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Originally published in 1999 in *Green Anarchist*, published in 2008 in *Technological Slavery* in heavily revised form.
Technological Slavery — Kaczynski, Theodore J.

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If it was acceptable to fight World War II in spite of the severe cruelty to millions of innocent people that that entailed, then a revolution against the technoindustrial system should be acceptable too. Had the fascists come to dominate the world, they doubtless would have treated their subject populations with brutality, would have reduced millions to slavery under harsh conditions, and would have exterminated many people outright. But, however horrible that might have been, it seems almost trivial in comparison with the disasters with which the technoindustrial system threatens us. Hitler and his allies merely tried to repeat on a larger scale the kinds of atrocities that have occurred again and again throughout the history of civilization. What modern technology threatens is absolutely without precedent. Today we have to ask ourselves whether nuclear war, biological disaster, or ecological collapse will produce casualties many times greater than those of World War II; whether the human race will continue to exist or whether it will be replaced by intelligent machines or genetically engineered freaks; whether the last vestiges of human dignity will disappear, not merely for the duration of a particular totalitarian regime but for all time; whether our world will even be inhabitable a couple of hundred years from now. Under these circumstances, who will claim that World War II was acceptable but that a revolution against the technoindustrial system is not?

Though revolution will necessarily involve violation of the principles of fairness, revolutionaries should make every effort to avoid violating those principles any more than is really necessary–not only from respect for human decency, but also for practical reasons. By complying with the principles of fairness to the extent that doing so is not incompatible with revolutionary action, revolutionaries will win the respect of nonrevolutionaries, will be able to recruit better people to be revolutionaries, and will increase the self-respect of the revolutionary movement, thereby strengthening its esprit de corps.

"Morality, guilt and fear of condemnation act as cops in our heads, destroying our spontaneity, our wildness, our ability to live our lives to the full . . . I try to act on my whims, my spontaneous urges without caring what others think of me . . . I want no constraints on my life; I want the opening of all possibilities . . . This means . . . destroying all morality." — Feral Faun, "The Cops in Our Heads: Some Thoughts on Anarchy and Morality."[1]

It is true that the concept of morality as conventionally understood is one of the most important tools that the system uses to control us, and we must liberate ourselves from it.

But suppose you're in a bad mood one day. You see an inoffensive but ugly old lady; her appearance irritates you, and your "spontaneous urges" impel you to knock her down and kick her. Or suppose you have a "thing" for little girls, so your "spontaneous urges" lead you to pick out a cute four-year-old, rip off her clothes, and rape her as she screams in terror.

I would be willing to bet that there is not one anarchist reading this who would not be disgusted by such actions, or who would not try to prevent them if he saw them being carried out. Is this only a consequence of the moral conditioning that our society imposes on us?

I argue that it is not. I propose that there is a kind of natural "morality" (note the quotation marks), or a conception of fairness, that runs as a common thread through all cultures and tends to appear in them in some form or other, though it may often be submerged or modified by forces specific to a particular culture. Perhaps this conception of fairness is biologically predisposed. At any rate it can be summarized in the following Six Principles:

[1] *The Quest for the Spiritual: A Basis for a Radical Analysis of Religion, and Other Essays by Feral Faun*, published by Green Anarchist, BCM 1715, London WC 1N 3XX, United Kingdom.

1. Do not harm anyone who has not previously harmed you, or threatened to do so.
2. (Principle of self-defense and retaliation) You can harm others in order to forestall harm with which they threaten you, or in retaliation for harm that they have already inflicted on you.
3. One good turn deserves another: If someone has done you a favor, you should be willing to do her or him a comparable favor if and when he or she should need one.
4. The strong should have consideration for the weak.
5. Do not lie.
6. Abide faithfully by any promises or agreements that you make.

To take a couple of examples of the ways in which the Six Principles often are submerged by cultural forces, among the Navajo, traditionally, it was considered "morally acceptable" to use deception when trading with anyone who was not a member of the tribe (WA. Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology*, 9th ed., p. 207), though this contravenes principles 1, 5, and 6. And in our society many people will reject the principle of retaliation: Because of industrial society's imperative need for social order and because of the disruptive potential of personal retaliatory action, we are trained to suppress our retaliatory impulses and leave any serious retaliation (called "justice") to the legal system.

In spite of such examples, I maintain that the Six Principles tend toward universality. But whether or not one accepts that the Six Principles are to any extent universal, I feel safe in assuming that almost all readers of this article will agree with the principles (with the possible exception of the principle of retaliation) in some shape or other. Hence the Six Principles can serve as a basis for the present discussion.

I argue that the Six Principles should not be regarded as a moral code, for several reasons.

First. The principles are vague and can be interpreted in such widely ways that there will be no consistent agreement as to their application in concrete cases. For instance, if Smith insists on playing his radio so loud that it prevents Jones from sleeping, and if Jones smashes Smith's radio for him, is Jones's action unprovoked harm

the interest of the system and is instilled through propaganda. In fact, these people have simply been brainwashed.

It goes without saying that in order to bring about a revolution against the technoindustrial system it will be necessary to discard conventional morality. One of the two main points that I've tried to make in this article is that even the most radical rejection of conventional morality does not necessarily entail the abandonment of human decency: there is a "natural" (and in some sense perhaps universal) morality–or, as I have preferred to call it, a concept of fairness–that tends to keep our conduct toward other people "decent" even when we have discarded all formal morality.

The other main point I've tried to make is that the concept of morality is used for many purposes that have nothing to do with human decency or with what I've called "fairness". Modern society in particular uses morality as a tool in manipulating human behavior for purposes that often are completely inconsistent with human decency.

Thus, once revolutionaries have decided that the present form of society must be eliminated, there is no reason why they should hesitate to reject existing morality; and their rejection of morality will by no means be equivalent to a rejection of human decency.

There's no denying, however, that revolution against the technoindustrial system will violate human decency and the principles of fairness. With the collapse of the system, whether it is spontaneous or a result of revolution, countless innocent people will suffer and die. Our current situation is one of those in which we have to decide whether to commit injustice and cruelty in order to prevent a greater evil.

For comparison, consider World War II. At that time the ambitions of ruthless dictators could be thwarted only by making war on a large scale, and, given the conditions of modern warfare, millions of innocent civilians inevitably were killed or mutilated. Few people will deny that this constituted an extreme and inexcusable injustice to the victims, yet fewer still will argue that Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese militarists should have been allowed to dominate the world.

Since then, attitudes toward violence have changed dramatically. Today the media, the schools, and all who are committed to the system brainwash us to believe that violence is the one thing above all others that we must never commit. (Of course, when the system finds it convenient to use violence–via the police or the military–for its own purposes, it can always find an excuse for doing so.)

It is sometimes claimed that the modern attitude toward violence is a result of the gentling influence of Christianity, but this makes no sense. The period during which Christianity was most powerful in Europe, the Middle Ages, was a particularly violent epoch. It has been during the course of the Industrial Revolution and the ensuing technological changes that attitudes toward violence have been altered, and over the same span of time the influence of Christianity has been markedly weakened. Clearly it has not been Christianity that has changed attitudes toward violence.

It is necessary for the functioning of modern industrial society that people should cooperate in a rigid, machine-like way, obeying rules, following orders and schedules, carrying out prescribed procedures. Consequently the system requires, above all, human docility and social order. Of all human behaviors, violence is the one most disruptive of social order, hence the one most dangerous to the system. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the powerful classes, perceiving that violence was increasingly contrary to their interest, changed their attitude toward it. Because their influence was predominant in determining what was printed by the press and taught in the schools, they gradually transformed the attitude of the entire society, so that today most middle-class people, and even the majority of those who think themselves rebels against the system, believe that violence is the ultimate sin. They imagine that their opposition to violence is the expression of a moral decision on their part, and in a sense it is, but it is based on a morality that is designed to serve

[2] See Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr (editors), *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Bantam Books, New York, 1970, Chapter 12, by Roger Lane; also, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15th Edition, 2003, Volume 25, article "Police," pages 959–960. On medieval attitudes toward violence and the reasons why those attitudes changed, see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, Revised Edition, Blackwell Publishing, 2000, pages 161–172.

inflicted on Smith, or is it legitimate self-defense against harm that Smith is inflicting on Jones? On this question Smith and Jones are not likely to agree! (All the same, there are limits to the interpretation of the Six Principles. I imagine it would be difficult to find anyone in any culture who would interpret the principles in such a way as to justify brutal physical abuse of unoffending old ladies or the rape of four-year-old girls.)

Second. Most people will agree that it is sometimes "morally" justifiable to make exceptions to the Six Principles. If your friend has destroyed logging equipment belonging to a large timber corporation, and if the police come around to ask you who did it, any green anarchist will agree that it is justifiable to lie and say, "I don't know".

Third. The Six Principles have not generally been treated as if they possessed the force and rigidity of true moral laws. People often violate the Six Principles even when there is no "moral" justification for doing so. Moreover, as already noted, the moral codes of particular societies frequently conflict with and override the Six Principles. Rather than laws, the principles are only a kind of guide, an expression of our more generous impulses that reminds us not to do certain things that we may later look back on with disgust.

Fourth. I suggest that the term "morality" should be used only to designate socially imposed codes of behavior that are specific to certain societies, cultures, or subcultures. Since the Six Principles, in some form or other, tend to be universal and may well be biologically predisposed, they should not be described as morality.

Assuming that most anarchists will accept the Six Principles, what the anarchist (or, at least, the anarchist of individualistic type) does is claim the right to interpret the principles for himself in any concrete situation in which he is involved and decide for himself when to make exceptions to the principles, rather than letting any authority make such decisions for him.

However, when people interpret the Six principles for themselves, conflicts arise because different individuals interpret the principles differently. For this reason among others, practically all societies have evolved rules that restrict behavior in more precise ways than the Six Principles do. In other words, whenever a number of people are together for an extended period of time, it is almost inevitable that

some degree of morality will develop. Only the hermit is completely free. This is not an attempt to debunk the idea of anarchy. Even if there is no such thing as a society perfectly free of morality, still there is a big difference between a society in which the burden of morality is light and one in which it is heavy. The pygmies of the African rain forest, as described by Colin Turnbull in his books *The Forest People* and *Wayward Servants: The Two Worlds of the African Pygmies*, provide an example of a society that is not far from the anarchist ideal. Their rules are few and flexible and allow a very generous measure of personal liberty. (Yet, even though they have no cops, courts or prisons, Turnbull mentions no case of homicide among them.)

In contrast, in technologically advanced societies the social mechanism is complex and rigid, and can function only when human behavior is closely regulated. Consequently such societies require a far more restrictive system of law and morality. (For present purposes we don't need to distinguish between law and morality. We will simply consider law as a particular kind of morality, which is not unreasonable, since in our society it is widely regarded as immoral to break the law.) Old-fashioned people complain of moral looseness in modern society, and it is true that in some respects our society is relatively free of morality. But I would argue that our society's relaxation of morality in sex, art, literature, dress, religion, etc., is in large part a reaction to the severe tightening of controls on human behavior in the practical domain. Art, literature and the like provide a harmless outlet for rebellious impulses that would be dangerous to the system if they took a more practical direction, and hedonistic satisfactions such as overindulgence in sex or food, or intensely stimulating forms of entertainment, help people to forget the loss of their freedom.

At any rate, it is clear that in any society some morality serves practical functions. One of these functions is that of forestalling conflicts or making it possible to resolve them without recourse to violence. (According to Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's book *The Harmless People*, Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1989, pages 10, 82, 83, the Bushmen of Southern Africa own as private property the right to gather food in specified areas of the veldt, and

People who occupy positions of power within the system have an interest in promoting the security and the expansion of the system. When these people perceive that certain moral ideas strengthen the system or make it more secure, then, either from concious self-interest or because their moral feelings are influenced by self-interest, they apply pressure to the media and to educators to promote these moral ideas. Thus the requirements of respect for property, and of orderly, docile, rule-following, cooperative behavior, have become moral values in our society (even though these requirements can conflict with the principles of fairness) because they are necessary to the functioning of the system. Similarly; harmony and equality between different races and ethnic groups is a moral value of our society because iterracial and interethnic conflict impede the functioning of the system. Equal treatment of all races and ethnic groups may be required by the principles of fairness, but this is not why it is a moral value of our society. It is a moral value of our society because it is good for the technoindustrial system. Traditional moral restraints on sexual behavior have been relaxed becausethe people who have power see that these restraints are not necessary to the functioning of the system and that maintaining them produces tensions and conflicts that are harmful to the system.

Particulary instructive is the moral prohibition of violence in our society. (By "violence" I mean physical attacks on human beings or the application of physical force to human beings.) Several hundred years ago, violence per se was not considered immoral in European society. In fact, under suitable conditions, it was admired. The most prestigious social class was the nobility, which was then a warrior caste. Even on the eve of the Industrial violence was not regarded as the greatest of all evils, and certain other values–personal liberty for example–were felt to be more important than the avoidance of violence. In America, well into the nineteenth century, public attitudes toward the police were negative, and police forces were kept weak and inefficient because it was felt that they were a threat to freedom. People preferred to see to their own defense and accept a fairly high level of violence in society rather than risk any of their personal liberty.[2]

long as these people comply with conventional morality, they have a sense of righteousness that enables them to disregard the principles of fairness without discomfort.

Another way in which morality is antagonistic toward the Six Principles is that it often serves as an excuse for mistreatment or exploitation of persons who have violated the moral code or the laws of a given society. In the United States, politicians promotetheir careers by "getting tough on crime" and advocating harsh penalties for people who have broken the law. Prosecutors often seek personal advancement by being as hard on defendants as the law allows them to be. This satisfies certain sadistic and authoritarian impulses of the public and allays the privileged classes' fear of social disorder. It all has little to do with the Six Principles of fairness. Many of the "criminals" who are subjected to harsh penalties–for example, people convicted of possessing marijuana–have in no sense violated the Six Principles. But even where culprits have violated the Six Principles their harsh treatment is motivated not by a concern for fairness, or even for morality, but politicians' and prosecutors' personal ambitions or by the public's sadistic and punitive appetites. Morality merely provides the *excuse*.

In sum, anyone who takes a detached look at modern society will see that, for all its emphasis on morality, it observes the principles of fairness very poorly indeed. Certainly less well than many primitive societies do.

Allowing for various exceptions, the main purpose that morality serves in modern society is to facilitate the functioning of the technoindustrial system. Here's how it works:

Our conception both of fairness and of morality is heavily influenced by self-interest. For example, I feel strongly and sincerely that it is perfectly fair for me to smash up the equipment of someone who is cutting down the forest. Yet part of the reason why I feel this way is that the continued existence of the forest serves my personal needs. If I had no personal attachment to the forest I might feel differently. Similarly, most rich people probably feel sincerely that the laws that restrict the ways in which they use their property are unfair. There can be no doubt that, however sincere these feelings may be, they are motivated largely by self-interest.

they respect these property rights strictly. It is easy to see how such rules can prevent conflicts over the use of food resources.)

Since anarchists place a high value on personal liberty, they presumably will want to keep morality to a minimum, even if this costs them something in personal safety or other practical advantages. It's not my purpose here to try to determine where to strike the balance between freedom and the practical advantages of morality, but I do want to call attention to a point that is often overlooked: the practical or materialistic benefits of morality are counterbalanced by the psychological cost of repressing our "immoral" impulses. Common among moralists is a concept of "progress" according to which the human race is supposed to become ever more moral. More and more "immoral" impulses are to be suppressed and replaced by "civilized" behavior. To these people morality apparently is an end in itself. They never seem to ask why human beings should become more moral. What end is to be served by morality? If the end is anything resembling human well-being then an ever more sweeping and intensive morality can only be counterproductive, since it is certain that the psychological cost of suppressing "immoral" impulses will eventually outweigh any advantages conferred by morality (if it does not do so already). In fact, it is clear that, whatever excuses they may invent, the real motive of the moralists is to satisfy some psychological need of their own by imposing their morality on other people. Their drive toward morality is not an outcome of any rational program for improving the lot of the human race.

This aggressive morality has nothing to do with the Six Principles of fairness. It is actually inconsistent with them. By trying to impose their morality on other people, whether by force or through propaganda and training, the moralists are doing them unprovoked harm in contravention of the first of the Six Principles. One thinks of nineteenth-century missionaries who made primitive people feel guilty about their sexual practices, or modern leftists who try to suppress politically incorrect speech.

Morality often is antagonistic toward the Six Principles in other ways as well. To take just a few examples:

In our society private property is not what it is among the Bushmen — a simple device for avoiding conflict over the use of resources.

Instead, it is a system whereby certain persons or organizations arrogate control over vast quantities of resources that they use to exert power over other people. In this they certainly violate the first and fourth principles of fairness. By requiring us to respect property, the morality of our society helps to perpetuate a system that is clearly in conflict with the Six Principles.

Among many primitive peoples, deformed babies are killed at birth (see, e.g., Paul Schebesta, *Die Bambuti-Pygmäen vom Ituri*, I.Band, Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Brus- sels, 1938, page 138), and a similar practice apparently was widespread in the United States up to about the middle of the 20th century. "Babies who were born malformed or too small or just blue and not breathing well were listed [by doctors] as stillborn, placed out of sight and left to die." Autl Gawande, "The Score," *The New Yorker*, October 9, 2006, page 64. Nowadays any such practice would be regarded as shockingly immoral. But mental-health professionals who study the psychological problems of the disabled can tell us how severe these problems often are. True, even among the severely deformed — for example, those born without arms or legs — there may be occasional individuals who achieve satisfying lives. But most persons with such a degree of disability are condemned to lives of inferiority and helplessness, and to rear a baby with extreme deformities until it is old enough to be conscious of its own helplessness is usually an act of cruelty. In any given case, of course, it may be difficult to balance the likelihood that a deformed baby will lead a miserable existence, if reared, against the chance that it will achieve a worthwhile life. The point is, however, that the moral code of modern society does not permit such balancing. It *automatically* requires every baby to be reared, no matter how extreme its physical or mental disabilities, and no matter how remote the chances that its life can be anything but wretched. This is one of the most ruthless aspects of modern morality.

The military is expected to kill or refrain from killing in blind obedience to orders from the government; policemen and judges are expected to imprison or release persons in mechanical obedience to the law. It would be regarded as "unethical" and "irresponsible" for soldiers, judges, or policemen to act according to their own sense of fairness rather than in conformity with the rules of the system. A

moral and "responsible" judge will send a man to prison if the law tells him to do so, even if the man is blameless according to the Six Principles.

A claim of morality often serves as a cloak for what would otherwise be seen as the naked imposition of one's own will on other people. Thus, if a person said, "I am going to prevent you from having an abortion (or from having sex or eating meat or something else) just because I personally find it offensive", his attempt to impose his will would be considered arrogant and unreasonable. But if he claims to have a moral basis for what he is doing, if he says, "I'm going to prevent you from having an abortion because it's immoral", then his attempt to impose his will acquires a certain legitimacy, or at least tends to be treated with more respect than it would be if he made no moral claim.

People who are strongly attached to the morality of their own society often are oblivious to the principles of fairness. The highly moral and Christian businessman John D. Rockefeller used underhand methods to achieve success, as is admitted by Allan Nevin in his admiring biography of Rockefeller. Today, screwing people in one way or another is almost an inevitable part of any large-scale business enterprise. Willful distortion of the truth, serious enough so that it amounts to lying, is in practice treated as acceptable behavior among politicians and journalists, though most of them undoubtedly regard themselves as moral people.

I have before me a flyer sent out by a magazine called *The National Interest*. In it I find the following:

"Your task at hand is to defend our nation's interests abroad, and rally support at home for your efforts.

"You are not, of course, naive. You believe that, for better or worse, international politics remains essentially power politics– that as Thomas Hobbes observed, when there is no agreement among states, clubs are always trumps."

This is a nearly naked advocacy of Machiavellianism in international affairs, though it is safe to assume that the people responsible for the flyer I've just quoted are firm adherents of conventional morality within the United States. For such people, I suggest, conventional morality serves as a *substitute* for the Six Principles. As