

Anarchy: Deep in the Woods

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I recently read this rather interesting article — ‘Children of Ted: The Unlikely New Generation of Unabomber Acolytes’ (John H Richardson, *New York Magazine*, December 11, 2018) — which left me feeling curious as to what is, in fact, the political legacy of the Unabomber (AKA Ted Kaczynski). My interest is also inspired by having recently watched Netflix’s *Manhunt: Unabomber* (of which, based on others’ description, Kaczynski is not a fan).

Witnessing global ecology on the point of total collapse is perhaps another reason to (re-)examine his ideas.

From memory, I think I first encountered Kaczynski’s manifesto (Industrial Society & Its Future) in the pages of zines like *Fifth Estate*. Certainly, I remember there being a lot of discussion of the text in the radical press, especially its meaning and significance for anarchists and environmentalists. Kaczynski went to some trouble to ensure his text was published in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*: his bombing campaign between 1978 and 1995 killed three people and injured 23. For all that, Lewis Mumford is the better read.

It’s in this context that the various groups, projects and individuals who may (or may not) constitute ‘Ted’s Children’ have emerged, identified in the article as being ‘Books and webzines with names like *Against Civilization*, FeralCulture, Unsettling America, and the Ludd-Kaczynski Institute of Technology’; Deep Green Resistance, Derrick Jensen, *Individualidades Tendiendo a lo Salvaje*/Individuals Tending Toward the Wild (ITS) and so on. (Oddly, it does not reference John Zerzan.) While each of these individuals, groups, texts and projects has generated its own fair share of controversy, that surrounding ITS and eC0-eXTReMiSM is something else again.

Existing within and emerging from a broader anarchist, insurrectionist and nihilist milieu, or seeming to, ITS is a relatively new kid on the anti-civilisationist bloc. Its first communiqué was published in April 2011, and claimed responsibility for a parcel bomb sent to nanotechnologist Oscar Alberto Camacho Olguin. In ENG translation, it reads in part:

In Mexico, as mentioned, nanoscale technology continues to grow, the government of the Mexican State wants to keep abreast of progress and modernity (also by the morbid and mediocre goal of reaching the national presidency) and therefore has built the *Universidad Politécnica del Valle de México*, where the Nanotechnology degree is one of several courses complicit in technological development. The reasons to attack all types of growth in nanoscience are quite strong and therefore we have sent a parcel bomb to that institution on April 14th of this year, specifically to the head of the Engineering Division in Nanotechnology, Prof. Oscar Alberto Camacho Olguin. We have no hesitation in attacking those people who are key to the climax that technology wants to achieve. We prefer to see them dead or mutilated rather than continuing to contribute with their scientific knowledge to all this shit, to continue feeding the Domination System.

Since then, ITS (and its various constituents) have undertaken (or claimed to have undertaken) many more such actions, including, most sensationally, the murders and attempted murders not only of ‘mad scientists’ like Olguin but indiscriminate attacks upon civilians. In any case, there has now been published over 60 communiqués from ITS on teh webs, available for perusal on relevant blogs, and previously (in ENG translation) on the *Atassa* blog (now defunct). According to these sources, cells would appear to exist in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico (and presumably elsewhere in South American territories), but for obvious reasons — like their string of claimed actions — this is difficult either to confirm or to deny.

Richardson:

The most ominous example [of domestic terrorism in some way inspired by Kaczynski] is *Individualidades Tendiendo a lo Salvaje*, or ITS (usually translated as Individuals Tending Toward the Wild), a loose association of terrorist groups started by Mexican Kaczynski devotees who decided that his plan to take down the system was outdated because the environment was being decimated so fast and government surveillance technology had gotten so robust. Instead, ITS would return to its guru’s old modus operandi: revenge. The group set off bombs at the National Ecology Institute in Mexico, a Federal Electricity Commission office, two banks, and a university. It now claims cells across Latin America, and in January 2017, the Chilean offshoot delivered a gift-wrapped bomb to Oscar Landerretche, the chairman of the world’s largest copper mine, who suffered minor injuries. The group explained its motives in a defiant media release: “The pretentious Landerretche deserved to die for his offenses against Earth.”

While initially seeming to have some sympathies for anarchism (or at least its insurrectionist and anti-civilisationist tendencies), of late ITS has deepened its antagonism by threatening to kill anarchist critics, among them Scott Campbell, the author of two articles — ‘There’s Nothing Anarchist about Eco-Fascism: A Condemnation of ITS’ (May 12, 2017) and ‘Not Our Comrades: ITS Attacks on Anarchists’ (August 30, 2017) — which denounce ITS from an anarchist perspective. Further (‘Of Indiscriminate Attacks & Wild Reactions: an anti-civ anarchist engages with ITS and Atassa, their defenders and their false critics’):

ITS has attacked anarchists, in fact, has tried to detonate a bomb in an anarchist squat in order to kill or injury many of them. They have threatened even more. They have stridently condemned anarchists in word and deed. They have embraced something they call the “indiscriminate attack” and have fully embraced a particular brand of the ideology of misanthropy. They claim that any human is a legitimate target for murder and have recently claimed responsibility for multiple of them: a couple slaughtered

for the sin of hiking in some relatively virgin wilderness, and the May 3rd femicide of Lesvy Rivera, a woman on the campus of National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), who the group condemned for being human, for being drunk, and most obviously to some of us, for being a woman.

A number of other statements have since been published, some of which have been compiled into a pamphlet called ‘Against Eco-Extremism : Mirror image of Civilisation & Religion’ (July 2018), and in November the Individualist Network and Indonesian Anarchist Black Cross published Seek and Destroy Eco-Extremism Everywhere: A Joint Statement. For its part, ITS has responded to critics, who are generally denounced for their ‘moralism’, and anybody is free to wade thru their online polemics on ‘The Anarchist Library’ (see below) and elsewhere.

The two individuals featured in Richardson’s article, John Jacobi and ‘Abe Cabrera’, ‘contributed to the journal *Atassa*, which was dedicated on the first page to the premise that “civilization should be fought” and that the example of Ted Kaczynski “is what that fighting looks like”.’ *Atassa: Readings in Eco-Extremism* is published and distributed by Little Black Cart (LBC) in the US. The introduction to the first volume reads:

Atassa is the Muskogee word for “war club.” The *atassa* was the symbol of the Red Sticks, a faction within the Muskogee or Creek nation that from 1813 to 1814 fought against the encroachment of white settlers on their lands in what is now the states of Georgia and Alabama in the present-day United States.

For us, it is a symbol of a war that came too late, too late to save their sacred ground and rhythm of life, too late to fight the mass of invaders who would transform the land into something unrecognizable. Nevertheless, the war was fought, because their instincts, and arguably the land itself, demanded it.

Eco-extremism has no presence in the United States or in the English-speaking world. It started in Mexico as an illegalist tendency, not at all concerned with proselytism or popularity, and has since spread to other countries to the South and in a certain form to Europe. Those involved in this journal are thus not eco-extremists, and we don’t advocate that anyone consider this journal an exhortation to action or advocacy for illegality. Like the *corridos* (ballads) also coming from the South celebrating the actions of figures of the drug trade, we are here to “tell it like it is,” not changing anything or condemning any of these actions since we don’t find that attitude particularly helpful. Like the *narco-corrido*, our only message is: “This exists, and you have to think about it, whether you like it or not.”

We hope that our little labor will serve to inform and inspire a different perspective in the Anglophone reader.

With Wild Nature on our side.

Atassa 1 otherwise comprises elaborations on ‘eco-extremism’ and Kaczynski’s writings by Cabrera, Jacobi and others, accounts of ITS actions, historical analysis of the Creek War and other such conflicts, strategic and tactical advice for those wishing to pursue an eco-extremist approach, and so on. A second volume (I haven’t read) has been published which presumably carries on in the same manner as the first. Of the second volume, LBC notes: ‘Not necessarily the most controversial thing LBC has ever published, but certainly the publication that has caused the most furor so far.’

In response to Campbell’s articles, LBC published a statement on ‘Why do we publish such objectionable things?’ (August 24, 2018). The Brilliant podcast has also published interviews with the editor of the journal, ‘Abe Cabrera’. (Oddly, ‘Cabrera’ has also written for *Ritual* zine: ‘Primitivism without catastrophe’, February 17, 2016. *See also* : Antifa is liberalism, feminism is cancer, and I’m a monkey’s uncle, April 18, 2018.)

At some point in the last year or so, the *Atassa* wordpress blog was deleted. The last post to appear on the archived version of the blog, dated September 24, 2017, contains an ENG translation of ITS’s fortieth communiqué, detailing the alleged placement of:

... a package-bomb at the entrance of the Physics and Astronomy Space in the University City, addressed to Dr. Gloria Dubner, director of the establishment, who was awarded recently for her progressive efforts in support of the techno-industrial system. It seems that the person in charge of the place perceived that something was amiss and decided to call the police. We remark here that this won’t stop us. On the contrary, it compels us to do more. The next time we won’t fail. The package was aimed to wound physically and emotionally all of the techno-geeks who were nearby; not only Gloria herself but any student or simple worker. We don’t make distinctions in this war that we wage against our own species.

No shit.

It may be coincidence, but the closure of the blog seems to have been followed by the d0xxing of its alleged editor, ‘Abe Cabrera’ (details of which can be found on the 325 site), and the repudiation of the zine by some of those associated with it. The controversy over *Atassa* and ITS also appears to have resulted in a split among the admins of ‘The Anarchist Library’, which hosts a number of ITS writings. *See* : An Anarchist Librarian From North America / 10 Years Later, A Reflection And A Response / On An English Language Anarchist Library Project (August 28, 2018) | ‘About’, AnarchistLibraries.net.

In the end, according to Richardson, Kaczynski is radically unconvinced by ITS: “A hypothesis: ITS is instigated by some country’s security services — probably Mexico. Their real task is to spread hopelessness, because where there is no hope there is no

serious resistance.” Possibly, ‘eco-extremism’ is a species of the genus ‘eco-fascism’. Michael Siebert (Linkola, Montana, *Jacobite*, July 19, 2018):

Ecofascism, more than any other right-wing movement, is destined for a surge in popularity the closer we come to environmental collapse. The earth’s ecosystems may very well collapse before liberalism, and when they do, the effects will be felt much more acutely. The anti-civilisation movement is tapping into dark territory that eco-activists won’t discuss publicly, but will stay up late thinking about.

Leaving aside the precise nature of the relationship between the doctrines, it’s worth noting that, according to this 2018 report in Spiegel (‘The Hate Network’), Kaczynski has been in correspondence with the neo-Nazi grouplet Atomwaffen (AW), who appears to inspire them to action just as he has ITS. Certainly, ITS and AW share a commitment to murderous violence, misanthropy and misogyny, and an ideological syncretism that can be baffling to outsiders. In this context, the role of particular forms of non-state terror in ultimately reinforcing state control and state violence is worth considering (*see*, for example, Situationist Gianfranco Sanguinetti’s reflections ‘On Terrorism and the State’ (PDF), 1978(ITA)/1980(FRE)/1982/2004(ENG)).

Finally:

- Journalist and filmmaker Jake Hanrahan has been following the ITS saga, and this thread from January 2018–December 2018 provides more details regarding the relationship between ITS and Kaczynski, an alleged attack in Edinburgh (January 2018), another in Spain, ITS giving props to Mark Conditt (the alleged Austin bomber), an arson attack upon a lumberyard and the murder of a priest in Mexico, the placement of a bomb in Brazil and a polytechnic in Greece, the arson of a bus in Rome, and so on.

- Blogger ‘Lefty Hooligan’ denounces LBC for publishing *Atassa* in Between ‘nihilism and fascism’ (September 10, 2017) and provides links to various relevant materials, including to some on IndyBay which detail ITS’ praise for LBC and *Atassa*’s role in propagating ITS’ doctrines in North America, along with approving celebrations for the murderous activities of Islamic State/Daesh in Europe and the murder of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville by neo-Nazi James Fields.

See also: In Manifesto, Mexican Eco-Terrorists Declare War on Nanotechnology, Robert Beckhusen, WiRED, February 12, 2013 | The Ted Kaczynski Papers: FBI Files and Photographs | Letters to the Unabomber: A Case Study and Some Reflections, Julie Herrada, *Archival Issues*, Vol.28, No.1, 2003-4 [PDF] | The Communiques of Freedom Club (The Anarchist Library) | Radical Environmentalism’s Print History: From Earth First! to Wild Earth, Bron Taylor, Environment & Society Portal (2018) | Dark Mountain | Wild Roots | The Wild Will Project | Fierce Dreams | Black Seed.

Shout-out : Michael Loadenthal, who’s authored scores of relevant essays: academia.edu /// wordpress.

They held up a stone
I said, "Stone."
Smiling they said, "Stone."

They showed me a tree.
I said, "Tree."
Smiling they said, "Tree."

They shed a man's blood.
I said, "Blood."
Smiling they said, "Paint."

They shed a man's blood.
I said, "Blood."
Smiling they said, "Paint."

~ Dianne Abse (Adapted from the Hebrew of Amir Gilboa), 1982

The Ted K Archive

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Slack Bastard

www.thetedkarchive.com