

## **Globalization and Technopolitics**

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"A community will evolve only when a people control their own communication."  
Frantz Fanon

As the third millennium unfolds, one of the most dramatic technological and economic revolutions in history is advancing a set of processes that are changing everything from the ways that people work, to the ways that they communicate with each other and spend their leisure time. The technological revolution centers on computer, information, communication, and multimedia technologies, is claimed to produce a new economy, described as postindustrial, postFordist, and postmodern, accompanied by a networked society and cyberspace, and the juggernaut of globalization. There are, of course, furious debates about how to describe the Great Transformation of the contemporary epoch, whether it is positive and negative, and what are the political prospects for democratization and radical social transformation.

In this paper, I will engage some issues involving globalization, technological revolution, and the alleged rise of a new economy, networked society, and cyberspace in relationship to the emergence of an innovative technopolitics that uses new technologies to advance oppositional social movements, radical democracy, and alternatives to capitalist globalization. While I would argue that there are novelties and discontinuities in the current configuration of economic, political, social, and cultural constellations, there are also continuities with the previous forms of "modern" society. In particular, the "new" economy exhibits crucial features of the "old" capitalism such as the driving forces of capitalist accumulation, competition, commodification, exploitation, and the business cycle. Hence, globalization and technological revolution are best theorized as forms of the global restructuring of capitalism and the technological development and a turbulent socio-economic transformation are intrinsically interconnected.

A surprising number of theories of globalization neglect the role of technology in the construction of the global economy and society and fall prey to economic determinism, reducing globalization to the imposition of the logic of capital on expanding arenas in the world today. Globophilic discourses celebrate the process as positive, bringing expanded wealth, democracy, cultural pluralism and diversity, and education to people throughout the world (Friedman 1999). Other pro-globalization discourses are technophilic, seeing the global economy as the product of computer and information-technology revolution, thus projecting the aura and excitement of progress and new technologies onto globalization.

Opponents of globalization stress, by contrast, the dangers of growing divisions between have and have-nots, threats to the environment, the undermining of labor rights, and the destructive features of globalization. Extreme anti-globalization discourses are globophobic, seeing it as a purely negative phenomenon, a catastrophe for the human race. Likewise, technophobic discourses, also mobilized against globalization, seeing the new technologies as alienating users from their bodies, concrete social relations, embedded communities, and local traditions, with technophiles lost in a place-less cyberspace and realm of the virtual.

To overcome one-sided positions on globalization, I would propose that the economic and technological components of globalization be theorized as interconnected and that we reject one-sided pro or con positions. I would propose developing critical theories of globalization and technology that assess positive and negative features, the ways that they promote injustice, domination, and oppression, and the ways that they can be used for justice, democratization, and progressively transforming society. Globalization and new technologies are, however, highly contradictory and ambiguous and often the up and down side, the positive and negative uses and effects, are interconnected requiring dialectical analysis and critique. In this way, I will contrast a corporate and capitalist globalization-from-above to more cosmopolitan globalization-from-below movements that are struggling for democratization, social justice, workers and human rights, environmental protection, and a diverse range of issues intending to help create a better global world. I will delineate some struggles against capitalist globalization and will show forms of globalization-from-below which use the instruments of globalization to promote positive goals such as a cosmopolitan internationalism, democratization, the reconstruction of education, social justice, and other progressive values.

Hence, in this paper, I focus my discussion on the ways that a radical democratic politics can use new technologies to intervene within the global restructuring of capitalism to promote democratic and anti-capitalist social movements aiming at radical social transformation. I would argue that globalization and technological revolution are in some ways inevitable, but the forms that they take are not. That is, I think that the trends toward a more global economy and culture, a networked society, and the continued flow of commodities, images, cultural forms, technology, and people across the globe will continue apace, as will intense technological revolution -- barring an apocalyptic collapse of the global economy. Both take the form of what Schumpeter called "creative destruction" and guarantee that the next decades will be highly turbulent, contested, and full of struggle and conflict. But, I would argue, that the forms that globalization and technological revolution will take are neither fixed nor determined. Hence, I would argue that it is perfectly reasonable to struggle against corporate capitalist globalization and its market model of society, its neo-liberal laissez-faire ideology, its institutions like the WTO, the World Bank, and IMF, and its putting profit, competition, and market logic before all other aspects of life. I will accordingly focus on the ways that technopolitics can and are being used for anti-capitalist struggles, while noting the limitations of some versions and the need for articulating the use of technology with the struggles of oppositional movements.

### Technopolitics and Oppositional Political Movements

Significant political struggles today against globalization are mediated by technopolitics, that is the use of new technologies such as computers and the Internet to advance political goals. To some extent, politics in the modern era have always been mediated by technology, with the printing press, photography, film, and radio and television playing crucial roles in politics and all realms of social life, as McLuhan, Innis, Mumford, and others have long argued and documented. Voting in a representative democracy has long been mediated by technology, as the disastrous failure of voting machines and the voting-counting process in the U.S. 2000 Presidential Election dramatized (see Kellner, forthcoming).

What is new about computer and information-technology mediated politics is that information can be instantly communicated to large numbers of individuals throughout the world who are connected via computer networks. The Internet is also potentially interactive, allowing discussion, debate, and both on-line and archived discussion. The Internet is increasingly multi-media in scope, allowing the dissemination of images, sounds, video, and other cultural forms. Moreover, the use of computer and information technology is becoming a normalized aspect of politics, just as the broadcasting media were some decades ago. The use of computer-mediated technology for technopolitics, however, opens new terrains of political struggle for voices and groups excluded from the mainstream media and thus increases potential for intervention by oppositional groups, potentially expanding the scope of democratization.

Given the extent to which capital and its logic of commodification have colonized ever more areas of everyday life in recent years, it is somewhat astonishing that cyberspace is by and large decommodified for large numbers of people -- at least in the overdeveloped countries like the United States. On the other hand, using computers, transforming information into data-packets that can be sent through networks, and hooking oneself up to computer networks oneself, involves a form of commodified activity, inserting the user in networks and technology that are at the forefront of the information revolution and global restructuring of capital. Thus the Internet is highly ambiguous from the perspective of commodification, as from other perspectives. Nonetheless, in the U.S., government and educational institutions, and some businesses, provide free Internet access and in some cases free computers, or at least workplace access. With flat-rate monthly phone bills (which we know do not exist in much of the world), one can thus have access to a cornucopia of information and entertainment on the Internet for free, one of the few decommodified spaces in the ultracommodified world of technocapitalism. So far, the "information superhighway" is a freeway, although powerful interests would like to make it a tollroad. Indeed, commercial interests are quickly transforming it into a giant mall, thus commercializing the Internet and transforming it into a megaconsumer spectacle (see Schiller 1999).

Obviously, much of the world does not even have telephone service, much less computers, and there are vast discrepancies in terms of who has access to computers and who participates in the technological revolution and cyberdemocracy today. Consequently, there have been passionate debates over the extent and nature of the "digital divide" between the information haves and have-nots. Critics of new technologies and cyberspace repeat incessantly that it is by and large young, white, middle- or upper-class males who are the dominant players in the cyberspaces of the present. While this is true, statistics and surveys indicate that many more women, people of color, seniors, and individuals from marginalized groups are becoming increasingly active. In addition, computers may become part of the standard household consumer package in the overdeveloped world, although studies are emerging that indicate that large numbers of individuals claim that they have no intention of purchasing computers and using the Internet. Yet in the light of the importance of computers for work, social life, entertainment, and education, no doubt growing amounts of people will continue to go on-line. Further, there are plans afoot to wire the entire world with satellites that would make the Internet and new communication technologies accessible to people who do not now even have a telephone, TV or even electricity, and wireless communication is touted as the next stage of networked communication.

However widespread and common computers and new technologies become, it is clear that they are of essential importance already for labor, politics, education, and social life, and that people who want to participate in the public and cultural life of the future will need to have computer access and literacy. Although there is a real threat that the computerization of society will intensify the current inequalities in relations of class, race, and gender power, there is also the possibility that a democratized and computerized public sphere might provide opportunities to overcome these injustices. Cyberdemocracy and the Internet should be seen therefore as a contested terrain. Consequently, radical democratic activists should look to its possibilities for resistance and the advancement of political education, action, and organization, while engaging in struggles over the digital divide. Dominant corporate and state powers, as well as conservative and rightist groups, have been making sustained use of new technologies to advance their agendas. If forces struggling for democratization and social justice want to become players in the cultural and political battles of the future, they must devise ways to use new technologies to advance a radical democratic and ecological agenda and the interests of the oppressed.

There are by now copious examples of how the Internet and cyberdemocracy have been used within oppositional political movements. A large number of insurgent intellectuals are already making use of new technologies and public spheres in their political projects. The peasants and guerilla armies who formed the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico, beginning in January 1994 used computer databases, guerrilla radio, and other forms of media to circulate their ideas and to promote their cause. Every manifesto, text, and bulletin produced by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation who occupied land in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas was immediately circulated through the world via computer networks.

In January 1995, when the Mexican government attacked the Zapatistas, they used computer networks to inform and mobilize individuals and groups throughout the world to support them in their battle against repressive Mexican government action. There were many demonstrations in support of the rebels throughout the world. Prominent journalists, human rights observers, and delegations traveled to Chiapas to demonstrate solidarity and to report on the uprising. The Mexican and U.S. governments were bombarded with messages calling for negotiations rather than repression. The Mexican government was forced to back down and halt their repression of the insurgents. While carrying out various forms of repression, they continued to sporadically negotiate with them, and as of this writing in March 2001, the new Mexican President Vicente Fox has agreed to continue negotiations.

Seeing the progressive potential of advanced communication technologies in revolutionary struggle, Frantz Fanon (1967) described the central role of the radio in the Algerian Revolution, and Lenin stressed the importance of film in spreading communist ideology after the Bolshevik revolution. Audiotapes were used to advance the insurrection in Iran and to disseminate alternative information by political movements throughout the world (see Downing 1984 and 2000). The Tianenaman Square democracy movement in China and various groups struggling against the remnants of Stalinism in the former communist bloc used computer bulletin boards and networks, as well as a variety of forms of communications, to promote their movements. Anti-NAFTA groups made extensive use of the new communications technology (see Brenner 1994 and Fredericks 1994). Such multinational networking and distribution of information failed to stop NAFTA, but created alliances useful for the politics of the future. As Nick Dyer-

Witheyford (1999) notes:

The anti-NAFTA coalitions, while mobilizing a depth of opposition entirely unexpected by capital, failed in their immediate objectives. But the transcontinental dialogues which emerged checked -- though by no means eliminated -- the chauvinist element in North American opposition to free trade. The movement created a powerful pedagogical crucible for cross-sectoral and cross-border organizing. And it opened pathways for future connections, including electronic ones, which were later effectively mobilized by the Zapatista uprising and in continuing initiatives against maquiladora exploitation.

Thus, using new technologies to link information and practice and to advance oppositional politics is neither extraneous to political battles nor merely utopian. Even if immediate gains are not won, often the information circulated or the alliances formed can have material effects. There are, moreover, striking examples of how Internet-centered organizing campaigns effectively worked against the institutions and corporations of capitalist globalization. Successful struggles against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment in 1995-1998 involved websites and e-mail campaigns against the U.S.-supported effort to develop binding rules on how states treat foreign investors and list-serves linking the groups struggling against the "agreement." Obviously, the Internet alone did not defeat this initiative for capitalist globalization, but it enabled the non-government organizations fighting against it to circulate information, share resources, and link their struggles (see Smith and Smythe 2000).

There have been many campaigns against the excesses of capitalist global corporations such as Nike and McDonald's. Hackers attacked Nike's site in June 2000 and substituted a "global justice" message for Nike's corporate hype. Many anti-Nike web-sites and list-serves have emerged, helping groups struggling against Nike's labor practices circulate information and organize movements against Nike, which have forced them to modify their labor practices.

A British group that created an anti-McDonald's website against the junk food corporation and then distributed the information through digital and print media have received significant attention. This site was developed by supporters of two British activists, Helen Steel and Dave Morris, who were sued by McDonald's for distributing leaflets denouncing the corporation's low wages, advertising practices, involvement in deforestation, cruel treatment of animals, and patronage of an unhealthy diet. The activists counterattacked and with help from supporters, organized a McLibel campaign, assembled a McSpotlight website with a tremendous amount of information criticizing the corporation, and mobilized experts to testify and confirm their criticisms. The three-year civil trial, Britain's longest ever, ended ambiguously on June 19, 1997, with the Judge defending some of McDonald's claims against the activists, while substantiating some of the activists' criticisms (Vidal 1997: 299-315).

The case created unprecedented bad publicity for McDonald's which was disseminated throughout the world via Internet websites, mailing lists, and discussion groups. The McLibel/McSpotlight group claims that their website was accessed over 15 million times and was visited over two million times in the month of the verdict alone (Vidal 1997: 326). The Guardian reported that the site "claimed to be the most comprehensive source of information on

a multinational corporation ever assembled" and was part of one of the more successful anticorporate campaigns (February 22, 1996; [www.mcspotlight.org](http://www.mcspotlight.org)).

Anti-Nike, McDonalds, and other websites critical of global capitalist corporations have disseminated a tremendous amount of information. Many labor organizations are also beginning to make use of the new technologies. Mike Cooley (1987) has written on how computer systems can reskill rather than deskill workers, while Shoshana Zuboff (1988) has discussed how high-tech can be used to "informate" workplaces rather than automate them, expanding workers' knowledge and control over operations rather than reducing and eliminating it. On the other hand, the use of technologies in the workplace also has negative effects. Many jobs are eliminated as production is automated or moved to the developing world (itself an ambiguous phenomenon); computer-mediated labor also involves deskilling and can have harmful effects on workers; a new class of "net-slaves" is developing with relatively low-paid and/or temporary job status, without benefits; and computer-surveillance gives capital powerful new tools to monitor and spy on workers.

Yet, new technologies have been extensively-used in labor movements and actions. The Clean Clothes Campaign, a movement started by Dutch women in 1990 in support of Filipino garment workers, has supported strikes throughout the world, exposing exploitative working conditions (see [www.cleanclothes.org/1/index.html](http://www.cleanclothes.org/1/index.html)). In 1997, activists involved in Korean workers strikes and the Merseyside dock strike in England used websites to promote international solidarity (for the latter see [www.gn.apc.org/labournet/docks/](http://www.gn.apc.org/labournet/docks/)). Jesse Drew (1998) has extensively interviewed representatives of major U.S. labor organizations to see how they were making use of new communication technologies and how these instruments helped them with their struggles; many of his union activists indicated how useful email, faxes, websites, and the Internet have been to their struggles and, in particular, indicated how such technopolitics helped organize demonstrations or strikes in favor of striking English or Australian dockworkers, as when U.S. longshoremen organized strikes to boycott ships carrying material loaded by scab workers. Technopolitics thus helps labor create global alliances in order to combat increasingly transnational corporations.

On the whole, labor organizations, such as the North South Dignity of Labor group, note that computer networks are useful for organizing and distributing information, but cannot replace print media, which are more accessible to many of its members, face-to-face meetings, and traditional forms of political action. Thus, the challenge is to articulate one's communications politics with actual movements and struggles so that cyberpolitics is an arm of real battles rather than their replacement or substitute. The most efficacious Internet projects have indeed intersected with activist movements encompassing campaigns to free political prisoners, boycotts of corporate projects, and various labor and even revolutionary struggles, as noted above.

### The Global Movement Against Capitalist Globalization

One of the more instructive examples of the use of the Internet to foster global struggles against the excesses of corporate capitalism occurred in the protests in Seattle and throughout the world against the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in December 1999, and the subsequent emergence of a worldwide anti-globalization movement in 2000-2001. Behind these actions was

a global protest movement using the Internet to organize resistance to the WTO and capitalist globalization, while championing democratization. Many websites contained anti-WTO material and numerous mailing lists used the Internet to distribute critical material and to organize the protest. The result was the mobilization of caravans from throughout the United States to take protestors to Seattle. Many of the protestors had never met and were recruited through the Internet. For the first time ever, labor, environmentalist, feminist, anticapitalist, animal rights, anarchist, and other groups organized to protest aspects of globalization and to form new alliances and solidarities for future struggles. In addition, protests occurred throughout the world, and a proliferation of anti-WTO material against the extremely secret group spread throughout the Internet.

Furthermore, the Internet provided critical coverage of the event, documentation of the various groups' protests, and debate over the WTO and globalization. Whereas the mainstream media presented the protests as "antitrade," featured the incidents of anarchist violence against property, and minimized police violence against demonstrators, the Internet provided pictures, eyewitness accounts, and reports of police brutality and the generally peaceful and nonviolent nature of the protests. While the mainstream media framed the protests negatively and privileged suspect spokespeople like Patrick Buchanan as critics of globalization, the Internet provided multiple representations of the demonstrations, advanced reflective discussion of the WTO and globalization, and presented a diversity of critical perspectives.

The Seattle protests had some immediate consequences. The day after the demonstrators made good on their promise to shut down the WTO negotiations, Bill Clinton gave a speech endorsing the concept of labor rights enforceable by trade sanctions, thus effectively making impossible any agreement during the Seattle meetings. In addition, at the World Economic Forum in Davos a month later there was much discussion of how concessions were necessary on labor and the environment if consensus over globalization and free trade were to be possible. Importantly, the issue of overcoming divisions between the information-rich and the information-poor, and improving the lot of the disenfranchised and oppressed, bringing these groups the benefits of globalization, were also seriously discussed at the meeting and in the media.

The Seattle demonstrations were followed by April 2000 struggles in Washington, D.C., to protest the World Bank and IMF, and later in the year against capitalist globalization in Prague and Melbourne. It was apparent that a new worldwide movement was in the making that was uniting diverse opponents of capitalist globalization throughout the world. The anticapitalist and anti-globalization from above movement favored globalization-from-below, which would protect the environment, labor rights, national cultures, democratization, and other goods from the ravages of an uncontrolled capitalist globalization (see Falk 1999 and Brecher Costello, and Smith 2000).

The movement against capitalist globalization used the Internet to organize mass demonstrations and to disseminate information to the world concerning the policies of the institutions of capitalist globalization. The events made clear that the protestors were not against globalization per se, but were against neoliberal globalization, opposing specific policies and institutions that produce intensified exploitation of labor, environmental devastation, growing divisions among the social classes, and the undermining of democracy. The emerging anti-globalization-from-

above movements are locating these problems in the context of opposition to a restructuring of a neo-liberal market capitalism on a worldwide basis for maximum profit with zero accountability. The anti-capitalist movements, by contrast, have made clear the need for democratization, regulation, rules, and globalization in the interests of people and not profit.

The new movements against globalization-from-above have thus placed the issues of global justice and environmental destruction squarely in the center of important political concerns of our time. Hence, whereas the mainstream media had failed to vigorously debate or even to report on globalization until the recent past, and rarely, if ever, critically discussed the activities of the WTO, World Bank and IMF, there is now a widely circulating critical discourse and controversy regarding these institutions. Stung by criticisms, representatives of the World Bank, in particular, are pledging reform. Pressures are mounting concerning proper and improper roles for the major global institutions, highlighting their limitations and deficiencies, and the need for reforms like debt relief for overburdened developing countries to solve some of their fiscal and social problems.

Hence, to capital's globalization from above, cyberactivists have been attempting to carry out globalization from below, developing networks of solidarity and propagating oppositional ideas and movements throughout the planet. To the capitalist international of transnational corporate globalization, a Fifth International, to use Waterman's phrase (1992), of computer-mediated activism is emerging, that is qualitatively different from the party-based socialist and communist Internationals. Such networking links labor, feminist, ecological, peace, and other anticapitalist groups, providing the basis for a new politics of alliance and solidarity to overcome the limitations of postmodern identity politics.

### Social Movements and Technopolitics in the U.S. Context

In addition, a series of conflicts around gender, sex, and race are also being mediated by new communications technologies in the United States and elsewhere. After the 1991 Clarence Thomas Hearings in the U.S. Senate on his fitness to be Supreme Court Justice, Thomas's assault on claims of sexual harassment by Anita Hill and others, and the failure of the almost all male U.S. Senate to disqualify the obviously unqualified Thomas, prompted women to use computer and other technologies to attack male privilege in the political system in the United States and to rally women to support women candidates. The result in the 1992 election was the election of more women candidates than in any previous election and a challenge to conservative rule.

Many feminists have now established websites, mailing lists, and other forms of cybercommunication to advance their movements. Younger women, sometimes deploying the concept of "riotgrrrls," have created electronically-mediated 'zines, web sites, and discussion groups to develop their ideas and to address their problems and struggles. African-American women, Latinas, and other associations of women as well have been developing web sites and discussion lists to advance their interests. And AIDSs activists are employing new technologies to disseminate medical information and to activate their constituencies for courses of political action and organization.

In addition, African-American activists have made use of broadcast and computer technologies



to promote their cause. John Fiske (1994) has described some African-American radio projects in the "technostruggles" of the present age and the important functions of the media in recent conflicts around race and gender. African-American "knowledge warriors" are using radio, computer networks, and other media to circulate their ideas and "counter-knowledge" on a variety of issues, contesting the mainstream, and offering alternative views and politics. Likewise, activists in communities of color -- like Oakland, Harlem, and Los Angeles -- are setting up computer and media centers to teach the skills necessary to survive the onslaught of the mediatization of culture and the computerization of society to people in their communities.

Indeed, a variety of local activists have been using the Internet to criticize government, to oppose corporate policies, and to organize people around specific issues. These efforts range from developing websites to oppose local policies, such as an attempt to transform a military airport into a civilian one in El Toro, California to gadflies who expose corruption in local government, to citizen groups who use the Internet to inform, recruit, and organize individuals to become active in various political movements and struggles. Consequently, new communications technologies enable ordinary citizens and activists to themselves become intellectuals, to produce and disseminate information, and to participate in debates and struggles, thus helping to realize Gramsci's dicta that anyone could be an intellectual.

The key to developing a robust technopolitics is articulation, the mediation of technopolitics with real problems and struggles, rather than self-contained reflections on the internal politics of the Internet. A single week-in-review of the technology articles of the New York Times, a paper not known for its promotion of activism, indicates a variety of articles that suggest the broad range of ways that technopolitics impinges upon a wide arena of political domains (September 1-8, 1998, found in [www.nyt.com/library/tech/98/09](http://www.nyt.com/library/tech/98/09)). An article "Born from '96 Opposition, Serbian Internet Effort Thrives," opens by stating that the Serbian government's annulment of a November 1996 election won by oppositional forces sparked fierce criticism disseminated worldwide through the Internet, forcing a reversal of the results and producing the first "Internet revolution" (September 8, 1998). Although the repressive forces of the Serbian government continued to exercise power, growing Internet and public criticism helped generate mobilization of the opposition against the Miloshevic government, including Internet radio that is disseminated throughout the region. By the summer of 2000, opposition forces were able to generate massive anti-government rallies and peacefully vote Miloshevic out of office, thanks in part to Internet-generated information and discourse.

Increased numbers of groups and individuals are also using technopolitics to advance local issues. A 1998 New York Times article discusses "Santa Monica Seeking a Return to Online Civic Forum of Yore" (September 8, 1998). About ten years ago, the Santa Monica Public Electronic Network, or PEN, established itself, providing jobs, shelter, and amenities to the homeless and inaugurating a forum of public dialogue. With the demise of Santa Monica's only local newspaper in March 1998, such forums are more essential than ever to public dialogue, and the city is attempting to reinvigorate its online civic platform, the oldest public affairs network in the U.S. Other NYT articles the same week discuss a lawsuit over the right of students to criticize their schools and educational authorities on web sites (September 4, 1998), and how various corporations are using electronic mail and bulletin-boards to promote criticism of company policies and personnel (September 7, 1998).

These latter examples suggest how technopolitics make possible a refiguring of politics, a refocusing of politics on everyday life and using the tools and techniques of new computer and communication technology to expand the field and domain of politics. In this conjuncture, the ideas of Guy Debord and the Situationist International are especially relevant with their stress on the construction of situations, the use of technology, media of communication, and cultural forms to promote a revolution of everyday life, and to increase the realm of freedom, community, and empowerment. To some extent, the new technologies are revolutionary, they do constitute a revolution of everyday life, but it is often a revolution that promotes and disseminates the capitalist consumer society and involves new modes of fetishism, enslavement, and domination, yet to be clearly perceived and theorized.

Clearly, rightwing and reactionary forces can and have used the Internet to promote their political agendas as well. In a short time, one can easily access an exotic witch's brew of websites maintained by the Ku Klux Klan, myriad neo-Nazi assemblages, including the Aryan Nation and various militia groups. Internet discussion lists also disperse these views and rightwing extremists are aggressively active on many computer forums, as well as radio programs and stations, public access television programs, fax campaigns, video and even rock music productions. These organizations are hardly harmless, having carried out terrorism of various sorts extending from church burnings to the bombings of public buildings. Adopting quasi-Leninist discourse and tactics for ultraright causes, these groups have been successful in recruiting working-class members devastated by the developments of global capitalism which has resulted in widespread unemployment for traditional forms of industrial, agricultural, and unskilled labor. Moreover, extremist websites have influenced alienated middle-class youth as well (a 1999 HBO documentary on Hate on the Internet provides a disturbing number of examples of how extremist websites influenced disaffected youth to commit hate crimes).

The latest twist in the saga of technopolitics, in fact, seems to be that allegedly "terrorist" groups are now increasingly using the Internet and websites to promote their causes. An article in the Los Angeles Times (February 8, 2001: A1 and A14) reports that groups like Hamas use their website to post reports of acts of terror against Israel, rather than calling newspapers or broadcasting outlets. A wide range of groups labeled as "terrorist" reportedly use e-mail, list-serves, and websites to further their struggles, causes including Hezbollah and Hamas, the Maoist group Shining Path in Peru, and a variety of other groups throughout Asia and elsewhere. The Tamil Tigers, for instance, a liberation movement in Sri Lanka, offers position papers, daily news, and free e-mail service. According to the Times, experts are still unclear "whether the ability to communicate online worldwide is prompting an increase or a decrease in terrorist acts."

Different political groups are in fact engaging in cyberwar as adjuncts of their political battles. Israeli hackers have repeatedly attacked the websites of Hezbollah, while pro-Palestine hackers have reportedly placed militant demands and slogans on the websites of Israel's army, foreign ministry, and parliament. Likewise, Pakistani and Indian computer hackers have waged similar cyberbattles against opposing forces websites in the bloody struggle over Kashmir, while rebel forces in the Philipines taunt government troops with cell-phone calls and messages and attack government websites.

It is now de rigueur for mainstream politicians to run "e-campaigns" as a critical part of their overall strategy, as websites can provide information on the candidate, citizen feedback, and, of course, links for volunteer efforts and donations. It is widely held that without the Internet, former wrestler and independent candidate Jesse "The Body" Ventura would have lost his bid for governor of Minnesota, since his funding and influence grew primarily through a plain Internet site and a burgeoning e-mail list. Unlike one-way transmission TV ads, the sites of Bush and Gore in the 2000 presidential race featured interactive links for citizens to "get involved." Gore had special links for students, African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and gays and lesbians. Such links are conspicuously absent on Bush's site, except for an "en espanol" link and a "Just For Kids!" page that likened a presidential campaign to a baseball game.

In the dramatic Battle for the White House after Election 2000, both sides used the Internet and websites to attack their opponents, as well as list-serves and e-mail to organize demonstrations. After Bush's theft of the election, anti-Bush groups used the Internet and technopolitics to organize impressive demonstrations in Washington, D.C., against Bush's inauguration that turned out to be the largest anti-inauguration demonstrations since demonstrations against Nixon in 1973, at the height of the Vietnam war (see the study in Kellner, forthcoming).

### Some Concluding Remarks

The Internet is thus a contested terrain, used by the Left, Right, and Center to advance their own agendas and interests. The political battles of the future may well be fought in the streets, factories, parliaments, and other sites of past conflicts, but all political struggle is now mediated by media, computer, and information technologies and increasingly will be so. Those interested in the politics and culture of the future should therefore be clear on the important role of the new public spheres and intervene accordingly.

Active citizens thus need to acquire new forms of technological literacy to intervene in the new public spheres of the media and information society. In addition to traditional literacy skills centered upon reading, writing, and speaking, engaged citizens and public intellectuals need to learn to use the new technologies to engage the public. Computer and digital technologies thus expand the field and capacities of the intellectual as well as the possibilities for political intervention. During the Age of the Big Media, critical-oppositional intellectuals were by and large marginalized, unable to gain access to the major sites of mass communication. With the decentralization of the Internet, however, new possibilities for public intellectuals exist to reach broad audiences. It is therefore the responsibility of the active citizen to creatively use these new technologies, as well as to critically analyze the diverse developments of the cyberculture. This requires dialectical thinking that discriminates between the benefits and the costs, the upsides and downsides, of new technologies and devising ways that the technological revolution can be used to promote positive values like education, democracy, enlightenment, and ecology. Active citizens thus face new challenges, and the future of democracy depends in part on whether new technologies will be used for domination or democratization, and whether each individual will sit on the sidelines or participate in the development of new democratic public spheres.

I have argued in this study that technopolitics should be an arm or adjunct of political struggle and not attempt to replace really existing politics with cyberstruggle. I have stressed attempts to

articulate technopolitics with oppositional political movements and have provided some examples of how individuals and groups are using new technologies to advance a diversity of political aims and movements, focusing on some examples of an alternative democratic globalization. I have suggested that in the era of globalization and the Internet, political struggles are at once local and global, and that technopolitics can advance an alternative globalization. As we enter a new millennium, public intellectuals and activists are going to need to accordingly perceive the new public spheres of political struggle and gain new skills and literacies in order to participate in the intellectual and people battles of the contemporary era.