

# The Ellul Forum

For the Critique of Technological Civilization

## Remembering Ivan Illich & Katharine Temple

Issue 31 Spring 2003

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*"I believe that our vocation on earth is to establish a harmony that includes all that we call justice, liberty, joy, peace, and truth."*

*Jacques Ellul*

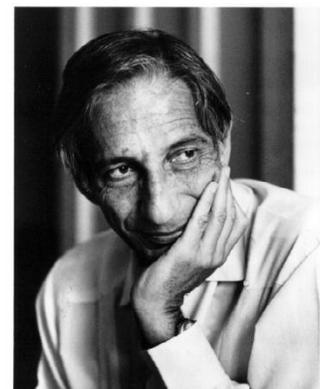


*"Sheer gratitude has led me to meditate on a spirituality of friendship as one possible orientation to the mystery of God."*

*Katharine Temple*

*"I consider conviviality to be individual freedom realized in personal interdependence and, as such, an intrinsic ethical value."*

*Ivan Illich*



# The Ellul Forum

For the Critique of Technological Civilization

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*The Ellul Forum* is published twice per year, in the Spring and Fall. Its purpose is to analyze and apply Jacques Ellul's thought to aspects of our technological civilization and carry forward both his sociological and theological analyses in new directions.

#### Editor:

Clifford G. Christians, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana

#### Associate Editor:

David W. Gill, Berkeley, California

#### Contributing Editors:

Patrick Chasteney, University of Poitiers, France

Dan Clendenin, Stanford, California

Peter F. W. Davies, Buckinghamshire College, UK

Marva Dawn, Vancouver, Washington

Darrell J. Fasching, University of South Florida

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David Lovekin, Hastings College, Nebraska

Carl Mitcham, Colorado School of Mines

Pieter Tijmes, University of Twente, Netherlands

Gabriel Vahanian, Strasbourg University, France

Willem Vanderburg, Univ. of Toronto, Canada

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#### Books, Reviews, News:

Send books for review, book reviews, and news to David Gill, EF Assoc. Editor, P.O. Box 5365, Berkeley CA 94705. [IJES@ellul.org](mailto:IJES@ellul.org)

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# From the Editor

In this issue of *The Ellul Forum* we honor our recently departed friends and colleagues, Katharine Temple and Ivan Illich. Katharine Temple (June 8, 1944 – November 22, 2002) was buried on November 30 at her home parish, the Anglican Church of St. John, Port Hope, Ontario. Ivan Illich was born in Vienna in 1926 and passed away on December 2, 2002 in Bremen, Germany. He was buried in the cemetery of Oberneuland in Bremen. They represent the spectrum of Ellul's influence, from a social activist in the Catholic Worker House in Lower Manhattan to a world class scholar in academia. In their own ways, Katharine Temple and Ivan Illich carried on Ellul's mission as emblazoned on *The Forum* masthead: "the critique of technological civilization."

Katharine Temple wrote her superb 1976 doctoral thesis (under George P. Grant) at McMaster University on "The Task of Jacques Ellul: A Proclamation of Biblical Faith as Requisite for Understanding the Modern Project." Her frequent contributions to *The Catholic Worker* often mentioned Ellul's work and ideas. We honor her memory with a sample of her short essays but Kassie's greatest legacy is her life of joyful, sacrificial service among the poor.

Ivan Illich once said that Ellul was "a master to whom I owe an orientation which has decisively affected my pilgrimage for forty years" (*Ellul Forum* 13 (July 1994): 16). Illich's own brilliance and creativity produced a significant body of work that is a wonderful complement to that of Ellul. Countless new-generation scholars of technology use the books of both side-by-side.

Special thanks are owed to Contributing Editor Carl Mitcham for his work on this special issue. From his numerous contacts around the world, and his unbelievable bibliographic skills, he assembled this material with his trademark collegiality. The obituary Carl wrote in Spanish for the Madrid daily *El Pais* is included here in the original to honor Ivan Illich's Cuernavaca and his mastery of 14 languages.

Associate Editor David Gill, President of the International Jacques Ellul Society, provides the first of a regular series of columns in this issue of the *Forum* ("How Big Is the Tent?" p. 19), along with new "News and Notes" and "Resources" sections that will be of interest to Ellul students.

\* \* \* \*

The focus of the upcoming Fall 2003 issue of *The Ellul Forum* will be the technologies of cyberterrorism and hate. We will also review important new books on Ellul by Andrew Goddard and Jean-Luc Porquet. Our Spring 2004 issue, guest edited by Joyce Hanks, will focus on the tenth anniversary of Ellul's death.

Manuscripts you wish to have considered for *The Forum* are welcomed by the editor. Material for "News and Notes," "Ellul Resources" and queries about book reviews should be sent to David Gill.

*The Ellul Forum* and the International Jacques Ellul Society are all-volunteer activities, funded entirely by membership dues and small donations. We appreciate your solidarity and support.

Clifford G. Christians, Editor

[editor@ellul.org](mailto:editor@ellul.org)

# *Remembering Kassie*

## *by Jim Grote*

Two characteristics come to mind whenever I think of Kassie—"personally endearing" and "intellectually combative." One of her most outstanding qualities has been a continual source of guilt for me—she was a great letter writer and I am a terrible correspondent. I first wrote her many years ago because we had a mutual friend, Phil Hanson, who, like Kassie, studied under George Grant in Canada. Also, I had lived at two Catholic Worker houses. I still owe Kassie a letter in response to her letter dated Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> in 1998. She concluded with a comical P. S. about the irony of writing a letter during Lent and on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. As Kassie never crossed the Rubicon into the Church of Rome, I'm sure she's smiling at my Catholic guilt and my five-year delay in answering her letter.

One endearing memory is Kassie hitch-hiking all the way from New York to the hills of Kentucky to attend my wedding, a method of travel I'd used to visit her a number of times. And I can never forget drinking beer together and singing Cab Calloway's "Stormy Weather" on a number of occasions. The sweet way my children used to pronounce her name in their pre-school years sticks in my mind. Their pronunciation caught something of her inner spirit.

However, when it came to the life of the mind, Kassie was not nearly so sweet! I was always a fan of Simone Weil and Kassie had little tolerance for any criticism of Judaism. I remember going to a Simone Weil conference with Kassie and

Carl Mitcham and the two of them getting into a huge argument during the question and answer session (I can't recall the source of the dispute). On the way home in the car I exclaimed, "I can't take you two anywhere together." Another time at a philosophy of technology conference in Canada, Kassie (who was the only woman in the room) stood up and attacked the speaker for his feminist tendencies, going into a long involved defense of natural law. When I expressed my surprise later about a student of Ellul defending natural law, she smiled and replied, "I just can't resist bashing liberals!"

One final admission of guilt. During a visit to the New York Catholic Worker, I spent a couple days editing a paper of Kassie's, "The Sociology of Jacques Ellul," for publication in an early issue of Research in Philosophy and Technology. The manuscript was fifty pages long and true to Kassie's Catholic Worker spirit, it was typed on the back of old donated stationery and there were no Xeroxed copies of the manuscript. I inadvertently lost the paper and begged her to kill me in order to assuage my guilt. She was remarkably light-hearted about the whole affair. Upon eventually finding the paper, after retracing my steps all over New York, I took pause to contemplate both Kassie's forgiving smile and Ellul's theory of universal salvation. The two still go together in my mind.

*February 2003. Louisville, Kentucky*

# *Fascinated by the Instruments of Power*

## *by Katharine Temple*

During a news show, early on in the international military build-up in the Persian Gulf, an Egyptian correspondent opined that Arab populations might not fully support the United States, for they might see this as a colonial war. She was immediately cut off, and the scene switched to the American boys in the desert. Whether or not this was deliberate censorship, presumably it was felt she had overstepped the mark. Presumably, the American audience could not consider that their country (nor its allies, including Israel, which, although not formally part of the coalition, plays a major part in it) could be involved in an imperialist enterprise. This did not go along with the program, the concerted image projected by the media.

If we look to the past, though, there are no grounds for surprise at such a suggestion. As Paul Fussell writes in his introduction to *The Norton History of Modern Warfare*, "One

need not be a cynic to understand ... that the modern union of neurotic nationalism and complex technology has defined war in a way unknown before." As for these specific preparations, the friend who sent me the Fussell article put the same point this way. "I guess Bush is determined to wage war on Saddam Hussein. I wonder exactly what is at stake? I suppose oil and national pride. The UN is behaving even worse than usual." And I would add in Mr. Bush's intimate involvement with the CIA and Texas oil money.

It is true that the analysis cannot remain focused on one man and one product. Rather, we should look at the forces they represent, what President Bush himself has called "our way of life"—that union of technology (the material organization of resources) and the state (the bureaucratic organization of the nation and its resources.) This union is the new imperialism, an expansion beyond classical colonialism.

Nor can we blame only one country, for, although U.S. is in the vanguard, the development is worldwide.

In the September 1990 *CW*, we considered these ideas in the thought of Jacques Ellul, especially from his book *The Technological Society*. He sees our whole civilization as being informed by technique, that is, the totality of a technical system, based on the efficient impersonal logic of machines, and all the ways in which, in every area of life, we integrate ourselves into that logic—to the exclusion of any other way. Technique gains strength because we give our allegiance to the streamlined mastery of nature (both human and non-human) as our source for power and security. In their essence, the forces of technique are aggressive, controlling and expansionist in every direction.

In a recent book, *The Technological Bluff* (Eerdmans, 1990) Ellul has said: "We have the existence of the so-called military-industrial complex, which really ought to be called the technico-military-statist complex. The original term applies only to a capitalist organization and even there it is too narrow. Not industry, but the technical system, is to blame, along with the state, which is the engine and primary user of techniques and which organizes the military." This account may sound abstract, but the reality of the war now going on in the Persian Gulf is anything but abstract.

The war is an all too concrete example of the domination imposed by the technico-military-statist complex, and its symbols are the car, the bomb, the TV, the computer—all essential to the parties in this conflict.

The car is the popular symbol of our needs. It is the outward sign of our highly mechanized and mobile society, whose wheels are kept turning by oil. Without oil, it is believed, the national system would be in jeopardy. Not only would the price of gas and oil company profits be affected, but beyond that, also the whole U.S. financial structure (already nervous because of expansions in information technologies in other countries). And so, if the oil supply is threatened, all other considerations, even an economic recession, back seat in the interest of technological state-power. On the other side, oil is the only leverage, in this game, that Saddam Hussein has at his disposal.

The car may well represent what we are all about, but the Pentagon is the spearhead of technique (in hardware, organization mentality) with its ever-expanding arsenal nuclear and non-nuclear weapons, whose alleged purpose seems thwarted by the end of the Cold War. As someone remarked, "All that might and personnel trained on Eastern Europe has to go somewhere to spread itself out." If the military complex were to shrink, the whole technical infrastructure could collapse. This is indeed a war economy, thanks to the technical primacy of the military. And a war economy tends to bring about war!

In this instance, the two forces—machines and the military—come together almost to demand a war from the state. The particular geo-political realities in the Middle East (and we cannot forget the further complexities of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which will never be ameliorated until there is an adequate response to the Palestinian *Intifade*) need to be seen in this context. It is a war needed by the technical system, a war desired by both presidents, a war made possible only by complex computer centers ("the mastery of the micro-chip over muscle" in the words of one commentator). It is also a war brought to us by television, which gives facile analyses and an illusion of participation in some strange and titillating way.

All of this adds up to expansionism. No matter what the outcome, it seems it will be a victory for the technico-military-state system and a defeat for the populations subjected, willingly or unwillingly, to it.

To go back to the news show: To suggest that Arabs, who have seen wave after wave of Western commercial expansion for resources, might see this as a colonial war is hardly outrageous. In fact, to deny the possibility adds further layers of anti-Arab racism (whether American, European or Israeli) to the imperialist pie. Probably the most accurate historical, political, economic, military and technical analysis comes in *Hosea* 8:7. "For they sow the wind and they shall reap the whirl wind." A current sense of the same thing comes from Amos Elon (writing from Jerusalem for *The New Yorker*, Dec. 24, 1990). "The feeling of being beset by blind forces is especially strong...."

But, none of this is openly stated, for it is not material for war propaganda. We simply do not want to hear about it, for it is part of the American ethos to see itself as different from other, wicked nations, as a state that acts only as the righteous, innocent policeman for a dangerous world. George Hunsinger has called this belief the heresy of American exceptionalism. "From the genocide of Native Americans to the incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the open veins of Central America, the myth of our exceptional virtue, backed by the blasphemy of our national divine election, has served again and again to make us tolerate the intolerable, accept the unacceptable and justify the unjustifiable." (Quoted in *CW* Oct.,- Nov., 1988.) If this war really is an exception, it has yet to be shown. (Sad to say, this is similar to the political critique of the state of Israel—a small nation, founded as a sanctuary against murderous persecution, metamorphosed, in worldly terms, into a technico-military state to guarantee an elusive security.)

### Means and Ends

The question comes up: Are you so naive as to think that Saddam Hussein is merely an innocent victim? Of course not. The violence he has perpetrated and threatens is what people are talking about when they call this a just war (assuming an acceptance of the theory in the first place, or its applicability to modern warfare). The arguments for a so-called "just war," however, should be looked at more realistically, in terms of means and ends.

"Some day our children will be taught that this battle ... was fought to protect freedom and democracy. My generation was brought up to believe that Britain, France and the United States waged war against Nazi Germany to save Jews and other non-Aryans in Central Europe from extinction. Would that we had, but we didn't. The world tolerated Adolf Hitler's internal crimes and his invasions, just as it did Saddam's, until he crossed a line that had little to do with a concern for humanity and everything to do with the balance of power." (Charles Glass, *The Spectator* (London), Aug. 25, 1990). The point I see is that this war has nothing to do with justice. It seems to me, therefore, that we cannot simply hope for some inadvertent justice, such as more freedom for the people of Kuwait and Iraq, or security for Israelis, through an insatiable will-to-power. Furthermore, "the balance of power" is a euphemism for the clash between expanding powers. There are no limits, as the history of modern warfare, modern techniques and the modern state has taught us. Their power itself becomes irrational and all of us are caught up in its

whirlwind. Saddam Hussein's own pursuit of technological sophistication and state power, pitched in frighteningly anti-Semitic tones against the Zionist state, will not be overcome by more of the same from the West—raised to the power of "blind forces."

It is not my point to come up with better national policies (though surely there must be some) so much as to strive for clarity about a war that has been veiled and distorted by the powers that be. This war is the way of the state. That's the hell of it. We must learn not to accept those terms, to reject the madness that leads only to further war.

How, then is it possible to proceed? It all sounds so overwhelming, beyond the reach of personal responsibility. Nevertheless, clarification is a requirement and a discipline that requires the greatest attention. Above all, we must learn the art of not being distracted. Not distracted on many levels—not by official versions shot through with lies; not by the electronic media circus which presents these versions to us; not by discussions that suck us into the web of tactics (e.g., whether chemical weapons, a small nuclear bomb, air strikes, a long siege, a simple assassination is "best") that are neither politics nor morality, but only the slippery slope to insanity through a fascination with the instruments of power.

Finally, we must develop habits to prevent us from being distracted from the deadly reality, the dominant drive, of our way of life. In the last section of the *Technological Bluff*, Jacques Ellul talks about the ways we are prone to being "fascinated people," held in thrall to technique by computers, tele-terminals, television, advertising, games, sports, etc. Interestingly, he concludes: "Those who are most susceptible to propaganda (and advertising) are the intellectuals [and on the same page he adds a list of the various shapers of public opinion] while the hardest to reach and budge are those rooted in traditions, whose ideas are fixed, who live in relatively stable environments (like farmers up to the 1950s) or those in structured relations (like members of unions)."

If we want to work to see the war in the Persian Gulf for what it is, perhaps we should take his point to heart as an admonition, and be freed from a fascination with technique. Perhaps those of us who wish to remain rooted in the Christian tradition, to stand with those not in influential circles, could make the practice of clarification (which, in traditional terms, is the virtue of prudence) our Lenten discipline.

*From The Catholic Worker, March-April 1991, p.3.*

## *Capitalist Starbucks* by Katharine Temple

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an unofficial gathering of 3000 of the most powerful people on earth, a handful of whom must be on scholarship to add a touch of color or class. (Some of them are also religious or literary figures who, at first glance, would seem more likely to appear at the World Social Forum, a counterpart gathering of more grass-roots groups who met in Porto Alegre, Brazil at the same time.) Usually, the WEF meets in Switzerland. This year it was in NYC—for reasons that vary with who is asked—at the Waldorf Astoria. On the second night they were in town, as protesters also arrived, we had a discussion at the St. Joseph House dinner about reactions from the city.

Reggie told us how many Starbucks, McDonald's and Gap stores had NYPD in front. We all wondered why. Roger said perhaps the police were getting easy overtime instead of a pay raise. Or, perhaps they thought the protesters, being barred from the hotel, would look for something else to do before their legal demonstration. The hope would be that respect for the NYPD, after September 11, would stifle any questions about anything.

It is true that these corporations, among others, have been highlighted before. I opined that, with or without the WEF, I would be glad to see an organized boycott of these stores. If I had to choose one (and I don't shop at any of them), it would be Starbucks. Someone once asked me why I do not go there, and I replied, "Let me count the ways: prices, anti-union practices, running local coffee shops out of business, involvement in the

prison industry, a symbol of what is wrong with the economic system."

The general sense in the dining room was that this heightened police presence was part and parcel of the hype about the war on terrorism. After all, the WEF came on the heels of the president's warnings in his "State of the Union" speech. As the media would have it, fundamentalists abroad are the threat, while anarchists are at home. The revival of this old saw since the decline of communism is fascinating, especially as anarchism was the political ground Dorothy kept going back to, to reclaim it from negative overtones of violence. I guess we, too, have to revisit the terrain in a new context. In either case—whether the authorities were worried or opportunistic—the very visible NYPD made priorities clear: large corporations protected by force.

"This is like a movie, a f\_\_\_\_\_ing movie." Eleanor's refrain (and she is a beloved NYCW matriarch now of blessed memory) came to me later, as I saw the scene Reggie had described. After a while, you get so used to it that your Pavlovian response is in those terrible mythic terms of "us" vs. "them." (Another angle on the film triangle is "John Q," where it is so easy to sympathize with Denzel Washington's plight that I am a bit surprised this hostage plot got to the theaters.) Also, it gets harder and harder to distinguish between virtual reality on the screen and the suffering in real violence. That, Eleanor knew about.

The second topic at dinner that same night began when Gerry told us how many banks had uniformed guards for ATMs. Although most were from private companies, the impression was the same. (And I do recall seeing a piece about the increasing privatization of even the military!) The question this time: What is this ATM sabotage about? In a nutshell, it would not be about robbing banks, but trying to slow down robbery by the banks.

At this point, Tanya jumped in to question if such sabotage was really going on. More likely, she said, protesters are using ATMs, not making them useless. I had to confess it would be a temptation for me, if I could accept the destruction of property as a nonviolent tactic. The appeal is like the Luddites in nineteenth-century England breaking looms that were the means of their own oppression and displacement. Bank activities in the realms of credit, mortgage and debt are legion. Unrestrained usury (in the sense Marty Corbin talks about in this issue) is at the center of our economic system and is responsible for huge amounts of violence in the world. Nevertheless, this cardinal sin is seldom talked about, at least not in North America, though I gather it was more up front and center in Porto Alegre.

Then, there are advances in financial technology. On the one hand, ATMs represent the closing of small branches, with job losses for bank tellers and other low-paid workers. On the other hand, the technology is crucial for the speedy transactions that make global integration and the current concentrations of power (personified in the WEF) possible. Included in these processes is speculation as the new form of usury. Now, more than 90% of financial transactions are speculation (i.e., making money by guessing what will make money), while a few years ago, the stock market (which I never did trust) was 90% investment, however gouging, in goods and services. What a difference speed and coordination can make.

*Cui bono?* Look to the major players at the WEF. *Cui malo?* Look to countries where wars are waged, end with the most current devaluation and debt.

It is a short step to tie together the technology of financial institutions (of which the ATM is the most publicly visible and, so, a temptation for me) with the interlocking military technology—not the least of which is the abstraction in the activity. High-tech maneuvers, like the movies, distance us from results like unsanitized wars, or cut-backs from IMF controls or the destruction brought by huge hydro-electric projects. The machine and its integrated institutions shield us from these human effects. To steer as clear as possible from participation could only be a good thing.

Over the WEF weekend, the alleged threats did not materialize, not even peaceful demonstrations at the stores or banks. (One group did go to the Manhattan headquarters of Enron.) Sad to say, not a lot more talk like our table talk either. Although I heard suggestions for democratic control over corporations, I did not hear a lot about the economy itself. And, although I heard a fair amount about the ravages of capitalism, there was not much about the technological-military complex that is capitalism's hardware.

The next such discussion in the dining room was not until the Superbowl, a fitting entertainment for the fourth day of the WEF. This time, none of the themes was missing, each melded into the others: the economy of consumerism, high-tech and globalization, the pride of patriotism (underlined by shots of the American troops in Kandahar), altogether in a classic movie plot, wrapped up in the U2 half-time show. (I was sure Bono, who is a promoter of debt reduction, would have a heart attack, or else I would!)

Our modest gathering had enough people able to separate the game from propaganda (or, is that, too, self-delusion?), enough people from New England who couldn't care less about the name of their team, enough of us who always root for the underdog (and Jimmie, who supported both teams) that we managed to enjoy ourselves while we waited for the truck with the vegetable donations. It was a great show!

*From The Catholic Worker, May 2002, p.5.*

## *Jacques Ellul—the Word of God in a World of Technique*

*A Catholic Worker Conversation Between Jeff Dietrich and Kassie Temple*

[Folks at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker have been studying the social analysis and theology of Jacques Ellul for about a year. This spring, Jeff Dietrich got in touch with Katharine Temple at Marybouse, to discuss a three-part series planned for *The Catholic Agitator*, and especially the importance of Jacques Ellul's thought for the CW. We then decided on a joint effort, and the result is this conversation between Jeff and Kassie, which also appears (edited and revised slightly differently) in the July 1990 *Agitator*. — Eds. Note]

**JEFF DIETRICH:** I talked to you a while back, and told you how excited I was about the reading I have been doing in Jacques Ellul. I feel like a born-again Catholic Worker, if one

can say that. I feel that what Jacques Ellul has done is to give us a consistent, contemporary critique of the culture in which we live, which makes what the Catholic Worker does so pertinent. I feel that sometimes people just dismiss us as "saints," or just nice people. Folks say, "Oh, you do such nice work," "You are such good people." That's not why we're doing it

To have someone like Ellul, who gives you this elaborate perspective to work from, makes me feel liberated, even though I know some people find his perspective rather depressing.

**KASSIE TEMPLE:** While you were talking, I was remembering that I knew some of the writings of Jacques Ellul before I knew much about the Catholic Worker, and I, too, was

very taken with his analysis of society and his other writings about what it means to be Christian in the world in which we live. And as I learned more about the Catholic Worker movement, it seemed that its philosophy and theology were the only ones around that resonated with Ellul's kind of understanding.

**JEFF:** I feel that, as the Catholic Worker movement, we really haven't updated our analysis of the culture since Peter Maurin died. And the way Ellul talks about "the technological society," I feel as though Peter, would, if he were alive today, either be saying the same thing, or writing "Easy Essays" about Jacques Ellul.

**KASSIE:** Well, I think that's true. I think the requirement for good social analysis as necessary for social change is one thing they would have in common. At the same time, Jacques Ellul would probably see Peter Maurin's thought as focusing directly on industrial society and what it has become and what it has done to people. Ellul himself, on the other hand, has focused, since 1935, on what he calls "the question of technique." He sees industrial society as having moved to a different phase, and so the analysis would be different.

**JEFF:** What Ellul seems to be saying is that the industrial revolution has come to an end, and that we've entered a new era. For instance, if you believe what Ellul is saying, you would analyze events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as having been brought about by technique. They've got to catch and retool, because the world is moving toward a uniform economic and political, technical culture that will include the Soviet Union, Europe, China, and the United States and Japan in a single system. This seems to be exactly what Ellul was saying—that revolution has come to an end, and that we've entered a new era.

**KASSIE:** Yes. Certainly he would see the changes in Eastern Europe as necessitated by the Soviet Union's economy coming into a new world environment. The relationship of production to the political and social forms cannot sustain economic growth. There needs to be change. But I think Ellul would say that it is a mistake to focus on the economic question as the main question. The economics are within this new technicized framework.

I think he would agree with Dorothy Day, who focused on the state and the large bureaucratic institutions. But, for him, even that thinking is perhaps still too much in terms of the Marxist "mode of production." The mode of production has changed and we need to describe that in a way that is more exact.

For instance, the computer shouldn't be shunned simply because Peter didn't like machines. We should examine the role of the computer; what makes them different from other machines?

**JEFF:** It seems to me that Ellul, in *The Technical System*, is saying that the computer as an information processor has brought about a completely different environment. Previous to the computer, the techniques of the state, education, propaganda and various other techniques were separate and could not be coordinated. But now they can be integrated into one smooth-running technical system through the information processing machine.

**KASSIE:** Right. And we need to analyze that, not moving away from our philosophy of what that is doing to people, how it brings about poverty. The whole emphasis on the works of mercy would not change, but rather our analysis of where the enslavement comes from, where the oppression lies; there would be a shift in emphasis to a changed situation.

**JEFF:** So often it looks like these changes liberate people, and people speak of the machines, satellite communications and information processing as personalized, liberating developments, when that's not necessarily so.

**KASSIE:** And I think we need to look precisely at the poverty in Los Angeles, the poverty in New York, at why people come to our doors, how this poverty is being shaped and formed, what this is doing to people.

**JEFF:** You realize the hypocrisy of American politicians, all politicians, who preach family values with one breath, and preach technological growth with the next, and don't recognize that the two are incompatible,

**KASSIE:** And don't recognize that this new formulation of the information society, or the technical society, is depersonalizing. You can't use impersonal means to bring a more personalist way of being.

**JEFF:** In reading Ellul's theology, I felt supported in what the Catholic Worker does in simple living, the green revolution.

Ellul makes this contrast between the "means of God" and the "means of the world"—that God very rarely works directly in the world, that God most often chooses a human medium through which to work. It would follow, then, that God does not work through the technical means of the world, and the more our culture becomes enslaved to technical means, the more difficult it is for God to work in the world.

Also, there are all those metaphors from the Gospels that are so important to Ellul—to be the leaven in the loaf, to be a light unto the world, to be wakeful and watching, the pearl of great price. All of these things are the "little way" of the Catholic Worker.

You so often feel overwhelmed by the means of the world. I know I've always had a tendency to buy into that perspective of "we're not being very effective here." So, you stick with the Catholic Worker way out of a kind of faithful, spiritual perspective.

What Ellul does is give you the ability to look critically at what the technical means are and say "no, you can't use these to bring about the Kingdom of God." You can't use mass elections to bring about the Kingdom of God, you can't use television and radio to bring about the Kingdom. Each person has to have a conversion of the heart and be open to the Word of God, and be ready to be used by the Holy Spirit. That's the only way it works and none of us wants to believe that.

**KASSIE:** That seems a clear summary of what Ellul is saying to Christians, and I think it's a clear summary, perhaps in different language, of what Peter has said. That is, the call is to all Christians, not just a select few, to witness to the way of God, the truth of God, which is different from the powers of the world. But they would both say that we need to do it in the world in which we live, and to know that world.

For instance, when Peter talked about voluntary poverty, not only is that a traditional means in Catholic thought, but ours is also a society that is unusually obsessed, dominated by money. The weight of consumerism is literally killing people, and the Christian is called to open that up and witness to another liberation. You can't be liberated from the power of money simply by spending more money. Peter said you accept voluntary poverty in order to end the enslavement to money.

Or, to take another example, if large-scale bureaucracies are the order of the day, then we need small communities which embody personalist, non-bureaucratic ways of living our lives together.

**JEFF:** This is the whole issue of personalism. It seems when we go out and talk about it or when we write about it in our papers, I feel self-conscious almost because it seems like this is a quaint kind of perspective of the world, and what we really should do is have a massive revolution, or elect Jesse Jackson president or convert the editorial board of the *L.A. Times*. That this personalist perspective of person-to-person action, doing the works of mercy—that's a nice thing to do, and if you want to do it, that's fine, but those of us who are really going to make a difference in the world and bring social justice about, or bring in the Kingdom, we're going to work through these massive means to change the world.

Ellul gives me a way of looking critically at these technological means and saying no, they're not going to work, that's not going to bring about the kind of justice that you want. In fact, these technological means are doing exactly the opposite of what you think they're doing. Fortunately or unfortunately, you have to work on this personalist level.

**KASSIE:** I think another reason we sometimes eschew personalism is that it can look like we're going to retreat into a world of ones and twos. The outside world is so overwhelming that I'm going to look after only my own well-being, that I'll try to make atmosphere where "my own personhood is affirmed," etc.

But that isn't what was meant by personalism, certainly not by Dorothy or Peter. For them, it was a public response in the world.

The means and ends are the same—this is a theme for both Ellul and Peter. If you want a society that is personalist, is communitarian, is based on the well-being of the other, you can't reach that through impersonal, bureaucratic fund-raising means. Dorothy used to quote, "All the way to heaven is heaven," another statement about the question of ends and means.

**JEFF:** And this is exactly why the Catholic Worker espouses an anarchist, non-statist perspective. But again, there hasn't been a strong intellectual groundwork for an anarchist perspective, and we all get sucked into the cultural ritual of elections and the media surrounding it.

**KASSIE:** We've certainly had many discussions around here about whether people prefer the word "personalist" or "anarchist". But I think the importance of the anarchist critique (certainly in social theory, Ellul gives an anarchist critique of technological society, in distinction to a Marxist critique or a liberal critique) is that the form of anarchism that the Catholic Worker should espouse is a personalist anarchism. It is precisely a critique of statism—that the increasing power of the bureaucratic state is the source of domination. So that in our relationship to the state, we cannot simply say, "Well, we'll take the advantages from the state that we can and it won't have any repercussions on how we run our house." Rather, the state is a key point in our analysis of this society to see where the increasingly monolithic power structure is.

**JEFF:** I was particularly taken with Ellul's introduction in his book *The Political Illusion* where he talks about the French revolution. We tend to think of the kings of France as being absolute, total monarchs, the "Sun King" and all that. Before the French Revolution, though, the king had difficulty creating a standing army, he couldn't raise enough taxes to support a drive for empire. But after the Revolution, once the king was deposed and all people became part of the state and responsible for the state and to the state, then everybody, of course, served willingly. Then, once so-called democracy was there, people

voluntarily enslaved themselves and gave themselves over to a taxation system and a system of law that they would never have done under a monarchy.

When you start looking at it that way, the whole idea of people just giving themselves over completely to the state, you need to have a stronger foundation to this anarchist-personalist perspective. I think that's what Ellul gives us.

**KASSIE:** Yes. At the end of that same book he talks about what is needed, and these are just a few little excerpts from that: "It is important, above all, never to permit one's self to ask the state to help us. Indeed, we must try to create positions in which we reject and struggle with the state, not in order to modify some element of the regime or force it to make some decision, but much more fundamentally, in order to permit the emergence of social, political, intellectual, artistic bodies, associations, interest groups or economic or Christian groups totally independent of the state. What is needed are groups capable of extreme diversification of the entire society's fundamental tendencies, capable of escaping the unitary structure, presenting themselves not as negations of the state, which would be absurd, but as something else not under the state's tutelage."

**JEFF:** It sounds exactly like something Dorothy would have written.

**KASSIE:** Yes. I think one of the great strengths of the Catholic Worker is that both Peter and Dorothy had this call to do something else, not just to do the negative, not just to say what was wrong, not just to say "no," which of course is part of it. This idea of communities that would be doing something else, is certainly the essence of the "green revolution," no matter how quaint some of Peter's plans appear.

**JEFF:** Just as you say that, talking about something else, I think one of the criticisms of Jacques Ellul is that he won't tell you what to do. It seems to me it goes to the heart of the differences between the Catholic Worker and Jacques Ellul. While I want to say that Ellul is describing the Catholic Worker, I'm very careful about making that kind of statement.

**KASSIE:** Well, I think there is a great difference between them in terms of Jacques Ellul being Protestant and Peter Maurin being Roman Catholic. It is interesting, and perhaps it is just a sign of our times, that because they are both strongly rooted in their respective traditions, that seems to draw them closer together. The idea that the strongest critique of modern society would come from something pre-modern, makes them seem remarkably similar. This includes the view that, "There is not something a little bit wrong with the world; there's something a whole lot wrong with the world."

On the specific question of their separate theologies—unlike Martin Luther, one of Ellul's favorite books is the book of James which says "faith without works is dead." And so, for Ellul, there can be no Christian theology of grace without incarnation, without works. But I think Ellul sees his particular calling as a Christian—and this is certainly within a Protestant understanding—as that of raising questions about what we are doing. We cannot formulate an alternative unless we are willing and able, through grace, to raise the most serious questions and recognize that this society is not the Kingdom. It is not going to be the Kingdom. At the same time, we must incarnate our faith within this society.

Ellul's refusal to spell out a blueprint is somewhat the difference between a Catholic and a Protestant, but also it comes from the belief that if you give an answer in advance, you have cut off the thing that is most needful for Christians

today and that is the raising of the deepest questions. You know that in this society, you can hold all sorts of opinions that people can find interesting or not interesting. But if you raise a serious question on the things that matter most, then there is a complete dismissal.

You raised, for example, the question of the power of the state. You can be as critical of a particular regime as you want, but if you say, "I don't vote because voting doesn't make any difference," that goes too far. The raising of questions is something that is so rarely done, so rarely done among Christians as well.

Some of this thought comes from Jacques Ellul being Protestant. I think that Peter probably thought it was possible to separate from society, in order to build a new one along Christian principles. Perhaps Peter's is the Catholic idea that there is such a thing as a Christian society, or that society can be transformed to be Christian. Ellul, on the other hand, thinks that the Kingdom, the Presence of the Kingdom, will always be hidden, will always be the injection of the Word of God into an alien country And that will be the case until the end time.

*From The Catholic Worker, September 1990, pp.4-5, and The Catholic Agitator, July 1990.*

## *En memoria de Iván Illich, un anarquista entre nosotros*

*by Carl Mitcham*

Iván Illich, uno de los mayores críticos sociales del siglo XX, acaba de morir a sus 76 años en Bremen. Nacido en Viena en 1926, fue ordenado sacerdote en Italia y vivió gran parte de su vida en Estados Unidos y México. Con una prometedora carrera dentro de la Iglesia, renunció a ella. Rector de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, profesor en Penn State University y en la Universidad de Bremen, fue un viajero y conferenciante incansable. Con múltiples licenciaturas y doctorados en ciencias y letras, plurilingüe, su trabajo intelectual se puede resumir en un incansable esfuerzo por pensar hasta las últimas consecuencias las ideas de progreso y desarrollo, tan caras a expertos y políticos.

En la década de los setenta escribió los primeros libros que le hicieron ser conocido internacionalmente. *La sociedad desescolarizada* es un ataque al sistema educativo moderno, *La Némesis Médica* analiza la perversión de los sistemas de salud y *La convivencia* somete a un despiadado escrutinio los ambiciosos programas de desarrollo de esos años sesenta. Estos libros inciden sobre las tres "vacas sagradas" más importantes que una izquierda progresista abanderó como camino de modernidad. Carlos Barral, editor sensible y culto, entendió que Illich era uno de los críticos más lúcidos del momento y se encargó de hacer conocer en la España franquista y tecnocrática sus textos. *La sociedad desescolarizada* vendió varios millones de copias, se tradujo a unos veinte idiomas, convirtiéndose en nuestro país en un libro de obligada lectura para enseñantes y pedagogos. La perspicacia del autor le permitió ver con asombrosa claridad el futuro, nuestro presente, de una sociedad demasiado confiada sólo en sus capacidades económicas. Entre los años ochenta y noventa cambió el ámbito de sus intereses intelectuales. *In the Vineyard of the Text*, comentario sobre el *Didascalion* de Hugo de Saint Victor, le permitió dirigir su atención hacia el análisis de la vida actual, cada vez más alejada de los sentidos y de la verdadera amistad. Mucho antes de la moda contemporánea de reflexionar sobre la lectura y la escritura a la luz de las nuevas tecnologías, Illich mostró con erudición de historiador y

consideración crítica del filósofo las implicaciones de los cambios culturales que sufre un acto tan cotidiano como leer.

A pesar de la creciente presión economicista de la sociedad posindustrial, trató de buscar los medios para poder volver a vivir una vida que se experimentara en un cuerpo, capaz además de aceptar a los otros como tales, como amigos. Ésta es su llamada revolucionaria en la época de globalización hipertecnologizada, en la era de Windows XP. Desafortunadamente, ya no contamos con Barral para que siga ofreciéndonos su trabajo en español. A veces el desarrollo acelerado produce olvidos significativos. Algunas ediciones como *El Género Vernáculo* siguieron publicándose en México y es difícil encontrar hoy en día este hermoso texto sobre la antigua armonía entre hombres y mujeres. Tal vez sea éste uno de los trabajos más apasionantes e incomprensidos de Illich, tal vez por ello fue injustamente marginado. *H<sub>2</sub>O o las aguas del olvido* es una joya. Su maestría de historiador nos guía por un intrincado viaje de del agua entendida como el elemento mágico que nos limpia, nos otorga el olvido, nos remueva, refresca, vivifica y sana para acabar reduciéndola a una molécula química, una abstracción insípida.

Los últimos años de su vida han sido especialmente dolorosos porque, consecuente con su pensamiento y reluctante de las innovaciones médicas, no aceptó los alivios terapéuticos, afirmando su cuerpo y lo que éste le trajera. Su gran lección está ahí: siempre consecuente, es uno de los últimos intelectuales donde vida y obra, pensamiento y acción se entrelazan íntimamente. Radical, anarquista, cultivador de la amistad, pero también rechazado, mantuvo alta su talla de intelectual inconformista e insobornable.

*Carl Mitcham, profesor en la Colorado School of Mines (EEUU) y coeditor de The Challenges of Ivan Illich (2002) / Andoni Alonso, Profesor en la Universidad de Extremadura y autor de La Nueva Ciudad de Dios (2002).*

*El País, martes 10 de diciembre de 2002*

# *In Memoriam: Ivan Illich, 1926 – 2002*

## *by Aaron Falbel*

Ivan Illich, a former Catholic priest, philosopher, historian, theologian, social critic, and activist, slipped away without much fanfare on Monday, December 2, at the home of a close colleague and friend in Bremen, Germany. The few obituaries that appeared pronounced him a has-been, a relic from the '60s and early '70s when his writings were briefly in vogue. However, this assessment belies his many important contributions toward a more modest, respectful, just, caring, humane, and peaceful society.

Born in Vienna in 1926 to a Catholic father of aristocratic Dalmatian descent and a mother who was a Sephardic Jew, Illich was forced to go underground in 1941 due to his mother's ethnicity. He escaped with his family to Italy, and, upon completing his university studies and ordination, he came to the United States in 1951. After spending an intense five years as a much-loved parish priest in a Puerto Rican neighborhood on the tip of Manhattan, he was appointed vice-rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, a position he held for another five years until he was forced off the island due to a political controversy there. (He strongly and vociferously objected to church officials using the church's status and authority to meddle in local electoral politics.)

Illich achieved notoriety in 1961 when he opened a center in Cuernavaca, Mexico that served as the main training ground for missionaries and other do-gooders bound for Latin America. The purpose of the center, eventually called the Center for Intercultural Documentation, or CIDOC, was deeply subversive though by no means secretive: to thwart the cultural imperialism and neocolonialism inherent in such missionary initiatives as the American Catholic Church's "Alliance for Progress" and Kennedy's secular analogue, the Peace Corps. In such lectures and essays as "Yankee, Go Home," "The Seamy Side of Charity," and "Violence: A Mirror for Americans," Illich tried to dissuade American volunteers from going to Latin America to "help" the "poor." He pointed out that their good intentions would in no way cancel out the inevitable damage they would do by being "vacationing salesmen for the middle class 'American Way of Life,'" — a way of life not only unsustainable in the rich, overdeveloped countries but simply unattainable for the vast majority of people these programs were attempting to "help." Unwittingly, their interventions also "maintained or swept into power military regimes in two-thirds of the Latin American countries" and helped to open Latin America as a massive market for U.S. goods and as a source of cheap labor. "The compulsion to do good," wrote Illich, "is an innate American trait. Only North Americans seem to believe that they always should, may, and actually can choose somebody with whom to share their blessings. Ultimately this attitude leads to bombing people into the acceptance of gifts." In response to such sarcastic criticism, Illich was beaten with chains and actually shot at—actions very likely orchestrated by

the C.I.A. Fortunately, the assassination attempts failed. Clearly he had struck a nerve close to the center of power.

Indeed, the forces of power were mobilizing against him. Illich was summoned to the Vatican in 1968 to defend CIDOC's activities and his own religious and political views, but he refused to cooperate. The Vatican responded by placing an interdict on CIDOC in early 1969, banning all religious personnel from attending its classes, lectures, and seminars. The ban had little effect; the place had achieved a magnetism all its own, and Illich had always insisted that CIDOC was a secular organization. Rather than continue to cause a political scandal within the Church, Illich, announced his "irrevocable decision to resign entirely from Church service, to suspend the exercise of priestly functions, and to renounce all titles, offices, benefits, and privileges which [were] due to [him] as a cleric."

In the 1970s, CIDOC became a "thinkery" for broadening this sort of critique by examining the damaging side-effects of modern institutions in general. Illich became even more radical, in the etymological sense of "getting to the root" of things. His conclusions were surprising, even shocking, to many, and certainly controversial. Like Gandhi before him, Illich was a caustic critic of industrial society. He saw dangers not only in the environmental degradation caused by the industrial mode of production but also in a type of social degradation due to an overabundance of services. His critiques of education (Deschooling Society), of the medical establishment (Medical Nemesis), of technocratic, technological society (Tools for Conviviality), of transportation systems (Energy & Equity), of the helping professions (Disabling Professions), of commodity dependence in a market-intensive society (The Right to Useful Unemployment), and especially of development (Celebration of Awareness; Church, Change, and Development and The Development Dictionary, ed. W. Sachs) ruffled many feathers and earned him many detractors across the political spectrum.

Illich was one of the first to take note of the "paradoxical counterproductivity" of modern institutions when they reached a certain size and level of intensity. This resulted in schools that made people stupid, hospitals that made people sick, prisons that made people violent, high-speed transportation that created traffic jams and ever-increasing passenger miles, development agencies that created more and more "needy" people, and so on. Once institutions grow beyond a certain threshold, Illich observed, they end up thwarting the very purposes for which they were allegedly established. They tend to become dysfunctional and to incorporate other purposes that actually impede their stated objectives.

Illich decried modern society for becoming more and more machine-like, more automated, more sewn-up, more impersonal, more pervaded by "systems" of one sort or another. Such a society, he argued, cannot help but degrade friendship,

love, care, community, hospitality, learning, dwelling, and, ultimately, the art of suffering and dying, by replacing all these human acts with ministrations of professional services, bureaucracies, systems, and techniques. He saw modern society as deeply violent in its essence and not just because of its frequent recourse to military intervention. Again, his words were radically surprising: "[T] he plows of the rich can do as much harm as their swords. United States trucks can do more lasting damage than United States tanks." As before, Illich was critical of those who, perhaps with good intentions, sought to promote peace through economic development.

"Development," he wrote, "has always signified a violent exclusion of those who wanted to survive, without dependence on consumption, from the environment's utilization values. Pax economica [or peace through economic development] bespeaks war against the commons." Protection of the commons—from enclosure, from exploitation, from being turned into a "resource," and from the regime of artificial scarcity—was, according to Illich, a fundamental component of pax populi, of the people's peace, of true peace, throughout much of history. At times, Illich characterized the industrial age as "the war against subsistence" and culture as "unique arrangements by which a given group limits exchange relationships to specific times and places." Such insights preceded the present anti-globalization movement by several decades.

In the latter years of his life, in the '80s and '90s, Illich moved away from his provocative, sometimes inflammatory critique of modern institutions to explore the historical question of how the mindset and social conditions that gave rise to these institutions came into being. No longer the political gadfly or rabble-rouser, he ceased to have entertainment value for the media and faded from public view. He now divided his time between Germany and Mexico (with short visits to the United States and elsewhere), leading seminars, lecturing, and writing. He once likened his historical method to the motion of a crab in flight: "The crab moves backward, while its popping eyes remain fixed on the object [it] flee[s]. ... I want to explore what happens if I begin to move backwards, with my eyes fixed on the present." As a historian of the Middle Ages, Illich immersed himself in the past in order to see more clearly how radically different and unprecedented our modern times are from any

past historical epoch. "And when I come out of the past and enter-the present," he wrote, "I find that most of the axioms generating my mental space are tinged with economics."

From these explorations in the historical archaeology of ideas and perceptions came a number of books: Shadow Work, Gender, H2O and the waters of Forgetfulness, ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind, In the Mirror of the Past, and In the Vineyard of the Text. In these works, Illich examined various "certainties," "axioms," "necessities," or "needs" with which we live today, and he showed how each of them had an origin in history. And that which had a beginning, as Illich liked to point out, can also plausibly have an end. His historical perspective reveals that the certainties we take for granted today, such as the need for education, medical care, employment, literacy, transportation, markets, energy, police, prisons, news media, etc., were not always so certain. His crab-like journeys into the past serve to loosen the grip that modern certainties have on our perceptions and imagination. The institutional and political realities we live with today are thus neither immutable nor inevitable. This is Ivan Illich's message of hope in these dark times.

In his essays and lectures, Ivan Illich frequently made a distinction between expectation and hope. He once remarked, "I am very pessimistic but hopeful." He was also a man of deep faith. When asked by a student how he defined faith, Illich replied, "Faith is a readiness for the surprise. We must have a sarcastic readiness for all surprises, including the surprise of death." The lockstep, planned, predictable, mechanical aspects of modern society are thus more than just damagingly counter-productive; their *raison d'être* lies in their attempt to wipe out and safeguard us from all the surprises in life. The institutionalization of genuine human acts replaces hope with expectation through attempting to offer us something called "security." But for Illich, such security is an idol we worship at our peril. His life's work dares us to have trust and faith in nature, in our own senses, and in each other. There are no guarantees with such risky, foolhardy trust. But there may be surprises, both good and bad. Are we ready?

*December 16, 2002. Amherst, Massachusetts*

## *A Note on the Death of Ivan Illich* *by Barbara Duden and Silja Samerski*

On Monday, December 2, 2002, Ivan Illich died. Although he had been preparing for several years, death came as a surprise. He was in the midst of preparation for his seminar on the corruptio optimi, the corruption of the best. The seminar was scheduled to occur at the University of Bremen on the upcoming weekend, and Ivan had hoped to reflect with friends and students on his ideas about the ecclesiastical origin of uniquely Western certainties. These historical investigations on the perversion of the Gospel ran like a red thread through the last decade of his teaching in Bremen. With the help of friends he hoped to finish a manuscript on this subject within the next months.

On Thursday, December 5th, we buried him in the cemetery of Oberneuland in Bremen. During the preceding days many people came to his Bremen home for the death watch and to bid him farewell. At the beginning of the funeral Mass in St. Johann, Wolfgang Sachs read the following text ["The Loss of World and Flesh"], in which Ivan bemoans the loss of the art of dying. It is a letter of congratulations Ivan wrote in 1992 to Hellmut Becker, then director of the Max-Planck Institute for Educational Research in Berlin.

At the end of January 2003, Ivan had hoped to lecture in the second winter term. Johannes Beck is preparing a convocation for February 7-8 at the University of Bremen.

# *The Loss of World and Flesh*

## *by Ivan Illich*

Formerly, one left the world by dying; until then one lived in it. Both of us belong to that generation that was still being born "into the world," but which is now threatened by dying without a foothold in the world. Unlike any other generation, we have lived through a break with the world.

In earlier times, a dropout set off on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela; or begged for *stabilitas* on the porch of a monastery; or joined the lepers. The Russian and Greek worlds also offered the possibility of becoming not a monk but a fool, and for the rest of one's life to lodge with dogs and beggars in the atrium of a church. But even for such extreme fugitives from the world, the world remained the sensual frame of their passing existence. The world continued to be a temptation, especially for the one who wanted to renounce it. Most of those who left the world soon caught themselves cheating. The history of Christian asceticism is a record of heroic attempts to be faithful to the renunciation of a world to which every fibre of one's being adheres. When dying, my uncle Alberto still had them serve him the *Vino santo* that was harvested in the year of his birth.

Today all this has changed. The two thousand-year epoch of Christian Europe is gone. The world into which our generation was born has passed. Not only for the young but also for us, the old, it has become impalpable, incomprehensible. The very old have always remembered better times, but that is no excuse for us, we who were alive during the regimes of Franco, Roosevelt, Hitler, and Stalin, to forget that farewell to the world we lived through.

I remember the day I became senile once and for all. I cannot forget the dark March clouds obscuring the evening sun and the vineyard on the Sommerleite between Pötzleinsdorf and Salmansdorf near Vienna, two days before the *Anschluss*. Until that hour it had been a certainty for me that I would give children to the old tower on the Dalmation Island. Since that lonely walk this has seemed impossible for me. As a twelve-year-old boy, I experienced the disembedding of the flesh from the warp and weft of history, even before a command was issued from Berlin to gas all fools in the Reich.

To talk to each other about this break in the experience of world and death is a privilege of our generation who knew what had been before. Hellmut, I believe I am writing to someone who knew that.

When very young, destiny made me into a colleague, counselor, and friend of women and men several generations older. I thus learned to let myself be cultivated and shaped by people who were too old to take part in the experience of that disembedding. By contrast, our students, without exception, are offspring of the epoch after Guernica, Leipzig, Bergen-Belsen, and Los Alamos: Genocide and the human

genome project; the death of forests and hydroponics; heart transplants and medicide through insurance—all these are also tasteless, without smell, impalpable, and non-worldly. The Feast of Advent from the Erlanger Corpus celebrates the bottomlessness of the worldless non-human. We who are old and yet young enough to have lived through the End of Nature, the end of a world fit for the senses, should be able to die like no one else.

What the past composed can also decompose. Further, the past can be re-evoked. But Paul Celan knew that only smoke remains from the world-dwindling that we have experienced. It is the virtual drive of my computer that serves me as the symbol for this unretrievable disappearance, and through which the loss of world and flesh can be envisaged. The worldliness of the world is not deposited like ruins in deeper layers of the ground. It is gone, like a deleted line of the rain drive.

This is why we, seventy-year-oldsters, can be unique witnesses, not only for names but also for perceptions that no one any longer knows. Many who have stood in this break have been broken by it. I know some who themselves tore their existence to threads before the atom bomb, Auschwitz, and AIDS. Deep in their hearts in the middle of their lives they have become *viejos verdes*, old greens, who pretend it is possible to have fathers in the manageable show that has become a system. What was propaganda in the Nazi period, what could be undermined by hearsay, is now being sold: As a menu with the computer program or the insurance policy; as counseling for education, bereavement or cancer treatment; as group therapy for those at risk. We old ones belong to the generation of pioneers of that non-sense. We are the last of that generation that helped transform the systems of development, communication, and services into worldwide needs. Worldly disembodiment and the programmed helplessness we have propagated exceed by far the fallout that in our generation has been deposited in heaven and on earth, in the stratosphere above and the waters below.

We were in the key positions when TV removed daily life from people. I myself fought so that a university TV station broadcast weather predictions of rain in every village square of Puerto Rico. I did not then know how much this would inevitably reduce the range of the senses, and how much the horizon would be barricaded by administered presentation furniture. I did not consider that soon European weather from the evening news show would discolor the first light of dawn seen through the window. For decades I have been careless in handling unfathomable abstractions like one billion people in a bar chart. Since January, my account statement from the Chase Manhattan bank is decorated with a graphic chart that allows

me to compare my expenses for restaurants and office material at a glance. Hundreds of detailed ingratiating services in information, administration, and counselling deliver an interpretation of my *conditio humana*. When I discussed that topic with you, Hellmut, more than twenty years ago, I could not imagine that the integration of the educational enterprise into lifelong everyday life would be so smooth and slick.

Sensual reality submerges deeper and deeper under the coverage of commands on how to see and hear, feel and taste. Education in an unreal construction begins with textbooks whose content has shrunk to subtitles for graphic boxes, and ends with the dying who grasp encouraging test results about their condition. Exciting soul capturing abstractions have extended themselves over the perception of world and self like plastic pillow cases. I notice it when I speak to young people

about the resurrection from the dead. Their difficulty consists not so much in a lack of faith, as in the disembodiment of their perception and life through constant distraction from their soma.

In a world that is inimical to death, you and I prepare ourselves not to come to a mortal end but to die in the intransitive sense. On the occasion of your seventieth birthday, let us celebrate that friendship in which we praise God for the sensual glory of the real world through our good-bye from it.

*Translated by Barbara Duden and Silja Samerski from Ivan Illich, "Welt -abhanden," in Gerold Becker and Jürgen Zimmer, eds., Lust und Last der Aufklärung: Ein Buch zum 80. Geburtstag von Hellmut Becker (Basel: Beltz, 1993), pp.76-79. Used by permission.*

## *Ivan Illich: In Memoriam*

### *by Pieter Tijmes*

Ivan Illich was an impressive person, at once intimidating, and receptive. He had access to the great of the world and the heroes of the mind, but the less powerful and famous had access to him. He gathered them around him, he associated with them; he inspired and supported them. He was a magician in their company, and he charmed them, even when they did not always understand him. They knew what he said was important even when they were not sure what he was saying. At his funeral in Bremen these friends put in their appearance and bid him adieu, participating in the rituals of church and graveyard.

Two things in the service were noticeable: the open invitation to those present to testify briefly to their relationship with Illich, and the reading of a letter written by Illich on the occasion of Hellmut Becker's 70th birthday. In this letter Illich specifically objected to the modern loss of being able to die one's own death. In his own remembrance service, this reading was an appropriate witness to that for which Illich stood during his entire life.

Ivan Illich was born 1926 in Vienna. After the Anschluss of Austria with Germany, the Illich family took refuge in Italy because of his mother's Jewishness. He studied science and philosophy in Florence, and later theology at the Gregoriana in Rome. He followed the calling to become priest and in the 1950s the slums of New York became his field of pastoral activity. Later he founded the Centro Intercultural de Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico. After extensive debates with the Vatican, he renounced all priestly functions in 1969. This did not reduce his attachment to the Gospel as enduring inspiration in his life.

Intrigued by his permanent rebellion against contemporary political and ecclesiastical affairs, I once asked whether he really believed in God in the traditional Trinitarian terms of the Church's creed. His answer was apodictic, foreclosing all objections: "Of course, God was father, otherwise I (Ivan) could not be your brother, and vice versa." I

was reduced to silence, since I did not dare question our brotherhood while a guest in his home. But the point of my question to him, as an "avant-garde revolutionary," came from my puzzlement. His acute appreciation of secularization and the historicity of the Christian faith made me wonder about his view of traditional revealed truth. Then I had to live with his existential answer to my intellectual question. It was an acutely Illichean answer, but not a response to the intention of my original concern.

Ivan Illich can be best described as a merciless critic of culture. He had no fixed station; on the contrary, he had a travelling existence. He taught at universities all over the world, especially in the United States and Germany. His early books, such as Celebration of Awareness, Deschooling Society, Tools for Conviviality, and Medical Nemesis, gave evidence of his keen eye for the discrepancies, inconsistencies, and irrationalities of our modern way of life. He designated capitalism as counter-productive. All that glitters is not gold. He wrapped his message in a vigorous and aggressive language. I could not always understand his energy, attacking people who conformed and adapted to our modern technological world. His special attention was directed to the pride of modernity, i.e., technology.

On the waves of the 1970s tide of social criticism, he became known among students. That Erich Fromm wrote a preface for one of his books made it plausible, to the outsider, that Illich belonged to the New Left. But from the beginning there was already an obvious difference in tone. He appreciated premodern ways of living in their particularity, and not just as preparatory trials that took their value from the modernity we achieved.

Let me return to Illich's 1992 letter to Becker. This document, "The Loss of World and Flesh," is representative of the last stage of his criticism of modernity. It mirrors his unremitting resistance, his refusal to surrender to what he saw as the corruption of modernity. He made clear that he had once

known a world he loved, but that he had to live in a world he abhorred. In this love and aversion, he thinks of the world of the flesh, the body and the senses, in contrast with the world today where flesh, body, and senses evaporate and have less and less meaning in themselves. In a dramatic way, he writes about a break in history he had already experienced as a young man of twelve. It was, so to say, a proleptic experience of a disembodied future in which he found his own corporal existence set aside by history.

In articulating this break, Illich emphasizes the fact that in the modern world people have become different. They may still hear, look, and feel, but they do so no longer with natural bodies. They no longer experience the world in their flesh. This he describes as becoming disembodied or disincarnated. On the basis of his own books and articles, one might add that it is due to technology that our bodies and flesh are no longer what they once were, but are more and more altered by the electronic media with which they engage and their bio-cybernetic transformations. In the letter itself, he does not explicitly examine the cause of the historical break, but only refers to students who are children of the era of Guernica, Bergen Belsen, Los Alamos, and the era of heart transplants, genocide, medicide. These students live on the opposite side of a great historical divide.

The letter is not so much a treatise as a deeply felt response to a friend. Contemporary ills and serious troubles from atom bombs to AIDS are pressed together in one breath. In one way or another these are, in his view, all related. He places himself as a transition figure, one who was born into a world of the flesh and the senses but now lives in a world of non-sense, among people alienated from the world and senses, as part of a generation that promoted the programmed helplessness of people. The abstractions of science and technology have taken over the place of the experience of the world and the self. Abstractions are like cushion-covers that supersede the traditional sensory perception.

Illich's perceived break with the past coincides with the demise of Christianity. In some way, this is involved with the passing bimilleneal age of European Christianity. But his point in the letter is not, in the first place, that the Christian faith is fading away—at least he does not elaborate on this issue. For a deeper understanding of the relationship between his Christian faith and criticism of culture, I have to quote Barbara Duden, for whom "it is impossible to understand his

thinking during the last twenty-five years without attention to the flesh." According to Duden, Illich

treats the flesh apophatically, and the clearer this becomes the better I understand that for him the flesh orients one inexorably toward the Incarnation, toward the mystery in the world of his faith, and ultimately toward the Cross.... [For Illich] the tradition of Western medicine [cannot] be grasped without reference to the Cross and its denial [since], after all, the rituals fostering the myths of disincarnation - be they medical, hygienic, or other—[must also be] understood as cultural denials of the Incarnation in a society that has grown out of the Christian West. (Barbara Duden, "The Quest for Past Somatics," in Lee Hoinacki and Carl Mitcham, eds., *The Challenges of Ivan Illich* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002], pp. 220-221)

The reading of Illich's letter evoked a world full of nostalgia and struggle, and he ends with the words: "In a world hostile to death, we do not prepare for passing away but for dying intransitively. On the occasion of your 70th birthday, let us celebrate that friendship in which we want to praise God for the sensual reality of the world, even by taking leave of it."

Ivan Illich had strong views that were often not easily accessible. They were provocative, because they did not harmonize with our knowledge of past and present. Unfortunately, the time is over when we can still ask him for clarification. We have to judge for ourselves about the plausibility of his vision. His contributions to the understanding of our world undoubtedly rest with his observations of trends that have to do with our orientation in the world, and he often speaks as if dichotomies such as embodiment and disembodiment, worldliness and unworldliness, necessarily and always exclude each other. Yet it is the task of philosophy to discover what different experiences have in common. Even theology should, in my view, have a say in this debate. Illich cannot be better honoured than by a critical examination of his historical intuitions. The heritage of his ideas is now a departure for our own reflections on technology and modernity—or, as it may be, post-modernity.

*January 2002. Enschede, The Netherlands*

## ***“All Things Considered”***

***National Public Radio      December 4, 2002***

***Carl Mitcham on Ivan Illich***

JACKI LYDEN, host: Ivan Illich, a former Catholic priest and champion iconoclast, has died in Germany. He was 76. Illich's writings challenged mandatory schooling, even though he was an educator, and the Catholic Church, even though he'd been a priest. In the process of his questioning, he helped remake the

sociological map for the baby boom generation. At one time a worldwide intellectual tour de force, Illich's ideas were much less in vogue in the decades before his death. Carl Mitcham is professor at the Colorado School of the Mines, who's written

about Illich's sociological theories and his turbulent relationship with the Catholic Church.

Professor CARL MITCHAM (Colorado School of the Mines): He was a radical social critic who, because of his fundamentally radical Christian commitments, saw the Catholic Church as not living up to its own ideals, and felt like he had to try to call it to account. I would compare Ivan Illich, in some ways, with Dorothy Day, who was one of the founders of the Catholic worker movement. She was a loyal member of the Catholic Church, but she felt like that in many instances, the church wasn't living up to its own Gospel ideals and, therefore, had to criticize it.

LYDEN: But Illich didn't just talk about the failings of the church in society. He talked about many sociological phenomena that have failed the populous, whether it was science or a more secular notion of education. He said it often made people dumb. And he came to say that hospitals created more sickness than they did health. His ideas seemed to bleed over into becoming provocative almost for the sake of being provocative.

Prof. MITCHAM: But I think that's really a misreading of Illich to say that he was just a radical provocateur for the purposes of being a provocateur. He really identified something which he called 'counterproductivity.' Oftentimes in many areas of our lives, we pursue something to the point where it becomes counterproductive; it doesn't get us what we're after. But because we're so committed to the pursuit of this—which, at one point, was effective—we failed to be able to step back and take a critical look at what we're doing. And he saw this operative in many different social institutions. And I think in a

lot of areas, we now almost take some of his insights for granted.

LYDEN: Did you ever meet him?

Prof. MITCHAM: Yes. I've known Illich for 15 years.

LYDEN: And what sort of a person was he? You've undoubtedly had conversations.

Prof. MITCHAM: Well-educated, multilingual, in some sense, autodidact. He loved to have conversations around a dinner table; a little pasta, a candle, good friends, talking. But the conversation would be going on simultaneously in German, in French, in English and in Spanish. And he would be trying to translate for people who were missing things in other languages and yet carrying on the conversation, sort of like a maestro, almost like a music conductor. And at the same time, pushing everybody to think harder, to think more deeply about what they were saying. It was a remarkable experience.

LYDEN: Did he feel, in any sense, Mr. MITCHAM, at the end of his life that history had passed him by?

Prof. MITCHAM: Yes. I think that at the end of his life, he was completely ready to die because he realized that his historical role had been completed.

LYDEN: Well, thank you very much for speaking with us, Mr. MITCHAM.

Prof. MITCHAM: Thank you.

LYDEN: Carl Mitcham is co-editor of the book "The Challenges of Ivan Illich: A Collective Reflection." He spoke to us from Golden, Colorado.

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## *The Death of Ivan Illich: A Personal Reflection* by Lee Hoinacki

On Monday, December 2, 2002, Barbara Duden called me from Bremen, Germany. Here in Philadelphia where I now live it was about half-past twelve noon, and we were eating lunch. She said that Ivan Illich had died that morning.

Since I had seen Ivan in September, and since we had such a good talk at that time, I was reluctant to attend the planned funeral. Barbara would be surrounded by good friends.

That afternoon and evening I started calling and sending emails to people on this side of the Atlantic. One answer, for example, from Gustavo Esteva, contained a column for the Mexico City newspaper, *Reforma* on Ivan's death; he had already written this!

The next morning, I continued contacting people. In the afternoon a Bremen friend, Antje Menk called, saying that the young people there (Silja Samerski and Matthias Riger, I guess) were insisting that I come, and she was sending a ticket. I was unable, then, to finish going through my list of people to notify.

I called Peter Bohn, another Illich friend in Philadelphia, since we had agreed to meet downtown the next day after a demonstration against the war in front of the Federal

Building; I told him I was going to Germany and would not be there to meet him.

He said he, too, would check on a ticket. Later, he called back to say he had a ticket for me that evening to Frankfurt. Then Samar Farage called from Germany to say that they couldn't buy a ticket for me from that side of the Atlantic. I explained that Peter had just bought me an electronic ticket. I had a few minutes to pack and get to the airport.

Arriving in Frankfurt, I took a train to Bremen. In the train station, I was joyfully surprised to find Michael, a young friend, there to meet me. He took a chance that I would come in on that train! We walked to Barbara's home, getting there shortly after 3 p.m.

Michael had seen Ivan early Monday morning, and they talked about a seminar Ivan was to direct on the weekend. Ivan said he was tired and lay down on a futon in the living room. Michael left and, some minutes later Silja, who lives down the street, came in (she has a key to the house), and found him dead. Barbara, who was in Hannover at her teaching job, had spoken to Ivan on the phone about noon.

When I arrived at the house, each person, Barbara especially, warmly embraced me; I felt embarrassed by such a genuine outpouring of affection. I entered the front room and found the body of Ivan resting on the futon where he had died. A burning candle and cut flowers stood nearby ... a symbol of life ... an image of death.

Using the Breviary that contained the Latin Vulgate, the one Ivan and I said each day whenever we were together, I recited some of the Officium defunctorum, the office of the dead.

Wednesday evening was a time to greet old friends who had come for the wake and funeral. So many good people, all of whom had been introduced to me by Ivan since the time I first visited him in Germany in 1978 ... some now close friends.

Early Thursday morning we lifted the body into a plain wooden coffin, and the lid was screwed down with finger-nuts.

The large church of St. Johann was nearly filled the next morning for the Mass. Various friends of Ivan participated in the ceremonies, well arranged by Wolfgang Sachs. The pastor, Propst Ansgar Lüttel, who had been to see Ivan some days earlier, spoke the homily/eulogy, acknowledging his awareness of who the man, Ivan Illich, was.

Many of those at the Mass gathered in the chapel of the distant cemetery, Oberneulander, for a short service, then proceeded to the gravesite for the burial. I was especially impressed by the ceremony in which each person present went up to the open grave and threw a handful of dirt on the lowered coffin; some also threw flowers.

All were then directed to a hotel for coffee and a bowl of soup. For some, it was the last event of the celebration, since they had to return to their jobs and homes.

My final feeling was one of joy. Various factors together, not in any order, contributed to this feeling. From reports of those persons who were present, the meeting between Ivan and Propst Lüttel, some days before Ivan's death, was most cordial and filled with understanding. In the light of this report, I must regard the visit, especially the time the two of them were together alone, as a grace-filled moment for Ivan.

At the church, just before the Mass, a young man came up to greet and embrace me. Almost ten years earlier there had been a serious break between him and Ivan ... from close intimacy to anger, distance, pain on both sides. He and Ivan never again spoke to one another.

Before and after the break, I visited him, stayed with his parents, and tried to be a friend; we had been quite close. Because of his lack of enthusiasm for my visits, several years ago I had stopped traveling to the town where he lived.

He traveled five hours to get to the funeral, and had to return home almost immediately after the ceremonies for his teaching duties the next day. He came back to Bremen to see me on Saturday and Sunday; we had long talks. I think that much of the woundedness that divided him and Ivan is now healed.

Another person, a young woman, was also bitterly estranged from Ivan. She had moved from a close friendship

to a kind of smoldering anger. She and I had also been good friends, but I had not seen her for two or three years. While in Bremen, I sent her a greeting card, and received an immediate friendly reply by email (sent to the Illich email address). She was happy to hear from me, and invited me to come visit her and her family.

These three events were beyond what I could have hoped for ... they do not respond to my sense of causality ... they are, strictly speaking, gratuitous gifts, manifestations of merciful Providence.

Well, maybe. They may also represent a kind of higher superstition, that is, my superstition. True, they are signs, but signs of what? I take them to be signs of grace. But the very fact that I interpret them in this way may indicate a superstitious need in me ... I need signs of grace (there's a hard saying in the New Testament in which the Lord rebukes those who seek signs; see, e.g. Mk. 8.12).

I regard these events as a blessing on Ivan's life, as indicating a good far beyond what even the most perceptive eulogists will be able to cite. They indicate the important aspect of Ivan's stance: How he stands before God ... (again, maybe!).

Ivan suffered from physical pain which, as far as I could tell, was constant and almost unremitting ... and this for some years. I think he also suffered certain effects from the opium that he took to help bear the pain, but as I don't know anything about the physical pain, I know even less about the effects of opium. He was also greatly and increasingly distressed in his attempts to be a friend to different people.

I think, however, beyond all the above, he experienced another terrible pain: the inability to say what he wanted to say: about the corruptio optimi, the mysterium iniquitatis, the relationship between these two realities, their respective relationships to the world and to the Church, and the interrelationships of all these complex cultural/historical/ecclesiastical, divine affairs.

In our long conversations on these themes, the struggle and frustration were evident ... and awful to witness. He who had said so much so well in his life was now unable to speak. And he was acutely aware of his inability to articulate what he vaguely felt to be the truth.

Given the other pains and sufferings, maybe especially the long-range effects of the opium, it was impossible for him ever to overcome this final confusion. Therefore, I felt it was good that he died sooner rather than later. In a sense, it was already years too late.

David Cayley is now working on some tapes he recorded in which Ivan attempts to make a last statement. I've read most of the transcripts and there are nearly insuperable problems ... of clarity and theological precision. But maybe Cayley can pull off what he did with the life and thought of Simone Weil! From her eminently difficult writings, he put together a magnificent intellectual/witness portrait.

So, my overall feeling is one of immense gratitude. Ivan Illich suffered various quite different kinds of pain in the days, weeks, months, and final years preceding his death. All that is now swallowed up in the fulfillment of his faith.

*January 2002. Philadelphia*

# In Review

The Fall 2003 *Ellul Forum* review section will expand to include regular “re-views” of Jacques Ellul’s books along with other significant works.

**Harvard and the Unabomber: The Education of An American Terrorist** by Alston Chase. New York: Norton, 2003. 432 pages.

Alston Chase, a writer and independent scholar specializing in intellectual history, was the author of a major article on “Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber” in *The Atlantic* in June 2000. His new book is a brilliant, extremely well-researched expansion of that article. The focus of the narrative is, of course, Theodore Kaczynski, now serving a sentence of life in prison without possibility of parole for his bombs which murdered or maimed several people during his 1978-95 “Unabomber” terrorist attacks on representative leaders of “industrial society.”

By an eerie coincidence, Kaczynski was a professor of mathematics at the University of California, Berkeley, for my final two years enrolled there, 1967-69. I was an odd combination history major and math minor, preparing at that time to be a high school teacher, but had no math classes with Kaczynski and wasn’t even aware of his existence in our huge university, embroiled in a great deal of chaos and protest those years.

More to the point for *Ellul Forum* readers, Kaczynski was a great enthusiast for Jacques Ellul from 1971 or 1972 onward. Kaczynski said about Ellul’s *Technological Society*, “when I read the book . . . for the first time, I was delighted, because I thought, ‘Here is someone who is saying what I have already been thinking’” (p. 92). Kaczynski’s brother David later said that Ellul’s *Technological Society* “became Ted’s Bible” (p. 332). According to author Chase, Kaczynski even exchanged letters with Ellul. Now those would be a fascinating read!

Kaczynski, you will recall, managed to get the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* to print his very lengthy essay “Industrial Society and Its Future” (the “Unabomber Manifesto”) in September 1995 by promising to cease his terrorist killings if they did so. This “victory” led to his defeat because David Kaczynski recognized the author of the text as his brother and blew the whistle on him.

The “Manifesto” did not refer specifically to Ellul (thankfully!) but it is indisputable that Ellul’s concept of “Technique” as a way of thinking (not just a set of tools), as an ensemble of means that had become an end in itself, ever expanding throughout the world and into every domain of life, having a virtually deterministic, necessary character, was central to Kaczynski’s view of the world.

Alston Chase gets three cheers from this reviewer for the understanding of Ellul he brings to his analysis. “Despite corresponding with Ellul, Kaczynski ignored virtually all that the French philosopher had written since 1964 . . . It would seem Kaczynski ‘imprinted’ on the early Ellul and ignored what followed. . . he did not even own a copy of *The Ethics of Freedom*. Kaczynski’s faith in the efficacy of revolution had apparently remained unchanged despite, not because of, the later admonitions of Ellul” (p. 93).

“Curiously, Kaczynski revered Joseph Conrad and Jacques Ellul, both of whom deplored violence and advocated the spiritual life. . . Blinded by scientism and rage, he missed the message of Ellul, Paz, and Conrad altogether” (pp. 363-364). Chase shows how Kaczynski’s “revolution” illustrated precisely the phenomenon against which Ellul warned in his *Autopsy of Revolution*: a violent, technological response simply reinforces the grip of Technique!

Chase’s careful personal and intellectual biography of Kaczynski delivers a read that is not only fascinating but illuminating and persuasive. It offers insights not just into Kaczynski himself but into the broader topic of terrorism. Terrorists use ideas to justify appalling acts of violence but ideas alone do not create terrorists. Families, teachers, institutions, experiences, and, finally, personal choices are all part of the true explanation. Kaczynski emerges not as a clinically insane person but as a brilliantly twisted, deluded, enraged, and evil man. Chase shows how technological society is partly, but not wholly, to blame for the creation of a Kaczynski. A remarkable book.

Reviewed by David W. Gill

## The Jacques Ellul Special Collection at Wheaton College

### A Report from David Malone, Librarian

Wheaton College, a private liberal arts college founded in 1860, located just west of Chicago, has gathered the most comprehensive collection of Jacques Ellul materials outside of France. In the mid-1980s, Dr. Joyce Main Hanks began to transfer copies of Ellul materials to Wheaton College.

The Wheaton collection now includes nearly all of Ellul’s published books, articles, and essays, reviews of his work, as well as various book manuscripts, course lecture notes, public lectures and addresses, and some unpublished material. It includes audio (and some video) materials, such as sixteen taped interviews of Ellul by Joyce Hanks. The most significant recent addition was nearly 200 audiotapes of Ellul’s lectures and Bible studies made by Bordeaux physician Franck Brugerolle. We collect as many works by and about Ellul as possible, regardless of form or language, including master’s theses and doctoral dissertations.

Our purpose is not only to preserve Ellul’s archives but to encourage the study of his works and ideas. Our hope is for increased awareness and involvement by Ellul scholars, researchers, and academicians. We invite your dialog, encouragement, recommendations, and ideas for additional materials. We would welcome the development of lectures, seminars, and study programs extending the study of Ellul and enhancing the collection’s use.

Access an inventory of the Ellul collection at:  
<http://www.wheaton.edu/learnres/arcsc/collects/sc16/>  
Contact staff at 630-752-5705 or  
[Special.Collections@wheaton.edu](mailto:Special.Collections@wheaton.edu)

# News & Notes

Please send any news, announcements, or inquiries of interest to Ellul Forum readers. E-mail to [IJES@ellul.org](mailto:IJES@ellul.org) or mail to IJES, P.O. Box 5365, Berkeley CA 94705 USA. Deadline for Fall 2003 issue: September 15.

✍️ **ETIENNE DRAVASA**, Professor Emeritus at the University of Bordeaux, recently wrote: "I was deeply touched to receive a copy of the December 2002 issue of *The Ellul Forum*. Jacques Ellul's work and his legacy deserve the exceptional homage which is paid to him in *The Forum*. . . . It was a great honor for me to be a personal friend of Jacques Ellul for more than fifty years."

✍️ **GRANT SHOFFSTALL** ([gwshoff@ilstu.edu](mailto:gwshoff@ilstu.edu)), a graduate student in sociology working toward the M.A. with Prof. Richard Stivers at Illinois State University, will present a paper on Jacques Ellul at the August 15-19, 2003, meeting of the American Sociological Association in Chicago. Grant welcomes contacts with other sociologists interested in Ellul and is seeking information on doctoral level sociology programs and faculty conducive to his further study of Ellul.

✍️ **VIRGINIA LANDGRAF** ([kaencat@hotmail.com](mailto:kaencat@hotmail.com)) successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation in Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary, "Abstract Power and the God of Love: A Critical Assessment of the Place of Institutions in Jacques Ellul's Anthropology of Dialectical Relationships" under the direction of Prof. Max Stackhouse. Ginny, a lay theologian active in the Presbyterian Church (USA), spent two years in Thailand with the Peace Corps and has an M.A. from the Graduate Theological Union. She is interested in seminary teaching, preferably abroad.

✍️ **RANDY ATAIDE** ([rataide@MountainViewFruit.com](mailto:rataide@MountainViewFruit.com)) is receiving his M.A. in Theology (supervised by Prof. Mark Baker) from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno CA. His thesis was entitled "If We Serve a God of Productivity Is There Room for Jesus? An Analysis and Application of Jacques Ellul's Thesis of Technique in the Agri-Business World." A full-time businessman operating a group of fruit storage, distribution, sales, and marketing companies ([www.MountainViewFruit.com](http://www.MountainViewFruit.com)), Randy completed the J.D. before his M.A., and has been accepted into the Executive Education Program for Owners/Presidents of Companies at Harvard Business School in February 2004. He plans to continue making business his primary career but welcomes contacts and opportunities to share his ideas, possibly including the publication of his thesis.

✍️ **MAX KIRK** ([maxkirk@canada.com](mailto:maxkirk@canada.com)) is a mediator in private practice in British Columbia. He is looking for conversation and dialogue about the struggle within Judaism with the religious challenge of modern technology---and how this struggle may be at the heart of the conflict concerning Jerusalem today. Max had a very brief correspondence with Jacques Ellul and would welcome contacts with others familiar with Ellul's thought.

✍️ **ANDY BAKER** ([jesusradicals@jesusradicals.com](mailto:jesusradicals@jesusradicals.com)) and a few friends organized the "Jesus Radicals" web site originally as a tribute to Vieques student protesters who were detained and barred from the base. The site evolved into a place to

network, discuss issues, and find resources on radical Christianity and anarchism. Many visitors to the web site are encountering and appreciating Ellul's ideas on anarchy, money, and power for the first time. Andy is headed for the M.A. program at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary this fall and hopes to follow that with a Ph.D. somewhere.

✍️ **KUNIHIDE MATSUTANI** ([kuni0070@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:kuni0070@yahoo.co.jp)) is now finishing his Ph.D. in political theory and intellectual history at Tokyo's International Christian University. His doctoral thesis focuses on the development of Ellul's theory of technology in the context of the political and intellectual climate of France in the 1930s, with particular emphasis on anarchism, non-conformism, and personalism. Matsutani earned his B.A. from Massachusetts and his M.A. at ICU (Tokyo) with a thesis on Foucault. A few of Ellul's works have been translated into Japanese but Matsutani's thesis would be the first monograph on Ellul to appear in Japanese.

✍️ **STEVE PEARSON** ([brainy pirate@hotmail.com](mailto:brainy pirate@hotmail.com)) informs us that a Yahoo discussion group on Jacques Ellul has been intermittently active with discussions of both Ellul's theology and his technology. No guarantees on quality in these free-for-all cyberspace discussions, of course, but if anyone is craving some interaction about Ellul . . . here is a possibility. Steve, himself, is beginning a Ph.D. program in Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia with a focus on the devotional literature of prayer and spirituality. Contact Steve if you are interested in Ellul's take on the spiritual life and in what an Ellulian literary theory might look like.

✍️ **SEBASTIAN LUPAK** ([sebastian.lupak@gdansk.agora.pl](mailto:sebastian.lupak@gdansk.agora.pl)) is a journalist in Gdansk, Poland, with an interest in acquiring more of Ellul's books---and in meeting or corresponding with other students of Ellul's thought.

✍️ **CARLO CARRENHO** ([carlo@carrenho.com.br](mailto:carlo@carrenho.com.br)) has a small publishing company in Brazil and is interested in publishing Ellul in Portuguese. Anyone interested in supporting or participating in this project should contact him.

✍️ **MATTHEW PATTILLO** ([matthewpattillo@hotmail.com](mailto:matthewpattillo@hotmail.com)) will present a paper on Jacques Ellul and Rene Girard at the June 18-21 meeting of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion in Innsbruck. Others interested in Girard's mimetic theory and its bearing on Ellul's work should contact him.

✍️ **JEAN-LUC PORQUET**, a journalist at the French satirical political journal *Canard enchainé*, has just published a book entitled *Jacques Ellul: L'homme qui avait presque tout prévu* (Paris: Le cherche midi, 2003. 286 pages). The book can be purchased from Librairie Mollat ([www.mollat.com](http://www.mollat.com)) for 18 euros (plus shipping). Porquet presents Ellul as "the man who foresaw almost everything." The heart of the book is Porquet's review of twenty ideas and phenomena of our technological civilization which Ellul discussed and analyzed well in advance of their dominance. Porquet's book will be reviewed in the Fall 2003 issue of *The Ellul Forum*.

✍️ **ANDREW GODDARD** ([andrew.goddard@wycliffe-hall.oxford.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.goddard@wycliffe-hall.oxford.ac.uk)) has recently published a new book, *Living the Word, Resisting the World: The Life and Thought of Jacques Ellul* (Paternoster Press, 2002, xxiv, 378 pages; [www.paternoster-publishing.com](http://www.paternoster-publishing.com)). It can be purchased in the US through Eisenbrauns ([www.eisenbrauns.com](http://www.eisenbrauns.com)) for about \$30 plus shipping. *Ellul Forum* review scheduled Fall 2003.

# How Big Is the Tent?

by David W. Gill

President, International Jacques Ellul Society

Not too long ago I attended a concert by Diana Krall and heard her make a sardonic reference to unnamed “jazz police” who had questioned her jazz authenticity. More recently a couple friends of mine in the “opera police” sputtered and fumed at a giant poster promoting the latest album from Italian singing star Andrea Bocelli, which hung just across the train platform from us.

Such experiences raise the question of whether The International Jacques Ellul Society---or any other individuals or organizations---might be tempted to act as a sort of “Ellul police,” passing judgment on who is or is not qualified as an “authentic” representative of Ellul’s thought. Another way to put it is to ask whether we want a “little tent” accommodating only those with whom we agree---or a “big tent” that welcomes diversity and disagreement.

The IJES choice is to welcome anyone who in any way supports the goals of (1) preserving and disseminating the literary and intellectual heritage of Jacques Ellul, (2) extending his social critique, especially concerning technology, and (3) extending his theological and ethical research with its special emphases on hope and freedom. Affirm these goals, pay your annual dues, and you are in our “big tent” Ellul organization.

One reason for our “big tent” philosophy is tactical: all of us who care about Ellul need to work together if we want to accomplish the goals listed above. We are relatively small in number and scattered all over the globe. Publishing projects, conferences, and the like, are costly and labor-intensive. If we really care about Ellul’s legacy, this is the time for collaboration, not fragmentation.

The historical reality is that an incredibly diverse group of people looks back to Jacques Ellul as a primary teacher and source of inspiration. Our current IJES leadership reflects some of that diversity: our professions range from attorney to university professor to independent scholar; our specialties range from communications to history, philosophy, language, theology, religion, ethics, political science, and law; some are active in churches (of various denominations) and some are not; we live in all regions of the United States and in England and France.

In the early 1970s, I recall being impressed at seeing Ellul’s name in a catalog course description for Cal’s Boalt Hall law school---as well as in sociology and theology course descriptions in other departments and schools. I was amazed at the diverse parade of Ellul admirers which I soon became aware of: mainstream Lutheran historian Martin Marty, *Brave New World* author Aldous Huxley, L’Abri evangelical intellectual Os Guinness, ex-Watergate-con, “born again” Prison Fellowship leader Chuck Colson, Anabaptist theologians John Howard Yoder and Vernard Eller, Catholic Worker leader Jeff Dietrich, counter-cultural historian Theodore Roszak, southern Christian church social activists Will Campbell and James Holloway, French professor Joyce Hanks and others now on our IJES board . . . and this is just a

sample. Today, the Ellul tent stretches to include José Bové, the French farmer and anti-globalization activist, and Andy Baker and his “Jesus Radicals,” who, inspired by Ellul’s version of Christian anarchy and discipleship, are out there bearing witness and getting arrested for protesting America’s international violence.

This diversity among the students of Jacques Ellul is a wonderful thing in a world of partisan orthodoxies and narrow affinity groups. Little or nothing is gained, and much can be lost, by evading discussion with those different from ourselves and with whom we may disagree. Learning is rarely enhanced by narrowing our debates too soon. Whether based on fear or ignorance (two common sources), a strategy of exclusion is misguided.

The bottom line on this topic is that Jacques Ellul himself engaged all comers and viewpoints. He read widely and welcomed engagement with his critics as well as enthusiasts. He constructively stimulated the thinking and behavior of an unusually wide and diverse group of listeners and readers. He often wrote and said that his objective was not to provide a set of answers but rather to provide people with improved means to think for themselves. If Ellul’s “anarchy” means anything, it allows for freedom, risk, transgression, deviance, and a readiness to be out of control.

In light of all of this, the IJES tent is designed to be big. We welcome your entry, your ideas, and your participation, and we encourage you to spread the word about the IJES to everyone you think might be interested.

## International Jacques Ellul Society

[www.ellul.org](http://www.ellul.org)

P.O. Box 5365, Berkeley CA 94705, USA

[IJES@ellul.org](mailto:IJES@ellul.org) Tel/Fax: 510-653-3334

The IJES (with its francophone sister-society, L’Association Internationale Jacques Ellul) links together scholars and friends of various specializations, vocations, backgrounds, and nations, who share a common interest in the legacy of Jacques Ellul (1912-94), long time professor at the University of Bordeaux. Our objectives are (1) to preserve and disseminate his literary and intellectual heritage, (2) to extend his social critique, especially concerning technology, and (3) to extend his theological and ethical research with its special emphases on hope and freedom.

The IJES and AIJE have been founded by a group of long-time students, scholars, and friends of Jacques Ellul, with the counsel and support of Jean, Yves, and Dominique Ellul, and as a French-American collaboration.

### Board of Directors

Patrick Chastenet, *University of Poitiers*; Clifford Christians, *University of Illinois*; Andrew Goddard, *Oxford University*; Darrell Fasching, *University of South Florida*; David Gill (President), *Berkeley*; Joyce Hanks (Vice-President), *University of Scranton*; Ken Morris (Secretary-Treasurer), *Berkeley*; Carl Mitcham, *Colorado School of Mines*; Langdon Winner, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*

### Joining the IJES

To become a member, anywhere in the world, and receive the twice-yearly *Ellul Forum*, submit annual dues of US \$20 to “IJES” (use an international postal money order or bank check drawn in US dollars) with your name and complete mailing address.

# Seven Valuable Ellul Resources

## **WWW.ELLUL.ORG**

### **An Indispensable Web Site**

Julianne Chatelain, a long time student of Ellul's thought, has voluntarily, in her spare time, helped construct and maintain the joint web site of the IJES and AIJE at [www.ellul.org](http://www.ellul.org). This is where you will find

- information about IJES and AIJE activities and plans,
- a brief and accurate biography of Jacques Ellul, and
- a complete bibliography of Ellul's books in French and English.

### **The Ellul Forum: 1988-2002, Issues 1-30 (compact disc)**

*The Ellul Forum* was founded by Prof. Darrell Fasching in 1988 as a twice-yearly publication for those interested in Ellul to exchange ideas and opinions and maintain contact while scattered all over North America and beyond. The first thirty issues of *The Forum*, some 500 published pages total, are now available (only) on a single compact disc which can be purchased for \$15 (postage included). Send payment with your order to "IJES," P.O. Box 5365, Berkeley CA 94705 USA.

### **Cahiers Jacques Ellul**

#### **Pour Une Critique de la Societe Technicienne**

The first volume of an annual journal called *Cahiers Jacques Ellul* has just appeared in France and is available for 20 euros (postage included) to individuals outside France, and for 25 euros to libraries. The theme of the initial 2003 volume is *Les Années Personalistes* ("The Personalist Years"), with articles by Patrick Troude-Chasteney, and Jean-Louis Loubet del Bayle as well as from the Jacques Ellul archives.

The editor of *Cahiers Jacques Ellul* is Patrick Chasteney, President of *L'Association Internationale Jacques Ellul*, the sister society of the IJES. *Cahiers Jacques Ellul* promises to be an essential new reference for those seriously interested in Ellul's ideas.

### **Librairie Mollat---new books in French**

Librairie Mollat is one of the great bookstores you will ever visit, occupying a labyrinthine building in the center of old Bordeaux. If you cannot visit in person, Mollat's web site ([www.mollat.com](http://www.mollat.com)) is an excellent resource for finding French language books, including those by and about Ellul. Mollat accepts credit cards over the web and will mail books anywhere in the world.

### **Jacques Ellul: An Annotated Bibliography of Primary Works**

by Joyce Main Hanks. Research in Philosophy and Technology. Supplement 5. Stamford, CT: JAI Press, 2000. xiii., 206 pages. \$87. ISBN: 076230619X.

This is the essential guide for anyone doing research in Jacques Ellul's writings. An excellent brief biography is followed by a 140-page annotated bibliography of Ellul's fifty books and thousand-plus articles and a thirty-page subject index. Hank's work is comprehensive, accurate, and invariably helpful. This may be one of the more expensive books you buy for your library; it will surely be one of the most valuable. Visit [www.elsevier.com](http://www.elsevier.com) for ordering information.

### **Alibris---used book source**

The Alibris web site ([www.alibris.com](http://www.alibris.com)) recently gave thirty titles of used Jacques Ellul books in English translation available to order at reasonable prices. Alibris could be the answer if you are searching for an out-of-print Ellul title.

### **Reprints of Nine Eerdmans Books By Ellul**

The William B. Eerdmans Company published several English translations of Ellul volumes that have been out of print for a few years now. Now, by arrangement with Ingram and Spring Arbor, individual reprint copies of these volumes can be purchased and in your hands in a week or so. The books and prices listed at the Eerdmans web site are as follows: *The Ethics of Freedom* (\$40), *The Humiliation of the Word* (\$26), *The Judgment of Jonah* (\$13), *The Meaning of the City* (\$20), *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man* (\$19), *Reason for Being: A Meditation on Ecclesiastes* (\$28), *The Subversion of Christianity* (\$20), and *The Technological Bluff* (\$35). *Sources and Trajectories: Eight Early Articles by Jacques Ellul* translated by Marva Dawn is also available (price unknown).

To order any of these books, go to your bookstore (or on-line book dealer) and have them "back order" the titles you want. Do not go as an individual customer to Eerdmans or Ingram/Spring Arbor. For more information visit "Books on Demand" at [www.eerdmans.com](http://www.eerdmans.com).

## **Change of Address?**

**Don't forget to notify IJES if your address changes!  
Postal forwarding orders expire after a period of time.  
Forwarding practices are sometimes unreliable.  
You don't want to miss out on *The Ellul Forum*.  
We don't want to lose touch with you.  
Send your address change immediately to:**

**[IJES@ellul.org](mailto:IJES@ellul.org)**

**Or**

**IJES, P.O. Box 5365, Berkeley CA 94705**

