

Escape from Ecology

Necrophilia and the Left's Internalized Green Scare

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In 1963, the psychologist and libertarian Marxist theorist Erich Fromm pondered why there was not more widespread and effective resistance to war. He hypothesized that ‘people are not afraid of total destruction because they do not love life; or even, because many are attracted to death’. Fromm described this death-desiring orientation as ‘necrophilia’ and explained that it develops when people lack fulfilling social connections, chances to be creative and freedom of thought and action. It predominates, he argued, in capitalist societies, where corporate and state bureaucracies treat people as ‘numbers’, and captivating screens endlessly project slaughter and sterility. It is likely that Fromm would have offered the same explanation today as to why there are not more widespread and effective responses to ecological breakdown. Fromm (1976) understood these ‘ecological dangers and the dangers of nuclear war, either or both of which may put an end to all civilization and possibly to all life’.

This chapter, written from an Anarchist perspective, posits that a social necrophilia has prevented dominant sections of the global Left (in the United States and Latin America) from developing effective responses to ecological breakdown. Although Anarchists share leftist goals of social emancipation, they tend to act autonomously from the hierarchical, bureaucratic institutions — top-down unions, political parties and large non-profits — comprising the “official Left” or “the official institutions of the Left” (Hardt and Negri 2000; Van Meter 2017). These Anarchists argue that the official Left ultimately protects capitalism, the state and other structures of domination. As Peter Gelderloos (2010) suggested, ‘The Left, to a large extent subconsciously, has as its primary role to make resistance harmless’.

While the official Left has sometimes helped achieve important reforms, its internalization of at least two necrophilous capitalist strategies has hindered more subversive and constructive forms of ecological resistance and reconstruction. These internalizations reflect Fromm’s (1947) description of how people in unfree societies tend to develop an ‘authoritarian conscience’, which is ‘the voice of an internalized external authority, the parents, the state, or whoever the authorities of a culture happen to be’. First, dominant Leftist institutions internalize capitalism’s *Green Scare* targeting radical ecological movements with state repression. It is common for the official Left to denounce, inform on and arrest people who take direct action against ecological devastation. Second, the official Left internalizes capitalism’s technique of *greenwashing*, falsely defending destructive corporate and state policies as green and sustainable. This greenwashing reflects Fromm’s (1968) description of necrophilous policymaking: ‘Those who are attracted to the non-alive are the people who prefer “law and order” to living structure, bureaucratic to spontaneous methods, gadgets to living beings, repetition to originality’.

I focus on two sections of the official Left that portray themselves as responsible defenders of life on Earth: first, Left institutions in the United States including large environmental non-profits, and second, Left parties that took state power as part of Latin America’s Pink Tide since the late 1990s. With these case studies, I attempt to demonstrate that the official Left performs a role of preventing people from build-

ing a society in harmony with non-human nature. In large part, this role results from many Left institutions' elite funding sources and pro-capitalist or reformist ideologies. However, a social psychological basis is a necessary condition. As Fromm (1963) argued, 'If all [humans] loved life, had reverence for life, were independent and critical, the human basis for war would be lacking'. Similarly, if the official Left cultivated a genuine love of life, there is hardly any way it could continue marching willingly with capitalism towards omnicide (the murder of everything). Over the course of the chapter, I mention examples where some avowed anti-capitalist and even Anarchist groups, who do not accept any corporate funding or subscribe to capitalist ideology, have internalized aspects of the Green Scare and greenwashing strategies. Therefore, a satisfying explanation must involve more than *just* economic and ideological factors. In the conclusion, then, I return to Erich Fromm's theory and suggest that effective ecological movements will need to undo necrophilous internalizations and create a culture of biophilia, meaning a love of life. These movements will find that outside of the official Left, countless humans, animals and ecosystems already engage in everyday direct action and mutual aid, prefiguring a world resonating with Fromm's (1941) Anarchist-leaning commitment to 'victory over all kinds of authoritarian systems'.

Green Scare in the United States

‘All over the globe, environmental activists are currently facing a growing backlash, which is designed to intimidate them into inactivity and silence’, Andrew Rowell wrote in 1996. The prior year, a Nigerian military junta murdered the Ogoni environmental campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa, who had organized communities against Shell Oil’s devastation. Hundreds of Ogoni had been killed and 30,000 had been made homeless. Since then, the targeting of grassroots environmental campaigners has continued to expand worldwide. Global Witness (2017) reported that at least 200 land and environmental defenders in twenty-four countries had been killed in 2016. Forty per cent of the victims were indigenous, and 60 per cent lived in Latin America. The deadliest countries were Brazil, Colombia, the Philippines, India and Honduras. Almost 1,000 land and environmental defenders had been murdered between 2010 and 2016, and 197 were killed in 2017 (Watts 2018).

In the United States, the Right’s ‘Wise Use’ movement and the federal government have claimed since the 1980s that radical environmental defenders are ‘ecoterrorists’ and ‘extremists’. The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) targeted prominent members of Earth First!, waking up a sleeping Dave Foreman with guns pointed at him in 1989, and, evidence suggests, non-fatally car-bombing Judi Bari in 1990 (St. Clair and Frank 2015; Ongerth 2014). The Heritage Foundation, a Right think-tank, advocated in 1990, ‘Strangle the environmental movement. It’s the greatest single threat to the American economy. It doesn’t just include a few extremists. It is extremist’ (Rowell 1996). Following Al Qaeda’s September 2001 terror attacks, the Right and the federal government increased their use of ‘eco-terrorist’ accusations. One of the major targets was the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), an anti-authoritarian network whose carefully orchestrated acts of vandalism have cost Earth-destroying corporations many millions of dollars. Only targeting property, the ELF has never harmed a human being. ELF’s communiques espoused life-loving and anarchistic ideas of ‘social and deep ecology’, that ‘Property is theft’ and a commitment to ‘non-hierarchical’ structure (1997). By 2004, ‘extreme animal rights and environmental activists’ had caused more than \$100 million in estimated damage to corporate property (Anti-Defamation League 2004). That year, the FBI began its ‘Operation Backfire’, culminating in arrests and prosecutions of ELF members for terrorism. Pointing centrally to the ELF, the FBI warned in 2005, ‘The No. 1 domestic terrorism threat is the eco-terrorism, animal-rights movement’ (Schuster 2005). Activists identified an on-going ‘Green Scare’ reminiscent ‘of tactics used against Americans during the communist Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s’ (Potter 2008). The Green Scare must be understood as just one component

of the U.S. government's long-standing pattern of attacking dissidents and minorities (Churchill and Vander Wall 1990).

The official Left, including major environmental non-profits, quickly adopted Green Scare rhetoric and behaviours, signalling its internalization of capitalist values. In 1989, the National Wildlife Federation's president Jay Hair condemned Earth First! as 'outlaws and terrorists' (Green 1989). The Sierra Club offered financial rewards for information that could lead to eco-saboteurs' arrest (Tolme 2001; Potter 2011). The group's executive Carl Pope elaborated to the *Wall Street Journal*, 'In fact, when a Forest Service facility in the Wilamette National Forest was torched in 1996, perhaps by ecoterrorists, the Sierra Club offered a reward to anyone who could help identify the perpetrators' (Pope 2001). According to former North American ELF Press Office spokesperson Craig Rosebraugh (2014), 'The Sierra Club had even gone so far as to work with the FBI in the Colorado Vail arson investigation' after the ELF burned down a ski resort that threatened lynx habitat in 1998.

On 30 October 2001, U.S. Congressional Representative Scott McInnis addressed a letter to the Left's major environmental non-profits. Expressing concern over green radicals' vandalism of corporate property, the letter announced, '[W]e are calling on you and your organization to publicly disavow the actions of eco-terrorist organizations like the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) and Animal Liberation Front (ALF)' (Rosebraugh 2014). With few exceptions, the non-profits capitulated. Greenpeace's director John Passacanto responded, 'If we define eco-terrorism as violence, violence to people or to property, we disavow it' (Oko 2002). The Sierra Club's Carl Pope insisted, 'We have been denouncing eco-terrorism since before Scott [McInnis] knew it even existed' (Tolme 2001).

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a Left watchdog of far-right groups, has also devoted resources to monitoring the Earth Liberation Front and so-called 'eco-violence'. Despite acknowledging that the ELF has never harmed a human being and that it advocates 'equality, social justice and . . . compassion for all life', the SPLC (2001) voiced concern about the ELF's green radicalism: 'But like most groups on the radical right today, the ELF sees global capitalism as an enemy'.

The official Left has also attacked life-loving anarchistic currents using the 'black bloc' tactic during Seattle's 1999 mobilization against the World Trade Organization. Wearing black clothing and masks to protect their identities, these predominantly Anarchist affinity groups damaged the property of ecologically and socially destructive large corporations (ACME Collective 1999). As documented by communications scholars, their acts of vandalism 'catapulted the protests into national headlines', drawing media 'attention to the issues' (DeLuca and Peeples 2002). Left non-profits and unionists infamously assaulted the black bloc participants. Lori Wallach of Public Citizen proudly recounted: 'Our people actually picked up the anarchists. Because we had with us steelworkers and longshoremen who, by sheer bulk, were three or four times larger. So we had them literally, just sort of, a teamster on either side, just pick up an anarchist. We'd walk him over to the cops and say this boy just broke a window [. . .]

Please arrest him’. The next day, Medea Benjamin of the non-profit Global Exchange asked the *New York Times*, ‘Where are the police? These anarchists should have been arrested’ (Dupuis-Deri 2014). Effectively agreeing with Frommian theory, Van Deusen (2010) described such Left opponents of the black bloc as ‘weighed down in indecision and tacit acceptance of the status quo [. . .] Despite their professed goals, they become the harbingers of defeat and alienation’.

Moreover, animal liberation groups have found themselves abandoned and denounced by the Left’s official institutions. The American Civil Liberties Union decided in 2006 not to oppose the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act signed into law by President George W. Bush. Designed to target opponents of the fur, factory farming and animal research industries, the law expanded the legal definition of ‘terrorism’ to include First Amendment-protected activities — including whistleblowing and nonviolent civil disobedience — deemed ‘damaging’ to business operations. Will Potter (2011) argued that the ACLU effectively allowed the bill to pass: ‘When the civil liberties watchdog says, “The ACLU does not oppose this bill”, as it did in an

October 30, 2006, letter to Sensenbrenner, it’s like a bank security guard turning his back with the vault’s doors swung wide’. Other mainstream non-profits have publicly denounced radical animal liberationists. The Humane Society has condemned the ‘illegal conduct’ of the Animal Liberation Front, and Greenpeace has denounced the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society’s sinking of unmanned whaling ships (Yates 2013; Pellow 2014).

The internalized Green Scare has furthermore pervaded the mainstream climate change movement, as demonstrated in November 2015 when the United States-based 350.org helped coordinate protests at the United Nations’ climate conference in Paris, France. When Parisian officials enacted a citywide protest ban, 350.org complied and cancelled a march it had planned along with other non-profits (Rodriguez and Case 2015). However, hundreds of unarmed Anarchists and other anti-capitalists violated the ban, forming black blocs and defending themselves from police in order to maintain a presence on the streets. Rather than cheering on these protesters (or even denouncing the riot police tear gassing and arresting them), 350.org denounced the demonstrators as ‘unaffiliated with the climate movement’ (Phipps, Vaughan and Milman 2015).

During the 2016 struggle at North Dakota’s Standing Rock Sioux reservation against the construction of the oil-transporting Dakota Access Pipeline, indigenous land defenders faced extreme state repression, including about 800 arrests and forcible eviction by ‘[l]aw enforcement officials, heavily armed with military equipment and riot gear’. The pipeline’s construction company, Energy Transfer Partners (ETP), hired a security firm that labelled the pipeline’s opponents as ‘jihadists’ (Global Witness 2017). In September 2016, reporters filmed a security force’s dogs biting indigenous land defenders, drawing blood (Goodman 2016). ETP’s CEO Kelcy Warren has since called for pipeline opponents to be ‘removed from the gene pool’ (Hand 2018). While repressive activity originated with corporate forces, some Leftists internalized it and tried to replace militant tactics with harmless ones. As one anonymous participant

complained, ‘Much of the camp’s rhetoric is of the “Non-violent Direct Action” type. Lock your arm to this piece of deconstruction equipment and take a picture with a banner for Facebook’. Such activities led an indigenous man to lament, ‘I don’t know who these “leaders” are. They’re not my elders’ (Anonymous 2017). One Standing Rock participant warned that ‘nonviolent direct action’ trainers brought to the camp taught ‘protestors how to “de-escalate” even to the point of pulling young men (warriors) aside and chastising them (gently of course) for their anger. They were also told not to wear bandanas over their faces but to proudly be identified. A chill went up and down me’ (Wrong Kind of Green 2016). When Jessica Reznicek and Ruby Montoya publicly claimed responsibility in July 2017 for arsons that cost the pipeline’s builders a reported \$3 million, Sierra Club lawyer Wally Taylor condemned the direct actions: ‘Certainly, we had absolutely no knowledge about what these women were doing or were going to do, and we condemn any kind of damage or anything like that’ (Petroski 2017).

Even radical, autonomous leftists have sometimes internalized Green Scare rhetoric, demonstrating the authoritarian conscience’s far-reaching effects. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a radical union (of which I’m a member) with deeply rooted Anarchist tendencies, does not accept corporate funding. To its credit, the IWW has done highly important organizing towards an ‘ecological general strike’ and its constitution aspires to ‘live in harmony with the Earth’ (Hughes and Ongerth 2014). The union supports deep reductions of the workweek, which would make the economy less polluting and wasteful (Schneider 2014). Overall, the IWW has adopted an infinitely greener stance than did, for example, the business-friendly union the AFL-CIO which supported construction of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access oil pipelines (Solomon 2017). However, when the IWW member Marius Mason was arrested for alleged vandalism committed under the Earth Liberation Front name, the IWW’s General Executive Board (2008) issued a statement *condemning* Mason’s alleged tactics: ‘[T]he charges (simply put, arson and property destruction done to halt bio-engineering experiments and logging) are unrelated to union activity. Additionally, our union opposes these tactics, which stem from isolation and powerlessness’. The statement did not denounce the state repression that Mason faced.

Anarchistic eco-resistance groups have sometimes self-imposed a rigid pacifism, effectively adopting the state’s rejection of vandalizing corporate property. Earth First! has ‘self-consciously started to adopt the restrictive rhetoric of non-violence’, according to one critic who supplies plenty of examples since 2011 that sometimes involved a hyper-focus on collaborations with non-profits on performative actions posing little direct challenge to capitalists (Oxalis 2014). The anarchistic Rising Tide network has also collaborated with non-profits on largely performative actions, leading a critic to argue that Rising Tide ‘operates in lockstep with Greenpeace and 350.org’ (Raymond 2015). The network insists in bold letters on its website, ‘People and groups do not engage in property destruction under the name Rising Tide’. In all fairness, there can be strong contextual reasons for certain groups to adopt nonviolent tactics, and

moreover, it must be noted that the networks mentioned here have often courageously defended human and non-human communities (*Earth First!* Journal 2014). Still, their adoption of pacifist discourse may indicate a certain closeness with the official Left's limitations on resistance. As the North American ELF Press Office (2007) explained, 'No one in his right mind can honestly state that the popular environmental movement using state-sanctioned tactics has been successful. It is very obvious something more is needed'. When members of these eco-resistance groups have sometimes supported a broader diversity of methods necessary for defending life, they have broken from what Ward Churchill (2012) called the 'death wish' embedded in the 'pathology of pacifism'.

Pink Tide and Criminalization of Anti-extractivists

Struggles in Latin America have often clashed between strategies of *buen vivir* (living well) and extractivism. The *buen vivir* strategy, inspired largely by Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní and other indigenous traditions, emphasizes living harmoniously with social and ecological communities (Ford 2014). It ‘puts the emphasis on doing, rather than consuming’ (Esteva, Babones and Babcicky 2013). Its worldview overlaps significantly with Fromm’s (1976) suggestion that people live more fulfilling lives by focusing on ‘being’ (which ‘refers to *experience*’) rather than ‘having’ (which ‘refers to *things*’). By contrast, the official Left’s strategy of taking of state power, responsible for the ‘Pink Tide’ of Left electoral victories since the late 1990s, has often tended towards extractivism, relying centrally on extracting and exporting oil, natural gas, timber and other natural resources for export to overdeveloped nations. According to critic Alberto Acosta (2013), extractivism has historically ‘led to widespread poverty’, and although Pink Tide governments have distributed revenues more fairly, they have not engaged in any radical redistribution of income and wealth’. Acosta added that extractivist governments tend to ‘criminalize’ forms of ‘protest against the extractivist activities’. John Holloway (2010) warned that Pink Tide states relate to their populations as ‘a quantity of undifferentiated, abstract atoms, with limited capacities [. . .] This is not a politics of dignity’. Following the necrophilous trajectory, the Left in power has targeted ecological resistance in Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil and Mexico.

In 2010, Bolivia’s Left government convened in Cochabamba the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. Some 35,000 people from 142 countries attended. The conference produced a radical document denouncing capitalism and calling for a variety of local solutions respecting ecosystem and planetary health. However, outside of the conference, a national indigenous council known as Conamaq held a parallel summit that critiqued the Bolivian government’s extractivist policies. Organizers called this conference the 18th Mesa or 18th table, since the official World People’s Conference had 17 working groups (Building Bridges Collective 2010). In their declaration, the 18th Mesa denounced ‘imperialism, transnationals and the so-called progressive Latin American governments that implement mega energy and infrastructure projects under the [Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA)]’. In addition to critiquing the Pink Tide governments, the 18th Mesa

declaration implicated other parts of the Left including ‘those NGOs which support projects of the aforementioned corporations’ (18th Mesa 2010).

The Bolivian government, in turn, has targeted indigenous and grassroots critics with violence and smears. In December 2013, the government ‘helped to violently oust the Conamaq from their offices in La Paz’. A Conamaq member claimed, ‘Our crime was defending Mother Earth’ (Peralta M 2014). After members of the People’s Guarani Assembly of Takova Mora blocked a highway in Chaco on 19 August 2015, protesting oil extraction in indigenous territories, police broke up the rally using tear gas and batons and detained twenty-seven people. Seventeen were punished with extrajudicial sanctions preventing them from publicly participating in events related to this local ecological struggle (Cregan 2015).

In Venezuela, environmental campaigners and indigenous peoples have complained about repression accompanying extractive activities enabled by the Left government and military. Survival International reported in 2015, ‘Indians have denounced the Venezuelan military for failing to tackle the illegal mining and for “creating a climate of terror and fear”. Some officers are known to be involved in the illegal gold trade’. In 2016, President Nicolas Maduro opened the Arco Minero, a major mining zone, without consent from local indigenous communities. The local indigenous leader Brian Clark lamented the intimidating presence of the Venezuelan military: ‘The presence of the army here is not for the people. It’s for their [the state’s and military’s] own benefit’ (Ebus 2018).

Ecuador’s Pink Tide government — under Rafael Correa (2007—2017) and his successor Lenín Moreno — has also taken aim at environmental defenders, smearing and arbitrarily punishing campaigners and going so far as forcibly shutting down the Pachamama Foundation, a prominent environmental non-profit, in 2016. Human rights researchers found a lack of sufficient evidence to support the charges in three of the government’s cases against indigenous and environmental campaigners (Human Rights Watch 2018). First, in 2013, indigenous Shuar campaigner Jose Acacho, was convicted of ‘terrorism’ and sentenced to twelve years in prison for allegedly inciting violence at a 2009 protest against new mining laws. Not a single trial witness testified that Acacho was even present at the demonstration. A second case responded to a clash between the government and mining opponents in December 2016. Following the confrontation, Correa’s government tried to dissolve the organization Ecological Action, although the group successfully appealed its closure. The Shuar campaigner Augustin Wachapa was charged with inciting violence through a Facebook post and says he was held in a maximum-security prison for four months. Researchers called the government’s case ‘devoid of meaningful evidentiary support’. Finally, seven indigenous leaders and environmental defenders who demonstrated against oil drilling in 2013 ‘remain subject to a criminal investigation that has failed to yield any evidence against them for over four years’. The Pachamama Foundation had helped organize the protest against foreign investors bidding on drilling rights on indigenous territories. On television, Correa smeared the defendants as ‘violent people, bad people’ and

four days later, on 4 December 2013, his government ordered the Pachamama Foundation to close down. While the current administration has reinstated the Pachamama Foundation and has made overtures to environmentalists, ‘the provision used to shut down Pachamama Foundation remains in place’ and problems of arbitrary prosecution remain unresolved. Researchers concluded that Ecuador’s government has ‘abused’ executive powers ‘to harass, intimidate, and punish Ecuadorians who opposed oil and mining projects that the president endorsed’ (Human Rights Watch 2018).

When the Brazilian Worker’s Party held power from 2003 to 2016 as part of the Pink Tide, they were criticized for doing little to stop the murder of land defenders by landowners and logging companies. In 2011, rubber tapper and ecological campaigner Jose Claudio Ribeiro da Silva, known as Ze Claudio, was murdered by vigilantes. It was reported a few years later, ‘The outcry over Ze Claudio’s killing spurred the government to announce it would provide activists with protection, but few have actually received it’ (Miller 2015).

Since the Left-leaning President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took power in Mexico in 2018, the state has repeatedly sent soldiers, tanks and helicopters into the territories of the Zapatista National Liberation Army and their indigenous supporters. The Zapatistas, who staunchly oppose Lopez Obrador’s proposed infrastructure megaprojects in their region, have complained that ‘the military, police, and paramilitary presence has increased, as has that of spies, listening ears, and informants’ (Pinto 2019; Telesur 2019).

While indigenous and grassroots environmental campaigners in Latin America have often advanced life-loving resistance, the Left in power is acting to repress and marginalize those approaches. While sometimes co-opting ecological rhetoric, Pink Tide governments have maintained the centrality of destructive extraction. Raul Zibechi (2015) appropriately observed, ‘The extractivist model tends to generate a society without subjects. This is because there cannot be subjects within a scorched- earth model such as extractivism. There can only be objects’. Such disrespect of people’s health, homes and dignity matches Fromm’s characterization of necrophilia.

Greenwashing the Status Quo

Dedicated to preserving the status quo, the official Left claims that solutions will be top-down and led by technical experts instead of by communities. For example, Environmental Defense Fund's President Fred Krupp insisted, '[W]hat the environmental movement needs is more scientists and engineers and economists' (St. Clair 2011). Even despite their professed dedication to data, however, the official Left enthusiastically supports policies and technologies expected to bring ecological breakdown well past safe levels, locking in at least 3 or 4° Celsius of global warming above pre-industrial levels. Leading climate scientists confirm that no level of warming above 1 or 1.5 ° is remotely safe: Already an estimated 400,000 human beings currently die each year from climate change impacts. 2 ° of warming could submerge the world's coastal cities with rising seas. 4 ° of warming could even kill off 90 per cent of human beings (Fischer 2017). Just slightly higher levels could completely 'annihilate planetary life' (Strona and Bradshaw 2018). While failing to prevent catastrophic warming, the Left's preferred policies also exacerbate comparable threats, such as water contamination, nuclear radiation, methane leaks, mountaintop destruction and indigenous people's dispossession. Simply put, there is no way that a life-loving Left would promote these false solutions.

Theoretically, society could rapidly transition towards a fully renewable and greenhouse gas-free economy, leaving some chance of minimizing catastrophe. As Energy Justice Network (2018) summarized, '[S]tudies say it can be done by 2030, but with enough political will and a shifting of subsidies from dirty energy and militarism to clean solutions, it can likely be done much sooner'. According to Hansen (2018), decarbonization at this pace, combined with greener agriculture and forestry, could return global temperatures to safe levels this century. For many decades, grassroots movements and intellectuals have proposed indigenous, Anarchist, syndicalist, Communalist and ecosocialist visions of a sustainable world free from capitalism's grow-or-die imperative (Bookchin 1964; Sethhness Castro 2012). Demonstrating these radical visions' mass potential, the Environmental Justice movement has campaigned for community-controlled clean energy and efficiency programmes (Raval 2015) with principles affirming 'the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species' (People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit 1991). Other groups have begun constructing fragments of an ecological society by creating direct democratic assemblies and syndicates, planting community gardens, installing renewable power and collectively constructing non-consumerist lifestyles compatible with the philosophy of buen vivir. Examples include the Global Ecovillage Network, the Right to the City, and Transition Towns, which all prefigure a 'libertarian communist future' (Carson 2018).

Instead of replicating these important experiments on a massive scale, the mainstream Left has focused primarily on greenwashing the present capitalist society.

In 2009 and 2010, the U.S. Democratic Party and like-minded non-profits advocated for federal cap-and-trade legislation largely crafted by BP, Shell, Duke Energy, DuPont, General Electric and Dow Chemical (Klein 2014). While mainstream scientists called for the United States to cut carbon emissions by at least 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, the potential legislation only aimed for a 0.7 per cent cut below 1990 levels during that period. Moreover, the bills allowed companies to avoid even these minuscule pollution cuts as long as they paid for fraud-prone ‘carbon offset’ schemes that purportedly but unreliably reduced pollution abroad. The bills were estimated to allow a 92 per cent chance of an extremely dangerous 2° of warming and a 40 per cent chance of 4 ° of warming. The bills also subsidized and otherwise offered incentives promoting polluting energy sources such as offshore oil, so-called ‘clean coal’ and nuclear power (Center for Biological Diversity 2010). Climate scientist James Hansen (2009) warned that the legislation ‘would only assure continued coal use, making it implausible that carbon dioxide emissions would decline sharply’.

Despite staunch criticisms from leading scientists and grassroots activists alike, the official Left celebrated these corporate-crafted cap-and-trade bills as if they were sent from the heavens. The Sierra Club called the House bill a ‘step toward unleashing a true clean energy revolution’. The League of Conservation Voters deemed it ‘the most important environmental vote to date in the House of Representatives’, and the Environmental Defense Fund called it ‘a strong bill’ and ‘the most important environmental and energy legislation in our nation’s history’ (Sierra Club 2008; Thrush 2009; Parry 2009; Krupp 2009). The denialism required to celebrate a 0.7 per cent emissions reduction (compared to a necessary reduction of at least 40 per cent) as a ‘step toward revolution’ was staggering. In any case, the bill failed in the Senate and never became law.

The pattern of greenwashing continued in subsequent years as the Left cheered enthusiastically for the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement despite the fact that the treaty protected capitalist growth instead of rebuilding society along ecological lines. Even in the unlikely event that the treaty’s emissions reductions pledges are implemented, they are estimated to warm the planet by more than 3 ° and by as much as 4 ° (Climate Action Tracker 2018). However, the Paris agreement did not contain any mechanism to actually enforce these pledges, leading Dr. Hansen to call the treaty ‘a fraud, really, a fake . . . It’s just bullshit’ (Milman 2015). Grassroots analyses explained how the treaty gave a green light to commercial logging, fraudulent offsets, genetically modified organism monocultures, large-scale animal agriculture, hydroelectric dams and nuclear power (Reid Ross 2015). For example, La Via Campesina (2018), a global network of small farmers, observed that the agreement ‘further commodifies Mother Earth and dispossesses peasants and indigenous people’. Despite such glaring inadequacies, the Sierra Club celebrated the Paris Agreement as a ‘turning point for humanity’ and praised ‘President Obama’s leadership’. The Left-leaning Avaaz.org exclaimed, ‘World

leaders at the UN climate talks have just set a landmark goal that can save everything we love!’ 350.org cheered, ‘Today is a historic day’ at the passage of ‘a deal that sends a signal that it’s time to keep fossil fuels in the ground’ (Sierra Club 2015; Adler 2015; 350.org 2015). Among the U.S. Left, bureaucracy and delusion won over creativity and realism.

Latin America’s Pink Tide governments, despite their ‘green’ and ‘ecosocialist’ rhetoric, are not much more committed to systemic transformation than the U.S. Left is. Evo Morales’s regime in Bolivia has claimed green credentials based on its role in convening the Cochabamba climate summit. Nonetheless, the administration has brought natural gas extraction levels to ‘unprecedented heights’ (Webber 2017). It also shifted the country’s agricultural sector away from small farming by subsidizing larger and more destructive industrial farms (Tilzey 2017). In 2015, Morales implausibly assured reporters that a planned \$300 million nuclear reactor ‘poses no risk to humans or to mother Earth’ (AFP 2015). While Venezuela’s president Hugo Chavez (1999—2013) claimed his regime had embraced an ecologically oriented ‘21st century socialism’, Maria Pilar Garcia Guadilla (2010), in an Anarchist journal in Venezuela, exposed this green rhetoric as grounded in ‘myth’ and pointed to government plans for increased coal and oil extraction and mega-damming. Although Chavez and his successor Nicholas Maduro promised to diversify the country’s oil extraction-based economy, the promises remained empty. OPEC (2018) reported, ‘Venezuela’s oil revenues account for about 95 per cent of export earnings. The oil and gas sector is around 25 per cent of gross domestic product’.

Ecuador’s government recognized the ‘rights of nature’ in its 2008 constitution and in the following year promoted a National Plan for Buen Vivir, adopting the language of grassroots indigenous and environmental campaigners. Despite the rhetoric, the government followed an extractivist model and opened its Yasuni National Park to oil, gold and copper extraction megaprojects owned by transnational corporations, endangering lives and homes of the park’s indigenous residents. Ecuadorian philosopher David Cortez observed that the government’s rhetorical commitment to buen vivir has become simply “a tool to legitimize policies of aggressive *extractivismo*” (Sacher and Baez 2017).

Brazil’s Pink Tide government, despite committing to ‘zero illegal deforestation’ by 2030, allowed deforestation at rates expected to drive most Amazonian tree species extinct by mid-century. Moreover, the government encouraged the construction of hundreds of dams that adversely impacted indigenous peoples, farmers and ecosystems (Akemi and Sethness Castro 2018). Brazil’s pledges in the Paris Agreement have been ranked ‘insufficient’ for keeping global temperatures below 2 ° (Climate Action Tracker 2018).

Mexico’s Lopez Obrador went through a performance of asking Mother Earth for permission to build a destructive railway megaproject through the territories of indigenous people including the Zapatistas. Subcomandante Moises, a Zapatista spokesper-

son, responded, ‘We don’t buy it. Mother Earth doesn’t speak, but if she did, she’d say clearly, *No! Go fuck yourself*’ (Baschet 2019).

There sometimes seem to be few limits to the official Left’s engagement with destroying life. In 1995, the Wildlife Society’s millionaire president Jon Rousch sold \$150,000 worth of timber from sensitive lands on his own ranch to Plum Creek Timber Company (St. Clair 2010). The Nature Conservancy allowed natural gas drilling on its Texas bird sanctuary in 1999 and drilled an oil well there in 2007 that still operated as of 2014. The Sierra Club accepted millions from the fracking industry from 2007 to 2010 and has continued to take funds from fracking investor Michael Bloomberg (Klein 2014). Conservation Northwest endorsed Washington state’s 2017 plan to kill wolves deemed a threat to ranchers’ cattle. The group offered the meek excuse, ‘While heart-rending it is our hope that this action . . . will cease further livestock depredations and prevent the need for additional lethal actions’ (Mapes 2017). The Marxist *Jacobin Magazine* has run articles supporting geoengineering and nuclear power (Angus 2017). Environmental groups have even tacitly supported mass-murderous and ecologically disastrous wars. The Sierra Club forbade chapters from opposing the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq (Bustillo 2002). The campaign website of the Green Party’s 2016 presidential candidate Jill Stein called on the United States and Russia to ‘restore all of Syria to control’ by Bashar al-Assad’s regime massacring its population. Stein also picked an openly pro-Assad running mate (Weinberg 2016).

Towards Biophilous Revolution

In contrast to necrophilia, Fromm coined ‘biophilia’ to describe the life-loving orientation that ordinarily develops in free, healthy societies. Biophilia encompasses not only a love of humanity but also of all ‘living beings’. Certain passages in his work even suggested that biophilia (one could more precisely say ecophilia) extends to entire ecosystems including their non-living structures. For example, Fromm (1960) mentioned the possibility of relating ‘creatively, actively’ to mountains and rivers and seeing them as intrinsically valuable. Crucially, he argued that love of life involves an *active* practice: ‘If a woman told us that she loved flowers, and we saw that she forgot to water them, we would not believe in her “love” for flowers’ (1956).

Biophilous responses to ecological breakdown would be guided by the ‘biophilous conscience’, ‘motivated by its attraction to life and joy’ (Fromm 1963). Biophilous resistance would involve, I contend, a diversity of tactics grounded in a situational assessment of what is effective and ethical rather than rigid criteria, such as what is legal, what is the ‘most militant’, or what is pacifist. Regarding the last of these dogmas, Fromm (1964) spoke highly of non-violent actions and opposed unnecessary and adventurist violence, but he also rejected strict pacifism since ‘violence in defense of life is of a different nature than violence which aims at destructiveness’. Biophilous responses would aim at social transformation, laying the groundwork of a life-loving society. Practitioners would ‘try to achieve a new style of life’ through projects, such as ‘local councils’, ‘purposeful agricultural communities’ and ‘community living in cities’ (Fromm 1968). They would seek to overcome what Fromm (1961) called ‘alienation from oneself, one’s fellow [hu]man and from nature’.

Necrophilia is not inescapable, and Fromm therefore held out active hope — neither optimism nor pessimism — for the working class to engage in anarchistic revolution. This hope ‘is impatient and active, looking for every possibility of action within the realm of real possibilities’ (Fromm 1973). Revolution for Fromm (1968) entailed neither ‘tired reformism’ nor ‘pseudo-radical adventurism’, and it can be inferred that revolution today would occur autonomously from the Left’s dominant strains. His hope sprang from a view that living beings inherently engage in a project of (often-collective) self-preservation: ‘And yet it would not be wrong to say the tree hopes for sunlight and expresses this hope by twisting its trunk toward the sun. Is it different with the child that is born?’

Confirming Fromm’s hypothesis, non-human beings regularly find ways to preserve life and resist domination, dispossession and destruction (Hribal 2010). These resisters are often wild animals, such as the young gorillas who cooperate to dismantle hunters’

traps in Rwanda (Diskin 2018), or the deer that entered an Indianapolis computer store, smashing commodities and using antlers to fling away a police officer (Tulhoy 2017). Even captive cows routinely flee slaughter and exploitation, with one recently joining a herd of wild bison and learning to survive in Poland's Bialowieza Forest (News from Elsewhere 2018). Another cow escaped with its calf from a Texas farm, and the two travelled to an animal sanctuary, according to reports: 'She swam across a pond with her baby, ran through a forest for hours, until she ended up jumping our very high fence and getting into our pasture' (Schweig 2018). Raoul Vaneigem (1998) observed that nature sometimes 'refuses to produce' for capitalist ends and instead delivers 'sudden jolts that threaten the edifice' of the social system. Given chances to heal, damaged ecosystems regenerate vibrant, diverse networks of life after suffering intensive domestication or even nuclear power meltdowns (Tree 2018; Barras 2016).

Outside the official Left, humans globally have also been refusing to engage in the daily process of reproducing death-desiring capitalist society. This chapter has supplied some examples including grassroots proponents of *buen vivir* and Environmental Justice, members of ecological communes and so-called eco-terrorists. People find countless ways to replace life-numbing work and consumption with life-affirming activities: they might call in sick to go bird-watching, sneak hours away at the office to read Ursula Le Guin stories, form a choir with friends, grow their own food in a garden, or squat a vacant house. Holloway (2010) speculates, 'There is nothing special about being an anti-capitalist revolutionary. This is the story of many, many people, of millions, perhaps billions'. Keven Van Meter (2017) claims such everyday resistance comprises a 'factor of revolution', challenging capital accumulation while also laying groundwork for more overt, coordinated and sustained struggle. Within Anarchist and anti-authoritarian movements, Nick Montgomery and carla bergman's (2017) call for 'joyful militancy' offers a biophilous attempt at overcoming the often rigid and joyless cultures surrounding activism. More organizing will be needed to make systemic transformation possible and to build resilient, biophilous communities capable of collectively surviving state repression and adequately combating corporate propaganda. The good news is that biophilia, when cultivated and maintained, spreads to other people with ease. Fromm (1963) noted, 'Love of life is just as contagious as love of death'.

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