

An early attempt to argue for hunter-gatherer societies or human extermination

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From things that I have written in some of my earlier notes, some people may assume that I tend to idealize hunting-and-gathering societies. This is not exactly true. Let me explain my view of these societies. They have the following good points:

Because a nomadic hunting-gathering society is more or less egalitarian and has very few members as compared to a modern society, each adult male can significantly participate in the important decisions, rather than having these decisions arbitrarily imposed by some vast system.

If a nomadic hunter-gatherer prefers he can wander off by himself, in which case he gets to make all his own decisions. (Example: According to Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's "Harmless People", the bushman Short Kwi spent most of his time off in the Veldt, away from the others, talking with him only his immediate dependents, viz, his wife, daughter, and mother-in-law.)

I suspect that this freedom would make serious rebellion a rare thing in nomadic hunting band. But, if a member of such a band does feel a need to rebel against or escape permanently from his group, he has a much better chance of success than a member of today's world — encompassing technological society, simply because a hunting-gathering band is a very small and weak society, compared to modern societies. This, in fact, is the biggest reason for my preferring primitive to modern societies — small, weak society means individual is comparatively strong and significant; whereas individual in modern society is totally impotent and insignificant.

Some people imagine primitive hunters must be crude, bestial, or degraded. I have argued against this elsewhere. It can be argued that primitive hunters have more of what we call "noble" qualities than modern man. But, whether this "noble savage" idea has any truth to it or not, it is of minimal interest to me, because, to me, all of mankind (with possible rare individual exceptions) is contemptible. It is true that recently I've come to be more tolerant of human failings, but I am still strongly aware of these failings, and despise them, even though I may feel friendly toward certain individuals exhibiting those failings. The failings to which I principally refer are irrationality, unclear thinking, and inability to liberate oneself from values and assumptions that one has been trained to accept. Some people imagine that modern man are more liberated from the "official" value of their society than are men of traditional societies. To one like me, who is a social outsider, this is not so clear, since, to a real outsider, it is obvious that most of those who imagine themselves to be nonconformists are really slavish conformists. (Imagine people who believe in racial equality, sexual equality, nonviolence and the transcendent value of art and philosophy, describing themselves as nonconformists! Do they imagine that they invented these ideologies themselves?) However it may be that there really is more psychological freedom in today's society than in a hunting society, because our society is transitional: traditional psychological controls are breaking down, while the far more effective psychological controls that technique is providing have not yet come close to being fully supplemented. I wouldn't venture to say which kind of society offers more psychological freedom, not having any personal experience in a hunting society. Also, it is possible I may even be wrong in

assuming that a hunting society provides more physical freedom, because, not having lived in such a society, I can't be absolutely certain.

In any case, even the most primitive society carries in it the seeds of what I consider evil, since all societies have the potential for eventual "progress" toward civilization. Thus I am more inclined to wish that the human race would become extinct.

Now, considering hunting and gathering as an *economic* form — this I *do* idealize. By this I mean that I would rather make my living by hunting, gathering plant foods, and making my own clothing, implements, etc., than in any other way I can think of. Here I do have some personal experience to go on.

Appendix: Ted's flirtation with human extermination

From age, say, 15 — 18 I went through a certain phase. It had its beginnings before I went to Harvard, came on strong during my Freshman year, and had largely faded out by about the middle of my Junior Year. This was what I may call a romantic phase. I wanted to let loose my passions and express them freely, rather than being stoical as formerly. I began to put great emphasis on music and certain kinds of literature.

Both before and after this phase I always enjoyed music and certain kinds of literature. The difference was that during the phase I considered art to be something important, whereas before and after the phase, I considered art to be merely an embellishment of life, not something really important ...

... I dislike most modern art, music, and literature, because it arouses too many feelings of a negative or "sick" type, whereas older art concentrated on the beautiful or the heroic ...

... During my romantic phase I continued to have fantasies of a primitive life, but I tended strongly to embellish this with romantic details like horns resounding through the forest, savage-looking tunics of bear-skin, and so forth. During this period I was attracted to German Romanticism. I also read Alan Bullock's biography of Hitler and became interested in Nazism. I used to fantasy myself as an agitator rousing mobs to frenzies of revolutionary violence. Thereby I would become a dictator, and I would send my Gestapo out to round up all the people I hated — and there were plenty of those ...

... When, in my teens, I had fantasies of becoming a dictator, it was not exactly social dominance that rested me. I dreamed of getting revenge on those I hated; I dreamed of being an orator rousing mobs to a frenzy of revolutionary violence; I dreamed of manipulating vast world-shaking forces. I did not dream of dominance in personal relationships. I wasn't interested in personal relationships to any great extent ...

... Either I would imagine myself getting power and rebuilding society so as to guarantee maximum individual autonomy; this accomplished, I would retire to spend

the rest of my life in some isolated wilderness. Or else I would imagine myself becoming a dictator then wiping out the human race by means of an atomic war or some such thing ...

... (As I became more and more aware of the extreme difficulty of reforming society so as to guarantee what I consider sufficient individual autonomy without wiping out 99.99% of the human race, I leaned more and more toward the second type of dictator fantasy.) ...

... Since the chances of stopping technological progress (even temporarily) seem so slight I wish that there would be an all-out atomic war intensive enough to exterminate the human race...

The Ted K Archive

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The initial text is taken from the last entry of Ted Kaczynski's journal in May of 1979: Source PDF & Archived HTML. And the appendix contains extracts taken from the autobiography he wrote the same year: Source PDF & Archived HTML

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