

MARCHING PLAGUE
Germ Warfare and Global Public Health

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Critical Art Ensemble

AUTONOMEDIA

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Autonomea
POB 568 Williamsburgh Station
Brooklyn, New York 11211-0568 USA
Phone & Fax: 718-963-2603

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Hope Kurtz 1958-2004
RIP

Acknowledgments

This book should have debuted in the late fall of 2004; instead, it makes its first showing in 2006. This late appearance, as some readers know, is due to a failed attempt by the FBI and the Department of Justice to censor this text.* During a raid on the home of Steve Kurtz, the FBI confiscated all files, notes, and books pertaining to this project. Originally, it was thought that the agency was just using these materials to make the case that Kurtz was a “political advocate” involved in terrorist plots. However, after this suspicion was shown to be little more than a paranoid fantasy, the FBI continued to hold all the materials. Consequently, CAE had to go through the unfortunate task of reconstructing the research. This process was slow, and other activities seemed continuously to get in the way—administrating the legal case, fundraising, resurrecting

our projects (also lost in the FBI raid), public lectures, and wage work. CAE remained as determined as it could under the circumstances, and *Marching Plague* is the product of this determination. The book has not turned out as we originally envisioned it, primarily because we were unable to fully reconstruct the research. In spite of all these blocks and diversions, we finally completed it to our satisfaction (albeit not 100%), along with the projects that accompany this text.

While we may pat ourselves on the back for getting this book done at all, let us assure our readers that it could never have been done without the help of so many people. Without the worldwide outcry of those who expressed outrage, sent encouragement, and created the media surrounding the case, Steve Kurtz would probably be in jail awaiting trial instead of being out in the world continuing to work with CAE. Of course, to everyone who sent money to the CAE Defense Fund to pay for his lawyers, we offer our eternal gratitude.

So many people deserve personal thanks, and none is more deserving than those who have worked tirelessly (with no end in sight) on the CAE Defense Committee. To Gregg Bordowitz, Igor Vamos, Jacques Servin, Lucia Sommer, Rich Pell, Nathan Martin, Claire Pentecost, Beatriz da Costa, Ed Cardoni, Faith Wilding, Ryan Griffis, and Greg Sholette, know that we would have been lost without you. CAE members could never have done all the work themselves. The time the defense team freed up is the time that helped make this project possible.

Thanks to NAAO, Ed Cardoni, and Polly Little for so admirably administrating the CAE defense fund, and keeping the IRS off our backs.

One key event contributing to creating the time to do this book was the auction/fundraiser at the Paula Cooper Gallery. For almost a year we were going month-to-month, fundraiser-to-fundraiser in order to pay the lawyer bills. This auction gave us some room to breath. Special love to Helen Molesworth, who said an art auction could be organized to raise funds for CAE's legal defense and then made it happen. Heaps of gratitude to the auction team: Gregg Bordowitz, Sam Durant, Paula Cooper, Lucia Sommer, Doug Ashford, James Meyer, Nato Thompson, Jason Simon, Mark Dion, Ulrike Mueller, Lori Cole, Anthony Allen, Jocelyn Davis, Brooke Singer, Ed Cardoni, Wallace Shawn, the Cooper Union volunteers, and to all the artists who gave work, and all the collectors who bought it.

Many thanks to Jim Fleming and the Autonomedia collective for standing by us and publishing this book, even though it will probably mean a reactivation of the subpoena they were served. And thanks to all the people who had an impact on this book and the related projects, including Lucia Sommer, Gregg Bordowitz, Igor Vamos, Jacques Servin, Rich Pell, Nathan Martin, Claire Pentecost, Beatriz da Costa, Humberto Ramirez, Rebecca Schneider, Nato Thompson, Nicola Triscott, Rob La Frenais, Gillean Dickie, Creative Capital, Lynn Hershman, Matt Fuller, Natalie Jeremijenko, Paul Vanouse, Amanda McDonald Crowley, Stephanie Rothenberg, Adnan Hadzi, and Lennaart van Oldenborgh. We are also grateful to Jenn Phillips and Lucia Sommer who stepped in to fill the editorial void after Hope's death.

We also have to express the utmost appreciation to our longtime collaborator and co-defendant Bob Ferrell—a man whose life has been spent in the service of public health and science education, and for that, he is now an enemy of the state.

Finally, CAE must acknowledge the tragic loss of our sister in cultural arms, Hope Kurtz. She was the gateway to the public, our editor, poet, and voice of reason. Before any project was released, she reviewed all the materials, suggested necessary changes, and in the end, gave final approval. Her talent lay in her genius for pattern recognition (especially text). She could look at any kind of document, and even if she did not understand the content (which was rare), she knew if something was wrong. We called her “the voice of reason” because whenever a project was getting too abstract, specialized, or too “insiderish,” she would take us to task on it. We miss her dearly and still do not know what to do without her. But even after this inconceivable loss, we continue to follow her words and vow to “never surrender” or be intimidated by the authoritarian forces that we have fought against for so long.

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*For details on the illegal detention and indictment of Steve Kurtz and to support the CAE Defense Committee, visit caedefensefund.org