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Frontiersman

Facing the truth, however great the cost.

October 2012

Human Society and Its Future

Sam Aurelius Milam III

The personal strengths and weaknesses of a leader are no true indication of the merits of his cause.

—from *Lord of Light*
by Roger Zelazny

In June of 2012, I had occasion to read *Industrial Society and Its Future*, by Theodore John Kaczynski. The document revealed yet another instance of misinformation and defamation by the government. That is, in spite of the widespread condemnation of Kaczynski and the trivialization of his work by the media, the document turned out to be a powerful and relevant description of some very serious problems. It also proved to be yet another disquieting example of how very similar to my own views are those of some of the people who've been harassed, injured, or murdered by the government. Read some of their views and you might just as well be reading mine.

In his document, Kaczynski decried many of the same problems about which I've complained. He criticized many of the same sorts of people that I've criticized, and for many of the same reasons. He predicted that, unchecked, present trends will lead to the eventual redesigning of the human species. People, he predicted, will be genetically engineered into perpetually content and complacent service units for the benefit of industrial society. It's a situation of which I, too, have been afraid.

Kaczynski blamed the problems entirely on industrialization. His solution to the problems is to utterly destroy all industrialization, even to burning the books that would allow it to be rebuilt. I share his concerns but I'm not happy with his solution to the problems. However, consider this. Industrialization is an inevitable consequence of human behavior. It has existed since a human built the first fire. The difference between building a fire and building a city is only a difference of degree. The kind of thinking that leads to the fire is fundamentally different from the kind of thinking that doesn't.

Once that change in thinking has occurred, industrialization is only a matter of time.

Industrialization is inevitable but, contrary to Kaczynski's belief, it isn't either good or evil. It's only powerful. It's a tool. The ruinous circumstances and events that have been attributed to it are not an indictment of industrialization. They're a failure of the people who've caused its misuse. Such people have utilized it for the furtherance of their own agendas, to the detriment of other people. The problems are the result of human attitudes such as greed, arrogance, overweening ambition, ruthlessness, and so forth. Even if we manage to destroy industrial society, it will eventually be developed again, and with the same eventual results. That leads to the rub, which is this.

It doesn't seem likely to me that we will ever cure the deficiencies of human behavior that lead to the misuse of industrialization. Every invention will be a mixed blessing. Sadly, and for some reason that eludes me, the ruinous consequences of misused industrialization seem to be more prolific and more persistent than the beneficial consequences of its proper use. That leads to the unhappy possibility that, maybe, Kaczynski is correct. If industrialization is an inevitable development, if people always use it to create more harm than good, and if the causes of such misuse are incurable, then the only part of the scenario that seems amenable to manipulation is the progress of industrialization after it begins. Maybe, as Kaczynski advocates, beyond some point industrial society must be destroyed.¹ Then, human society will be plunged back into the squalor of pre-industrial times. People will suffer but, at least, they'll still be people. They won't be engineered service units. That's a grim and gloomy prospect. I've given it some thought² but if any of you have any better suggestions then we ought to consider them. ¶

1 See my story *The Watchhounds of Ambit*, Wednesday, June 3, 1992, available on my personal website.

2 See my essay *The Lone Raver Writes Again*, Friday, April 12, 2002, available on *Pharos*.

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An Excerpt from *Industrial Society and its Future*

Theodore John Kaczynski

121. A further reason why industrial society cannot be reformed in favor of freedom is that modern technology is a unified system in which all parts are dependent on one another. You can't get rid of the "bad" parts of technology and retain only the "good" parts. Take modern medicine, for example. Progress in medical science depends on progress in chemistry, physics, biology, computer science and other fields. Advanced medical treatments require expensive, high-tech equipment that can be made available only by a technologically progressive, economically rich society. Clearly you can't have much progress in medicine without the whole technological system and everything that goes with it.

122. Even if medical progress could be maintained without the rest of the technological systems, it would by itself bring certain evils. Suppose for example that a cure for diabetes is discovered. People with a genetic tendency to diabetes will then be able to survive and reproduce as well as anyone else. Natural selection against genes for diabetes will cease and such genes will spread throughout the population. (This may be occurring to some extent already, since diabetes, while not curable, can be controlled through use of insulin.) The same thing will happen with many other diseases susceptibility to which is affected by genetic degradation of the population. The only solution will be some sort of eugenics program or extensive genetic engineering of human beings, so that man in the future will no longer be a creation of nature, or of chance, or of God (depending on your religious or philosophical opinions), but a manufactured product.

123. If you think that big government interferes in your life too much NOW, just wait till the government starts regulating the genetic constitution of your children. Such regulation will inevitably follow the introduction of genetic engineering of human beings, because the consequences of unregulated genetic engineering would be disastrous....

124. The usual response to such concerns is to talk about "medical ethics." But a code of ethics would not serve to protect freedom in the face of medical progress; it would only make matters worse. A code of ethics applicable to genetic engineering would be in effect a means of regulating the genetic constitution of human beings. Somebody (probably the upper-middle class, mostly) would decide that such and such applications of genetic engineering were "ethical" and others were not, so that in effect they would be imposing their own

values on the genetic constitution of the population at large. Even if a code of ethics were chosen on a completely democratic basis, the majority would be imposing their own values on any minorities who might have a different idea of what constituted an "ethical" use of genetic engineering. The only code of ethics that would truly protect freedom would be one that prohibited ANY genetic engineering of human beings, and you can be sure that no such code will ever be applied in a technological society. No code that reduced genetic engineering to a minor role could stand up for long, because the temptation presented by the immense power of biotechnology would be irresistible, especially since to the majority of people many of its applications will seem obviously and unequivocally good (eliminating physical and mental disease, giving people the abilities they need to get along in today's world). Inevitably, genetic engineering will be used extensively, but only in ways consistent with the needs of the industrial-technological system....

128 While technological progress AS A WHOLE continually narrows our sphere of freedom, each new technical advance CONSIDERED BY ITSELF appears to be desirable. Electricity, indoor plumbing, rapid long-distance communications ...-how could one argue against any of these things, or against any other of the innumerable technical advances that have made modern society? It would have been absurd to resist the introduction of the telephone, for example. It offered many advantages and no disadvantages. Yet, as we explained in paragraphs 59-76, all these technical advances taken together have created a world in which the average man's fate is no longer in his own hands or in the hands of his neighbors and friends, but in those of politicians, corporation executives and remote, anonymous technicians and bureaucrats whom he as an individual has no power to influence.... The same process will continue in the future. Take genetic engineering, for example. Few people will resist the introduction of a genetic technique that eliminates a hereditary disease. It does no apparent harm and prevents much suffering. Yet a large number of genetic improvements taken together will make the human being into an engineered product rather than a free creation of chance (or of God, of whatever, depending on your religious beliefs). ∞

*I suggest my essays *Ravin' Evermore*, Monday, August 12, 1991, and *The Lone Raver Writes Again*, Friday, April 12, 2002. They're both available on *Pharos*.*

—editor

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An Excerpt From *Biometric surveillance*

from *Surveillance*, by Wikipedia

Downloaded Friday, February 3, 2012

Biometric surveillance refers to technologies that measure and analyze human physical and/or behavioral characteristics for authentication, identification, or screening purposes.... Examples of physical characteristics include fingerprints, DNA, and facial patterns. Examples of mostly behavioral characteristics include gait (a person's manner of walking) or voice.

Facial recognition is the use of the unique configuration of a person's facial features to accurately identify them, usually from surveillance video. Both the Department of Homeland Security and DARPA [*Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency* –editor] are heavily funding research into facial recognition systems.... The Information Processing Technology Office, ran a program known as Human Identification at a Distance which developed technologies that are capable of identifying a person at up to 500 ft by their facial features.

Another form of behavioral biometrics, based on affective computing, involves computers recognizing a person's emotional state based on an analysis of their facial expressions, how fast they are talking, the tone and pitch of their voice, their posture, and other behavioral traits. This might be used for instance to see if

a person is acting “suspicious” (looking around furtively, “tense” or “angry” facial expressions, waving arms, etc.)....

A more recent development is DNA fingerprinting, which looks at some of the major markers in the body's DNA to produce a match. The FBI is spending \$1 billion to build a new biometric database, which will store DNA, facial recognition data, iris/retina (eye) data, fingerprints, palm prints, and other biometric data of people living in the United States. The computers running the database are contained in an underground facility about the size of two American football fields....

The Los Angeles Police Department is installing automated facial recognition and license plate recognition devices in its squad cars, and providing handheld face scanners, which officers will use to identify people while on patrol....

Facial thermographs are in development, which allow machines to identify certain emotions in people such as fear or stress, by measuring the temperature generated by blood flow to different parts of their face.... Law enforcement officers believe that this has potential for them to identify when a suspect is nervous, which might indicate that they are hiding something, lying, or worried about something.... ∞

Fatal Flaw

Sam Aurelius Milam III

The proper applications of biometric identity are much more limited than is generally believed, for a very good but generally unacknowledged reason. Here's the reason. So far as I'm aware, the idea that every individual's biometric features are unique is only a theory. Whatever opinions might be presented in support of the theory, it isn't proven until a person's fingerprint (or whatever) is compared to every other fingerprint (or whatever) in the entire world with the result that the fingerprint (or whatever) being tested is different from every other fingerprint (or whatever) in the world. Anything short of that isn't irrefutable. Even if such a comparison was made, it would become obsolete after the birth of the next child.

The fact that my fingerprint is on an object doesn't prove that I was there. It might prove that I'm one of an unknown number of people who might have been there. It might prove

only that somebody lifted my fingerprint from one location and placed it in another location. So, a fingerprint (or whatever) might be useful for a door lock. The likelihood of someone else with an identical fingerprint trying to enter a particular door is probably small. However, the idea that each fingerprint is unique is mere opinion, however widely and expertly held. As proof of guilt, where punishment is a possibility, it's entirely unacceptable. Would you like to face the possibility of time in prison, or of execution, based on a theory that's only a widely held assumption and, worse yet, an assumption that has been made by scientists?

Every convict who has ever been incarcerated based on biometric evidence ought to be released immediately. With regard to people who've been executed as a consequence of biometric evidence, the fatal flaw in the theory is an excellent argument in favor of human fallibility and an even better argument against the death penalty. ¶

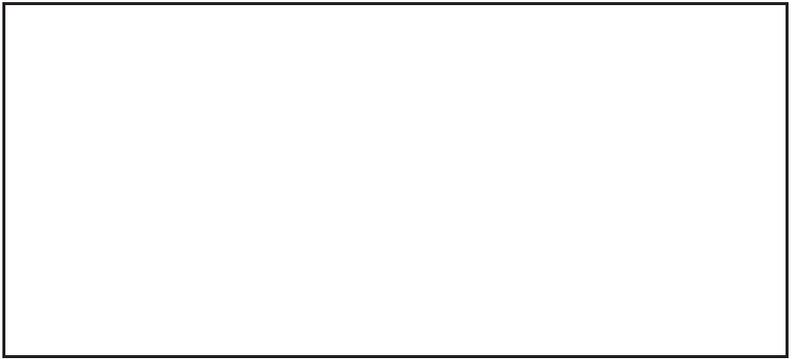
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Nation in Distress

The concept of “mental health” in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress. —paragraph 119
Industrial Society and Its Future
Theodore John Kaczynski



Acknowledgments

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Useful Units of Measure

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by David, of Idaho Falls, Idaho.

- Two thousand pounds of Chinese soup:
won ton
- The time between slipping on a banana peel and smacking the pavement:
one bananosecond
- Three statute miles of intravenous surgical tubing at Yale University Hospital:
one I.V. league
- One millionth of a mouthwash:
one microscope
- The speed of a tortoise breaking the sound barrier:
mach turtle

∞

Statements Attributed to Al Gore

Original Source Unknown. Forwarded by Lady Jan the Voluptuous. I didn't try to verify any of them.

- Mars is essentially in the same orbit as Earth.... Mars is somewhat the same distance from the Sun, which is very important. We have seen pictures where there are canals, we believe, and water. If there is water, that means there is oxygen. If oxygen, that means we can breathe.
—August 11, 1994
- The Holocaust was an obscene period in our nation's history. I mean in this century's history. But we all lived in this century. I didn't live in this century.
—September 15, 1995
- I believe we are on an irreversible trend toward more freedom and democracy, but that could change.
—May 22, 1998

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—Sam Aurelius Milam III, editor

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