Fixed Ideas and Letter Bombs

Formerly Feral Faun critiques FC's Industrial Society & Its Future as ideology

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Contents

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Unfortunately, the response of american anarchists to the 'unabomber' (hereafter, FC[1]) has mostly been one of knee-jerk disavowal verging on reactionary hysteria. It seems these anarchists fear for their good reputation by which they plan to convert the masses to anarchism. So there has not yet been an actual critical response from an anarchist perspective to FC's tract *Industrial Society & Its Future.* Since FC claim to be anarchists (defining this in terms of favouring self-determination for individuals and small groups over the domination of large-scale systems over our lives) and have involved themselves in doing something (whatever problems we have with their tactics), this non-response is absurd. *Industrial Society & Its Future* is an attempt to deal with some significant questions often ignored or dealt with by sloganeering in the anarchist press. FC's statement has *many* faults, often is shallow and inadequate to the challenge it is attempting to meet. This stems from a lack of thorough social analysis, reliance on concepts which seem to come from pop psychology and adherence to fixed ideas (a fixed idea is a thought or idea that dominates the thinker, causing her to channel all thinking and analysis through that one idea, e.g. for the religious, god is a fixed idea, for the patriot, the country). FC correctly sees that the industrial technological system is a system of domination, but misses the fact that it is a complex social system which needs to be attacked in its totality. But let's examine FC's theses.

FIXED IDEAS AND LETTER BOMBS

Formerly Feral Faun critiques FC's *Industrial Society & Its Future* as ideology

Unfortunately, the response of american anarchists to the 'unabomber' (hereafter, FC[1]) has mostly been one of knee-jerk disavowal verging on reactionary hysteria. It seems these anarchists fear for their good reputation by which they plan to convert the masses to anarchism. So there has not yet been an actual critical response from an anarchist perspective to FC's tract *Industrial Society & its Future*. Since FC claim to be anarchists (defining this in terms of favouring self-determination for individuals and small groups over the domination of large scale systems over our lives) and have involved themselves in doing something (whatever problems we have with their tactics), this non-response is absurd. *Industrial Society & Its Future* is an attempt to deal with some significant questions often ignored or dealt with by sloganeering in the anarchist press. FC's statement has *many* faults, often is shallow and inadequate to the challenge it is attempting to meet. This stems from a lack of thorough social analysis, reliance on concepts which seem to come from pop psychology and adherence to fixed ideas (a fixed idea is a thought or idea that dominates the thinker, causing her to channel all thinking and analysis through that one idea, eg. for the religious, god is a fixed idea, for the patriot, the country). FC correctly sees that the industrial technological system is a system of domination, but miss the fact that it is an integral part of a more complex social system which needs to be attacked in its totality. But let's examine FC's theses.

LEFTISM: A NEUROTIC RESPONSE TO A PSYCHOTIC SOCIETY (FC'S THESES 1-32)

FC's tract strangely begins with several pages critical of leftism. Stranger still, this criticism relies completely on psychology (and that of a rather crude 'pop' form). FC use this as a basis, later on, for a more general description of the psychology of people under the industrials system.

FC see leftism as having a psychological basis in "feelings of inferiority" and "oversocialisation". Modern american leftism is certainly based in what Max Stirner called "ragamuffinism" and Nietzsche called "ressentiment". Some recent anarchist writings have referred to it as the "ideology of victimism". This ideology does seem to reflect and promote feelings of inferiority, but FC seems to be, unfamiliar with these ideas and adopt instead a methodology reminiscent of pop psychology in their critique. Fortunately for FC, leftists are apparently so afraid of any sort of criticism, that they could only respond to FC's inadequate criticism with hysterical yammerings.

FC are correct in saying that most american leftists come from middle or upper-class backgrounds. But FC miss what may be the most significant aspects of this in terms of the psychology of leftism: namely, that many leftists believe that they are privileged, that they have an excess of social power, and they feel guilty about this. In a very christian, messianic manner, they "give themselves" to those who -- according to their ideology -- have received the short schrift from society. This guilt and secular christianist activism explain the leftist masochism, self-sacrifice and dogmatism quite well. Recognising the religiosity of leftism, we can see that it can be compassionate, morally based *and* hostile all at once -- just like christianity which compassionately and morally instituted pogroms,

inquisitions, wars and genocide against heretics and non-believers.

FC's attempts to interpret every aspect of the leftist's life in terms of a pop psychology inferiority complex severely weakens the argument. Leftists, like nearly everyone else in this society, lead very compartmentalised lives. I have known leftists who seem to 'like' the blues or world beast music because they imagine such music is a way to get in touch with the feelings of black or third world people. Thus to the extent that leftism affects the art preferences of the leftist it does not seem to be in the direction of embracing defeat or irrationalism, but of trying 'to get in touch with' other cultures. This is absurd and merely reinforces the commodification of these cultures, but it does not, in itself, indicate inferiority feelings.

Certainly, leftists spend far too much time trying to prove the equality of oppressed groups and demanding that it be granted by the state, but this does not so much prove the inferiority feelings of leftists as their adherence to relying on authority. It is the leftist belief in a democratic social order -- which is to say, a structure of democratic *authority* -- which causes them to embrace victimistic ideology, an ideology which *begs* those in power to grant 'equality', 'rights', 'justice', etc. This practise of constantly begging for what one wants (particularly when those wants have been transformed into abstractions which one can never see accomplished) inevitably makes one feel weak and incapable -- and so inferior. Leftist activists promote this form of radicalism because it guarantees their role within the present social structures. When women, gays, blacks, etc., start taking their lives as their own as individuals, it brings them into conflict equally with leftist ideologues and with society, precisely because they are no longer *begging* and so no longer need the leftists to beg for them.

FC's concept of "oversocialisation" also proves to be inadequate because it

depends on psychology rather than an analysis of the social role of the leftist. Leftism is a form of liberal democratic / humanist politics -- that is, it is part of the political system to which the rise of capitalism and the industrial system gave birth. So it is no surprise that leftists subscribe to the "liberty, equality, fraternity" which are the shibboleths of such politics. But the totality of the social system is far more complex and irrational than FC think. The real values of this system, the ones for which it sacrifices all others, can be summed up rather simplistically as follows: (1) the expansion of capital; (2) efficiency in production; (3) increasing social control in the daily lives of individuals to guarantee the first two. Beyond these fundamentals, the social system is quite irrational and full of contradictions. Thus, the social structure is both anti-racist and racist as each of this tendencies may under different circumstances better serve the above-mentioned values (and, of course, aspects of earlier social structures do not disappear overnight). The same can be said about sexism / anti-sexism, violence / non-violence, war / peace, etc. Leftists are no more or less "oversocialized" than conservatives, moderates or most radicals. Leftists believe that the social system can be rationalised, that its contradictions can be removed without destroying the system as a whole. So they try to convince the authorities to abolish sexism, racism, violence, war -- without realising that, within this social system, these are a necessary part of the same mechanism of control of which anti-sexism, anti-racism, non-violence and peace are a part -- the one side needs the other, just as the right needs the left and vice versa.

I do not deny the neuroses of leftism as evidenced in its guilt, masochism and moral stridency. But if we want to make an intelligent attack on the social system -- as FC apparently does -- we need to develop analyses of the system and the left's role therein that go far deeper than FC's pop psycholgy.

FIXED IDEA #1: THE POWER PROCESS (FC'S THESES 33-98)

The first major fixed idea that dominates FC's thoughts is "the power process". This idea seems to form the basis of most of FC's analysis, and that's too bad because it's a flawed idea -- pop psychology reminiscent of 70's management strategies and self-help books. FC describes the power process: "Everyone needs to have goals whose attainment requires effort, and needs to succeed in attaining at least some of these goals". But do I need goals? No, I need or want specific things. Some effort is inherently involved in getting these things and, of course, I will be happier if I do get them and if I determine how I get them. But to transform this need for actual things into an abstract need for goals, effort and attainment which are simply words that can be used to describe how one gets what one needs, and then to

base an analysis of the present social system on this abstraction is absurd. I *have* goals, simply because I need or want specific things, but I do not *need* goals -- so I not *need* a "power process".

The "power process" is a psychhlogical model and, like all such models, springs from and is only useful within a specific social context. The 'oedipus complex' was a model developed in victorian Europe which worked well for explaining much of the sexual psychology of victorian Europe [ver time it has proved less and less useful and is now used only by die-hard Freudans. It has no applicability ro ancient Romans, Hopi Indians, Mbute pygmies, medieval English peasants, etc. The "power process", assuming irt has any application outside of pop psychology, would also have to be understood in terms of a specific social context. FC's attempt to universalise it

which provided their basic needs is about one quarter of the amount of time spent by the average perason in industrial society at work. In other words, primitive people got the things they wanted with less effort than most of us expend to get what we want. In fact, since there was no time schedule which they had to follow to perform these activities, so they could be done whenever one pleased (except in emergencies), it can be argued thast primitive societies were societies of total 'leisure'. With the rise of agriculture and cities about 10,000 yeasrs ago, the new technological system douhled the amount of time that those who used it had to spend in meeting their basic needs and placed this activity on a 'strict seasonal time schedule -- this could be considered the origin of work. Industrial technology drastically increased both the amount of work time and the rigidity of scheduling necessary for work. So most

IF THE UNABOMBER PREVAILS AND WE RETURN TO WILD NATURE...

CAN I STILL HAVE MY CARPHONE?

leads to a sloppy understanding of history and anthropology.

FC's anthropology is about 30 years behind the times. FC seem to assume that primitive people needed to spent most of their time and energy satisfying biological needs. It has been pretty well established that even in harsh environments, the amount of time primitive people spent in activities

people in our society find themselves so exhausted by activities not of their own making that in what little leisure time they have they often choose to vegetate through passive entertainment. This problem is *alienation*. FC are not completely unaware of this "...in our society people do not satisfy their biological needs AUTONOMOUSLY, but by functioning as parts of an immense social machine."

Alienation is not merely a psychological problem. Often the most alienated people are the most adjusted to their alienation. Alienation is the reality of a social system in which our lives, our activities and our interactions are not our own to create as we choose, but have been made for us in such a way that we become the property of society. The ways of fulfilling our needs and wants become very convoluted and indirect, like a Rube Goldberg machine -- but it isn't comical. I want food, shelter, a few things to give me pleasure. So I travel -- by car or public transit (which have become another necessity) -- to a place where I spend eight hours -- not making my own food or shelter or playthings -- but maybe shuffling papers or welding parts to parts or serving food to strangers or sitting in front of a computer processing information that means nothing to me. I do not do these things because they give me any pleasure -- usually they are miserably tedious tasks. In themselves, these tasks serve no purpose for me. They serve to purpose of the boss or corporation for which I do these tasks and they serve the purposes of the social system -- in other words, they serve purposes alien to me. What I get for giving up so much of my life to serve an alien cause is *money*. So after work, I have to go out to the shops with the money I got from working to get food, clothing and pleasure items I want -- since it is as compulsory as a job, this shopping time should also be counted as work time -- and I must pay rent to a land-lord or mortgage to a bank for shelter. In fact, with the exception of a few who refuse, most people sacrifice most of their lives to buy survival and a few plastic trinkets. Here there is a goal, an effort of the most horrendous sort and the attainment of basic necessities -- but there is no life, not one that is my own. The technological system is an essential part of this alienation but not the totality. A complex social system incorporating work, technology, capital, authority, ideology (including religion) and so on, all of which are integrally intertwined, this is what turns our lives into mere resources for society. And it must be attacked in its *totality* by those of us who want to take back our lives.

FC's "power process" seems to me to have a meagre, pathetic view of the world as a constant struggle for survival. This may well indicate the meagre, stingy social context from which it springs -- for the present era certainly is that. But such meagreness will never get us out of this mess. That will take something strong and lively, something so certain of its abundance that it has no fear of squandering. Stirner speaks of such a thing calling it one's "own might", the might of which one makes one's life one's own, and so comes to have an excess of life -- and it is this, my life as my own, and not "the freedom to go through the power process", that I want.

FC's reliance on their fixed idea, the "power process", makes for very poor -- and, in my opinion, dangerous -- social analysis. I have already pointed out the fallacies this has caused in FC's understanding of primitive societies and the acquisition of necessities in industrial society. But FC take these fallacies further. We'll leave aside such minor absurdities as FC's attribution of a lack of interest in having children to a disruption of the "power process". The danger of FC's use of the "power process" as a basis for social analysis becomes evident when it is applied to science. For FC, science is *essentially* a surrogate activity. Scientists get involved in order to "go through the power process", and science is (emphases added):

obedient *only to the psychological needs of the scientists and of the government officials* and

corporation executives who provide the funds for research.

If only it were that simple, but science is not just a surrogate activity to help a few people meet their psychological needs. Science is an integral part of the social system under which we live, an ideological and practical tool for the maintenance and expansion of that social system. It is *this* goal to which science is blindly obedient, and for the social system, science is not a surrogate activity, but a necessary component for its survival. Whatever psychological fulfillment science many provide to its practitioners is simply, like the paycheck, part of the bribe necessary to make people willing to serve the needs of society in this way.

FC are obviously aware of the systemic

nature, at least of industrial technology (even though they don't make the connection to the social system as a whole), yet they are so fixated on their pop psychology concept of the "power process" that they develop tunnel vision and interpret everything through this faulty idea. So they end up lacking a clear analysis of society. This fixation on the "power process" causes FC to describe things as universal problems which are only problems within this present social context because of the necessary contradictions of this society. Thus, "transexuality among American Indian tribes" was no problem, because the tribes in which it occured accepted it without censure. If FC were to study sexual anthropology, they would discover that many sexual practises which are considered perverted by our society are practiced by many primitive people without the stigma of perversion and so were no problem. Such activities become problematic in this society because sexuality is most useful to it when repressed and promoted at the same time -- transforming it into a hard-to-get commodity and into an identity. Thus, the problematic nature of sexuality stems not from a disruption of the "power process" as FC would have it, but from its commodification and separation of sexuality from life is rarely a problem in primitive cultures.

FC define "freedom" as "the opportunity to go through the power process..." The only freedom I consider to be worth pursuing is that my life be my own to determine, that my interactions be my own to create, that my self-enjoyment be central to how I live my life. FC may try to claim that this is what the "power process" is, but their own use of the term proves otherwise. It is a fixed idea through which to interpret the world and w hich one should sacrifice oneself for the sake of. The desire for self-determination and self-enjoyment will move me to fight for myself and possibly even to sacrifice some *things*, but I will sacrifice them *to myself* and will never sacrifice myself. But adherence to a fixed idea (such as the "power process") moves one to fight for the CAUSE, to sacrifice *oneself* to the

CAUSE. As I will show, FC call for just such self-sacrifice, showing that the "power process" has nothing to do with making one's life one's own, but is a fixed idea to be served.

FC'S DESCRIPTION OF INDUSTRIAL-TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY (FC'S THESES 99-160)

having laid the groundwork wioth the fixed idea of the "power process" FC now present their "analysis" (more a description) of industrial-tecghnological society. FC introduce this part of their essay with fivoe "principles of history". As with most radicals for whom "history" is a central concept, they refrain from defining it. I find the five principles to be useless abstractions. They are concerned with

vast social trends and express only the most banal generalities about these trends. The only positivbe thing I have to say on it is that they would lead anyone who desires individual self-determination to conclyude that they musty destroy society itself. But FC use these "principles" as dogmas ny which they interpret industrial society. Nonetheless, this is the best section of FC's essay. Their descriptions of this society are often accurate, though their interpretations are ferquently shallow and poorly thoqught out because of their dependence on fixed ideas and dogma.

FC rightly recognise that the industrial-technological system is not compatible with self-determination, that it must, out of inherent necessity, regulaste people's lives and thast the level of regulation must increase as the system expands, but FC do not recognise that this is true odf the system as an integrated whole -- including its political, cultural and ideological institutions. The *whole* is beyond reform and revolt against the totality is necessary -- which means thast attacks against any part of the social system can be worthwhile as long as they are aimed at taking back one's life. In the same light, just as 'good' and 'bad' parts of technology cannot be seperated, neither can 'good' and 'bad' parts of civilisation as a whole.

Throughout this section, FC describe many horrble aspects or potentials of industrial technology, but provides no social analysis, no recognition that there is an entire social context which creates this technology. One is left to wonder of FC think social context has any significance. Several times, they bring up their belief in the genetic basis of human behaviour as if it were proven fact. Stphen Jay Gould has effectively argued that this is an unproven hypothesis which does not explain human behaviour very well. In any case, I wonder if FC's reliance on psychological models might not stem from their adherence to geneticism. It certainly impoverishes FC's argument by causing them to ignore the social sysstem of which technology is an integral part, making their argument

inadequate and unconvincing in many ways. And it leads FC to propose a revolutionary strategy that is self-sacrificial and, furthermore, absurd.

FC's FIXED IDEA #2: THE REVOLUTION AGAINST THE INDUSTRIAL-TECHNO-LOGICAL SYSTEM (FC'S THESES 161-232)

I oppose not only industrial technology, but technology and civilisation in their totality. So why do I call FC's "revolution against industrial technology" a fixed idea? Because my opposition to civilisation is based on a recognition that civilisation as a system of social relationships makes my life and my axctivities alien to me, so that they are not my own, but are molds into which I am to tryu to fit. I would never willingly sacrifice myself for the

Civilisation as a system of social relationships makes my life and my activities alien to me, so that they are not my own, but are molds into which I am to try to fit. I try to destroy the system *for myself* as a way of taking back my life.

destruction of civilisation. Rather I try to destroy this system *for myself* as a way of taking back my life. For FC,

the destruction of [the industrial] system must be the revolutionaries' ONLY goal ... no other goal can be allowed to compete with that one.

So *I* am to be second to the goasl of destroying industrasl technology. Haviong a goasl for which one is willing to sacrifice oneself changes the nature of the battle against the social system. FC's strategies, aside from being frequently absurd, are also strategies on an immense scale. One almost gets the impression that FC expect to convert a large number of people to their cause who will then be willing to participate in a unified revolution... Since FC make comparisons to the French and Russian revolutions, it seems thast this is their model for revolution, sufficiently modified for use against industrial technology. But both of these revolutions actual moved in the opposite direction to thst which FC calls for. Each created modern states which msde transition to an industrial system easier. I would argue that a unified revolutiion of the sort for which FC call can most likely only lead to the creation of a unified system, not to the destruction of one. If the goal is individual self-determination, then the struggle must start from the individual who united only as one chooses with whom one fights.

Those who have a cause with which to fight rather than fighting for themselves want converts. So FC recommend a method of propagandising which involves inventing an ideology of "Wild Nature vs. Industriasl technology". This manipulative strategy hardly seems conducive to promoting individusl (or small group) autonomy. FC's strategy seems to promote a large grouop dynamic whee a few would lead and most would follow. If this did not seem mostly like FC's fantasy, I would find this part of FC's ideas detestable. But FC are explicit: rthe destruction of the industrial system must be *the top priority*. For this, we should be willing to support dictatorships if that will

destabise the industrial system, support agreements like NAFTA and GATT if they can maske the system topheavy and so easier to push over, and have lods and loads of children because children of revolutionaries supposedly become revolutionarioes (at least according to the genetic theories to which FC apparently subscribe). For FC, there is no social context in which these things arise and for which they occur -- capitalism, technology, the state, the family -- all are nothing for FC, only industrial technology and its destruction matter.

FC make an important point when they tell us that primitive people *as individuals* were actually much better able to take care of themselves than industrialised people who have allowed themselves to become dependent on an immense social system. The significance of this for me is that it means that, to a much grwateer extent than we can know, their lives were their own. But is it only industrial technology that ends this owwness? I have already pointed out that hunter-gatherers apparently pursued the activities necessary for survival without compulsion, except in emergency situations jeg. droughts, severe storms), doing them when they felt like it -- more for the joy of it than out of need. Individuals werre constantly figuring ways of making these activities easier and more enjoyable, but these ways werre not immense systems, but merely tools and methods that individuals could make and use for themselves. The rise of agriculture(not to be mistaken for small-scale gardening) was the introduction of a technological system. It created a compulsory seasonal schedule for the production of food. But agriculture did not rise in a vacuum. Archaeological evidence indicates that agriculture developed in conjunction with the rise of early cities. Cities may, in fact, have come first... There can be no doubt that a concept of exclusive (private or communal) property must have coincided with the development of agriculture. There is also evidence of a connection between religion and agriculture. The early cities already give evidence of structured hierarchies and a specialised warrior class which can rightly be called a state and its army. In other words, the technological system of agriculture arose as pasrt of an integrated social system -- whast we call civilisation. This system, in its totality and through *all* of its structures (technology, the state, economy, religion, the family, work, exclusive property...), took the lives of individuals from them and made these lives the property of society. John Zerzan has presented evidence in a number of his writings that this alienation began well before the rise of civilisation, but this system of social relationships called civilisation changed life qualitatively in ways that made alienation a central defining quality of life. The fatalism and religiosity that are so much a part of agricultural; societies can be seen as an expression of this alienation. Peasants feel more as though things happen to them than that they do things. Industrial technology certainly made a further qualitative change in the nature of alienation. Though farmers are forced to comply with a time schedule rather than doing things in their own time, they still (in peasant cultures, not in agribusiness) are directly producibng their food. In industrial society, the activities into which one is forced in order to earn survival are not even directly related to one's survival needs in any way. They have become complexely alien. But once again, the technology is only *part* of an entire complex, integrated social system, *all* of which acts together to guarantee that we can only gain our survival by giving up our lives to the reproduction of the social system. Those of us who want our lives back annot limit ourselves to

AGAINST IDEOLOGY

FC'ss "only goasl". We have much m,ore to destroy than the industrial system -- we have the whole civilisation to bring down and will attack it on asll fronts; the state and its protectors (cops, the military, bureaucrats...), economy (capitalism, work, property rights asnd so on), technology, religion, education, the family, ideology.... And we won't do this as a cause, but selfishly, because we want our lives back. I want to determine my own life, create my own activities and interactions for my own enjyment. So any "revolution" that demands that I sacrifice myself for its cause is as much my enemy as the social system which demands the same of me. Only a revolution which attacks society in a way that allows individuasls to take back their lives interests me, and such a revolution would grow out of the revolts of individuals against their own alienation, not from a mass programme.

FC's hatred of the technological system has my sympathy and agreement. But I vehemently reject their adherence to fixed ideas, particularly their dependence on a psychological model, the "power process", as a means of analysing the technological system. I wonder if this psychological conception of the problem is why FC, who say that the destruction off the industrial system is "the ONLY goal", has chosen to blow up technicians, researchers and other human servants of the machine rather than large-scale industrial facilities which are more essential parts of the industrial system. Don't get me wrong, everyoner who has been attacked by FC has been working actively toward drastically increasing social control and destruction of wild places. The few deaths are no loss to me -- in fact, I smile, tghinking "One less techniciasn to control my life". But kiling off technocians one by one seems like an extemely slow way to destroy the industrial system...

I have many problems with FC's ideas. Their lack of a clear social analysis and their adherence to fixed ideas prevent them from making a coherent and convincing critique out of their often accurate descriptions of industrial society. Furthermore, FC's fixed ideas channel the whole into an authoritarian and very self-sacrificial conception of

revolution. Nonetheless, FC has been doing sonething to fight the present social system. One may question their tactics, but those who do so from an anarchist armchair or from the position of typical, ineffective and unsatisfying radical activism had best direct equally probing questions at themselves.

AFTERWORD: SOME THOUGHTS ON VIOLENCE

While there has been little response at all to FC's essay, the rwactiobn to their vuiolence has come from nearly all sides. Even Tad Kepley's mostly sympathetic article in *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* #42 was tainted with moralisms regarding violence, in spite of Tad's claim to the contrary. Tad says:

> The anti-authoritarian who makes use of violence ... must be aware of the contradictions in destroying to create, in using violence in the hopes of creating a world without violence.

There are no contradictions in destroying to create -- Every act of creation involves destruction. When one makes a meal, one directly or indirectly kills or mutilates other living things; making a shelter will involve destruction of one form of thing to make another. But it is Tad's second phrase that is more relevant to this question. There certainly would be contradictions in using violence *if* what one wanted was a world without violence; but FC never claims to want a world without violence. FC want a world without a huge global system that destroys the artonomy of individuials and small groups. I also do not want a world without violenode; I want a world in which individuals can create their own lives and interactions in accordance with their desires -- and, in such a world, conflict and, therefore, violence is inevitable. It is the state's monopoly on violence that I oppose, and when individuals use violence against the state (or any other aspect of the system of social control) and its tools, they are breaking that monopoly.

Tad Kepley and the critics of violence are wrong; Taking a life is *not* the ultimate act of domination. Forcing someone -- or hundreds, thousands, millions, billions -- into dependency on

a social system that bleeds their lives away to reproduce itself and in exchange for survival (in the worst cases, not even that) and possibly also a social system that bleeds their lives away to reproduce itself and in exchange for survival (in the worst cases, not even that) and possibly also a

few trinkets and glass beads -- *that* is the ultimate act of domination. The killer lays no claim to the life of the victim until they kill them, and even then they lay no claim to the *life* but only to the ending of that life.

Domination consists of forcing people to give away their life energy while they are living. Certainly, dominators (or dominating institutions) sometimes kill

to enforce their power, but as the cliche says "the living envy the dead".

FC's targets are precisely people who choose, by their research or other work activities, to uphold and increase domination. The "absolute irrevocable

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removal" of such a person takes nothing away from me that I would want to keep. Because I am selfish, I will never willingly sacrifice myself, but I will gladly sacrifice anything or anyone that interferes with my ability to create my own life and interactions as I choose. 'Human community' is an abstraction. Real interactions and associations are those experienced by individuals -- either as self-determined creations or as impositions -- not the mystical connections which spring from such abstractions as 'humanity' or 'species being'. My interactions with cops, high-tech researchers in social control, state bureaucrats, capitalists, religious leaders or any other authority figure, no matter how indirect the interaction, is one in which I am imposed upon, one aimed at making my life alien from me. Such an interaction can only impoverish me. The death of any such a figure of authorirty, therefore, does not impoverish me and may well enrich me. Indeed, it can add a little brightness to my life, knowing that I have successfully managed to attack, in however small a way, the structures of authority -- even if that involves killing someone who has willingly chosen to be a bully-boy for authority. Certainly, it makes more sense tactically to attack targets of more significance than anty individual can ever be in maintaining authority -- but such attacks on property also get condemned by those in power as "mindless terrorism". And they are equally condemned by those who prefer to do nothing but continually beg the state to, please, abolish itself and, in the meantine, be nicer to poor, sweet, harmless little anarchists.

I am not meaning to be overly harsh to Tad. His article at least shows some sympathy for FC's hatred of the technological system and avoids he reactionary hysteria found in *Slingshot* and numerous other anarchist periodicals. But in his assessment of violence, Tad seems to be kissing a bit too much pacifist ass. Destruction of a global social system will involve violence, and that violence would not be ironic or contradictory with its goal; it would be the unconstrained expression of the passion that those who are taking their lives back feel against the system that keeps them alienated.

6

Leftism: a Neurotic Response to a Psychotic Society (Fc's Theses 1-32)

FC's tract strangely begins with several pages critical of leftism. Stranger still this criticism relies completely on psychology (and that of a rather crude 'pop' form). FC uses this as a basis, later on, for a more general description of the psychology of people under the industrials system.

FC sees leftism as having a psychological basis in "feelings of inferiority" and "over-socialisation". Modern american leftism is certainly based in what Max Stirner called *ragamuffinism* and Nietzsche called "ressentiment". Some recent anarchist writings have referred to it as the "ideology of victimism' This ideology does seem to reflect and promote feelings of inferiority, but FC seems to be, unfamiliar with these ideas and adopt instead a methodology reminiscent of pop psychology in their critique Fortunately for FC, leftists are apparently so afraid of any sort of criticism, that they could only respond to FC's inadequate criticism with hysterical yammering.

FC are correct in saying that most American leftists come from middle or upper-class backgrounds. But FC miss what may be the most significant aspects of this in terms of the psychology of leftism namely, that many leftists believe Ural they are privileged, that they have an excess of social power, and they lied guilty about this. In a very Christum, messianic manner, they "give themselves" to those who - according to their ideology - have received the short shift from society. This guilt and secular chnstianist activism explain the leftist masochism, self-sacrifice and dogmatism quite well Recognising the religiosity of leftism, we can see that it can be compassionate, morally based *and* hostile all at once just like Christianity which compassionately and morally instituted pogroms, technological system is a system or it is an integral part of a more to be attacked in its totality But inquisitions. wars and genocide against heretics and non-believers.

FC's attempts to interpret every aspect of the leftist's life in terms of a pop psychology inferiority complex severely weakens the argument leftists, like nearly every one else in this society, lead very compartmentalised lives. I have known leftists who seem to like the blues or world beast music because they imagine such music is a way to get in touch with the feelings of black or thud world people Thus to the extent that leftism affects the art preferences of the leftist*it does not seem Io be in the direction

of embracing defeat or irrationalism, but of trying to get in touch with' other cultures this is absurd and merely reinforces the commodification of these cultures but it does not. in itself, indicate inferiority feelings.

Certainly, leftists spend far too much time trying to prove the equality of oppressed groups and demanding that it be granted by the state, but this does not so much prove the inferiority need to develop analyses of society and the left's role therein that go far deeper feelings of leftists as their adherence to relying on authority It is the leftist belief m a democratic social order — which is to say, a structure of democratic *authority* - which causes them to embrace victimistic ideology, an ideology which *begs* those in power to *grant* equality', 'rights', 'justice', etc. This practise of constantly begging for what one wants (particularly when those wants have been transformed into abstractions which one can never sue accomplished) inevitably makes one feel weak and incapable — and so inferior. Leftist activists promote this form of radicalism because it guarantees their role within the present social structures When women, gays, blacks, etc., start taking their lives as their own as individuals, it brings them into conflict equally with leftist ideologues and with society, precisely because they are no longer *begging* and so no longer need lire leftists Io beg for them.

FC's concept of "oversocialization" also proves to be inadequate because it depends on psychology rather than an analysis of the social role of the leftist. Leftism is a form of liberal democratic / humanist politics - that is, it is part of the political system to which the rise of capitalism and the industrial system gave birth So it is no surprise that leftists subscribe to the ''liberty, equality, fraternity'' which are the shibboleths of such politics But the totality of the social system is far more complex and irrational than FC dunk. The real values of (his system, the ones for which it sacrifices all others, can be summed up rather simplistically as follows (I) the expansion of capital; (2) efficiency in production. (3) increasing social control in the daily lives of individuals to guarantee the first two Beyond these fundamentals, die social system is quite irrational and full of contradictions Thus, the social structure is both anti-racist and racist us each of this tendencies max under different circumstances better serve the above-mentioned values (and. of course, aspects of earlier social structures do not disappear overnight) The same can be said about sexism / anti-sexism, violence / non-violence, war / peace, etc. Leftists arc no more or less " oversocialization" than conservatives, moderates or most radicals Leftists believe that the social system can be rationalised, that Us contradictions can lie removed without destroying the system as a whole So they try to convince the authorities to abolish sexism, racism, violence, war - without realising that, within this social system, these arc a necessary pan of the same mechanism of control of which anti-sexism, anti-racism, non-violence and peace arc a pan - the one side needs the other, just as the right needs the left and vice versa.

I do not deny the neuroses of leftism as evidenced in its guilt, masochism and moral stridency But if we want to make an intelligent attack on the social system - as FC apparently does – we than FCs pop psychology.

Fixed Idea #1: The Power Process (FC's Theses 33- 98)

The first major fixed idea that dominates FC's thoughts is 'the power process'' This idea seems to form the basis of most of FC's analysis, and that's too bad because it's a (flawed idea - |>op psychology reminiscent of 70 s management strategies and self- help books FC describes the power process 'Everyone needs to have goals whose attainment requires effort. and needs to succeed in attaining at least some of these goals But do I need goals? No, I need or want specific dungs Some effort is inherently involved in getting these things and, of course, 1 will be happier if 1 do get diem and if I determine how I get them But to transform tins need for actual dungs into an abstract need for goals, effort and attainment which are simply words dial can be used to describe how one gels what one needs, and then to base an analysis of the present social system on this abstraction is absurd I *have* goals simply because I need or want specific things, but I do not *need* goals – so I not *need a* 'power process''

The 'power process ' is a psychological model and. like all such models, springs from and is only useful within u specific social context The 'Oedipus complex' was a model developed in Victorian Europe which worked well for explaining much of the sexual psychology of victorian Europe over time il has pruned less and less useful and is now used only by die-hard Freudians It has no applicability to ancient Romans, Hopi Indians. Mbute pygmies, medieval English peasants, etc. The "power process' assuming it has any application outside of pop psychology would also have to be understood in terms of a specific social context FC's attempt to universalize it leads to a sloppy understanding of history and anthropology.

FC's anthropology is about 30 years behind the times. FC seem to assume that primitive people needed to spend most of their time and energy satisfying biological needs It has been pretty well established that even in harsh environments. the amount of time primitive people spent m activities which provided their basic needs is about one quarter of the amount of time spent by the average person in industrial society at work In other words, primitive people got the things they wanted with less effort than most of us expend to get what we want In fact since there was no lime schedule which they had to follow to perform these activities, so they could be done whenever one pleased (except in emergencies), it can be argued that primitive societies were societies of total 'leisure'. With the rise of agriculture and cities about 10,000 years ago, the new technological system doubled the amount of time that those who used it

had to spend m meeting their basic needs and placed this activity on a *tnct seasonal time schedule — this could be considered the origin of work Industrial technology drasticallv increased both the amount of work time and the ngidits of scheduling necessan f<» work So most people in our society find themselves so exhausted by activities not of their own making that in what little leisure time they have they often choose to vegetate through passive entertainment This problem is *ahenatum* FC are not completely unaware of thu in otu society people do rau satisfi their biological needs AUTONOMOUSLY, but by functioning as parts of an immense social machine.

Alienation is not merely a psychological problem. Often the most alienated people arc the most adjusted to their alienation. Alienation is the realm of a social system m which our Ines, our activities and our interactions arc not our own to create as we choose, but have been made for us in such a way that we become the property of society the wav s oJ fulfilling our needs and.wants become ven convoluted and indirect, like a Rube Goldberg machine — but it isn i comical I want ftxxL shelter, a few things in give me pleasure So I travel — In car or public transit iwhich have bcawne another necessity I – to a place where I spend eight hours — not masking niv own food »w shelter or phivihtngs — Inil maybe 'hullling papers ar welding paru to parts or serving food tn ⊠trangas .v sitting tn front of a computer processing information that means nothing to me 1 do not do these things because they give me am pleasure — usually they arc miserably tedious tasks In themselves, these tasks serve no purpose for me, they serve the purpose of the boss or corporation for which I do these tasks and they serve the purposes of the social system – in other words, they serve purposes alien to me. What I get for giving up so much of my life to serve an alien cause is *money*. So after work. I have to go out to the shops with the money I got from working to get food, clothing and pleasure items I want - vince n is as compulsory as a job. thi> chopping time should also be c» Hinted as work tunc — and J must pay rent to a land-lord or mortgage to a hank fdor shelter In fact, with the cxceptnwi of a few who refuse, most people sacrifice most of their lives to huv survival and a few plastic trinkets Here there is a goal, an effort of (he most horrendous sort and the attainment of basic necessities — but there is no life, not one that is mv own. The technological system is an essential part of this ahenasuon but not the totality *A* complex social system incorporating work. technology, capital, authmtv. ideology (including religion) and w on. all of which are integrally mien ui this is what turns our Ines into mere resources for society And it must be attacked in its *totality* by those of us who want to take hack our lives.

FC's "power process" seems to me to have a meagre, political view of the world as a constant struggle for -•unival This may well indicate the meagre, sdngv social context from which it springs — for the present era certamh is that But such meagreness will never get us out of tins mess That will take something strong and lively, something so certain of its abundance Oiat it has no fear of squarxiering Stimer speaks of such a thing calling it one s "own might the might of which one makes «me s life one s own. and so cornm u» have an excess of lie — and it is this, rnv lite as mv own, and n«A "the freedom to go through the power process' . that I want

FCs reliance on their fixed idea, the power process' makes for very (xior — and. in my opinion dangerous — social unahsiA I have already punted out the fallacies this has caused in FC's understanding of primitive societies and the acquisition of necessities in industrial society. But I C take these lallacics further Wc II leave aside such minor absurdities as FC s a tin but ion of a lack of interest in having children to a durupb«) of the power process Ihe danger *of FC's use of the* power pr<xxss as a basis for social analysis become- evident when it is applied to science I or FC science is *essentially a* tunogaie activity Scientists get involved in order to "go through the power pruccvs . <m*J xkikz is eniphaMis added

> obedient *only* to the*piytluiloyical* needs *of* the scientists and of Ilir gov-urrunent official* and corporation executives who provide the funds lor research.

If only it were that simple, but science is rn»i just a surrogate activity to help a few people meet their psychological needs Science i> an integral part of the social svstem under which we live, an ideological and practical tool for the maintenance and expansion of that social svstem It is *this* goal to which science is Hindis obedient, and for the oiciul s\ stem, science is not a surrogate acinny. but u necessary component for its survival Whatever psychological lultillmcnt science mass provide to its ITHClitioiKTs is simply, like the paxcheck part of the bribe necc'san to make people willing to serve the needs of socieh m this wav.

FC are obviously aware of the systemic nature at least of industrial technology (even though they don't make the tuai to the social system as a whole), yet they are so fixated on their pop psychology concept of the power pnxccss that they develop tunnel vision and interpret everything through this faulty idea So then end up lacking a clear analysis of society This fixation <m the power process causes FC to describe ihmgs as universal problems which are only problems within this prcseni social context because of the necessary contradictions of this society Ihus. transexuahty among American the tribes m which it occured accepted it without censure If FC were to study sexual anthrojxjlogy thev would discover that many sexual practise which are considered perverted by our society are pcascticed by masny frumtivc people without the stigma of jiervcTxion and so were no problem Such aclivities l>ecome prHilcmauc in this society because sexuality is most useful to it when repressed and promoted at the same lime — transforming n into a hard-to-get commodity and into an identity Thus, the problematic nature of sexuality stems not from *a disruption of* thr power process' as FC would have it, but from its commodificatHMi Such separahon of sexuality from life is rarely a problem in primitive cultures

FC define freedom^ as The opportunity t<» go through the power jxocexs ' The only freedom I consider lo be worth pursuing is that my life he mv own to determine fruit nn interactions be my own to create, that rm iiclfienjuvmcnl be central to liow I Ine my life FC may try to claim that (hi* is uh/it tlsc 'power *pfoyeM"* is. but (heir

own use of the (erm proves otherwise It is a fixed idea through which to interpret the world and w hich one should sacrifice oneself The desire for self-determination and scif-cnjoymcni will move me to fight for inysclf and possibly even to sacrifice vane *ihtnys.* but J will sacrifice them *lo mysrlf* and will *never* sacrifice myself Itoi adherence to a fixed idea (such as the power process) moves one to tight for the CAUSE, to sacrifice *oneself to* the CAUSE As I will show, EC call tor just such self-sacrifice, showing that the |x»wcr process' lias nothing to do with making one's life one's own. but is a fixed idea to be served

FC's Description of Industrial-Technological Society (FC's Thesis 99-160)

having laid the groundwork with tie fixed idea of the "power process" FC now present their "analysis" (more a description) of industrial-technological society FC introduce this part of their essay with five principles of history. As with most radicals for whom "history " is a central concept, they refrain from defining it. I find the five principles to be useless abstractions. Thev arc concerned with vast social trends and express only the most banal generalities about these trends. The only positive thing I have to say on it is that they would lead anyone who desires individual self-detcmunation to conclusion that they must destroy society itself. But FC use these principles as dogmas by which thev interpret industrial society. Nonetheless, this is the best section of FC's essay Their descriptions *of* this society are often accurate, though their interpretations are fcrquentlv shallow and poorly thopught out because of Ihor dqjendence on fixed ideas and dogma

FC rightly recognise that the industnal-technological system w .tot compatible with self-determination, dial it must, out of inhcreo! necessity, rcgulaste people s lives and thasi tlie level of regulation must increa.se as the system expands, but FC do not recognise that this is true exif the system as an integrated whole — including its political, cultural and ideological institutions. The *whole* is beyond reform and revolt against the totality is necessary - which means thast attacks against any part of the social sy stem can be worthwhile as long us they are aimed at taking back one's life In the same light just as g<xxl and 'bud' ports of leduxjlogy cannot bv sejjcraicd. neither can good' and 'had' parts of civilisation as a whole.

Throughout this section. FC describe many horrbic aspects potentiuh *of* industrial technology, but provides no social analysis, no recognition that there is an entire social context which creates this technology One is left to wonder of FC think social context has any significance Several times, ihcy bring up their bchefin the genetic basis of human behaviour as if it were proven fact Stphcn *Jay* Gould has effectively argued that this is an unproven hvp»<ficMs which does nol explain human bchavuxir very well In any case I wonder if FC's reliance on psyetiological models might mot stem from their aiiltcrcncc to geneticism It certainly impoverishes FC's argument by causing them to ignore the social syy stern of which technology is an integral part making their

argument inadequate and unconvincing in many wavs And it leads FC to propose a revolutionary strategy that is self- sacrificial and. furthermore, absurd.

FC's Fixed Idea #2: The Revolution Against the Industrial-Technological System (FC's Theses 161-232)

I oppose not the industrial technology, but technology and civilisation tn their totality. So why do I call FC's revolution against industrial technology a fixed idea? Because my opposition to civilisation is based on a recognition that civilisation as a system of social relationships makes mv life and mv uxctivities alien to me, so that they are not my own, but arc molds into which I am to try u to fit I would never willingly sacrifice mvself lor the destruction of civilisation Rather I try to destroy this system *for myself* as a way of taking back my life. For FC,

> the destruction of [the industrial) svstem must be the revolutionaries ONLY
> goal no other goal can be allowed to compete with that one

So *I* am to be second to the goal of destroying industnasl technology Haviong a goasl for which one is w illing to sacrifice oneself changes the nature of the battle against the sociasl system FC's strategics, aside from being frequently absurd, are also strategics on an immense scale One almost gels the impression that FC expect to convert u large number of people to their cause who will then be willing to participate in a unified revolution Since FC make comparisons to the French and Russian revolutions, it seems that this is then model for evolution. sufficiently modified for use against industrial (cclinology But both of these revolutions actual moved in the opposite direction to that which FC calls for Each created modem states which made transition to an industrial system easier 1 would argue that a unified revolution of the sort for which FC call can most likely only lead to the creation of a unified system, nol to the destruction of one If the goal is individual self-determination, then the struggle must start from the individual who united only us one chooses with whom one fights.

Those who have a cause with which to fight rather than fighting for themselves want converts So FC recommend a method of propagandising which involves inventing an ideology of "Wild Nature vs Industrial technology Ihn manipulative strategy hardly seems conducive to promoting individual (or small group) autonomy FC's strategy seems to promote a large group dynamic whec a few would lead and most would

follow If this did not seem mostly like FC's fantasy, 1 would find this part of FC's ideas detestable Bui FC arc explicit rthc destruction of the industrial system must be *the top priority* For this, we should be willing to support dictatorships if that will destabilise the industrial system, support agreements like NAFTA and GATT if they can mask? the system top-heavy and so easier to push over, and have loads and loads of children because children of revolutionaries supposedly become revolutionaries (al least according to the genetic theories to which FC apparently subscribe), For FC. there is no social context in which these things arise and for which they occur — capitalism technology, the slate, the family - all arc nothing for FC. only industrial technology and its destruction matter.

FC make an important point when they tell us that primitive people ru *individuals* were actually much better able to take care of themselves than industnalused people who haw avowed themselves lo become dependent on an immense social system Hie significance of this for me is that it means (hat. to a much greater extent than we can know, their lives were their own But is it only industrial technology dial ends this ownness? I have already pointed out that hunter- gatherers apparently pursued the activities necessary for survival without compulsion, except in emergency situations >eg droughts, severe storms), doing them when tliey felt like it — more for the joy of it than out oi need Individuals ware constantly figuring ways of making these activities easier and more enjoyable but these wavs were not immense systems, but merely tools and methods thin individuals could make and use lor themselves The rise of agriculture (not to be mistaken for small-scale gardening) was the introduction of a technological system It created a compulsory seasonal schedule for the production of food But agriculture did not nsc in a vacuum Archaeological evidence indicates that agriculture developed in conjunction with the rise of early cities. Cities mav, in fact, have come first There can be no doubt that a concept of exclusive (private or communal) property must have coincided with the development of agriculture There is also evidence of a connection between religion and agriculture The early cities already give evidence of structured hierarchies and a specialised warrior class which can nghliy be called a slate and its armv In other words, the technological system of agriculture arose as pasrt of an integrated social system - whast we call civilisation Ihis system, in its totalirty and thnxigh *all* of us structures (technology, the state economy, religion the family, work exclusive property .). took the lives of individuals from (hem and made these lives the propertv of society John Zerzan has presented evidence in a number of his writings that this ahenastion began well before the rise of civilisation, but this system of social rchitionshijis called civilisation changed life qualitatively in ways fruit made alienation a central defining quality of life The fatalism and religiosity that arc so much u part of agricultural societies can be seen as an expression of this alienation Peasants feel more as though things happen to them than (hat they du things Industrial technology certainly made a further qualitative change in the nature uf alienation Though farmers are forced to comply with a time schedule rad kt than doing things in their own tunc, they still (in peasant cultures, ru>t in agribusiness) arc directly

producibng their food In industrial society, the activities into which one is forced in order to cam survival are not even directly related to one's survival needs in any way. They have become complexdy alien But once again, the Uxlinology is only *part* of an entire complex, integrated social system, *all* of which acts together to guarantee fruit we can only gain our survival by giving up our lives to the reproduction of the social system Those of us who want our lives back anno! limit ourselves to FC's "only goal" We have much more to destroy than the industrial system — wc have the whole civilisation to bring down and will attack it on asll fronts, the state and its protectors (cops, the military, bureaucrats), economy (capitalism, work, property rights asnd so on), technology, religion, education, the family, ideology... And we won t do this as a cause, but selfishly , because we want our lives back I want to determine my own life, create my own activities and interactions for my own enjyment So any "revolution" that demands that I sacrifice mvself for its cause is as much my enemy as the social system which demands the same of me <)nlv a revolution which attacks society in a way that allows indinduusls to take back their lives interests me, and such a resolution would grow out of the revolts of individuals against their own alienation, not from u mass programme

FC's hatred of the technological system has my sympathy and agreement But 1 vehemently reject their adherence to fixed ideas, particularly their dependence on a psychological model, the "power process ", as a means of analysing the technological system I wonccr if this psychological conception of the problem is why FC. who say that the destruction off the industrial system is "the ONLY goal", has chosen to blow up technicians, researchers and other human servants of the machine rather than large-scale industrial facilities which are more essential parts of the industrial system Don't get me wrong, everyone who has been attacked by FC has Ixxri working actively toward drastically increasing social control and destruction of wild places Ihe few deaths arc no loss to me - in fact, I smile, thinking 'One less technician to control my life" But killing oil technicians one by one seems like an extremely slow way to destroy the industrial system.

I have many problems with FC s ideas Fhcir lack of a clear social analysis and their adherence to fixed ideas prevent them from making a coherent and convincing critique out of their often accurate descriptions of industrial society Furthermore, FC's fixed ideas channel the whole into an authoritarian and ven self-sacrificial conception of revolution. Nonetheless, FC has been doing sonething to fight the present social system One may question their tactics, but those who do so from an anarchist armchair or from the position of typical, ineffective and unsatisfying radical activism had best direct equally probing questions at themselves.

Afterword: Some Thoughts on Violence

While there has been little response at all to FC's essay, the reaction to their violence has come from nearly all sides. Even Tad Kepley's mostly sympathetic article in *Anarchy. A Journal of Desire Armed* #42 was tainted with moralisms regarding violence, in spite of Tad's claim to the contrary Tad says:

> The anti-authoritarian who makes use of violence ... must be aware of the contradictions in destroying to create, in using violence in the hopes of creating a world without violence.

There are no contradictions in destroying to create — Every act of creation involves destruction When one makes a meal, one directly or indirectly kills or mutilates other living things making a shelter will involve destruction of one form of thing to make another But it is Tad's second phrase that is more relevant to this question. There certainly would be contradictions in using violence *if* what one wanted was a world without violence, but FC never claims to want a world without violence FC want a world without a huge global system that destroys the autonomy of individuals and small groups I also do not want a world without violence I want a world in which individuals can create their own lives and interactions in accordance with their desires – and, in such a world, conflict and therefore, violence is inevitable It is the state's monopoly on violence that 1 oppose, and when individuals use violence against the stale (or any other aspect of the system of social control) and its tools, they are breaking that monopoly.

Tad Keplev and the critics of violence are wrong; Taking a life is *not* the ultimate act of domination. Forcing someone — or hundreds, thousands, millions, billions – into dependency on a social system that bleeds their lives away to reproduce itself and in exchange for survival (in the worst cases, not even that) and possibly also a few trinkets and glass beads - *that* is the ultimate act of domination. The killer lays no claim to the life of the victim until they kill them, and even then they lay no claim to the *life* but only to the ending of that life. Domination consists of forcing people to give away their life energy while they are living. Certainly, dominators (or dominating institutions) sometimes kill to enforce their power, but as the cliché says "the living envy the dead".

FC's targets are precisely people who choose, by their research or other work activities, to uphold and increase domination The "absolute irrevocable removal" of such a

person takes nothing away from me that I would want to keep Because I am selfish. I will never willingly sacrifice myself, but I will gladly sacrifice anything or anyone that interferes with my ability to create my own life and interactions as I choose 'Human community' is an abstraction. Real interactions and associations are those experienced by individuals – either as self-determined creations or as impositions – not the mystical connections which spring from such abstractions as humanity or species being. My interactions with cops, high-tech researchers in social control, stale bureaucrats, capitalists, religious leaders or any other authority figure, no matter how indirect the interaction is one in which I am imposed upon, one aimed at making my life alien from me. Such an interaction can only impoverish me. The death of any such a figure of authority therefore does not impoverish me and may well enrich me. Indeed, it can add a little brightness to my life, knowing that I have successfully managed to attack, in however small a way, the structures of authority – even if that involves killing someone who has willingly chosen to be a bully-boy for authority. Certainly, it makes more sense tactically to attack targets of more significance than any individual can ever be in maintaining authority — but such attacks on property also get condemned by those in power as "mindless terrorism". And they are equally condemned by those who prefer to do nothing but continually beg the state to, please, abolish itself and, in the meantime, be nicer to poor, sweet, harmless little anarchists.

I am not meaning to be overly harsh to Tad. His article at least shows some sympathy for FC's hatred of the technological system and avoids the reactionary hysteria found in *Slingshot* and numerous other anarchist periodicals. But in his assessment of violence, Tad seems to be kissing a bit too much pacifist ass. Destruction of a global social system will involve violence, and that violence would not be ironic or contradictory with its goal, it would be the unconstrained expression of the passion that those who are taking their lives back feel against the system that keeps them alienated.