

Eco-Fascism

Fascism in the Green Movement

Anon

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Ku Klux Klan members participating in 1990 Earth Day activities by picking up trash along a New Jersey highway. Hey, it's the Environmental Decade.

IT IS AN IRONY OF HISTORY that Herbert Gruhl, the first Die Gruenen deputy in the West German Bundestag, invented the slogan that the Greens "are neither Left nor Right but ahead". Gruhl eventually split from the Greens to found his own Ecological Democratic Party. The ODP far from being neither left nor right" is firmly on the far Right, has been infiltrated by neo-Nazis and has been described as 'eco-fascist' in orientation.

Others claim the whole ecology movement is fascistic. Arguments justifying this claim include measures to reduce in environmental damage demanding authoritarian controls; the Greens 'absolutist and draconian critique'; the movement as literally reactionary, looking back the past; its critique of reason leaving it undefended against irrational ideas; population concerns linked to racism and genocide; the use of nature to

justify political decisions leading to conservative assumptions about society. Revisionist authors like ex-Monday Club supporter, Bramwell, even argue that while liberals and socialists support the modern Green Movement, this is an aberration in the history of an ideology with a deep-rooted right wing 'Blood and Soil' tradition.

Neo-Nazis have shown a keen interest in ecological values. Hindu fascist Satrivi Devi inspired British National Socialist Zolin Jordan with her mystical ecological doctrine by speculating that humanity had entered a period of time, the Kali Yuga, when the corruption that had been gathering for millenium would be burnt away by a cleansing fire of total destruction. Devi praised Hitler for his respect for animals and belief in 'natural' laws. In 1965, George Thayer wrote "Their deep love for Nature, for the Sun, the Soil, and the purity of their blood, acts as a philosophical cement that binds together all their attitudes on democracy, communism, the Jews, finance, and race into a logical whole. The Fascists and neo-Nazis take their feelings to the point where the love of these items becomes a religion" ('The British Political Fringe', p. 104). The Britons Society, a far Right book club, stocked Whyte & Jacks 'The Rape of the Earth' and Lady Balfour's 'The Living Soil'.

In 1984 the British National Front supported animal rights, deforestation, destruction of the countryside and other 'green' issues. Edited by ex-NF organiser Michael Walker, 'Scorpion' made links between National Socialists and the fringe of the Green movement. Joe Pearce in 1986 claimed "Racial preservation is Green and argued "The soil of a Nation is ... the Nation's life-blood. From the Nation's soil must be grown the food upon which the Nation depends ... anything which poisons the soil poisons the Nation itself."

While the NF remained pro-nuclear, 'Nationalism Today' claimed "If the present programme of nuclear power expansion continues the British race may not be recognisably human, let alone racially pure" ('Nationalise Today' 4). A previous issue contained the headline 'Alien Bankers Destroying British Countryside' in an attempt to link conservation and virulent anti-semitism.

In 1989, 'Nationalism Today' outlined the Front's 'green' strategy with remarkable frankness. Greens were praised for transcending outmoded creeds of materialism, in favour of a new form of politics". In escaping from the right/left, capitalist/socialist axis and putting forward their ideas the Front stated simply "Green politics is the key". Green values were praised and defined as "A politics where administrative and economic decentralisation are the norm, where man lives in harmony with his environment, where local communities are empowered to make the decisions that directly affect them, where the healthy values of co-operation and participation are encouraged, and selfishness and apathy condemned". Greens were urged to "extend their enthusiasm for the preservation of life forms to include man himself or at least European man!".

Infiltration was advocated with 'Nationalism Today' arguing that "the wide range of issues raised by the environmental crisis bring before us many organisations worthy of the assistance of activists. Nationalists everywhere should ensure that they are in

the vanguard of these groups, even to the extent of establishing them where none presently exists”.

The Front and other neo-fascist splinter groups claimed the mantle of Distributism advocated by anti-semitic Social Credit cranks in the 1930's: “It emphasised particular policies that NF leaders were increasingly drawn to — most importantly decentralisation, in which the future New Order would be based on a large number of nation states, much of whose power would devolve to localities and ruralism, a ‘back-to-the-land’ philosophy in which mass production and cities would be displaced by small workshops and multitude of small farms. Chesterton’s enthusiasm for the traditional family with the man at the head of the household was also attractive to the NF patriarchs.” (‘Searchlight’ 174).

So is the Green Movement fascist in orientation? Is the real Green heritage to be found in the deeds of Hitler and Darre, his Minister of Agriculture? Does a critique of technology and a fear of scientific rationality inevitably lead to hysterical, genocidal extremism? All of these questions depend for their answer on how one defines fascism and green beliefs.

Bramwell separates fascism from National Socialism and ‘Ecologism’ from Green politics. By Ecologism, she means ecology, a respect for peasants, anti-mechanism and a strong sense of the importance of place. Ecologism is a box’ that can contain Left and Right wing versions of this ideology. She makes no claim that Italian fascism had anything to do with Ecologism.

Mussolini was no friend of the peasant but believed in progress, mechanisation and advance. The Futurists that celebrated speed, power, domination and the motor car influenced him. Italian fascists sought to transform their nation in a way that was aggressive to both the environment and humanity. But Mussolini’s draining of the Pontine marshes compares with Hitler’s construction of huge ceremonial braiding’s and autobahns. Despite perverse rhetorical justification of National Socialism by reference to ‘natural laws’¹, the Nazis dominated and degraded the environment even more than their Italian co-thinkers.

Fascism and National Socialism were opportunistic movements. Bramwell’s analysis is just the latest attempt to identify these movements with other ideologies at variance with key far Right values. Greens are not environmentalists having a wider agenda. Authoritarian solutions to global problems are specifically rejected, non-violence is important and commitments to social justice accepted. National Socialism and fascism share common features of authoritarian leadership, militarism and social division by race, diametrically opposed to Green values.

The right wing heritage of Green politics is an illusion created by the simplest of logical fallacies. Because some fascists and Nazis were interested in ecology does not mean that everyone interested in ecology is a fascist or a Nazi.

The Ted K Archive

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