

July 6–8, 2016

Berkeley, California

**POLITICS** without Illusion,

**REVOLUTION** without Violence:

*Re-Viewing the Contributions of Jacques Ellul*

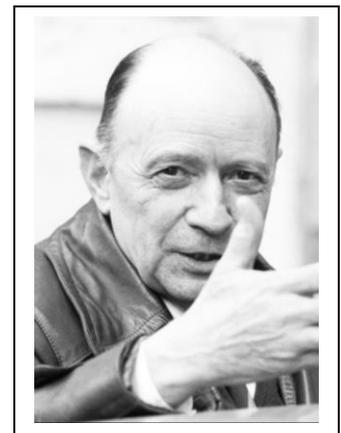


Five decades ago, the University of California, Berkeley campus was an epicenter of political activism, especially among university students and intellectuals but also attracting civil rights community leaders and the emerging feminist and environmentalist movements. One of the figures whose work inspired the protest against the “brave new world” of omnipresent *technique*, compulsory military service in a distant war, and meaningless consumerism was the French sociologist and lay theologian Jacques Ellul of the University of Bordeaux (1912 – 1994). More than a

few walked Berkeley with either *The Technological Society* or *The Presence of the Kingdom*—or both—in their hands.

Now, some fifty years later, most of the sixty volumes authored by Jacques Ellul are back in print in both French and English after a slow-down during the 1990s. Newly discovered and/or translated Ellul manuscripts are appearing every year. Interest in Jacques Ellul is growing around the world.

And this is no mere antiquarian curiosity. The reality is that our planet is in trouble, with social disorder and violence, economic injustice and poverty, technological challenge and environmental disaster, political illusion and paralysis. A more profound analysis than commonly available in media or school is urgently needed. To this end, Jacques Ellul’s insights warrant a serious re-viewing in this epoch.



**The International Jacques Ellul Society** ([www.ellul.org](http://www.ellul.org)) invites you to a three-day conference on “Politics without Illusion, Revolution without Violence,” drawing on themes Ellul addressed in such works as *The Political Illusion*, *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man*, *Autopsy of Revolution*, *De la révolution aux révoltes*, *Changer de Révolution*, *Violence*, and *Anarchy and Christianity*.

## Program Schedule

### Wednesday, July 6 (all events in Heyns Room, Berkeley Faculty Club)

- 11:00–2:00 Registration & check-in
- 2:00–2:30 Welcome & Introduction  
2:30–4:00 Plenary Session (Chair: David Gill)  
#1: Langdon Winner “Radical Upheavals of the Sixties and Since: Illusion & Reality”  
#2: Patrick Chastenet “Democracy Confiscated? The Continuing Relevance of Jacques Ellul”
- 4:00–4:30 Break
- 4:30–6:00 Plenary Session (Chair Randal Marlin)  
#3: Allyson Rogers “Schoenberg’s Revolutionary Ideas Through an Ellulian Lens”  
#4: David Gill “The Political Theology of Jacques Ellul”
- 6:00–7:30 Dinner on your own
- 7:30–8:30 Plenary Session (Chair: Jacob Van Vleet)  
#5 Filmmaker Jerome Ellul Discusses and Shares His Work

### Thursday, July 7 (all events in Heyns & Howard Rooms, Berkeley Faculty Club)

- 9:00–10:30 Plenary Session (Chair: Lisa Richmond) (*Heyns Room*)  
#6: Daniel Cérézuelle “Bernard Charbonneau on Politics and the State”  
#7: Frédéric Rognon “Jacques Ellul & the Non-Violent Movements of His Time in France”
- 10:30–10:45 Break
- 10:45–12:15 Parallel Session (Chair Langdon Winner) (*Heyns Room*)  
#8: David Lovekin “The Symbol and the Problem of Boundary and Violence in the Empire of Non-sense”  
#9: Brede Kristensen, “Ellul as Pattern Theorist and How to Get Out of the Cul-de-sac of Technique into the Open Space of Humanness”
- 10:45–12:15 Parallel Session (Chair Ted Lewis) (*Howard Room*)  
#10 Virginia Landgraf “Jacques Ellul, Thai Politics, & the King's 2005 Birthday Speech  
#11 Zachary Loeb, “The Hashtag Comes First: Jacques Ellul & the Shortcomings of High-Tech Activism”
- 12:15–1:30 Lunch on your own

- 1:30–3:00 Parallel Session (Chair David Lovekin) (*Heyns Room*)  
 #12: Jacob Rollison, “The Language of Violence and the Violence of Language: Ellul’s Presence in the Post-Modern World”  
 #13: Niklas Toivakainen, “Merging Finance, Ethics, & Ecology: Some Disquieting Features of the Happy, Fair and Green Society”
- 1:30–3:00 Parallel Session (Chair Virginia Landgraf) (*Howard Room*)  
 #14: Adrián Almazán “An Insight Into Ellul’s Necessary Revolution  
 #15: Carmen Madorrán, “The Illusion of Change: From Syriza in Greece to Podemos in Spain or the Five Star Movement in Italy.
- 3:00-3:15 Break
- 3:15-5:30 Plenary Session (Chair Geri Forsberg) (*Howard Room*)  
 #16: Anthony Miller, “Ellul’s Anarchic Ideal and the Social Contract”  
 #17: Michael Morelli, “The First Humanist”  
 #18: Jason Hudson, “Wendell Berry, Urban Agriculture, and the Quest for Revolution”
- 5:30-6:00 Break
- 6:00-8:00 Banquet & Discussion (*Heyns Room*)  
 #19 Mark Baker & Davis CA Mayor Robb Davis in Conversation
- 8:00 - *Optional Music & Conversation*

**Friday, July 8** (all events in Heyns Room, Berkeley Faculty Club)

- 9:00–10:30 Plenary Session (Chair Albert Moritz)  
 #20: Gregory Wagenfuhr “Revolution or Subversion?: A Constructive Critique of Ellul’s Vision of Christian Political Engagement”  
 #21: Sylvie Justome, “Resistance in Thought & Action, from the Global to the Local at Verdon.”
- 10:30-11:00 Break
- 11:00–12:30 Plenary Session (Chair Allyson Rogers)  
 #22: Jeffrey Shaw “Ellul on War, Violence, & Peace”  
 #23: Andy Alexis-Baker “No Gods, No Masters, No Heroes: Lessons from Ellul & Anarchy”
- 12:30–2:00 Lunch on your own
- 2:00–3:30 Plenary Session (Chairs, David Gill & Patrick Chastenet)  
 #24: General Discussion “Where Are We & Where Do We Go From Here?”
- 3:30 Conference Adjourns



**#1: Langdon Winner** [langdon.winner@gmail.com](mailto:langdon.winner@gmail.com)

Langdon Winner (PhD, California) is Thomas Phelan Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (USA). He is a political theorist interested in the ways in which technology affects the quality of social and political life. He is author of *Autonomous Technology*, *The Whale and the Reactor*, and other works, and his long-standing involvement with popular culture includes an earlier life as rock critic for *Rolling Stone*. His blog Technopolis offers commentary on political artifacts in humanity's uncertain future. At present he is at work on a book, *The Revolt against Technology*, a study of post-World War II American social thought.

**“Radical upheavals of the Sixties and Since: Illusion and Reality”**

For those who have followed radical social movements from the 1960s to the present day, the writings of Jacques Ellul offer an opportunity to examine the underlying beliefs and practical strategies of those who seek fundamental change in what are ostensibly “democratic” societies but which often display closed, unjust, oligarchic patterns. Through a careful critique of the political theories and social science findings of the mid-twentieth century, Ellul's book *The Political Illusion* casts doubt on many of the central ideas and projects that have inspired activists from the New Left of the sixties to the progressives of the 21st century. While sympathetic to many of their basic impulses, Ellul lays bare the institutional limits, ideological barriers, and personal delusions that undermine the hopes and programs of those who seek revolutionary transformation or even modest reform.



**#2: Patrick Chastenet** [AIJE33@wanadoo.fr](mailto:AIJE33@wanadoo.fr)

Patrick Troude Chastenet is Professor of Political Science at the University of Bordeaux. He was Jacques Ellul's student assistant in the 1970s. He has published ten books, including *Lire Ellul* (1992), *Jacques Ellul on Politics, Technology, and Christianity* (2005), *Jacques Ellul penseur sans frontières* (2005), and *Comment peut-on (encore) être ellulien au XXIème siècle?* (2014). He is the founding president of the Association Internationale Jacques Ellul, director of *Cahiers Jacques Ellul*, and a founding board member of IJES. He has organized several international multidisciplinary colloquia on Ellul's thought and legacy.

**“Democracy Confiscated? The Continuing Relevance of Jacques Ellul”**

The bulk of Ellul's work on politics was written in the 1950 through the 1980s. Is it now outdated, or is it still relevant? I will advance the thesis that it remains entirely pertinent today, with the proviso, however, that we not turn Ellul into a sort of clairvoyant who predicted everything before he died: from the subprime mortgage crisis to the latest electronic gadgets, from the terrorist attacks of the 9/11 to the commercial failure of the Google Glass.



**#3: Allyson Rogers** [adrogers@ualberta.ca](mailto:adrogers@ualberta.ca)

Allyson Rogers is a research associate at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Her degrees are from the University of Alberta (BMus, ethnomusicology), Carleton University (MA, music and culture), and Grant McEwan University (Artist's Diploma, jazz studies). She has worked in the music division of large cultural institutions, including the National Arts Centre and the Banff Centre for the Arts, and is active on the Ottawa music scene. Allyson will begin PhD work in communication studies at McGill University in fall 2016.

**“Schoenberg’s Revolutionary Ideas Through An Ellulian Lens”**

Ellul delivers a bleak assessment of modern art in his later work *The Empire of Non-Sense: Art in the Technological Society* (1980). He articulates two basic orientations, political art and formalist art, both of which he claims are subordinated to *technique* and thus unable to confront the ideology of a technological society. The work of twentieth-century composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) is rightly understood by Ellul as the beginning of a turn towards formalism and a radical departure from conventional tonality. However, while Ellul takes this as evidence of submission to *technique* and the destruction of tradition, I argue that Schoenberg’s revolutionary ideas about harmony and the purpose of music theory were in fact a conscious resistance to a technological and authoritarian mindset he saw developing in the musical world of the early twentieth century. Even if his ideas were eventually taken in an antithetical direction—extreme forms of serialism, for example—they were at the outset genuinely transgressive and an attempt to resist the development of a totalizing theory of musical aesthetics. In fact, many of Schoenberg’s concerns are similar to Ellul’s regarding the fate of art in a technological society. In this paper, I look at Schoenberg’s ideas through an Ellulian lens to examine the success and failure of his resistance to dominant ideologies in music theory and aesthetics in the first half of the twentieth century.



**#4: David Gill** [dgill@ethixbiz.com](mailto:dgill@ethixbiz.com)

David Gill (BA, UC Berkeley; MA, San Francisco State) earned his PhD at the University of Southern California with a dissertation on *The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul*, subsequently published as the first of his seven books on theological or business ethics. He spent a sabbatical year 1984–85 and several summers in Bordeaux, meeting with Ellul and many Ellul scholars, family, and friends. He is retiring this month from a forty year career as a business school and seminary professor of ethics. He is the founding president of the International Jacques Ellul Society and a founding board member of the AIJE.

**“The Political Theology of Jacques Ellul”**

By coincidence, 2016 is the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Jacques Ellul’s *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man*—a study of II Kings, the “most political book in the Bible,” Ellul claims. There and in the *Ethics of Freedom* and elsewhere, Ellul sketches a sort of “political theology” that merits our attention. Is all of our political activity truly “useless” (*inutile*) as Ellul concludes? Well, sort of. But useless things may sometimes be worth doing for reasons other than measurable efficacy. We will explore Ellul’s theological perspectives on politics and the state and try to assess their relevance in the age of Trump.



**#5 : Jérôme Ellul**

[jerome.ellul@neuf.fr](mailto:jerome.ellul@neuf.fr)

Jerome Ellul holds a master's degree in history from Université Michel de Montaigne (France). He is a multi-instrumental musician (piano, guitar, harmonium, organ, improvisation, and composition), photographer, and filmmaker. His site [jayavermanprod.com](http://jayavermanprod.com) exhibits some of his work. He is a member of the Association Internationale Jacques Ellul and is actively involved in numerous projects to preserve and extend the legacy of his grandfather. He is currently engaged in collecting material for a documentary to be titled *Jacques Ellul : Technique et Théologie*.

**"Filmmaker Jerome Ellul Discusses and Shares His Work"** (Jacob Van Vleet, Chair)



**#6: Daniel Cérézuelle** [daniel.cerezuelle@free.fr](mailto:daniel.cerezuelle@free.fr)

Daniel Cérézuelle has studied philosophy and social science. As a philosopher he has taught the philosophy of technology in France and the USA and since 1991 has served on the board of the *Société pour la philosophie de la technique*. As a sociologist he is investigating the social importance of non-monetary economy in modern society. He is currently the scientific director of the *Programme Autoproduction et Développement Social* (PADES). He is the author of *Pour un autre développement social* (1996), *Écologie et liberté: Bernard Charbonneau précurseur de l'écologie politique* (2006), *La Technique et la Chair* (2011), and other works.

**“Bernard Charbonneau on Politics and the State”**

Ellul and Charbonneau were lifelong friends. They shared a common understanding of freedom as action and incarnation of spiritual values. From the 1930s, they were convinced that the unchecked development of technology and the State would result in a deep depersonalization of life, and a new form of totalitarianism. According to Ellul, after the Second World War they decided by common agreement that Ellul should write the book on modern technology and that Charbonneau should write the book on the State. Such was their community of views that Ellul later said that everything Charbonneau had written on the State could have been written by him. But these ideas were so unconventional that Charbonneau's *L'Etat (The State)*, completed in 1949, had to wait for almost forty years before it could be published in 1987. Reading *L'Etat* provides some understanding of the theoretical and existential framework of Ellul's social thought. But in spite of a deep agreement over what should be a revolutionary action and its goals, from their youth they sometimes disagreed about the means of action. This is due to a difference in their appraisal of the value of human reason.



**#7: Frédéric Rognon** [rognonfr@yahoo.fr](mailto:rognonfr@yahoo.fr)

Frédéric Rognon is Professor of Philosophy in the Protestant theology faculty at the University of Strasbourg and publication director of the journal *Foi et Vie*. He is also president of the Justice and Prison Chaplaincy Commission of the Protestant Federation of France and the author of *Jacques Ellul : Une pensée en dialogue* (2007, 2d ed. 2013) and *Généralisations Ellul : Soixante héritiers de la pensée de Jacques Ellul* (2012).

**“Jacques Ellul and the Non-Violent Movements of his Time in France»**

In Jacques Ellul's time, three major movements, clearly distinct, occasionally rival, often allied, occupied the scene of non-violent thought and action in France: the Mouvement International de la Réconciliation (MIR, “International Reconciliation Movement”), of Protestant origin with a spiritual orientation; the Communautés de l'Arche de Lanza del Vasto (L'Arche Communities of Lanza del Vasto), dedicated to Gandhian, communalist, and interfaith ideals; and the Mouvement pour une Alternative Non-violente (MAN, “Movement for a Non-violent Alternative”), a secularist movement ideologically close to self-managing socialism. Ellul had real affinities and profound disagreements with each of these movements. The exchanges of views he had with them were frank, even blunt. We will examine the points of agreement and disagreement between the parties in order to clarify the particular characteristics of the Ellulian approach to non-violence: the deconstruction of justifications of violence, but also the recognition of a necessary, even a legitimate violence (the violence of love); the affirmation of the spiritual foundation of non-violence, but also the criticism of a technological non-violence obsessed with the goal of efficiency; and the promotion of the concept of “non-power,” which alone is faithful to the Biblical roots of true non-violence.



**#8: David Lovekin** [dlovekin@inebraska.com](mailto:dlovekin@inebraska.com)

David Lovekin is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Hastings College in Nebraska, USA. He is the author of *Technique, Discourse, and Consciousness: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Jacques Ellul* and editor, with Donald Phillip Verene, of *Essays in Humanity and Technology*. He is co-translator of Ellul's *The Empire of Non-Sense*. He has published numerous essays on Ellul and Giambattista Vico that deal with technology as a problem for the philosophy of culture in the spirit of Ernst Cassirer, with the idea of technology as a symbolic form. He has received five grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. His photography has been published in numerous books and periodicals, most recently on covers of the *Prairie Schooner*, the literary magazine of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and in the Modern Arts/Midwest, Midtown gallery in Omaha, Nebraska.

**“The Symbol and the Problem of Boundary and Violence in the Empire of Non-sense”**

In *The Empire of Non-sense: Art in the Technological Society*, Ellul explained that art no longer functioned in its traditional manner to provide visions or notions of the true, the beautiful, and the good, because these values have become passé. Tradition, in fact, is passé. The image and the spectacle prevail in a technological world in no need of a past. In this paper I will explain what Ellul means by symbolization as a mediation and consider why technology itself cannot be symbolized.



**#9: Brede Kristensen** [bredekristensen@gmx.com](mailto:bredekristensen@gmx.com)

Brede Kristensen studied sociology and political science in Amsterdam and completed his studies with a PhD thesis on the sociology of Jacques Ellul, “Betrayal of Technique.” He worked as a lecturer in social policies at a graduate college in Zwolle, Netherlands, and, from 2000, as program director of TransformaFoundation, which has been carrying out many projects on good public governance in Eastern Europe. Kristensen lives in Curacao and is also involved in public governance reform in the Caribbean. He lectures on social ethics and social policies at the University of Curacao. His books include *Patterns of Welfare* (1988), *Matter of Limits: Concerning Integrity of Public Governance* (2008), and *Policy Imagination: The Art of Developing Inclusive Public Policies* (2015). Kristensen is also active as a literary critic.

**“Ellul as Pattern Theorist, and How to Get out of the Cul-de-sac of Technique into the Open Space of Humanness”**

This paper will briefly deal with ten issues: How to read Ellul: against interpretation and for inspiration; Ellul as a typical pattern analyst exploring “technique” as an unfolding pattern; Pattern unfoldment characteristics in the work of Ellul: characteristics of intertwinement of modern technique and modern society; The importance of the ‘technical mind’ as a main facilitator of pattern unfoldment; Technique as an invasive and colonizing pattern in different societal spheres; Individual choice and responsibility in postmodern times: false and real responsibility; Revolution as a variation of pattern unfoldment, and a resetting of societal conditions; Ethics of freedom: existentialist ethics and the conditions of real and non-violent pattern change; Ellul’s handling of periods of European Middle Ages as a model from which we may learn; Towards a symbiotic planet: principle of symbiosis as the opposite of parasitic technique and condition for humanness and responsible politics.



**#10: Virginia Landgraf** [kaencat@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kaencat@sbcglobal.net)

Ginny Landgraf is an indexer-analyst at the American Theological Library Association. She wrote her PhD dissertation, "Abstract Power and the God of Love: A Critical Assessment of the Place of Institutions in Jacques Ellul's Anthropology of Dialectical Relationships," under Max Stackhouse at Princeton Theological Seminary. She has presented and published on Jacques Ellul's interpretation of Sennacherib in Second Kings and on readings of the Ten Commandments that can be derived from Ellul's work. She is a frequent contributor to the *Ellul Forum* and is a member of the IJES board. Recently she contributed an essay to *Réforme* on the reception of Jacques Ellul in the USA. In 1988–1990 she served with the U.S. Peace Corps in Thailand and spent additional time there studying Thai music.

**"Jacques Ellul, Thai Politics, and the King's 2005 Birthday Speech"**

This paper will use Jacques Ellul's thought to look at descriptive and ethical aspects of recent Thai politics. Descriptively, it will show how some aspects of Ellul's thought fit the Thai situation better than others. The co-optation of language of democracy and civil liberties into authoritarian movements fits with Ellul's analysis of propaganda, and the sacred status accorded to the monarchy and Thai nationality fits with his analysis of the nation-state as one pole of the contemporary sacred (in *The New Demons*). But whether technique is the ultimate arbiter of politics (as Ellul concludes in *The Political Illusion*) in Thailand remains an open question, because groups determined to maintain power in Thailand have sometimes used methods that seem not to fit in with efficiency as Ellul implicitly defines it. The paper will then look at restrictions on civil liberties in Thailand, both by the recent military junta and in the longstanding lèse-majesté laws, as ethically contestable. Ellul calls on Christians to speak words of truth beyond the death-dealing powers of political, economic, and physical might. Sociologically, he believes that societies unable to receive new information will die of entropy. The latter analysis enables one to examine resources within Theravada Buddhism (the majority religious tradition in Thailand) that could interrupt power that denies truth. The king's birthday speech of 2005, in which the king stated that he could be criticized, will be taken as a gift in this respect, above and beyond its interpretations as a political maneuver.



**#11: Zachary Loeb** [zml218@nyu.edu](mailto:zml218@nyu.edu)

Zachary Loeb is a writer, librarian, activist, and fledgling academic. He was an active participant in the People's Library of Occupy Wall Street and continued to be involved in taking care of the People's Library after the movement was evicted from Zuccotti Park. Loeb's research focuses on ideologies that develop in relation to technology and the critique of technology. He has an MSIS from the University of Texas at Austin, an MA from the department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University, and is currently working towards a PhD in the history and sociology of science department at the University of Pennsylvania.

**"Occupy Ellul! The Shortcomings of High-Tech Activism"**

Today, activist campaigns spread swiftly by using hashtags on Twitter, YouTube videos of state brutality rack up thousands of views, and Facebook pages become important sites for organizing. Indeed, in contemporary narratives concerning social movements, the technologies activists use have themselves come to be regarded as important characters in these movements' stories. And yet a discomfiting question lingers in the background: to what extent does the reliance on high-tech tools of communications bind these movements to the very systems against which they are protesting? While recent social movements have directed criticism at a host of targets, these movements have proven less willing to critique the tools they have used for disseminating their messages. Drawing upon the thought of Jacques Ellul, and focusing upon Occupy Wall Street, this paper argues that contemporary social movements' adoration for high-tech devices and platforms hinders their ability to mount a genuine opposition. By relying on platforms and devices controlled by powerful corporations, activists have become entangled in technique even as they seek to resist it. Granted, the problem may be that many activists may not even think that technique is something they need to think about, let alone resist.



**#12: Jacob Rollison** [jake.rollison@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:jake.rollison@abdn.ac.uk)

Jacob Rollison is a doctoral student in theological ethics at the University of Aberdeen (UK). He holds a BA in Economics from Wheaton College (IL) and an MA in Media & Communication from the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland. He is the author of *Revolution of Necessity: Language, Technique, and Freedom in Jacques Ellul and Slavoj Žižek*, forthcoming from Atropos Press.

**“The Language of Violence and the Violence of Language: Ellul’s Presence in the Post-Modern World”**

Ellul’s 1981 *The Humiliation of the Word* puts forth a view of language at once masterfully ambiguous, critically defended, and largely unrecognized for its unique contours. In this paper, I would like to trace the development of some of these contours, viewing *Humiliation* as the culmination of a long communicative outworking. A significant progression in French thought during Ellul’s time was the rise to popularity of post-structuralist thinkers such as Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida in the 1960s, a trend responded to by later thinkers such as Deleuze and Guattari and Jean-François Lyotard. These thinkers, while differing amongst themselves, criticized the human subject, historicism, and language. Throughout this tradition, language is often viewed as a *violent* imposition on the human subject. If, as for Heidegger, man dwells in the house of language, for Lacan, it is a *torture-house*. For Lyotard, “To speak is to fight.” These trends continue today with the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, for whom violence is inherent to language. Ellul was aware of and responding to these trends in his works from the late 1960s onward. While David Lovekin has done impressive work with symbolism and language in Ellul’s thought, his work has focused either on different epochs or different areas of philosophy. Other secondary works (in English) on Ellul deal in an isolated manner with certain texts of Foucault or Lyotard’s *The Postmodern Condition*. In my research, I am aiming for a wider and more focused account of Ellul’s engagement with this period and trend of thought. I argue here that a critical shift takes place in Ellul’s work between 1968 and 1972, and at least three of his books in this period can be helpfully illuminated in light of this engagement. Works in this period see Ellul responding rhetorically, theologically, and sociologically to the post-structuralist trio of critical foci—the human, history, and language. This continues through the 1970s, culminating in Ellul’s critiques of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* throughout *Humiliation*.



**#13: Niklas Toivakainen** [ntoivaka@mappi.helsinki.fi](mailto:ntoivaka@mappi.helsinki.fi)

Niklas Toivakainen is a PhD student in philosophy at the University of Helsinki, Finland. His academic interest lies in the philosophy of mind, technology, psychology, theology, ethics, and critique of modernity/culture. Alongside his academic pursuits, Niklas has been active in grassroots movements such as local economy building, community supported agriculture, and an autonomous university project. He was also co-producer of the autonomous cultural and research space “Kammari” in 2014–2015 and is working on establishing the autonomous research project “Living Philosophy” for art and philosophy (<http://kammari.org/living-philosophy/>).

**“Merging Finance, Ethics, and Ecology: Some disquieting features of the Happy, Fair, and Green Society”**

The aim of my paper is to try to identify a particular symptomatic phenomenon in our society, namely, a specific form of mergence between finance, ethics and ecology. As a general analysis and diagnosis I will try to shortly explore the technologically based capitalist society’s ability to assimilate all forms of cultural value into its mechanism. I will base my claim on observations or examples that to my mind capture paradigmatic features of this phenomenon, simultaneously as they point towards disquieting features embedded in them. These observations will include “well-being,” fair-trader, and new forms of inclusiveness and shared decision making in, e.g., companies. In the latter part of the paper, I will attempt to challenge these observations and the suggested mergence of finance, ethics, and ecology more substantially by drawing on Ellul’s conception of ethics as one of non-power, freedom/responsibility, conflict, and transgression. I will end by reflecting on the importance of these four pillars of ethics and the challenge they pose to “alternative movements” struggling to “better the world.”



**#14: Adrián Almazan** [adrian.almazan@uam.es](mailto:adrian.almazan@uam.es)

Adrian Almazan is a PhD student in philosophy at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain). He holds an undergraduate degree in physics and two master's degrees from the same university: one related to physics (nanotechnology and condensed matter) and the other to philosophy (philosophical critique and argumentation). He is a member of the publishing house El Salmon and on the editorial board of the magazine *Cul de Sac*.

**“An Insight Into Ellul’s Necessary Revolution”**

Ellul’s Necessary Revolution, described in *Autopsy of Revolution* (1969), requires, on the one hand, for man to feel that it is impossible to continue living as he does, causing rebelliousness. On the other, it is necessary for the main structures that support society to become blocked. In its totalitarian attempt to colonize all the spheres of our lives, the Technological System became, and remains, a blocked structure. Furthermore, as Ellul stated in *De la révolution aux révoltes* (1972), it has reduced the only place from which to potentially materialize revolution to the conscience of an individual that develops a theoretical insight about his reality. But Ellul goes dramatically further. He affirms that the agents of adjustment of the Technological System (amongst which we could include new technologies such as internet or smart-phones), and the artificial well-being they provide, exclude the possibility of a revolutionary individual action. Therefore, revolution is virtually impossible; we are left only with fleeting and vain revolts. I find the present pertinence of this statement to be without doubt. I nevertheless disagree with Ellul, as I think that there is still an open door for a revolt which could collectively, not individually, partially overcome the impersonal forces of the blocked Technological System, through the act of recovering part of the autonomy that has been taken by its advance. A situation where the stability of social structures is threatened, for example in the case of ecological downturn, may limit the effectiveness of the Technological System’s agents of adjustment. Would this allow for a Necessary Revolution of the kind that Ellul had previously discarded?



**#15: Carmen Madorran** [carmen.madorran.ayerra@gmail.com](mailto:carmen.madorran.ayerra@gmail.com)

Carmen Madorran holds a degree in philosophy from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain), where she also obtained a master’s degree in philosophical critique and argumentation. She is currently part of the teaching and research staff in training in that university, where she is pursuing her doctoral studies specializing in moral and political philosophy, under the supervision of Jorge Riechmann. She has published papers on the socio-ecological crisis, basic human needs, consumerism, and collective consumption alternatives. Among her interests are the problems of historical memory and the repression under Franco’s dictatorship.

**“The Illusion of Change: From Syriza in Greece to Podemos in Spain or the Five Star Movement in Italy”**

Recent years have seen a surge of different so-called popular political movements throughout Western democracies, from Syriza in Greece to Podemos in Spain or the Five Star Movement in Italy. Irrespective of their differences in ideology, origins, and organization, they all present themselves as a real challenge to a corrupt, somewhat illegitimate system. Moreover, they are all allegedly rooted in popular support and claim to convey a true democratic demand and potential for change. However, they all take part in some way or another in the institutional structure for political competition (i.e., political parties, elections, etc.). This work recovers and critically applies Ellul’s theoretical development of the *political illusion* to these movements. To what extent are they a contemporary version of older illusions? Do they share the same fallacies and inconsistencies Ellul denounced in relation to traditional political parties? Ellul argued that the only possible escape from the political illusion was to create positions to reject and struggle with the state, so that new groups capable of opposing it, able to reject its pressures and controls, may emerge. Ellul’s sharp insights on political participation may help us discern whether we are in the presence of a real chance for democratic change, or if this is yet another illusion.



**#16: Anthony Miller** [anthony.miller@ryerson.ca](mailto:anthony.miller@ryerson.ca)

Anthony Miller is a graduate student in the master of arts in philosophy program at Ryerson University, Canada. His research interests include political philosophy with a primary interest in social contract theory, philosophy of action, and philosophical concepts of human nature.

**“Ellul’s Anarchic Ideal and the Social Contract”**

In *Anarchy and Christianity*, Jacques Ellul claims that despite the fact that we cannot create the ideal anarchic society we nevertheless should still look towards this as the ideal to inform how to fight capitalism and improve the living situation of the masses. This is correct and should influence our understanding of other communitarian political theories. In particular, communitarian social contract theory, which is best defined by Hobbes, Rawls, and Rousseau, can be re-understood in light of the contributions raised by Ellul. Ellul claims that violence and other forms of coercion are central and inherent to power structures and therefore need to be challenged. Although social contract theorists typically argue that these power structures are ethical insofar as everyone would accept them, this does not mean that there are better, less oppressive, power structures. The person that needs to be assumed understands what is best for him/her and accepts the power structure only because it benefits them. Application of this assumption is needed for the social contract to have moral worth and applying Ellul’s argument that by applying anarchist ideals to the contemporary power structure that it can create a better power structure. With an educated populace in a social contract, one can create a more ideal society. Although, as Ellul argues, anarchy is not a realistic possibility, we can forever get closer to this ideal by applying Ellul’s insights with social contract theory.



**#17: Michael Morelli** [mchmorelli@gmail.com](mailto:mchmorelli@gmail.com)

Michael Morelli is a graduate student studying theological ethics (MTh) at University of Aberdeen (UK). He received his BA at Simon Fraser University and MA in Christian studies at Trinity Western University (both situated in Vancouver, Canada). Alongside his educational pursuits, Michael has worked as a pastor of worship arts and communications coordinator at evangelical churches in Vancouver, Canada.

**“The First Humanist”**

Jacques Ellul’s *The Meaning of the City* begins with a crucial aspect of Cain’s story. After being marked by God for murdering his brother Abel, Cain does two things: “He knows his wife sexually, who then gives him a son; and he builds a city.” Ellul suggests the first act signifies “a desire for eternity” and the second act signifies “a desire for security.” But, he concludes, the first act is not of as much concern to us as the second. From this foundation, Ellul constructs his doctrine of the city. Contra Ellul’s suggestion, what concerns me are both Cain’s first and second acts and how an acute consideration of their relationship and its implications might not only complement Ellul’s doctrine of the city but also provide deeper insight into humanity’s destructive propensity to exclude God from its political activity. In the process, I will suggest that Ellul’s description of Cain as “the first builder of a city” is more an approximation than an encapsulation of Cain’s person, because Cain is more accurately described as the first humanist. Such an understanding of Cain’s person, I believe, will provide more theological purchase on the issues explored in *The Meaning of the City*, and, hopefully, assert a powerful, proactive social ethic for the ways Christians ought to conceive of and engage in politics: “We are clearly told to participate materially in the life of the city and to foster its welfare. The *welfare*, not the destruction. And the welfare of the *city*, not our own . . . Who knows if in this cursed environment, man’s work cannot also sing to the glory of the living God?”

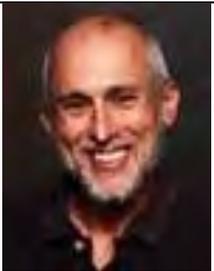


**#18: Jason Hudson** [jedwinhudson@gmail.com](mailto:jedwinhudson@gmail.com)

Jason Hudson is a PhD student in theology at Cliff College (UK) and an adjunct professor at Cincinnati Christian University (USA). His current work seeks to bring the thought of Jacques Ellul and Wendell Berry into confrontation with current attitudes toward progress, particularly within the context of evangelical Christianity. Beyond mere academic curiosity, his current interests rise out of an effort to bring his theological and philosophical thought into harmony with his roles as a church leader, professor, amateur farmer, and political dissident.

**“Wendell Berry, Urban Agriculture, and the Quest for Revolution”**

Proponents of urban agriculture often tout its revolutionary potential as a viable alternative to the industrial agriculture juggernaut, while detractors have noted its role in promoting neoliberalism, assuaging the alienating effects of an inhuman agricultural system only enough to pacify urbanites while leaving the underlying neoliberal structures intact. Jacques Ellul’s dialectical view of history—which sees history unfolding along two opposing paths, one closed and deterministic, based on power, the other pregnant with possibility and spontaneity, based on the revelation of God in Christ—provides a way to understand UA as situated within dialectical tension. The movement from the agrarian Eden to the eschatological city is marked by an ongoing negotiation between God and humanity. Therefore, the garden city described in John’s Apocalypse is the result of God’s appropriation of human invention—even when the motivation for human action has been God’s displacement. Using Jacques Ellul’s dialectical scheme and the resulting ethic—freedom emerging from an eschatological hope—alongside Wendell Berry’s view of a virtuous agrarian society, I propose an ethical framework for understanding UA as a phenomenon that is at once fully integrated into the technological age and pregnant with revolutionary potential.



**#19 Robb Davis** [robbathome@gmail.com](mailto:robbathome@gmail.com)

Robb Davis holds a master’s degree in public health and a PhD in population dynamics from Johns Hopkins University (USA). He has over twenty years’ experience in international development in the field of maternal and child health and nutrition. He was the executive director of the Mennonite Central Committee. He was elected to the Davis, California, city council in June, 2014 and is slated to become mayor in July, 2016. He contributed an article to the *Ellul Forum* (#46).

**“Taking Ellul’s Ideas Into the Mayor’s Office & City Council”**  
---- A Conversation with Mark Baker



**#20: Gregory Wagenfuhr** [greg.wagenfuhr@gmail.com](mailto:greg.wagenfuhr@gmail.com)

Greg Wagenfuhr (BA, Wheaton; MDiv, Westminster) recently completed his PhD in theology from the University of Bristol (UK) under the supervision of Andrew Goddard. His PhD thesis was titled "Revelation and the Sacred Reconsidered: The Revelation of God in Christ as Desacralising Reorientation to 'Milieu' in and beyond Jacques Ellul." His *Plundering Egypt: A Subversive Christian Ethic of Economy* (2016) is influenced by the dialectical method of Ellul. His research interests are in systematic theology and the relationship of epistemological, ontological, moral, and theological justification.

**"Revolution or Subversion? A Constructive Critique of Ellul's Vision of Christian Political Engagement"**

The theological bases for Ellul's anarchist position, his "necessary revolution," are not satisfactory. Rejecting notions of God as lord or king, as in *Anarchy and Christianity*, is a false step by his own logic given in works such as *The Subversion of Christianity* and *The New Demons*. Ellul's embarrassment of some biblical imagery is understandable, given his commitment to non-power. But Ellul's own hermeneutical claim—that Scripture desacralizes our mythologies rather than our mythologies demythologizing Scripture—stands against his later writings on political engagement, with the net effect that his vision of revolution and his version of anarchism leave something to be desired. But all is not lost, and Ellul can be redeemed and improved upon. I suggest that my own developments of a theology of subversion, rather than revolution, solves his problem. An honest reading of Scripture, especially given recent research into the historical context of Jesus, reveals that Jesus cannot be separated from the teaching of a kingdom and a teaching of power. By articulating a theology of Christian subversion, I believe the resulting ethical practice and political engagement are less utopian while at the same time truer to Scripture.



**#21: Sylvie Justome** [sylvie.justome@gmail.com](mailto:sylvie.justome@gmail.com)

Sylvie Justome holds a degree in classical literature from Paris-IV Sorbonne University (France) and she is *agrégée*. She has lived and taught in Egypt, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Djibouti, where she supported the development of literature, theater, and cinema. She then became an inspector with the Académie-Inspecteur Pédagogique Régional and worked in the French overseas territories of Nouvelle-Calédonie, Polynésie française, and Wallis & Futuna. She is a longtime member of AIJE and has promoted Ellul's thought within the association she created and leads, Agora Soulac Energie, and within Collège Jacques Ellul in Bordeaux.

**"Resistance in Thought and in Action, from the Global to the Local at Verdon"**

From 2006 to 2009, reading the work of Jacques Ellul on Technique was a source not just of inspiration and reflection --- but also of action (without illusion or violence !) -- for activists fighting against a project to build a methane gas terminal at Verdon (on the Gironde Bay near Bordeaux in Southwest France). It was David against Goliath! The comparative strength of the two sides was not at all in our favor. It was presented as a tiny project directly affecting only a few people --- who were immediately accused of reacting in self-interest and with a « Not In My Back Yard » reflex. So it was necessary to help people appreciate the broader importance and far reaching consequences of what was at stake. We were applying the Ellulian principle «think globally, act locally.» We were rejecting a quantitative, materialist perspective on people, values, and ethics. In our view every individual human being is of infinite worth – no less than a group. This approach, not selling out the human person to a coldly marketed and quantifiable Technique, gave us an unbelievable confidence on the way to a victory with neither violence nor illusion !



**#22: Jeffrey Shaw**

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Jeff Shaw (PhD, Salve Regina) is Associate Professor of Strategy and Policy in the college of distance education at Salve Regina (USA). He is the author of *Illusions of Freedom: Thomas Merton & Jacques Ellul on Technology & the Human Condition* (2014) and is the editor of the forthcoming volume on *Ellul, Violence, and War*. He is co-editor of the forthcoming *Wars of Religion: An Encyclopedia of Faith and Conflict* and co-author of the forthcoming *The Reformers on War, Peace, and Justice: A Survey*. Jeff received an MA in military history from the American Military University and in national security studies from the Air Command and Staff College (USA).

**“Ellul on War, Violence, & Peace”**

*Jacques Ellul on Violence, Resistance, and War* has just been released by Wipf and Stock. I will present the book and explain how the chapters are designed to frame a new examination of Ellul's thinking on war. Ellul scholars are familiar with Kenneth Konyndyk's critique of Ellul's writing on the topic of violence, but is there some other way to evaluate Ellul's contribution to the study of war? I will propose that it is in Ellul's thinking on politics and propaganda that one is most likely to find a valuable Ellulian contribution to the study of the phenomenon of war. Evaluating Ellul alongside the panoply of great thinkers such as Thucydides, Clausewitz, and Mao, all of whom are foundational to an understanding of war, one is more likely to appreciate Ellul's thought as it relates to war rather than relying solely on his writing on technique. While war is a subject not widely studied in today's academic environment, crippled by safe spaces and trigger warnings, it is worth investigating what Ellul has to say on the topic. It is hoped that a second volume of Ellul and war will be printed, and I will encourage conference attendees to consider contributing a chapter on the topic.



**#23 Andy Alexis-Baker**

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Andy Alexis-Baker (PhD Marquette) is Lecturer in Theology at Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles, including, *A Faith Embracing All Creatures: Answering Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Care for Animals* (Cascade, 2012) and *A Faith Encompassing All Creation: Answering Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Care for the Environment* (Cascade 2014). Andy is a member of the IJES board.

**"No Gods, No Masters, No Heroes: Lessons from Ellul and Anarchy"**

Jacques Ellul's work on the way myth works in modern society is highly relevant to the way we see the state, democracy, and revolution today. The primary myths of science and history stand in a dialectical relationship with science promising to progressively reveal the truth and history promising that we can make our own destiny and have progress from ignorance to enlightenment. Within this dialectic, Ellul examined the myths of work, state, heroes, youth, and revolution to see how these interlocking mythologies of our day mystify the modern world. Myths of democracy and the state function to keep people afraid of one another and feel saved from primal violence, while the myth of modern revolution strengthens state power and has been vacated of almost all meaning in consumer society. Against this trend posits that revolution against history is necessary and must attack the state and technology first of all for it to be a genuine revolution. This anarchist analysis is highly relevant for looking at so called "alternative" politics like that of Bernie Sanders in the United States, which remain utterly captivated by the mythologies of our time and debase revolution even further with empty slogans.

**#24: General Discussion: Where Are We & Do We Go From Here?**

**Chairs: David Gill (IJES President) & Patrick Chastenet (AIJE President)**

## **Berkeley 2016 Conference Organizing Committee**

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Randal Marlin  
Lisa Richmond  
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Mark Baker holds an MA in biblical studies from New College Berkeley and a PhD in theology and ethics from Duke University. He is a professor of mission and theology at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary and has written books and articles in English and Spanish, including some that interact with Ellul's thought, such as *Religious No More* (1999) and *Galatas* (2014). He is a member of the IJES board and has served as a guest editor of the *Ellul Forum* (#46).



**Geri Forsberg** [geforsberg@juno.com](mailto:geforsberg@juno.com)

Geri Forsberg (BA, Washington State University; MA, International School of Theology; MA, PhD New York University) earned her PhD at NYU under Neil Postman with a dissertation, *Critical Thinking in an Image World*, drawing from the works of media ecologists, including Jacques Ellul. She serves on the English faculty at Western Washington University. Among her recent articles are "Introducing Jacques Ellul to English Education" (*Explorations in Media Ecology*), "Jacques Ellul's Contributions to Media Literacy," and "Morality and Ethics in a Technological Society: Revisiting Hope with Jacques Ellul."



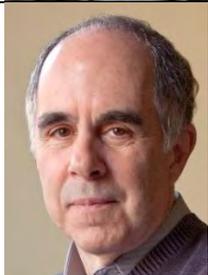
**Ted Lewis** [TedLewis@wipfandstock.com](mailto:TedLewis@wipfandstock.com)

Ted Lewis is Director of Communications at the Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking at the University of Minnesota, providing training and consultation work for restorative justice programs. He is also an Acquisitions Editor for Wipf & Stock Publishers where he oversees the Jacques Ellul Legacy Series (of reprints and new translations). He holds an MA in Religious Studies (University of Minnesota), where he concentrated on the sociology of religious-based conflicts.



**Randal Marlin** [marlin@ncf.ca](mailto:marlin@ncf.ca)

Randal Marlin is a graduate of Princeton, McGill, and Toronto universities (PhD, 1973) and currently vice-president of the IJES board. Since 1966 he has taught in the department of philosophy at Carleton University (Canada). In 1979–80 he won a Canadian department of defence fellowship supporting a year at the University of Bordeaux, where he studied under Jacques Ellul. In 1982 he translated Ellul's *FLN Propaganda in France during the Algerian War* into English and organized the 2014 Ellul conference in Ottawa. His *Propaganda and the Ethics of Persuasion* (2002, 2d ed. 2013) has attracted a wide readership.



**Albert Moritz** [albert.moritz@utoronto.ca](mailto:albert.moritz@utoronto.ca)

Albert F. Moritz (Ph.D., Marquette) is the Blake C. Goldring Professor of the Arts and Society at Victoria University in the University of Toronto. His doctoral work was in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British poetry. His scholarship has tended toward social and cultural history: biographies of Emma Goldman and Stephen Leacock, studies of picturesque aesthetics in illustration in the first mass press during the nineteenth century, the historical/geographical Oxford Literary Guide to Canada. He is primarily a poet. His work has received the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Award in Literature of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Ingram Merrill Fellowship, the Griffin Prize, the Beth Hokin Prize of Poetry magazine, etc. Recent books include *Sequence* (2015), *The New Measures* (2012), and *The Sentinel* (2008).



**Lisa Richmond** [lisa.richmond@wheaton.edu](mailto:lisa.richmond@wheaton.edu)

Lisa Richmond is Director of Library and Archives and a faculty member at Wheaton College (USA), which holds one of the largest collections of books and papers relating Jacques Ellul outside of France. In 2014, she presented a paper on Ellul at the conference of the Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians. She serves on the IJES board and is currently preparing a new English translation of Ellul's *Présence au monde moderne* for Wipf & Stock publishers. She is pursuing a PhD at the Institut de Recherche sur la Renaissance, l'Âge classique, et les Lumières, l'Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier III (France), on "The Meaning of Self-annihilation in Port-Royal Theology."



**Jacob Van Vleet** [JVanVleet@dvc.edu](mailto:JVanVleet@dvc.edu)

Jacob Van Vleet teaches Philosophy and Comparative Religion at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, California. He holds a PhD from the California Institute of Integral Studies and MA degrees from both the Dominican School of Philosophy and the Graduate Theological Union. He is the author of *Dialectical Theology and Jacques Ellul* (Fortress Press, 2014) and the editor of *Jacques Ellul: Essential Spiritual Writings* (Orbis Books, 2016). Jacob is a board member of the IJES.