# INTERRUPT 12

newsletter of

computer people for peace

October,   1970

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# Nixon's Peace

Nixon's speech of October 7, calling for a "cease fire in place" is good propaganda; however, there are several factors which I offer for your consideration:

---The Thieu-Ky regime would still be in power, backed by approximately 400,000 U.S. troops.

---The call by the National Liberation Front for a coalition government organizing election (rather than the Saigon clique supervising elections) has not been met. This is a vital point when you consider that during the last elections, communists and "neutralists" were not allowed to participate. Dzu, the runner-up candidate, is still being held in Saigon prisons.

---The only foreign troops in Vietnam are from the U.S. and our client nations-- South Korea, Thailand, Phillipines, Australia. They have no right to interfere in the internal struggle taking place in Vietnam.

It is rare that I agree with Nixon, but a special Right-On to his statements concerning prisoners--"I propose that all prisoners of war, without exception, be released now to return to the place of their choice. And I propose that all journalists and other innocent civilians of the conflict be released immediately as well".

Anti-war people should support this and struggle to insure that draft resisters, anti-war GI's in stockades, Buddhists, Saigon students, Panthers, expatriots in Canada and Sweden, and all other "innocent civilians of the conflict be released immediately as well".

Taking Nixon's vocal concessions as a step towards victory for the antiwar movement, all people who oppose the Indochina war should fully support all the mass demonstrations taking place this Fall calling for immediate and total withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Southeast Asia.

Stu Davis

# act now

The National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) is calling demonstrations on Oct. 31. Actions are scheduled for Atlanta, Amherst, Austin, Boston, Chicago, Columbus, Denver, Detroit, El Paso, Lawrence, Logan, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New Haven, New York, Niagara Falls, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, Providence, Racine, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, Tampa, Trenton, and Vancouver.

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In New York, a CPP contingent, marching under our banner, will assemble at noon at Columbus Circle (Broadway and 59th), and will head down Broadway through Times Sq., across 42nd St. to Bryant Park (42nd St. and 6th Ave.), where a rally with speakers and entertainment will be held from 2:30 to 4:00 pm.

CPP members can help defray the organizational and publicity costs of the Oct. 31 demonstrations by mailing a check to New York Peace Action Coalition, 137 W. 14th St., New York, N.Y. 10011. Volunteers to leaflet, man peace tables, and sell buttons should call NYPAC at 924-0894.

The National Coalition Against War, Racism, and Repression (NCAWRR), comprised of New Mobilization Committee members who disagree with NPAC's single issue approach, has made tentative plans for a rally against "U.S. Genocide" at the U.N. on November 15. ∎

# CPP HAS NEW HOME

CPP has made arrangements with the Dolphin Center in New York City giving us the use of common office space, a meeting room and other services of the Center. The Dolphin Center serves as the office and meeting place of many other peace groups--among them SANE, Psychologists for Social Action, Medical Committee for Human Rights, National Strike for Peace, and Peace Action Coalition. All correspondence with CPP in the future should be addressed to the new office:

    Computer People for Peace
    c/o Dolphin Center
    137 West 14th Street
    New York, N.Y.    10011
Phone: 212-924-0894 (we have a phone!)

# Professional No People Yes

We shall in the future be known as:
        COMPUTER PEOPLE FOR PEACE
(Anyone using the word "Professional" will be sentenced to doing program maintenance for life, on the utterance of the last vowel!)

After long discussions among people in CPP and after receiving reactions to a recent letter in Interrupt suggesting the name change, the CPP Steering Committee has decided to change the name of the organization. Most people responding to the change felt that the "Professional" label limited the potential scope of the group and smacked of elitism.

The first NY CPP General Meeting of the Fall will be held on Thursday, November 11, 8:00 p.m., at the Dolphin Center, 137 W. 14th St., 3rd Fl., New York. Planned for discussion are CPP's plans for the Fall and Winter. Refreshments will be served. We look forward to seeing you PEOPLE and all your friends.

# Human Manifesto

A pledge taken by some in your field dis-
avows war research or weapons production
and further to counsel students and col-
leagues similarly. Thrusts by CPP are
toward conferences and conventions, always
focusing inward. As a lay victim of Com-
puterism I see a further question that
must be faced by Computerists. Where they
are not helping napalm enemies, are they
ever in hands where profit is not the
prime mover? Yes, when computers are put
to use on medical research, hospitals,
medicare, medicaid, social security, wel-
fare. But, in some mysterious fashion
they become excuses for confusion.

That I just learned there is a higher
echelon of villains than the computer may
seem lame. Yet in this cabalah of science,
only the "do not fold, spindle or mutilate"
invade my existence with its numbers,
holes and name for address convenience to
be tucked in window envelopes. The psy-
chological factor that you can't fight
the machine (like City Hall) is awesome.
We have enough unreachables. Science and
Mathematics tend to be didactic and we
common folk are rendered subdued.

So it is with the all-powerful computers,
which have the legend of efficiency and
accuracy on their side. They have been
characterized by their feeders as the
Chief Controllers. Due to dual fallibility
computers often goose-step incorrectly;
obeying orders. At present, the law and
order system doesn't take individual vari-
ables into consideration. This spews poi-
son on the public.

I know the impregnable fort the computer
helps create. A complex of surgery landed
me in the hospital. I had insurance and
Medicaid, which would be renewed. Automat-
ically, my green card was replaced by a
yellow one with the identical expiration
date. The Medicaid hospital worker assured
me it was a simple error made by the com-
puter, that thousands of recipients had
received wrongly marked I.D.'s. Two months
later I was released without a current
card. Her frequent pleas for correction
(and she's way up the ladder from ordinary
citizen) went unheeded. I was stuck with
my intensive medical costs. Eventually, it

(and she's way up the ladder from ordinary
citizen) went unheeded. I was stuck with
my intensive medical costs. Eventually, it
was found that the computer had put me into
a dead file and I had to apply again. Eight
months later, I received a wrongly addressed
card; a month later properly addressed; two
weeks later a different expiration date and
after another month, a twin. Now I have
three valid cards.

Efficiency cannot be denied but when the
computer messes up, consultants aren't
around, just desperate victims. If the
fault does not lie in that abused machine,
then look to yourselves. Those mundane
daily tasks do affect human lives.

In other words, don't just object to war
work and excessive profit motive. People
feel impotent in the face of Computerism.
Where do we go? We need you to help us
defeat the cold card.

Set up a human watchdog service where peo-
ple "up against Computerism" can turn.
Spread awareness.

Computers are here to stay, so your field
is secure. Show us what "professionals"
really are. Eradicate our fear. Convey
to us that people, not machines, are with
it.

                              Ann Rosenberg    ▪

## acm (continued from page 7)

request was granted and the sponsors also
saw fit to place a member of CPP on one
of their "Town Meeting" panels. The
major question CPPers raised at that
meeting was what would ACM do about the
case of Clark Squire. Nobody "could
commit" the ACM at that time but later in
an ACM Executive Council meeting a sub-
committee was formed to study the Squire
case. CPP had its people attend the
various ACM '70 meetings that were "user-
oriented." They invariably talked around
the real issues. The CPP table, however,
proved to be a cordial place to meet new
people and rap. Most who came to the
table were eager to get more information
about CPP and liked our approach to user
problems.                                ▪

# COMMITTEES

SJCC

CPP has formed a group to plan our actions at the Spring Joint Computer Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The letter reprinted below, sent to the general chairman of the conference and to the press, describes what the planning group is doing. For further information contact Paul Millstein through our Dolphin Center office.

Jack Moshman, General Chairman, SJCC'71
Moshman Associates, Inc.
6400 Goldsboro Road
Washington, D.C.  20034

Dear Mr. Moshman:

Computer People for Peace (CPP) is extremely disappointed with the planners of the FJCC for failing to invite our organization to participate in the Fall Conference. Since we have yet to hear from the planners of the SJCC, it seems necessary to remind you that CPP is an active organization concerned with the effects of computers and automation, and as such should take part in the planning of all major computer conferences.

You will be pleased to learn that CPP is currently working on program suggestions for the SJCC. Subjects such as The Social Responsibility of Computer Workers and Users, The Role of the Computer in Society, and Job Security and Mobility of the Computer Workforce have been avoided in the past. We feel that these and many other topics of relevance to computer people must be included in the program.

We also reject the usual method of presenting ideas--the "expert" who delivers his carefully screened six month old paper only serves to create barriers preventing audience involvement. CPP proposes an alternate plan, consisting of group workshops geared to developing action programs, both at the conference and on a continuing basis.

In addition, I am requesting space within the exhibition hall for a CPP exhibit. Surely, with all of the emphasis on military applications of computers, there is room for an exhibit for peace.

We are devoting a great deal of time preparing for a successful and meaningful SJCC. We hope to have your cooperation and await your response to our suggestions.

                                        In Peace,

                                        Paul L. Millstein
                                        for the SJCC planning group
                                        of CPP

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## ACM '70 QUOTES

"No other society (USA) in the history of the world has ever made such a concerted positive assault on the status of the poor." David B. Mayer (IBM), Chairman of ACM's Committee on Computing and the Disadvantaged.

A behind the scenes memo at the conference discussed security procedures "to insure as smooth a program as possible". The memo outlined procedures "in the event of any threatened or actual disturbance INCLUDING A LINE OF QUESTIONING WHICH APPEARS OMINOUS" (emphasis ours).

Are you planning an action? Do you have constructive ideas you'd like to implement? Do you know a further way we can reach people in the field? Do you have ideas for publicizing the above? Do you have answers to questions we can't even think of?

Help the Press Information Group. We're trying to get things together to help each other and to thrust CPP upon the outside world with more impact. We need direction and cooperation.

We're trying to soft-pedal, but don't underestimate the strength and determination behind this plea. For now, why shout? After all, we exist because we care.

As habit, contact Ann Rosenberg, through our Dolphin Center address and phone, or at home: 277 W. 11th St., NYC 10014; CH2-6555. Send or call in information on studies, actions, ideas and the unknown. ∎

## DATA BANKS

The following are some thoughts that were expressed at the first meeting of the newly formed Data Bank Committee. Contact Jeanine Meyer through our Dolphin Center address for more information.

There is now a group in CPP studying and working on actions concerning data banks. We believe we have a unique contribution to make to the growing concern over the invasion of privacy and repression symbolized by data banks. We can offer a more radical perspective than other professional groups and still benefit from the aura of our technical jobs. We ask all people, in and out of the field, to tell us their ideas, describe any data bank atrocities, support and work on our actions. We are now in the process of contacting other groups and individuals working on the problem--ACLU, University Professors, Ralph Nader, the Vietnam Peace Parade Committee. We are considering actions against several data banks.

There are many types of data banks and we do not want just to express a vague kind of anti-technology feeling. The following will have to be refined, but we offer this analysis: Data banks can be--
1) a tool of some bureaucracy,
2) a misused tool for "good", and
3) a tool for repression.
Credit card data banks fall into the first group. Legal and procedural safeguards must be established to restrict their use. Programs to educate the public on the practices of these companies are needed to build a phase of protest. Many professional and "right wing" groups are concerned with this problem. What we have to do is work for safeguards that work for the poor and less educated, since they are the ones hurt most by the present credit card and other bureaucratic data banks.

A nationwide online system of medical dossiers is often suggested as a "good" data bank. There are many reasons why this and other so called "good" data banks are harmful when they are misused. There is a scarcity of money for health, education and welfare. We need not go into why this is so. In any case, training more doctors, nurses, paraprofessionals, improving walk-in clinics, sending medical teams into areas that desperately need more medical care are high priority items. We in the field should watch out for the computer mystique. Having a computer allows for a complex answer when a simpler answer makes more sense. Welfare systems are a good example of this. Like many institutions and structures in our society the welfare of the real user or client is considered after the bureaucrat and the professional, if it is considered at all.

Frequently when discussing data banks and the invasion of privacy that accompanies them, people use the phrase, "1984 is sneaking up on us." The FBI and the Army know that what they are doing is harmful to all people, expecially those that disagree with the present political leaders. Certains laws may get in their way but they get around them. The intent of the FBI and the Army must be questioned. We are considering law suits and demonstations, knowing that the most we can expect to

accomplish is to educate people and make
them aware of the direction of our country
away from democracy.

We are probably in these data banks--
so are you.  ∎

## POLITICAL THEORY

The Political Theory Committee has started
discussions around the points below.  For
additional information contact Ron Lane
through our new office at the Dolphin
Center.

It has been said that America is ruled by
an elite of rich people who brainwash the
American people through the media, keeping
them in a state of political immaturity,
so that the rich themselves will not be
meaningfully challenged.  On the other
side, however, it is often said that the
radical left also seeks to manipulate
people such as students to further their
own ends.  Both claims agree on one point:
that the people of the country are brain-
washed and manipulated, tossed around by
rhetoric, politically unaware, without any
real understanding of political reality.

It has also been said that liberty is only
achieved when people actively take part in
the affairs that affect them, and that this
takes work and time and knowledge.  In
other words, liberty is earned by becoming
politically aware and active.  If this is
true, how can we raise our consciousness
and earn our liberty?  How can we undo the
brainwashing delivered to us on all sides?

We all understand some things.  We all
understand different things.  Can we get
together and by arguing out our viewpoints,
by reading and discussing, raise our
consciousness of political reality?  How
can we go about doing this?  ∎



We believe that the threat to individual privacy—
whether it be caused by the computer, by surveil-
lance techniques such as electronic eavesdropping,
or by an ever-expanding number of surveillance
personnel—is perhaps the greatest problem con-
fronting America today, particularly due to the rapid
expansion of the information processing art.

There is little time remaining to deal intelligently
with the situation, but whether the time is short or
no, the time is now for ultimately it will have been
too late. It will have been you, and I, the assumed
sophisticate of the computer age who is primarily
responsible.

Do something.

reprinted from Data Systems News
aug-sept 1970

# SUMMER NOTES

CPP held meetings throughout the summer months for the first time in its three year history. The summer meetings were not simply an extension of regular CPP functions. They evolved from discussions at the last scheduled Steering Committee meeting in June. That meeting was attended by several new people who had been moved to come out by the expansion of the Indochina war, the repression at Jackson State and Kent State, and the "hard hats" on Wall Street.
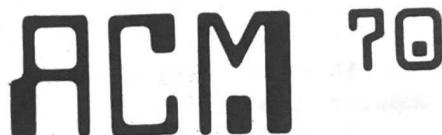
The Steering Committee discussion centered around the problem of getting people involved in CPP. "Why, with over two thousand people on our mailing list do we only have ten at this meeting?" We decided to try some alternate structures. Rather than continue the commitee meetings-- Steering, Labor, Analysis--we announced a schedule of informal meetings to discuss such questions as: How Large Data Banks Are Affecting Our Lives; Whether Technology is Good or Bad; How We Can Overcome the Computer Mystique; Why the Dichotomy Between "Hard Hats" and "Students." We felt that people who would feel wary of walking into a functioning committee meeting might be happy to attend an informal discussion group.

The second major idea for bringing more people into an active role in CPP was the concept of a weekend campout. The First Annual Summer Joint Computer Conference In The Woods (FASJCCITW, reported elsewhere in this issue) was the realization of that idea.

How did these ideas for involving more people work out? I believe that both the meetings and the camping convention were qualified successes. We had over fifty people at the convention. Some of them had never before been to a CPP meeting. The summer meetings also brought out some new people who are now actively contributing to CPP. Yet the best thing about the summer meetings to me was their informality. We had no chairmen. The discussions were freewheeling and people spoke out when they desired. No one person or small group dominated.

When CPP started up again in September on a regular basis, some of the "summer people" reacted strongly to the formality of the structured meetings. They asked: Why not continue in the collectivist manner of the summer? I feel that if the collectivist style works then use it because any form of organizational hierarchy is repulsive. But I also remind people that during the summer months we were not concerned with finances; we did not organize any actions; we did not publish an Interrupt; we had no contact with the press; etc. While major policy decisions must be formulated from collective actions, many of the ongoing functions of CPP may best be ultimately made the responsibility of one person. The organization of the Interrupt collective is a case in point.

Ed Regan ∎

# ACM '70

ACM '70 was billed as The Unconventional Convention. It was supposed to be aimed at the users of computers and, through technology, come up with some ideas for a better society. CPP questioned the ACM's definition of a user as being technical management and put forth the idea that the user is the individual affected by the computer. On this basis, we strenuously objected to the $85. fee charged to anyone who wanted to attend the seminars during the 3 day convention. CPP felt that the average person whose life is very much affected by computers in his bank statements, credit cards, income tax, and welfare checks was not about to pay $85. simply to listen to a lot of technically oriented managers continue to justify the generally inadequate systems.

CPP contacted the sponsors of ACM '70 as soon as the fee schedule was announced. We demanded the fees be eliminated. We requested table space in the convention lobby to distribute literature. While no action was taken on the former, the latter

By this time most of you have probably heard about the case of Clark Squire, a programmer who has been in jail for the last eighteen months awaiting trial on conspiracy charges involving twenty-one Black Panther Party members. CPP has endorsed the actions of the Squire Committee to raise the $50,000 bail, because we feel that the civil liberties of all people are involved in this case.

Clark has made a special appeal to the people in the computer field to aid him in regaining his freedom. We feel that it is important for the computer community to act together to aid one of its members, for the "conspiracy" form of indictment tends to depersonalize the individuals involved. He has written the following letter in order to make his views known.

Although the Steering Committee of CPP has not voted on the analysis presented in this letter, we feel that the deep and careful thoughts which are outlined here are worthy of serious consideration. We remind those of you who are concerned that donations may be sent to the Squire Committee, in care of CPP at the Dolphin Center (see inside front cover for CPP's new address). Further information about the facts of the case are available from Ed Elkind (212-663-8661 evenings).

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Power to all my brothers and sisters in the Computer Industry!

First off I'd like to send a vigorous Right-On to all of you that have come together to raise bail in my behalf. Since I have last seen many of you a lot of water has passed under the bridge so that maybe I can best relate to you by putting this letter in the form of a political essay on the relationship between the computer industry and the political prisoner. I could just as well have chosen any other topic and political prisoners or simply "Political Prisoners", and the line of reasoning would have been the same, because the issue of political prisoners touches all segments of society. In the future the issue of political prisoners will become a more and more dominant factor in American life, partly because there will be more of them. Yet today the U.S. government refuses even to acknowledge the existence of political prisoners. It categorizes all prisoners as criminals. So what I want to do is start at a point with which we are all familiar, the computer industry, and proceed to a point with which all of us may not be so familiar--the political prisoner.

I am sure that most of you are familiar with the terror and hostility generated among affected personnel when they learn that "a computer" is being installed to "assist in" or replace many of the manual functions they currently perform. This terror and hostility stems mainly from the fact that those affected by the computer feel insecure and threatened. They feel that they may be replaced, fired or lose seniority and rank by having to learn a new job. Now the peculiar thing is that these persons fear the very thought of a computer displacing them even though they may be doing the most menial, monotonous and distasteful type of work. So now we have a situation where a computer, which frees scores of people from the drudgery of performing a monotonous task, in reality neither frees nor benefits them. It more often penalizes them with the additional hardship of being without a means of livelihood or at best unleashes a mad scramble to secure another menial or equally distasteful type of job. One can more fully appreciate what I am trying to bring out if one extends the concept of the computer to cover the entire field of machines and automation, and adds a liberal dose of racism so that the people performing the menial labor are always nonwhite and/or

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# Computer People

poor. Then one comes up with a close approximation to this society and some of its serious flaws. Even though the model is not exact, it is sufficient to expose those serious defects, namely racism, exploitation and oppression. In other words, the introduction of automation does not benefit the people it frees but discards them back upon the heap of ignorance and poverty, into a life of unemployment, welfare or another menial job. There is something fundamentally wrong with a society when you can introduce a machine-- that could relieve thousands of people from menial, distasteful tasks, increasing efficiency and production--for an end result which leaves a great number of people unaffected and benefits only a few people, mostly those that own the machine. This is exploitation pure and simple, stemming mainly from the fact that people themselves do not own the machines and have no say in determining how these machines are to be used.

The issue of racism is self evident. Its widespread existence needs no substantiation, other than each of us examining his own experience in American society. Now a computer, a machine, or automation in itself is neither good nor bad but is simply a tool. Its use and relation to people determines its character. This is where the issue of political prisoners and repression comes in.

Those people who call into contention the way society is laid out in relation to all the people, who challenge racism, exploitation, the way the tools are used in that society and who benefits from this use, the way the wealth is distributed--and are arrested for this--are political prisoners. Political prisoners are those people arrested for seeking to change a society that needs changing and is going to be changed. Because of their views they are subjected to all types of repression, under the smokescreens of "conspiracy" charges, frame-ups, mass predawn raids,

complete with "shoot-outs", and annihilation campaigns.

In the early ages when science was young many persons were ostracized, prosecuted and even killed for expounding new scientific theories. Much of the world was not ready for scientific change. In the Middle Ages, Galileo, considered a father of modern physics, was forced to publicly recant his theory that the earth moved about the sun and even then was sentenced to life in strict seclusion. A few decades ago a school teacher was prosecuted for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution, but on a whole, society today accepts scientific change. Einstein was rewarded, not prosecuted, when he revolutionized the science of physics with his theory of relativity. But in the field of social science theory we are still in the Middle Ages. Society today still seeks to ostracize, prosecute and even kill those persons advocating social changes.

We can all agree that society needs changing. For many people, society simply does not work. For the Indian it was genocidal; for other nonwhites it is racist; for the poor it is dog-eat-dog exploitation; for the middle class life is shallow and without substance, a gadget-and-consumption oriented rat race; and for the revolutionary it is intolerable.

Once we come to the definite conclusion that society needs changing the next step is by far the most difficult because it runs head on into that old terror--fear of action or of getting involved. This is purely a personal decision that each of us has to make alone and to himself as to his level of participation in changing society. Where to begin is a large question: here I would like to make a few points about repression and political prisoners.

Political prisoners who were active in changing society, particularly those prisoners faced with vague and flimsy conspir-

acy charges, but also those prisoners faced with deadly serious charges carrying long prison terms, are still innocent until proven guilty. They still have a constitutional right to equal protection of the law, still have a right to reasonable bail and to prepare a proper defense; otherwise let us snatch away the last veil and usher in full scale Fascism complete with swastikas and goose steps. The issue of bail becomes paramount here if for no other reason than under the "American System of Justice" it is a well established fact that prisoners who make bail stand at least four times the chance of an acquittal than the poor and indigent prisoners who cannot raise bail. Another reason is that persons out on bail have a chance to gather witnesses and other evidence in their behalf which are crucial to their defense. And especially in a highly publicized controversial trial, persons out on bail also have a chance to publicly expose and counteract much of the slanderous and prejudicial propaganda of the prosecution. It is no accident that the prosecution has unprecedentedly and repeatedly refused to lower the astronomically high "ransoms" on the jailed Panthers. Since high bails are simply a more subtle method of repressing political prisoners, it is here I suggest that many of you make your initial commitment.

To my Black brothers and sisters in the computer field I want to say that some of you are doing some beautiful work; you know who you are so Right-On to that. To others I would like to add that because you have skills and belong to that least commited segment of the Black community, "the Black middle class", you have the double obligation to support revolution in this society and also to make your skills available to the liberation struggle in the Black community. The current rumbles in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa are only the distant thunder of the storm clouds approaching this country and even a blind man can see that Blacks will carry the brunt of both the struggle and the repression that is descending. So it is mandatory that many of you move from your position of "aloofness" and possible alienation from the Black community and exert a special effort to make your skills available to the Black community.

To all of you, I want to thank you again for getting involved by starting a bail

campaign. To those of you for whom this is a first--welcome. To others for whom this is a continuing effort I urge you on to a greater commitment because I am sure that after becoming involved we all eventually arrive at the same conclusion. In order to effect any radical change in this society: Revolution is the only solution.

In closing I want to send a very special Right-On to those two revolutionary brothers, Nicholas Unger and Robert Wolfe of NYU, for their attempt to stir the conscience of the institution where they worked so it would use some of its considerable assets to raise bail for political prisoners. I fully appreciate both the intent and the need for such a move and also the consequences brought to bear on them for such an action. If there is one lesson learned that stands above all others in being a Panther it is that it is inherently right for a people to revolt against any train of injustices. Once you have taken that step to scratch the surface, unveiling a massive underlying hulk of hypocrisy, deceit and rot, you will cease to wonder how you got started, but why you waited so long!

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE
SEIZE THE TIME
FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

Clark Squire--Panther 21
Branch Queens Jail--August 21, 1970

"...when Soviet police arrested distinguished biologist Zhorese Medvedev late last month it seemed safe to assume that the familiar pattern of repression had claimed yet another victim.... But from the beginning Medvedev's case was unusual. As the pampered elite, Soviet scientists--even those with liberal beliefs are usually left alone. And last week he scored another first for Soviet dissenters: after three weeks of detention, he received a 'provisional' discharge from custody....

All evidence indicated, however, that it was precisely the enormous support Medvedev received from other Soviet intellectuals that had persuaded the authorities to change their course...."
(reprinted from Newsweek, June 20, 1970)

# CPP'S FASJCCITW

More than fifty people rapped and romped together on a Jersey mountainside one week-end last month to celebrate CPP's First Annual Summer Joint Computer Conference In The Woods. People had different expectations for the conference--to socialize, to enjoy the outdoors, to involve new people, to start new projects, to define a direction for CPP. But basically we wanted a chance to know each other better in more relaxed circumstances than the routine Wednesday night meeting.

Arriving Friday night in rain and fog, people splashed around puddles in the dark, hoping that the camp would be dry enough Saturday for camping out. We grabbed a sandwich in the cafeteria and rapped about the techniques and politics of data banks. Past midnight, an expeditionary force went off to find the now moonlit pool while timid souls slept.

After Saturday morning breakfast, two work-shops staked their claims on a grassy meadow. One discussed the utility and meaning of political activities, another the possibility of developing a responsive, human work environment within (or without) the corporate framework (e.g: forming work collectives, organizing programmers, operators and keypunchers into an association, etc.).

After lunch, we swam, played volley ball and frisbee, or climbed up the mountain in search of dry camp sites.

Afternoon workshops were on data banks (this folded: an alternate group sprang up to discuss "power"), and the structure of CPP. This meant different things to different people. Some of us talked about the most efficient organization to promote growth, and some stressed less traditional ways of providing for participation.

Some of the more active people were criticized for doing too much alone, and others were advised to assume responsibilities. It became obvious that we had a real communication problem between people with different perspectives. A few people felt they had not been consulted, or had been ignored, misrepresented, or attacked. Little was solved, and finally the session adjourned for dinner.

The dozen or so children had toys, four dogs and a cat, volunteer kid watchers and each other to keep them occupied while their parents attended sessions. We found running a day care center was easier than we'd anticipated; kids naturally take care of themselves.

Saturday night we watched "The Battle of Algiers", preceded by a Newsreel about the Army, an appeal for pledges for the Clark Squire bail fund, and interminable projector problems.

A plenary session was convened Sunday morning to hear workshop reports. When the structure session was reviewed, the debate began anew and the next several hours evaporated in a spirited discussion. As an involved party, I can hardly claim to be objective about the debate, but I will try to be less than partisan in describing it.

There were several points of contention. One group felt that the amount of work to be done is too great to allow personal feelings to get in the way. From this view, we are only being self indulgent to squabble about who writes leaflets or who is upset by the way decisions are being made while people are dying in Viet Nam. Another group said that the war is the logical, inevitable outcome of a system which ignores people's needs. We must consciously structure our group in accord with all our members' humanity and aspirations if we are to offer a significant alternative to the manipulators now running society (and its wars).

Some agreed that a highly structured organization is essential to attract new people to CPP. Individuals should be given continuing responsibility for specific functions--mailings, correspondence, publicity, etc. But others thought rigid structure would only insure that those in power maintain power, with newcomers shunted to menial tasks and denied participation in

the decision process. By this view, "experts" should not jealously guard their status but use their skill to help others become competent. Still others believed an unstructured group--where members relate very easily with each other--would intimidate newcomers. Or, new people might think that a small clique was in control so that they feel channeled into predefined activities. A danger of the "affinity group" relationship might be a tendency to turn inward and inhibit CPP's growth. ' On the other hand, a traditionally structured group implies a much smaller affinity group at the top, assigning tasks to others without giving them real responsibility.

At times this dispute grew heated, but finally people on both sides resolved to be more aware of how their actions affected others, and to change their behavior when appropriate. I think people finally agreed that no one's motives had been bad. More understanding was called for, and a rededication to work together harmoniously.


photo: ellen bitkower

Was the weekend constructive? I feel it was, both socially and politically (and these are not unrelated). We did not emerge with a blueprint for action, but we did struggle together to establish open working relationships. Our success will be tested by CPP's future actions. If we can utilize the lesson learned at FASJCCITW our actions will become more effective. We will build a stronger and a growing CPP. More computer people will become active, working at all levels from licking stamps to planning new actions, spreading the word that workers in our field are disturbed by the misuses of our technology and are determined to change our priorities so that the computer can better serve the people's needs.

Barbara Marsh

# WOMEN'S CENTER

New York City now has a Women's Center which is located at 36 W. 22nd Street (212)691-1860 . The center is merely a place for women to go to exchange ideas, pick-up literature, get abortion counseling and an endless list of other functions. It has no formal structure or governing body, and is operational only because women's rap groups and collectives throughout the city have been devoting time and talents to keep it running.

Several of us in CPP are forming a systems collective to help the center be in a better position to receive and disseminate the huge quantities of information which pass through it. . Since the success of the center is dependent on the number of women who can be reached through regular mailings, we thought that the first task should be to establish a computerized mailing list.

It is likely that we will be able to adopt the CPP mailing services for use by the Women's Center. What may prove difficult is to get committments for necessary machine time for weekly or bimonthly mailings, and volunteer keypunch time and machines to keep the list up to date. We desperately need free:

-360/30 or up machine time
-Use of keypunch machines and volunteers to train keypunch operators.

If you would like to help us on the Systems Collective please call:
    Joan Dublin (212-666-6418)
There is a lot of work to do to get the committments for machine time since most companies are not owned by women or favorable to women's liberation.

Hope to hear from you.

Joan Dublin

# LETTERS TO INTERRUPT

August 30, 1970

Dear Interrupt,
I joined CPP about four months ago but because of personal inertia and laziness I only started attending meetings in early July. Finally my feelings got to me and I started coming every week.

The summer is a bad time because so many people are away and tend to let their involvement drift. I found out that a lot of the "old heavies" would not be back until the Fall. My feeling toward the group is one of extreme warmth. Some meetings have been way up and some way down but all have been infected with the feeling of an honest attempt by all to do something before 1984 gets here.

The meetings have averaged about fifteen people and have had no chairmen. The open and loose feeling that has resulted from this unrigid situation has been wonderful.

It is hard to know if we are doing anything of real significance but we are trying. It is very easy to get disgusted, chuck it all in, and let the sickness of America wash over us. The system is so huge that one feels totally impotent, but it is precisely because of this we all should be involved.

I look forward to a long, active, frustrating stay with CPP and hope there are many others out there like me.

Bob Weisburd

Philadelphia, Pa.
August 22, 1970

Peace,
We are getting together a magazine for radicals in the professions. ...I'm having a hell of a time finding out about radical activity in the sciences--your group looks like it may be the most important one.

Jay Lockman

If anyone wants to get in touch with Jay directly, the address and phone number of the magazine is: RAP (RAdical Professionals) 1218 Panama Street, Philadelphia, Pa.; KI5-7288.

Buffalo, New York
July 24, 1970

Dear Interrupt:
I'm moved to write by Judith Grimes' letter in the June issue. I agree 100% with her suggestion and reasons, and would like to amplify it as follows:

1) Professionalism et al --Judith's criticism is right on. That kind of attitude, incidentally, is one of the main obstacles to union activity among programmers. Calling ourselves professionals doesn't change the fact that we are, in economic fact, working class, brain-power proletariat.

2) The entire aura of CPP's present title is old-line left-liberal, maybe even middle-liberal, and I think from the good stuff going on in Interrupt you have moved into the radical bag and should so designate.

3) That raises the further issue of what to call yourself (ourself?). I tend to think that the "for Peace" designation, although certainly true, is too narrow and again somewhat lib. You are out for bigger game than just an end to one localized ground war --you have obviously realized the interrelationship of corporate capitalism, international exploitation, racism and sexism, pollution, war, repression, health, poverty, etc., etc., ad nauseum. We know that the Viet Nam War is not just a "mistake" and that American domestic troubles, although certainly aggravated by military priorities, will not be easily or automatically ended by "Peace."

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4) If you want to keep your initials as is for the sake of continuity, which makes sense, maybe something like (bad) Computer Power to the People (?!?!?!?!ergh!) or (better) Computer Political Project, or..? Someone must have some ideas! If I were just making up a name from scratch, I would go for Radical Computer Project, myself.

This may seem silly, by the way, but one of the reasons, apart from simple lack of money and time, that I have not formally joined CPP or done any active organizing up here is the name --most of the people who are both into computers and activist in Buffalo are so heavily into left politics that your title is a severe handicap.

Which brings me to the Buffalo scene. Buff, you may know, is a bad and redneck town, with an active right wing, cops to match, and a university full of "vicious vandals." I came up here to go to SUNY Buffalo, which I am now doing, but my assistantship is in computer music so I am still somewhat active "professionally." I could imagine some field for recruiting at the University computing center, but so far I've had little contact with them.

I worked for six months in the city, at Cornell Aeronautical Lab, which is like working for Honeywell but worse. Most people at CAL are into the "well, there'll always be wars, our government is the best around and so, well, we've got to make fragmentation bombs and data bases and nerve-gas pellets and so on --I mean "good liberal" types, nice people, good programmers. It's frightening. Most people are not good liberal types, in my experience. Needless to say, in a shop which required security clearance (which, to my surprise, I got), I did not do much politicking. I wrote a letter on CBW (Chemical-Biological Warfare), which I posted on a bulletin board, got a few good responses to, and then was told in no uncertain terms that I should take it down. I was very glad to leave for my University position. Most of the non-CAL people I've run into (not very many) are in the same vein.

In all honesty, I doubt that organizing University computer people would be a profitable use of my energies, especially as I am heavily into Women's Lib. But I would like to get your mailings, and have already passed on some of your leaflets to a guy I know who's an operator at a local bank, and I will do more of that type of thing as the occasion arises.

I would really dig a correspondence on the possible alternate uses of computers, both in present situation, as part of a resistance or revolutionary movement, or in alternate life-styles situations (whole earth thing, maybe?) or After The Revolution, assuming an ecologically intelligent situation. What are the damn things good for, apart from particle physics and the creation of massive mounds of clerical work in insurance companies and banks? (and, for that matter Movement mailing lists). I am isolated from the NY scene, where I gather some answers are being worked out. Maybe we could get a discussion going in Interrupt on these issues?

Peace,
Judy Kerman

# computers seek deserters

"Washington, Sept. 14 (UPI)-The Pentagon said today that it would start using computers and cash rewards in dealing with deserters and servicemen who go A.W.O.L.

New regulations, signed Aug. 24 by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, David Packard, for the first time brought all branches of the armed forces under a unified system for handling deserters and those absent without official leave, a Pentagon spokesman said.

The regulations set up a $15 cash reward for the apprehension and detention of absentees, deserters or escaped prisoners. They also set a reward of $25 for anyone capturing and returning to the military an absentee or deserter.

Mr. Packard said a computer link would be established between each branch of the service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's national crime record system."
(reprinted from the New York Times, 9-15-70)

# PROFESSIONALISM?

In a recent letter to Computerworld, Dick Brandon, president of Brandon Applied Systems, reiterated his attack on the "incompetent" behavior of programmers. His list of accusations included:
"...programmers are non-professional in their daily behavior...
"...are not loyal to their companies or their managers...
"...fail to exercise responsibility over their own use of resources--their time and machine time...
"...create problems with operations personnel because of their superior attitude".

He also stated that he had developed similar lists for systems analysts and managers.

Now I have no quarrel with Mr. Brandon's interest in list gathering, but I must take strong issue with his inability to connect his "impressions" with possible causes for the behavior he categorizes. Perhaps a list of questions could "help" him along in his analysis. For example:
---Why should people act in a so-called professional manner when they are not treated as such?
---Why should anyone exhibit loyalty to their company? Shouldn't their feelings for their employers be based on their impression of how important the company is to their lives? Some children exhibit no "loyalty" to their parents because they do not believe in what their parents do or stand for.

---What does responsibility mean? Should an employee feel responsible only because he receives a pay check from his employer? What are the reponsibilities of the employer to the employee?

It hardly seems out of place to mention that a person's behavior is shaped by the way he or she is treated by others. Many people have begun to fight the idea of being molded by their corporate environment because they find little satisfaction with the goals or policies of the company.

I am frankly delighted to see that Mr. Brandon thinks so many programmers have these "undesirable" traits. To me it indicates that people are questioning the meaning of the work they do, and are not merely accepting cut and dried tasks. Some of these people may choose to drop out because their goals and the motives of their companies may come into severe conflict. Others may stay and try to change the behavior of their bosses. Good luck, Mr. Brandon.

Joan Dublin ∎

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Is your mailing label wrong? of course it is; our keypunching is about as good as our typing in this issue. Please send us your old label and your correct address. We are anxious to receive mail at our new address.

# HEAR YE HEAR YE

Not more than a few months ago, many of us of the East Coast sat quietly and listened to reports of computer company layoffs in California. Now the wave has clearly hit us in New York.

Interrupt is interested in doing a survey of companies which have fired, laid off, or otherwise cut back their computer staffs. The August 5, 1970, issue of Computerworld listed NCR, Control Data, Honeywell, and Recognition Equipment as some of the first culprits. Our grapevine tells us that: R.N.Dailey has fired six out of twenty-seven people; the American Stock Exchange has laid off several analysts recently; and CAI bounced a payroll and is being forced into receivership.

If you've been a victim of the "recession" (is it really?), please write and tell us of the circumstances. Apparently, the golden age of the computer industry is on the wane, but no facts or figures exist to tell us. Keep the cards and letters coming. ∎

# $$$$ & ¢¢¢¢

Yes, money talks! Your money talks--to thousands of computer people when you join and/or contribute to Computer People for Peace.

This may sound like an old "Bogey" movie, but CPP does need your money to keep talking for peace, for U.S. withdrawal from Southeast Asia, against discrimination based on race or sex, for the use of computer technology to benefit mankind.

Interrupt (this newsletter) is sent to 3000 computer people. Printing, layout and mailing costs are over $300 per issue and the mailing list is still growing.

We mail out other materials--on the next steps in the struggle for peace; on the campaign to raise bail for Clark Squire, the Black Panther computer programmer on trial in New York; on our recently held First Annual Summer Joint Computer Conference In The Woods.

We make small financial contributions to worthy causes--Civil Liberties Union, Vietnam Peace Parade Committee, National Lawyers Guild, American Serviceman's Union, Labor Rank and File Committee, WBAI, Joan Bird Bail Fund.

CPP's new office at the Dolphin Center in New York City is costing us nearly $600 a year for rent and telephone.

Membership in CPP is $10 a year. We need your 1970 dues. If you have already paid, we need a contribution--$5, $10, $25-- whatever you can give. Help make CPP work by filling out the coupon below and sending us your check.

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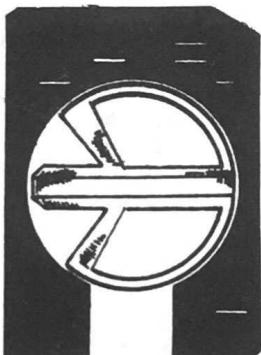
# FJCC · 70

The emphasis of the three day Fall Joint Computer Conference--November 17-19 in Houston, Texas--will be on the computer industry's obligation to mankind.

CPPers who are planning to attend, or who can easily attend the FJCC, should contact the NY Steering Committee through the new Dolphin Center address. We can supply you with leaflets, buttons, and press kits.

CPP should be represented at the FJCC. These conferences are finally starting to deal with problems of the real world. We must make sure that they have the correct perspective.



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