

# On the Unabomber

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# Contents

The Outer Layer . . . . . 3  
The Second Layer: FC & Jacques Ellul . . . . . 4  
The Third Layer: Signs of Compromise . . . . . 6  
The Fourth Layer: Frustration, Deprivation, and System . . . . . 6  
Conceptual Epoxy: The Totalitarian Personality . . . . . 10  
The Fifth Layer: Anarchism . . . . . 12  
Attribution to Kaczynski . . . . . 14  
Collaboration, or a Compromise with Himself? . . . . . 16  
Conclusion: Revolution, Anarchy, Collaboration . . . . . 19  
Implications . . . . . 20

On May 5, 1998, Theodore John Kaczynski was sentenced to life in prison for violating federal firearms, explosives, and postal laws. Three people had been killed and twenty-nine injured by the “Unabomber” crimes, and new levels of security precautions became part of life in the US. Every aspect of this episode — the politics, the arrest, the evidence, and the defendant’s sanity — depends on Kaczynski’s writings. Academia has ignored the subject, implying that sending bombs to universities is an effective way of deterring intellectuals from analyzing terrorism.<sup>1</sup> The most important document, *Industrial Society and Its Future* (deftly renamed “The Unabomber Manifesto” by the FBI), purports to have been written by a revolutionary group calling itself FC (Freedom Club). On close examination, this document turns out to be (a) the product of long, serious research, (b) revolutionary anarchism seeking to incorporate a spectrum of allies, and (c) a rough political compromise between (at least) two worldviews.

## The Outer Layer

*Industrial Society* is over 35,000 words long. Publication of the essay was a condition for FC to end its attempts to kill and to limit itself to sabotage. The argument proceeds in a conventional way. It defines people’s basic character, and relates it to adequate versus unfulfilling ways of life. A good society is one that promotes the better ways, while a bad one hinders them. Next, the essay outlines a few principles governing society, criticizes contemporary society, and prefigures two alternative futures. More substantively, *Industrial Society* claims that humanity needs to experience “autonomously” the “power process.” Deviation from this true humanity includes “surrogate activities” (especially those of scientists) such as mass entertainment, consumer culture, and identification with mass society. The cost of these activities is deprivation of the chance to live in accordance with one’s nature.<sup>2</sup>

“Freedom,” defined as the opportunity to go through the “power process,” is the criterion for a good society. “Some Principles of History” are enumerated, and “industrial-technological society” is judged as irreversibly destined to destroy human freedom. Technology is not determined by humans, but “it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system ... the system is guided not by ideology but

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<sup>1</sup> The sole academic article is Tim Luke, “Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto,” in *Telos* 107 (Spring 1996), pp. 81-94; but see also David C. Rapoport, “Editorial” The Media and Terrorism; Implications of the Unabomber Case,” in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>2</sup> The essay was published jointly by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* on September 19, 1995, with the FBI’s approval. To clarify ideas and respond to critics, FC also demanded publication of 2,000 word essays in each of three succeeding years. The essay is well written, but poorly organized. The language is simple, but readers often find it dense. Only the strange organization of the subtitled sections causes problems. There is a well structured introduction, followed by a sudden digression into leftist psychology not mentioned in the introduction. If less space were devoted to leftism, and the psychology sections had been relocated, *Industrial Society* would have been less difficult to understand

by technical necessity.”<sup>3</sup> Currently, the system is approaching crisis, because of the great psychological frustration, social disorder, and ecological damage it generates as it clashes with both human nature and nature as such. Therefore, humanity must choose between revolution and the betrayal of human nature. The system may overcome these problems and people will be happy. Such a result, however, is still considered odious, because FC believes it can only be achieved by psychologically and biologically separating humanity from the need for freedom and dignity, i.e., by everyone ceasing to be truly human. To avert this, social instability can be exploited by anarchists, producing an intense “time of troubles” that will lead back to “wild nature” — a condition similar to that of frontier America. Since the earth cannot support its current population without a technological society, FC predicts that humanity will face a massive and probably painful decline.

## The Second Layer: FC & Jacques Ellul

*Industrial Society* mentions several books and authors, while other sources are apparent even though not explicitly identified. For example, James Q. Wilson (past President of the APSA) has indicated that the end of If 139 is a fair depiction of his own views.<sup>4</sup> The most vital source is Jacques Ellul. His influence is crucial. FC’s major concepts, such as “technology,” are derived from him. For Ellul, technology designates a category of knowledge more than a collection of machines. Hence, Ellul and FC continually speak of behavioral psychology, bureaucracy, and political lobbying as “technology.”<sup>5</sup> Yet, Ellul was not a true Luddite. His ideas, however, are the point of departure for the negative aspects of FC’s worldview, which are genuinely Luddite.

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<sup>3</sup> FC, *Industrial Society and Its Future* (Berkeley CA: Jolly Roger, 1995), H119 and others. The book is out of print, but there are several versions on the web, of which <<http://www.cs.umass.edu/~ehaugjsja/unabomb/docs/manifesto.toc.html>> is recommended.

<sup>4</sup> James Q. Wilson, “In Search of Madness,” in *New York Times* (January 15, 1998), A 21. Cf. also Tom R. Tyler, *Why People Obey the Law* (New Haven, CN: Yale, 1990). Tyler was one of the many psychologists who commented on the Unabomber, but he is the only one to whom FC sent a copy of *Industrial Society*, along with a letter asking him to give serious consideration to certain questions. See John Douglas and Mark Olshaker, *Unabomber: On the Trail of America’s Most-Wanted Serial Killer* (New York: Pocket Books, 1996), pp. 189-90.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the following citations:

Ellul: “*In a given civilization, technical progress is irreversible?* (Italics in original)

FC: “But technological advances are permanent within the context of a given civilization.”

Ellul: “. . . man can never foresee the totality of consequences of a given technical action. History shows that every technical application from its beginnings presents certain unforeseeable secondary effects which are much more disastrous than the lack of the technique would have been.”

FC: “They are unaware of (or choose to ignore) the fact that when large changes, even seemingly beneficial ones, are introduced into a society, they lead to a long sequence of other changes, most of which are impossible to predict . . . technical progress will lead to other new problems for society far more rapidly than it has been solving old ones.”

Despite its debt to Ellul, FC's program is in blunt defiance of his expressed beliefs. As early as *The Technological Society*, Ellul taught that it was no longer possible to find freedom through political action, or the hermetic life.<sup>6</sup> In 1971, he published a book (which Kaczynski read) in which he refused to endorse any positive goal, arguing that revolution is intrinsically "anti."<sup>7</sup> In 1976, two years before the first bomb exploded and 19 years before the publication of *Industrial Society*, Ellul denounced virtually every FC position.

Most likely, Ellul was addressing the temper of the times, but he may have known of FC. FC announced its forthcoming essay about 13 months after death made it impossible for Ellul to repudiate it, as he probably would have. A passionate Protestant theologian, Ellul dismissed as "absurd" the notion that humans are "naturally" free. For him, the only true freedom is salvation in Jesus. So freedom is "not in conformity with nature; it is against it."<sup>8</sup> Freedom and power are incompatible.<sup>9</sup> Although, "an a-political attitude is in no sense a mark of freedom," revolutionaries typically overturn society only to become its next masters, and "such a one is in the service of Satan."<sup>10</sup> The required "revolution" is in human consciousness, seeking autonomy, rationality, and contemplation.<sup>11</sup> Finally, to Ellul, anarchists are hopeless Utopians,<sup>12</sup> but (in what may have been a fateful concession)<sup>13</sup> their broad opposition to technological society

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Ellul: "The technical phenomenon cannot be broken down in such a way as to retain the good and reject the bad."

FC: "The "Bad" Parts of Technology Cannot Be Separated From the "Good" Parts."

See Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), pp. 89, 105 and 111, respectively; FC, *Industrial Society*, *op. cit.*, 1)133, 170 and 121, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> Ellul, *The Technological Society*, *ibid.*, pp. 77ff.

<sup>7</sup> Ellul, *Autopsy of Revolution*, tr. by Patricia Wolf (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), pp. 250-1 and 279-81; on Kaczynski's reading it, see *US v. Kaczynski*, (E.D.Cal 1998) [Docket no. 96-CR-259] Document #573, p. 17. The file is in the Federal Courthouse in Sacramento, CA.

<sup>8</sup> Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom*, tr. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Erdmans, 1976), p. 91 and 93, respectively; see also pp. 11-15 etc.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12 and 57, etc.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 374 and 56, etc.

<sup>11</sup> Ellul, *Autopsy of Revolution*, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-91, especially p. 283.

<sup>12</sup> Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom*, *op. cit.*, pp. 185, 273, etc.

<sup>13</sup> FC's idea of what revolutionary praxis requires has a recognizable ancestry. H117 and n. 17 illustrate the collective action problem with reference to the decline of efficacy as groups become larger. See Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1971) pp. 48 etc. See also his *Rise and Decline of Nations* (New Haven, CN: Yale, 1982) pp. 31-3. The argument that positive reinforcement is superior to negative ones (H132 and 141) is associated with Skinner. See B. F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: MacMillan, 1953), pp. 182-93. FC's strong sense of "political" versus "structural" revolution may come from Arendt, but adopts her opponents' view that the political upheavals are not "real" revolutions. The distinction between revolutions "from above" and those "from below" (1(194) is Barrington Moore's. The argument that "people hate psychological conflict" (H186 and n. 5) probably relies on Leon Festinger. Finally, FC's claim that a revolution cannot just advocate destruction, but needs "positive goals" (1J183) probably derives from what Chalmers Johnson calls a "goal culture." See, respectively. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Pelican, 1984), pp. 24-5, 59-114 (first published 1963); Barrington Moore, *Social Origins*

validates them as temporary secular allies. Clearly, by the time of the publication of *The Ethics of Freedom* (1976), Ellul's beliefs were not FC's. Still, Ellul retains a hold on FC's thinking, so that the adoption of any positive goals is considered strictly pragmatic (1(183)).

## The Third Layer: Signs of Compromise

*Industrial Society* is not just Ellul plus violence and some books on revolution. The essay violates rules of good composition in ways that suggest compromise prevailed over sound exposition.<sup>14</sup> Read with a political eye, the early sections of any political platform often represent the most polished expression of a hard-wrought compromise. At the end of this essay, though, the compromise seems shaken, as harsh attacks alternate with equivocal caveats. There are also some stylistic variations. Comments on revolutions and how to live are expressed in rather general terms, using succinct, well-integrated passages, and rarely employing citations. Treatments of technology and frustration tend to be more extended, using everyday examples, and often providing citations. The capitalization and yoking together of INDIVIDUAL and SMALL GROUPS are also worrisome. Ordinarily, an individualist writer might emphasize "small" to stress a very slight concession, while "positive freedom" authors usually dismiss "rugged" individualism as unrealistic. The capitals suggest an attempt to give equal prominence to usually antagonistic views. *Industrial Society* is even equivocal on its own status as a political document. FC is adamant that the coming revolution will not be political, despite its obviously substantial effort to include political concepts. Yet, almost the entire last portion of the essay (1(180 to 1(230)) is meant to establish the "correct line" for the coming revolution.

## The Fourth Layer: Frustration, Deprivation, and System

In FC's view, the "power process" consists of goal formation, pursuit of goals, and goal achievement (1(33)). Everyone needs to encounter a moderate degree of diffi-

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*of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1966), pp. 433-52; Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford U. Press, 1957), pp. 1-31; Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change*, 2nd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford U. Press, 1982), p. 87.

<sup>14</sup> It would read more smoothly if all of the sections on basic human nature were together, instead of interspersed with discussions of various human maladies. However, the placement of the sections on leftist psychology after an introduction that does not mention them is the most awkward choice. Yet, by the end of the essay, FC is waffling to the point of saying that the claims about leftists may be imprecise or flatly "wrong."

culty, and occasionally achieve some goals. Some people need to choose these goals autonomously (1|42-4). If achievement is too easy, people suffer from the same boredom afflicting decadent aristocrats (1|34-5). If it is too difficult, they become frustrated (5|36).<sup>15</sup> Socially, the opportunity to experience the power process autonomously is FC's very definition of freedom. Unfreedom is the "deprivation" of such opportunity, and indicates that society is causing individual frustration on a mass scale. The industrial-technological system is guilty of this, and has grown to global proportions. At the same time, the massive interdependence of the system means that it is vulnerable to collapse if instability is sufficiently exacerbated. This tightly interconnected worldview is a familiar one.<sup>16</sup>

It is part of a paradigm that was gospel in its day. Full application of mathematics and the rigor of science was its avowed goal. "General systems" thinking was founded by a mathematician and, in principle, could be represented by symbolic equations.<sup>17</sup> Frustration-aggression was inspired by Freud, but was based on observable behavior. Deprivation at the level of social aggregates was framed in theorems, correlates, and quantifiable economic measures and other social conditions. The whole project was bound up in a worldview stressing materialism, anti-communism, and methodological individualism, although the latter clashed with "systems" thinking.

Although *Industrial Society* is dominated by individualism and behavioralism, other aspects are imported from a conflicting philosophy. Goal-oriented behavior is egoistic and usually materialistic. There is nothing about power or freedom in frustration-aggression. Why then is this called the "power process" instead of the "achievement

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<sup>15</sup> FC relies heavily on the notion of frustration to explain individual psychological problems. In particular, note #6 attributes a vast array of human suffering to frustration. Note #6 also provides a (hand drawn, in the original) cognitive map of the relations among these conditions, and those resulting from ease of achievement as well.

<sup>16</sup> The power process elements homogenize and simplify the notion of goal oriented behavior found in John Dollard's frustration-aggression hypothesis, and the "unit action" espoused by Talcott Parsons. See John Dollard, *et al.*, *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1939), pp. 1-11, 27; Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, eds., *Toward A General Theory of Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 48, 53; Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York: Free Press, 1951), pp. 4-9, 57-67. Note #6 provides a basic description of frustration-aggression, and FC's belief that "primitive" cultures do not suffer as much frustration as modern ones is a possibility examined at some length in Dollard (which may also be the source for FC's use of the term "surrogate"). Parsons and his co-authors connect individual psychological difficulties to the social system by way of "deprivation." That concept, in turn, is made the basis of a frustration-aggression explanation for revolutions by Ted Gurr. A book co-edited by Gurr (and strongly relying on his perspective) is cited by FC (note #16 and "alternative" note #16). See Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, *The History of Violence in America*, rev. ed. (New York: Bantam, 1970), especially pp. 596-605.

<sup>17</sup> There is some potential for confusion over the use of the term "system" by FC, because it appears to mean "social system" and "modernity" at the same time. However, that link is supplied by referring to Ellul, who explicitly endorsed Parsons' notion of system over many others, but felt that the technological system was not confined to any single country. Whatever Parsons would call "modern," Ellul would regard as tied into mass technology. See Ellul, *The Technological Society*, *op cit.*, pp. 123-33; and Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System*, tr. by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Continuum, 1980), pp. 76-84.

drive”? Why is the social “opportunity” to achieve one’s goals not understood in terms of a healthy (or depressed) “market” instead of as “freedom”? What has dignity or autonomy to do with it? What is the point of casting this political vocabulary across a psychological analysis if the goal of the revolution is supposedly not political? At the core of human nature, according to FC, lies the relation to freedom and power. “Freedom” is never used in a careless or ambiguous manner. It always means exactly what it is defined to mean: “the opportunity to go through the power process, with real goals, not the artificial goals of surrogate activities, and without interference, manipulation, or supervision from anyone, especially from any large organization” Q94). The word “power” is one of the most frequently used terms in the essay, but it is difficult to sort out its meaning in various contexts. People have a “widely recognized” need for power (T[33]). The “power process” is something related, but different and, to FC, more important. The “power process,” is carefully defined, but often confused with the need for power. Being “power hungry” seems different again, a negative thing. But if everyone needs power, why are some not power hungry? The need to go through the power process is psychological, but a person can be subject to the power of others, implying that it is relational. It is debilitating to be frustrated in one’s goals (powerlessness), but also to succeed too easily (perhaps be too powerful).

FC insists (often in capitalized type) that freedom is only possible for an individual or a small group. The stipulation of a small group is interesting, because it differs from Ellul. He sees society prior to the Industrial Revolution as sufficiently natural to allow the freedom to withdraw, apparently into the life of a hermit or a monk. FC admits that early New England and the Italian city-states did not preclude freedom, but only because oppression was still subject to technological limitations fl[95]). However, FC wants a group so small fl[42 uses six members as an example) that membership is entirely voluntary. This situation would allow everyone to go through the power process. There would be “power among” (though FC does not use the term), but no one would have “power over” anyone else.

The small group has another purpose. Everyone needs the power process, but the degree of need is different among individuals. Indeed, some do not even need true autonomy. FC is at some pains to explain “autonomy” for precisely this reason. Having stipulated that the power process is central to individual psychological and social well-being, FC nonetheless avers that “The majority of people are natural followers, not leaders.. .” (note #5). They still need autonomy, but only in the sense of wanting direct access to their leaders and the opportunity to participate “to some extent” in decision-making. Apparently, in a small group, the natural leaders will emerge without having “power over” anyone or making followers feel disempowered. By way of contrast, even the most powerful people in technological society are not very free. The needs of the system largely determine how they live and make decisions.

Even more revealing is FC’s faithfulness to “power” and “freedom” when everything else is conceded. Even if the industrial-technological system were able to create universal happiness — if its propaganda could make people feel good about being disem-



powered and if it could solve the problem of ecological balance and achieve permanent social stability — FC would still damn the system and die fighting it. Freedom and dignity are what matters. Freedom is neither an absence of toil or danger, nor is it about happiness or clean air. It is about the experience of personal power. This empowerment is not a good or service that can be traded away for material abundance or satisfying diversions. The need for the power process is fundamental and can only be expunged by massive social control and genetic engineering, i.e., humans would have to cease being truly human. These ideas, however, are at odds with the assumptions about human nature intrinsic to the behaviorist paradigm, in which frustration comes from the failure to achieve egoistic, goal-oriented satisfaction. FC's concern for being robbed of one's essential nature is more like "dehumanization." FC believes (with Ellul) that it need not be frustrating at all, when properly soothed with consumerism and conditioning.

Now the strange twists and turns of "power" in the essay are a little more comprehensible. The need for power might be a nod to Nietzsche (but another source will be considered shortly). That power can exist among people without anyone having power over anyone is unmistakably from Arendt's understanding of Aristotle<sup>18</sup> — who may, in turn, contribute the notion of the "middle path" in goal satisfaction. Also from Aristotle is the hierarchy of natural followers and natural leaders. All are human to some degree, even though there are some "unthinking, animal types" whom FC might as well have termed "natural slaves." Others are more fully human, because of their deeper capacity for autonomy. In the world after systemic collapse, FC locates small, participatory democracy in a sea of atomistic survivalists, forming a rough compromise between the individualism of the behaviorist paradigm and a more community-oriented philosophical tradition.<sup>19</sup> FC's claim that 19th Century America was much like this is strained, but it illustrates FC's meaning.

The whole argument tends to become unintelligible when FC turns to measures of authentic participation in the power process. Anything other than the struggle to survive fails the test. "Surrogate activities" and "identification with the mass" are cited as artificial satisfactions of the power process. Scientists are particularly guilty of this, and their narrow pursuit of, t surrogate goals drives the whole system forward. Yet, this violates the philosophical view of Aristotle and Ellul that freedom can only be had if one escapes from the realm of obeying mere "necessity." A major point in Ellul's thought is that technique is always in the realm of "necessity."<sup>20</sup> The confusion is resolved by recognizing Marx' influence. FC is not dogmatically Marxist, but uses a few Marxian ideas. FC speaks of a "process" instead of a psychological "drive" in order to

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<sup>18</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1969), especially Chapter 2; Aristotle, *Ethics*, tr. by J. A. K. Thompson (New York: Penguin, 1955).

<sup>19</sup> See Arendt, *On Revolution*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-35; and Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), especially Chapter 5; Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, ed. and tr. by Ernest Barker (Oxford: Oxford, 1946), pp. 11-7.

<sup>20</sup> Ellul, *The Technological Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 116, 146, 271-2.

accept Parsons' transformation of Marx's labor process into a sort of decision-making process. Avoiding the abstraction to which Parsons was prone, FC stays close to the material world by requiring a struggle to survive. In Marx's labor process, people mix their labor with nature. FC's power process can be intra-social, but it must remain "within nature" — acting upon it, and being acted upon by it 198). Without adequate experience of the power process, people are estranged from themselves, from others, and from nature (including their own basic nature) in a manner parallel to what Marx called alienation, but now with the flavor of "evolutionary psychology."<sup>21</sup>

Marxism also equips FC's concept of the system with an abusive class structure, thus legitimating war on technocrats. As Ellul described, the system grows by incremental rational choices. Yet, FC also believes that it is pushed forward by reckless innovation. "Power hungry" technocrats and scientists pursue their unfulfillable surrogate needs, pushing everyone else toward the final eclipse. Members of the technical elite are not themselves free, but they may legitimately be attacked as targets of the revolution. The (normally) self-equilibrating system is facing a crisis, because of the contradictions between its needs and those of the (still human) beings that populate it. There is no "army of the unemployed," but ". . . there are growing numbers of people who in one way or another are rebels against the system: welfare leeches, youth gangs, cultists, Satanists, Nazis, radical environmentalists, militiamen, etc." (TJ161). The coming revolution must aim at "the economic and technological basis of the present society," rather than at its political veneer. The majority of the people will be slow to understand this, because their "surrogate activities" and other efforts to "adjust" constitute a form of false consciousness.

## Conceptual Epoxy: The Totalitarian Personality

Some aspects of *Industrial Society* aim at plastering over the disjuncture between its two worldviews, but careful inspection shows a persistent fissure. All of which leads to the subject of leftism. Ostensibly, there are two reasons for FC's discussion of leftism. The first three sections after the "Introduction" hold that leftists are an extreme manifestation of the sickness of modern society. Near the end of the essay, "The Danger of Leftism" warns would-be anarchists against the treachery of leftist infiltrators. These reasons are surely too thin to explain the scale and intensity of FC's denunciation. The essay strives to analyze leftism as a dangerous psychological type, not identical with political leftism as such. There is no discussion of property or labor. To support this approach, *Industrial Society* cites Eric Hoffer, construing leftists as a sub-genus of the "True Believer." Hoffer argued that true believers are drawn to (or

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<sup>21</sup> Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), pp. 70-101; Robert Wright, "The Evolution of Despair," in *Time*, Vol. 146, No. 9 (August 28, 1995), pp. 50-57.

emerge in) every stirring social movement.<sup>22</sup> FC understands this, and even concedes that the “True Believer” type is needed for its own revolution.

Leftist true believers are supposed to be inherently “totalitarian” (TJ219-22). In FC’s opinion, leftists are plagued with “feelings of inferiority” that lead them to identify with the weak and oppressed without having true compassion for them or doing anything that would be objectively helpful. By contrast, FC sympathizes with minorities and victims of social injustice but regards these as auxiliary forces that could become a distraction. An important subgroup of the Left also suffers from “oversocialization,” which is the burden of fully taking to heart society’s morality — a burden so demanding that no one can actually live up to it.

FC’s leftist “totalitarianism” is derived from Adorno *et al.*’s long discredited works on the supposedly fascist “authoritarian personality.” Critics of Adorno have shown, among other things, that this rigid, dogmatic type could also be found on the Left, despite different ideological content.<sup>23</sup><sup>24</sup> FC supplies a (possibly unique) account of the specifically Left dogmatic believer, but it is not a simple extension of Adorno. For instance, leftists supposedly suffer from an excessive burden of general social rules, rather than an overbearing (often parental) authority figure, thus distinguishing the “totalitarian” leftist from the “authoritarian” fascist.<sup>25</sup> Also, *Industrial Society* relies on two strains of thought on aggression. One is “frustration-aggression”; the other, Alfred Adler’s “individual psychology.”

Interestingly, although reliance on frustration-aggression thinking is scattered throughout the essay, the sections on leftists are almost devoid of it. The door to the second psychological dimension is found in note #2. FC argues that Freud emphasized sexual repression in Victorian society, but that today psychology has more to do with analyzing aggression. Focussing on aggression was one of the main reasons for Adler’s departure from Freud’s circle in Vienna, and the contrast of author, ideas, and contexts created in note #2 would be perfectly parallel if one were to add Adler’s name. Furthermore, FC always uses the term “feelings of inferiority,” rather than the almost cliché “inferiority complex.” Adler is the original source for analysis of “feelings of inferiority,” and underlined his preference for that phrase over “inferiority complex,” which others began using during his lifetime.<sup>26</sup>

Adler’s ideas further underpin FC’s concept of “power.” For Adler, the key to mental health is power, seen as a sense of competence built by finding challenges one can meet. Well-adjusted people seek mastery in challenges and over things, not over people,

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<sup>22</sup> Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951).

<sup>23</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *et al.*, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1950).

<sup>24</sup> Edward Shils, “Authoritarianism: ‘Right’ and ‘Left’,” in Richard Christie and Marie Jahoda, eds., *Studies in the Scope and Method of “The Authoritarian Personality”* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1954), pp. 24-49.

<sup>25</sup> Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality*, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-105, 337-89, especially pp. 370-6.

<sup>26</sup> Heinz L. Ansbacher and Rowena R. Ansbacher, eds., *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: A Systematic Presentation in Selections From His Writings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 257.

because they are adjusted to living in community with others. Unhealthy people are convinced of their inferiority and are therefore obsessed with overcoming this condition, but they prop themselves up by setting goals so impossible that they can always excuse failure or blame others. Only by overcoming this blockage presented by other people can such an individual be satisfied, necessitating a goal of total superiority over others. In a rare venture into political commentary, Adler even associated this malignant orientation toward power with Bolshevism.<sup>27</sup> FC's belief that the need for power is universal, that achievement should be conceived of in terms of achieving power (rather than hedonistic satisfaction), that being "power hungry" is evil and debilitating, and that certain relations to power are prone to political leftism, all find theoretical support in Adler's writings. For Adler, however, scientists are well adjusted and benevolent. He has no notion comparable to "surrogate activities" that might provide a basis for judging science unhealthy and wrong. This is why FC has linked Adler and Marx to produce a psychologically malignant class that perpetuates the ills of the system.

The whole treatment of leftist psychology in *Industrial Society* only creates a secondary veneer of compromise, not a real synthesis. Adlerian psychology fits with the philosophical notion of an intrinsic human nature. It is not surprising that psychologists who read *Industrial Society* might mistake its intellectual ambition for mental confusion.<sup>28</sup> FC attempts to cover this conflict with the term "oversocialization." This is not a standard term. It is not in the encyclopedias and dictionaries of the field. Out of only four appearances of the term prior to publication of *Industrial Society*, two are significant. One writer (in a journal on gifted children) contrasts it to the value of nurturing and freedom in education. The other source seeks to explain murder as the result of a repressive upbringing that causes a brittle veneer of conformity across a core personality without conscience.<sup>29</sup> Yet, there is no mention of frustration, aggression, or deprivation in the section titled "Oversocialization."

## The Fifth Layer: Anarchism

If *Industrial Society* has at least two different worldviews, anarchism is the basis for reconciling them. The strain of thought connecting behaviorism, Ellul, and Luddism still dominates, but the second perspective (philosophically committed to positive freedom and community, indebted to Aristotle, and ecologist in orientation) is well represented. As suggested above, the negative agenda in *Industrial Society* can be described as a Neo-Luddite Ellulian heresy. FC never equivocates on the project's

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154-6, 240, 256-61, 293-4 and 455-7.

<sup>28</sup> Alston Chase, "Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber," in *Atlantic Monthly* (June 2000), pp. 41-65.

<sup>29</sup> See Frances J. Norton, "Oversocialization in the Young Culturally Deprived Child," in *Exceptional Children*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (November 1969), pp. 149-55; Stuart Palmer, *A Study of Murder* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1960), pp. 7-10; and Dollard *et al.*, *Frustration and Aggression*, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-6.

destructive aspect: “. . . while the industrial system is sick we must destroy it. If we compromise with it and let it recover from its sickness, it will eventually wipe out all of our freedom. . .” (TJ135); “. . . And such an ideology will help to assure that, if and when industrial society breaks down, its remnants will be smashed beyond repair, so that the system cannot be reconstituted. The factories should be destroyed, technical books burned, etc. . .” (K166); “. . . Until the industrial system has been thoroughly wrecked, the destruction of that system must be the revolutionaries’ ONLY goal. . .” (1(200)).

What FC calls its “positive ideals” are best described as a Deep Ecology heresy, striving to incorporate a self-consciously “ecocentric” movement into a violent, “anthropocentric” revolution. To be sure, the tone of the passage on nature suggests that FC may share the environmentalists’ love of nature. Yet, the passage endorsing “WILD nature” comes in the section on “Strategy.” FC may be sentimental about nature, but the connection of nature to this revolutionary program is baldly pragmatic. FC knows that few will join a revolution that has only a destructive purpose. Therefore, a positive ideal is required, and nature has a proven appeal. The remainder of the “Strategy” section is simply a guide for revolutionary praxis. More to the point, FC’s entire project aims at saving human freedom, a decidedly “anthropocentric” perspective.<sup>30</sup> Though FC is sympathetic to radical ecologists and hopes for their support, it cannot pass their basic test for membership. Clearly, the “positive” ecological aspect is part of the lesser voice in the essay. Participatory democracy has always been a part of the “green” agenda, especially for Europeans.<sup>31</sup> It makes sense to link the two here as well, forming a philosophical-Aristotelean-ecologist strand subordinated to the behaviorist-Ellulite-Luddite one.

FC presents itself as anarchist (1J215, and n. 34) and, in the context, it makes sense. If departure from Ellul defines FC’s problem, it also sets the direction in which FC sought a solution. FC takes anarchism not as an appropriate ally, but as a foundation to which other beliefs are adapted. Its central agenda is the disintegration of all large organizations, private or governmental. Apart from such organizations, technology as such need not be bad. The crucial test is in the section titled “Two Kinds of Technology.” If something does not make the user dependent on large scale organizations, it does not constitute a threat to freedom and can be allowed to survive into the post-revolutionary world.

FC’s fundamental individualism belongs in the libertarian tradition of anarchism, rather than to social anarchism.<sup>32</sup> There have been attempts to claim that FC is leftist,

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<sup>30</sup> See also Arne Naess, “The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects,” in George Sessions, ed., *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* (Boston: Shambala, 1995), pp. 64-84.

<sup>31</sup> See Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak (in collaboration with Lildiger Rutz), *Green Politics: The Global Promise* (New York: Dutton, 1984).

<sup>32</sup> Some passages of *Industrial Society* are too fragmentary to allow confident insights. The strange collection of “bourgeois” thinkers cited by FC actually reads like an attempt to obscure something else. For example, Simon Bolivar is mentioned. Bolivar was indeed a well educated man and a courageous leader, but he grew critical of liberal democracy as practiced in the Latin America of his time. See Vicente

even though *Industrial Society* openly dismisses leftists, and refuses to endorse even the most moderate Left positions.<sup>33</sup> Nothing supports the “leftist” characterization except the assumption that Deep Ecology is inherently leftist — an error sometimes described as “red-green confusion.”<sup>34</sup> The sharp antipathy between “social” ecology and more individualistic perspectives is simply overlooked.<sup>35</sup> *Industrial Society* is closer to Lysander Spooner than to Karl Marx.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, claims by Internet Nazis that FC is one of them stand on little more than shared hostility to the Left — hardly a definitive trait.

## Attribution to Kaczynski

*Industrial Society* is an anarchist compromise between at least two synthetic worldviews. Kaczynski seems to have controlled the written expression of these ideas, but only one of the worldviews can be easily linked to him. The FBI’s Affidavit for the search of Kaczynski’s cabin indicates that several other individuals had previously attributed *Industrial Society* to a different suspect in the investigation.<sup>37</sup> However, the

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Lecuna (compiler) and Harold A. Bierck, Jr., ed., *Selected Writings of Bolivar*, Vol. 2 (New York: The Colonial Press, 1951), pp. 365-6, 625, and 669-70. See also Victor Andres Belaunde, *Bolivar and the Political Thought of the Spanish American Revolution* (New York: Octagon, 1967); Simon Bolivar, *An Address of Bolivar at The Congress of Angostura, February 15, 1819*, tr. by Francisco Javier Yanes (Washington, DC: Byron S. Adams, 1919). FC also cites Chinese writers, but one can find abundant evidence within the sources themselves that these are not paradigmatic advocates of liberal (or even “bourgeois”) democracy. See Chester Tan, *Chinese Political Thought in the Twentieth Century* (Garden City, NY: 1971), pp. 199, 202, 255, 296-7. Why not address Thomas Jefferson, for instance? Elsewhere, FC boldly speculates about the course of society. FC’s own principles of history, however, preclude such speculation. Then, there are the references to fiction. Several writers have noticed how literature is a backdrop to the entire Unabomber episode. See Donald Foster, “The Fictions of Ted Kaczynski,” in *Vassar Quarterly*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 14-7. See also Cynthia Ozick, “Dostoyevsky’s Unabomber: Raskolnikov Lives On,” in *The New Yorker*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (February 24 and March 3, 1997), pp. 114-21.

<sup>33</sup> Joe Klein, “The Unabomber and the Left,” in *Newsweek*, Vol. 127, No. 17 (April 22, 1996), p. 39; Ron Arnold, EcoTerror, *The Violent Agenda to Save Nature: The World of the Unabomber* (Bellevue, WA: Free Enterprise Press, 1997), pp. 7-12, 25-6 and 31-64.

<sup>34</sup> Luke, “Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto,” *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>35</sup> See the special edition of *Critical Review*, Vol. 6, Nos. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 1992) especially Gus diZerega, “Social Ecology, Deep Ecology, and Liberalism,” pp. 305-70.

<sup>36</sup> Lysander Spooner, “No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority,” in *The Lysander Spooner Reader*, intro. by George H. Smith (San Francisco, CA: Fox and Wilkes, 1992), pp. 77-122.

<sup>37</sup> US v. Kaczynski, “Affidavit” (no document number), p. 94. Understandably, no names are mentioned. Victor Ferkiss has written that he received some attention from the FBI as a source for ideas in *Industrial Society*, but not as a suspect. See Victor Ferkiss, “The FBI Comes Calling: My Encounter With the Unabomber,” in *Commonweal*, Vol. 124, No. 16 (September 26, 1997), pp. 9-10. Ferkiss claims a common influence on FC and his own work and in detecting Ellul as that source. See Doc. #74, Exhibit #30.

essay was readily recognized by Kaczynski's family, who provided a wealth of comparable documents. A content analysis by the FBI (later endorsed by a consultant) found numerous parallels between *Industrial Society* and Kaczynski's writings. Many similarities are superficial, but a shared preference for arcane spellings and rare turns of phrase are noteworthy, although contested by another linguist.<sup>38</sup> The defense conceded that all the handwritten materials in the cabin — apparently including a “rough draft” of *Industrial Society* — were penned by Kaczynski. How complete the draft may be is not known. Typed copies of *Industrial Society* and the FC letters were also found. According to the prosecution, they (or most of them) were produced on one of Kaczynski's typewriters, but the defense did not stipulate that he authored those documents.

The behaviorist portion of the essay, along with the “totalitarian personality” aspect, tracks well with Kaczynski's academic life. He attended Harvard when Parsons was one of its most illustrious professors. Kaczynski earned a PhD in mathematics at Michigan, the cradle of behaviorism.

He taught at Berkeley when Hoffer was on the faculty. In letters, Kaczynski mentions de Camp's *The Ancient Engineers* (cited in note #18 of *Industrial Society*) and the commission report from which the Graham and Gurr volume is drawn.<sup>39</sup> While opposed to the march of technology, Kaczynski never gave up on the scientific method. He kept careful “lab notes,” and even his insignificant actions and possessions were measured and quantified. He seems to have retained a faith in an objective scientific method even as he went into his trial. He stonewalled psychiatrists (telling one, “You are the enemy”), but agreed to a neuropsychiatric examination, believing “objective” tests would vindicate his sanity. Only when the results were disappointing and both courtroom protests and a suicide attempt had failed, did he consent to psychiatric evaluation as a precondition for his request to act as his own attorney.<sup>40</sup>

Ellul is cited in one of Kaczynski's 1971 essays, and by 1972 *The Technological Society* was his “bible.”<sup>41</sup> In a letter to Ellul, he claimed to have read it six times, but nothing about their correspondence has been made public.<sup>42</sup> There is vague testimony that Kaczynski took an interest in social thought, but by his own account he

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<sup>38</sup> US v. Kaczynski, “Affidavit” Attachment 4; Doc. #53, Declaration #6; Doc. #74, Exhibit #27; Donald Foster, “The Fictions of Ted Kaczynski,” p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> US v. Kaczynski, “Affidavit,” pp. 68-9.

<sup>40</sup> On “objective” testing, see US v. Kaczynski, Doc. #501; on previous hostility to analysis, see Doc. #338, pp. 2-3; on the foreclosure of new counsel, and the failure of his suicide attempt, see Doc. #477, pp. 488, 491, and 490, and Doc #481, pp. 32-8. For Kaczynski's detailed personal account, see Doc. #576.

<sup>41</sup> US v. Kaczynski, “Affidavit,” p. 71 and Attachment #3, pp. 2 and 10.

<sup>42</sup> US v. Kaczynski, Doc. #573, p. 17. It is tempting to suspect an exchange of letters moved Ellul to denounce Kaczynski's views (in works noted above), while solidifying the point at which Kaczynski departs from Ellul. In fact, though, almost nothing is known of this correspondence, and Ellul may never have written back.

stressed anthropology and history.<sup>43</sup> He also read science fiction, especially L. Sprague de Camp.<sup>44</sup> His position has never been unambiguously stated, but there are strong indicators. His known writings are generally Luddite and sentimentally nature-loving.<sup>45</sup> In a quote from his (yet to be published) book, Kaczynski offers to put his brother in touch with “environmental radicals.”<sup>46</sup> However, Kaczynski’s strongest link seems to be with anarchist author John Zerzan.<sup>47</sup> *Earth First!* has, by and large, sought to distance itself from Kaczynski, and he has advised “real revolutionaries” to abandon *Earth First!* (and their principles of open membership and participatory democracy) and form a disciplined revolutionary group.<sup>48</sup> The psychological report generated at his trial stresses the stability of his beliefs as solidified around his 1971 anti-technology essay, which shows a vague predilection for philosophical libertarianism.<sup>49</sup> Kaczynski owned a copy of Paul Goodman’s *Growing Up Absurd*, which could have opened certain lines of thought, such as the need for authentic experience of the world.<sup>50</sup> One journal entry includes the declaration, “I would also like to kill a Communist.”<sup>51</sup>

## Collaboration, or a Compromise with Himself?

Is the heterodox character of *Industrial Society* attributable to Kaczynski? *Industrial Society* is not a case of what some analysts would call “secret writing.” Knowing the esoteric material does not significantly alter the message of the essay, and FC is not in the same political situation as authors whose writings have been analyzed using this method. Self-protective concealment does not explain the problems, because (aside

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<sup>43</sup> Anonymous, “Ted Speaks,” *Green Anarchist*, (Autumn 1999), pp. 20-1. That article was jointly published by *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*. Information from other sources indicates the author is Theresa Kintz.

<sup>44</sup> US v. Kaczynski, Doc. #74, Exhibit #25, p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> A short story he wrote in prison is a simple parable about a “cabin boy” trying to prevent a ship from being wrecked by a crew gone mad with pride in their technical prowess. See Theodore Kaczynski, “Ship of Fools,” in *OFF! Magazine* (Fall 1999), pp. 15-7.

<sup>46</sup> William Glaberson, “In Book, Unabomber Pleads His Case,” in *The New York Times* (March 1, 1999), A 12. The book is still unpublished.

<sup>47</sup> Zerzan corresponds with Kaczynski, visited him in jail and interceded for him during the trial. Zerzan is (at least) a mentor to the Eugene, Oregon anarchists.

<sup>48</sup> Four articles in *Earth First!*, Vol. 16, No. 5 (May 1, 1996) address the issue, and a more recent reaction appears as a “Letter to the Editor” by Theresa Kintz (then a member of the Editorial Collective of *Earth First!*) to *Gear* (September 1999), p. 24. Advice on a revolutionary splintering of *Earth First!* appears in Theodore Kaczynski, “Letter to John Zerzan,” *Earth First!*, Vol. 19, No. 5 (“Beltane,” May 1, 1999), p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> US v. Kaczynski, Doc. #573, pp. 17-8, 28; “Affidavit,” Attachment #3, pp. 16 and 23.

<sup>50</sup> US vs. Kaczynski, “Inventory of Items Seized at the Residence of Theodore Kaczynski,” p. 8, item MB 32; Paul Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd* (New York: Vintage, 1960). Goodman’s “radical-liberal” agenda, however, is hardly on the order of FC’s anarchism.

<sup>51</sup> US v. Kaczynski, Doc. #545, Exhibit #3.



from the eco-radical dimension) it is the philosophical side of the essay that is more veiled. Kaczynski has no known record of published or unpublished writings drawing on the sources used. He could not have been identified by invoking these ideas and was, in fact, identified because of his closeness to the other side (the side favoring behaviorism, Ellul, and Luddism) of *Industrial Society*.

It is tempting to explain the essay's problems by a "provisional" diagnosis of Kaczynski as paranoid schizophrenic. Such an interpretation, however, is diametrically opposed to the actual psychiatric report. Everything in this report encourages the view that Kaczynski is more inclined to rigidity than heterodoxy.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, much like the dominant voice of *Industrial Society*, Kaczynski seems to have fastened to the apparent negativity and "pessimism" (which Ellul struggled long to deny) of *The Technological Society*, and uses it to straightjacket Ellul's sometimes consciously self-contradictory work.<sup>53</sup>

*Industrial Society* may have been typed in a cabin, but it was neither written nor read in a vacuum. To some readers, it seems intellectually inadequate; to others, it is politically deceptive. It was written to invite critics to make such mistakes. From post-modern and neo-Luddite perspectives, FC's hostility to the system is commendable, but intellectually weak and inferior to their own. Tim Luke finds FC unaware of its own similarities to Goodman, and points out failed opportunities to tap Gramsci, Mumford, Marcuse, and Lukacs.<sup>54</sup> Kirkpatrick Sale also thinks of Mumford and Goodman, asks for Weber, Schumacher, or Carson, and looks for Ellul, but does not see him.<sup>55</sup> Both authors seem to assume that if FC were well versed in social criticism, the footnotes in *Industrial Society* would credit post-modern neo-Luddite writers, not their behaviorist enemies. Ignoring, for a moment, FC's peculiar forum and political intent, there is some merit in these commentaries. Scholarly criticism of technological society has a heritage too rich to suffer the injustice of cursory treatment here. The point is that FC does not openly tap those riches.

Still, *Industrial Society* is not a well-articulated body of thought. Comparable intellectuals make their careers with books, articles, and lectures, pitched at the university level. FC got 35,000 words in a newspaper. Not surprisingly, the most pervasively awkward characteristic of the essay is that FC understands the complexity of the ideas and tries to compress them into language so simple it cannot carry the weight. Sale expected a C+ student washed out of college and unaware of contemporary critics of

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<sup>52</sup> US v. Kaczynski, Doc. #573, pp. 17-8, 27-38, but especially 27-30.

<sup>53</sup> For a broader view, see Clifford G. Christian and Jay M. Van Hook, eds., *Jacques Ellul: Interpretive Essays* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1981).

<sup>54</sup> Luke, "Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto," *op. cit.*

<sup>55</sup> Kirkpatrick Sale, "Is There Method In His Madness?," in *The Nation* (September 25, 1995), pp. 305-11.

technology, such as himself or John Zerzan. Kaczynski is bright, well educated, and had been corresponding with Zerzan for more than a year before being arrested.<sup>56</sup>

If post-modernists and neo-Luddites wish FC were more like them, conservatives insist they are all the same. Cold War logic of guilt by association is accepted more now than during the latter half of the actual Cold War. From this perspective, the fact that about 20% of the paragraphs in *Industrial Society* are devoted to an attack on leftism means nothing, just as the distinction between Marxian and Marxist, or Socialist and Communist is negligible. Joe Klein would link the Unabomber to everything “Left.”<sup>57</sup> Ron Arnold is better schooled and sometimes more careful, yet ultimately he concludes that all environmentalists should be suspected of terrorism, even though he disclaims doing anything of the sort.<sup>58</sup> Of course Marx did criticize technology, and there are environmentalists who endorse sabotage. However, FC’s distance from Marx can be illustrated by its balanced view of religion, whereas Marx would make religion the beginning of all alienation.<sup>59</sup> In any case, Klein makes his case about what FC believes only by ignoring what FC says it believes. Arnold is a fairly able critic of environmentalism, though he too unsuccessfully looks for Ellul in *Industrial Society*. However, when he slides into a sort of “laundry list” of guilt by association, the only thing that protects his integrity is the honesty of his partisanship.

All of these perspectives ring hollow, because their eagerness to press existing debates leads them to dismiss the evident political intent of FC. An important part of being the “Freedom Club” is to anticipate and to avoid being included in the post-modern club or, for that matter, the racist, sexist, or conservative club. *Industrial Society* is not post-modern, but paleo-Ellul and latter day Aristotle. It is not Communist, but anarchist (and libertarian anarchist at that). It is not easily discredited by association. With ideas resistant to conventional attack, the usual recourse is to deny the author’s sanity. Although he did not expect his own attorneys to be the agents of the insult,<sup>60</sup> Kaczynski anticipated being declared insane so that his ideas could be discredited. The “mad bomber” is an available and useful cultural image. Kaczynski’s actual state of mind is not known. The report done for the trial gave only a provisional diagnosis, but Kaczynski does not maintain that he is emotionally trouble free. Quite apart from the truth of the matter, the calculated legal tactic of declaring Kaczynski a “mad bomber” permitted the public to ignore the larger questions, at least for a while.

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<sup>56</sup> Christine Craft, “Kaczynski Wants To Speak,” in *Sacramento News and Review* (December 24, 1997), p. 11. Luke wrote his critique before the image of Kaczynski the hermit was modified by news of his extensive travel and reading.

<sup>57</sup> Joe Klein, “The Unabomber and the Left,” in *Newsweek*, Vol. 127, No. 17 (April 22, 1996), p. 39.

<sup>58</sup> Ron Arnold, *EcoTerror, The Violent Agenda to Save Nature: The World of the Unabomber* (Bellevue, WA: Free Enterprise Press, 1997).

<sup>59</sup> See Kostas Axelos, *Alienation, Praxis, and Techne in the Thought of Karl Marx*, tr. by Ronald Bruzina (Austin, TX and London: University of Texas, 1976).

<sup>60</sup> US v. Kaczynski, Doc #545, Exhibit 8.

If the recently noisy exponents of (to adopt the phrase of the moment) “anarcho-primitivism” endorse the Unabomber’s ideas, it should be no surprise. *Industrial Society* is a genuinely post-Cold War argument, diverting attention from “Left versus Right” to “big versus small” and “technically expert versus personally empowered.” FC is insulated from the familiar political debates by its heresy of Ellul, rejecting technical society, but also rejecting religious spirituality in favor of hermetic individualism. Such an orientation has little reason to express itself to society. By his own account, Kaczynski “became political” about 1983.<sup>61</sup> Compromising with a philosophy of political community makes a rough fit, but it creates an agenda that is relevant without sacrificing “insulation” from being dragged into a Left-Right argument.

## Conclusion: Revolution, Anarchy, Collaboration

*Industrial Society* is a difficult essay in several ways. The organization is problematic. It is neither incoherent nor tightly deductive. For most readers, its fairly plain language can be taken at face value, but its meaning may appear to be strained by the heavy load those simple words are made to carry. A more sophisticated audience is frustrated by FC’s positions that are parallel to, but separated from important pre-existing traditions of social criticism.

The argument here contradicts many ill-founded impressions of the Unabomber episode, but also conflicts with the simple fact that there is no significant, publicly available evidence of a knowing accomplice. Furthermore, information on the subject is limited and its sources are problematic. Only a tiny fraction of Kaczynski’s writings have been made public, and every available item was sorted out and presented to serve legal or clinical priorities. Yet, the “simple facts” in no way prohibit the conclusions reached here. Contrary to popular belief, Kaczynski has carefully refused to admit he wrote *Industrial Society*. More surprisingly, the government joined him in obscuring the question.<sup>62</sup> At Kaczynski’s sentencing, prosecutors did not require him to admit writing *Industrial Society*, although he was required to “agree” to many other examples of his writing.

To anticipate another objection, perhaps Kaczynski is truly shy in person, but he does not seem at all reticent about writing to interesting people (Ellul and Zerzan, for example). In the minimal scenario, he might never have met his most helpful interlocutor. Given the many “committees of correspondence” promoted by green activists in the years before the Internet, connections of this sort were not uncommon.<sup>63</sup> Also,

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<sup>61</sup> Anonymous, “Ted Speaks,” in *Green Anarchist*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> US v. Kaczynski, Dex.: #1 and #555, pp. 5-6; Peter Klebnikov, “Return of the Unabomber: The Disturbing Cult Around Ted Kaczynski,” in *Gear* (May-June 1999), pp. 56-60.

<sup>63</sup> See Charlene Spretnak, *The Spiritual Dimension of Green Politics* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear, 1986), p. 77.

several people unwittingly helped Kaczynski with research, money, tools, materials, testing grounds, or transportation. An equally innocent correspondent would actually fit the pattern.

To summarize, then, a careful reading of *Industrial Society* makes a few things clear. FC (and presumably, therefore, also the Unabomber) is “about” anarchist revolution. *Industrial Society* is a serious attempt to explain the need for such a revolution, and belongs to the “libertarian” tradition of anarchism. The peculiarities of the essay are best understood as the product of a compromise between two well-educated world-views. One is behaviorist, impressed with certain aspects of Ellul’s writings, and has Luddite aims, the other is more philosophical, concerned with Aristotelian questions of community and positive freedom, and hopes to achieve a world that is technologically primitive, but ecologically sound. The character of *Industrial Society*, along with some external support, indicates that Kaczynski probably wrote it, but with the aid of at least one collaborator.

## Implications

The meaning of the Unabomber episode and its aftermath has been elusive. Understanding more about FC’s essay helps in several ways: 1) If the essay is a political compromise, the differing reactions to it by the general public and street level activists makes sense. 2) FC’s summary of Ellul advertises the power of a general approach to the problems of technology. 3) Prevailing ideologies do not oppose FC so much as flee from what they share with the bomber’s beliefs. 4) There is plenty of ground for critiquing FC’s views, but those positioned to do so shrink from the task.

The essay is a political compromise. However, the tension within that compromise is not entirely detrimental to its political effect. The general public is confused, as should be expected. Cost efficient sound bites and short attention spans are part of the world that is being attacked. In an age of ideology, the audience expects revolutionaries to deliver a symphony of harmonious political ideals. A secular replacement for religion is supposed to come first, while compromise is a political necessity that comes later. With *Industrial Society*, the political compromise is not postponed. It sounds dissonant, admits its own limits, leaves questions open, and does not resolve all differences among its contributors. Yet, there is a concordance that freedom is right, technological society is enslaving, and that something can be done.

For the relevant activists, this is attractive. Exactly because FC does not conform to a constricting uniformity, it fits the new shape of global protest. Diverse perspectives converging on a common cause has become the familiar pattern. “Globalizing meta-narratives” are considered suspicious by the sophisticated, and ideologues are widely seen as intolerant. In this environment, a new generation of anarchists have had an

impact disproportionate to their numbers, and in doing so they endorse FC's call for industrial collapse.

Questioning "techne" is not limited to radicals. FC revives the critique of technology along the lines set out by Ellul. This is the aspect that has most impressed thoughtful members of the technological elite, some of whom are honest enough to quote FC.<sup>64</sup> The standard conceit of progress is that the shapeless, uncontrolled, deeply interdependent system of technical innovation works for the good. The bad aspects of technology are regarded as particular problems, while the system is beneficial. FC emphasizes that what is actually most impressive and seductive are narrow, particular improvements, while it is the interaction of the system as a whole that hems modern life. It is not inconceivable that society could mediate between human nature and technology. Thoughtful, intelligent, educated people might have a lot to say about that. However, as FC arrives to press the question, it is the ideologues who speak loudest.

FC's essay is not a balm or a stimulant, but an acid. It threatens important beliefs by dissolving their logic into its own agenda. Subtly, FC implies to certain political believers: "You don't want to agree with us, but logically you must." FC tells serious ecologists that they should join the revolution. A "deep" notion of ecology cannot escape the logical conclusion that its ends require the virtual elimination of humanity. Confronted with FC's hijacking of radical ecology, eco-philosophers simply take refuge in their pacifism. Industrial collapse may be unlikely, but it is surely the more plausible road to a people-free wilderness.

Market ideologues are threatened with every bit as much guilty recognition of themselves. FC's innovations are interesting, but the style, tone, and effort involved in that synthesis are revealing in another way. Only among devotees of von Mises, Hayek, Rand, and Friedman does one find the sort of perspective that presumes there is nothing at all to say about the Left except as pathology, and that the world is hungry to know just what ails these misguided leftist souls. If libertarian individualism is what lends virtue to the merciless market, it lends itself all the more to anarchy. If government control is illegitimate on libertarian grounds, there is no defense for the power of corporate bureaucracy either. Confronted with FC's radical individualism, market ideologues resort to accusing it of being leftist.

Self-avowed "real" anarchists are in an awkward position, as well. When FC first identified itself as anarchist, the reaction in those quarters is well summarized as a sarcastic, "Thanks a lot."<sup>65</sup> Anarchists have often suffered from the backlash against their historical use of violence and, in recent years, have struggled to distance themselves from it. Clearly, FC is not a direct descendant of Proudhon or Bakunin, yet it is sincere in undertaking a new form of anarchism. Respecting the sensitivities of its nearest political relatives, FC's letter accompanying the essay apologized for not

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<sup>64</sup> Michael Taylor, "Real Anarchists Decry Unabomber," in *The San Francisco Chronicle* (May 16, 1995), pp. A1 and 11.

<sup>65</sup> The most impressive example is Bill Joy, "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us," in *Wired* (April 2000) pp. 238-63.

qualifying its self-identification. Absolving them of association with the Unabomber crimes, FC left the same anarchists wondering if “real” anarchism should want to be so absolved.

As for intellectuals, fear had its role in the silence while academia was under attack by the Unabomber. While the violence was mute, the bombings were unintelligible, but also unsolvable. Silence did not end with the bombings. It became a solution. Kaczynski’s arrest confirmed what was quietly suspected after the publication of *Industrial Society*. Intellectuals found themselves to have been under attack by someone who was (as Joseph Conrad once phrased it) “one of us.” On top of all, the Unabomber was an embarrassment. Obviously, the Unabomber and FC did not go unnoticed. FC’s essay is intelligent and educated, but flawed in its construction and not fully developed. Those shortcomings are not a legitimate reason for actively ignoring the whole episode, but rather the excuse for trying to do so. Any balanced response would constitute inclusion. Continued silence was the natural path. In this respect, intellectuals set an example for other elites. Faced with embarrassment of their own, government and the courts eventually adopted silence as their policy goal for the Unabomber affair.

Kaczynski’s attorneys pressed a “mental defect” defense to save their client’s life. They systematically misled and then defied Kaczynski. They kept to their guns when a prosecution motion deprived them of any expert witnesses to support their argument. They stayed the course when the judge threatened to hold them in contempt. Their efforts appeared to be failing. Under then-current law, “mental defect” was a frail barrier, and no barrier at all without expert psychological testimony. Also as a matter of law, both sides filed briefs conceding that the right to self-representation could not be denied in the circumstances. However, it suddenly became apparent that the defendant was bent on a political trial. If Constitutional guarantees were respected, he would get it.

For the government, the context was terrible. A series of spectacular trials had the press fully mobilized for court coverage. Paranoia was commonplace, and exploiting it was a booming industry in the post-Cold War, pre-millennium, X-Files era. The militia movement was still flourishing, but most people did not yet realize how much closer the Unabomber was to them than to 1960s revolutionaries. Federal law enforcement was saddled with the burden of its misdeeds at Waco, Ruby Ridge, and elsewhere. Last, but not least, biotechnology, the most dynamic technical field of the day, had just collided with a global ban on cloning, as if to admit that the Unabomber might have a point.

Like academia earlier, government found itself in danger of being embarrassed by an enemy that might have something intelligent to say. It would have taken civic courage to give Kaczynski the opportunity to explain techne, advocate an ideology without uniformity, and compare FC’s confusing writing to its critics’ confused thinking. He might fail, of course. Still, he was an unusually intelligent, educated terrorist, and surprisingly able to talk out of turn during the trial. Kaczynski’s defense team skillfully led the court and prosecutors to join them in muzzling their client, asking only that

his life be spared. One public defender announced in open court that Kaczynski could not bear having his ideas publicly degraded as madness. The other said, just as openly, that they would challenge their client's competence, but only because he wanted to fire them.

Finally, everyone got the hint. A Bureau of Prisons psychiatrist found Kaczynski competent, but went on to provide an expansive (though "provisional") diagnosis that the defendant was schizophrenic (though "functional" and in "remission"). The judge stretched the facts and the law to explain denying the right to self-representation. Cornered, Kaczynski offered a plea to save the dignity of his ideas, and the government grabbed the chance to silence them. The durability of this solution is in doubt. The government essentially concedes that Kaczynski will get a new trial, if the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals follows its own recent precedents.<sup>66</sup> Protests against global technocracy press the conflict in the venue of the streets. By and large, the most important meaning of the Unabomber episode is its demonstration of how ill prepared modern society is for new, unfamiliar confrontations. *Industrial Society* is better than its detractors pretend, but certainly open to serious challenge. The awkward denials and embarrassed cringing pass through diverse channels, but they all flow from a central fear that modernity is not up to the argument.

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<sup>66</sup> The court's most relevant decision favored the appellant in *US v. Hernandez*. Prosecutors cannot deny the similarity of the cases, so they try to persuade the court that it was wrong the first time: "The government asserts that Hernandez was wrongly decided." *US v. Kaczynski*, (9th Cir.) [Docket no. 99-19531] "Brief for the United States" filed March 15,2000, p. 39, footnote 11.

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