Green Anarchist

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Green Anarchist (GA) is the title of a periodical, which has taken both magazine and newspaper formats, and the term "green anarchism" also signifies the political position of a wider radical environmentalist movement (Atton, 1999, 45). The periodical's first editorial team was formed after the 1984 Stop the City demonstration and comprised Marcus Christo, Richard Hunt – a noted writer for more mainstream Green magazines – and Alan Albon, a pacifist writer for the at the time largely individualist and pacifist anarchist newspaper Freedom. As a result, early editions of Green Anarchist followed similar non-violent and liberal lines (Booth, 1996: 67).

The editorial team, and many of the wider circle of contributors to the magazine (which later became a newspaper before returning to magazine format) were inspired by the environmental movements of the 1960s and '70s, and many had been on the fringes of the Ecology Party (now the Green Party). The magazine was marked by its openness to diverse contributors and almost unrestricted access to the letters page, which meant that it included a range of opinions within each edition (Atton, 1999:41-42); although the overall balance within its early years was towards individualist pacifism. This not only caused conflict with the class struggle (or social) anarchists but also caused friction between Hunt, the leading member of the editorial team, and the other contributors.

Hunt advocated policies of free-markets and tax cuts, on the grounds that it "redistributes wealth from the rich to the poor" and allows small business to prosper (Hunt, 1984: 8). Hunt also was not a pacifist, as he espoused revolution, although is agents of change did not include those in the affluent West, but only those who lived on the economic periphery, that is, the peasantry in the Third World (PNR, 1992: 16). These and other views came into conflict with the magazine's less aggressive editors and many supporters (Booth, 1996: 72). Consequently, the magazine which was established during the confrontational Miners' Strike (1984-85), barely covered the dispute (except by the occasional overtly class-conscious contributor), and by the time of the high profile industrial action by print-workers (1986), the magazine was wholly antipathetic to the strikers. An editorial by Albon rejected solidarity actions for the sacked workers as he blamed them, rather than the newspapers' proprietor and editors, for the papers' sexism and racism (Albon, 1996 [1986]: 73). This lack of solidarity not only left the media moguls in a stronger position to espouse their views, but GA's stance "created a sectarian gulf between GA and the Class Struggle Anarchists" which lingered on for many years (Booth 1996: 74).

GA's apparent individualist positions, along with growing support for hierarchical social practices, further divided GA from the wider class struggle anarchist movement and exacerbated tensions within the editorial board. Breaking point was reached when Hunt wished to publish an article in support of Western military intervention in Iraq-Kuwait (1991- 92). He was unable to impose his will on the editorial board of Green Anarchist – and so he left to set up his own magazine, Alternative Green.

Following Hunt's departure, and the re-shaping of the editorial team, which included Paul Rogers and Stephen Booth, GA developed a more overtly Primitivist orientation.

Primitivism argues that technology, and the scientific rationale that underpins it, imposes a specific form of domination on nature. Amongst the writers published in GA have been prominent Primitivists like John Zerzan and John Moore and "post-left" radical lawyer Bob Black. More controversially, GA also publicised and endorsed the views of Theodore (Ted) Kaczynski, the convicted Unabomber, distributing the *Unabomber's Industrial Society and Its* Future (Anti-Authoritarians Anonymous, 1996: 21-22; Kaczynski, 1999: 20-21). GA linked the need to eradicate the hierarchies of high-tech contemporary societies with Kaczynski's co- ordinated and highly sophisticated incendiary campaigns targeted at particular technologically advanced organisations.

As Séan Sheehan notes, the Primitivist analysis adopted by GA often ignored the economic dynamic that encourages the enclosure and imposition of technological control over the wilderness (Sheehan, 2003, 44). As a result GA viewed social conflict in Manichean terms: of the manifold, mindless drones of the technological system versus the enlightened protectors of the wilderness. Thus GA suggested anyone who was not actively involved in the campaign against civilisation as the enemy. In a highly controversial article penned by Booth, GA praised the example of the Oklahoma bomb (carried out by fascists) and the Aum Shinrikyo Sarin Gas massacre of commuters on the Tokyo underground as laudable examples of "attacks on the system." Booth's defenders claim it was these attacks' impact on the state, not their intentions or programme, that he was supporting (Booth, 1998a, 11; Booth, 1998b: 12; Editor of GA, 1998: 12;).

Because of GA's commitment to environmental direct action, and comprehensive reports of radical ecological campaigns, these views did little harm, at least initially, to the circulation. However, the advocacy of attacks against civilians caused further tensions between the main activists within GA and other anarchists. When the editors became subject to state intervention in 1995, following a raid on a bookshop selling GA and Animal Liberation Front (ALF) materials (in a court case referred to as the GANDALF (GA aND ALF) trial), some anarchists were reluctant to display the usual solidarity for activists facing suppression (Space Bunny, 2007).

However, despite the disagreements with the ideological positions in many of the articles in GA, the GANDALF defendants did receive support from non-Primitivist anarchists, and wider interested parties such as the journalist's union. Campaigners considered the authorities' grounds for prosecution to be unjustified, and that they would set a dangerous precedent. The authorities' case was that the accounts of environmental direct action included in the paper were inciting similar attacks (Green Anarchist, 1997: 1; Atton, 1997: 14-15). The trial also suggested that agents provocateur had infiltrated the grouping that produced the paper (O'Hara and Booth, 1999: 20-27). The defendants in November 1997 received custodial sentences of up to three years, without the prosecution ever having to show that the publications had inspired one criminal act. The accused were, however, eventually released after an extensive campaign and successful appeal.

In 2001, the two main editors of Green Anarchist fell out, purportedly over the decision by one (Paul Rogers) to sell an interview with Kaczynski to the soft-porn magazine Penthouse for $3,750. As a result of this rift, two separate publications of the same name, one published by Rogers the other by Booth, are produced with varying degrees of regularity.

There is also a website of the same name run, but infrequently updated, by the Rogers faction. Booth's version of Green Anarchist has recently distanced itself from Primitivism, whilst the influence of Green Anarchist's primitivist phase can be seen in the US magazine Green Anarchy.

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A critique of his ideas & actions.

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