Disrupting The Purist Anarchist Pipeline

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Introduction

At the very least, one goal I hope to achieve in collecting these quotes together, is to provide a cautionary warning, mostly for young people, about the importance of approaching political philosophy with careful consideration.

I think polarization and passionate polemical arguments for the direction and focus of any political or philosophical movement should be encouraged as it can be a vibrant discourse that inspires someone to join.

However, the two foundational issues any group must worry about are firstly becoming defined too broadly such that the philosophy just becomes a weak cultural disposition. So, for example, the way in which you have Christians on every side of every political issue today. And secondly, the group's members defining the project in a rigidly narrow way, such that the group splits into factions, with each faction calling the other fakes, or abandoning the project entirely.

The obvious ideal is to maintain lots of specialized philosophical platforms within any movement, whilst maintaining coherence as a unified force. I've only written about this first issue in passing in an essay called *On the Far-Left, Effective Activism & Violence*,[1] but I plan to write about it more in the future.

For now, I'd like to address this second issue of factionalism.

Disclaimers galore

A while ago I was told by a Kaczynski fan that anyone who doesn't want to destroy all electricity grids is a reformist. So, I simply think there's a danger in traveling down the purist anarchist rabbit hole of more and more rigidly dogmatic political theory, where you begin to believe it's only worth reading the way a few authors view the world.

One obvious critique of the way I've compiled these quotes is that I open up anarchism and its many specialized philosophies, to a charge of being solely irrational steps along the road that people adopt for reasons of personal purity. Also, that the same could be said of people adopting center-left liberalism as opposed to status quo centrism.

I believe, however, that the desire to take on political identities for personal purity or the need to view the world in rigidly fundamentalist ways is a specific willfully

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[1] Theo Slade. On The Far-Left, Effective Activism & Violence [Essay]. Activist Journeys. February 21, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

self-limiting phenomenon. I'm not saying the only way a person could arrive at all the philosophies that I'm going to discuss is through a desire for personal purity. So, although I think this is an important critique that can be leveled at some niche ideologies participants, it certainly isn't a perfect defeater to all the ideologies.

I really value debate between various specialized political philosophies and strategies, and I have nothing against for example, green anarchism as the promotion of a style of critique not often seen, like black-anarchism and anarcha-feminism. These can help identify you as someone who has had the time to research the ways in which expertise in building democratic institutions, green architecture and rewilding will help get us to a better world.

In using the term pipeline I'm not making an absolutist factual claim, that if a person reads x thing, they are on their way to becoming y thing, always and definitively. I am saying there is a clearly observable psychological crossover among some people from these niche ideologies who move down them in a pursuit of viewing the world in more fundamentalist ways, and who also attempt to move others along in the same direction as them, and finally that it's more common the further down you go.

Obviously, someone can travel all the way down to the level of a Satanist death cultist and only have been able to encourage one of their former friends to move down one level, thus spitting them out at only one level lower, but it's still a concerning phenomenon, both for the few who end up at the very low levels, as well as the many who just take on a more purist gatekeeping form of anarchism.

Also, I will quote one example of a group later, ITS Mexico (Individualists Tending to the Wild), who started out at one end of the pipeline and moved all the way to the other end, but just for now to have something concrete to hold onto, here's an example of how this shift can happen explained by a purist anarchist expressing what it felt like to move down the levels:

> A zed: Just finished reading Atassa. Has anyone else had a chance to read it? I thought it was extremely fascinating ... something about EE and Atassa just feels like such a drastic shift in the discourse and reminds me of the importance with which individuals read and shared Desert.

> Ishkah: Say you were blown up by one of ITS pipe bombs after walking down the street, such that you were paralyzed for the rest of your life and sitting in a hospital bed, tell me what would be your feelings about the person who did that to you?

> A zed: ... I do not condemn the actions taken by ITS for the same reasons they give for not condemning rape, if you condemn it you should do something about it. So while I have theoretical disagreements with ITS, I don't condemn them, even if they were to attack me, I for the most part, agree with who they have chosen as targets.

The issue

I think it's inarguable that some people will take a bunch of contradictory twists and turns down a list of more and more fringe ideologies, in pursuit of the most rigidly simplistic way of viewing the world, in searching for 'answers' to reduce anxiety in a seemingly chaotic world, to provide a navigable route in a world which can feel terrifyingly uncharted. In this way they come to believe they have the answers to almost all life's questions. What is arguable is how common this phenomenon is depending on the ideology.

A comparison

I'm going to make a comparison between elements of two situations now, but I want to be clear that I'm not equating the two, and the element I'm comparing is not how similar the ideologies are to each other. I'm comparing a dynamic of how participants may move through the different ideologies.

A person might move over to the far-right in stages which incrementally take them further away from their initial views. For example, firstly believing that: Slavery is bad and also that the US civil war was more about the economic disparity between North and South. Then moving to a position, that slavery, understood in the context of the time, was a necessary evil. And from there to a position black Americans have benefitted from being brought to the US and are ungrateful for the opportunities afforded them.

A similar dynamic can happen for people moving away from identifying with green anarchism. A person could first be convinced that they should stop supporting a variety of direct-action campaigns, in order to focus solely on being against technology in order to reach the maximum people with a clear message. However, in consequence, they significantly reduce the amount of people they're trying to coalition build with. Then, secondly they may begin to believe that; in the absence of fellow activists to spread the message to a wider population, that killing and terrorizing people is a necessary evil to draw maximum attention to the direction society needs to be heading in. This would reducing further the number of people they're able to recruit into taking similar actions. Then thirdly, thinking that hope for changing people's minds is pointless, they may begin to believe that they should just take pleasure in embracing their violent hatred for all things 'unnatural'.

From the perspective of the person falling down this cult like ideological rabbit hole they may believe that they're only descending further down and down because they're discovering more and more the 'true' nature of man. However, from the outside looking in, it's easy to see the person is just holding a false belief, and then each time they're proven wrong, doubling down and taking on a more extreme version of the same ill thought out emotional intuition.
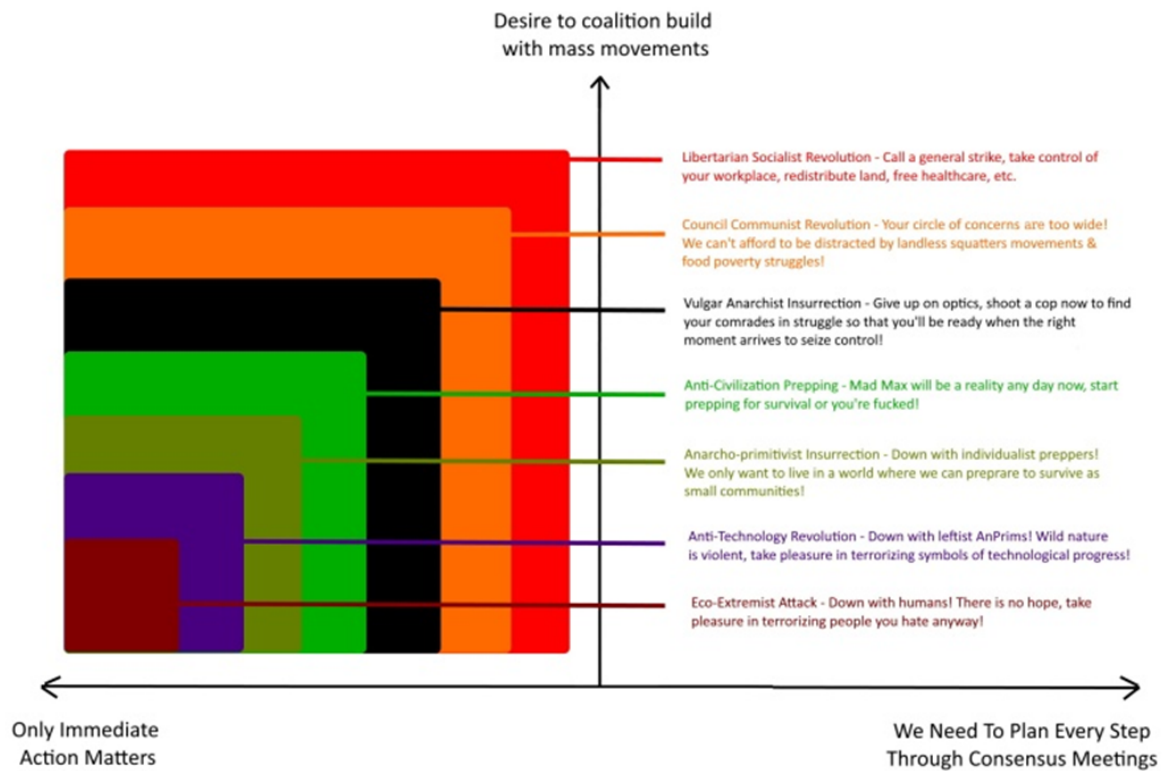
An analogy by way of a diagram

I'd also like to offer an analogy that someone could go from desiring a 'libertarian socialist revolution' to a 'vulgar anarchist insurrection'[2] because people can buy into anarchist ideology for all the wrong reasons. The same way a person with an eating disorder could just be using veganism as a way to restrict their diet on the way to raw veganism, etc. So, just keep in mind that the diagram text is not meant to be a perfectly summarized version of each ideology.

Finally, I neither claim all the ideologies listed are anarchist, nor that I would personally desire to see a libertarian socialist revolution end at worker control, but I do see anarchists as part of a big-tent leftist movement, where securing workplace democracy would be a massive improvement in society.

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[2] The primary meaning of vulgar is a kind of less complicated copy of an original idea/object where some of the original important nuance is lost. So with anarchists who treat insurrectionairy anarchism as the strategy which is of primary importance, I think some nuance is lost. Like what Cells of Fire said about people fetishizing illegalism and voluntarily going underground. Maybe they respected people who talked about having to go on the run to live by their principles after the cops got wind of who they were, but then the people who thought they were copying them mistakenly imagined they were following in their footsteps by going underground even when they didn't need to.

"You see, Ricks — they get lazy. There's always a shitty decoy towards the end. But those decoys made decoys too, and got lazy themselves. And far enough down the line... There be monsters."

Desire to coalition build with mass movements

Libertarian Socialist Revolution - Call a general strike, take control of your workplace, redistribute land, free healthcare, etc.

Council Communist Revolution - Your circle of concerns are too wide! We can't afford to be distracted by landless squatters movements & food poverty struggles!

Vulgar Anarchist Insurrection - Give up on optics, shoot a cop now to find your comrades in struggle so that you'll be ready when the right moment arrives to seize control!

Anti-Civilization Prepping - Mad Max will be a reality any day now, start prepping for survival or you're fucked!

Anarcho-primitivist Insurrection - Down with individualist preppers! We only want to live in a world where we can preprare to survive as small communities!

Anti-Technology Revolution - Down with leftist AnPrims! Wild nature is violent, take pleasure in terrorizing symbols of technological progress!

Eco-Extremist Attack - Down with humans! There is no hope, take pleasure in terrorizing people you hate anyway!

Only Immediate
Action Matters

We Need To Plan Every Step
Through Consensus Meetings

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Various ideologies

I'm going to quote a ton of essays from a bunch of ideologies in the order I've seen people travel down them, along with quotes from a ton of critiques, then end on two possible ideologies that could work as a useful force in disrupting a person's journey down the pipeline.

I've unashamedly chosen various critiques with prescriptions which at times contradict each other, as the aim is to find some critiques close to each specific ideology in order to have the greatest chance of relating to the person's way of thinking intuitively.

Post-Left Anarchism

The narrowing of approaches

On two fairly popular anarchist forums, they summarize post-left anarchism like so:[1]

> What Post-Left Anarchy Critiques:
>
> 1) The Left
>
> - Critiquing the Left as nebulous, anachronistic, distracting, a failure & at key points a counterproductive force historically ("the left wing of capital").
>
> - Critiquing Leftist activists for political careerism, celebrity culture, self-righteousness, privileged vanguardism & martyrdom.
>
> - Critiquing the tendency of Leftists to insulate themselves in academia, scenes & cliques while also attempting to opportunistically manage struggles.
>
> 2) Ideology
>
> - A Stirner-esque critique of dogma & ideological thinking as a distinct phenomenon in favor of "critical self-theory" at individual & communal levels.

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[1] Multiple Authors. Post-Left Anarchy [Essay]. Raddle. Retrieved on July 14, 2022. Original link. Archived link.

3) Morality

- A moral nihilist critique of morality/reified values/moralism.

4) Organizationalism

- Critiquing permanent, formal, mass, mediated, rigid, growth-focused modes of organization in favor of temporary, informal, direct, spontaneous, intimate forms of relation.

- Critiquing Leftist organizational patterns' tendencies toward managerialism, reductionism, professionalism, substitutionism & ideology.

- Critiquing the tendencies of unions & Leftist organizations to mimic political parties, acting as racketeers/mediators, with cadre-based hierarchies of theoretician & militant or intellectual & grunt, defaulting toward institutionalization & ritualizing a meeting-voting-recruiting-marching pattern.

5) Identity Politics

- Critiquing identity politics insofar as it preserves victimization-enabled identities & social roles (i.e. affirming rather than negating gender, class, etc.) & inflicts guilt-induced paralysis, amongst others.

- Critiquing single-issue campaigns or orientations.

What Post-Left Anarchists Value:

- Moving beyond anarchISM as a static historical praxis into anarchY as a living praxis

- Focusing on daily life & the intersectionality thereof rather than dialectics / totalizing narratives (except anarcho-primitivists tend toward epistemology)

- Emphasizing personal autonomy & a rejection of work (as forced labor, alienated labor, workplace-centricity)

- Critiquing Enlightenment notions of Cartesian dualities, rationalism, humanism, democracy, utopia, etc.

- Critiquing industrial notions of mass society, production, productivity, efficiency, "Progress", technophilia, civilization (esp. in anti-civilization tendencies)

What is Green Anarchy?:[2]

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[2] Anonymous. A text dump on Black Seed [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. retrieved on June 10th, 2014. Original link. Archived link.

Unfortunately, many anarchists continue to be viewed, and view themselves, as part of the Left. This tendency is changing, as post-left and anti-civilization anarchists make clear distinctions between their perspectives and the bankruptcy of the socialist and liberal orientations. Not only has the Left proven itself to be a monumental failure in its objectives, but it is obvious from its history, contemporary practice, and ideological framework, that the Left (while presenting itself as altruistic and promoting "freedom") is actually the antithesis of liberation. The Left has never fundamentally questioned technology, production, organization, representation, alienation, authoritarianism, morality, or Progress, and it has almost nothing to say about ecology, autonomy, or the individual on any meaningful level. The Left is a general term and can roughly describe all socialist leanings (from social democrats and liberals to Maoists and Stalinists) which wish to re-socialize "the masses" into a more "progressive" agenda, often using coercive and manipulative approaches in order to create a false "unity" or the creation of political parties. While the methods or extremes in implementation may differ, the overall push is the same, the institution of a collectivized and monolithic world-view based on morality.

The expanded limits of violence

Against the Corpse Machine: Defining A Post-Leftist Anarchist Critique of Violence:[3]

> ... in his classic anarchist book, *Bolo'Bolo* lays out a vision of a future anarchist society. In it he not only acknowledges the reality of violence, he incorporates it directly into the society by reviving the notion of the duel as a dispute resolution mechanism. Interestingly, P.M. also makes another case for the continued existence of violence in an anarchist society.

> There are no humanist, liberal or democratic laws or rules about the content of nimas [common socio/political/cultural backgrounds] and there is no State to enforce them. Nobody can prevent a bolo [community] from committing mass suicide, dying of drug experiments, driving itself into madness or being unhappy under a violent regime. *Bolos* with a bandit-nima could terrorize whole regions or continents, as the Huns or Vikings did. Freedom and adventure, generalized terrorism, the law of the club, raids, tribal wars, vendettas, plundering — everything goes.

> This vision perhaps goes a bit further than many anarchists would be willing to concede, but P.M. clearly has a realistic appreciation for the fact

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[3] Ashen Ruins. Against the Corpse Machine: Defining A Post-Leftist Anarchist Critique of Violence [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. 2002. Original link. Archived link.

that in a truly anarchist society, not all anarchist values will be universally adopted, whether because the revolution will not occur simultaneously everywhere, or in the same way, or because some people may decide simply to opt out of an anarchist society (blasphemy, I know). Pre-State societies have shown a wide range of attitudes towards violence: from human sacrifices, warfare and cannibalism on one hand to raw foodism and peaceful co-existence on the other — it is unlikely that an anarchist world would ever settle on just one standard (and what a bland and boring world that would be if they did).

Various Critiques

Anarchists in Wonderland:[4]

The post-left image of "the left" is not just overly simplified, it is frequently wrong on the particulars. McQuinn writes, for example, that the "critique of everyday life" is "largely incompatible" with "most of the New Left of the 60s and 70s." In Germany, France, and North America, at the very least, large segments of the New Left enthusiastically embraced the critique of everyday life; indeed the profoundly anti-authoritarian upsurge of that era — which was of course accompanied by an authoritarian backlash — owed much of its vigor and incisiveness to this re-orientation toward everyday relationships. The influential three-volume work The Critique of Everyday Life was written not by an anarchist, but by the French leftist Henri Lefebvre.

Themes such as the critique of everyday life and the critique of ideology have in fact been central to radical forms of left politics for decades. The classic primer by Richard Gombin, for example, The Origins of Modern Leftism, devotes a pivotal chapter to "A Critique of Everyday Life". More important, the concrete practice of countless New Leftists was explicitly predicated on a forceful rejection of precisely those values which McQuinn takes to be constitutive of the left as such. This strand of left radicalism did not appear out of nowhere in the 1960s; it has its roots in earlier figures such as Alexandra Kollontai or Wilhelm Reich, and found one of its most articulate spokespeople in Herbert Marcuse, whose work on the topic reached back to the 1930's. All of these individuals were non-anarchist leftists.

Similar points could be made about the critique of industrial technology, which McQuinn also takes to be essentially foreign to leftist thought. The

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[4] Peter Staudenmaier. Anarchists in Wonderland; The Topsy-Turvy World [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. 2003. Original link. Archived link.

actual history of the left includes numerous instances when such innovative critical approaches emerged to contest the conformism and repressiveness of the cadre model. There is no sensible reason to collapse this multifaceted record into a one-dimensional tale of leftist perfidy. Moreover, some leftists have been thoughtful and resolute allies of anarchism at crucial junctures in our history. Many anarchists learn about the Spanish revolution through the superb account Homage to Catalonia, penned by George Orwell. Orwell was a leftist who fought side by side with other leftists and anarchists against both the right and the Stalinists in Spain. Today one of the chief ways that inquisitive anarchists have easy access to the classics of our own tradition is through the work of leftists like Daniel Guerin. Selective memory will not help us make sense of the conflicted history of left interactions with anarchists.

But the problem here goes beyond one-sided depictions of the left. Post-left anarchists also rely on a truncated conception of anarchism itself. McQuinn's essay is not immune to this tendency; at several points he insists that anarchism as a whole rests on an "indelibly individualist foundation". If this were true, it would be difficult to explain the centuries-old internal struggles between individualist anarchists and social anarchists. Without recapitulating these debates here, suffice it to say that many contemporary anarchists reject McQuinn's contention that "collectivism" is inherently suspect while "individual self-theory" is the source of liberation. His ill-considered invocations of Stirner aside, McQuinn neglects the crucial dialectic between individual and collective that is the distinctive feature of social anarchist praxis. While we can probably all agree with McQuinn's observation that "without the autonomous individual, any other level of autonomy is impossible", post-leftists would do well to remember that the reverse is equally true: Without autonomous collectivities, individual autonomy is impossible. McQuinn's commitment to individualist assumptions leads him to misconstrue this fundamental relationship. Getting things more or less backwards, he writes that "only free individuals can create a free, unalienated society." But free individuals do not drop out of the sky; they are themselves the product of free societies.

Joyful Militancy: Building Resistance in Toxic Times:[56]

There is something that circulates in many radical spaces, movements, and milieus that saps their power from within. It is the pleasure of feeling more

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[5] Carla Bergman, Nick Montgomery & Hari Alluri. Joyful Militancy: Building Resistance in Toxic Times [Book]. AK Press. 2017. Original link. Archived link.

[6] Chris Dixon. For the Long Haul [Book]. Briarpatch Magazine. June 21, 2016. Original link. Archived link.

radical than others and the worry about not being radical enough; the sad comfort of sorting unfolding events into dead categories; the vigilant apprehension of errors and complicities in oneself and others; the anxious posturing on social media with the highs of being liked and the lows of being ignored; the suspicion and resentment felt in the presence of something new; the way curiosity feels naïve and condescension feels right. We can sense its emergence at certain times, when we feel the need to perform in certain ways, hate the right things, and make the right gestures. Above all, it is hostile to difference, curiosity, openness, and experimentation.

This phenomenon cannot be exhaustively described, because it is always mutating and recirculating. The problem is not simply that people are unaware of it—we think it is common among those touched by radical milieus. As the anarchist researcher and organizer Chris Dixon writes,

"Whenever this topic comes up in discussions, I've found it quickly evokes head nods and horror stories about takedowns on social media, organizational territorialism, activist social status hierarchies, sectarian posturing, and a general atmosphere of radical self-righteousness."

It can be risky to discuss all this publicly; there is always the chance that one will be cast as a liberal, an oppressor, or a reactionary. For this reason, these conversations are happening between people who already trust each other enough to know that they will not be met with immediate suspicion or attack. Here there is room for questioning and listening, with space for subtlety, nuance, and care that is so often absent when rigid radicalism takes hold. These are some of the questions we have been asking in our research: What is this force? What are its contours, and what are its sources? What triggers it, and what makes it spread? How can it be warded off, and how are people activating other ways of being?

Rigid radicalism is both *a fixed way of being* and *a way of fixing.* It fixes in the sense of attempting to repair, seeing emergent movements as inherently flawed. To fix is to *see lack everywhere*, and treat struggles and projects as broken and insufficient. It also fixes in the sense of fastening or making permanent, converting fluid practices into set ways of being, stagnating their transformative potential. Even though unfolding practices might appear identical to each other from a distance, habits and certainties can take over from what was once experimental and lively. When rigidity and suspicion take over, joy dies out.

When radicals attack each other in the game of good politics, it is due at least in part to the fact that *this is a place where people can exercise some power.* Even if one is unable to challenge capitalism and white supremacy as structures or to participate in transformative struggles, one can always

attack *others* for being complicit with Empire and tell oneself that these attacks are radical in and of themselves. One's opponents in the game of good politics and rigid radicalism are not capitalists, nor white supremacists, nor police; they are others vying for the *correct ways* of thinking about and fighting capitalism, white supremacy, and policing. Comparison and evaluation of different camps or currents can be so constant that it becomes an end in itself: every encounter with a new current must be approached with a distrustful search for flaws. We come to know others—their beliefs, their commitments, their worth—based on how good they are at staking out a position.

In this sense, rigid radicalism is not one political current, but a tendency that seeps into many different currents and milieus today. In some milieus, the currency of good politics is a stated (or demonstrated) willingness for direct action, riots, property destruction, and clashes with police. In others, it is the capacity for anti-oppressive analysis, avoidance of oppressive statements, and the calling out of those who make them. In others it is the capacity to avoid work and survive without buying things or paying rent. In some it is adherence to a vision of leftism or revolution, and in others it is the conviction that the Left is dead and revolution is a stupid fantasy. In some it is the capacity to have participated in a lot of projects, or to be connected to a big network of radical organizers. In every case, there is a tendency for one milieu to dismiss the commitments and values of the others and to expose their inadequacies. At its extreme, this generates a form of sectarianism that is fuelled by the very act of being vocally sectarian.

The newcomer is immediately placed in a position of debt: owing dedication, self-sacrifice, and correct analysis that must be continuously proved. Whether it is the performance of anti-oppressive language, revolutionary fervor, nihilist detachment, or an implicit dress code, those who are unfamiliar with the expectations of the milieu are doomed from the start unless they "catch up" and conform. In subtle and overt ways, they will be attacked, mocked, and excluded for getting it wrong, even though these people are often the ones that "good politics" is supposed to support: those without formal education who have not been exposed much to radical milieus, but who have a stake in fighting.

None of this is meant to suggest that we should be more wishy-washy about oppression, or that hard lines are wrong, or that all radical practices are corrupt or bad. Developing analysis, naming mistakes, and engaging in conflict are all indispensable. To undo rigid radicalism is not a call to "get along" or "shut up and take action" or "be spontaneous." People's capacities to challenge and unlearn oppressive behaviors, take direct action, or avoid selling labor and paying rent can create and deepen cracks in Empire. They

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can all be part of joyful transformation. But any of these practices can also become measuring sticks for comparison and evaluation that end up devaluing other practices and stifling the growth of collective capacities.

The Left Overs: How Fascists Court the Post-Left:[7]

... an occultist named Hakim Bey developed the idea of the "Temporary Autonomous Zone" (TAZ). For Bey, a TAZ would actualize a liberated and erotic space of orgiastic, revolutionary poesis. Yet within his 1991 text, Temporary Autonomous Zone, Bey included extensive praise for D'Annunzio's proto-fascist occupation of Fiume, revealing the disturbing historical trends of attempts to transcend right and left. ...

Thus, the post-left began to assemble through the writings of ultra-leftists, green anarchists, spiritualists, and egoists published in zines, books, and journals like Anarchy: Journal of Desire Armed and Fifth Estate. Although these thinkers and publications differ in many ways, key tenets of the post-left included an eschatological anticipation of the collapse of civilization accompanied by a synthesis of individualism and collectivism that rejected left, right, and center in favor of a deep connection with the earth and more organic, tribal communities as opposed to humanism, the Enlightenment tradition, and democracy. That post-left texts included copious references to Stirner, Nietzsche, Jünger, Heidegger, Artaud, and Bataille suggests that they form a syncretic intellectual tendency that unites left and right, individualism and "conservative revolution." As we will see, this situation has provided ample space for the fascist creep. ...

An important aspect of the Anti-Politics Board was the articulation of nihilist and insurrectionary theories, both of which gained popularity after the 2008 financial crisis. In an article titled, "The New Nihilism," Peter Lamborn Wilson (aka Hakim Bey) pointed out that the rising wave of nihilism that emerged during the late 2000s and into the second decade could not immediately be distinguished from the far right, due to myriad cross-over points. Indeed, Stormfront is riddled with users like "TAZriot" and "whitepunx" who promote the basic, individualist tenets of post-leftism from the original, racist position of Stirnerism. Rejecting "political correctness" and "white guilt," these post-left racists desire separate, radical spaces and autonomous zones for whites.

Leaving Out the Ugly Part — On Hakim Bey:[8]

[7] Alexander Reid Ross. The Left Overs: How Fascists Court the Post-Left [Essay]. Anti-Fascist News. March 29, 2017. Original link. Archived link.

[8] Robert P. Helms. Leaving Out the Ugly Part — On Hakim Bey [Essay]. LibCom. 2004. Original link. Archived link.

Bey's best-known book Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) describes spiritual zones in which anything goes, where the oppressive rules of the outside society need not interfere with what feels good to do. I realise that many honest people have read TAZ without taking any sleazy impression from it. I hope they'll forgive me for pointing out that paedophiles say these same things to children. In his essay "Obsessive Love" (Moorish Science Monitor, Vol. 7, #5, Summer 1995), in which he pretends to be quite the classical scholar, he talks about ancient religious views on romantic and obsessive love. "The Greco-Egypto-Islamic ferment adds a pederastic [i.e. paedophile] element... the ideal woman of romance is neither wife nor concubine but someone in the forbidden category..." He uses the term "spiritual alchemy" for witnessing the "Devine Beloved in certain beautiful boys," and remarks that, "since all homosexuality is forbidden in Islamic law, a boy-loving sufi has no 'safe' category for sensual realisation."

Insurrectionary Anarchism as Primary

The narrowing of approaches

A few words of freedom by Conspiracy of Cells of Fire:[9]

> The vital force of FAI-FRI is its constant renewal, its stimulating evolution. Today the need to overcome old concepts such as "organization", "liberated society", "revolution" is more urgent than ever before.

> Other concepts such as "federalism", "informality", "mutual support", "horizontal-anonymous debate between groups/individuals through praxis", "rejection of plenary assemblies" retain their full strength as the main pillars of our planning.

Lone wolves are not alone... by Conspiracy of Cells of Fire:[10]

> The ambassadors of the modern way of life speak of the savior of economy through corrective changes and development programs, while the ideologists of the left beg for the cleansing of institutions. Unfortunately, in Greece the tension of bureaucratic social anarchy also joins the dance of the absurd and fantasies the revival of dead ideologies speaking of self-management of the production means and workers collectives.

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[9] Alfredo Cospito. A Few Words of "Freedom" [Essay]. RadioAzione. July 2014. Original link. Archived link.

[10] Conspiracy of Cells of Fire. Lone wolves are not alone [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. 2012. Original link. Archived link.

Thus the socialist anarchists, while refusing the system, instead of destroying class identities and economy, speak their language. They speak of the overthrowing of the existent, without however uprooting from inside them the economic-centric logic. For us, as anarcho-individualists and nihilists, economy is not the key for liberation.

Economy is a part of the problem and the problem itself. The only way to strike the heart of the problem is to destroy the economy and its distinctions and speak of human relations. The world will not become prettier or more-free if we collectivize work but only if we blow up the relation of work and destroy its mentality, its ethics and culture. The same will happen with friendship, love, pleasure, the meaning of life itself.

On the road for continuous anarchist insurrection we do not keep anything which holds us down on the past. We tear down the myths of the revolutionary subject, of the proletariat, of the eternal wait for the right objective conditions, the social likeness towards the population, this slow moving mass which with its inactivity stops us from breathing...

Therefore, looking back in time, we recognize as our own prints, the traces left behind by some lone wolves, who walked then against their time. It is all those conspiratorial anarchists illegalists who made the anarchist insurrection their only home land. It is those who chose to stay away from the glory of the dead ideologies and bureaucracy of the social anarchism which awaits the masses in order to begin its insurrection. Lone and unique they armed their desires, out aside the pathetic rot of the mob and went on to the storming of heaven.

Armed Joy by Alfredo M. Bonanno:[11]

People are tired of meetings, the classics, pointless marches, theoretical discussions that split hairs in four, endless distinctions, the monotony and poverty of certain political analyses. They prefer to make love, smoke, listen to music, go for walks, sleep, laugh, play, kill policemen, lame journalists, kill judges, blow up barracks. Anathema! The struggle is only legitimate when it is comprehensible to the leaders of the revolution. Otherwise, there being a risk that the situation might go beyond their control, there must have been a provocation.

Hurry comrade, shoot the policeman, the judge, the boss. Now, before a new police prevent you.

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[11] Alfredo M. Bonanno. Armed Joy [Book]. The Ted K Archive. 1977. Original link. Archived link.

The expanded limits of violence

Open Letter To The Anarchist & Anti-Authoritarian Movement:[12]

> When a group or individual starts a revolutionary campaign through the deeds and related communiques, other groups and individuals in the Anarchist Informal Organisation will follow according to their methods and time. Each group or individual can launch a struggle campaign on specific targets through one or more actions signed by the single group or individual and by the claim of the Federation. If a campaign is not agreed by the other groups, the critic will show itself through actions and communiques that will contribute to correcting or discussing it.

> The organisation, therefore, does not affect the entire life and projects of the comrades so that all kind of armed-struggle sectarianism are avoided. Once we are well rooted, power will find it very difficult to destroy us.

'Do not say that we are few' a statement from the Italian FAI:[13]

> The only limits we put to our action are of ethical nature. We have made a choice with our action in this world of included and excluded. We are not interested in a society divided in classes, we don't want any dictatorship of a class over another, we want anarchy! Millions of microcosms where each individual can experiment themselves freely. Something very similar to what we experiment through action every day by elaborating the best way of organizing ourselves without renouncing our individual freedom. It is exciting to grow in this organisational experience along with sisters and brothers we've never seen and probably will never see. It is exciting that individuals who don't know one another come to the same conclusions in a given moment in history. ...

> The first: destructive direct action as an indispensable and essential element. Such action can take the form of throwing a molotov as well as committing murder, without any hierarchy of importance, each group or individual will decide as they best like, in the respect for their own revolutionary ethics, which will certainly always exclude hitting at random. In our view, this point will have to give rise to a new nihilist and anarchist guerrilla, thousands and thousands of fires against capital everywhere.

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[12] Informal Anarchist Federation. Open Letter To The Anarchist & Anti-Authoritarian Movement [Essay]. Fire On The Horizon. 2003. Original link. Archived link.

[13] Informal Anarchist Federation. Do not say that we are few [Essay]. 325. Sept 02, 2011. Original link. Archived link.

Escalation; Some Texts Concerning the Informal Anarchist Federation (FAI) and the Insurrectionist Project:[14]

> My idea was to make some points known, points that normally we have never clarified and that make us angry sometimes... yes, when we hear or read comments about us... in other words we need to show to this fucking movement that we are not ghosts coming from nothing (laughers...'hey. did you see you?'). We need to show to them that we think it very carefully before carrying out an action and that we leave very little to chance. Our actions are not indiscriminate, on the contrary they are so controlled that we haven't managed to do what we really want yet...(laughers). Then there's nothing obscure or clandestine in our way of life. Most of us come from the movement. Live inside it and know that reality. Some even come from shit situations.

The sun still rises by Conspiracy of Cells of Fire:[15]

> We are exiting the scene of urban guerrilla warfare's past ethical fixations, which rarely took a public position on the issue of revolutionary bank robbery. We feel that there is now plenty of new urban guerrilla discourse and practice that opposes — in a clearly attacking way — the bosses' work ethic as well as the predatory banking machinery, *proposing armed expropriation as a liberatory act, and obviously not as a way to get rich.*

> Nevertheless, we don't consider the expropriation of banks to be a prerequisite for someone's participation in the new guerrilla war. *There is one revolution, but there are thousands of ways in which one can take revolutionary action.* Other comrades might choose to carry out collective expropriations from the temples of consumerism (supermarkets, shopping malls) in order to individually recover what's been "stolen" and use those things to meet each person's material needs, thereby avoiding having to say "good morning" to a boss or take orders from some superior. Still others might participate in grassroots unions, keeping their conscience honed — like a sharp knife — for the war that finally abolishes every form of work that enriches the bosses while impoverishing our dignity.

> We feel the same way about *voluntarily "disappearing" to go underground.* The fetishization of illegalism doesn't inspire us. We want everyone to act in accordance with their needs and desires. Each choice naturally has its own qualities and virtues as well as its disadvantages. It's true that when

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[14] The Informal Anarchist Federation. Escalation; Some Texts Concerning the Informal Anarchist Federation (FAI) and the Insurrectionist Project [Zine]. 325. July, 2007. Original link. Archived link.

[15] Conspiracy of Cells of Fire. The Sun Still Rises [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. 2011. Original link. Archived link.

a group voluntarily chooses to go underground ("disappearance" from the environment of family and friends, false papers, etc.), that certainly shields them from the eyes of the enemy. But at the same time, their social connection to the wider radical milieu is cut, and to a certain point they lose a sense of interaction. Of course, the same doesn't apply when there are objective reasons for going underground (arrest warrants, a price on one's head), in which case *clandestinity is the attacking refuge* of those caught in the crosshairs of the law. This creates a parallel need for the existence of *support infrastructure,* both among guerrilla groups themselves as well as within the wider antiauthoritarian milieu, *that will "cover" the tracks of wanted comrades.* Prerequisites would be a certain *complicity* and *discretion,* which concepts are frequently seen as "outdated" but in our opinion should once again be launched piercingly into battle. If comrades from a guerrilla group engage in regular above-ground interaction — participating in movement meetings and processes, taking part in debates, and creating projects with others that address shared concerns — then *the hermetic nature of the guerrilla group* should clearly be protected from open ears and big mouths. *Therefore, it's general attitude also must be one of discretion in order to circumvent the deafening exaggerations that can turn it into a "magnet" for bastards from antiterrorist squads and the police.* Taking a page from our own self-critique, we must mention the fact that many of us behaved completely opposite to the above, which — along with the viciousness of certain conduct originating within the anarchist milieu — "guided" a number of police operations right to us. In any case, self-critique lays down solid ground from which to develop oneself and offer explanations, but the current text isn't appropriate for that. We'll return to it in the future.

Various Critiques

The Anarchist Federation of Britain made a public statement on the kneecapping of a nuclear executive perpetrated by the Informal Anarchist Federation.

This public statement represented an important pushback to the promotion of the terrorist's tactic of attempting to spread fear rather than building social movements and sometimes sabotaging what stands in our way, but always with the goal of winning strategic victories.

Though I also wish they had included a critique of taking actions based on the conspiratorial anti-industrial beliefs in the over-exaggerated dangers of nuclear meltdowns in stable nations:[16]

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[16] Anarchist Federation. The Anarchist Federation statement on the kneecapping of a nuclear executive perpetrated by the Informal Anarchist Federation [Statement]. Anarchist Federation. May 19, 2012. Original link. Archived link.

On the 11th of May Roberto Adinolfi, CEO of an Italian state controlled nuclear engineering company, was shot and wounded. A cell of the insurrectionist Informal Anarchist Federation have claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement, saying that it was an act of vengeance for deaths and environmental damage caused by the nuclear industry. Previous acts claimed by Informal Anarchist Federation cells include sending a letter bomb to the Italian tax collection office, almost blinding a worker at the office* and risking the lives of the postal and clerical workers who unwittingly carried the bomb. ...

In our aims and principles, the Anarchist Federation states that "It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without their use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation". We are not a pacifist organisation and do not condemn insurrection itself or all insurrectionist tactics; however, as Anarchist Communists we strongly criticise individualist and vanguardist tactics that do not come out of a broad-based class struggle movement. We condemn actions that put workers in danger without their knowledge and consent, and we reject elitist statements, such as that made by the Informals, which consider the working class to be too ignorant and invested in Capitalism to be relevant to struggle.

Capitalism is, fundamentally, a social relationship; it can no more be harmed by small groups who are disconnected from the wider class struggle shooting individual bosses or sending bombs through the post than it can by passively marching from one place to another or consuming "ethical" commodities. Instead, the Anarchist Federation advocates organising with other working class people to take direct action for ourselves in order to both defend ourselves against attacks by capital and the state in our everyday lives and build a culture of resistance that can seriously challenge capitalism. As well as being tactically more effective than isolated acts of violence, organising in this way allows us a glimpse of a better world, free of exploitation, alienation and oppression. By acting collectively and making ourselves accountable to others, we prepare ourselves for a world where our whole lives are really under our own control. ...

Say You Want an Insurrection by CrimethInc:[17]

If we have never called ourselves insurrectionists, it is not because we do not wish for insurrection, but because our own temperament predisposes

[17] Crimethinc. Say You Want an Insurrection [Essay]. Crimethinc. Jan 7, 2010. Original link. Archived link.

us to an anarchism without adjectives. The important thing is to fight for freedom and against hierarchy; we imagine that this will demand different approaches in different situations, and that these approaches may need one another to succeed. We are anarcho-syndicalists on the shop floor, green anarchists in the woods, social anarchists in our communities, individualists when you catch us alone, anarcho-communists when there's something to share, insurrectionists when we strike a blow.

Anarchism without adjectives not only refuses to prioritize one approach over the others, but emphasizes the importance of each aspect of anarchism to its supposed opposites. The riot needs the bake sale to be repeatable; the arson needs the public campaign to be intelligible; the supermarket heist needs the neighborhood grocery distribution to pass on the goods.

All dichotomies are false dichotomies to some extent, masking not only the common threads between the terms but also the other dichotomies one might experiment with instead. On close inspection, successful insurrectionism seems to depend so much on "community building" and even "lifestyle anarchism" as to be virtually indistinguishable in practice. If we retired this particular distinction, what other distinctions might arise in its place? What other questions might we ask?

All this is not to say that individual anarchists can't focus on their particular skills and preferred strategies—simply that it is an error to frame anyone's personal preferences as universals. In the end, as always, it comes down to a question of which problems you want to wrestle with, which shortcomings you feel most equipped to overcome. Do you prefer to struggle against invisible hierarchies in informal networks, or brave the stultifying inertia of formal organizations? Would you rather risk acting rashly, or not acting at all? Which is more important to you, security or visibility—and which do you think will keep you safer in the long run?

We can't tell anyone which problems to choose. We can only do our best to outline them. Best of luck in your insurrections—may they intersect with ours.

Gender Disobedience: Antifeminism and Insurrectionist Non-dialogue:[18]

The insurrectionist milieu has situated itself as an iconoclastic force within anarchist thought. Its critique often seeks to analyze and subvert the subtle leftism of much allegedly radical thought. This is important. This is valuable.

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[18] Lilith. Gender Disobedience: Antifeminism and Insurrectionist Non-dialogue [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. August 15, 2009. Original link. Archived link.

However, I find it disturbing that, in the midst of this, there lies gross generalizations, ignorance toward the material being criticized, and outright refusal to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of many frames of critique. With this piece, I will focus on the critique of feminism in the works of Feral Faun/Wolfi Landstreicher, as I find it to be generalizing, misinformed, and thus far without consolidated response from anarchists or feminists.

One of the key texts produced by insurrectionary anarchists to counteract feminist critique is Feral Faun's "The Ideology of Victimization" found in the collection Feral Revolution. Within this, Feral Faun posits that feminism and victimization are inseparable and, because of this, feminism turns toward domination structures such as the state for support. There is much to be said for this argument; it undeniably does describe certain strains of feminist thought. Unfortunately, Faun transforms feminism into a monolithic ideology, stripping it of all subtleties and nuances.

I do not wish to claim that feminism is inherently whole or encompassing in its critique. I feel that an anarchist critique of feminism may be valuable and illuminating. What I do not wish for is more of the same anti-intellectualism and non-thought that seems to be the lot of post-Leftist critiques of feminist theory. If we continue to accept accusation in place of research and false representation in place of actual engagement with what is being critiqued, we are destined to be as theoretically empty as any ideology we can possibly imagine.

Anti-Civilization

The narrowing of approaches

A Critique, Not a Program: For a Non-Primitivist Anti-Civilization Critique:[19]

An anarchist and revolutionary critique of civilization does not begin from any comparison to other societies or to any future ideal. It begins from my confrontation, from your confrontation, with the immediate reality of civilization in our lives here and now. It is the recognition that the totality of social relationships that we call civilization can only exist by stealing our lives from us and breaking them down into bits that the ruling order can use in its own reproduction. This is not a process accomplished once and for all in the distant past, but one that goes on perpetually in each moment. This is where the anarchist way of conceiving life comes in. In each

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[19] Wolfi Landstreicher. A Critique, Not a Program: For a Non-Primitivist Anti-Civilization Critique [Essay]. 325. 2007. Original link. Archived link.

moment, we need to try to determine how to grasp back the totality of our own life to use against the totality of civilization. Thus, as Armando Diluvi said, our anarchism is essentially destructive. As such it needs no models or programs including those of primitivism. As an old, dead, bearded classicist of anarchism said "The urge to destroy is also a creative urge". And one that can be put into practice immediately. (Another dead anti-authoritarian revolutionary of a generation or two later called passionate destruction "a way to grasp joy immediately").

Having said this, I am not against playfully imagining possible decivilized worlds. But for such imaginings to be truly playful and to have experimental potential, they cannot be models worked out from abstracted conceptions of either past or future societies. In fact, in my opinion, it is best to leave the concept of "society" itself behind, and rather think in terms of perpetually changing, interweaving relationships between unique, desiring individuals. That said, we can only play and experiment now, where our desire for the apparently "impossible" meets the reality that surrounds us. If civilization were to be dismantled in our lifetime, we would not confront a world of lush forests and plains and healthy deserts teeming with an abundance of wildlife. We would instead confront a world full of the detritus of civilization — abandoned buildings, tools, scrap, etc., etc. Imaginations that are not chained either to realism or to a primitivist moral ideology could find many ways to use, explore and play with all of this — the possibilities are nearly infinite. More significantly, this is an immediate possibility, and one that can be explicitly connected with a destructive attack against civilization. ...

Various Critiques

A Quick and Dirty Critique of Primitivist & Anti-Civ Thought:[20]

We have the capacity not just to avert global warming and ocean acidification but to reclaim the Sahara and restore the megafauna that hunter gatherers killed off. (Contrary to the myth that primitive peoples were somehow aware of ecological externalities beyond their immediate contexts, recent global statistical analyses have conclusively settled that hunter gatherers were responsible for the ecological destruction of the late Quaternary). With the broader insight and perspective provided by science and global communication we finally have an opportunity to repair the mistakes of past generations as we move asymptotically towards greater understanding of our world and thus greater agency within it.

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[20] William Gillis. A Quick and Dirty Critique of Primitivist & Anti-Civ Thought [Essay]. Human Iterations. October 10, 2015. Original link. Archived link.

That word, agency, is the core of this divide between anarchism and primitivism.

Primitivists would rather write agency out of the conversation. They want to pretend that we have No Alternative but collapse, no real choices or options to be expanded or diligently explored. Their opposition to technology and cosmopolitanism make perfect sense when the very notion of expanding our choices is taken to be incomprehensible. *Physical freedom? What nonsense, you can't be oppressed by nature!* What's happened to get someone to such a ludicrous position is a divorcing of oppression from anything concrete. Now oppression isn't controlling people or constraining their options in life, it's just anything that conjures bad feels. *Freedom? Well there's no such thing really. Just the freedom from thought, the freedom from choice, complexity, vigilance, etc.*

This kind of obsession with the delusion of certainty is the hallmark of depression. The desperate hunger for the pain of having no real options. Many commentators have noted the turn of our milieu towards treating depression, anxiety and other mental health issues as the essential experience of our radicalism. We bond over sharing in it; and end up fetishizing and reinforcing these ailments.

Only in such light primitivism can pretend to be coherent with anarchism.

But to hunger for the genocide and ecocide of a collapse is to mistake mental health issues for radicalism. Misanthropic edginess for critique. Emotional states for vigilant pursuit of root dynamics.

Anarcho-Primitivism

The narrowing of approaches

Zerzan takes the critique of technological society having advanced faster than our brains or culture have had time to adapt to and then rigidifies the critique into a narrow prescription about how we should live:[21]

Q: How do you determine what technology is acceptable and what isn't?

A: I think one very general way to look at it is division of labour. If you have a tool that anybody can make, that's great. You're in contact with it in a very sensual way. But tools that require a hierarchy of coordination and specialisation create a kind of distancing. That's the kind of technology to avoid.

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[21] Roc Morin. The Anarcho-Primitivist Who Wants Us All to Give Up Technology [Essay]. Vice. 27 June 2014. Original link. Archived link.

I posited a hypothetical to Zerzan that if we were to realize this hunter-gatherer world, but where there were still some people who had the knowledge to organize assembly lines to create items like penicillin and glasses for people who were disabled or injured, would that be a legitimate target for sabotage or would that just be a consent issue, where you let them do that even if you worry that it helps restart technological society?

His answer was that he's happy for people to use the scraps of industrial society in ways which don't require a high level of coordinated education for a time, but that even this wouldn't be his ideal end goal for humanity:[22]

> I think we'd have to, if everybody could pitch in and try to find workable solutions as we go, I mean I think there could be intermediate steps, you know we don't want people unable to live without certain technologies to just simply die off, but at the same time it's not clear to me that we need the worldwide grid otherwise you can't achieve that. I mean I think there are other methods, some of which are just simple things like when you're peddling a bicycle with the light, you pedal and it generates electricity to light your tail-light or your headlight. So why can't you do that with somebody who needs a respirator? You know, you don't have to have a whole world system going may be to fix, you know to to help people in different situations and as we kind of try to go away from the dependency which has been really pretty fatal.

His antipathy for our technologically advanced cultural evolution extends even as far back as symbolic culture:[23]

> Another aspect of how we view and relate to the world that can be problematic, in the sense that it separates us from a direct interaction, is our shift towards an almost exclusively symbolic culture. Often the response to this questioning is, "So, you just want to grunt?" Which might be the desire of a few, but typically the critique is a look at the problems inherent with a form of communication and comprehension that relies primarily on symbolic thought at the expense (and even exclusion) of other sensual and unmediated means. The emphasis on the symbolic is a movement from direct experience into mediated experience in the form of language, art, number, time, etc Symbolic culture filters our entire perception through formal and informal symbols. It's beyond just giving things names, but having an entire relationship to the world that comes through the lens of

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[22] Theo Slade. A Conversation with John Zerzan on Direct Action, School Shootings, Authenticity, Veganism & More [Video Interview]. Activist Journeys. Aug 9, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

[23] Anonymous. A text dump on Black Seed [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. retrieved on June 10th, 2014. Original link. Archived link.

representation. It is debatable as to whether humans are "hard-wired" for symbolic thought or if it developed as a cultural change or adaptation, but the symbolic mode of expression and understanding is certainly limited and its over-dependence leads to objectification, alienation, and a tunnel-vision of perception. Many green anarchists promote and practice getting in touch with and rekindling dormant or underutilized methods of interaction and cognition, such as touch, smell, and telepathy, as well as experimenting with and developing unique and personal modes of comprehension and expression.

Finally, a fringe of anarcho-primitivists even oppose the use of fire:[24]

> The man-the-hunter story has been arranged to fit the violent lifeway of civilization. It's challenging for people today to conceive of a way without fire, cooking or hunting, just as people deny that our species is a colonizing one. Without fire, we would not have been able to colonize. Without a colonizing ethos, we would not have used fire to breech the wild limits of our primal human habitat. Just imagine, without fire humans may still be mostly in Africa, and a diversity of megafauna may still be in every land. And for certain, the life on Earth would not be in a death spiral. Fire mastery hoisted human ferocity, and with that wrought a fiery new lifeway onto all.

The expanded limits of violence

Zerzan thought he found a kindred spirit when he first heard about Kaczynski:[25]

> The concept of justice should not be overlooked in considering the Unabomber phenomenon. In fact, except for his targets, when have the many little Eichmanns who are preparing the Brave New World ever been called to account?... Is it unethical to try to stop those whose contributions are bringing an unprecedented assault on life? ... As a friend in California put it recently, when justice is against the law, only outlaws can effect justice.

The fact that morality doesn't equal legality and that there is a time and place for civil disobedience and direct action are well accepted positions, what is wholly disagreeable though is comparing scientist's role in advancing high-tech society, to that

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[24] Ria Del Montana. AnPrim On Fire: Human Supremacy Within Anarcho-Primitivist Narrative [Essay]. Vegan Primitivist. March 21, 2019. Original link. Archived link.

[25] John Zerzan. Running on Emptiness: The Pathology of Civilization [Book]. Feral House. Fall 1995. Original link. Archived link.

of the organizers of the Jewish Holocaust. Also, arguing that those who send parcel bombs to these scientists as being similarly heroic to those who resisted Nazis.[262728]

> I ended the speech with the suggestion that there might be a parallel between Kaczynski and John Brown. Brown made an anti-slavery attack on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia in 1859. Like Kaczynski, Brown was considered deranged, but he was tried and hung. Not long afterward he became a kind of American saint of the abolitionist movement. I offered the hope, if not the prediction, that T.K. might at some point also be considered in a more positive light for his resistance to industrial civilization.

> They ain't innocent. Which isn't to say that I'm totally at ease with blowing them into pieces. Part of me is. And part of me isn't.

> I think the targets were relatively more appropriate as he went along, as they became more lethal, on that level anyway, I think you could argue that that's the case.

Devout primitivists must also do some creative accounting to put a happy spin on the number of babies that die through lack of modern medicine. Here for example, they I think romanticize the routineness of mothers killing or leaving their babies to die and compare this to people choosing an abortion before ever seeing the babies face, which if done in the first several weeks can be as simple as taking a few pills and having what simply feels like a heavy period:[29]

> ... foragers believe that life does not begin until, usually, the age of two. Foragers look at infanticide much the same way we do abortion. Among the !Kung, a pregnant woman goes into labor, and walks off into the bush (I'm told that childbirth is significantly less an ordeal among those who are not malnourished — affluently or otherwise). Maybe she comes back with a child; maybe she doesn't. Either way, no questions are asked. So, our calculations of forager lifespans are quite unfair — if we're going to include their infanticide, then we must include our own abortions. To do otherwise would simply be ethnocentric. In fact, when we do that, we see that forager lifespans are as long as, and sometimes longer, than our own.

[26] John Zerzan. Running on Emptiness: The Pathology of Civilization [Book]. Feral House. 2002. Original link. Archived link.

[27] Thomas Ian Campbell and Michael Lipkin. "To Get Our Message Before the Public, We've Had To Kill People" [Essay]. The American Reader. Original link. Archived link.

[28] Theo Slade. A Conversation with John Zerzan on Direct Action, School Shootings, Authenticity, Veganism & More [Video Interview]. Activist Journeys. Aug 9, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

[29] Jason Godesky. 5 Common Objections to Primitivism [Essay]. Toby & People. 2005. Original link. Archived link.

Finally, unable to question their own logic of the inevitability of collapse or the perceived undesirability of a future shaped in some ways by our use of machines, they must look at every less than physically and mentally advantaged super-human as a lost cause, who it would be more merciful to kill if they could push a button and end their suffering sooner:[30]

> It is undeniably true that the world's population cannot be sustained without modern civilization. Of course, it is abundantly clear that modern civilization is not sustainable, either. Given those two facts, then some kind of massive die-off is inevitable. It might be through genocide, but since primitvists are a fringe of a fringe (and will always be so) it's unlikely to come from us. There are many other parties with a much greater interest in genocide for its own sake, who are far closer to power than we will ever be. Ultimately, genocide might be the kindest method, just as it is kind to deliver a *coup de grace* to a dying animal. The alternative is to waste away by hunger or disease. But ultimately, genocide on such a scale would be nigh impossible, and though die-off is guaranteed, it is almost as guaranteed *not* to come by way of genocide.

Various Critiques

Here an anti-civilization thinker urges people not to turn primitivism into a dogma:[31]

> Ultimately, if we imagine dismantling civilization, actively and consciously destroying it, not in order to institute a program or realize a specific vision, but in order to open and endlessly expand the possibilities for realizing ourselves and exploring our capacities and desires, then we can begin to do it as the way we live here and now against the existing order. If, instead of hoping for a paradise, we grasp life, joy and wonder now, we will be living a truly anarchic critique of civilization that has nothing to do with any image of the "primitive", but rather with our immediate need to no longer be domesticated, with our need to be unique, not tamed, controlled, defined identities. Then, we will find ways to grasp all that we can make our own and to destroy all that seeks to conquer us.

When I talked to Zerzan, I tried to grapple with the core of what primitivists are valuing when they talk about presence:[32]

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[30] Jason Godesky. 5 Common Objections to Primitivism [Essay]. Toby & People. 2005. Original link. Archived link.

[31] Wolfi Landstreicher. A Critique, Not a Program: For a Non-Primitivist Anti-Civilization Critique [Essay]. 325. 2007. Original link. Archived link.

[32] Theo Slade. A Conversation with John Zerzan on Direct Action, School Shootings, Authenticity, Veganism & More [Video Interview]. Activist Journeys. Aug 9, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

... in terms of this term presence, whether we should desire an authenticity of a long period of our evolutionary history as humans. I don't know, like I think potentially we could be suffering more now for sure, but it could be suffering that we desire to take on if we can get to this left-anarchist, pro technology future. It could be a source of virtue for us, striving for these intellectual skills.

And then authenticity, as a concept it's only developed recently, like we used to think of authenticity differently as like sincerity. So, the effort you put into helping your family would be an indication of whether you were being authentic to yourself, if you were being just and fair to your family in taking on your responsibilities.

So, I don't know whether it would be authentic for me to desire hunter-gather life, I think I would desire hunter-gatherer life more than the middle ages if I could be born into a fairly egalitarian tribe like the Penan, but I think rather than just settling for primitive life or just settling for the middle ages, I think we should try and be aspirational to this future world of still being able to use some technology, like printing presses and penicillin.

Anti-Tech Revolution

Here we have arrived at Ted's own proposed strategy.

This is a step back along the spectrum of the scale of technological society the ideological proponents are openly hoping to dismantle, but this is often simply for pragmatic reasons, in that, destroying electricity grids and preventing them from being rebuilt is a lot simpler goal to advocate others over to, rather than pretending they also have an easy solution for challenging feudal warlords who will rise up in the chaos.

As well, it is a step away from identifying with left-wing philosophy the way all the ideologies previously mentioned do on average to some degree. Despite all of them rejecting mass-movement organizing and allying, they often draw in followers through claims of being the only one true ideology with an effective plan for dismantling capitalism, the patriarchy, etc.

These groups often contain a large number of conspiratorial minded people whose effect in the real world would more closely align with right wing people in their indifference for segments of the population simply for who they are by nature.

So, it is refreshing that at least fans of Kaczynski are open about having made the jump of no longer sympathizing with left-wing philosophy, both in foundation and in application, so root and branch.

This ideological tendency has a smaller group following then any of the other ideologies listed so far and it is often a strategy people pick up after having already bought into primitivism.

The narrowing of approaches

Here Ted explains why he thinks it is necessary for revolutionaries to narrow their focus on technology being the central target:[33]

> It is widely recognized that "the basic variable which determines the contemporary historic process is provided by technological development" (Celso Furtado*). Technology, above all else, is responsible for the current condition of the world and will control its future development. Thus, the "bulldozer" that we have to destroy is modern technology itself. Many radicals are aware of this, and therefore realize that there task is to eliminate the entire techno-industrial system. But unfortunately they have paid little attention to the need to hit the system where it hurts. ...

> Wilderness can be saved permanently only by eliminating the techno-industrial system, and you cannot eliminate the system by attacking the timber industry. The system would easily survive the death of the timber industry because wood products, though very useful to the system, can if necessary be replaced with other materials.

> Consequently, when you attack the timber industry, you are not hitting the system where it hurts. The timber industry is only the "fist" (or one of the fists) with which the system destroys wilderness, and, just as in a fist-fight, you can't win by hitting at the fist. You have to go behind the fist and strike at the most sensitive and vital organs of the system.

> So, instead of protesting one or another negative consequence of biotechnology, you have to attack all modern biotechnology on principle, on grounds such as (a) that it is an insult to all living things; (b) that it puts too much power in the hands of the system; (c) that it will radically transform fundamental human values that have existed for thousands of years; and similar grounds that are inconsistent with the values of the system.

> In response to this kind of attack the system will have to stand and fight. It cannot afford to cushion your attack by backing off to any great extent, because biotechnology is too central to the whole enterprise of technological progress, and because in backing off the system would not be making only a tactical retreat, but would be taking a major strategic defeat to its code of values. Those values would be undermined and the door would be opened to further political attacks that would hack away at the foundations of the system.

> Now it's true that the U.S. House of Representatives recently voted to ban cloning of human beings, and at least some congressmen even gave the

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[33] Ted Kaczynski. Hit where it hurts [Journal]. Green Anarchy. Spring 2002. Original link. Archived link.

right kinds of reasons for doing so. The reasons I read about were framed in religious terms, but whatever you may think of the religious terms involved, these reasons were not technologically acceptable reasons. And that is what counts.

The expanded limits of violence

Ted's attempt to assassinate people such as scientists and computer store owners was seen by many primitivists to have been an ineffective and misguided strategy. Here are a few quotes summarizing his desires and reasons at the time:[34][35][36]

> ... we may find it useful to blow up more biotechnicians and the like at some time in the future, so we would prefer not to be bound by a promise to stop bombing. If we made such a promise we wouldn't want to break it. So we are looking for some way to get our material published without having to make any promises or deals. ...

> ... All the university people whom we have attacked have been specialists in technical fields. (We consider certain areas of applied psychology, such as behavior modification, to be technical fields.) We would not want anyone to think that we have any desire to hurt professors who study archaeology, history, literature or harmless stuff like that. The people we are out to get are the scientists and engineers, especially in critical fields like computers and genetics. ...

> In one case we attempted unsuccessfully to blow up an airliner. The idea was to kill a lot of business people who we assumed would constitute a majority of the passengers. But of course some of the passengers would have been innocent people-maybe kids, or some working stiff going to see his sick grandmother. We're glad now that the attempt failed. ...

> A bomb package that we mailed to computer scientist Patrick Fischer injured his secretary when she opened it. We certainly regret that. And when we were young and comparatively reckless we were much less careful in selecting targets than we are now.

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[34] Ted Kaczynski. The Bombings & Communications of Ted Kaczynski as part of his Terror Campaign [Letter]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

[35] Ted Kaczynski. The Bombings & Communications of Ted Kaczynski as part of his Terror Campaign [Letter]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

[36] Ted Kaczynski. The Bombings & Communications of Ted Kaczynski as part of his Terror Campaign [Letter]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

Various Critiques

Here is an excerpt from an article published in the academic journal Bioethics which I think neatly reveals and refutes the hidden premise within many of the Unabombers foundational arguments. That faulty premise being; the evaluative asymmetry whereby anything that happens in wild habitat is automatically less bad than anything that happens in an industrialized society.[37]

> When one reads 'Industrial Society and its Future' and Anti-Tech Revolution, it is hard not to notice that Kaczynski evaluates problems caused by technology very differently than how he evaluates problems that arise in technology's absence. This is most apparent in the middle paragraphs of 'Industrial Society and its Future,' in which Kaczynski compares industrial and pre-industrial life. After he has given an elaborate account of human powerlessness in industrial societies, he makes a concession: 'It is true that primitive man is powerless against some of the things that threaten him; disease for example.' Kaczynski does not, however, seem to think that this is a very significant problem. Instead he writes: 'But he can accept the risk of disease stoically.' This response invites a follow-up question: If the badness of the problems faced by 'primitive man' can be avoided if one accepts them stoically, then why can't the badness of the problems faced by people in industrialized societies also be avoided through stoicism? The only explanation given by Kaczynski is that whereas a problem caused in the absence of technology 'is part of the nature of things, it is no one's fault,' a problem caused by technology is 'imposed.' Of course, it makes sense to hold that while no-one is responsible for what nature does, someone might be responsible for what humans do. Kaczynski, however, does not seem to be concerned with assigning responsibility or blame; he is concerned with comparing the quality of human life in industrial versus pre-industrial societies. It seems, therefore, that Kaczynski holds that while a problem caused by technology is very bad indeed, a problem caused by nature, though it can be frustrating, is not nearly as bad, at least not in an ethically relevant way. It appears that on Kaczynski's view, two equally hopeless situations can differ dramatically in how bad they are depending on whether the situation is caused by technology or caused by things in nature that count as non-technological.

> This evaluative asymmetry can help explain several of Kaczynski's priorities and areas of focus. It can explain why he is worried that our lives now depend on the operation of power plants that might fail, but not worried that pre-industrial lives depended on rain showers that might fail to come

[37] Ole Martin Moen. The Unabomber's Ethics [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. 2018. Original link. Archived link.

as expected; worried that people today are oppressed by bureaucracies, but not worried that people were previously oppressed by their tribes; worried that people now do tedious office work but not worried that work in pre-industrial societies could also be tedious. The picture that emerges is that in Kaczynski's view, the harms that are averted by technology were not ethically relevant harms to begin, and that what we gain from technology today does not count as ethically relevant benefits. Given this picture, it makes sense why Kaczynski counts only the downsides of technology: There are few or no ethically relevant upsides to count.

Eco-Extremist Nature Worshipers

The narrowing of approaches

The publisher of an eco-extremist journal LBC explained what sense they made of the eco-extremist phenomenon:[38][39]

> Abe outlines what the eco-extremist position is. 1) Pessimism towards human endeavors 2) Wild Nature is the primary agent in the eco-extremist war 3) Listening to the call of the ancestors against the destruction of a way of life 4) individualism against mass society 5) indiscriminate attack as an echo of Wild Nature itself. 6) Nihilism as a refusal of the future 7) Paganism/animism as attempts to rescue ancestral dieties.

> John Jacobi's article is an attempt to contextualize eco-extremist thought for a North American audience. It does it by telling the story of a young man who starts corresponding with Ted Kaczynski and is put into context with people trying to live the ideas that he preaches ("The Apostles"). In this excellent piece you learn about the factionalism of the indomitistas and how ITS fits in with this history of ideas. This is a history of 21st century eco-radicalism, of which eco-extremism is but a portion.

Here an eco-extremist explains in what way they have tried to transcend Kaczynski's ideas:[40]

> We have never denied that the essay, "Industrial Society and Its Future" has been an important part of our formation into what we are now. For

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[38] Anonymous. Why do we publish such objectionable things? [Essay]. Little Black Cart. August 23, 2017. Original link. Archived link.

[39] By including quotes from people like Aragorn and Julian Langer's writing as explanations and critiques of eco-extremism, I'm not claiming they are themselves eco-extremists.

[40] John Jacobi. A text dump on wildism [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. July 13, 2016. Original link. Archived link.

that reason, in the past we used such terms as "leftists," "power process," "feelings of inferiority," "liberty and autonomy," etc. that in the present we have omitted or changed for other words so that we distinguish ourselves from the "indomitistas" of Kaczynski. ...

[D]eeply religious people (either pagan or Christian or whatever) have good reasons for being against industrial society. Many see value in religion and disdain the secularists' constant attempts to eradicate it, which is necessary in industrial society (as historical trends suggest). Furthermore, although there are secular reasons for opposing industrial technologies as well, religious opposition is often much more powerful because of its irrational and emotional appeal. For instance, religious opposition to biotechnology is a lot more difficult to counter than secular opposition to biotechnology. ...

The individualists who identify with eco-extremism can either worship nature apart from the sense of the great religions or not. When I talk about paganism I'm talking strictly about my personal beliefs. I'm not stating that it's a mandatory belief among all eco-extremists. I would just like to make that clear. ...

Sure, I'm a civilized person living in the modern, technological, and industrial world. It's hard for me to separate myself from the teachings that the schools indoctrinated me with when I was young. It's hard for me to reject the idea that rain (for example) comes from a process within the hydrological cycle. Or that a river is just water, or that fire is a mere grouping of incandescent molecules. Or that the explosives that ITS utilizes are the product of an exothermic reaction. For before I believed in the "Spirits of the Earth" (for lack of a better term) I was also an atheistic materialist who based my beliefs more in the scientific method than animism. But that all changed when I had a very personal experience with a fox, a deer, and a pair of vultures in the semi-desert hills of northern Mexico. ...

So to reiterate, I am a civilized human being, but I'm over that. I prefer to recover my past as a Teochichimeca and to fight for it with tooth and claw. And even though I am well aware that I am not capable of a complete return to that worldview, it's in this manner that my opposition to the techno-industrial system and modern civilization are fostered. ...

I think that here it would be better to strike a balance and not disregard one side or the other totally, as I have written previously. I am a modern human being and I can't think like my ancestors. I can't believe anymore that water falls from the sky as a "gift from the gods". I know that the water falls from the sky as a result of the hydrological process, even if I would prefer not to know that and remain with the beliefs of my ancestors. Unfortunately I cannot do that.

The expanded limits of violence

Here the same eco-extremist above lays out their justifications for an expanded list of targets and means of violently targeting people:[41]

> Though some may be more culpable than others, ITS and eco-extremist groups assert that all who conform to this society and who contribute to it in one way or another (us included) are guilty for what it does, and no one then is INNOCENT. If you contribute to this society or conform to it, you are not innocent.
>
> On October 26th, 2015, the "Indiscriminate Group" (GI) abandoned an explosive in the station of the Metro Chilpancingo in Mexico City at rush hour. In their communiqué the eco-extremist group indicated that their target was the transportation system and all that it represented (environmental destruction, the urban commute of the masses, progress, etc.) The bomb was located by the police who removed it from the station and deactivated it, thus frustrating the attack. This is another example of indiscriminate attack, which caused disgust among many people, including those who claim to be against the values of the system. But GI acted without reservation, justifying the attack that sought to strike out against the public mass transit system without consideration of if they killed or wounded "innocents". Everyone there were members of a society complicit with the destruction of Wild Nature, including human nature.
>
> ITS and other eco-extremist groups attack not only because of the spirit of the Teochichimecas. The reasons behind their attacks are many, ranging from what we have indicated here, to those that seek to defend Wild Nature in an egoist manner, mere revenge, or seeking to destabilize certain institutions in the present.
>
> ITS and other cells utilize Teochichimeca tactics, but also urban guerilla strategies, experimentation with armed struggle, practice of criminal activities such as armed robbery, psychological terrorism, etc. in order to reach their ends. One of the primary of these is the extreme defense of wild nature through terrorism against scientists, humanists, engineers, clergy, miners, businessmen, etc.

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[41] John Jacobi. A text dump on wildism [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. July 13, 2016. Original link. Archived link.

Various Critiques

John Jacobi who was for a time a super-fan of Kaczynski pushes back against some of the positions outlined above:[42]

> ... I do not understand how you can "reject" physics or other such things. Clearly these things are at least mostly accurate, or else they wouldn't work as well as they do. And I suspect that if you truly "reject" them, meaning you do not accept them as true at all, you may turn out to be like the indigenous people who believed in "Ghost Shirts." Consider an excerpt from a letter I responded to when I was editor of The Wildernist:

> *I'm always reminded of the story of the Ghost Dance, which was a religious movement that some Native Indians adopted in the late 1800s. It stemmed from a prophecy by the messianic spiritual leader Wovoka, who preached that if the "Ghost Dance" was done just right, the spirits of the dead would fight on behalf of the Natives and make the colonists leave. Part of this was a belief that the dancers had "ghost shirts" that would protect them from bullets. I've heard a radical environmentalist actually say— actually say—that this was an example of their spiritual superiority, their "oneness with the Earth." Apparently she hadn't heard the end of the story, because in 1890 soldiers opened fire on Natives at Wounded Knee, and the ghost shirts did not, in fact, protect the two hundred plus individuals who died that day. The only "oneness with the Earth" they ended up experiencing was the oneness of their corpses with ashes and dust.*

> *The moral of the story isn't, "Ha! Look at those ignorant Natives." To the contrary, Wovoka-ish mysticism has played out plenty enough times throughout history for us to know that humans just seem to be prone to these sorts of things. The moral of the story is, however, that radical environmentalist talk of "the inarticulable," "oneness with Nature" and other such gobbley-gook is very likely or at least prone to becoming yet another example. So far I've seen no other tools able to combat this better than science and reason.*

> I have nothing more substantial to say about this topic. Your beliefs are fine, provided you accept the exceptions I gave in my previous letter. I only bring this up because I want to see eco-radicals everywhere rewild in the most effective way possible. I don't care if this means "revolution" or whatever, so long as they actually care enough for wild nature to be effective in defending it. This is only a logical outgrowth of valuing wildness anyway.

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[42] John Jacobi. A text dump on wildism [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. July 13, 2016. Original link. Archived link.

You say that if a shaman told you to do something obviously wrong, you probably wouldn't follow it. But doesn't this suggest that you are actually a materialist and that you regard materialism as a better way of resisting the attempts of others who use delusions to hold power over you? I am a spiritual person myself. As a materialist I regard the Cosmos with awe and through reason and unreason alike commune with it, studying the process of creation through evolutionary theory, hiking through stone skeletons of the earth, washing in the river blood of the earth, etc. But ultimately I do not posit the existence of anything other than what is material–that is beautiful enough!–and I do not regard shamans or any sort of master as an infallible source of knowledge. Instead I think empirical investigation, logic, and other scientific ways of knowing the world have shown themselves to be superior ways of knowing the world, whether they are present in primitive cultures or industrial ones. And they are present in primitive cultures. See Jared Diamond's "Zoological classification system of a primitive people", in which Diamond shows a "nearly one-to-one correspondence between Fore [taxonomy] and species as recognized by European taxonomists."

See also Louis Liebenberg's "The Art of Tracking: The Origin of Science", in which Liebenberg illustrates how scientific reasoning can be traced to the methods hunter/gatherers used to track and hunt animals.

This is, at least, my own belief. You need not reply if you do not want to. I simply wanted to make clear that by accepting scientific materialism I do not disregard spirituality or irrationality. These things are important to me because I love the WHOLE human, not just some parts. But I would much rather receive spiritual fulfillment from what I regard as true beliefs, cruel or not, traditional or not. Again, I write about these things in "The Foundations of Wildist Ethics," section III.B.

I end with a quote from Edward Abbey:

Belief? What do I believe in? I believe in sun. In rock. In the dogma of the sun and the doctrine of the rock. I believe in blood, fire, woman, rivers, eagles, storm, drums, flutes, banjos, and broom-tailed horses ...

Regarding the point on "indiscriminate attack," I remain solidly convinced that "indiscriminate" is not a proper term and does not properly communicate what you are trying to say. The problem is that most individuals understand "indiscriminate attack" to mean "random attack," ... then they will not think that you actually care about wild nature, nor do you care about rewilding in the most effective way possible. Instead, they will think that people who advocate "random attack" merely want to kill, or have something wrong with them ... This problem is exacerbated by the language in communiques by ITS, which sometimes speak as though everyone

is a target, when at the very least I think they restrict their attacks to the civilized. ... ... surely you would not attack primitive peoples ... "just because,"

You write, for instance, that intelligent readers will understand the meaning of the phrase, but intelligent readers may not be the only ones inspired to act. This is especially true when the language of the communiques is so messy, reckless, and open to misinterpretation.

... I do not think indiscriminate attack is a very good idea. If your enemy is much stronger than you, then it makes sense to prod him with a stick to wear him out, but if you prod too hard too quickly then the enemy will stamp you out completely.

A man whose sympathetic essay towards eco-extremism was copied into one of the terrorist group ITS communications has this narrow though perceptive critique:[43][44]

> The eco-extremist movement, whose liberation theology and anti-anarchist anti-politics has upset and displeased many in eco-radical and anarchist milieus, revere and worship Wild Nature, and seek to emulate storms and hurricanes and wildfires through their methodology of indiscriminate attack. And while there is much to find ugly in and criticise the eco-extremist movement for – especially the infamous group ITS – there is a certain poetic beauty in this desire to embrace their being extensions of wild-Being, through emulating Wild Nature – though they often appear (certainly to my mind) to miss that destruction is creation, and that what is wild is alive.
>
> Destruction as a phenomenon is the event of a singularity whereby, due to certain physical intensities, a new situation, space, location, Thing (etc.) is created. In this way, creation and destruction are in no way a dichotomy, but rather the monist force of the flow of motion, energy, transience in an entirely physical sense.
>
> A hurricane and a wildfire are destructive, but they aren't violent. In their destruction they create new situations, spaces, locations; Things, from the intensity of their energetic releases. A meteor that kills most of the life on planet Earth, including the dinosaurs (arguably this planet's most successful occupants if we assume a paleontological realist epistemology), is not violent and does not enact violence upon those it has killed. The Chicxulub

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[43] Julian Langer. Before The Beginning Were The Waters [Essay]. Gods and Radicals. October 15, 2017. Original link. Archived link.

[44] Julian Langer. Guerrilla Ontology: On Destruction, Violence and Direct Action [Essay]. Gods and Radicals. December 20, 2017. Original link. Archived link.

meteor was destructive, and its destruction lead to the creation of a situation that resulted in mammals becoming more prevalent (as a generalized category of species-Being) as the dinosaurs died out.

Destruction and creation are the monist flow of Life, where life and death are one and the same thing. They are the same thing in each present, temporarily bound by the physical dimensions of embodied Being – wild-Being as I choose to term it. As such, destruction(/creation) is an aspect of what is wild (or natural, if you prefer).

In one of the first anarchist critiques of ITS, an anarchist groups actively engaged in sabotage from Chile critiqued ITS in this way:[45]

One small group, tied to a certain imaginary of "symbolic" peoples and to music / alternative and university backgrounds (reject faculties that still attend ... and study what they hate so much), hates human animals and therefore sees the enemy everywhere.

In this "wild fog", caused by their own complacency and messianism, they classify among their enemies and the last worker, the victim of this shitty manufacturing system. They talk about killing workers, farmers or any other person whom, let's be honest, the discussion of our relatives over the years did not consider valuable interlocutors. Although we are accomplices, the enemy is someone else, and to any anachist, libertarian, punk or nihilist this is quite clear. But eco-extremists are not, in an attempt to be avant-garde, and even in trend.

That is why we call on individuals and coordinated affinities who are fighting today to continue to fight for the liberation of all living beings and the country, without losing sight of the political aspect of our actions, and real enemies and targets.

Seven years after the death of Mauricio Morales, we commend the Manada de Choque Anarquico Nihilista for its sober and insurgent activities during the protests on May 1 and April 21, when they once again demonstrated the success of affinity coordination. To be clear and refute the page "Maldicion Ecoextremista" which tried to present these acts as an act of irresponsible urban guerrillas, in order to appropriate libertarian action!

We applaud the fighters from the Paulino Scarfó Revolutionary Cell (FAI-FRI), who wrote in their statement of responsibility for the attack on the Santander Bank in La Cisterna: " *The attack has its own ethics and is not indiscriminate; we have embraced the fire attack and we no longer support ideas that are trying to spread* ".

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[45] Anonymous. Does the Unabomber have any relevance to anarchism? [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. May 23, 2016. Original link. Archived link.

Comically, an anti-civilizational group engaged in terrorism against people made a passing critique of ITS in one of their communiques, whilst making a point of declaring they're not interested in dialogue with ITS who they disagree with, and only dialogue with those whose attacks they agree with:[46]

> 12 March, Santiago, Chile: Noise bomb against the highway management company Vespucio Sur by FAI-IRF.
>
> We do not consider the struggle against civilization to be distinct or external to the struggle against all forms of authority. We identified the highway management companies as being important arteries that gives life to the network of domination, facilitating the advancement of civilization and enriching themselves via the imposition of an urbanism that is servile to the interests of power. Both the present and past history show us that the germ that leads to authority has also developed in communities that existed prior to civilization and has also manifested itself in groups that have remained outside or against civilization. That is why our struggle is essentially ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN. This is why we feel it is important to distance ourselves from the self-proclaimed 'eco-extremist tendency' that has defended the indiscriminate attack that is contrary to the idea of being 'against all authority' and denounces international solidarity with imprisoned companeros who are related in word and deed to insurrectionary anarchy. Such ideas are neither an 'evolution' or 'more radical' but are in fact quite the opposite. We have no interest in engaging in virtual polemics with them, we prefer dialogue with our companeros via action.

I personally think it would be good to promote the cultural value of dialogue with any one you find curious.

As well as people being taught at an earlier age the value of a holding a logically coherent philosophy. This would obviously be more likely achieved through a coordinated civilization where through auditing and wealth distribution we would be able to uniformly raise the standards of education.

But either way, here again is another example of some anti-civilization anarchists who despite not desiring these basic elements of civilization, they have in important ways drawn a clear distinction between their own ideological tendency and ITS:[47]

> When Cabrera arrives at discussing the fate of the women at Fort Mims, his laudatory tone and narrative is utterly unbroken. With an incipient giddiness consonant with everything he's written up to now, he quotes at

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[46] Various Authors. Dark Nights #45 [Communique]. Dark Nights. April 2016. Original link. Archived link.

[47] Edelweiss Pirates. Of Indiscriminate Attacks & Wild Reactions [Zine]. The Ted K Archive. September 21, 2017. Original link. Archived link.

length about the gratuitous mass rape that took place at Fort Mims. Not a word of contextualization of the horrors of civilized war, or of war at all, is proffered. After this– his crown-jewel block quotation—he begins the next paragraph, "Far from being acts of gratuitous or extraordinary violence, what occurred at Fort Mims was well within the cultural and spiritual logic of traditional Creek culture." To prove his point, he quotes another white historian at length.

Here is the ideological underpinning being offered by their US boosters for the femicidal actions claimed by ITS. Here is the "indiscriminate attack" being refined, in print as in thought. Here is Rape-as-Re-Wilding.

Finally, many anarchists had a good laugh at and critiqued the way the eco-extremist terrorists and their propagandists acted when one of their own had their personal details found out and published on the internet (strongly identifying information is censored here):[48]

> Within 12 hours of the doxxing of [Abe] being released, the so-called ITS "Mafia", who virtually live on the internet now, were so upset they had to describe the age and dryness of my Vagina! And take responsibility for the "massacre" beating of an anarcho-punk after a Zapatista rally last December! What is there left to say either to or about these misogynist, misanthropic, psychopathic high priests of the ITS death-cult? ...
>
> > "ALL participants and friendlies around the atassa project have reached out to me hoping I can, for lack of a better term, alleviate any animosity over the Atassa project.
> >
> > Abe went off the deep end. ... [the journal] started as [a] theoretical exploration of violence with no one except abe actually declaring and supporting ITS
> >
> > Nobody wants beef, I'm just a middle man relaying this.
> >
> > You can email back, call @ +150********, or completely ignore.
> >
> > Fuck with abe all you want, he deserves it, but everyone else doesnt."
>
> There it is; there is "ALL the participants and friendlies around the Atassa project", which we assume includes LBC/Aragorn totally throwing [Abe] under the bus just to save themselves any bother. They must seriously underestimate us to write such ridiculous shit – Ah, just a "theoretical exploration of violence". What a fucking collection of cretins. So much for

[48] L. More non-news about the "Eco-Extremist Mafia" [Essay]. 325. Oct 23, 2018. Original link. Archived link.

the claims of the Pope of ITS Mexico about their "theorists", these people couldn't theorise themselves out of a paper bag.

"Eco-Extremism" is an opportunistic trend of parasitism, online fakes and sacred beliefs, recycling on facebook, twitter and the "altervista" or "wordpress". Although they would like you to think that their groups are spreading, instead they are dwindling, with a few people traveling between countries (or staying put in Mexico!) and believing in their sacred misanthropic mission. A mission which is expressed as hatred of women, hatred of anarchy, and 'humanity'.

Human Exterminationists

The narrowing of approaches

Within eco-extremism there is an even more niche ideological tendency that could best be described as human exterminationists.

Here is an essay by an 'aristocratic individualist' from 1918 that was bizarrely used in an eco-extremist zine by an ex-anarchist who used to spend time sabotaging open cast coal mines on land owned by an aristocrat in Scotland:[49][50][51][52]

> The pessimism we want to study now is that which we have called misanthropic pessimism. This pessimism doesn't proceed from an exasperated and suffering sensibility, but from a lucid intelligence exercising its critical clear-sightedness on the evil side of our species. Misanthropic pessimism appears in its grand lines as a theory of universal fraud and universal imbecility; of universal banality and universal turpitude. As the pitiless painting of a world peopled with cretins and swindlers, of ninnies and fools.

> The character of this pessimism appears as a universal coldness, a willed impassibility, an absence of sentimentalism that distinguishes it from romantic pessimism, ever inclined to despair or revolt. The mute despair of Vigny is more pathetic than a cry of pain. In Stirner we find frantic accents of revolt, while in Schopenhauer we find a tragic sentiment of the world's pain and a despairing appeal to the void. As for the misanthropic pessimist, he makes no complaints. He doesn't take the human condition as tragic,

[49] Coal Action Scotland. A text dump on Jay [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. August, 2018. Original link. Archived link.

[50] Friends of Jay. A text dump on Jay [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. Dec 7, 2018. Original link. Archived link.

[51] Jay. A text dump on Jay [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. Spring 2016. Original link. Archived link.

[52] Coal Action Scotland. A text dump on Jay [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. August 26, 2012. Original link. Archived link.

he doesn't rise up against destiny. He observes his contemporaries with curiosity, pitilessly analyzes their sentiments and thoughts and is amused by their presumption, their vanity, their hypocrisy, or their unconscious villainy, by their intellectual and moral weakness. It is no longer human pain, it is no longer the sickness of living that forms the theme of this pessimism, but rather human villainy and stupidity. One of the preferred leitmotivs of this pessimism could be this well- known verse: "The most foolish animal is man."

Here a human exterminationist argues that the eco-extremist terror group ITS were also human extinctionists all along:[53]

Their hopelessness and pessimism toward all of hyper-civilized humanity (i.e. the only humanity left for all intents and purposes) has never been in doubt. The hypothetical positing of a "small group of people who are willing to embrace the wild," does not bring such a group into being, and neither does the existence of the peoples of such places like the Amazon or the Andaman Islands whose entire existence is due to the "conservationist" impulse to "leave them alone". The exception proves the rule, and if techno-industrial civilization and the rule of law collapsed tomorrow, such isolated peoples would no longer be protected.

The real issue with Jacobi has always been his intransigent belief in the human as a closed system, no matter how much recourse to "the wild" he has at times. He can't but spout such Enlightenment dogma as "the source of human values is human beings themselves," as if all "humans" have been equal throughout history, as if to predicate "human" in both the civilized and uncivilized resolves the issue at the level of first principles. As if the object of human cognition continues to be the continuation of the actually existing human genome, even if only within the circle of those who have an adequate affinity with the "Wild Will." But even if eco-extremists posit a "human nature" that is corrupted by industrial society, they neither posit a clear idea of its essence, nor a way to "fix" that nature by creating an "outside" of civilization. Such an "outside" does not exist, and there is no feral future, nor is one possible.

So to Jacobi's question, whether eco-extremists carry out their action because of their hatred of humanity or their love of the wild, they would reply that this is not an "either/or" dilemma. One can, and probably should, have both points as motivation. There is no natural "outside" that the hyper-civilized can take refuge in, as we are all products of civilization itself. But

[53] Various Authors. A text dump on Black Seed [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

as techno-industrial civilization is neither a well-defined nor stable phenomenon, the ultimate object of hatred is the idea of human power and control as their own end, which can only be countered by attacking the human as both product and agent of that control. In this sense, extinction is like a wish more than a practical program: it is like the anarchists who wish for a "society without domination," though they know that this is probably not attainable. There will probably be homo sapiens well into the distant future, but one can act as if they should simply not exist.

The expanded limits of violence

Here is a text glorifying school shooters small contribution to the effort of exterminating all humans. Adam Lanza called into John Zerzans' primitivist radio show and wrote that he wished he'd been born a lower-primate so that he could have been unconcerned with complex cultural relationships:[54]

> Both Frazier and Lanza's messages were clear to those who understand, but mystified everyone else: humans have, to their detriment, completely removed themselves from nature and through the ways of civilizati0on we have all been imprisoned. Frazier's fury came from a transcendent moment where he saw the obscenity of materialism that we are bound to while Lanza saw how we are shaped from birth to accept this fate and enjoy being caged. Like warriors before them they refused to see humans as more valuable than other life on earth and had no moral qualms about extinguishing lives no matter how young and innocent. In fact, they may be seen as having acted from a place of kindness, as suggested by Adam Lanza's very personal killing of his mother before he left for the school. In his mind he wasn't deranged; he had been pacing his cage his whole life, until he could pace no more. Then he pounced. We are all capable of nurturing and compassion, but we are also capable of the most horrific brutality, given the right conditions. These instances of cruelty, whether from long ago or in our lifetime, shouldn't be swept under the rug. They are not horrible abominations that we must do everything to forget. They are human responses, maybe one of the last meaningful human actions we can observe, which is perhaps what terrifies people so much. As Fuchs observes, "Deep down in every one of us there is a ruthless primal killer inside. Perhaps this is the fundamental truth from which all censors, moralists and inveterate optimists flee in panic." Let us not flee in panic from our own impulses, but learn from them and come face to face with society, its warts and all.

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[54] Various Authors. A text dump on Black Seed [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

Various Critiques

The former Kaczynski super-fan Jacobi comically critiques these human extinction-ists as having tarnished the otherwise respectable idea of eco-extremism. He explains that he had hoped the terror group ITS were simply opening the door to human exterminationists to join their terror alliance, the same way they opened the door to Satanists and pure nihilists who care nothing for wild habitat:[55][56]

> [E]co-extremism has recently made yet another ideological turn, and with the turn I have to dispose of my former tolerance, at least toward large factions of the eco-extremist "tendency." They have become extinctionists. They argue that they care for the wild, that humankind will invariably harm wild nature, and that humankind must therefore go extinct. This is a ridiculous philosophy, and while what follows will explain the reasons why, I am not at all thrilled I have had to write them out. Only a subset of extinctionism's philosophical formulations, usually pessimistic and nihilistic, are philosophically interesting (see Better to Have Never Been by David Benatar); but the ecological formulation—that humans should go extinct for the sake of wild nature—is never good philosophy. And explaining why entails a lot of nitpicky philosophical talk that readers are probably not going to very much enjoy. Nevertheless, because it is a recurring problem even in the mainstream ecological movements, it is necessary, it seems, to disally myself with it.
>
> There are people who tend to be kind of true believers in the whole thing and say this situation really is utterly hopeless and that the whole human race is irredeemable and a lot of people do hold these views without going to the actionable extremes that ITS does, so it's not completely surprising, extinctionism has been a part of environmentalism for a very long time ... they basically hate everything around, they just want to destroy everything, it's not destroy society to save nature, it's just nuclear attack bomb everything. I'd say that the most dominant part of its definitely is that now, it's always been kind of fragmented and there's some communications from certain groups that claim the name and also explicitly say we don't want to see the destruction of the human race, we just want to see a destruction of the technological system, but they're few and far between at this point, I think mostly the ITS brand has associated itself largely with this sort of nihilism and extinctionism, but the groups differ. They care more about whether or not everybody agrees on being able to commit terrorist acts

[55] Various Authors. A text dump on Black Seed [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

[56] Popular Front. 36. The New Wave of Eco-Extremism and Nihilist Militancy [Podcast Interview]. Popular Front Podcast, . Mar 9, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

against technological society and on the human race than whether or not people believe the same thing.

Satanist Death Cultists

The narrowing of approaches

In the second issue of an eco-extremist journal, they included a satanist essay romanticizing embodying the most despised evil in society:[57]

> The purpose of this work is to synthesize eco-extremism and nihilist individualism, to give a spiritual justification to a sentiment that refuses all spirit. It is a reflection on the scope and depth of human failure, and an approach to the Inhuman. We leave behind the Wisdom of the City, and Ideologies such as progressivism and anarchism that are merely a blink of the eye in the unfolding of the Unknowable. Here we seek to honor and praise the Murderer not merely as a passing political or psychological archetype, but as the metaphysical principle driving the hyper-civilized to extinction. We seek evil not as something that can shock, but as something that moves about in the shadows and cracks of human existence. We divide this treatise into three parts:
>
> - 1. On Earth as it is in Hell: A theological reflection on the essence of demons.
> - 2. The Satanic Sacrament: Individualist poisoning and human sacrifice in 17th century France in the "Affair of the Poisons."
> - 3. Bomb, Bullet, and Blade: Eco-extremism as a meager yet rigorous attempt to embody the struggle of Chaos and the Murderer against the Christian God and its secular manifestations.
>
> This text is not a political treatise. There is nothing here about liberation, self-realization, or human striving. We hate the human and everything it entails. We rejoice at the spilling of human blood upon the Altar of the Earth: its aroma ascends like incense before the Throne of the Unknowable. Yet we know that even these ef-forts are a feeble visible sign of the Invisible Grace of the Hidden.
>
> We realize that the Murderer has been working since the beginning in many forms and manifestations, and He will not stop until the Human is no more.

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[57] Multiple Authors. A text dump on Atassa [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

A while later a Greek ex-serviceman was coaxed into building a pipe bomb and leaving it in a public square in Edinburgh, Scotland. The communique he wrote to claim responsibility explained that he was motivated in part by this brand of satanism:[58]

> (ABYSS) 48 COMMUNIQUE OF THE INDIVIDUALISTS TENDING TOWARDS THE WILD
>
> -A package bomb left totally indiscriminately at a central location selectively.
>
> Why do I not think of the "innocent" people one might think... I answer with a question... Did my birth giver's pussy think when it was fucked to be fertilized with microscopic semen that creates the vessels that I hate? Did anybody ask me to be born? Did anyone know what I would become? Do you know that some see consciousness as a curse? Fuck you, pathetic pricks, you don't know shit then! I do not seek justification for existence, neither do I seek someone to blame. I seek the amoral rape of existence through the injection of life passing from the Death Gate. Anti-human odium is my life's blood, transforming my vessel into the Beast.
>
> The joke of human consciousness and what it creates I confront with nihilistic laughter, unconscious cynicism and misanthropic passion! When I say "fuck you all", it might as well be the most sincere thing I have said my whole life! I wish my scream could burn you all, but it can't do fuckin shit! Hahahahahahahah! This is why I have to experiment with fire, poison, bombs, even if the attack fails. Next time it might not, until I satisfy my Egotistical Satanity.
>
> Furthermore I claim myself as part of the international Terrorist Mafia known as ITS. Between egoist conspirators I accepted a criminal offering on the basis of common interest. This is no spiritual union like those of the anarchists. I am not an Eco-extremist, I am a Nihilist Misanthrope as I like to call myself. Of course words mean nothing and are used in a specific context and for my own benefit.

He was arrested 2 years later, plead guilty, sentenced to 8 years and 4 months, and then asked his lawyers to submit an appeal for not getting enough mercy for having plead guilty:[59]

> Nikolaos Karvounakis, originally from the Greek island of Crete, had placed the improvised device packed with 58 nails and sections of metal pipe in a shelter at Princes Street Gardens in January 2018.

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[58] Various Authors. A text dump on eco-extremism [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

[59] Various Authors. A text dump on eco-extremism [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. Original link. Archived link.

Written on the flap inside the box were the words "fuck you all". The device included low grade explosive, and a primitive but disconnected fuse made from a light filament and a battery.

Army explosives experts believed that had it been made operational or accidentally detonated, it would have been capable of causing significant injuries, the high court in Edinburgh heard. Karvounakis later claimed to be linked to a fringe group accused of eco-terrorism which originated in Mexico.

Six weeks after the device was found, the Edinburgh Evening News received an email headed "International Terrorist Group in UK". It contained a link to an extremist website where Karvounakis had anonymously claimed responsibility with a picture of the device and signed "Misanthropos Cacogen".

In December 2020 Police Scotland counter-terrorism officers received intelligence from European counterparts linking him to the offence. DNA taken from tape used in the device was found to belong to him.

John Scullion QC, Karvounakis's defence counsel, said he had been struggling with anxiety and low self-esteem, and had spent increasing amounts of time online. There he had drifted into conversations with extremists, whose beliefs he now repudiated.

Scullion said his client, who pleaded guilty to an offence under the Terrorism Act, had intended to cause disruption but had not planned to injure people, so had left the detonator unconnected. "It is fair to say he now bitterly regrets what he did and will bitterly regret it for the rest of his life," Scullion told the court.

ITS Mexico then began to promote satanist literature in their communiques:[60][61]

I really noticed that mixing of weird ideologies because I saw that ITS were publishing and promoting information from a fascist group called Temple of Blood. Now I've done a lot of work on Atom Waffen division, this militant neo-nazi group and they're linked with Temple of Blood which it's like anarchist-nihilist, esoteric-hitlerist, occultist, like the most weirdest shit you can imagine, all mixed in.

Their system of belief is that there's different ages, different eons which have existed throughout history, different historical ages and that we're living in

[60] Popular Front. 36. The New Wave of Eco-Extremism and Nihilist Militancy [Podcast Interview]. Popular Front Podcast, . Mar 9, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

[61] Popular Front. 71. O9A Rising: The Spread of Britain's Occultist Militant Group [Podcast Interview]. Popular Front Podcast, . Apr 19, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

a particular age now and the Nazi era was almost like an attempt to drag civilization towards the kind of civilization that they want to move towards because they want to move to a new civilization, a new type of person, and they would say that western civilization is decaying, has been made soft by its Judeo-Christian heritage and they're ultimately extremely anti-Christianity, anti-Judaism, they're setting themselves against that very, very strongly, just as a lot of very aggressive satanic or occult groups do, that's the thing they're opposing. And Hitler and that era it's seen as an attempt to combat that and it's almost like a satanic entry into the world and so it's lionized.

Why I know a bit about it is because when I've been covering terrorism cases in the UK involving people on the extreme right wing, involving neo-Nazis, order of nine angles is increasingly coming up as a reference and an influence on these people to the extent that within the last just over a year, we've had four teenagers in the UK jailed for terrorism offences where order of nine angles has come up a lot in the background to those cases.

In one case which was a then sixteen-year-old from Durham who was convicted of several offenses including preparing a terrorist attack, it was essentially prosecuted that he was a neo-Nazi, he was inspired by groups like atom warfare division, but also that he basically became an occult neo-Nazi.

The way it was put in court was that he was heavily influenced by the order of nine angles and he was buying their books, writing about them in his journal and this was something that had completely taken hold of him and it's in other cases as well.

Finally, the admins of the now deleted facebook page for the eco-extremist journal explained their common foundation with fascism:[62]

All anti-civ thought and fascism have the same founding premise and modus operandi. These are that a large chunk of the human population holds down a selected group that could potentially function successfully if these other groups were not around. The solution is thus to cull the land of those people, either the scapegoat of all societal ills (fascism) or the vast majority of people who could not function without the support of techno-industrial society (anarcho-primitivism / anti-civ green anarchy). Both ideologies can be reluctant or coy about the methodology they use or its results ("an ethno-state does not lead directly to genocide", "the destruction of the power grid is not intended to directly kill billions of people"). However, the ethical

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[62] Andy Fleming. Anarchy: Deep in the Woods [Essay]. slackbastard . December 16, 2018. Original link. Archived link.

decision of both is the same: do what needs to be done to allow those who can be free to be free, and damn the consequences. Eco-extremism does not shy away from this.

Various Critiques

Here an anonymous anarchist summarized what they thought of the people who had followed this ideological puritan road:[63]

> What we did find out, was that a few months ago [Abe] promoted on his summer reading list on Atassa Facebook, the book "Iron Gates," which is a fascist written and published book that is set in a concentration camp. Part rape fantasy, part pro-Nazi propaganda. It's also one of the 'go-to' texts promoted by Atomwaffen Divison in the USA, which is like the American version of National Action (Neo-Nazi group in UK). A lot of comrades have pointed to a potential cross over between the Eco-Extremist material and Satanic/Neo-Nazi crap like Atomwaffen who has killed about half a dozen people in the US.

> Yeah, so much for all these "theorists" and ITS "cells" that like to philosophise about what is and what is not "fascism", and how dare the 'anarcho-cops' call them fascists.

> We specifically warn against this EE tendency because of the potential for cross-overs with the nationalist-autonomous & nationalist-anarchist, neo-nazi and indigenous pagan "white tribe" eco-fascists who target the dredge of the anarchist scene with their irrationalist, green authoritarian and runic occult bullshit.

> In the last text-threat from ITS Brazil, where they blame the Hambach Forest defenders for the death of the comrade who fell from the trees, we find the jealousy, the resentment, the bitterness of those who understand nothing about what it is that we are fighting for. In all the texts from ITS these past years we find a gross lack of understanding of what the anarchist ideas are and what anarchist methods are. Instead we just find a perverse and fanatic pathology and a weakness, leading to their ongoing blatant failures and authoritarian outcomes.

Minimalist Anarchism

Remembering back to the beginning of what members of ITS Mexico were doing before they formed the group, as likely a bunch of kids committing sabotage against

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[63] L. More non-news about the "Eco-Extremist Mafia" [Essay]. 325. Oct 23, 2018. Original link. Archived link.

corporations destroying wild habitat they enjoyed. I think it would be nice for those who have the energy, to compassionately hold out a hand, in sketching out an alternative to the long and desolate road we just discussed.

I think the distribution and application of high-level technology will become the primary political conflict of the future, therefore leftists do have to take seriously the protection and re-establishment of more minimum viable technology lifeways if we want to win more people over to our side and make our strategies the tried and tested policies of the future.

This would simply be one ethical outlook with prescriptions within leftist and anarchist discourse worth promoting.

A broad approach with specialized interests

Like I wrote earlier, Ellul is a great person to read for both a critique of technological overconsumption and an antidote to the rigid position of Kaczynski:[64]

> If we see technique as nothing but objects that can be useful (and we need to check whether they are indeed useful); and if we stop believing in technique for its own sake or that of society; and if we stop fearing technique, and treat it as one thing among many others, then we destroy the basis for the power technique has over humanity.

Also, David Charles has some great ideas for how to practice living a low-impact lifestyle:[65]

> Technology is there to solve the little problems of existence and support us in our lives. There's a lot of amazing tech out there and it's easy to get sucked into saying yes to every little advance, whether it's needed or not.
>
> Technology solves problems. That's good. But when the problem is solved, I think we should stop there. Paying for something when I haven't got any cash on me is a mild inconvenience, but my debit card solves it with little fuss. Saving a further twenty seconds at the checkout is simply not a problem that I have.
>
> In fact, far from being a problem solved, shaving seconds from that interaction is actually a bad thing. Solving problems that aren't problems will always have consequences. In this case, it alienates us a little further from the people who serve us our Meal Deals.

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[64] Jacques Ellul. Perspectives on Our Age: Jacques Ellul Speaks on His Life and Work [Book]. House of Anansi Press Perseus-PGW. 2004. Original link. Archived link.

[65] David Charles. Minimum Viable Technology [Essay]. David Charles. September 25, 2015. Original link. Archived link.

I'm far from being against all technology (he says, publishing this on the vast interconnected technologies of the internet), but I do think we should always use the minimum viable technology for a task. In other words, we should use the most basic tools that will still get the job well done. ...

Skills

The more basic the technology, generally speaking, the greater the skills you must learn and deploy.

For example, motorists who grew up in the 40s, 50s and 60s had to become semi-skilled mechanics in order to keep their cars on the road. Modern motorists have no such need. In fact, car manufacturers deliberately make their technology unhackable, so that you must go back to the approved dealer for expensive repairs.

The same is true of modern computers. You used to have to understand the fundamentals of programming to use a PC properly. Nowadays, user interfaces have evolved to the point where the internal workings of your computer are shrouded in mystery. When something goes wrong, the user is clueless and open to exploitation.

Of course, for many people, myself included, this ease of use is a good thing. But ease of use and incomprehending dependence are two completely different things.

Dependence is hierarchical and undemocratic, concentrating knowledge and power in the hands of the few. It reminds me of the worst excesses of medieval religion, where divine forgiveness was sold to the layman by a corrupt hierarchy of priests.

Hidden Benefits

Using the minimum viable technology for a task often has hidden benefits. For example, writing long hand on paper is important to cognitive development in children, helps you learn by combining visual, motor and brain processing, could make us more creative and stave off mental decline as we get older. Not bad for something that is so obviously "backward" in this screen-filled age.

These hidden benefits apply to almost every positive constraint that I've experimented with: No Hot Showers, No Mobile Phone, No Supermarket.

The Tool is not the Task

In our search for the most efficient technology, we forget that 99% of a task is not about the tools we use.

Cleaning yourself is not about power showers, hot water tanks or expensive shampoos; it's about water and scrubbing. Jumping into a lake would do it.

Communication is not about 4G, wifi or GSM; it's about talking to other human beings. Like the ones you see on the train every morning.

Grocery shopping isn't about foil-packed for freshness, 138 different varieties of soup or self-service checkouts; it's about building a strong and healthy relationship to your food and the people who supply that food. You find that at your local greengrocer, not in the aisles of a supermarket warehouse.

The Best Things in Life are Simple

Using the minimum viable technology reminds us that the best things in life are not complicated.

There is nothing that gives me greater pleasure than pulling on a pair of walking shoes (my minimum viable technology for travel without blisters), slinging a small backpack over my shoulder (MVT for basic food and camping gear), walking out into the sunset, sleeping the night on a hilltop in my bivvy bag (MVT for sleeping) and waking to the warming glow of the sunrise.

I don't need much more than that. Anything else is a luxury and distracts from the task at hand: exploring the corners of the life I have been given.

Technology is there to support us when we need it, not to be taken for granted. When the support falls away – and it will one day – will you be able to stand on your own two feet?

Pragmatic Left-Anarchism

People who identify as left anarchists differ from most other anarchists in a purely surface level way, in that when asked how we identify politically, we desire to make a pragmatic optics decision, in explicitly making clear that we're both leftists and anarchists.

That way for now, anchoring the term anarchist explicitly to a mainstream struggle of left vs. right economic & egalitarian politics.

The same way some socialists make the optics decision to tag on democratic to the word socialist.

I think this is an important strategy for being able to get our foot in the door with most people by overcoming a caricature and definition, that of being people who just want chaos and disorder, which we've been tarred with since almost all the way back to the beginning.

So, depending on who you're talking to or what platform you want to stay unbanned from, I think we should accept that we may need to hide our power level and sometimes even go undercover in those spaces.

This does however put us at odds with one small group of anarchists who identify with the term post-left anarchy, in that we desire to engage in tactical left-unity on the big-tent campaigns of the present, even though we do still value forming solely anarchist campaigns and planning uniquely anarchist strategies as well. So, the term can also help identify us as being in the majority camp of anarchists who simply are not post-left anarchists, and don't hold to purely post-left values.

Finally, here's one simple way of explaining anarchism which we think works well for anarchists to use for clarity and promotion of the political philosophy:[66]

> Anarchism is a political theory that is skeptical of the justification of authority and power. Anarchism is usually grounded in moral claims about the importance of individual liberty, often conceived as freedom from domination. Anarchists also offer a positive theory of human flourishing, based upon an ideal of equality, community, and non-coercive consensus building.

A wide array of approaches

Despite holding some anti-pragmatic positions like 'conscientiously abstaining' from voting, Colin Ward's life's work provides a great example on the value of pursuing an incrementalist approach:[67]

> Ward's anarchism rests on three main ideas: pluralism, the presence of anarchy in existing society, and a focus on problem-solving. First, Ward argues that all societies solve problems using a variety of mechanisms. They use commercial, market-based techniques; they use authority and directive and bureaucratic techniques; and they also use techniques of mutuality – techniques of mutual aid and cooperative self-help. Within this pluralist framework, 'anarchy' refers to the space in which the latter techniques of mutual aid and cooperative self-help predominate. The aim of anarchism should be to try to push society in the direction of greater anarchy in this sense – to shift the balance of society's pluralistic problem-solving in a more anarchic direction.

> Second, related to this pluralist perspective, is Ward's claim that anarchy is already very much part of our social world:

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[66] Andrew Fiala. Anarchism [Essay]. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Winter 2021. Original link. Archived link.

[67] Stuart White. The incremental anarchist [Essay]. Radical Philosophy #161. May 2010. Pages 67-68. Original link. Archived link.

far from being a speculative vision of a future society ... [anarchy] is a description of a mode of human organization, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society ... the anarchist alternatives are already there, in the interstices of the dominant power structure. If you want to build a free society, the parts are all at hand. (*Anarchy in Action*)

Examples of anarchy in action that Ward gives include Alcoholics Anonymous, Friendly Societies, squatters' movements, tenants' housing co-operatives and efforts to bring workplaces under 'workers' control'. The anarchist aim should be to build out from already existing anarchy in society, extending its coverage to wider and wider spheres of social life: To do this, anarchist thinking must, in Ward's view, have a resolutely practical, problem-solving focus. Anyone wanting to theorize the intricacies of 'autonomy' or 'anarchy' as abstract concepts will look to Ward's writings in vain. His work is overwhelmingly concerned with discussion of concrete issues such as housing, urban planning, education, welfare and transport, trying to show how the anarchic techniques of mutual aid and cooperative self-help might be applied.

Housing was a particular interest – he spent his early career working as an architect – and illustrates his general approach. Here he was highly critical of state-heavy efforts, led by middle-class housing professionals, to provide housing for the working classes. In an open letter to the Labour MP Tony Crosland, then shadow minister for housing, Ward drew out the paternalism he saw in the social-democratic tradition:

You ... see the homeless, the ill-housed and overcrowded and the newly-weds just coming up for membership of the Housing Shortage Club, as the inert objects, the raw material of policy, waiting to be processed by the Housing Problems Industry. (*Housing: An Anarchist Approach*, 1976)

Against this paternalism, Ward asserted the principle of 'dweller control' of housing, exemplified in tenants' co-operatives, self-build projects and, not least, squatters' movements.

Ward's resistance to paternalism inevitably brought him into conflict with the Marxist tradition. In his 1985 book *When We Build Again*, Ward refers to the 'ludicrous polemics among Marxist pundits'. Reflecting on the claim that council-house provision is 'decommodification', Ward points to the older use of the word 'commodity' to refer to that which is useful or commodious. He then argues that, in this sense, the mass council housing of the postwar period has indeed been a tremendously successful experiment in 'decommodifying' how many working-class people live.

It would nevertheless be quite wrong to see Ward's anarchism only in terms of a series of interventions in specific policy areas. In a 1968 interview for BBC Radio 3, he described himself as 'an anarchist-communist, in the Kropotkin tradition'. And underpinning the various interventions there is indeed a unifying vision drawn from the work of Kropotkin and from Ebenezer Howard's original conception of the garden city. Ward edited a version of Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops* for Freedom Press in 1975 with commentary on what he saw as its contemporary relevance in the new era of energy crisis and stagflation.

The vision is of a society in which local communities are the prime political unit and in which economic activity is localized around a mix of agricultural/horticultural and industrial production. The citizen might work on her allotment on Monday, teach for the next three days a week for the Teachers' Guild in a local school (where children's attendance is not compulsory) and then spend Friday in the Community Workshop making items for a Local Exchange and Trading Scheme. One evening a week might be spent at a meeting of the neighbourhood council.

Ward stood, in effect, at the confluence of two traditions. On the one hand, he knew his anarchist classics, particularly Kropotkin's work, and he drew on them. On the other, he was inspired by the diffuse traditions of working-class and popular self-help – resolutely practical traditions concerned to get things done, to make the world better in some simple but important and measurable way, and which have little time for theoretical niceties. He sought to bring the traditions into dialogue, for their mutual benefit.

Summarizing what tactics I view as most effective going forward, I wrote an essay discussing the role of the far-left, effective activism & violence:[68]

Mutual aid – We should put the time into helping our neighbors and volunteering, for example on a food not bombs stall, to both manifest and get to enjoy the positive benefits of a communalist caring society.

Direct action – We should try to mostly choose targets which the largest amount of people can sympathize with, for instance the sabotaging of a fox hunt in order to highlight the direction we'd like to move in with legal animal rights, going from mostly ending blood sports, to mostly ending animal captivity, to mostly ending hunting for taste pleasure.

Campaigning – We should look for the easiest squeeze points to rack up small wins, like the picketing of a cafe to reclaim lost wages, so that word spreads and it creates a domino effect.

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[68] Theo Slade. On The Far-Left, Effective Activism & Violence [Essay]. Activist Journeys. February 21, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

Education – We should be educating ourselves and helping others know what work and rent union to join, what to keep a record of at work, how to defend yourself from rapists and fascists, how to crack a squat and how to write a press release, etc.

Electoral politics – Its often obvious which party is the lesser evil long-term and I think it's virtuous to vote that way as more people will have a qualitatively less bad experience than the few who do. So it's the trolley problem. We wouldn't desire to put in the electoral system ourselves, but some of us engage with it for a few hours every 4 years and use the discourse surrounding it to rally people to the far-left.

We need to get well educated on how even the baby step policies toward the left would be an improvement on where we are now, we need to learn the internal politicking of government and get good at having friendly arguments with comedy to appeal to friends and acquaintances basic intuitions.

The goal being that we can talk the latest news and (1) Win over conservatives to obvious empirically better policies on the left, and (2) Win over liberals when center-left parties are in power to feel dismayed at the slow pace of change, and so acknowledge how much better it would be if there was a market socialist in the position willing to rally people to demonstrate and strike to push through bills.

This still must entail a cynical clarity about how many swing voters you meet will be responding to the seesaw effect in politics of blaming the last person in power for everything wrong, so knowing how much time to invest and picking your battles.

The limits of violence

An Experimental List of Anarchist Principles:[69]

Some groups and projects try to put together an aims and principles list to explain what campaign news and philosophy they will focus on, and I think this can positively influence what actions people take and think are justified. Some examples I know of include:

- By Any Means Necessary[70]
- Anarchist Radio Network[71]

[69] Theo Slade. An Experimental List of Anarchist Principles [Essay]. Activist Journeys. May 1, 2022. Original link. Archived link.

[70] Various Authors. BAMN Principles [Statement]. BAMN. accessed 25 July 2022. Original link. Archived link.

[71] Various Authors. Basic principles [Statement]. A-Radio Network. accessed 25 July 2022. Original link. Archived link.

- Green Anti-Capitalist Front[72]

You also have people using slogans like 'by any means necessary' going all the way back to Malcolm X & Franz Fanon in the 60s, which I guess is an attempt to say we'll go as far as we're pushed, so be careful what state terror tactics you use on us.

My aims are reflected in the CrimethInc. exercise in what an anarchist program might look like.[73]

And I've already written about my ethics broadly,[74] but I'll try to be more specific here, in experimenting with drawing up a list of principles that I think would be useful to the calculation of what tactics I think are useful and justifiable in the UK today which is in my view a non-revolutionary period, which to me just means a time when social tensions are not at their height:

1) Never act with reckless indifference to human and non-human animal life.

2) Never physically hurt people for the purpose of achieving political goals as it runs counter to our philosophy on the left that material conditions create the person and so we should make every peaceful effort to rehabilitate people.

Some tricky to explain examples that are justified, but only just outside this principle are:

(A) Community self-defense and self-defense by proxy, where you might desire to fight fascists in the street in order to block them from marching through immigrant communities or where you might desire to push your way through huntsmen in order to save a fox from getting mauled to death by dogs.

(B) Survivor-led vigilantism, where to the extent that some current institutions fail to rehabilitate people and the process of seeking justice through the institutions available can sometimes cause more trauma than its worth, then personal violence in order to resolve feelings of helplessness in the face of evil acts can sometimes be reasonably viewed as justified to regain feelings of agency.

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[72] Various Authors. Aims & Principles [Statement]. Green Anti-Capitalist Media. accessed 25 July 2022. Original link. Archived link.

[73] CrimethInc. What Would an Anarchist Program Look Like? [Essay]. CrimethInc.. November 2, 2020. Original link. Archived link.

[74] Theo Slade. My Virtue-Existentialist Ethics [Essay]. Activist Journeys. September 20, 2020. Original link. Archived link.

3) Never take actions on the basis of anti-science beliefs or with the intent to propagate anti-science beliefs e.g. disproven conspiracy theories.

4) Take care to respect the difference between property which is personally and privately owned.

So, it could be seen as ethical to choose material targets of evil actors in order to cause economic damage and make a statement, so long as in the case of personal property, the item has no intrinsic sentimental value and can be replaced because the person is wealthy and that the item was paid for through the exploitation of others labor. Or is private property, meaning the means of production which should be owned collectively anyway.

The action would be an outlet for legitimate anger against that which causes us suffering and a means of developing people's thinking and creating a wider base of people joined in sympathy for those ideals.

For example, if taking the risk to slash slaughterhouse trucks' tyres in the dead of night both draws attention to animal suffering and also helps you to develop stronger bonds with a group of people and learn from other liberation struggles, then the action is both productive and leads to personal growth.

5) Never take actions in the hopes of helping in part instigate a revolutionary war sooner than it's reasonable to believe you would have the capability to win. Similarly don't use rhetoric about how tensions in society have escalated to the state of civil war or a third world war. For example, even if the revolutionary left got really good at assassinating captains of industry and getting away with it, there would be reasonable fears around the psychology of people who would take such an act against people who they could have grown up and been socially conditioned to be themselves, which would inexorably lead to a more authoritarian society and worse foundations on which to work towards a better society.

I do think we can hypothesize the unrealistic case of 99% of society desiring a referendum on a shift from parliamentary representative system to a federated spokes council system and the MP's dragging their feet, the same way both parties gerrymander the boundaries to make it easier to win despite it being the one issue most everyone agrees is bad, and people needing to storm the halls of power to force a vote to happen.

More likely though, an opportunity for revolution might arise from such a confluence of events as climate refugees and worker gains forcing the state and corporations into trying to crack down on freedoms in order to preserve their power and enough people resisting that move, who are then able take power and usher in radical policy change, with either the army deciding to stand down or splitting into factions.

Most can sympathize with quick revolutions against dictatorships where the result is a freer society, like the Kurdish uprising in Northern Syria which took power from a regime who had rolled tanks on demonstrators and outlawed teaching of their native language.

But, even there, there are key foundations you need to work from, like the probability you won't just give an excuse for the oppressor committing even worse horrors as was the case with the Rohingya militants who ambushed a police checkpoint, resulting in army & citizen campaign to burn down many villages, plus murder and rape those that couldn't get away.

Also, there would be a responsibility to put down arms after winning political freedoms and a majority are in favor of diplomacy through electoral politics, like in Northern Ireland today.

Under representative democracies, the sentiment of most is that, even if it could be argued that a war of terror (not a revolutionary war) against the ruling class was the easiest route to produce a better society, that it would still be ethically wrong to be the person who takes another's life just because it's the easiest way. Since regardless of manufactured consent or anything else you still could have worked to build a coalition to overcome those obstacles.

And I agree, it would be an act of self-harm to treat life with such disregard when we could have been that same deluded person shrouded in the justificatory trappings of society which normalizes that behavior. I don't think the way we win today is by treating a cold bureaucratic system with equally cold disregard, by justifying our resort to threat and violence because we have fewer resources, and a belief in the importance of our message. Time on earth is a foundational value worth fighting for, and everybody deserves some amount of breathing room to make mistakes and learn from them.

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