

## **PHI334: Industrial Business. September 6**

Today I am going to talk about Industrial Business. Here I am referring to all those societies that have underwent, or are currently undergoing, the process known as Industrialization, as well as the consequences thereof.

The first paragraph of Ted Kaczynski's (Unabomber) manifesto, known as "Industrial Society and Its Future" reads as follows:

The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life-expectancy of those of us who live in "advanced" countries, but they have destabilized society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world. The continued development of technology will worsen the situation. It will certainly subject human being to greater indignities and inflict greater damage on the natural world, it will probably lead to greater social disruption and psychological suffering, and it may lead to increased physical suffering even in "advanced" countries.

Now, as an instructor of record at the University of Kentucky, I should say that by no means do I endorse Kaczynski, his views, or the means by which he aimed to bring about his views. He was a bad guy, I do not approve. All of that being said, let us think for a second about his claim.

### **Has the industrial revolution been a disaster?**

I think that is an over exaggeration. I have stressed before that there were better times and there were worse times. If anything, we live in mid times. It also depends on what we mean by a disaster. I think disaster implies something truly horrendous, and I am unsure that the way in which things have unfolded are that horrendous and intolerable. Some perhaps feel this way, but I think most do not. Instead, I am interested in addressing some things such as what business is like under industry, which is separate from industrialized.

### **Some Context**

I spoke of industry, industrialization, and industrialized. I should clarify. In speaking about industrial business, I speak about business that is under industrialization or under industry. We in the US do not live under industry. We are a post-industrial society, a neo-liberal one if you will, and we will discuss this later.

An industrial society is one that is undergoing industrial revolution or is in the wake of one. This is Europe and the Americas in the 1700-1940s, this is some parts of the world 1940 to present, and, for some rare ones, 1980 to present. It is essentially a society that used to be rural and agricultural (all were at some point) that is switching or just switched to that mode where there is production using hardware in factories.

Marx was writing at the time of the industrial revolution in England and Germany. Upton Sinclair was writing in the 1920s in the US. I refer to those brutal conditions that obtained when people were just starting to work in factories, where manufacturing was becoming a thing, and so on.

### **Business under Industry**

There are a few central things I want to discuss, and I think they capture the essence of business at this time fairly well. Here they are:

1. Moving to Cities
2. Working in Factories
3. Impact of 1 and 2 on Individual

Basically, densely populated industrial cities with factory based manufacturing jobs, centralization as it were, occurred. Work became different too. Those things impacted how we lived life. I want to discuss these things in turn.

### **From Towns to Cities**

Agriculture among other things became mechanized. Artisan based work too. There were just not enough things to do in the town for people, young people, to sustain themselves. Cities presented opportunities. You could move to the city and work in a factory, or you could stay in town and probably be a burden to your family or worse starve. So, those who could, moved to cities, where the work was.

### **Factory Work**

Has anybody ever worked in a factory? I have not, look at my hands, but my ex, she was an engineer who worked as a robot engineer and technician at an Ohio Aluminum Production facility for a year. The work is very different from what you are probably used to, and it is also different from what farmers and artisans were used to as well.

When you work in a factory, you perform essentially the same thing in repetition. You produce a great many things, or at the very least contribute to their production, and yet you leave those to be sold. This is not how farming or crafting worked—you sold the stuff you made and kept the whole money from it. Now you get paid a wage that is semi tied semi not tied to the stuff you make. You are paid now for your time.

Conditions were horrible. I am referencing Marx, historical accounts, documentaries, Upton Sinclair, and so on. Child labor was a thing. People died all the time. There was no workers comp. Factory work was brutal.

### **Impact**

This is the important bit. First of all, moving to the city. We see this today in what in the news they call third world countries. People move to the city from towns they lived for hundreds of years in. They work horrible jobs, get injured, hooked on drugs, they become sex workers not out of some sense of empowerment, as some in the West today claim, but out of sheer necessity

which is the furthest thing from empowerment, and many die meaninglessly, forgotten, unknown. This is what moving to the cities was like here in the West, this is how it is in the Global South today, this is how it is in China in a sense today, parts of Asia, and Africa. It is horrible, and there one would be a fool to argue with Dr. Kaczynski.

We can infer from this that it was very hard to live a good life in the city when your business was working. However, there was more mobility. If you were a smith all your life, perhaps you might resent having to become some button pusher in a factory. But if you were confined to street sweep, sewer cleaner, or worse, a fief, in a sense, this was a chance for upward mobility. Consider the flood of immigration to the US during the Industrial Revolution here. Millions of Irish, Italian, Eastern European, and other Immigrants came here because in their old lives, they were fiefs, and to be a fief with no rights is worse. So, making working at a factory your business, dreadful as it is, was better than that and gave upward mobility.

This is around the time too when major economists break down production and the economy into three factors: land, labor, capital. Land corresponds to actual land, but also resources that are raw. Capital is the equipment by means of which stuff is produced. And labor refers to workers to operate the machinery to produce the stuff. Odds are, you'd be labor class, and your life would be pretty bad, but also not worse than before. You viewed yourself as labor, as someone who gets paid a wage, and this is the time when you did not view that as your business. Labor and business are falsely separated (even though working is a kind of business, since it is what one per-occupies oneself with).

Capitalism is emerging on the scene. If you are both lucky and clever, you can become incredibly richer—richer in fact than royal families were, which is why you see the rapid switch from Monarchies to Republics. Capitalism permits non-Aristocrats to become wealthy, wealth is essentially power, and so the Aristocrats must yield power for the Industrial Capitalist, because he has more wealth, can essentially crush the monarch. Many will not admit this, but it is due to capitalism that we have democracies and republics and government that is open to all in the first place.

Being a capitalist became a business too, and to this day, we sometimes falsely think that this is the only form of business. This is what you can learn about the essence of business from this—the reason why we falsely associate business with capitalism activity is because of the industrial revolution and the distinction emerging between owner and worker. In truth, each has his business as it were, it is merely different in regard to what one does with one's life and how one views oneself in relation to one's activity.

Overall, and in summation, business becomes radically transformed, for the essence of business, the activity of people, undergoes a paradigm shift. Essentially, it is the same—the activity one engages in as one lives—but the modality, the mode, the activity type, that becomes radically different and centered at the factory. Wrongly, I argue, the worker no longer views one self as having a business, since work becomes something one is disconnected from essentially. Under neoliberalism, this become re-addressed.