

Unabomber fans

Cletus Nelson

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"There's a little of the Unabomber in all of us," *Time* wrote over a year ago following the FBI's discovery of Theodore Kaczynski in his rickety Montana cabin. Considering that his face was splashed across television screens, T-shirts, magazine covers, and web sites, the public seems to agree with this sentiment. *By Cletus Nelson*



Today, eccentric post-moderns who buy Gacy art spout his words with the fervency of a '60s radical quoting Mao. Art commandos such as the notorious "See Men" use his sinister FBI sketch as a backdrop for their "art of the ephemeral spectacle." Coffee-house clove smokers, media armchair psychiatrists, and anarchist flag-wavers all claim to understand his motives. But a growing legion of technophobes and proto-revolutionaries are hailing Kaczynski's theses as a clarion call.

The first step in understanding this complex inmate: His 30,000-word masterwork, "Industrial Society and Its Future." Painstakingly precise, this coldly analytical political tract is startling for both its lucidity and passionate defense of freedom. Written in an epigrammatical style reminiscent of Nietzsche, a quick perusal provides an extended look into the hermetically sealed mind of Kaczynski or "FC," the nom de guerre he chose for his one-man battle against the techno-elite.

The first 30 pages describe how industrial society gradually strips away human initiative and self-determination and replaces them with blind obedience and collectivism. He argues that this trend removes our autonomy and forces us to live in a world bereft of individuality and replete with a never-ending myriad of rules and regulations.

Kaczynski asserts that technology is the driving force behind this ominous movement to destroy the liberties we cherish – from propaganda and other psychological techniques to surveillance devices. There is no "good technology" – we may one day live in a completely digital world, but we will have given up everything to achieve this ersatz utopia.

Will the jackboots and truncheons of the modern police state be replaced by mandatory medication, psychiatry, genetic engineering and other "bloodless" scientific techniques to keep us all in line? Kaczynski envisions such a world. Reject technology now, or face a world that combines *1984* and *Terminator 2*.

But there is time to save our freedom. Kaczynski's solution to this crippling environment of RAM-driven totalitarianism is simple "Wild Nature" – "the earth and its living things that are independent of human management and free of human interference and control." There can be no reconciliation between wild nature and microscopic computer chips; there is either autonomy or slavery.

Kaczynski ardently asserts that his revolution against cyberfascism can only be attained by achieving two goals: promoting social disharmony and turning the public against modern technology. The second goal alludes to his campaign of terror. "In order to get the message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people," he writes coldly.

Kaczynski foresees a vast international coalition of like-minded groups threatened by government encroachment. Technology can grudgingly be used in this uprising – but only to "attack the technological system."

When the system is destabilized, the time will be ripe for a complete overthrow of the technostate. Destruction will follow, and humans' dependence on the computer – and other pernicious evils – will finally be over. People will return to days of old, living

in harmony with nature in small communities that emphasize the individual over the collective.

Is this the incoherent rambling of a delusional paranoid – or one man’s altruistic attempt to save humankind? A growing sector of the population is crossing the line into open agreement of his beliefs – ironically, online.

”The Unabomber may have killed people, but he has many redeeming qualities,” posts a Kaczynski sympathizer at a popular site titled ”Support for the Unabomber.” The words of praise range from quiet agreement with the manifesto to fist-pumping admiration. ”He’s not a serial killer, he’s a revolutionary,” writes another Una-fan enthusiastically.

”Shadow” expresses her unbridled enthusiasm for ”TK,” as he is affectionately referred to by online enthusiasts, in the form of short vignettes describing the life of Dan Kaczmaryk, a fictional composite of the convicted murderer. Bearing titles such as ”Prom Night: A High School Outcast’s One Precious Moment” and ”Mountain Man,” she posts these stories in an attempt to rationalize his violent acts by romanticizing his life and vividly describing his alleged shame and humiliation. ”Ted was the most powerless individual of all. No one had ever listened, noticed, or cared.”

Apologists like Shadow give evidence to the power of Kaczynski’s words. You may dismiss him as a third-rate ”mad bomber,” but his sensitivity and intellect cannot be ignored. Kaczynski will spend the rest of his life behind bars because he feared for the future of this planet – and translated that fear into violent revolutionary action. His misguided efforts were far from moral, but in a sense Theodore Kaczynski is a textbook revolutionary: He has done more to permeate the political unconscious than a thousand Abbie Hoffmans. Every day, as workers riding the ”horizontal hierarchy” are forced to spend hours learning yet another mindless software program, a nagging question will continue to reside in their subconscious: what if he’s right?

The Ted K Archive

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