now with their paychecks as they could 10 years ago.

Many of us are deeply in debt. American consumers are over \$98 billion in the hole. That works out to over \$2000 per family!

And the final price we pay for all the posses-

sions and "conveniences" that they sell us runs a lot higher. The billions and billions of dollars worth of goods America produces every year exact a fearsome ecological toll.

Our cities are crowded, smelly, and ugly. There's less open land each passing year. Our health is deteriorating: more people are getting degenerative diseases—which means their bodies virtually rot—at younger ages. Even life expectancy is decreasing. Our jobs are boring. We work harder and harder to pay our bills and end up making other people rich.

Pollution comes from waste:

producing too much,
producing too sloppily,
and wasting what has
been produced



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