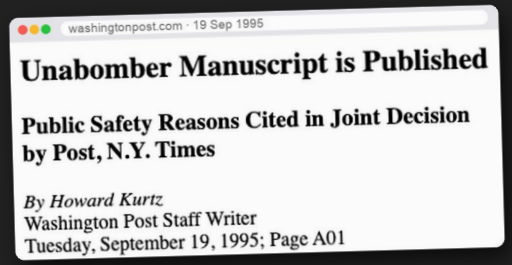
Mind and Machines

Session 4 · Industrial Society and Its Future

The manifesto

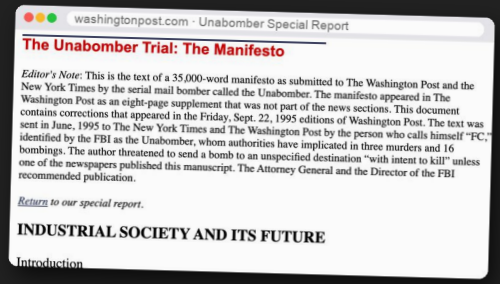
IN THE PRESS


washingtonpost.com · 19 Sep 1995

Unabomber Manuscript is Published

Public Safety Reasons Cited in Joint Decision by Post, N.Y. Times

By Howard Kurtz
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, September 19, 1995; Page A01


washingtonpost.com · Unabomber Special Report

The Unabomber Trial: The Manifesto

Editor's Note: This is the text of a 35,000-word manifesto as submitted to The Washington Post and the New York Times by the serial mail bomber called the Unabomber. The manifesto appeared in The Washington Post as an eight-page supplement that was not part of the news sections. This document contains corrections that appeared in the Friday, Sept. 22, 1995 editions of Washington Post. The text was sent in June, 1995 to The New York Times and The Washington Post by the person who calls himself "FC," identified by the FBI as the Unabomber, whom authorities have implicated in three murders and 16 bombings. The author threatened to send a bomb to an unspecified destination "with intent to kill" unless one of the newspapers published this manuscript. The Attorney General and the Director of the FBI recommended publication.

Return to our special report.

INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND ITS FUTURE

Introduction

> ***"The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race."***
>
> — FC, 'Industrial Society and Its Future', ¶1

DONALD GRAHAM, PUBLISHER · THE WASHINGTON POST · 1995

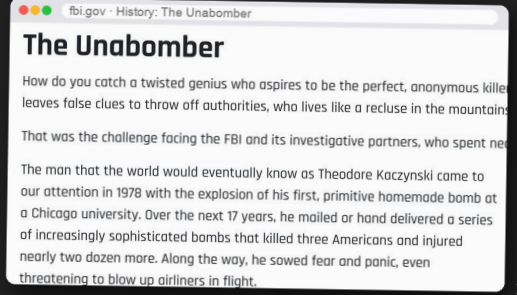
"Neither paper would have printed this document for journalistic reasons... We are printing it for public safety reasons, not journalistic reasons."

> ***"There was also a chance that someone would read the tract and get a hunch about the author; and that is exactly what happened. The suspect's brother read it, and it rang a bell."***
>
> — David Gelernter, injured by one of the bombs in 1993, quoted in Wired, 2000

THE FIGURES

16	bombs, 1978–1995
3	people killed
23	people injured
35,000	words, sent to the Post and the New York Times in June 1995

FBI; Howard Kurtz, The Washington Post, 19 Sep 1995


fbi.gov · History: The Unabomber

The Unabomber

How do you catch a twisted genius who aspires to be the perfect, anonymous kille
leaves false clues to throw off authorities, who lives like a recluse in the mountains

That was the challenge facing the FBI and its investigative partners, who spent ne

The man that the world would eventually know as Theodore Kaczynski came to our attention in 1978 with the explosion of his first, primitive homemade bomb at a Chicago university. Over the next 17 years, he mailed or hand delivered a series of increasingly sophisticated bombs that killed three Americans and injured nearly two dozen more. Along the way, he sowed fear and panic, even threatening to blow up airliners in flight.

The argument

THE SYSTEM → **THE POWER PROCESS** → **SURROGATE ACTIVITY** → **FREEDOM** → **NO REFORM**

"The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system."

— ¶119

"The power process has four elements. The three most clear-cut of these we call goal, effort and attainment of goal... We call it autonomy."

— ¶33

"...an activity that is directed toward an artificial goal that people set up for themselves merely in order to have some goal to work toward."

— ¶39

"By 'freedom' we mean the opportunity to go through the power process, with real goals not the artificial goals of surrogate activities..."

— ¶94

"You can't get rid of the 'bad' parts of technology and retain only the 'good' parts."

— ¶121

THE CONCLUSION

¶4 · INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND ITS FUTURE

"We therefore advocate a revolution against the industrial system. This revolution may or may not make use of violence…"

THE OTHER SIDE

"...historical hunter-gatherer societies might have imagined that life is meaningless without hunting... and would have imagined that our well-fed technological society is devoid of purpose."

— Dario Amodei, 'Machines of Loving Grace', Oct 2024

BILL JOY · WIRED · APRIL 2000

"The Industrial Revolution has immeasurably improved everyone's life over the last couple hundred years."

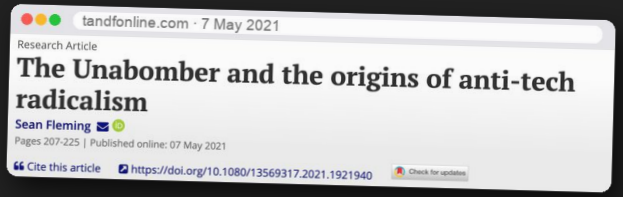
Where the ideas came from

"It is an illusion, a perfectly understandable one, to hope to be able to suppress the 'bad' side of technique and preserve the 'good'."

— Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, quoted in Fleming 2021

"...a novel synthesis of ideas from several disciplines and intellectual traditions."

— Sean Fleming, 2021



1954
Ellul, The Technological Society

1969
Morris, The Human Zoo

"Kaczynski's idea of surrogate activity is based on Morris's idea of 'survival-substitute activity'."

— Sean Fleming, 2021

1972
Kaczynski's essay 'Progress versus Liberty'

1975
Seligman, Helplessness

"Kaczynski thinks modern human beings are like the dogs in Seligman's shock experiment."

— Sean Fleming, 2021

1995
The manifesto is published

1996
His writing identifies him; arrested in Montana

KACZYNSKI'S PRIVATE NOTES, 2001

He wrote that he had "never read anything by" Lewis Mumford, Hannah Arendt, E. F. Schumacher and others often named as his sources.

— as reported by Sean Fleming, 2021

2021
Fleming traces the sources he left out

How it was read

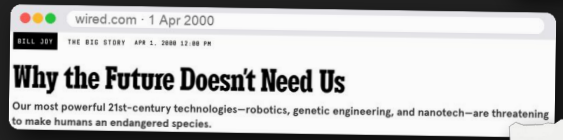
TAKEN SERIOUSLY

KIRKPATRICK SALE · THE NATION · 25 SEP 1995

"It is the statement of a rational and serious man, deeply committed to his cause..."

"...absolutely crucial for the American public to understand and ought to be on the forefront of the nation's political agenda."

— Kirkpatrick Sale, on the manifesto's central point



"...as difficult as it is for me to acknowledge, I saw some merit in the reasoning in this single passage."

— Bill Joy, 'Why the Future Doesn't Need Us', Wired, 2000

VS

CONDEMNED

KIRKPATRICK SALE · SAME REVIEW

"He is amoral, not to say coldblooded, about acts of terrorism..."

"Kaczynski's actions were murderous and, in my view, criminally insane."

— Bill Joy, Wired, 2000

"I would have told them not to publish. I'm glad they didn't ask me. I guess."

— David Gelernter, injured by one of the bombs, on the decision to print it

STATEMENT BY THE PUBLISHERS · 19 SEP 1995

"Both the Attorney General and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation have now recommended that we print this document for public safety reasons..."

If the machines take over

IF MACHINES DECIDE

¶173 · INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND ITS FUTURE · 1995

"...the human race might easily permit itself to drift into a position of such dependence on the machines that it would have no practical choice but to accept all of the machines' decisions... People won't be able to just turn the machines off, because they will be so dependent on them that turning them off would amount to suicide."

"These engineered human beings may be happy in such a society, but they most certainly will not be free."

— ¶174

BILL JOY ON KURZWEIL'S 'THE AGE OF SPIRITUAL MACHINES' (1999)

"In the book, you don't discover until you turn the page that the author of this passage is Theodore Kaczynski—the Unabomber."

IF MACHINES DO THE WORK

John Maynard Keynes,
Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren
(1930)*

"Thus for the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem—how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure..."

— John Maynard Keynes, 'Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren', 1930

"I think meaning comes mostly from human relationships and connection, not from economic labor."

— Amodei, same essay



"...it is very likely a mistake to believe that tasks you undertake are meaningless simply because an AI could do them better."

— Dario Amodei, 'Machines of Loving Grace'

Should we stop, steer, or speed up?

Stop it

Ted Kaczynski, 1995

"It is not possible to make a LASTING compromise between technology and freedom, because technology is by far the more powerful social force..."

— ¶125

¶2

"There is no way of reforming or modifying the system so as to prevent it from depriving people of dignity and autonomy."

We *can* steer it

Andrew Feenberg, 2002

ANDREW FEENBERG · TRANSFORMING TECHNOLOGY

"...technology is not a destiny but a scene of struggle. It is a social battlefield..."

"Reaffirming our agency in our relationship with technology may be a first, crucial step..."

— Mauro Lubrano, Lowy Institute, 2026

We should limit it

Bill Joy, 2000

"The only realistic alternative I see is relinquishment: to limit development of the technologies that are too dangerous, by limiting our pursuit of certain kinds of knowledge."

— Bill Joy, Wired, 2000

JOY'S PRECEDENT

"...the unilateral US abandonment, without preconditions, of the development of biological weapons."

Tech is amazing

Marc Andreessen, 2023

'THE TECHNO-OPTIMIST MANIFESTO' · A16Z

"We believe technology is liberatory. Liberatory of human potential. Liberatory of the human soul, the human spirit."

"Our enemy is the Precautionary Principle, which would have prevented virtually all progress since man first harnessed fire."

— Marc Andreessen, 2023