EXHIBITION OF DOCUMENTS.

The exhibition mounted for the conference consisted partly of images, and partly of original documents that could be thumbed through. Naturally the documents themselves cannot be shown here, but here are the annotations.

SECTION 1

**Before Radical Technology**

These sources are the most cited prior influences on RT 1.0

*Whole Earth Catalog*. Reprint of first edition, autumn 1968

It is hard to overstate the influence of the *Catalog*, with its dazzling mixtures of comment and kit. It introduced the entire spectrum of American radical and alternative culture, which at the time was several years ahead of Europe. It also forms a baseline for technical change: look for example at the cost, weight and specification for the calculator on the marked page.

“Towards an Ecologically-Based Technology”

This table was created by Nicolas Holliman in 1971 and is an early attempt to categorise technological regimes and their implications. It had a strong effect on thinking about ‘soft’, ‘alternative’ or ‘radical’ technological systems.

“Some Utopian Characteristics of Soft Technology”

Written by Robin Clarke, 25th November 1971.

Ideally, what do we really want? And can we find technological systems to fit? The 70s started with all manner of wish-lists like those of Nicolas Holliman. Here Robin Clarke (then editor of the *Science Journal*, a now-defunct UK equivalent of the *Scientific American*) lists 35 features that might be differentiate a ‘Soft Technology Society’ from the mainstream ‘Hard Technology Society’. This list was widely reprinted, and many theorists drew what they wanted from it. It was satirised by Peter Harper in *Undercurrents* No 5.

This is obviously an original typed document, on Quarto-sized paper, probably the first version from Clarke himself, perhaps submitted to the ‘New Science Group’ which also included the philosopher of science Jerry Ravetz, the science writer Kit Pedler, the artist Gustav Metzger, Peter Harper, and David Dickson, later author of *Alternative Technology and the Politics of Technical Change*.

Robin Clarke subsequently became a farmer and in the later seventies edited a magazine called *Natural Energy and Living*, eventually moving to Rome to work for the FAO. We have failed to find him.

*A Blueprint for Survival*

Special issue of The Ecologist, January 1972

Published shortly before *The Limits to Growth*, this report summarised the unsustainable trends visible in the early 1970s. Although it was regarded as radically alarmist, it was endorsed by a very wide range of senior scientific figures (look inside the front cover) and was taken very seriously.

Exhibition Catalogue, Alternative Technology Exhibition,

Modern Art Museum, Stockholm, 1972.

The exhibition was part of the ‘fringe’ around the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, organised by many of the original authors of RT 1.0. The cover shows the layout of the exhibition, where exhibitors were present throughout, interacting with visitors, who often made contributions of their own. As in RT 1.0 itself, there was a considerable ‘romance of China’ celebrating what Mao Zhedong called ‘the taming power of the small’. Texts at this exhibition led to the larger published text in *Undercurrents* No. 3.

The exhibition itself was largely designed and conducted by Chris Ryan and Peter Harper, organisers of the RT 2.0 conference.

“Alternative Technology: A Guide to Sources and Contacts”.

*Undercurrents* No. 3, Winter 1972.

This is a long bibliographic essay written by Peter Harper and Björn Eriksson, following the Stockholm exhibition earlier that year. It is the first published use of the term ‘Alternative Technology’ At that time *Undercurrents* was a collection of separately-printed items enclosed in a bag, hence the strange broadsheet format.

*Radical Science Journal*, Issue No 1, January 1974

This was the Old Left’s response to the problems of science and technology being raised by the wider alternative movement. The attempt to apply a Marxist analysis was not entirely successful.

Chris Ryan and Peter Harper, later contributors to RT 1.0, were on the editorial board but were regarded as slightly soft in the head, as were all environmentalists by their Marxist colleagues.

*Co-Evolution Quarterly,* Summer 1974

This magnificent magazine emerged from the *Whole Earth Catalog* and was also edited (initially) by Stewart Brand. It covered an enormous range and its influence was profound. It had no advertisements and could feature very long, often ground-breaking articles.

*In The Making* No 3, Spring 1975.

This occasional periodical was produced by the Sheffield cooperative Rad-Tech-in-Pact, subtitled ‘A directory of proposed productive projects in self-management or radical technology’. It is a lovely example of the cyclostyled printing used by many small publications of the time. A quick glance through the pages shows the astonishing range of projects and activities going on in the mid-70s. Note the much greater emphasis on the “Radical” than on the “Technology”.

SECTION 2

**After Radical Technology**

These sources chronologically follow RT 1.0 and in some cases acknowledge an influence

*Science for the People*, **7** (5), 1976. Special issue on Alternative Technology

Science for the People was an avowedly Marxist American journal that occasionally strayed into environmental and cultural territory. In this issue there are several essays on alternative technology, some merely dogmatic but others with critiques that are still worth reading.

Issues 1-3 of *Natural Energy and Living*, 1978

Mostly aimed at rural self-sufficiency enthusiasts, a growing section of society at the time. It should be remembered that a nuclear exchange in Europe was still a live possibility, and many families took a decision to adopt a lifestyle of ‘voluntary simplicity’ in the supposedly safer west of the UK, especially Wales and Ireland.

*Permaculture One*, by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, 1978.

This is the founding document of the Permaculture movement, based largely on the postgraduate research of David Holmgren. As it has evolved, Permaculture is a kind of ‘sister movement’ to radical/alternative technology, but with more emphasis on food and land use. If it’s a horticultural experiment, people say ‘Oh, that’s Permaculture’; if it involves renewable energy people say, ‘that’s alternative technology’. But they both defined themselves as covering everything.

*Eco-Logistics* by Patrick F. Howden, 1979

A classic *tour de force* of neo-primitive voluntary simplicity, with far more detail that RT 1.0. This was an important strand of the AT movement. The strap lines summarise the author’s ambitions: PROGRAMMING INTO SELF-RELIANCE. COMPATIBLE TECHNOLOGY AND A BIO-ECONOMY. RECYCLING OURSELVES INTO THE BETTER LIFE. A GRAND TOUR INTO HOW-IT-WILL-WORK.

The Dartington Model: A Community for the Future. 1980.

This was created by Andrew Page and was in some ways an extension of the Visions in RT 1.0. It turned into an actual miniature village model that travelled around Britain, everywhere stimulating the utopian imagination. It was lodged for many years at the Centre for Alternative Technology.

Open University Alternative Technology Group

*Report 1976-1982* 1982

Even in Universities there were research groups pursuing the ideas associated with RT 1.0. This report, edited by the Chairman Godfrey Boyle, gathers together research reports, publications and activities; and contains articles on subjects such as worm-composting, vertical-axis wind turbines, electric-assist bicycles, biogas production in India, conservatories, thatching and cooperative workshops.

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| **ラディッカル・テクノロジー** |

Japanese edition of RT 1.0 1982. Not a lot to say about this, although one of the editors went on to have two more books published in Japanese and became a visiting professor in Kyoto.

[CLIFF HARPER SECTION: DOCUMENTS]

CLASS WAR COMIX

Prospectus for the Class War Comix series.

Cliff Harper planned a series of six revolutionary comic-book stories, but could not find a publisher. Bernard Seal and Peter Harper, friends of Cliff’s, undertook to raise money through an early form of crowd-funding to print the first number. Cliff wrote a synopsis of this first number (which he called ‘New Times’), and then a summary of the whole series. The synopsis, the summary and the ‘begging letter’ are all shown here. The scheme worked, and CWC No.1 was duly printed. Later, Peter Harper reviewed the product for *Undercurrents*.

*Class War Comix* No 1:

This is the result of many years’ labour by Cliff Harper, in which as he reports ‘he taught himself to draw’. Much can be said, but it probably best just to watch the film show and draw your own conclusions.

Review of Class War Comix No 1, *Undercurrents* No.12, 1975

In this review Peter Harper tells the story of the comic’s speech bubbles and tries to assess whether the comic worked either as art or propaganda. It is probably fair to say the comic had a disappointing reception, but looking back, what would we say today?