

# Letters to the Fifth Estate

Various Authors

1997

## Fifth Estate Letters Policy

The Fifth Estate always welcomes letters commenting on our articles, stating opinions, or giving reports of events in local areas. We don't guarantee we will print everything we receive, but all letters are read by our staff and considered.

Typed letters or ones on disk are appreciated, but not required. Length should not exceed two double-spaced pages. If you are interested in writing a longer response, please contact us.

## Don't Lose the Fifth Estate

If you move but don't notify us directly, you will miss the next issue. Second class mail is not forwarded, even if you notify the Post Office. Please write us before moving and include your old address and zip.

## WASP Supremacy

To the FE:

Beni's review of Ellen Chesler's biography of Margaret Sanger (see FE #348, Fall 1996) omits mention of Sanger's treacherous "marriage of convenience" to the eugenics movement to legalize contraception by riding the tails of flagrantly racist, anti-immigrant and anti-working class nativists.

The very same "good ole boys" brought us the Palmer Raids, the deaths of Sacco and Vanzetti and the revival of the KKK in a wave of violent repression aimed at preventing ideas of the bolshevik revolution from becoming a material force in the U.S. Sanger did not merely recant her anarchism and remain "a radical and socialist" as Beni concluded, but became the international spokeswoman for population control in the name of WASP racial supremacy.

"More children from the fit, less from the unfit—that is the chief issue of birth control," wrote Sanger in 1919. From there, Sanger continued the downhill slide according to Linda Gordon in *Woman's Body, Woman's Right*. By the 1930s, she was recommending sterilization or gender segregation of "the whole dysgenic population" in the interest of "our way of life."

Sanger and her heirs are infamous for adding "population control" to the U.S. arsenal for use in promoting "stability," i.e., maintaining oppressive regimes in the Third World.

These are peculiar omissions for a review in the Fifth Estate, a publication I have long admired for its excellent critique of the chauvinism underlying Dave Forman's misanthropic brand of Deep Ecology—a genealogical descendant of the above movements.

Susan Simensky Bietila  
Milwaukee, Wis.

## A Bit Long

To the FE:

I purchased and read *Beyond Bookchin* by David Watson. There were some very good points made, but a general critique I have is that it was a bit long—especially the quotes from other writers.

A comrade and I have been co-facilitating an anarchist history class through the Free Skool at the Infoshop, and I've found that even among the folks who are genuinely interested in reading and learning about this stuff, it's difficult to get them to read more than 30 pages a week.

I was at Powell's Books in Portland last night and they had a little "New Title" sign under Bookchin's tract, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*, with a recommendation written on it. I took out my trusty pencil and enhanced the sign with a rebuttal and a suggestion to look three shelves below to Watson's book. I'll go back tomorrow to make sure it's still there, and if not, I guess I'll photocopy some choice words and insert them in Bookchin's book.

I was a little disappointed with your Unabomber article (see "The Unabomber & the Future of Industrial Society," FE #348, Fall 1996). Seems to me that the main thing we can all do (while we wait to see how Ted would like his supporters to help) is to expose past FBI (mis)conduct and the way the State and the prosecution are spoonfeeding the media. The feds have had their image tarnished since the Ruby Ridge and Waco disasters, plus their recent spy scandal, so they'll try to do this one perfectly.

We have to make sure they don't succeed effortlessly. Recent revelations in the Geronimo Pratt case help our side a lot.

Stay Warm,  
Lawrence  
Oakland, Calif.

## Be Anarchying

FE Comrades:

Yes, an original Fall 1996 FE; a social novel, a book of anarchy, collection of letters, scrap paper notes, a narrative of ecotopia.

I anger over the old question:

All species of the fascist money-recognition power of the present economic, educational, political, medical are saprophytic theofascist and have been joined to the WO/MAN of homo sapiens rooting to All-Life.

It is. It is that we need anarchy coming, coming to Act; coming to Act, within the necessities of all the living.

Be anarchying in yr ways and all yr days.

Daniel de Culla

Burgos, Spain

**FE note:** *This World We Must Leave and Other Essays* by Jacques Camatte, is available from FE Books, \$9 plus postage (see our book page for ordering information).

## Unabomber 1

Dear Fifth Estate:

As you will notice, our address has changed yet again. If the address has the word "Box" in it, the Post Office delays delivery, because they have a monopoly on boxes! But if you use the word "Suite" instead, they are happy. The government is making it difficult to use anonymous means of communication.

The excuse is terrorism, despite the fact that most of the bombs that go off in the USA have government fingerprints all over them. The anti-terrorism campaign is obviously manufactured by the state, and has the aim of increasing control of people's lives, by getting them to accept "security" as a necessary part of life. I'm not sure that your own responses to this campaign have recognized this. As you will notice in the article, "The New Bad Guys,"

in the enclosed *Wildcat*, we criticize your response to the Oklahoma bombing on the grounds that you assume Tim McVeigh is guilty. If he was black, you wouldn't have done this.

Fall 1996 of your esteemed organ [FE #348] features a major piece about the Unabomber which doesn't go so far as stating that Ted Kaczynski is guilty. Though he is white and male, he doesn't have a short haircut like McVeigh. However, you fall somewhat short of offering Kaczynski the solidarity he requires, whether innocent or guilty. In many places in this article, you make a point of equating the Unabomber's acts with those of the capitalist system.

It's difficult to get a precise grip on your long and rather unfocused article, but I think its conclusions can be summarized thusly:

- \* The Unabomber's attacks were unjustifiable, because his victims were innocent
- \* It is equally unjustifiable to turn in your brother to the FBI
- \* The Unabomber's critique of industrial civilization has nothing in common with ours
- \* It is irresponsible to mention the *Fifth Estate* as a possible inspiration for the Unabomber because the police might get angry with us
- \* No matter how wicked the Unabomber may be, Colin Powell is much worse
- \* People who sympathize with the Unabomber are mistaken
- \* The Unabomber's actions were part of the problem, typical of the smoldering disaffected men who are just as likely to kill their ex-wives as their boss
- \* Terrorist acts can never be revolutionary because they are nasty
- \* Terrorism is undemocratic, and only a majority can halt Leviathan
- \* Communities working together to transform society, not bombs, is the answer

Random quotes from Taoists and hippies fail to disguise the proximity of these views to those of the liberal left. Leftists counterpose mass action to individual terrorism, as if they are incompatible. They also contrast majorities to minorities, while adding that, of course, minorities can make a difference. They equate the terrorism of the state with its enemies, as you do throughout this article.

They "defend" those charged with terrorism by pointing out that the top brass of the army have killed more people. This amounts to putting them on the same level. In short, I think your fire has been so suffocated by feminism, pacifism and other liberal attitudes" over the years that you have been unable to notice just how much a part of the establishment these attitudes now are.

Having said all this, it is true that sending letterbombs is not a revolutionary tactic. The chance of a postman or receptionist getting blown up is high, and has happened many times. But solidarity, first with Ted Kaczynski because he is either innocent or a coherent enemy of civilization, and secondly, with the Unabomber, whether or not he and Ted are one and the same, is an essential precondition for criticism. Your response fell short.

Keep up the good work—in fact, improve it!

Richard Tate

Wildcat

1224 Broadway, Suite 108

Burlingame Calif. 94010

## Grow Wild!

Hi:

I liked the Unabomber article which raised interesting points. I had to laugh when I read the footnote about John Zerzan's critique of agriculture. I haven't read much of his stuff, but this is an idea I have long wrestled with and read about.

Fredy Perlman talks about it in *Against His-story, Against Leviathan* saying the first hierarchical, authoritarian, patriarchal societies arose at the same time as agriculture. Agriculture requires people to be tied down to the land, to work long and hard, and to manipulate nature in hundreds of ways.

This past summer I rediscovered this fascinating farmer/writer/crusader, Masonubu Fukuoka, who practices semi-wild agriculture with no cultivation, weeding, fertilizer, or pest control. It may be that insects often prefer plants we consider “weeds” to our “crops” when they are allowed to grow together.

These are ideas I am exploring in reading and in practice on a little patch of dirt behind my house. Fukuoka makes all the connections between petrochemical farming and corporations and the amount of labor both traditional Japanese and modern farmers must use to grow their crops. A good read is the out-of-print, *The Natural Way of Farming*, but libraries stock it.

Grow Wild!

Nicole

Ottawa, Ontario

## **Saving Up**

Fifth Estate:

Enclosed is my renewal to your subversive journal. I would have sent more, but I'm saving for an overnighter in the Lincoln bedroom.

Savagely,

Charles Bateman

Sacramento, Calif.

## **Against Oppression**

Dear Fifth Estate:

I'm a prisoner in Illinois who has received *Fifth Estate* in the past, but was transferred to another prison, and would like to continue receiving your paper.

I've been very busy fighting against the administration in every possible way—mostly fighting the blatant disregard for their own rules, while insisting that we obey them. I've been busy, there's no question of that.

Grievances, working from within the library to help educate the brothers in here; there's just so much to do. Most of my work has been to write for zines, and put out my own zine, to raise the level of awareness of people outside prison. I don't press my political beliefs on anyone, but try to show how hypocritical the government really is, and how we as a people need to stand against oppression in every form.

Racism has not been a factor on my unit. I've been very happy with the level of understanding and tolerance of the differences between the different cultures. Muslim and Christian, black & white, we're all working pretty well together, and I have to thank the brothers who've been so helpful in guiding each other toward a better understanding of the true enemy. Fighting among ourselves never gains anything.

Recently, the Illinois Dept. of Corrections began taking away property and privileges of people in segregation. No longer can prisoners have personal clothing, food, cigarettes, or write letters while in seg. TVs and radios are taken, and only one book or magazine is allowed. There was a protest planned because of this, but the planning fell apart before it could even begin. I'm told that there was a problem with the different gangs agreeing on things.

Ron Campbell #N-30537 P.O. Box 900

Ina, Ill. 62846

## **Looking in Peoria**

Dear FE:

I am looking for help finding anarchists in Peoria. Thus far, I have seen a few people with mohawks, but I'm not sure if their anarchy extends further than listening to the Subhumans and going to shows.

The only group working for social change that I've found remotely acceptable is the Socialist Worker's Party, but I'm getting sick of their preaching about the wonders of Castro's Cuba. Plus, their bookstore has only authoritarian socialist books.

I am in town for college, and leave during the summer, so I don't have the local base to start and maintain a local organization(s). Would any anarchist individuals or groups please contact me at: 1307 W. Bradley Ave., Rm. 42, Peoria IL 61606

Brian Gondek  
Peoria, Ill

## Neoist Chum

Dear 5<sup>th</sup> Estate:

While Fabian Tompsett accuses *Green Anarchist* of "offering a right-wing version of anarchism" (see Letters, FE #348, Fall 1996) he attacks anarcho-primitivism as a whole.

Tompsett and his Neoist chum, Stewart "Truth is the enemy" Home, are "having some problems with Green Anarchist," as he says, because of neoist tracts like *Green & Brown Anarchist* where they have us applauding Nazism, and *Green Apocalypse* where they absurdly argue anarchists and Nazis are the same "Bakuninists." In his pamphlet *Militias*, Tompsett accuses groups as diverse as Class War and the anarchist-Communist Federation and veteran anti-fascists like Stuart Christie and Larry O'Hara of being "fascistic" or "cheak" [sic] by jowl with apostles of the far-Right." This typifies Neoist "debate and reflection."

They're throwing these smears because they are intimate with fascists. Home first smeared GA in October 1994 within a week of us exposing fascist Richard Lawson and ex-GA editor Richard Hunt's involvement in the neo-nationalist Trans-Europa Collective. He obviously did this for Tony Wakeford, also of Trans-Europa, who Home slavishly describes as "a genius." As lead singer of black-shirted Death in June, Wakeford sung such odes to the SS as "We Drive East" and Home even uses fascist slogans in print (e.g., "Long Live Death" in his book, *What is Situationism?* (AK Press, 1996). Tompsett only admitted his involvement in *La Guerre Sociale*, apologists for Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson, when challenged about this last year (see his *Sucked*, p. 2).

Tompsett's 'critique' of FC [the Unabomber] is as insincere and absurd as his of GA; read in context, they're just saying what Perlman did, that "the natural reaction to dehumanization is resistance." The reference to "welfare leaches" surely shows FC have no particular sympathy for any of the diverse subcultures cited. Tompsett only attacks FC in an attempt to win sympathy from an Amerikan audience generally cowed by the FBI and to obstruct the growth of anarcho-primitivism in the UK.

It's easier for a largely conservative, workerist milieu in UK to dismiss Industrial Society & Its Future as "right-wing" than to answer questions it raises about the division of labour that their ideology is just not equal to. GA doesn't uncritically support FC—our introduction to *Industrial Society & Its Future* challenges its "reductionism and machismo" and our most recent issue printed formerly Feral Faun's excellent *Fixed Ideas* and *Mail Bombs*—but we do think they've more to offer revolution-wise than Tompsett's three-sided football matches and his pseudo-occultist London Psycho-geographical Association Newsletter (cheap laughs for post-modern yuppies).

For fuller documentation of this dispute, send \$3 for *Stewart Home and his Fascist Friends* from BM Box 4769, London WC1N 3XX. For firm proof the Unabomber suspect's been framed by the Feds, write to the Ted Kaczynski Defence Campaign c/o Green Anarchist, BCM 1715, London WC1N 3XX U.K.

Yours, for the destruction of Civilization,  
Oxford GAs

**FE responds:** We printed this letter because the authors, who had a letter in the Spring 1996 issue, demanded a chance to respond to a letter from Fabian Tompsett attacking them in our last issue. Its tone and relative incomprehensibility may give our readers a sense of a feud going on in England between Green Anarchist and the Neoist Alliance. While space limitations kept it out of this issue, we will be commenting on this feud and questions it raises in the upcoming issue. For now, let us say that the literature we have received from both sides makes us relieved there's a big ocean between us and Albion.

## Unabomber 2

Dear F.E. Folks:

Thank you all for a fine Fall 1996 issue, especially “The Unabomber And The Future Of Industrial Society” by T. Fulano, which is the best anti-authoritarian analysis of the subject we’ve read. We reprinted it in pamphlet form to distribute to folks who are not regular *Fifth Estate* readers. We also hope to get together a group to discuss the issues focused on in the article, along with those in David Watson’s *Beyond Bookchin*, as part of our on-going exploration of criticisms of technology.

We are particularly anxious to have this discussion because some anarchists have been enthusiastic supporters of the Unabomber. In Spring 1996, we attended an anarchist conference in Olympia, Washington (the Olympia Collective Circus), where a text was distributed in which the author criticized the Unabomber’s simplistic theoretical writing. (FE note: this text, by “Formerly Feral Faun,” has since been reprinted in *Green Anarchist* number 44–45 as “Fixed Ideas and Letter Bombs.”) After the criticism of the Unabomber’s “fixed ideas,” the author goes on to say he does not have major objections to the Unabomber’s tactic of using bombs to attack the willing masters and servants of modern technological tyranny because they are the enemies of life, and, the author asserts, he is pleased whenever the masters and servants of the technological order are killed by such bombs. This author argues that killing such individuals is not incongruent with anti-authoritarian principles, because it does not actually deprive the people killed of their freedom in a significant way, since it only takes their lives.

He asserts that people who kill only momentarily interfere with the murdered person’s freedom, while the masters and servants of the modern technological order deprive people of freedom for the duration of their lives: “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...” We find this to be a sickening and depressing perspective, as well as being a danger to the ongoing creation of human beings attuned to the development of real social relations with other living creatures. Despite the admirable goal of stopping the megamachine’s progress, this kind of “anarchist” justification of the acts of self-designated executioners is not substantially different from the heinous reasoning and atrocities of the rulers

If we want to go beyond this modern murderous social order, we have to cultivate a respectful attitude toward all life, which recognizes the validity of killing only for actual survival reasons, as in direct self-defense, immediate defense of others, or to avoid individual or group sickness, malnutrition or outright starvation. And even in such situations, we need to remember that taking the life of another creature is not something to be done lightly or unthinkingly, or to impose our wills on others. Moreover, relishing killing anyone, even the most abominable individual or group, strongly endangers our own goals of creating a libertarian communitarian society.

Although we have all felt the desire to have our dominators vanish from the scene, to savor the pleasure of any of their murders would be to allow ourselves to accept their brutal perspective that all living creatures, and the Earth itself should only be allowed to exist at the pleasure of those with the tools of death, and then only under conditions dictated by the “strongest.” It would also mean ratifying those worst human traditions and moral values which sanction destruction of other creatures’ lives as an acceptable pleasure, rather than those which recognize such acts as difficult necessities to be resorted to as infrequently as possible, and with sincere thought and great regret.

In this respect, there is something we can learn from the first human inhabitants of this continent. Although most pre-Columbian native North American tribes were far from pacifist, most did not have a conqueror mentality. They were therefore able to concentrate on creating and recreating communitarian, and often non-authoritarian social relationships among themselves, for which they generally recognized the importance of cultivating all tribal members capacities for respect for others, compassion, cooperation and sharing, over skill and efficiency in ending the lives of adversaries.

Because native peoples lacked an emphasis on taking life as the main goal, the “civilized” European invaders—who measured their own superiority over other animals and people in terms of their capacity to enslave and kill—concluded that the native peoples weren’t really serious soldiers, and only played at war. As the inheritors of the social world the conquerors built, we should understand the devastating results (both past and present) of their lack of respect, consideration and compassion for all but the most efficient killers.

It is one major reason why the dream of venting the deeply-rooted pervasive rage which modern society inspires in generally unfocused acts of mayhem against crowds of innocent strangers has been turned into reality all too often. It is a part of our anti-social character heritage which, if not consciously negated, can block our movement toward a more social world.

The Unabomber's proposal that revolutionaries do everything possible to bring about the collapse of the modern technological world, so as to avoid technology's far more destructive triumph, without worrying about the process of collectively building alternatives, is not only similar to the callous, elitist, manipulative modern ruling class approach. It has certainly also been one perspective advocated and implemented by some authoritarian "revolutionaries" and romanticized by many anarchists in the past and present.

But even the most desirable social values can not be imposed by force or coercion. Imposing social changes on people can, perhaps, superficially alter societal structures. However, in the process it inevitably cripples both people's ability to think and feel in nonhierarchical social ways, and thus undermines rather than assists the possibilities for establishing genuine egalitarian forms of sociability. Traditional civilized and capitalist power structures foster our isolation and alienation. They work against our developing any authentic sense of compassion for our fellow creatures—human or nonhuman. Our resistance must involve striving to construct the social bonds necessary to promote social solidarity, cooperation, and responsibility for the fate of others.

While we cannot simply harbor naive beliefs that our attempts to create egalitarian social practice alone can change social structure and unseat hegemonic ideology, challenging those hierarchies requires the building of egalitarian and cooperative habits of thought, and experiments in collective practice, as part of direct involvement in specific struggles against domination, repression and destruction of the basis of life. It is important for us to attempt to create social relations that can foster a more egalitarian and liberatory society, one that establishes individual habits of thoughts and customary structures that help to integrate our desires for both individuality and community.

We strongly agree with T. Fulano that we cannot "find our way through the examples of either lone assassins or terrorist cells." Our only real hope lies in intentionally cooperative and concretely egalitarian communities of people working both within and against this' society to transform it. While we cannot look to any definitive victories of anti-authoritarian -rebels to help guide us in our struggles, we can gain some hope and inspiration from a variety of past and present social movements and cooperative endeavors around the world—from the egalitarian Mexican revolutionaries of the beginning of the century and today, to the I.W.W., to the popular militias and collectives of the 1936–1939 Spanish Revolution, to the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1940s through 1960s, to the worldwide insurgency of students and workers of 1968, to the numerous movements for social justice in the 1970s through the 1990s in so many places. As people have retained or recreated a certain sense of social cohesion and solidarity, it has enabled them to rebel through constructive anti-authoritarian participation—which, we are convinced is the only possible way out of the self-destructing civilization constructed and energized by the megamachine.

We all need to explore these kinds of connections between political ideologies and modern technology, and individuality and sociability in greater depth, because in a real sense, our lives do depend on it.

Yours for a new world,

Sylvie

P.O. Box 17138

Seattle, Wash. 98107

**Fulano replies:** Thanks for your praise and for your comments. The sophomoric reasoning of the "Letter Bombs" article reveals how intellectually impoverished and ethically derelict much of so-called anarcho-primitivism has turned out to be, a subject to be taken up in our next issue. Sylvie's letter was edited for space considerations.

## The Holy Grail

Dear Fifth Estate:

David Watson's *Beyond Bookchin* is excellent, a wonderful follow-up to the 1989 Return of the Son of Deep Ecology special issue [FE #331, Spring 1989].

My only negative comment concerns his statement that “chaos theory may suggest more satisfying ideas about the structure of the cosmos...” A long passage from N.J. Girardot’s *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism* follows. Although Watson qualifies his statement with “may suggest,” I find this type of argument highly problematic.

As you well know, in our culture scientists enjoy a level of credibility unmatched by any high priestess) of other ages; their official role is that of seekers of truth and wisdom. Mathematicians and physicists (in this order) are at the top of the scientist-heap; they consider themselves to be intellectually superior beings who alone have the right to make profound statements, even in areas removed from their disciplines. This isn’t the case, of course; when a mathematician writes a book about the philosophy of mathematics, for example, the results are usually dismal.

Still, over the years there has been a steady stream of popular science books in which various authors have unveiled the latest Holy Grail: in the 1910s it was catastrophe theory; in the 1980s we had (and still have) chaos theory; Quantum so-and-so seems to be ever present. However, books such as James Gleick’s *Chaos* are nothing but attempts to impress the scientifically illiterate with new buzzwords—straightforward sophistry. Chaos itself is a subfield of dynamic systems, a subject concerned mainly with studying the iterations of mappings. However, this doesn’t stop the flood of writings by authors name-dropping “chaos this,” “chaos that,” and impressing large numbers of people in the process.

Watson’s use of this metaphor (if this metaphor is indeed reasonable) is limited. However, I have seen works by some anarchists in which the supposed findings of chaos theory are used as a justification of anarchist ideas. Perhaps it is enough for these authors to consider the consequences of such a view—for example, suppose that some mathematician develops a more general theory involving a set of theorems and conjectures which explain most of the phenomena in another framework—the “mysteries” of chaos will vanish, its supposed insights revealed as illusions caused by incomplete theories. It would then follow that we could all forget about anarchist ideas, as their basis has been proven fallacious.

Of course, ancient Taoist texts and the study of mathematical functions are disparate areas of knowledge. How exactly does “chaos” show us something about the world? If the claim is that some physical process being modeled, well maybe; but here we are back to doing physics. Is there some “evolutionary dynamic system” or a “cultural dynamic system,” perhaps? The thinnest metaphors are being stretched here. You can look at the graphs of various functions in mathematics and see just about anything.

These flimsy metaphors get attention, even among people who claim to ask fundamental questions about our culture, because of the cultural rule of science, as I mentioned and which Watson discusses in *Beyond Bookchin*. Watson should be careful when using this chaos stuff to refute Bookchin’s positivism.

If I’m going a little overboard with this, forgive me; but the genuflection to science in this society is nothing less than mystification born of ignorance. And it keeps getting worse; witness biopsychiatry and its claims to have found a physiological basis for “affective disorders,” whatever these are.

As I see it, there are two questions to consider first, suppose that some theory came to prominence in science that cast doubt on the ability of science to describe and predict some important phenomena. Is this a good thing? Second, is “chaos” such a theory? My answer to the first question is an unenthusiastic “yes.” As Watson suggests, there are many points of view; if one can get a wiser perspective on science from this new theory, that’s an improvement. Surely, there are lots of examples of scientists arriving at Deist-style mystic insights from their work; there are also many who do not. One must remember the source of these insights. These people are not being led to a sense of humility about themselves, their culture, and the future by the horrible destruction of the natural world, for example. As far as I can see, denial and apologetics—and grants to study “global change,” “climate modeling,” etc.—are the rule. (How can anyone use a phrase like “global change” with equanimity?)

If the best some people can do is be dazzled by the pictures on their computer screens, fine. I don’t see any new “paradigms” emerging from all of this—truth still comes from your computer, or from scientists. Even Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, a tenuous metaphor widely used to question scientific certainty, becomes privileged because when science talks in our culture, everyone listens.

As for question two, “chaos” is the study of nonlinear dynamics. With the availability of computing, in recent years, it has become possible to do “experimental mathematics,” testing the behavior of some equations for many iterations. This has attracted much interest, and mountains of hype. “Chaos” has not produced any universal laws or profound insights. Also, most of the spectacular pictures, the source of much popular interest, are derived from

equations which are not known to model any physical process. A world-renowned professor I had once described all of mathematics as “a bunch of tautologies.” Science’s limits are important to understand, but I think “chaos theory” aids us very little in that regard.

Finally what do we mean by the word “science”? Native people in pre-European California managed to live in rather harsh areas with a relatively high population density through meticulous knowledge of their world. This is science in my view. Another example is the accumulated knowledge of medicinal plants of aboriginal peoples—drug companies certainly respect this, as they derive billions in profits annually from stealing it. This, too, is science, but in a different cultural context.

An especially important issue Beyond Bookchin raises is respect for the natural world as an explicit ethical concern. After all, one can live in an anarchist world of wall-to-wall parking lots; the natural world doesn’t get included automatically, as Bookchin implies.

By the way, I’m glad the FE didn’t go under, although three issues a year would be nice. I have my disagreements with the FE, but I have yet to find anything as good, and I read quite widely. It’s heartening to know that what I consider to be the best political journal around, which features many potent philosophical, social, cultural and ecological ideas, is produced by a collective of “ordinary people,” not some academic all-star team—a bit of anarchy in action, if you will.

T.S.

Chicago, Ill.

**Watson replies:** T.S.’s point is well taken. He is correct in noting that I qualify my statement about chaos theory as simply a possible alternative to Bookchin’s mechanistic dialectic. Perhaps my comment should have been even more qualified.

What interests me about chaos theory is not its computer representations of phenomena, but its indirect recognition of both an organic holism and of the limits of our ability to understand completely and, therefore, control nature. I can imagine a kind of chaos theory accessible to the Greek pre-socratics and Chinese Taoists having no need of computer fractals, but rather arising from an intuitive apprehension of life based on close observation of life itself.

This is why the quote from Girardot appealed to me: it vindicated the ancient Taoists rather than using Taoism to vindicate science experiments. Nevertheless, science being one form of knowledge among several, we will inevitably find aspects of scientific knowledge meaningful. For example, when biological science along with some of the insights of chaos and complexity theory remind us of the marvelous interdependence of ecological life webs, and consequently of the daunting problem of human intervention, we naturally will appropriate that knowledge for our own purposes—hopefully remaining cautious of the kind of problem T.S. rightfully raises.

## Stand Up for Ted

To The Fifth Estate:

Bombing is not a family value. “We need neither condemn nor condone the Unabomber.” This is T. Fulano’s thesis (See “The Unabomber and the Future of Technological Society”).

Her argument goes like this: Ignore this man. Ted. FC. The Unabomber. He’s trivial. It’s not that he’s not right. It’s that it’s really not a politically significant situation. In fact, it’s not political at all. He’s psychopathic, perverse, pathetic. And totally ineffective.

Yes, everyone knows who he is and what he stands for—there’s even a ground swell of popular support but that’s precisely how he played into the hands of the media. He’s right (in his own crazy way). He’s right about absolutely everything. We’re doomed. But disregard him. He has a rage problem.

Granted, we’re being decimated. There may be grounds for desperate actions given urgency of the situation...Later. But rage is inappropriate. Rage is the main problem. It’s totally ineffective. It’s not nice at all. He came right out and said “You can’t eat your cake and have it too.”

That wasn’t called for. He’s unmarried, a “monad,” a loner, and he endangers us. Talk about him and the FBI will be out to get us, all because of him (although he hasn’t threatened the industrial order). The cops are worried

that he'll be a role model, and crack down on us legitimate activists. John Zerzan endangers us too—not that he's ever advocated violence, but he talks about Ted and put us at risk—that's cowardly. What a big public relations disaster!

Anarchy has nothing in common with violence, never has. In fact, violence never accomplished anything. It's obsolete. All violence is the same. But it's OK to feel sorry for him. To say we don't want him to actually fry. It will show that we are guided by love. The species is faced with extinction, but not today. The industrial system is on the brink of horrific cataclysm. We're cooked; it's over. We're already past the crossroads.

We totally depend on the technological system we despise—to pull the plug now is suicide. But while we're waiting for the ship to crash on the rocks of reality, we can be nurturing, trusting, empathetic. Practice everyday acts of random mutual aid and senseless beauty. Expect a miracle! Life goes on, even if not ours, some kind of life—probably! And that's somehow reassuring.

Extinction is just God's way of telling society to slow down. And if you just have faith, someday your man will come backing out of the labyrinth following his lover's thread to sunlight. Redemption happens. But in the meantime, be very, very cautious. Disruption is the true danger. "We focus on this parcel of Armageddon [the Unabomber situation] only at our peril."

It's strange. I never thought the FBI, Time-Warner and *Fifth Estate* would come to agree. Ignore this trivial, trivial madman. We're too few. It's risky. The real terrorist—the state—with its doomsday apparatus will extinguish us if we act defiant. Don't rock the boat.

Fulano's tortuous reasoning masks a semi-conscious resignation, fatalism and fear, relieved only by Hallmark-variety religious platitudes and delusions. This "liberationist" no longer believes in the possibility of freedom, or even survival. Disruption now is perhaps the one trauma we might avoid. She is gravely disrupted within herself by the line drawn by the Unabomber's acts.

The divide is not between love and rage, violence or non-violence, but between disruption and order. We need neither condemn nor condone violence. When blacks rallied around murderer O.J. they struck a media-made gong and gave voice to their outrage at the police and justice system. It was not mistaken for endorsement of homicide. The very distorting qualities of media made this strategy possible.

Do we stand up for Ted Kaczynski in common cause or leave him dangling, the psychopath, his views mere paranoia? He's a universally-known symbol of defiance toward the technological-industrial system. He stands for action, action while it's still possible to act. Do we? There's a little Unabomber in everyone, not because of the bombings, but in spite of them. He spoke to the conditions of our daily lives, and said, "We don't think it's inevitable. We think it can be stopped." The game's not up yet. To sympathize is not to lack compassion.

I hear veterans like Chomsky, Zinn, Dellinger near hopelessness as they contemplate a resistance in fragments, thirty years in forced retreat, while a consciousness-raising, ever-tightening media net systematically deprives us of any unifying focal point for resistance.

There will not be another Vietnam. The state learned from that. Did we? This is a new situation—one they haven't had much practice with. This trial is a 'melodrama. It presents an unique opportunity to be grasped and used. Can we put the technological-industrial system on trial?

Does a miracle falling over in a desert make a sound? How about this for a miracle: Ted walks.

Dare to be perky!

Lydia Eccles

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**Fulano replies:** To respond to this abstruse montage's various representations would necessitate repeating everything I've already said. Far from describing my argument, Lydia seriously distorts both the essay's general thesis and its particulars.

Like much post-modern discourse today, Lydia's letter strikes me as simultaneously cynical and naive. Obviously cynical in its portrayal of our reluctance to endorse the Unabomber's authoritarian "strategy" and ideas as cowardice, fatalism and religious platitudes, even as agreement with the FBI. Both cynical and naive, its claim that the Unabomber draws a clear "line"—that not content or context are meaningful, but only a division "between

disruption and order.” Indirectly approving of “disruption,” whatever its outcome, Lydia manages to cheer the Unabomber on while taking responsibility neither for his theory nor his bombings. There may be nothing cowardly about that, I guess, but it is convenient.

Her confusion of media irony for reality (apparently even her own “Unabomber for President” campaign) is also muddled. Particularly telling is her description (in fact her use of the trial as an example at all) of the highly mediatized reaction of blacks to the O.J. Simpson verdict. Though she apparently considers Simpson a murderer, she nevertheless believes this media depiction of cheering crowds somehow provided blacks a voice against police and the courts, and that this gesture “was not mistaken” (by whom?) as support for homicide.

Similarly, Lydia is terribly ingenuous if she considers the Unabomber a “universally-known” (and therefore implicitly unambiguous) symbol of defiance to industrialism, rather than a useful and disturbing image of inchoate refusal and impotence before it. And she’s downright delusional if she thinks the Unabomber has received “a groundswell” of popular support.”

**FE comment:** This paper has a long history of supporting political prisoners. Some of them committed acts of terror against the state, many others were framed. We don’t start or join defense committees for all of them.

Free Ted!? Sure, innocent or guilty. Fulano’s article called for his release, so what’s Lydia’s complaint? If her concern is the mediatization of issues, haven’t we done our duty?

One of our principles is opposition to prisons, which is why we give free subscriptions to prisoners and support the Anarchist Black Cross (see ABC article in The Rumble), but given how small our project is (and how much needs to be done), probably little of our energy will be spent on those with whom we have substantial disagreements on ideas and tactics.

## Unabomber suspects

Dear Fifth Estate:

My boyfriend was visited by the FBI about a year and a half ago because he somehow had been fingered as a Unabomber suspect. We figured it was because of his involvement in anti-Vietnam War activist groups in the early ‘70s, combined with his military training.

He also had been subpoenaed by the government to appear before a grand jury in the early ‘80s to give testimony about people he had supposedly worked with in anti-war activities. He refused to testify pleading several constitutional rights.

During that time he was the father of three young children and owner of a fledgling wheelchair repair business. He was and is too busy being a father and trying to make ends meet to plan terrorist acts. He also consciously chose a pacifist path when he decided to have children.

The Unabomber spectacle was a good excuse for the FBI to cruise around (all expenses paid by us) terrorizing and checking up on radicals trying to raise a family while serving their ideals.

He found the bomber article amusing.

Thanks for keeping it together,

Penney O’Reilly

Santa Cruz CA

# fifth Estate

Various Authors  
Letters to the Fifth Estate  
1997

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