

## Kevin Tucker on Kaczynski

If Ted's interview wasn't bad enough the first time around, reprinting it just offers some validation as the title 'Primitivist Myths' implies. That it was



anthropologically 'fact checked' made it even worse. Did anyone even bother to read the whole thing? What anyone who reads it with any grain of salt walks away with is that Ted has little grasp on the concept of anarcho-primitivism (AP), green anarchy (GA), or anything of the sort. This coming despite years of effort on the part of myself, John Zerzan, and the many others who've attempted to deal with Ted's methodical and ideologically bound arguments.

His arguments are just bullshit. Point by point (each referring to primitive societies);

I. Hunting and gathering societies were vegan: Hunting is a part of the descriptive title. Anyone who claims that gatherer/hunters were or are vegan is simply a moron. It's that simple. This has nothing to do with an AP perspective even if the interviewers were vegan and AP. Ted conflates animal rights with AP/GA, etc., and I'd hope that not only would people understand that rights are contrary to anarchy, but that rights are inclusive to civilization and liberation is exclusive. It's not that difficult really.

II. Most primal societies were "cruel to animals": Case points of cruelty are different than a society being "cruel to animals". Humans are not perfect, nor is any animal and nor should they be. Things happen all the time that are far from ideal. I agree with Ted, we shouldn't try and make some principles about how you should always act towards each other or other species, but is this something that the AP/GA milieu is guilty of? I don't think so.

Animal liberation is about ending the systemic torture and enslavement of animals, not their pain and ultimate deaths. You'll find similar acts of 'cruelty' throughout all species, and while I'm not so keen on it, I don't want to suppose that I know more than they do. Is toying with a wounded or dead animal an act of sedition or a means to familiarize the young with the animals their existence is tied to? More often than not, I'd say the latter is true, but does that mean the former doesn't happen? Of course not, but that doesn't negate AP either.

III. Lack of gender equality: This is really another groundball issue and one I'd hope other anarchists would be able to notice quickly. Equality is an issue of equal rights. That's a legal issue. Egalitarianism is about equal access and treatment. That's a social issue. Nomadic gatherer-hunter societies lack not only

the existence of the former, but the sociopolitical institutions that would make an issue at all. They are, however, the most egalitarian societies to have existed.

Ted brings the point home by drawing on 'wife beating' among the Mbuti without realizing he improves himself in the same quote: "...and the wife is expected to fight back." Patriarchy is asserted not by violence or male violence, but by institutionalizing a subservient role among women that includes a virtue of not fighting back. Simply put, non-egalitarian societies turn women into persons without agency. Women in nomadic gatherer-hunter and horticultural societies typically not only instigate fights, retaliate, defend themselves as individuals or a group, withhold food and other social contributions, but refuse to see themselves as victims of a situation where they have no control. They are autonomous and not dependents. That comes back to egalitarianism.

And that comes back to Ted's inclusion of the examples that Ted includes among the Siriono which show clear concepts of patriarchal domination and a preference for males. This is common among horticulturalists where sedentism, population growth and their consequences lay root to civilized thinking and behavior, which is why AP draws on domestication. Having concepts and socializing them are two different things as Yolanda and Robert Murphy's classic *Women in the Forest* shows to anyone who actually looks into the female perspective of this 'male domination'. Not surprisingly, they go through the ritual and religious motions without ever granting full authority to the males. It's a show that occasionally lands off stage.

Again, domestication is the key. The Inuit and Aborigines have similar concepts of a male defined religious order but posses domesticated dogs that carry their surplus society and high rates of sedentism or close contact with sedentary societies respectively.

Far from proving points of AP 'myths', Ted has merely glossed over the efforts of people like myself who've spent the bulk of their effort looking at these 'grey areas' of domestication and sedentism to look at the 'ugly' and 'unromantic' sides of primal life and understand what exactly they might mean.

IV. 'Original Affluent Society' or lack of work thesis: This has been a point of contention since Marshall Sahlins declared it in the mid-1960s. It has been

argued furiously on both sides and there are case points that show that some nomadic gatherer-hunter societies 'work' for 20-30 hours a week and others that show other bands 'work' for twice that or more. It comes down to a band by band basis and can't be said to be wholly true or false.

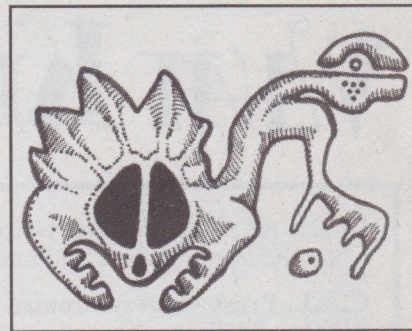
I agree that emphasis shouldn't be placed on the arbitrary distinction of 'work' and 'non-work' but on the existence of work itself. Work is something you do for someone else. It's a job whether it is working a field to create an agricultural surplus or selling electronics in a chain store. Nomadic gatherer-hunters, like most in primal societies, don't work, period. Leisure is the sacred cow of a capitalist society and there is nothing to be gained from feeding it.

However, disagreeing with the terminology does not debase the entire argument or point of the argument. I think this is an issue and avoid those terms, but Ted has elevated this point to ridiculous degrees as if to challenge the basics of AP theory in general. I just don't see it.

V. Most of these societies were non-violent: There's no grounding for this argument. There is no war among nomadic gatherer-hunters because they lack the motivations and social context for it. If you have a fluid band composition that includes people from all bands that you would potentially be warring with, there's not much reason or incentive to war. War arises with the material and ecological needs of semi-sedentary societies where kinship is central (as relates to ownership and production of gardens) and hence solidified enough to create an 'us' and 'them'.

Violence does happen and possibly more often among nomadic gatherer-hunters who take their affairs into their own hands. But the violence is an outburst without the drama or mask of being a society of strangers. It is kept in check by social reality and rarely escalates as the offending parties can either get over it or split apart. The stagnancy of sedentism is what amplifies the roots of violence and makes war possible.

VI. Competition and violent competition exist: This revolves around a line from Ted: "If a physical fight isn't a form of competition, then nothing is." And that is patently false. Fights occur because all animals have a vast range of emotion, not because we see the world as an ordered hierarchy that we must



assert ourselves within. Most fights do deal with relationships not because of 'access to mates', but because anyone who's been in a relationship can tell you that they are highly emotional things and that a sexual or loving relationship has so many more layers of emotion and bonding to them that they often cause emotional outbursts of all types.

'Arguments about food' are often indicative of feelings in general. And what is referred to as an argument here is more like the heckling that goes on incessantly among nomadic gatherer-hunters. It's a social check, but a light hearted one. Arguments do happen over food, but only an outsider geared to think in crudely scientific simplicity would see them as competition. Fights and arguments do occur without conspiracy or grand schemes.

VII. Damage to the environment: This point goes unsubstantiated and is questionable. Again, humans are no angels, but it serves no purpose to 'drain the pond upon which one sleeps'. Over hunting, I can guess refers to the highly contested 'overkill theories'. And where is the "reckless use of fire"? Fire was often used and to favor the growth of certain plants, but hardly was it ever reckless.

Unfortunately there isn't space given here to really go point by point, so I'll leave this for common sense. Ted is a revolutionary in the strict sense. His goals cannot be blurred by visions of what has or could be. I appreciate those who push aside utopian thinking, but it's one thing to draw on murky areas and another to essentially turn the utopianism on its head and toss the whole thing out.

And, last I checked, anarchy works because of personal responsibility. Moralistic? Maybe it's not the primitivists who need their 'romanticism' checked...

For wildness and anarchy,  
Kevin Tucker

**Correction:**

The correct address for *No Quarter* (reviewed in issue #61) is [captainmisionismycopilot@hotmail.com](mailto:captainmisionismycopilot@hotmail.com)