

Masking Earth's real problems

Somewhere under the beautiful sky on any given day there exist places where every person can be at their best, doing what they believe to be right, creating themselves and living up to their greatest potential.

For most of us a university is not such a place. Universities provide us with quantitatively valuable social contact, but do not allow us to participate in the solutions to Earth's problems. At university, we are inextricably connected to oppression as we are also connected to the social and ecological problems we passively help to maintain. A university activist with the best of intentions is still a fuel cell, plugged into the great machine, speeding up its joy ride into the dark.

We might agree that people need social contact, a healthy ecosystem, food and a warm place to sleep. For this most of us figure we need something called money. (Money can be exchanged for fruit, but unlike fruit it can be accumulated beyond one's needs without the visible and olfactory immorality of hoarding your own rotting pile of fruit).

To get money we need a job. To get a job we need a "good" (valuable to the agenda of industrial capitalism) education. To get a good education we must go into debt. However, once in debt we become indentured

labourers. A mortgage appeals to us more than rent, so we go into debt again. We need a car as our lives are short on freedom and those TV commercials that we weren't really paying attention to have made us associate cars and freedom. So deeper in debt we go. The debts lock in our slavery and the useless products we buy only provide us with fleeting amusement. And all around everyone seems to have chosen the same path.

Is this accidental? Of course not. The banks, corporations and wealth lords must insure their survival through the continued strangle-hold on the proletariat and the obedience and submission of the middle class. Do we have a choice? We certainly do.

Humans have been providing for themselves and their neighbours out of the bounty of the earth for millennia (before we consented to be fed by agribusiness, clothed with synthetics, and entertained by the numbing blue flicker of network TV).

For four years I gave my money, time, and brain to a university so that I could solve math problems on a Friday night. There was little time to think beyond what CNN said about why the US military had gone to Iraq to kill people. There was no time to find out why so many products were being boycotted,

no time to question pharmaceutical cures, no time to ponder the validity of science as a tool for understanding; no time for anything but competing with my brothers and sisters for the highest grades, so that I could make it to the top while they...well, who knows where they would go.

For four years I bought the electricity that causes acid rain and coal miners' widows, the paper of deforestation, the chemically raised food which destroys top soil, the products of multinational corporations who turn a blind eye to the torture and killings used to coerce labour, and the petroleum products which flood the beaches with oil and entertain us with the Gulf War.

Looking back on those days I am ashamed that I was participating in and cooperating with such a broad spectrum of

evil. Now, with friends, I am fighting these systems of oppression from outside the system through the constructive program at Gandhi Farm.

While we are far from perfect,

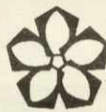
I think we have found our place and can see our potential. The radical solutions to earth's problems are simple; what we need is the courage to implement our solutions

C. DEREK BOWER

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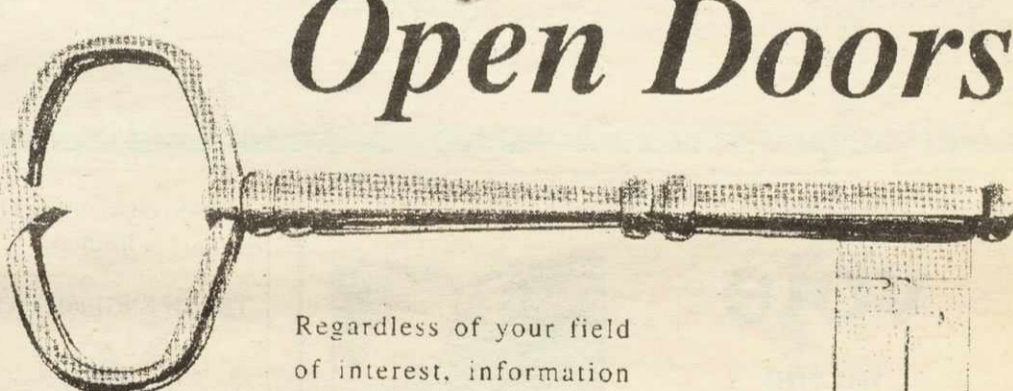
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