

ANTI-AUTHORITY

DAILY REVOLT

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# RETURN FIRE

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INDIVIDUAL WILL

DE-CIVILISATION

**Rebels Behind Bars**

(text by prisoners & repression news)

**Memory as a Weapon**

(revisiting near and far moments of enclosure, betrayal or confrontation)

**Power Down**

(agitation around the Hydro-Québec 735kV pylon project, Canada)

**To Love the Inhuman**

(review: John Zerzan's 'Animal Dreams')


**The Firestarting**

(invocation for a cleansing blaze)

...and more!

**VOLUME 4, CHAPTER IV**

**AUTUMN 2016**



In the suffocating grip of our daily routines, what space do we find for spontaneity? For wonder for this Earth we share, even as it is diminished? For companionship not relegated to sharing in the misery of (alternative) consumption, the segregated couple, the nuclear family? For the power of self-creation and subsistence outside the markets that are imposed?

The hurt and absences of this way of life too often become turned inward, a shame we carry as if it were our own. We are sold pre-packaged aspirations – always to be a little deferred so as to respond to the requirements of the dominant reality – when we want immediacy, heroic lives of adventure, belonging, caring and daring; life not survival. Always, the desires of those who exploit, imprison, toxify and repress us are posited as above those of ourselves, those for revolt.

We are kept on edge yet always distracted, close to breaking point, cowed and disempowered by disciplines or puffed up by divisions, mesmerised by the enforced idiocy of the spectacle in which even the drama of a dying world has been turned into a sort of reality TV series, portrayed as completely out of our hands.

The figureheads of economic growth and 'development' would have us turn a blind eye to misery that can't be portrayed in statistics. We have become determined to overturn their calculations. Our visions are of full unemployment, zero voter turnout, continual hi-tech breakdowns instead of breakthroughs, a rampant outbreak of the 'crime' named freedom; until we forget these categories and many more. People emerging from their different cages, forming face-to-face affinities to relearn the art of gifting not just competing, of respect for the more-than-human, of dignity and rebellion. A landscape wild with life again beaconing us to rejoin the dance, the blurring or dissolution of borders, genders, roles and prescriptions. Life without deadtime. And these nascent visions, however partial, are perpetually becoming armed. **The only question is where they will find breath next.**

Feel that breath, let it awaken in you.





# REBELS BEHIND BARS

– text by prisoners & repression news

## 'If Fighting for Freedom is a Crime, Innocence is Really the Worst of All'

– about the forthcoming anti-terrorist trial against anarchists and anti-authoritarians in Belgium

In late 2008, amidst diffuse hostilities triggered by the revolt in Greece following the assassination of Alexis by police [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg17*], the Belgian Federal Prosecutor launches an investigation of anarchists and anti-authoritarians. In 2010, on the basis of a list of actions that the police attribute to the “anarchist movement” and while the struggle against the construction of a new detention centre in Steenokkerzeel is underway, magistrate Isabelle Panou is assigned to the investigation, now under the anti-terrorist law. In May, then in September 2013, a dozen searches took place within this investigation, the searches targeting different homes as well as the anarchist library Acrata in Brussels. It is on this occasion that the existence of an anti-terrorist investigation first emerges. This investigation is led by the anti-terrorist branch of the Federal Judicial Police backed by the State Security and the General Intelligence and Security Agency of the army as well as various anti-terrorist branches of other European countries. The investigation is closed in 2014, culminating in the referral of twelve anarchists and anti-authoritarians to the Court Chambers.

After a session for the legalization of the specific methods of research used in this investigation (shadowing, phone tapping, microphone placement in one house, secret searches, attempts at infiltration, placement of video surveillance devices outside homes and inside one home) in October 2015, the case is referred to the Court Chamber. The sitting of the Chamber is scheduled for May 10, 2016 and will determine whether a trial should be held, and if so, under what charges<sup>[1]</sup>.

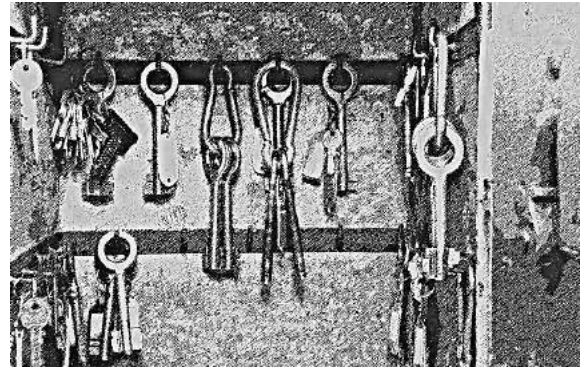
**In this investigation, the Federal Prosecutor has attempted to draw up no less than 29 individualized charges.** Nine comrades are accused of belonging to a terrorist organization and involvement in terrorist activities for more or less extended periods. Three of them are also accused of being the “leaders”. In addition, three other people arrested in the wake of an attack on the police station of Marolles<sup>[2]</sup> are accused of belonging to this terrorist group for a day, as well as various charges related to the attack. This is as far as

concerns the general accusation.

This is then complemented by more specific charges such as participation in an unauthorised demonstration outside the detention centre 127bis in Steenokkerzeel (transformed into “attempted arson” and a “terrorist offence” by the prosecutors), preparation and participation in an attack on the police station in Marolles (qualified by the prosecution as a “terrorist offence”), assault and wounding of police officers on several occasions, obstruction of the public highway, damage in various forms, shoplifting, arson of prison guards’ cars in the Ittre prison car park, incitement to commit terrorist offences... **It should be noted that these specific allegations are each aimed at specific comrades, that is to say not everyone has been charged with all the allegations.**

The backdrop to this investigation that has gone on for several years and produced no fewer than 32 boxes of papers, is that the Federal Prosecutor hypothesizes that an “anarchist terrorist group” would be active, in particular in Brussels, and that the accused would have “participated” in or “favoured” those activities. For example it has produced a list of about 150 attacks, a good number of which incendiary, against the structures of domination, police stations, courts, banks, companies that enrich themselves out of incarceration, construction sites, cars of diplomats, Eurocrats and NATO officials, mobile phone antennas... All these attacks took place in Brussels and surrounding area between 2008 and 2013.

The invention of a terrorist group that would be responsible for all of these facts (if only by the fact of “having rendered them possible”) allows pretty pirouettes for the prosecution: a library becomes a place of recruitment, discussions become clandestine meetings, leaflets and newspapers of anarchist critique become urban guerrilla manuals, demos and rallies become calls to terrorism, the affinity ties between people in struggle and the self-organization that might flow from them become “a structured terrorist group.” The invention of an “anarchist terrorist group” is obviously a rather clumsy attempt by the State to reduce anti-authoritarian and revolutionary subversion to the work of a single “structured group”. In trying to put a handful of inconvenient anarchists behind bars the State is seeking to discourage the refractory ones from taking direct action against what oppresses and exploits us



and impose absolute silence on any desires, possibilities and critical reflections that clash with this authoritarian world.

What has been committed to trial therefore is a mosaic of struggles, revolts, ideas, direct actions, critique, revolutionary imaginaries, agitations that have been attempting to attack dominion for years. **In this, the possible trial concerns not only the comrades accused, but also each individual, every anarchist, every revolutionary, every rebel against order, every insubordinate to authority who refuses to stand idly by in the face of exploitation and oppression.** What is being targeted is the search for autonomy in action, self-organization in the struggle, direct action in all its diversity, the choice to defend and disseminate anarchist and revolutionary ideas, to participate along with other rebels in self-organized and autonomous combat. And finally, without any doubt, a combative approach of anarchism that starts off from the individual, affinity, informality.

It would be absurd to separate the repression that is striking some anarchists and anti-authoritarians today from all the repression that is seeking to subdue (often preventively) any criticism of the established order and revolt. By dint of “terrorist threats”, refugee crisis, the fight against crime and very real wars, State repression today is going into top gear. At a time when change and restructuring is changing the grounds of social conflict faster and faster, neutralizing those who disturb their thinking and their actions is part of a set that targets the exploited and oppressed: the hardening of the conditions of survival, the militarization of borders, the imposition of massive technological control, the construction of new detention camps[...]

Defending oneself against this repressive coup that wants to send comrades to court on charges of terrorism is to defend any possibility and space of anarchist and anti-authoritarian action. [...] And, by solidarity with the accused comrades, to face the State repression aimed at paralyzing all subversive action.

If fighting for freedom is a crime, innocence is really the worst of all.

1. ed. – In the end, as comrades in solidarity noted shortly afterwards, the May 10th session "was cut short, the judge having raised the issue of the language in which the prospective trial should take place. Indeed, all of those potentially charged declared nothing during their hearings, but most of them had nothing to say... in Dutch! While the procedure was continued in French [ed. – the other 'official' language in Belgium]... Not knowing how to solve this "problem" at the time, the Chambre du Conseil was postponed. No new date has been set as yet."

2. ed. – As a part of an ongoing struggle against prisons and the construction of a new deportation prison specifically, anarchists called for an offensive demonstration against borders and all types of imprisonment. Across half of Brussels, the State responded by issuing a prohibition to gather as more than five people, enforced by civil and riot police (some patrolling with machine-guns). A few hours after the demonstration should have taken place, dozens of people attacked the Marolles police station; it and numerous police cars were heavily damaged, and two policemen were injured. Four people were arrested in the area afterwards and accused of this attack.

## 'Tato' and Javier Sentenced (Chile)

[ed. – continued from *Return Fire vol.3 pg79*]



"FIRE TO THEIR PRISONS AND THEIR MACHINES"

Prefix: Note that in a letter in June, Natalia 'Tato' Collado mentioned that she does not have any relationship with Javier; therefore they are mentioned as part of the same case, but not related in a way beyond that.

On trial, both anarchists were found guilty of burning the bus, and both sentenced to 3 years and a day of prison, without the possibility of legal benefits. Considering that the investigation process lasted approximately one year, the comrades should be finishing this sentence in May 2018.

**ONWARDS; THEY CANNOT CONTROL THE WILD**



The mural, in Lima, Peru, reads "JAVIER PINO & NATALIA COLLADO STANDING UP AND FIGHTING: DOWN WITH ANTHROPOCENTRIC SOCIETY"

## 'MUCH MORE THAN A BLOW'

[ed. – Comrades from Barcelona offer their thoughts on anarchist understandings of, and responses to, repression. Since these words were written, Spain has seen a wave of repression against anarchists [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg82*], although we are pleased to note that 'Operation Pandora part II' charges have now been dismissed.]



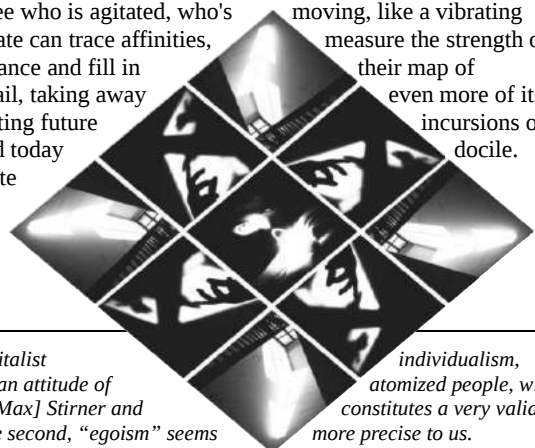
In general, the insurrectionalist analysis of repression has been that of a blow or a series of blows that seek to punish the most combative sector and discourage future attacks. To this vision corresponds the following practice of response: knowing the list of court cases, defending the freedom of those charged, and counterattacking in order to demonstrate that the repression has managed to sow neither fear nor paralysis. Or to summarize: in the face of repression, continue attacking. And why not? To water down combativeness because there have been consequences is a disgraceful error, and one committed by the Organization [ed. – slang for the anarcho-syndicalist union C.N.T., National Confederation of Labour, in Spain] and its Libertarian Movement several times during the 20th century.

**But repression is much more than a blow.** It forms part of a whole process of social engineering that seeks to transform the social terrain to facilitate total surveillance and restrict the possibilities of struggle. The repressive part of the process tries above all to isolate a subversive sector from society.

[...] Repression functions like this: before any arrests, there exists a continual campaign by the State to convert everyone into civil snitches, individualistic<sup>[1]</sup>, unsolidaristic people, and superficial morons. This is achieved through advertising, TV shows, movies (being that we are social and symbolic beings, narratives are extremely influential on human beings), consumerism, laws, economic competition, narcotic apparatuses like Twitter and cellphones, etc. [Silvo] Berlusconi, [ed. – four times the Prime Minister] in Italy, directed the perfect example of such social restructuring: before entering politics, he consolidated a media power that pursued this transformation of values in Italian society in order to "take the water away from the fish." From a solidaristic and combative society that supported the forceful struggles of the 60s and 70s – struggles subdued only thanks to the ensemble formed by the compromising nature of the reformist communists, the vanguardism of the radical communists and a good application of state terrorism – a superficial, consumerist society emerged in the 2000s that didn't care about the totalitarian practices that the State used to repress anarchists; anarchists that remained alone and as such were extremely easy to repress.

If the people with the most radical critiques don't intervene to sabotage this process of social engineering, spreading counter-narratives and constructing material bases capable of supporting another way of existing, everyone will have just two options: either become superficial idiots in order not to remain isolated, or become rarities that belong to one or another urban tribe (one of which could be the anarchists).

[...] The State deals out the repressive blow and observes the results. Far from being the only ones repressed in the last few years, anarchists share this honor with *independistas* [ed. – Catalan separatists], Muslims, immigrants, Roma people, and many more sectors of society. Each blow plays a distinct note as if one were dealing with a musical instrument. After a blow, they see who is agitated, who's moving, like a vibrating guitar string. In doing so, the State can trace affinities, measure the strength of support of each bastion of resistance and fill in their map of even more of its incursions on docile. governed society with more detail, taking away opacity in the interest of facilitating future a territory previously hostile and today The effect of this continuous state cartography operation is that of increasingly controlling society through the isolation of any subversion.



1. We don't want to confuse this capitalist which is not an ideology but rather an attitude of the individualism that comes from [Max] Stirner and critique of capitalist society. For the second, "egoism" seems

individualism, atomized people, with constitutes a very valid more precise to us.

**Some Light on the Investigation Leading to the Imprisonment of the Comrade Arrested on April 13<sup>th</sup> [+ related events] & subsequent resistance (Spain, Germany, Holland)**

**What Led to the Arrest of the Comrade in Barcelona**

On April 13<sup>th</sup> with a brief press release issued by the Cos of the *Mossos d'Esquadra* [ed. – autonomous Catalan police force], the police operation in which the comrade arrested in Barcelona currently captive in Cologne (Germany) accused of expropriating a bank in Aachen was described.

According to this press release, the operation responded to compliance with an International Letter of Request; the magistrates of Aachen had issued an arrest warrant two days before the operation for the anarchist militant in Barcelona. What the note did not explain, and what was not publicly known previously is how the arrest and the searches by the CME in the Gracia and Carmelo districts of Barcelona were not the simple execution of an international request, but the culmination of a long and focused collaboration between the German and Spanish police and judicial systems, with the active participation of the Catalan autonomous police. The involvement of the *Mossos d'Esquadra* in the case begins long before last April and, as has been shown, went far beyond a purely passive and executory role.

**An Ordinary Morning in Aachen**

On the morning of November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014 a group of armed persons entered the Pax Bank<sup>[1]</sup> branch in the city of Aachen, in Westphalia, in the west of the country. After emptying the safe and tying up the bank employees, they leave the office without causing damage or personal injury. In the following days, the police brigade in charge of investigations, the *Landeskriminalamt Nordrhein-Westfalen* (NRW LKA), will link this expropriation with two other assaults that occurred in recent years in the city<sup>[2]</sup> and will launch a true – and unsuccessful – media campaign of denunciation, publicly spreading the details of the robbery and offering rewards of thousands of Euros to anyone who can provide information on suspicious persons. The LKA insisted so much in this strategy, as to decide to use for this campaign a despicable popular television program, broadcast on one of the country's leading channels: 'XY Aktenzeichen XY... ungelöst' ("File XY... unsolved"). It is a reality show of openly para-police character where there are morbidly exposed cases that the



police have not been able to solve, showing images from security cameras, clothing found at the place of the "crime", identikit and reconstructions of the facts to impress and encourage the mass of spectators to assist the state organs and to denounce other people.

**The Wig, the Gloves & the Can**

Four months after the action, in March 2015, the investigation takes a new direction with the arrival on the scene of the Catalan police. They send a note in response to the request made by LKA, internationally, in January, by circulating the extracted genetic profiles from DNA samples<sup>[3]</sup> that would have been found at the crime scene, looking for possible matches on databases from other states. According to the *Mossos*, the profile of a sample taken from a wig found near the Pax Bank in Aachen in November would coincide with a sample from its genetic database, a trace extracted from a glove found in the street after a direct action of a political nature, that occurred in the district of Sants in Barcelona in June 2009. From here begins a joint investigation in which the police forces of both states share information and undertake intensive research into what the German press has defined as "the movement of occupied houses of the extreme left of Barcelona" and, according to the arguments presented to the media by prosecutors and police in Aachen, has been the main stage of the investigation. During the investigation (still according to the police version), at the end of June the agents of the information division of the *Mossos* surreptitiously collect an empty beer can abandoned on the road by the accused comrade. From this can DNA samples would have been extracted, in order to make a direct comparison with the remains of genetic material found near the Bank Pax after the expropriation. Four months later, in late October, a report of the biological laboratories of the *Mossos* confirmed the correspondence between the two samples. However, it would take nearly six months until April 12<sup>th</sup> this year, for a European Arrest Warrant against her to arrive from Aachen, and she was arrested the next day at her home in the Carmel district.

**Repression and Social Control: DNA & States**

The police process leading to this arrest therefore confirms what many already suspected, namely that the Catalan police

have spent years collecting biological specimens in a massive and systematic way during actions, demonstrations, searches and protests to make a database of genetic data to increase control over the antagonist movement. What was initially introduced as an exceptional measure, arguing the need to protect against repeat offenders and similar cases, it has been implemented as a repressive and standardized technology at the service of the persecution of political activists. In the Spanish state police this *modus operandi* has long been practiced by the regional Basque police (*Ertzaintza*) in the repression of the Basque left and struggles in *Euskal Herria* [Basque Country]. As reported by the magazine *Gara* in 2007, the *Ertzaintza* began construction of a genetic information database, with the collection of cigarette butts and glasses during parties, toothbrushes during searches, or plastic nozzles used in false traffic stops with breathalysers. The problems of reliability and probative value attributed by experts to DNA collection techniques have not prevented the Basque regional police from initiating legal proceedings based on the genetic profile as the only evidence, which with the invaluable help of special courts of the Spanish *Audiencia Nacional* have often resulted in long prison sentences for the accused.

**At European level, the use of gene technology in police and judicial matters has continued to gain ground from the late 80s when Interpol imported from the U.S.A. the strategy of the creation of databases for identification of persons through DNA profiling. Despite the differences depending on the socio-political and legal context of each place, in general, the common trend internationally is the exponential growth of the personal data stored in these databases and the gradual elimination of legal restrictions that limit the introduction and development of new samples.**

The use of genetic technologies by the police has increased significantly throughout the European Union, and the criteria for their use are becoming more and more lax. We are therefore faced with a huge leap forward, not only in repressive techniques geared toward dissident minority areas, but in States' ability of social control of the entire population, in general. Faced with this challenge, the enemy of the status quo has to choose between being intimidated by the control mechanisms of power or produce political strategies and practices to address them,



knowing that the idea of a totally controlled society is just that, the dark unrealizable fantasy of a logic of dominion that will always find resistance.



1. ed. – “Pax-Bank [was] founded in Cologne in 1917 as a bank cooperative of priests for the ecclesiastical community itself, under the principles of “self-help, self-responsibility and self-management”. Referring to historical events, both the October 1917 revolution in Russia and the growing social tensions in Germany itself, which ended in the fall of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s monarchy and then transformed into the revolution of November 1918, it is not surprising that in those times, when the Catholic Church felt directly threatened by the “red tide” of the revolutionary uprisings, the church decides to protect its capital, in this case not only “spiritual” but rather economic, with the founding of said bank. In addition, in 1920, by virtue of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost all its colonies, where its “civilizing work” was evidently accompanied by “ardent missionary work”. [...] Of course, the Pax-Bank is absolutely silent regarding its relations with the new political power that came to rule its homeland between 1933 and 1945, that is to say the Nazi party NSDAP, who, thanks to the unconditional support of German capital, was able to unleash its expansionist war machine, occupying up to half of the continent and perpetrating the Holocaust and the extermination of peoples considered inferior. [...] In 2009, [Pax Bank] investments in the US pharmacological company Wyeth, the producer of birth control pills, came to light. In the same year, investments in the British arms company BAE Systems, a producer of nuclear submarines and fighter jets, and British-American Tobacco Imperial, a potentate of the tobacco industry, were discovered. The Pax-Bank was quick to apologize to its clients and, as good Christians, its clients accepted the confession and knew how to forgive” (Pecunia Non Olet).

2. Recall that recently a comrade accused of having participated in one of these expropriations, which took place in July 2013, was re-arrested in Amsterdam and extradited to Germany [ed. – see below].

3. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a chemical component of the cell nucleus that contains the genetic information that is transmitted through heredity in living organisms. This acid is found in all the cells of human and non-human animals, plants and other organisms, except red blood



cells. DNA is used in various techniques (biogenetics, nanotechnology, bioinformatics, etc.), but what interests us in this text is the “forensic” use in police, judicial and penal contexts. In these cases, the DNA extracted from hair, saliva or blood is used, and as a result what is called genetic fingerprinting or “DNA profile” is obtained. It is the sequence variations of this fingerprint or profile that [ed. – supposedly] differentiate people, as if it were a “human bar code.”



The context that this anonymous text was released in, is that of a tangled investigation and inter-force collaboration spanning Europe, from West to East, North to South. The trail of events that led to the situation described above could be said to have started with what the German police describe as a “series of robberies” of banks in Aachen between 2012 and 2014 (resulting in a good amount of cash seized), but in reality goes back further; to the unknown police sampling which entered the genetic archives here in the U.K.

After one robbery in 2013, in which at least one of the assailants emptying the safe was said to be a woman, a strange thing occurs; having already combed the bank for clues without success, the German cops announce that eleven days later they discover two air pistols inside, containing DNA traces. That DNA, upon German cops appealing to their international counterparts, was linked to that taken by British cops of an anarchist woman resident in Amsterdam, Holland.

Near the other robbery mentioned earlier, of Pax Bank in Aachen, police recovered the wig mentioned in the article above; the Catalan police responded with their link. Because at this time they didn’t have a face for this supposedly-recurring trace, just a target-group from the nature of the action from which they first recovered the sample, Catalan police secretly collected the DNA of many female radicals, following them one by one and picking up the cigarette butts and empty bottles that they left behind. In June 2015 they make their match; an anarchist already imprisoned for a period of time during Operation Pandora [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg82**].

The other (Dutch) anarchist was arrested as she attempted to cross the Greek-Bulgarian border in July of 2015. After three weeks in Bulgarian detention, she was extradited to Germany and put into ‘investigative detention’ – a condition allowing the prosecutors to keep suspects in custody for long periods without making specific accusations. However, despite the subsequent formalisation of charges against her, after five months in these prisons the court judged evidence to be

insufficient, and she was released. However the prosecution shortly after appealed; she awaits trial, but out of jail.

During her imprisonment, she released an unsigned letter containing the following: “I do not want to enter a discourse that speaks in terms of innocence and guilt, for the juxtaposition at stake is not between these two “categories” formulated in the language of domination, the language of law; a language absolutely antagonistic to my own. It is, simplistic put, between those who desire freedom and those who steal it from them. And this has little to do with the double row of bars blocking my window, with the triple layer of walls and gates surrounding this place. As one of the philosophical cadavers of the university has written in not too distant history, “prison continues, on those who are entrusted to it, a work begun elsewhere, which the whole of society pursues on each individual through innumerable mechanisms of discipline”. This work however simultaneously continues inside and outside of prison; prison is not “external” to society, it is simply another one of the many expressions of domination.

And in this panoptical world [ed. – see **Panopticons Then & Now**] every act of rebellion, whether it is robbing a bank or stealing a loaf of bread, is a negation of the omnipresent control imposed upon us, a deafening or barely audible No in the face of domination. Expropriation is merely one of the means in the vast array of those available to take back what is stolen from us on a daily basis – our self-determination, the freedom and possibility to construct our lives according to our own wishes and desires.”

In the raids that followed in Barcelona, two private homes and the Blokes Fantasma squat were invaded and the twenty or so people living in the building were detained for twelve hours, and the woman previously held under Operation Pandora was kept awaiting deportation to Germany. Two days before, her European arrest warrant had been issued by the same investigative judge handling the Dutch woman’s case. Before she is taken out of Spanish borders, she participated via phone call with public events around the multiple days of clashes and looting in Barcelona that followed the eviction of the Banc Expropriat occupation at the end of May; afterwards, and also due to her “inciting mutiny” among the other prisoners in the isolation ward, she was subject to various disciplines and denied contact with her partner and at least one other.

Finally, the third piece of DNA ‘evidence’, alleged to be upon clothing recovered by the cops near the Pax Bank heist; Catalan police conducted a fake traffic stop of the

type described in the article above on another Barcelona anarchist, and claim a match to the DNA retrieved. This time their prey is also well known to them; an anarchist who had done over a decade in the prisons of Portugal, where he is from, and agitated inside against the prison regime, founding a library inside, and having been among those tried for the events in Caxais in 1996<sup>[1]</sup>.

\* – Following unrest in the prisons of Portugal against appalling conditions that produced various riots in the '80s, the final straw seems to have been when an amnesty for leftist urban guerrilla prisoners was not extended to other prisoners when a new president was elected, contrary to tradition. The better-known disorder in Caxais (following a series of rolling hunger-strikes and work stoppages, including blockade of supply van entering prison and an escape after strikers deliberately forced their transfer to a civil hospital) occurred when prisoners refused to re-enter their cells; in the following police riot, 180 were arrested and mostly beaten heavily. 13 years later, the State brought charges against 25 (ex-)prisoners over the affair; anarchists disrupted the court sessions and piled abuse on the public prosecutor, while being joined in their cries for freedom by some of the accused, until the judge closed the one session unable to maintain order. Tags against courts and prisons were spraypainted on a National Defence Ministry building and the Law School in Lisbon, as well as in the street of the Oeiras court where the trial was held, and north of the border in Galicia the offices of Portuguese Innovation and Integration Agency (a "lucrative entity for the promotion of enterprise and technology as one more piece of complicit machinery of the state and its development of police, judicial and prison repression") were attacked in solidarity.

June this year, this fighter was also raided in Barcelona at gun-point, and deported to Germany. Mid-September, the Aachen court also decided that, before their extradition for the appeal hearing in Germany, the Dutch anarchist awaiting trial 'outside' should also be re-imprisoned. The following night, people gathered outside the prison she was held in, "to break the isolation that those cement walls and barbed wire try to impose. The fireworks and voices reached the other side of the wall, with more prisoners sending back echoes." Again in October, anarchists demonstrated outside the Cologne-Ossendorf prison over the border in Germany, where the Barcelona anarchists are held. November 4th was the first trial session for the Dutch comrade (the two robberies are being tried separately), and despite a heavy police presence and the riot squad in the courtyard, comrades of the accused made their presence known. For updates, visit [solidariteit.noblogs.org](http://solidariteit.noblogs.org)

Whatever comes next, this case can tell us much about the extent that police have since a long time been coordinating to repress those who break the stifling order of capitalist normality. It tells us much about the extent and repercussions of contemporary surveillance – not only the DNA sampling, but also the biometric analysis of the banks' camera footage of the masked robbers (shape of head and jaw, way of walking, etc.) compared with

the accumulated recordings of the accused walking down the video-surveilled streets in their daily lives, is an important piece in the case. But not only that; the case also tells us that for anarchists, solidarity can be more than a written word.

Since the early days of the Spanish State's arrests, its consulate in the German city of Munich was defaced, while back in Barcelona the German Business School was also attacked and left with broken windows. Bank branches themselves have seen a large focus during the offensive, being smashed and defaced in Holland, Germany (including Pax Bank themselves in Erfurt) and Spain, while flames ravaged luxury cars of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, a mobile phone antenna over the border in Haren, and construction mega-project equipment in Toulouse. The detention complex has also been targeted, like a premises of the company responsible for maintenance of electronics in German prisons (and related surveillance of those held inside) being smashed up, or the paint-bombing of the Aachen courthouse in the run-up to the first court sessions in November. From Bristol (England) to Pontevedra (Galicia), to Greece and across the Atlantic, anarchists have hung banners about the case or publicly defended the act of stealing the money we are forced to live by in capitalist society from those who enforce the above; regardless of whether the accused were among such robbers.

We end on one such solidarity action, which brought us great joy to hear about, and pledge that no matter how the authorities try to ensnare us for our defiance and lucidity, there always seems to be another trap waiting to be sprung on them in turn; on their banks, their police stations, their infrastructures, the places they eat and rest.

### COMMUNIQUE FOR COORDINATED ARSON ATTACKS AGAINST ENERGY MULTINATIONAL RWE (GERMANY)

In the late hours of 25-11-16, we carried out coordinated arson attacks against the German energy multinational RWE in the vicinity of the Hambach opencast lignite mine [ed. – see *Return Fire* vol.3 pg91]. We have delayed this communique until now for strategic purposes.

After a scout of the area, we split up and set fire to six pumping stations, two electrical

transformers, one digger and a substation of the electrical grid.

**Pumping stations are key pieces of the mines infrastructure used to lower the water table and prevent the flooding of the mine. They most often resemble a section of exposed pipe and an electrical box surrounded by construction fence.** We prised open the electrical boxes using a crowbar and placed simple timed incendiary devices and a bundle of bicycle inner tubes inside to ensure the flames caught nicely.

The incendiary devices were composed of a candle secured to a firelighter cube with a strong rubber band. The candles burnt down slowly, then ignited the firelighters once we were safely away from the area. After smashing a window to gain access, we used the same devices to burn out the cab of the digger.

For the transformers and the substation we burnt car tires filled with gasoline soaked rags. We placed these beneath exposed insulated cabling on the substation and inside the

transformers. Within several minutes these targets were engulfed in flames and as we departed the substation exploded, sending arcing electricity and purple flames ten metres into the night sky. Although this caused a blackout two kilometres wide, the local media-scum failed to mention it in any of their press, downplaying it to the burning of the two transformers alone.

As the techno-industrial megamachine grinds on every day, destroying

and polluting all that is still wild and beautiful in this world, we feel that actions like this are a necessary measure to stay sane and remind ourselves that we are still alive amidst all of the destruction and misery of modern society.

**After all, the only way one can enjoy the industrial landscape at all is by crawling around in the tall grasses and nettles with the other animals and finding a good vantage point from which to observe pillars of black smoke rising from the scorched machinery and infrastructure of civilization.**

We wish to send a wink of complicity to the captive anarchists accused of bank robberies in Aachen and to Chilean prisoner of war Kevin Garrido, held for explosive attacks in the city of Santiago<sup>[1]</sup>.

For the multiplication of attacks against RWE!  
For anarchy and wildness!

*Death to civilization!*

– Scoundrels In The Night

1. ed. – At the prison guards school, a police precinct and an electricity firm; arrested with him and accused of the first was Joaquín García. Joaquín got pre-trial release after several months and went on the run, but was caught on a rural bus in Tirúa and sent back with additional charges for the revolver he was carrying.

“Our comrades who have been kidnapped or persecuted by the enemy due to their ideas and practices are not mere victims of repression. They are prisoners of war – all of them. Let's not victimize them, which is an old-fashioned strategy used by “Leftist fighters”. Simple and real solidarity (collecting food, money, clothes etc. for prisoners) is necessary, but it is not complete. It must be accompanied by direct attacks against the Regime. Only if it is, will it include the joy of vengeance [and of resistance,] whilst winking at those 'who are inside,' provoking flaming smiles in dark dungeons, and hatred and fear in the authoritarian hordes.” – *About the War*



## Let's Relaunch the Struggle Against Nocivity [+ updates] & random moments of solidarity (Italy)

Five years have passed [at the time of writing] since we were arrested in Switzerland when police at a checkpoint on the Albis pass, Canton of Zürich, found explosives, propane gas canisters, petrol cans and several copies of a claim by Switzerland Earth Liberation Front [E.L.F.] in the car we were in. The target of the proposed attack was the Binning and Rohrer Nanotechnology Centre, a structure that was under construction at the time, property of IBM in collaboration with ETH, the Federal Polytechnic of Zürich.

The [Swiss] trial took place a year and a half later where we were accused of: preparing deliberate arson; concealing and transporting explosive material; unauthorized trade (importation) of explosives. Federal prosecutor Hansjörg Stadler demanded sentences of 3 years and 4 to 8 months, broadly accepted by federal judge Walter Wütrich. The court confirmed all the charges, except that of illicit traffic (importation) of explosives, a charge we were cleared of.

Parallel to this, the Public Prosecutor of Turin had begun a thorough investigation

of the explosive cartridges that the Swiss authorities had found on us to find out where the material had come from. When the investigation was completed, prosecutor Enrico Arnaldi Di Balme issued three more charges against us: terrorist activity involving lethal and explosive devices, possession and transport of explosives in the public space and receiving stolen goods (explosives), all charges aggravated with ‘terrorist intent’.

**In these last 5 years our analysis of the present has been reconfirmed, and consequently our anarchist and environmentalist beliefs have simply strengthened.** Nano-bio-technologies are the latest path beaten by the techno-industrial capitalist system in the plunder and devastation of the Earth. These paths, like all the previous ones (think of the Industrial Age), are presenting as miracles what we can easily imagine are destined to turn into nightmares. These technologies are born from the new vision of the world of the computer era that has substituted the mechanistic one of levers and gears with a mathematical one of information bits where the whole of reality must fit into one algorithm. This new vision has now taken root as it is more suited to the needs of the present system. In asserting itself it has opened up hitherto undreamed possibilities for science to carry out what the moment and self-cannibalism of the system are urgently pressing it to do: appropriate everything in the universe and break it down into its smallest, infinitesimal components, into ‘bits’.

In other words, to achieve some universal basic unit with which scientists can reduce the whole of the existent to a level of interchangeability and equivalence so that through the engineering of this new (inaccessible up until now) raw material it will be able to make anything in the universe usable for the needs of power. These technologies are therefore the pillars upon which the system will be able to re-arrange the processes of production and supply that are vital to its growth, a growth to infinity on a planet that has already been plundered beyond the limits of its possibilities. And, as in the case of GMOs [Genetically Modified Organisms], the convergence of the sciences is the latest promise of a development trend that is supposed to tackle the ecological crisis that ecocidal progress itself has taken us to.

As we have written elsewhere, the Binning and Rohrer Nano-technology Centre was rendered operative and inaugurated a few months before our trial in Switzerland. For

almost three years it has been offering 950 square metres to collaborators in the basic research for new materials and elements of nano-metric construction. This site will allow the researchers of IBM, ETH and their partners to push the knowledge and above all the application possibilities of nano-technology far beyond, very far beyond, the current use reached by cosmetics, tyres and nanotech sprays. That is what the director of the structure Matthias Kaiserswerth is promising. For us, even if the men [sic] of IBM and ETH boast of having a laboratory that is unique in the world – and in certain aspects they are right – the reality is that the places where the engineering and manipulation of life and the planet are being pushed forward are numerous and scattered a little everywhere. From the research centres of the multinationals to the universities, from scientific hubs to international research institutes: this world is moving parallel to the reality we know, planning and building a future that will be imposed upon us, some aspects of which we can already see around us. **This world has a name and address.**

We have felt the urgency of trying to build struggles against this development more and more throughout the years, starting by understanding how indispensable bio- and nano-technologies are to the system and their potential harm. It is important to clarify that this harmfulness does not so much concern damage to human health or the environment as the relation between power and technology that is becoming a remodelling/substitution/destruction of living ecosystems. It is a far wider concept of nocivity [toxicity/harmfulness] directly linked to nocivity as a whole: the system itself. We still feel this urgency, and given the advance of the technological and industrial system we are still convinced that it must be translated into a radical critique, which cannot ignore the economic and social context of which these nocivities are both a product and a necessity. In turn, this



## **YOUR CHOICE.**

critique must be able to transform the oceans of ink and words required to express and deepen it, into struggle and direct action. So we are still convinced of the need to develop radical environmental struggles against this deadly techno-industrial system; but we want to point out that the struggle needs to be seen as a real possibility to put everything into question, not just a space to find a role in the political theatre or for offering ‘eco-sustainable’ alternatives to the system.

**What we see is how the places of techno-scientific power are being decentralized and molecularised into a**



**constellation of interests and ultra specific projects, although these are still necessarily all interconnected.**

Intervening and striking where it hurts most is always less evident or easy to understand. A constant source of inspiration in this respect are those all over the world who, still feel the urgency of the struggle, are carrying out projects, campaigns and mobilizations in defence of what they feel they are a part of, and sabotaging and attacking the gears of the techno-scientific patriarchal and capitalist industrial system.

We know that putting oneself on the line through the struggle probably means having to face repression sooner or later, and there's no escape from that. What one can and must avoid is leaving those who have been struck by the repression alone. Support for prisoners is something that can't be forgotten, and besides solidarity and basic support, it is just as important and fundamental to carry on the struggles that the comrades are paying for. As far as we are concerned, now outside these walls, we really appreciate the efforts of so many who have organized events and initiatives over recent months. As well as the warmth of their immediate necessary support they have given space to our case and above all, to the topics we want to discuss and express what we feel. This is fundamental for us.

April 23rd [2015] is the day set for the preliminary hearing, where it will be decided whether or not this 'déjà vu' trial is to take place. For our part, we are not as interested in drawing attention to our specific case and the trial against us, as in the desire to succeed in also transforming this moment into an occasion, mobilization, to re-launch these topics and feelings we share.

Not putting repression at the centre of things, but acting without delegating to others, against bio- and nano-technologies, nuclear power and all other forms of nocivity produced by this system of death; against the present moment of annihilation and devastation.

*For earth liberation, for animal liberation*

*– Billy, Costa, Silvia.*

[Luca (Billy) Bernasconi, Costantino Ragusa & Silvia Guerini.] February 2015



The banner, in Bristol, U.K., reads "CAPITAL IS AS 'GREEN' AS NUCLEAR IS 'SAFE'; AGAINST INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY HANDS OFF BILLY, SILVIA & COSTA"

In the more than a year and a half since these words were written, the legal labyrinth has only continued; although defence lawyers had called on the judicial principle of 'ne bis in idem', according to which one can't go on trial twice for the same case, the investigating judge agreed to the prosecutor's demand. Swiss and Italian security forces had already attempted a string of appeals to try to further indict the three while they were still in prison, on top of what the comrades described as "intense espionage activity, mainly addressed against the network of solidarity that had been created in the meantime and later against the most radical ecologist milieus that were more active in the struggle outside in order to follow our case and make questions such as that of nano-technology known".

The last session of the trial took place in Turin on March 2nd, 2016. Prosecutors demanded 5 years and 8 months for Costa, 5 years and 4 months for Silvia and Billy. The verdict reading was given shortly after (the three comrades themselves didn't attend); the principle of 'ne bis in idem' was upheld, so the trial was ruled inadmissible. However, the State Attorney of Turin has appealed the verdict, focusing on the transport of stolen explosive material and the 'fact' that the attack on IBM was prepared in Italy, not Switzerland. Their main 'proof' of this is that all three participate in the 'Coalition Against Nocivity', which during its active years has created an active projectuality against bio- and nano-technologies. IBM is in many ways the origin of the nano-technology boom thanks to the invention, in 1981, of the scanning tunneling microscope in another laboratory in Zürich. Now they are working to digitalise the world thanks to the chips, sensors and connections made possible by these same nanotechnologies (see 'Smarter Prison?', first released online in solidarity with Silvia, Billy and Costa in this legal process then printed as a supplement for **Return Fire vol.3**).

(Also, during this same time period, Silvia and Costa also had other charges resurrected from a decade before. In 2005, a high-voltage pylon owned by the electricity firm Terna<sup>(1)</sup> was dynamited in the southern Italian province of Pisa, causing heavy damage, and an interim work agency was also bombed in Pisa itself. In total ten from the circle of the 'Il Silvestre' group, who bring out the eco-anarchist journal 'Terra Selvaggia' (see **Return Fire vol.3 pg55**), were arrested, but later acquitted. Five were once again charged, including Silvia and Costa, in 2015; but in the end dropped once again.)

Now, the comrades await more news. Like then, and like always, we will affirm our closeness with the ideas and decisions of

these brave individuals, and the radical currents which have produced them. They have been backed since their first arrest in Switzerland with a range of solidaritaristic actions around the world, a scant few of which we list below; whether the judges return the case of Silvia, Billy and Costa to the courtrooms or not, **let's turn up the heat on the nano-world and the capitalist order which wants it.**

1. ed. – Silvia and Costa noted upon being informed of the resurrected charges that "[t]o the inhabitants of areas stretching along the line between the Pisa Mountains to the Apuan Alps in Tuscany, roars of revolt are nothing new. The La Spezia–Acciaio railway track has been the target of protests for over thirty years, not only because it carries French nuclear waste but also because it causes electromagnetic pollution. On this railway track alone dozens of dynamite attacks have occurred over the years[...] Repression has also been there over the years: eco-anarchist Marco Camenish's arrest in the 1990s [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg75**], also accused of sabotaging the pylons of the [Terna] railway track, did not stop the attacks; on the contrary in the following years such attacks also became the expression of solidarity with him and his struggle inside Italian and Swiss prisons."

## RANDOM MOMENTS OF SOLIDARITY

**21.05.10, Bristol, U.K.:** "A 'T-mobile' repeater was destroyed by fire. [...] Destructive acts against the telecommunications infrastructure of capitalist economy are simple and reproducible, as are attacks against other facets of industrial society. [...] Far from being a faceless abstract enemy, the conduits of commodity production remain attackable at many points, vulnerable to our courage, rage and joy." *Cells of Fire: Storm of Butterflies'*

**24.06.10, Switzerland:** *A field of GM corn is destroyed.* "The opposition to genetic engineering is part of an opposition that broadens to oppose total control of society and the living, that is being created thanks to the development of nano- and bio-technology. [S]olidarity with concrete actions with those and those who are opposed to this techno-scientific capitalist system and particularly with Marco Camenisch [see footnote above], Silvia, Costa and Billy..."

**13.08.10, Castelvetro, Italy:** *The group 'Black Like the Night' release thousands of quail from a battery farm.* "To Billy, Costa and Silvia, because it is in direct action that we stay on the common path that leads to the destruction of civilisation, because it is in the attack that our hearts manage to feel close to theirs. In the breath of a dream that burns and opens the cages."

**24.09.10, Bern, Switzerland:** *Demonstration outside the regional prison; ten of the forty people penetrate the courtyard in front of the building and lit firecrackers, greeting Costa, while other prisoners beat on the walls in response and lit lighters behind the opaque glass. This is two weeks into a hunger-strike declared by the three and Marco, as "a continuation of all those strong affinities and relationships as "green/anti-civilisation" anarchist individuals that connect us since many years", as well as for "all of you revolutionary individuals*

of every inclination that – as individuals or in groups – support us with your true and free revolutionary love, with your initiatives, with your resistance and revolutionary offensive in open daylight or open nightlight...”

**12.12.10, Varese, Italy:** “[W]e sabotaged a Shell petrol station [by cutting] the tubes operating the petrol and sealing the ATM with liquid steel. [...] Solidarity with all the rebels attacking those responsible for dominion!”

**14.12.10, Lisbon, Portugal:** *Paint-bombing, graffiti and lock-sealing for the Swiss embassy, once again also for Marco too.*

**30.05.11, London, U.K.:** *Windows broken and locks glued at the Swiss embassy in solidarity. “Freedom for all!”*

**Argentina:** “We sealed the locks and stained the walls of one of the torture and murder centers of animals, the Veterinary Medicine Society, which kills animals and teaches others to do the same. We will not give them peace, as this war began a long time ago...”

**Russia:** *Visit by the E.L.F. (& Informal Anarchist Federation / Animal Liberation Front) to “two commercial fishing resorts. They breed fish to be hunted by tourists.” Two phone masts burn.*

**14.01.16, Trento, Italy:** *Arson of two mobile phone towers. “Let’s stop electronic control and electromagnetic pollution. For Silvia, Costa and Billy, still on trial.”*

**06.03.16 northern Somerset, U.K.:** *Multiple rails are sabotaged with a portable disc-cutter on a freight distribution trainline, carrying fossil fuel, construction materials and brand-new vehicles. “Severing the lines that feed the machine is not impossible. [...] The war is not over when those moments stop, it sparks up in little raptures here and there, showing that we are not crushed, things can be brought to a grinding halt again, even for a split second.” This line had also been subject to a £100,000 attack in 2005, smashing cars being transported as they passed.*

“[T]he sure thing is that we are not alone. We live in a home full of voices, dreams, desires, laughter, melancholies, actions... Our home has no hosts and guests; it belongs to all of us. In our home we do not speak just one language but many and we always communicate with our eyes. The basement of our home is full of weapons, explosives, plans, communiques, whatever the enemy snatches from us, our hands and desires will never remain unarmed. At the table of our home there are always spaces and glasses of wine for new friends and comrades who we never met before. There are as well some empty places for the brothers and sisters who are absent, for our dead, for the wanted, for the imprisoned, but their glasses are always full because they are always next to us too. Our home has no doors, no rooms, not even walls. Our home has no roof because it would hide the sky and stars. Our home has no windows because it would stop the wind. Our home has no street or number. Our home has no name and lives in our hearts.”

– Lone Wolves Are Not Alone...

## 'THE IMPACT OF ROBOTICS'

On May 9th a protest was held in Pisa [Italy] outside the Sant'Anna University on the occasion of its Open Day, to question the role of this university with regard to the processes of preparation and implementation of war and concerning the role of scientific research in the construction of the world in which we live. Here follows one of the interventions made during the protest, on the theme of robotics:



Sant'Anna is distinguished mainly for robotics and bio-robotics studies and projects. These disciplines open the way for further technological and scientific advance in a society that is seeking to integrate more and more robots and machines with the living being for both civilian and military purposes: examples of this are industrial automation machines, exoskeletons, bionic prostheses, home automation, and so on.

**In order for this mechanic scenario to be possible it is necessary both to develop an ethics applied to robotics that prepares the ground for human-robot coexistence both from a social and legislative perspective on the one hand, and on the other solves problems that could arise as the impact of robotics creates profound changes.**

The introduction of technological innovation has caused radical social and organizational changes in general; think of how our lives have changed with the introduction of the computer or the telephone. It is no different in this case as it is equipment designed to be operational in an environment that they are making totally artificial and to make the human being increasingly dependent on this artificiality which only scientists and experts know how to foresee. Machines equipped with artificial intelligence that communicate via wireless, accumulating and exchanging data, replacing the human being in its activities and even in their everyday decisions, nullifying any kind of critique and reducing us to mere cogs.

These are studies and projects that are born from the arrogant idea that the human being can control, manipulate and experiment on the living in general, using it to their liking and adapting it to the needs of the current production and techno-scientific system.

**Robotics and bio-robotics are examples of a new approach to science, that of the convergence of different areas and studies that are moving toward the**

**same goal: controlling living beings and the earth that hosts them.** So, to design a machine similar to us it is necessary to combine the results from bio- and nano-technology, neuro-science, computer science, engineering, cognitive sciences and life sciences. Sant'Anna University is a pioneer in these projects of implementing the human being with man-made structures; sensory capacities, motor and human perceptions transferred into the robots. They are trying to design a future that increasingly disables the human being, already unable to live without technology.

We know that the apparent medical reasons, need for companionship, improvement of human and productive performance that these gentlemen [*sic, i.e. the scientists*] are preaching to have these atrocities accepted, represent a practice to justify the deadly techno-scientific advance. And that is also why we reject any kind of education to technology as it is a means of mental prerogative that leads to a constant mechanization of the existent.

The industrial economy; the growth of the world population with the consequent need for more and more resources and agricultural food production; the organization of large urban agglomerations, as well as the "management" of environmental disasters, are consequences arising from the continued exploitation of the earth and the anthropocentric logic and dominion caused by a process of thousands of years of civilizing process, whose resolution cannot be entrusted to specialists and machines. **Precisely the ones who caused these problems.** We are moving towards a robotic and artificial ecosystem that has little that is natural and a technology that is progressing very quickly, always leaving us less space and freedom. If this is the future that faces us, the present still conserves some wild spaces, albeit shrinking, and is still inhabited by individuals who do not want to delegate their lives to intelligent machines and to the phantomatic technical machines and scientists that are behind them.

# MEMORY AS A WEAPON

## 'ONE GOD & ONE STATE'

[ed. – Extract from John Zerzan's longer text 'Arrivederci Roma: The Crisis of Late Antiquity', investigating the fall of the Roman Empire]

Oswald Spengler declared an endpoint to civilization to be the triumph of the inorganic world-city over the organic land. (See especially "The Soul of the City" in *The Decline of the West*, volume II.) The marxist Kautsky, Spengler's opposite politically, also observed the loss of contact with nature and the unmooring of the individual from ancestral supports. Excessive urbanization was the main cause of the Roman collapse, in the opinion of Guglielmo Ferrero.

It was "a world of dwindling towns and bloated cities"<sup>11</sup> in which the countryside was taxed and exploited to sustain urban living, resulting in rural depopulation. Meanwhile the urban framework was itself falling apart. The mounting stresses on Roman civilization, its empire in retreat, meant a "hard" regime tending toward what we would call privatization. Less expenditure for public buildings and public cults. "The cities, which had created and sustained the higher forms of economic life, gradually decayed, and the majority of them practically disappeared from the face of the earth," to quote Rostovzoeff.

"Mass unrest," often due to food shortages, was "an inevitable phenomenon in cities of the Roman world," in A.D. Lee's words. Robert Knapp found that "the natural recourse was to riot." There was substantial social war violence from the Middle Empire to the end of late antiquity. The fourth century soldier and historian Ammianus Marcellinus wrote of the prominence of violent unrest in Rome, blaming the ruling class for disturbances and squalor. Significant riots include a 348 clash over delay of the grain subsidy and repeated incidents in 365 over the high price of wine.

Antioch saw major riots in the 5th century, and Peter Brown characterized Alexandria as "a notoriously riot-prone city," to cite just a couple of non-Rome locations. Solomon Katz mentioned "terrible peasant revolts" in various parts of the Empire, while outlawry became an important presence.

Between the late third century and the first half of the fifth, the Bigaudae, described as both brigands and revolutionaries, embodied outlaw peasant rebellion in parts of Gaul and Spain. Their egalitarian risings against the rich were a powerful radical critique in action.

What came to be referred to as paganism was a mainstay of Greco-Roman civilization. It was the official ensemble of gods and rites, emphasizing the citizen's responsibility to imperial authority, and embodying unity. In this way paganism was close to a general attitude of patriotism, respectful of civic tradition. Victor Ehrenberg declared paganism to be "a political rather than a religious matter[...] no question of belief or even emotional feeling." Its ritualism left little room for spirit, its orientation more empirical than a matter of faith. And since its gods were tied to the reigning politics, paganism tended toward the same breakdown Rome was experiencing. Its gods belonged to an early age, and were far from omnipotent. Civilization renders citizens powerless, and its religious parallel is a monotheistic, unrivaled power over its subjects in the spiritual realm.

**The word pagan originally meant one who lives in a pagus, or village. It didn't exist as a religious term before Christians began calling non-Christians pagans. But the usage is clear enough to us, and though it had about seven centuries of tradition behind it by the 400s, paganism was lacking in substance. Too impersonal and far from totalizing, this civic religion was unable to bear much weight. It was overdue for a crisis, along with the rest of the ruling order. The old gods were too limited and too formal. They fell into the shade.**

Roman globalization acquainted people with other options, via travel, trade, and conquest. With increasing insecurity, a feeling of "cosmic pessimism"<sup>12</sup> grew steadily stronger. So-called "mystery religions" arrived, mainly from the east, as misery begot mysticism. Mithra worship became a mystery cult from a branch of Persian Mazdaism, via the Greeks. It was fairly strong in the army, but its appeal was limited by its exclusion of women. From Egypt arose sun-worship, the cult of Sol Invictus with his December 25 birthday, and also an Isis cult. Dionysus emerged, a powerful, universalizing god of salvation, prefiguring the Christian savior in several respects. Native paganism in its last stages took on a neo-Platonic coloring, a decidedly monotheistic move like most of the other religious tendencies, but not decisively enough.

The emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in 312, made it Rome's official

religion, and declared paganism illegal. Anti-pagan repression was often laxly pursued, however, and two centuries after Constantine the old cults lingered. Paganism persisted in part because of its lack of a center; still largely polytheistic, it was multiple and versatile. But especially in its old Roman dress, paganism continued to fade in the sixth century, its sacrifices and temples abandoned. By the 390s the Christian church, a unified institution, had already visibly secured its hegemony.

Christianity had rather suddenly and unexpectedly succeeded, providing a personal religion in place of an impersonal civic one. "Seldom has a small minority played so successfully on the anxieties of society," as Peter Brown put it. Its central and original message of love was preached to the poor, the burdened, the outcast, not excluding women and slaves. Christian populism caught on with many in Roman civilization, especially the miserable urban masses. It not only offered heavenly reward, but also a stronger sense of belonging than that of the devotees of Mithra or Isis, for example.

Another central focus was of course Christian belief in a resurrected figure, Jesus as divine Saviour. It is clear that the early Christians expected an impending return of Christ, which gave their efforts a special intensity. The unique status of women and Christian care for the sick during epidemics were more down-to-earth contributors to success. The original churches were homes, which in itself gave women prominence, but during the third century the status of women was beginning to decline.

**The Gospel of Luke, written in about 100, contains many condemnations of the rich, e.g. "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (18:24). These were typical radical sentiments – which became inconvenient as the Church grew to be a powerful financial institution by the end of the 3rd century. "The time was ripe for a reconciliation of state and church, each of which needed the other," in Rostovzoeff's judgment. Early on there were Christians who appreciated the relation between one god and one state, the helpful implications of monotheism for a universal and unified civilization. Constantine, less abstractly, came to the conclusion that Christianity was the only glue that could help hold conflicting social elements together. The old ruling elites, or *paideia*, were no longer able to maintain control. With Christianity as the new public religion, religious and secular authority became integrated in a more binding and powerful partnership.**



**Preaching in fourth century Antioch, John Chrysostom proclaimed, “Oh! how passing wonderful is the power of Christianity, that it restrains and bridles a man [sic]...” Ambrose of Milan, another Church father and an aristocrat, in the same vein in 388: “The bishops are the controllers of the crowds, the keen upholders of peace...” He also asserted that “priests should have nothing of the masses about them, nothing of the people, nothing in common with the pursuits and manners of the barbarous multitude.”**

Christians had made the poor visible, and soon enough this made them more amenable to control. **The Church took over much of the state’s almsgiving and adopted a new style of pacification in civilization’s never-ending task of securing its authority.** More or less always stated in religious terms, the power of bishops, with their scores of guards, could hardly develop otherwise than along lines in tandem with the secular economy and society.

Rather like “closed shop” employment, where expulsion from the union spells loss of that employment, excommunication had temporal as well as spiritual consequences. It enforced the temporal power; e.g. soldiers who refused to fight in a war that the Church deemed just faced excommunication. Bishops preached increasingly to the elites, and the papacy made more and more of Rome’s glorious past. And yet Christianity never lost its power to offer a radical sense of community, even if that community was more symbolic than actual.

**A monolithic and centrally organized religion and its professional hierarchy took charge of various administrative functions of the Christianized empire, including roles performed by barbarian authorities.** The growing Church to some extent took over what Rome had created. Of course, there existed various philosophical differences; the searching criticisms of Augustine and – as we have seen – Salvian come to mind<sup>[3]</sup>. A united front against common enemies of Church and State certainly held sway, however. It is clear that almost every emperor urged the Church to define correct doctrine so as to enforce its official monopoly. Intolerance in matters of dogma was a new arrival to the Mediterranean world. Doctrine is of supreme importance for [ed. – apparently] the first time in civilization.

**A striking counterpoint to the accommodationist, power-oriented direction of the Church was a primitivist monasticism that swept the Roman world in the 300s.** It began in the deserts of Egypt, where the number of radically ascetic monks neared 200,000 by the beginning of the fourth century. The impulse to return to a pre-Fall, Eden-like simplicity pitted the movement against the Church hierarchy, civic authority, urban life, and even culture itself. Historians such as Rufinus described the ability of monks to mingle with wild animals. Their revolt favored egalitarian virtue over the achievements of civilization. “They had dropped out of the world, because they found society more than they could endure,” concluded Michael Grant. Bishops frequently allied with local elites to bar monks from their towns and to defend the ancient customs. “Emperors, too, in their edicts, declared the inmates of the monasteries to be fanatical, unruly, and rebellious.”

Violence was a not uncommon response to this challenge, which reached a high point with the Circumcellions in North Africa, in the second half of the fourth century. The anarchic offshoot of a non-radical sectarian heresy, Circumcellions (vagabonds, literally) sought to restore the [ed. – alleged] primitive equality of humankind. These millennium-seekers attracted fugitive slaves and destitute peasants, and their base consisted of native Berber and Punic elements. Hostile to urbanism and the dominant order, they preserved their independence until the Muslim conquests of the eighth century suppressed all forms of Christianity in the region.

[...] Another transition involved the symbolic institution or dimension of time. For the Greeks, cyclical time still held sway. Their sense of historical or linear time remained quite tentative at best. Roman Stoics (e.g. Cicero and Seneca) introduced a progressive, non-repetitive concept later developed further by Augustine. We have been under the sign of historical temporality ever since. Restlessly striving to dominate it somehow, while unable to escape the helplessness resulting from civilized, complex society.

Rome’s thousand years were, at base, just another civilization that came and went, subject once again to longings and anxious disquiet and requiring yet another new model of the same. Carlin Barton, in her often brilliant *Sorrows of the Ancient Romans*, refers to the Roman confrontation with time: “They were terrified by beginnings; this dread was one of the sicknesses of Roman culture.” One symbol of which was the gladiator, that

figure of ultimate despair, with its thrill of what became inescapable. A fitting face of civilization.



1. E.T. Salmon, *The Nemesis of Empire*
2. E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*.
3. [ed. – from earlier in the original text:] *On the Government of God* was Salvian’s 5th century Christian take on the virtuous simplicity of barbarians vs. debased Romans. Earlier and more famously, the historian Tacitus praised moral, democratic, hospitable, and happy denizens to the north in his *Treatise on the Situation, Manners and Inhabitants of Germany*. [T]he “barbarian” as a figure served various ideological purposes [to the late Roman Empire]. Violent barbarians were used to justify huge military expenditures by the state. Portrayed as noble savages, they were a means of criticizing degenerate civilization. [...] Petrus Patricius described the Scythians, in the east, as having “jeered at those who were shut up in the cities, saying, ‘They live a life not of men but of birds sitting in their nests aloft; they leave the earth which nourishes them and choose barren cities; they put their trust in lifeless things rather than in themselves.’” In modern times J.B. Bury referred to Slavonic barbarians of late Rome “who could defy the justice of civilization in thick forests and inaccessible ravines – regions echoing with the wild songs and romances of outlaw life.” But the “barbarians” in Europe had been practicing domestication for at least four millennia, and the processes of state formation had been going on for four hundred years in the Germanic world. Nonetheless not all the earlier, freer modes were extinguished. Bury again: “The east German barbarians were still in the stage in which steady habits of work seem repulsive and dishonorable.” [...] Aside from the nature of barbarian society and/or its dialectic with Rome – and the difficulty of generalizing about various groups – there were some connections with Romans that may seem surprising. Peter Sarris wrote of 4th century Goths and their “campaign of destruction aimed at members of the Roman governing classes” – in which “the barbarians were expressly aided [by] members of the Roman lower classes.” In *On the Government of God*, the Christian author Salvian declared, “A large part of Gaul and Spain is already Gothic, and all the Romans who live there have only one wish, not to become Romans again.” Joseph Tainter saw it similarly: “Contemporary records indicate that, more than once, both rich and poor wished that the barbarians would deliver them from the burdens of the Empire.”

# A SHORTER HISTORY OF A NORTHWEST E.L.F. CELL

[ed. – Here we present a tale that was first serialised in the now-defunct Seattle periodical 'Tides of Flame', not long after documentary-makers had released a longer film called 'If a Tree Falls...' about the rise and fall of one Earth Liberation Front (E.L.F.) group active in the '90s and '00s. Whereas that production came off as somewhat victimistic and defeatist (not to mention giving snitches and investigators themselves an inordinate amount of airtime), what we liked about this series was their placement of these events into the social context from which they arose; including more general activity across 'North America' from Vancouver to Mexico City, by the E.L.F. and others. Ordinarily, we would never read stories like this in print. The tragic part, of course, is that this amount of detail is publicly-known only because of the betrayal at the heart of the saga of Operation Backfire, the largest domestic terrorism investigation in the history of the U.S.

Doubtless, this raises the question of what end 'biography'-type accounts serve; but despite the danger of creating 'celebs' of the struggle, and them transforming from life-sized to larger-than-life, we have found it inspiring and empowering in our own time to come across such narratives. More than anything, what made us want to share this is the fact that rather than only cheerleading (though there may be an element of that at times!), we have here a very human telling of lives that merged, strengthened, but then split, fell apart, and dispersed – a common experience of those who enter environments of struggle. The recent renewal of excitement over the novel 'Letters of Insurgents' is for good reason partly because of such an aspect being portrayed so heart-breakingly powerfully. Here, too, we have the people who change, drift apart, who keep struggling and who don't, who enter the frustrations (and potential pitfalls) of 'wanting to go further' or who just fall apart under pressure. Certainly not all of these E.L.F.ers were anarchists, but these aspects their stories will resonate with many of us within that space; regardless of whether the 'urban guerrilla cell' was a method we see (or have lived) as our own.

The critiques – those of interest to us at least – leveled at the E.L.F. model at the time (such as that the radical environmentalist or animal liberation discourse 'specialised' these struggles by failing to tie them into capitalism or civilisation more generally, such as that for all that the occasional communique might have referred to

other other "isms" that the perpetrators were concerned about, these were called into existence as a list of single issues, "a broad liberal program that has taken on extreme tactics"), or those since (such as the worthwhile essay 'The Telescope or the Kaleidoscope', critical amongst other things of the founding principles of the model such as non-violence) won't be discussed here. Suffice to say that we find the inclusion of the Mexican and Russian groups significant in the text, in that this charts the drift from a more leftist, eco-activist discourse to an anarchist, anti-civilisation and insurrectional one that the E.L.F. has seen internationally, even as the (former) fighters described below languish in prison, on the run, or in the worst cases under the protection of their new-found Father State for their services. Both the struggle mentioned below in Khimki forest, and the eco-radical scene in Mexico which has since splintered into various directions (not all of them anarchist), on a practical level have eschewed non-violence (as you will see from the early E.L.F. Mexico action claim we have included to end on); and despite occasional uninvited interventions of the survivors of the North American E.L.F. Press Office still talking in terms of 'environmental justice' and the like, the generation of E.L.F. that exists today whose actions they reference would seem to have largely moved beyond such incoherent arguments, targeting all domination.

We publish this in solidarity with many earth-defenders of the world, whatever name they do or don't use. Whatever one makes of claiming actions under an acronym such as the E.L.F., it is inspiring to know of the high-impact actions that these people regularly carried out in these past decades – without fetishising the level of material damages above other considerations, it seems that those of even humble means can devastate the facilities and infrastructures that surround us, and that is a tale worth telling. But this is also a cautionary tale; and not just of what is at stake in terms of repression (sadly, since this was written two of the four fugitives – Rebecca Rubin [see **Return Fire vol.2 pg73**] and Justin Solondz – have been jailed) and the potential for today's comrade to become tomorrow's traitor to the State. Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher, two who did not snitch and who served their sentences with apparent dignity, have since release been outed as 'anti-modern' fascists and white separatists by longtime E.L.F. prisoner supporters and their former comrades. To us, as well as various strains of eco-radicalism in both Russia and Mexico also having gone in differently disgusting directions at times, this renews the importance of never separating 'ecology' or 'animal liberation' from our broader anarchist ideas, or making 'marriages of convenience' with such characters; rightists, leftists or the so-called 'apolitical', always distanced from our anti-politics.]

Sunshine. A hippy name, dark hair, fierce eyes. Josephine Sunshine Overaker. She went out one night with her boyfriend in the woods of Oregon, put bombs under a US Forest Service truck and on the roof of the Ranger station.



She spray-painted a circle-A on the side of the building along with the words "STOP RAPING OUR FORESTS." She laughed hysterically as she fled into the woods, the flames dancing behind her in the darkness, a demon beside her, and the future filled with fires and shadows. Over the next ten years, Josephine would transform from a free woman into an exile, living an anonymous life and outrunning her past. We do not know where she is, nor what she is doing, but she has eluded the clutches of the police, this person with the name Sunshine.

**She and two other men launched the first attacks of a fledgling Earth Liberation Front (ELF) cell in the Pacific Northwest.** The arson described above took place on October 28th, 1996, in Detroit, Oregon. Two days later in Lane County, Overaker and her group of three burned down the Oakridge Ranger Station. All of them had been involved in peaceful protests to stop the devastation of old growth forests in Oregon. They had seen these tactics fail endlessly and had seen Forest Service Rangers brutalize and imprison their friends who were attempting to defend the earth. When these arsons took place, many environmental activists did not know what to think. The most lucid of them were happy, understanding that their opponent had been attacked. Unfortunately, some activists were afraid and wanted to distance themselves from what had happened. They had no idea of what would come next in the summer of 1997.

It is not known why Overaker did not participate. What is known is that her group had grown and six of them burnt



down a horse slaughterhouse in rural Oregon on July 21, 1997. The Caval West slaughterhouse bought wild horses that had been captured by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and turned them into meat. The massive fire they lit completely destroyed the plant. It never opened again. For months peaceful protestors had written letters and children had held signs outside saying "DON'T KILL HORSIES," all to no avail. *The ELF managed to destroy a despicable company that murdered the last remaining wild horses in Oregon. The ELF destroyed it in one night and with one action.*

On November 30th, 1997, Overaker, her boyfriend, and three others burnt down a Bureau of Land Management wild horse corral in south-western Oregon. Before burning down the facility, the group freed 400 horses back into the wild. **Whereas the previous year the cell had focused its attention on the Forest Service, their activity in 1997 was dedicated to freeing wild animals that were being imprisoned and slaughtered.** The members of the group proved themselves to be against anyone who wished to destroy the wild earth, whether it be a private company or a government agency.

In 1997, different ELF cells that did not know each other carried out attacks in Utah against a fur-breeding plantation and at UC Davis in California against their still under-construction Center for Comparative Medicine. Both of these targets suffered arson attacks for their practices of enslaving, torturing, and murdering animals. **At the time, the action against UC Davis was seen as an insane act against a benevolent institution. Now, with everyone obsessed with free-range chicken and green technology, many people might not view the arson with the same outrage** expressed in 1997.

In Olympia on June 21st, 1998, the group launched a new offensive on the US Department of Agriculture, the greedy overlords of the forests. But on the day before the attack, Overaker was caught shoplifting items needed in the planned arson. After being released from jail, she was told she could not participate in the action. Knowing this was true, she decided to establish a firm alibi while her friends continue onward. The next morning, four members of her cell burnt down a US Department of Agriculture building.

**Simultaneously, a separate ELF cell burned down another Department building in a different part of town. On one day, the entire Puget Sound area saw fires burning in the capitol.**



The Canadian lynx, threatened by the ski expansion at the Vail resort torched in 1998

Despite being far ahead of most people around them (who were busy loving Clinton and "prosperity"), these groups were pursued by the FBI, labeled as terrorists and vilified by large segments of the environmental movement. Groups like the Sierra Club publicly denounced the ELF and applauded the government's efforts. Nevertheless, true to themselves and their ideas, this Pacific Northwest cell of the ELF proceeded to scope out a ski resort in Vail, Colorado, make their plans, climb up a mountain and burn down a multi-million dollar project that would ravaged the ecosystem around it. On October 19th, 1998, everyone watching the nightly news saw images of a giant ski lodge burning atop a snow covered hill. The arsonists had the remarkable experience of enjoying the true splendor of a mountain before burning a structure that ensured that same mountain's destruction.

This was the high moment of the group. It appeared as if they could do no wrong, that the tide would turn, and that people would rise up and escape the stupor of the late nineties. **We have focused our narrative around Josephine Sunshine Overaker for a simple reason: she is one of the few who did not betray their friends, renounce their beliefs, or go to jail. She is one of the few who remained free.** The saddest part of the story is far off, so for now, please take comfort in the fact that she is free, that not all was lost, and that the struggle continues to this day across the same planet she fought to protect.

On the FBI wanted poster, where she is described as a terrorist, it lists Overaker's possible professions as a firefighter, a midwife, a sheep tender, or a masseuse. This is the type of person they fear and seek to destroy.

Just before Christmas in December of 1998, the northwest Earth Liberation Front cell decided to strike the headquarters of US Forest Industries in Medford, Oregon. At the time, the group was based largely in Eugene and it was from here that they planned their attack. The members of the group who decided to carry out this

particular action were Jacob Ferguson, Kevin Tubbs, and Kendall Tankersley. After deciding on a date, the three decided they needed a fourth member, and so Kevin Tubbs asked his friend Rebecca Rubin, another member of the group, to help them.

They drove down to Medford, placed an incendiary device near the building and left. But the next morning there was no news of any arson. After scouting out the headquarters, Jacob Ferguson saw that the device was still there in plain sight having failed to ignite. He

contacted Kendall Tankersley and asked her to retrieve the device while he drove on to Sacramento to be with his mother for Christmas. When Tankersley drove back to Medford with an anonymous person who knew nothing of her task, she decided to not risk returning to the building.

After Christmas, Ferguson and Tankerley arranged to meet in Ashland, just south of Medford. Ferguson had his young son with him and the three returned to the headquarters. Ferguson got out of the car, made a new ignition device, and then drove with Kendall and his son to Dunsmuir, California where they rented a hotel room. **The next morning they learned on the news that their arson had been successful. The entire headquarters of US Forest Industries was destroyed for a loss of \$900,000.** In the communique that was released in the middle of January, 1999, the group wrote, *"This was done in retribution for all the wild forests and animals lost to feed the wallets of greedy fucks like Jerry Bramwell, U.S.F.I. President. This action is payback and it is a warning to all others responsible that we do not sleep and we won't quit. For the future generations we will fight back."* This last line is significant, given that Ferguson's young son was in the car and the fact that we are writing about them now, thirteen years later *[when published]*.

In May of that year, different members of the group reconvened to plan another attack. Their next target was to be a meat company in Eugene. On May 9th, Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, Chelsea Gerlach, Josephine Overaker and (presumably) Joseph Dibee set out to burn down the Childers Meat Company. **After Overaker and Dibee cut the fence, others placed and lit an incendiary device near a gas line in the building. As they were all driving away, they heard on their scanner that the fire had been reported.** By the next morning, the building had been totally destroyed. In their communique released shortly after, the group wrote, *"As long as companies continue to operate and profit off of Mother*



*Earth and Her [sic] sentient beings, the Animal Liberation Front will continue to target these operations and their insurance companies until they are all out of business.*" Rather than claim this action as the ELF, they claimed it as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a sister international group.

Over the course of 1999, the group did not commit any other large actions. After having grown to be over a dozen strong, the members navigated and agitated inside the growing links between the anti-globalization movement and the environmental movement. At the time, the potential for a mass revolt against global capitalism seemed possible. All across the world were millions of outraged people attempting to fight against the deregulation of the global market and the destruction of their traditional ways of life. For the members of the ELF, this was their chance to bring the fight to capitalism itself. They did not want a more humane capitalism as did their contemporaries, instead they wanted its complete destruction and an end to its war on the natural world.

Their opportunity for displaying their views in a more social manner arrived in the form of the planned protests against the WTO [ed. – *World Trade Organisation*] conference in Seattle in the fall of 1999. Several of the original members of the cell

protesters were tricked into blaming the anarchists for the violence of the police.

The smashed windows of the banks in downtown Seattle have until recently been regarded as the most heinous crime, oftentimes overshadowing the brutality of the police during those fall days. By the end of the WTO conference, the SPD had established a nightly curfew and invaded Capitol Hill. To the current and future ELF members present for the chaos, these experiences only cemented their conviction that the system they were fighting destroyed not only the natural world, but also human freedom, life, and joy. They knew the state would crush even the most minimal sign of disobedience.

To usher in the millennium, Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Josephine Overaker and Chelsea Gerlach decided to burn down the Boise Cascade lumber company regional headquarters in Monmouth, a town less than a hundred miles south of Portland. On Christmas Eve, 1999, the group completely torched the headquarters of the company, causing them a loss of \$1,600,000. In their communique, the group said it targeted the company for its ravaging of the Northwest and its intention to set up operations in the forests of Chile. Their communique ended, *"Let this be a lesson to all greedy multinational corporations who don't respect their ecosystems. The elves are watching. Earth Liberation Front."*

**And then, on New Year's Eve, the same four members hoped to trigger the type of Y2K panic that the capitalist media had been predicting.** They drove out to the plains near Bend, Oregon and took down an electrical pylon for the power grid. As the tower began to



attended the protests. Amongst them were other young people who had been brought up in the environmental movements and the struggle to save the Pacific Northwest forests. Daniel McGowan, Joyanna Zacher, Nathan Block and Susan Savoie were all to become members of the ELF cell and all contributed to the anarchist effort to directly attack the storefronts of businesses and banks, bypassing representation and moving directly into action. The now infamous Black Bloc began its corporate property destruction after the SPD [ed. – *Seattle Police Department*] had begun to pepper-spray and assault peaceful protesters blocking WTO delegates from their meeting. Despite this very clear sequencing, large segments of the unionists, mainstream environmentalists, and anti-globalization

fall, electricity arced across the sky and dust flew into the air. However, there was no disruption because the power was rerouted. North America continued to party as the 20th century became the 21st. There was no communique released by the group. On the morning of January first, this old crew of accomplices awoke to the future, unaware of what the next few years would bring.

The Northwest ELF cell whose exploits we have been narrating transmitted their plans to each other by attending what they called "book clubs." A given book, such as *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. LeGuin, would serve as the text in which the cell would decode their plans. With a key that read something like LINE 5, LETTER 26, the cell would assemble whole sentences until

they had received their instructions and targets. In this way, they resembled the Red Army Faction of the 1970's who used Moby Dick as their transmission device. This is just one of the ways in which the ELF cell maintained their secrecy and were able to remain free from incarceration for as long as they were active.

After their actions during the turn of the century, the cell was inactive until September of 2000. They chose the West University Public Safety [police] Substation in Eugene, Oregon, as their next target. After months of repression by local authorities against the anarchist and environmental movements, the cell believed that the radical community of Eugene would welcome a blow inflicted on the same police that had brutalized and jailed many of their friends. On the night of September 6th, Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and Chelsea Gerlach placed two incendiary devices beside the substation. One device failed to explode while the other, placed on a bicycle locked near the substation, tipped over and caused only minimal damage to the substation. The group did not issue a communique, given the relative failure of their action.

The cell struck again on January 2nd, 2001, this time with two new, younger members. Daniel McGowan and Susan Savoie accompanied Jacob Ferguson, Stanislas Meyerhoff, and Kevin Tubbs on a journey from Eugene to Glendale, Oregon. Their target was the Superior Lumber Company, a purchaser and processor of the felled woods of Oregon. The two new members served as lookouts while the other three placed two incendiary devices in the headquarters of the company. Once they were done, the group returned to Eugene. McGowan and Savoie were entrusted to write the communique. The two traveled north to Portland where they wrote the following words: *"What happened should shock no one. This year, 2001, we hope to see an escalation in tactics against capitalism and industry. While Superior Lumber says, 'Make few items, and do it better than anyone else,' we say, 'choose an earth raper, and destroy them.'"* During the whole of 2001, various ELF cells struck targets such as the University of Idaho Biotechnology building, various Bank of New York branches and an Old Navy on Long Island, a Nike outlet in Minnesota, and a genetically-modified cotton plant in California. In addition to this, a separate Northwest cell was spiking trees across Oregon, rendering entire portions of land purchases un-loggable. The actions and methods of the ELF were on the ascent, with the new cells proliferating at a quickening rate. However, there began to be signs of some impending calamity, some change in the weather.



\$1 million damages at Romania Chevrolet SUV dealership

In 2000, a man named Jeff Luers torched three SUVs at a dealership in Eugene. Unfortunately, he was being followed by undercover agents and was arrested shortly after his action. In March, the ELF cell decided to avenge his pending conviction. Stanislas Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and William Rodgers planned with another two new members to torch ten times more cars than Luers. It was decided that everyone participating in this action should not be Eugene residents. The two new members, Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacher, were involved in the environmental and metal scenes in Olympia and had met William Rodgers there. **The group of five proceeded to the [same] Romania Chevrolet Truck Center in Eugene and torched 35 SUVs. In reference to Jeff Luers, the cell wrote in their communique, "The techno-industrial state thinks it can stop the growing resistance by jailing some of us, but they cannot jail the spirit of those who know another world is possible."**

Shortly after this, ten members of the cells decided to stage a double hit against two targets in different states on May 21st, 2001. One would be the Jefferson Poplar Farm in Clatskanie, Oregon, while the other would be the UW Horticultural Center in Seattle. The former was chosen because it was believed that genetically modified trees were being grown there. The latter was chosen because a specific professor had his offices in the building and because he conducted genetic research on poplar trees.

Meyerhoff and the four new members, Savoie, McGowan, Block, and Zacher traveled south to the poplar farm. A separate team of five composed of Rodgers and four other new members traveled north to Seattle. The new members were Justin Solondz, Briana Waters, Jennifer Kolar, and Lacey Phillabaum. Before embarking on their journeys, the cell utilized Olympia as its home base and used the houses of their friends to make their incendiary devices. **At the poplar farm in Oregon, the first group set two structures and eighteen**

**vehicles on fire. They also tagged the words ELF and YOU CANNOT TAME WHAT IS WILD on the wall of a nearby barn.** The damage from this action caused nearly \$1,000,000 in damage. The communique issued for this action stated that the group "torched Jefferson Poplar

*because hybrid poplars are an ecological nightmare threatening native biodiversity in the ecosystem. Our forests are being liquidated and replaced with mono-cultured tree farms so greedy, earth raping corporations can make more money."*

The Seattle arson completely destroyed Merrill Hall at UW [and 13 SUVs], resulting in over \$3,000,000 worth of damage. **The group of five waited nearby, listening to their scanners, and did not leave until they heard confirmation that their fires were raging.** The group then returned to Olympia. Shortly after the simultaneous attacks against these producers of genetically modified plants, it was discovered that neither establishment was actively engaged in genetic modification at the time [ed. – since this has been proved untrue; the University of Washington's own website cited the professor whose research was targeted as "just one of many UW professors using genetic modification in their research", with a grant from the timber industry]. For several of the cell members, this was a terrible shock and caused Daniel McGowan, Brianna Waters and several others to leave the group.

And then September 11th happened. Already considered domestic terrorists, the ELF cell now had to be even more careful in the new climate of fear. Despite this and the problems with the previous action, a group composed of mostly old members decided to return to its roots and destroy another wild horse corral. In the summer of 2001, Joseph Dibee and Chelsea Gerlach had done reconnaissance of a Bureau of Land Management wild horse corral in Northern California. After choosing to attack this specific corral, Dibee asked Kevin Tubbs, one of the founders of the cell, to participate. Next, he asked Darren Thurston and Rebecca Rubin to be involved. Once they agreed, he picked up the two Canadian citizens after they illegally crossed the border and brought them to his house in Seattle.

Tubbs and Meyerhoff soon joined the three and they began making their incendiary devices. After making the last of their preparation, the group traveled to Olympia where they joined up with several unknown individuals. From there, they traveled to Eugene to pick up Tubbs before finally arriving near the corral on October 14th, 2001. **Shortly after midnight on October 15th, the group let the horses out of the corral and then placed their incendiary devices throughout the structure. With the fire burning behind them and the horses running wild, the group returned to Olympia.** Dibee, Thurston and Rubin continued north to Seattle. On October 16th, Jenifer Kolar returned Thurston and Rubin to their border crossing and the pair re-entered Canada. There, Thurston issued the communique for the action.

And so it was that the various members of the once powerful ELF cell returned to their respective towns of Eugene, Olympia, Seattle and Vancouver. The arson of the horse corral was to be their final action and the hysteria of 9/11 only cemented their conviction to cease their activities. Some wanted to continue attacking, even going so far as to suggest committing targeted assassinations against high capitalists and leaders of industry. Ultimately, however, the group freed one last group of wild horses and then scattered themselves across the Northwest. Other cells continued to act in the region, but this particular group of people moved on to different projects. No one suspected them, nor could anyone imagine they had lit up the nights with fire and caused a panic in the timber industries of the the Pacific Northwest. Their lives from hereon out were varied and complex...

After the disbanding of the cell, the arsonists and saboteurs dispersed into their new lives, scattering themselves across the country. **We do not have the means to narrate the stories of each person who participated in the ELF actions nor what they did once the cell came to an end. Nevertheless, we will provide a few stories about some of the people we respect.** As you will find out next, not all of the people who participated



in the assault against capitalism remained loyal to each other.

Joseph Dibee lived in Seattle after having participated in three arsons, including the synchronized attacks against two targets in Olympia. Oddly enough, he found employment with Microsoft and eventually contributed much technical expertise to the Internet Explorer browser. His work became his life and he sometimes spent 100 hours in the office. The same feverish personality that led him from a life of activism to urban guerrilla warfare seemed to still burn inside him even while he worked for one of the two major computer companies. Outside of work he went on hikes, kayaked, flew planes, scuba-dived, and explored the natural world he loved and had striven to protect. He was well-liked by his friends and co-workers. Apparently, his services were much appreciated by Microsoft as well.

Daniel McGowan, the young man who wandered into the Pacific Northwest and fell in love with the remnants of untamed nature, eventually returned his birthplace: New York City. He had grown up in a Catholic family and his father had worked as a cop for the NYPD. After rejecting a life in business, something his father frowned upon, Daniel had chosen the life of an activist. When he returned home, he eventually found employment with WomanLaw.org, a nonprofit group that helps victims of domestic violence avoid the traps and pitfalls of the judicial system. He met a woman named Jennifer and eventually married her, his new life becoming simple and increasingly removed from his previous one as an urban guerrilla.

Nathan Block and Joyanna Zacker remained close to the world they came from. They were in the Olympia metal scene and lived as a couple in a small house in the woods on Delphi Road. Nathan eventually began growing pot and soon had forty plants with which he could support himself. He and Joyanna were well-liked and well-known amongst their friends. Even their landlord described them as very nice people.

Justin Solondz remained in Olympia for a while after the cell disbanded. At the time he was dating Brianna Waters, another member of the cell. Both of them had attended the Evergreen State College and together they fought to save a forest in Oregon, working with the townspeople and making a film of the popular struggle against the logging companies. We have limited access to the facts, but it is known that at some point he and Brianna Waters separated and in 2005 he traveled to Europe to begin a life of wandering.

**While living these new lives, the world became increasingly bleak. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq took place, the public became infected with patriotic hysteria, and the housing bubble continued to bloom, creating new profits and expanding the market recklessly. It seemed as if everything that they had been fighting for had turned to nothing.**

**All of the forests were coming down to build new developments on land that was once wild. The public was swept away into the netherworld, electing the overtly-fascist Bush administration for another term in 2004. Pockets of rebellion survived in some major cities but the fight against capitalism entered a low period in the US, and a sense of defeat hung heavy in the air.**



Though it may not be widely recognized as such, everyone in this country experienced a fascist coup following the attacks of September 11th. A small group of people took power and drastically altered the entire social landscape, first by providing cheap housing and easy credit to the public and then by cashing out, leaving everyone else to fend for themselves. In Chile, on September 11th, 1973, another group of fascists seized power and proceeded to turn the entire country into an experiment from which a small group of people could extract profits and then vanish.

The former members of the ELF cell lived through the rising fascism as best they could, always aware of the gravity their past actions held in the current political climate. Rather than see an uprising against the world system that was killing the planet, our protagonists beheld a public that continued to willingly plunge into its own destruction. **All of them grew apart, numbing themselves to the horror unfolding around them, learning to live inside of it and survive as best as possible.**

We do not know what the exiled ELF fighters would have gone on to do had they not been caught, but based on appearances they did not engage in clandestine struggle ever again and many of them permanently renounced their former tactics. When they were apprehended, the most hidden and rotten parts of the former fighters came to the surface. Only the strongest held onto themselves through the hell that we will describe...

After the final actions of the Northwest ELF cell in 2002, the strength of the national environmental began to fade. The tactical and theoretical unity of the anti-globalization era no longer kept people together and working for a common purpose. The majority of the mainstream support that had once bolstered the larger environmental network was slowly absorbed into green capitalism, becoming infatuated with corn-based fuels, windmills, and soy products.

Simultaneously, the effort to discredit the data regarding global warming reached a disturbing high and was accompanied by the overt fascism being stoked by the Bush administration. It was in the midst of this counter-revolution, with the forces of order and reaction destroying the gains of the anti-globalization movement, that the FBI began what was to become known as the Green Scare<sup>[1]</sup>.

**It started simply enough. The FBI had a small lead and one suspect.**

His name was Jacob Ferguson, the young man who had also helped start the ELF cell. The FBI brought him in for questioning, threatened to put him in jail, and told him he would not see his son for decades. Although they only suspected him of a few minor acts of arson and doubted they could even connect him to them, the fearful Ferguson quickly revealed everything he knew about the activities of the cell. Much to the surprise of the FBI, this young man had participated in nearly every attack carried out by the cell. Totally consumed by fear, Ferguson agreed to act as an informant.

In 2005, Ferguson wore a wire and went on an FBI-funded trip across the country to meet up with his former comrades. **He went to New York City and recorded a conversation with Daniel McGowan in which he was able to manipulate his old friend into admitting guilt to several arsons. When Ferguson brought up the possibility of someone becoming an informant, McGowan replied that it would be "some Judas shit."** Ferguson conducted similar operations against Stan Meyerhoff, Kevin Tubbs, and William Rogers, otherwise known as Avalon. With the information that Ferguson collected,



the FBI began to organize the logistics for taking down the entire cell.

On December 7th, 2005, the FBI arrested seven people in different locations across the country. Just over a month later, three more people were arrested in what the FBI called Operation Backfire. Josephine Overaker, Rebecca Rubin, Joseph Dibee, and Justin Solodnz were able to escape apprehension. When the captured members of the cell learned the extent of Ferguson's treachery, the same fear that possessed him began to infect their minds. Having left behind their guerrilla activity, many of the former fighters had grown used to the comforts of a normal and affluent life. It was the fear of losing this that drove the majority of the cell to begin testifying against each other.

**The worst casualty of this betrayal was Avalon. Once he learned that most of his comrades were going to collaborate against each other, he wrote a simple goodbye note that read: "To my friends and supporters to help them make sense of all these events that have happened so quickly: Certain human cultures have been waging war against the Earth for millennia.**

**I chose to fight on the side of bears, mountain lions, skunks, bats, saguaros, cliff rose and all things wild. I am just the most recent casualty in that war. But tonight I have made a jail break – I am returning home, to the Earth, to the place of my origins.**

**Bill, 12/21/05 (the winter solstice.)" After writing this note, Avalon put a plastic bag over his head and killed himself inside his prison cell.**

By the end of Operation Backfire, only Daniel McGowan, Jonathan Paul, Joyanna Zacher, and Nathan Block refused to testify against any of their former comrades or each other. All of the others made selfish and cowardly deals in order to preserve the privileges and comforts they had come to value over the earth they once fought to protect. Whether they betrayed each other or not, each convicted member of the cell generally received 4-7 years each. Except for Jacob Ferguson. He received no jail time.

Despite this, multiple other ELF cells continued to operate in the greater Puget Sound area during this time. On April 13th, 2005, an ELF cell burnt down a house that was part of a new golf course subdivision in Sammamish. They left a message painted on a bed sheet that read "Where are all the trees? Burn, rapist, burn. E.L.F."

Between July 27th and July 29th, another cell burnt down two [uninhabited] homes built in what had once been forests in Whatcom County. Starting on November 25th and lasting until the end of January, 2006, the ELF burnt down houses and construction equipment in Bothell, Kenmore, and Camano Island every week and half. While there is no direct confirmation, this offensive could be seen as retaliation for the arrests taking place during this time period.

**Just as Briana Waters was being sentenced for her role in the infamous UW arson in March, 2008, another ELF cell burnt down four multimillion dollar Street of Dreams houses in Woodinville. This was to be the biggest environmental arson in the Puget Sound area and served as a reminder that the fight to save the planet still had life left in it. Law enforcement who responded to the inferno found a bed sheet nearby with these words painted on it: "Built Green? Nope black! McMansions in rural cluster developments are not green. ELF."**

We will conclude the story of the Northwest ELF. For now, take comfort in the fact that the dream some of them once had survived repression, suicide, betrayal, and entrapment. It lives on still in dozens of cells across the planet, fighting for the health and continuity of the earth.

While the Green Scare of 2006 may have been the end for one particular cell, the repression certainly did not stop the idea and concept of the ELF from growing. In the immediate aftermath of the arrests, multiple new houses were burnt by cells in



they threw multiple Molotov cocktails at the facilities for the new metro line, the construction of which had already resulted in evictions and tree clearing. Then the group destroyed a large telephone wire box belonging to Telmex<sup>[2]</sup>, rendering over 100 lines useless. In addition to this, they completely destroyed eight telephone booths owned by the same company. Finally, the group burnt an ATM at a Banamex bank. The communique claiming this action ends, "How beautiful it is to see revenge of the exploited and the oppressors squeezed! How beautiful is the fire that frees! How beautiful is the abolitionist fire of the anti-authoritarians! No to metro line 12! Stop the deforestation and the displacement of entire families! For every eviction or abuse of power... fire in the streets!"

Although not officially claimed by the ELF, this group operated in the same manner and their action signaled the beginning of a new offensive against the destroyers of the earth. A few months later, the *Frente de Liberación de la Tierra* (ELF) burnt a construction machine that was being used to build a new campus at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in DF. They also destroyed the new administrative offices in the campus.

In the beginning of their communique they write, "We were informed that the university had been destroying a large part of the ecological reserve where a so-called 'education' center is being built. Several



Lobby, truck & two vans of an industrial poultry operation arsoned in Athens, Greece, by E.L.F. 'Synapses of Ignition for the Polymorphous Anarchist Struggle', 13.05.15

varieties of trees and diverse plants were cut down, considered to be in the way of their ability to expand their facilities and their mastery over nature. The progress and education that they extol in their classrooms is always based on domination and anthropocentrism. In this act by the UNAM, it is more than clear that not only do they wish to dominate and mold the minds of students, they also seek to expand the same control over the land and the animals that inhabit her [sic].”

**Over the course of 2009, ELF cells across Mexico began attacking targets in a diffuse offensive.**

Telmex remained one of their primary targets, as did the practice and spectacle of bullfighting. Multiple groups and cells set barricades aflame in the middle of highways, burnt construction equipment, burnt police stations, and freed abused horses. In 2011, an ELF cell aligned with the Informal Anarchist Federation [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg80*] bombed a police station

in Coacalco. One month later, a different ELF cell burnt facilities belonging to the National Institute of Forestry, Agricultural, and Livestock Research in Texcoco. These facilities were used to do genetic research on plants. The attacks in Mexico continue to this day.

In Russia, the ELF has also found rich soil. In 2011 alone, there were dozens of instances of arson and sabotage committed by the ELF, the first of which was the torching of construction equipment in the forests outside Moscow on New Year’s Eve. Most of the activity centered around the defense of the Khimki forest, one of the few remaining wild places in the Moscow area.

The government and developers had plans to destroy it, put in a large freeway, and build housing and strip malls. In a rare development, the ELF and the general public had united in their efforts to stop development and had forced President Medvedev to halt the project in the

summer of 2010. A communique for an action in July of that year reads, “On July 17 2010 a tracked tree transporter was torched by a group of ELF activists. The action took place at the road construction site near Sheremetjevo airport in Khimki forest, North of Moscow, Russia. We support local activists in their fight against deforestation campaign of Moscow authorities, although we disapprove of their half-hearted liberal tactics.”

The battle for the Khimki forests has still not ended, but it represented a new era for the ELF. Unlike the schisms and splits that had occurred in the US between the environmental movement and the ELF guerrillas, the two sides in Russia were able to work together in their fight against Moscow and the international development companies. When suddenly the president himself suspended the project, it was as if the endless circle of history had been broken and for once, a group of humans using a diversity of tactics was united against the exploitation of the earth.

The last action [at time of writing] related to the defense of the forest took place on July 21st, 2012<sup>[3]</sup>. The full communique reads, “After having received news of new tree-cutting activity in Khimki forest, we decided to visit the workers. We aimed for 2 trucks and excavator parked on the clear cut. They were completely destroyed. Our solidarity goes out to eco-activists who broke the arm of private guard who was guarding the clear cut (this piece we learned from news). Enough of pseudo-legalism! Do like us, do better than us.”

The rulers of the world will never succeed in wiping out any of these groups, including the ELF. While the cell in the Northwest may have been arrested and neutralized, their efforts and examples live on from Indonesia to Mexico, from Russia to Chile. We wish everyone good luck, especially YOU.



28.07.10: After an attack on their camp by Nazis hired by the construction firm, Vinci, opponents of the Khimki felling storm City Hall by the hundred (while police forces are massed at the forest cutting) with fireworks, stones, air-guns and smoke-bombs, hacking down the door with an axe. Cops flee, two cop cars molotoved. Soon after over the border in Belarus, Russia's embassy is hit by molotovs in solidarity with the struggle, as was the same with paint-bombs in Istanbul, Turkey.

**'BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON'**

Last night, November 4th [2009], we went out among friends by the light of the moon in order to sabotage companies that destroy the environment.

This time it was CARSO’s turn, a firm linked to CICSA, one of whose owners is the bastard son of Carlos Slim; it is also one of the companies that, together with ICA and ALSTOM, is currently destroying large portions of ecosystems with the construction of a new metro line in Mexico City, imposing their damned progress on animal species and different types of trees.

A construction site belonging to CARSO was found on the outskirts of the outer Mexican expressway network in Mexico State by crossing the expressway and a sewage canal. The terrain was perfect; many trees covered our dark shadows.

**Armed with our backpacks, masked up and full of resolve, we crossed the lanes with automobiles passing by at high speed, jumped the small barbed wire fence, and then cut the wires in order to make our escape easier; previously we had made a path in order to go down the hill covered by grass and weeds growing around the banks of the canal, so we followed the path and found ourselves behind a tree, where we divided our equipment and split up.**

Some comrades went to the left and others went to the right; the signal to start attacking was the flash from a Molotov, which sadly was not what we expected,

but the menacing fire that illuminated the walled-in CARSO construction site began, followed by a shower of stones, bottles, and acid bombs (made with marbles and small metal objects). Federal Police (PF) inside the site started to come out in order to see who was attacking them, but they were unsuccessful, because after something was thrown we took cover behind the trees and branches. **When our escape began, the police could not come over to stop us because the sewage canal separated us from them, and they had no path or bridge by which to cross it.** Before leaving the terrain, we flung explosives made from dynamite, paper, and a fuse, combined with metal objects for greater destructive power. These weapons exploded, leaving an echo in the middle of the night and alerting the wicked Federal Police.

**This attack was not only against a construction site that is destroying the environment,** it was also against the police, as we demonstrate that we can be strong if we intend to and if we fight for what we want.

*Solidarity with the prisoners and people under investigation in Guadalajara, Mexico City, León, Mexico State, and the world!*

*Because we all have something of Barry [Horne]<sup>[1]</sup> in us whenever we leave words behind and start acting, we remember him with this action!*

– Earth Liberation Front

1. ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg64*

1. ed – Named in reference to the 'Red Scare' of the 1940's and '50's, which also saw legal and extralegal action by the U.S. government (against those accused of communist or anarchist sympathies or activity), aiming to harshly punish a few individuals in order to repress many more.

2. ed. – As comrades of those lands noted, "Telmex is a company that not only promotes bullfights, damages and destroys the planet with its telephone antennas, promotes massive lazy stupidity with its internet cables, and gives people cancer with its telephones and telephone antennas; Telmex also builds private prisons and prisons with private-federal investors in Mexico. Carlos Slim, the owner of this Mexican monster is also owner and co-owner of other companies that participate in megaprojects of urbanization, gentrification and environmental destruction, companies such as ICA, for example.

[...] In this scenario of attack, Telmex has always been a target of anarchists and other groups fighting for animal or earth liberation, and we see no reason why today, when Telmex is acquiring another major role as a prison-building company that supports the idea of prison, it should stop being one. Evidence of the attacks against this company is the fact that, from 2001 to 2012, 696 attacks were carried out – of those that were recorded – against Telmex properties around the country (attacks that consisted of the destruction or disabling of telephone booths, destruction of telephone and internet control boxes, burning of company trucks, burning telephone towers, a bomb threat at Carlos Slim's Plaza Delta Mall, an arson attack at a Telmex collections office), actions carried out from various perspectives and motives, but always with the intent to sabotage the communications monster. The most recent actions reported were the burning of a company truck in January 2016 and the disabling of 13 telephones in Ciudad Nez, State of Mexico, on June 17, 2016.

Sabotaging this company isn't as difficult as people think. According to what we've seen, the majority have been sabotages easily reproduced by anyone, such as disabling payphones. Some have been burned, others destroyed with a firework set off with a cigarette embedded on the wick as a timer, and many more sealed with rubber cement and paperclips. In the best cases, disabling telephone and internet control boxes have been done with rudimentary incendiary devices or with acid sprinkled on the cables inside the box, or simply cutting the small cable lines. Against telephone poles (not cell towers) some have opted to knock them down or have simply cut the wiring. Against trucks belonging to this ecocidal company, rudimentary incendiary devices have done their jobs well. But above all it is the creativity that materializes from our desires for the spread of sabotage and its replicability. There is no difference between big or small sabotage, they are all indispensable in the process of insurrection.



July 2011: excavator clearing forest in Sörmland, Sweden, gets cables cut, E.L.F. tagged, then fire-bombed

We are not for "striking a blow at the heart of the state," as along with this claim being part of the logic of the taking of power, it otherwise would delimit the insurrectionary goal into a centralized attack when part of the goal is that sabotage spreads and is not a single attack every now and then carried out by a group of professionals, but rather many daily attacks against a world that stifles freedom, carried out by those who want to, as every attack is liberating. Nor are we for "hitting where it hurts," as along with this claim smacking of the quantitative, it delimits the insurrectional goal into attacks against a single structure within the pillar of domination, when part of the goal is the generalization of revolt, that the attacks be against all aspects of domination or that the goal be to attack, from the largest to the smallest, at an individual or affinity group level. Besides, hitting where it hurts, does the occasional – due to the need for specialization – attack really hurt? Why settle for what hurts the system? Why not destroy it? For us, revolt and insurrection are daily acts that take place within ourselves and are externalized from us as strikes against power.

We are in favor of an anarchy that understands attack as multiform and daily, carried out by those who desire to be free in the here and now, far from all specialization and professionalization (of the pen and the act). We understand anarchy as a tension with what exists, as a project for the destruction of power, and we are fighting to build a reality of struggle and true confrontation with domination. Telmex is just one of the pillars that sustain power, the state and capitalism. Telmex has many branches ready to receive an attack from those freedom-seeking individuals".

3. ed. – See **Special Hydraulic Fracture** for more recent action around the Khimki defence. Earlier, workers' sheds had been molotoved, and 12mm carbine weapons fired on site machinery.

"For nearly two centuries, pre-luddites throughout Europe delayed the widespread use of new machinery. Their outrage and sabotage moved town councils and emperors alike to ban the new inventions. But in the meantime, the political power of the merchants grew, new opportunities to sell textiles opened up in the form of overseas markets, and the downtrodden came to accept their position and identify as workers, and thus would react more to their exclusion from work than to their much deeper oppression, the loss of skill and handicraft, the further expulsion from the land represented by the move from cottage to factory labor. Once these changes were cemented, the political elite reversed their position, advanced the interests of the merchants and industrialists, and protected the machinery like a sacred object, with lethal force. The luddites are remembered, curiously enough, because they lost. In being crushed, they could be presented as backwards, archaic, an inverse symbol for progress."

– Jason Radegas & Lev Zlodey

## "An Outrageous Spirit of Tumult & Riot"

"John Goodair had a factory in Stockport, Cheshire, the size of a city block with eight thousand spindles and two hundred looms.

On April the 14th 1812 a mob of two to three thousand (in a parish of only fifteen thousand) descended on his mill and mansion after smashing the windows of other industrialists' houses. At noon, led by two men dressed as women who proclaimed they were 'General Ludd's wives', the crowd stormed his mansion. The following is part of a letter written by his wife: "Everything, I have since learnt, was consumed by the fire, and nothing left but the shell. The mob next proceeded to the factory, where they broke the windows, destroyed the looms, and cut all the work which was in progress; and having finished this mischief, they repeated the three cheers which they gave on seeing the flames first from our dwelling. It is now nine o'clock at night, and I learn the mob are more outrageous than ever..." "

– *Rebels Against the Future*

In fifteen months at the beginning of the second decade of the [19th] century a movement of craft workers and their supporters declared war on the then emerging industrial society.

The movement spread across the Northern counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. It smashed thousands of machines, looted markets, burned down factories and spread hope of a way out of the bleak future being offered the majority of the British people. It was a movement that, in the words of the late radical historian E.P. Thompson; "in sheer insurrectionary fury has rarely been more widespread in English History".

It is important to understand the birth of industrialism. If we are to successfully dismantle the present system, it is essential to know how – and why – it was constructed.

### **The Birth of the New Society & the Destruction of the Old**

The elites that built up Industry had been growing in power, and the ideas and technologies that allowed them to grow had been festering for centuries. Its conception may have been long before, but its birth was a sudden calamity that accelerated change in society at an unprecedented rate. The Industrial Revolution, from roughly 1780 to 1830, mutated everything. It altered the way the majority of people lived, first in Britain and now all over the world. Just as societies are being shaped all over the globe into one monoculture; so the life systems of the

planet are also changing unrecognisably. The results of the society that was born in those 50 years will rebound through millions of years of evolutionary change. Norman Myers, a leading biodiversity scientist, has said: *"The impending upheaval in evolution's course could rank as one of the greatest biological revolutions of paleontological time. In scale and significance, it could match the development of aerobic respiration, the emergence of flowering plants and the arrival of limbed animals."*

Change beyond imagination.

But change has to burst forward somewhere, and it burst forward here in Britain.

**Lancashire, say 1780:** *"The workshop of the weaver was a rural cottage, from which when he tired of sedentary labour he could sally forth into his little garden, and with the spade or the hoe tend its culinary productions. The cotton wool which was to form his weft was picked clean by the fingers of his younger children, and the yarn was carded and spun by the older girls assisted by his wife, and the yarn was woven by himself assisted by his sons..."*<sup>41</sup>

A family often had no single employer but hired its looms, supplied with the raw materials by businessmen who then marketed the finished products. Workers had a large amount of control over their own labour. They produced only enough to keep themselves comfortable and if the fancy took them they might not work for days. Even after the enclosures took away large amounts of common land they subsisted for a great percentage on what they grew in their gardens. Basically they shaped their work around their lives, rather than their lives around their work. These were a strong people.

**Lancashire, say 1814:** *"There are hundreds of factories in Manchester which are five or six stories high. At one side of each factory there is a great chimney which belches forth black smoke and indicates the presence of the powerful steam engines. The smoke from the chimneys forms a great cloud that can be seen for miles around the town. The houses have become black on account of the smoke. The river upon which Manchester stands is so tainted with colouring matter that the water resembles the contents of a dye-vat.... To save wages mule Jennies have actually been built so that no less than 600 spindles can be operated by one adult and two children.... In the large spinning mills machines of different kinds stand in rows like regiments in an army."*

Insurrections and riots were so common throughout the preceding centuries that the

English poor have been characterised as one of the greatest mobs of all time. The spectre of revolution in France and America left the English rich with the realisation that they were walking on a knife edge: or more accurately that of a guillotine.

**Enclosure had given the new ruling class greater control over the land but crafts people still constituted a major counter current to the prevailing order. They had to be domesticated.**

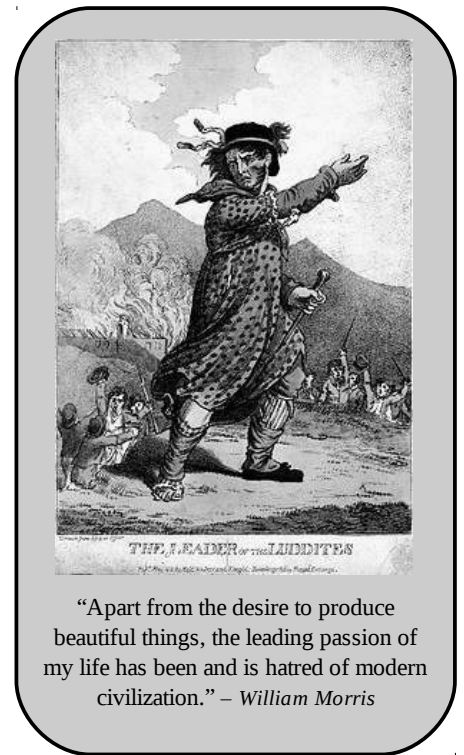
Factories were not built simply because of technological innovations, but more as a project of social control to limit the power of the 'poor'. To break their spirit.

In 1770, a writer envisioned a new plan for making the poor productive: The House of Terror, in which the inhabitants would be obliged to work for 14 hours a day and controlled by keeping them on a starvation diet. **His idea was not that far ahead of its time; a generation later, the House of Terror was simply called a factory.** Andrew Ure, one of the greatest proponents of Industry, wrote in 1835: *"If science was put to the service of capital, the recalcitrant worker's docility would be assured"*.

Factories meant regimented and unprecedented work hours, horrific pollution, dangerous working conditions, unsanitary living space with virulent diseases, early death, a starvation diet and a total lack of freedom. Nobody entered the factory system willingly. Men, war widows, young women and very often children, lived in a system one Yorkshire man described in 1830 as: *"[a] state of slavery more horrid than ... that hellish system – Colonial Slavery"*. These workers, who one doctor surveying Manchester in 1831 described as *"a degenerate race – human beings stunted, enfeebled, and depraved"*, were the refugees of a destroyed society.

Just as small farmers had been pushed off their land by enclosure, so the crafts people were purposefully pushed from relative autonomy to a situation of dependence. Whole regions, thousands of communities were broken up and reorganised to suit the wishes of the factory owners. Much of the populace were thrown aside to starve, or forced to become wage slaves in factories literally modelled after prisons. Cities and misery multiplied.

Petitions were handed to parliament, meetings and rallies were held but nothing came of it. With nobody to turn to but themselves, the weavers took direct action.



### The Birth of Luddism

*"The night of November 4th, a Monday, was cloudy but still not winter-cold. In the little village of Bulwell, some four miles north of Nottingham, a small band gathered somewhere in the darkness and ... blackened their faces or pulled up scarves across their faces, counted off in military style, hoisted their various weapons- hammers, axes, pistols, "swords, firelocks, and other offensive weapons" (as one report had it) – and marched in more or less soldierly fashion to their destination. Outside the house that was most likely the home of a master weaver named Hollingsworth they posted a guard to make sure no neighbours interfered with their work, suddenly forced their way inside through shutters or doors, and destroyed half a dozen frames.... Reassembling at some designated spot, the little band responded in turn to a list of numbers called out, and when each man had accounted for himself a pistol was fired and they disbanded, heading home.*

*A week later, this time on a Sunday night, the workers attacked again: same procedure, same target, only this time Hollingsworth was ready. In preparation for a renewed attack, he had sent some of his frames to Nottingham for storage and had arranged for seven or eight of his workers and neighbours to stand watch with muskets over the seven frames remaining. When the attackers approached the house they demanded that Hollingsworth let them in or surrender his frames, and when he refused a shot rang out and a fusillade of eighteen or twenty shots was exchanged.*

*One young man, a weaver from the nearby village named John Westley was shot –*



while "tearing down the window shutters to obtain entrance by force" ... before he died he had just time to exclaim "Proceed, my brave fellows, I die with a willing heart!". His comrades bore the body to the edge of a nearby wood and then returned "with a fury irresistible by the force opposed to them" and broke down the door while the family and the guards escaped by the back door.

They then smashed the frames and apparently some of the furniture, and set fire to the house, which was a gutted ruin within an hour; the men dispersed into the night, never identified, never caught. That same night just a few miles away in Kimberly, another group of men raided a shop and destroyed ten or twelve frames...

On Tuesday a cart carrying eight or nine looms to safety from the Maltby and Brewwet firm in Sutton, fifteen miles north of Nottingham, was stopped ... and men with their faces

blackened smashed its cargo with heavy hammers, bent the metal parts to uselessness, and made a bonfire of the wooden pieces in the middle of the street.



That evening a thousand men descended on Sutton from nearby villages, assembling at a milestone on the main road to the north, and marched on the town with their axes and pikes and hammers; about three hundred of them were said to be armed with muskets and pistols. The number of machines they broke is given as somewhere between thirty-seven and seventy, said to be "the frames of the principal weavers" of the town, one of whom, named Betts, whose shop was completely destroyed, was reported to have died soon after, "deranged."<sup>[2]</sup>

Luddism had begun.

### An Outrageous Spirit of Tumult & Riot

With weavers' taverns acting as rallying points, news spread from village to village. Inspired by the success of the first actions, communities all over the North started to act. At least a hundred frames were attacked in the last week of November, another hundred and fifty or more in December.

"There is an outrageous spirit of tumult and riot," the magistrates of Nottingham told the public in November 1811. "Houses are broken into by armed men, many stocking frames are destroyed, the lives of opposers are threatened, arms are seized,

haystacks are fired, and private property destroyed."

The spirit of rebellion rapidly spread across the Northern counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

Posters were pinned up on the doors of offending workshops, warning them to concede to the demands of 'Ned Ludd's Army' or suffer the consequences. For many businessmen the threat worked as well as the act.

**Most luddite literature makes reference to 'General Ludd' but there was no such leader.** Instead it was a reference to a (conceivably true) folktale of the time. The story goes that a Nottingham lad at the end of the previous century had been enraged with his loom and had set his hammer to it.

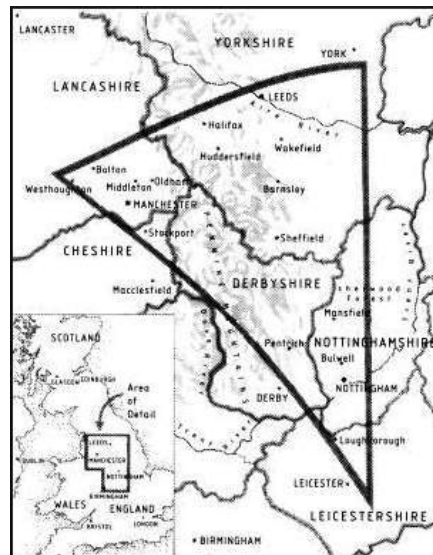
Machine destruction had been a tactic of the weavers and their kind since at least midway through the previous century. What was different about the Luddites was exactly the opposite of how many imagine them. Read many accounts, especially those written by supporters of the trade unions, and the Luddites

come across as mindless and disorganised, who if born a few centuries later would probably be kicking in bus shelters. True, Luddism was not the act of pre-organised political groups. However it was often *much more powerful*; a defensive reaction of communities under threat.

**The blackfaced figures marching over fields towards the hated factory had probably known each other since they were kids. They had played at similar 'games' (maybe 'hunting the French') as gangs of children. They had been brought up with stories of struggle, in which the actors were as often as not their parents, grandparents or 'im down the pub'.**

Though actions in nearby villages would often be done at the same time to stretch the soldiers, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any serious co-ordination across the counties. But such co-ordination was probably unnecessary and dangerous.

Many Luddite attacks included women (although unsurprisingly this was not the norm). On the 24th April 1812, a very successful attack was carried out on a mill outside Bolton only an hour or so after the



soldiers sent to protect it had left. "About fifty assembled near the mill...[descending on it]... they smashed through the gates and started to break windows in the mill, led by two young women, Mary Molyneux, 19, and her sister Lydia, 15, who were seen, according to court papers, "with Muck Hooks and coal Picks in their hands breaking the windows of the building"... shouting "Now Lads" to encourage the men on. With the windows broken, men took straw from the stables and set a series of fires inside: "The whole of the Building," wrote the Annual Register correspondent, "with its valuable machinery, cambrics, &c, were entirely destroyed."<sup>[3]</sup>

The spirit of revolt spread well beyond the confines of the textile workers. Riots broke out in many towns and food was redistributed. The whole of the north-west was verging on insurrection.

### Hangmen, Prison Ships, Spies & Battalions: The State fights back

[...] Battalions of soldiers were sent to the North. But with the eyes and ears of the community protecting them, the Luddites were often one step ahead. No intelligence system in the world is better than the collective solidarity of a community. Byron<sup>[4]</sup> joyfully summed it up: "Such marchings and countermarchings! From Nottingham to Bulwell, from Bulwell to Banford, from Banford to Mansfield! And when at length detachments arrived at their destination, in all "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," they came just in time to witness what had been done, and ascertain the escape of the perpetrators, to collect .... the fragments of broken frames, and return to their quarters amidst the derision of old women and the hootings of children."

The state dramatically raised the stakes. Frame breaking itself was punishable only(?) by 14 years transportation to Australia. On March 5th 1812, a bill was

passed to make the breaking of machines an offence punishable by death.

With the normal means of suppression failing the state organised an army of occupation in the north-west. More and more soldiers were sent. By May 1812 there were 14,400, including thousands of cavalry men and full artillery units. **Three months before, the Home Secretary had admitted that the force sent to crush the Luddite rebellion in Nottinghamshire was the largest ever used in the history of the country.** But as of the 1st of May, an army seven times as large was operating in the 'Luddite Triangle'. The scale of the presence was such that one out of every seventy people in the counties was a soldier. There were a thousand soldiers stationed in Huddersfield, a town of only ten thousand.

[...] Professional spies were brought in, informers paid. Generous bribes for information (in what was for many a famine) were posted up. Communities, for the most, stayed strong. Surprisingly few turned traitor. However, many in the movement were scared into the inactivity. **Luddite attacks on frames decreased. But this wasn't solely because of the state.** True, the towns were awash with soldiers, but there weren't that many frames left to smash. Luddism changed form.

### The Death of Luddism

To attempt to repeat the actions of the previous months would have been mad. Those luddites still active (a considerable number) changed tactics. Understanding that the rich had quite literally declared war, Ned Ludd's Army began to arm itself. Luddite gangs roamed through the counties gathering, by force, guns from any source they could.

*"[John Lloyd, a government agent], told the Home Office that 'bodies of a hundred and upwards ... have entered houses night after night and made seizures of arms' ... Vice-Lieutenant Wood the same month reported that there had been 'some hundreds of cases' ... leading him to fear it would all end 'in open rebellion against the government of the country ...' A Parliamentary Committee reported in July 'considerable' theft of guns and ammunitions in most towns, and in Huddersfield of 'all of the arms' ... 'every article of lead', wrote a correspondent from the West Riding, 'such as pumps, water spouts is constantly disappearing to be converted into bullets.' <sup>[5]</sup>*

[...] Although unions were technically illegal under the Combination Acts, courts often held them to be legal. **Many voices within the establishment saw the unions as a way to pacify the workers. When you're talking, you're not fighting.**

**The unions themselves (then as now) told the workers to stay away from sabotage, and to negotiate with the factory owners rather than fight the system itself.** In [John] Zerzan's words: *"Unionism played the critical role in [Luddism's] defeat, through the divisions, confusion, and deflection of energies the unions engineered."*

Less than a decade later, in 1825, the unions were officially recognised by the repeal of the Combination Acts – a measure supported by the majority of the British state.

The insurrection never came and Luddism slowly died, not with a grand finale but more with the actors leaving the stage one by one. The final event that can be accurately named Luddite came in June 1817. A state infiltrator named 'Oliver' convinced two hundred people from Pentrich, Derbyshire, to march out and join "a cloud of men" sweeping down from Scotland & Yorkshire on their way to London. Instead they were met by two mounted magistrates and a company of soldiers. Forty six were arrested, three of which were executed, fourteen transported to Australia and nine imprisoned.

Luddism was the last fitful struggle before, like a broken-in horse, the English poor lay down, resigned to wage slavery. The meagre struggles that followed rarely aimed at reclaiming peoples' lives from work; but merely getting a better deal for the slaves.

The poor started to identify themselves more and more with the idea of work, abhorrent only 50 years before. Concepts like the 'dignity of labour' and 'laziness is sin' multiplied. As Leopold Roc put it, *"There is always a tendency to rationalise insults when revenge does not take place."*

**The strange belief spread that technologies created to bolster obedience and elite power were 'neutral' – and could exist in a free world – in fact were the key.** The idea that we should organise our lives around work was the very opposite of what the Luddites stood for.

The workers' internalisation of industrial logic would be more disastrous than any army the manufacturers could muster. Even when the 'workers' movement seized power, its aim became to run industrialism itself. Revolutions came and went but to paraphrase the Anti-Election Alliance, 'Whoever you deposed, the industrial system always got in.' Party and trade union leaders easily made the transition to factory managers.

The internalisation of industrial logic by 'liberation' movements would lead to the 'revolutionary collectivisation' of the Soviet peasantry and its associated gulags, and many of the worst moments of the 20th Century. Whole generations were held both in slavery to industry and in awe of it.

### The Rebirth of Luddism?

But many of us have begun, in recent years, to see industry for what is. To reject industrial logic and embrace our desires.

[...] Feeling out of place in this society, alienation is very painful. Much like realising that we are descended from apes, in fact are apes, gives us a feeling of innate connection with the rest of life. Walking the streets of Manchester or Leeds, knowing that you walk the same streets as machine-destroying, free-food distributing, prison-breaking crowds, gives one a feeling of being rooted.

Machine haters walk again in the Luddite Triangle[...] The successful campaign in the early 90's to stop peat extraction on Thorne Moors just outside Leeds, came to a close when saboteurs destroyed 100,000 worth of machinery. Two weeks later the company (Fisons) sold up. The Lancashire M65 campaign<sup>[6]</sup> was a turning point in tree-based campaigns, and before the A30 Fairmile eviction<sup>[7]</sup> was the longest eviction in British history.

**[...] We are told by the media – the advance guard of the spectacle – to constantly change so that we can continue to be news. But nothing is truly new – with the exception of the scale and complexity of the problem. Our struggles are recent battles in an old war.**



The 'Luddite Triangle' today: Yorkshire Dales 'national park' is torn apart by quarrying. In 2008 an aggregate processing plant had holes drilled in the engines and tyres of all their bulldozers, control rooms broken into and all computers and instrument panels smashed, as well as keys to all buildings and machinery stolen. 'Stop Glensanda' was sprayed on site (the company's Scottish super-quarry leveling 'Mam' and 'Lag a 'Mhaim' peaks).

The spectacle attempts to destroy its real history and that of its opponents while creating a sanitised version of the past, which it can then sell back to consumers as a commodity. When we learn about OUR history, our ancestors, it is both inspiring and instructive. By looking at past conflicts we can learn more about our 'new' ones. By learning about the mistakes of the past we may avoid making them in the future.

1. Quoted in 'Rebels Against the Future', by Kirkpatrick Sale

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*

4. – [T]he romantic poet [George] Byron, whose close friend (also a great poet) Percy Shelley set up a fund for Luddite orphans. Largely in reaction to Luddism his wife, Mary Shelley, wrote 'Frankenstein', still the most eloquent and beautiful treatise against the machine. Interestingly her parents were William Godwin, one of the founders of anarchism, and Mary Wolfenscraft, the founder of feminism. In a further historical twist, Byron left his first wife and his daughter was brought up to hate the values he stood for, nature and love; growing up instead to be obsessed with machinery and mathematics. Working with Babbage, inventor of the first computer, she founded programming. In honour, the US nuclear missile control computer is named after her.

5. – 'Rebels...'. [ed. – Three Luddites also ambushed and fatally shot mill owner William Horsfall of Ottiwells Mill (who had pledged that he would "ride up to his saddle in Luddite blood"), on Crosland Moor in Huddersfield.]

6. ed. – "The campaign began in May 1994 at Cuerden Valley which has now been totally devastated by Stage One of the £142 million (!) 12 mile M65 road extension, which stretches from Junction 29 on the M6 to Blackburn. There has been serious opposition since work began, with constant direct action, squatting of properties en route, and tree-sitting. The most well publicised period of the campaign has been

"Last Wednesday in the evening a riotous mob of weavers, Sheermen, etc., assembled together and preceded to the town of Shepton Mallet [*Somerset, south-west England*] with an intent to destroy, under the cover of night, a spinning machine lately erected by the clothiers, for the advancement and benefit of the main factory, and to pull down the houses and take away the lives of those persons who encouraged and promoted the use of it. The mob attacked the poor house where the machines were worked, and before the soldiery could be had out to oppose them, broke into the same, and not only destroyed the particular objects of their resentment, but committed other injuries to a very considerable amount. They had scarcely effected their purpose, when the military, proceeded by the magistrates, advanced, and secured five of the ring leaders, but in conveying them to the prison they were attacked by the whole body, with an intention to effect a rescue. Driven to the extremity, no alternative was left – the command to level their pieces was given, and one man was killed on the spot, and six were wounded, some of them it is feared mortally. This intimidated the mob and they retired with the utmost precipitation." – *The Bath Chronicle*, 18.07.1776

"Protesters and security guards clashed repeatedly as fences were brought down around the bypass route. Around 150 people gathered in Alice Park for what was billed as a 'mass trespass'. They walked along the London Road to the southern entrance of the construction site, where security guards were waiting for them. While half the protesters attacked the gate, others pulled down an undefended part of the fence and streamed onto the site. Within minutes, they were wandering around the half built road near the water meadows, lights were ripped off construction vehicles and their windows were smashed. Demonstrators then turned their attention to the gate on the northern side of the A4. They hurled rocks at the guards at the other side, slid under the gate and shook the gate until it collapsed. Chief Inspector Paul Dennis of Bath police said: "Criminal damage was caused on some of the machinery. They then set about damaging fences and some were throwing rocks at security guards." He added that one protester had been arrested for criminal damage and one for assault.

Last night, 20 other demonstrators were occupying Bath police station, demanding to see their friends." – *The Bath Chronicle*, 13.03.1995

the recent defence of the Stanworth Valley 'Village in the Sky', at the beginning of Stage Two of the motorway. A small group of people squatted the ancient wood and despite the grim weather conditions, and lack of full time people over winter, they managed to construct the largest tree village in England, if not the world! There were over 40 tree houses ranging between 30 and 70 feet in the air protecting both sides of the approximately 100 metre wide valley. High tension cable walkways connected all the treetop homes and crossed over the River

Ribblesworth, that surged (due to the rain cloud vortex over Lancashire), through the middle of the valley" (It's (Not Really That) Grim Up North). The campaign added an extra £12.2 million onto the cost of the road, an important part of the historic mass resistance to what the government had in 1989 announced as "the biggest road building scheme since the Romans".

7. ed. – Fairmile anti-road occupation in east Devon, begun in 1994 and evicted in 1997.

## 'THE CULT OF UTILITY'

Luddism was heir to the millenarian movement of the preceding centuries<sup>[1]</sup>, and although it no longer expressed itself as a universal and unifying theory it remained radically foreign to all political outlooks<sup>[2]</sup>[.] every economic pseudo-rationalism. [...] It was in Protestantism, and more precisely its Anglo Saxon Puritan variation, that the cult of utility and progress found its source and legitimacy. Having made religion a private affair, the Protestant ethic confirmed the social atomisation caused by industrialisation: individuals found themselves alone before God in the same way they found themselves isolated with respect to commodities and money. As well, it professed the precise values that were required of the poor: honesty, frugality, abstinence, thrift and work. [...] In the industrial areas, the union was the direct offspring of the chapel, and lay preachers were transformed into trade union representatives. **The campaign to civilize the poor that was conducted by the bourgeoisie gained the upper hand over social hatred only on the rebound. Once it had**

been relayed by the workers' representatives, who, in their struggles against their masters, now spoke the same language as they did. [...] It was during the second third of the 19th century, when the poor were subjected to the most degrading and mutilating conditions in every aspect of their lives, and when all resistance to the founding of the new capitalist order was defeated, that Marx, Engels and their followers madly greeted with satisfaction the birth of "the revolutionary army of work," and considered that the objective conditions for a victorious assault had finally come together.

1. The millenarian movements, active in Europe from the 13th to the 17th centuries, attempted to realize a Golden Age or state of grace in real life. They grew out of a messianic Christianity which saw temporal authority – church and state – as the anti-Christ and a hindrance to the arrival of the millennium, the 1000 year rule of Christ on earth. Its adherents flaunted economic, sexual, religious and civic taboos, using a wide variety of tactics – some of them violent – to achieve their utopia.

2. During the same period in France, the silk-workers uprisings, which were also directed against the process of industrial domestication, were on the contrary already contaminated by the political lie.



# POWER DOWN

– no to the 735kV power line (Canada)

735,000 volts. This is what will pass through the new very high tension line that Hydro-Québec wants to construct as of this year. The trajectory of this line is 400km long and will transport electricity from the Chamouchouane central to Sanguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, passing through Lanaudiere, towards an eventual post that does not exist at the moment, in Terrebonne, called Judith-Jasmin. This will be linked to the Montreal region by a second segment of 19km towards the Bout-de-l'Île post. This is the most important hydro line in 20 years, estimated at 1.3 billion dollars. In fact, it's the 12th line of this scale in so-called "Québec".

But firstly, they need to clear-cut the path where pylons will be planted. The deforestation has already begun in the north and in Lanaudiere. It has caused multiple expropriations and partially crosses the hunting grounds of Attikamekws in the north, St-Michel-des-Saints, St-Zenon, Ste-Emelie-de-l'Energie, St-Alphonse-de-Rodriguez, Rawdon, etc.

The project has been contested by many residents, farmers and ecologists for the past 6 years: "Useless, environmentally devastating and economically unjustified" (Citizens Under High-Tension). Beyond any doubts, it is a categorical refusal. The BAPE (Bureau of Public Audiences on the Environment) has recommended the government wait until they have more information, to deepen the study of the impact and to take into consideration the opposition of the area. Nonetheless, the State has adopted a decree imposing the pursuit of the construction. Hydro-Québec gave 4 million dollars in compensation to the Regional County Municipality of Lanaudiere and another one million to Manawan as compensation to make them swallow their salads. But there are still people who oppose; most have land concerns, they are angry property owners because the value of their houses will decrease or because they have farms and their animals can't handle the strong electromagnetic fields of these high-tension lines. They refuse to sign the letters sent by Hydro-Québec that requests residents permission to cut trees on their lands as Hydro will not have compensated them personally in cash. In response Hydro is harassing them and has obtained an injunction. Even if it is heartwarming for people to be mobilizing

against Hydro-Québec, **this refusal only slows the process of systemic destruction and doesn't aspire to halt it.** We can even say that the motives of this opposition are absolutely contradictory to the desires of wild freedom that live in us. Our desire is to expand the field of possibilities, so we wish to propose other avenues to break the realization of this hydro project. As of this moment, the project is going ahead and the deforestation has already begun.

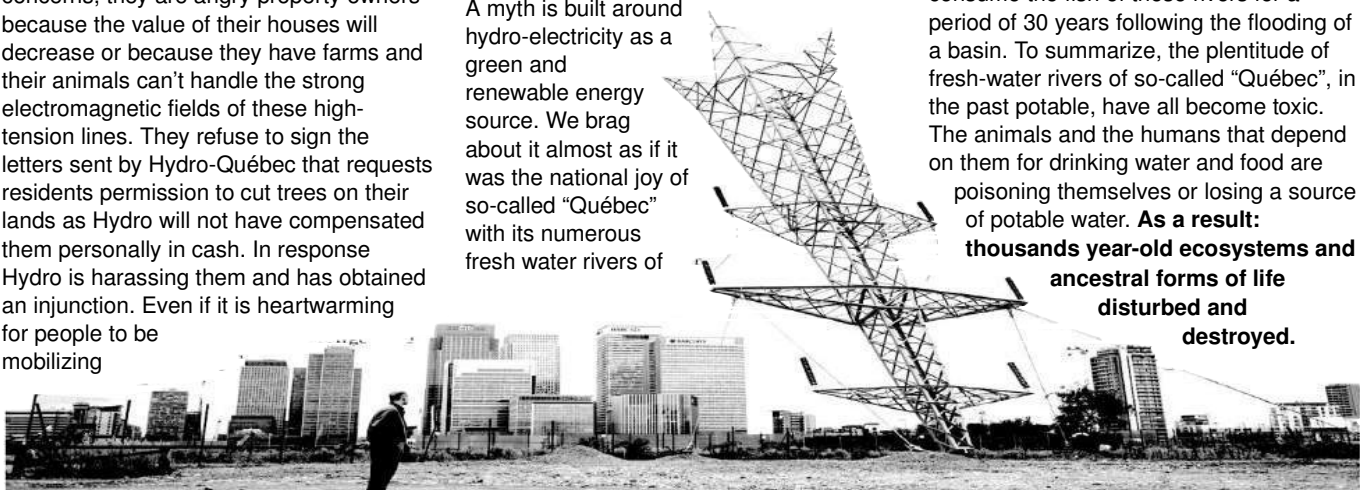
## Another National Myth

The Hydro-Québec mafia has no interest in retreating faced with a project like this that represents enormous profit. In fact, the era of combustible fossil fuels is in decline [ed. – see **Special Hydraulic Fracture**]. Facing the drying up of petroleum resources, the costs of extraction and transportation have become too high. **The turn to green has been in the works for a few decades and in this context, hydro-electricity, perceived as a renewable and green energy, becomes a precious commodity.** The large global corporations of commerce and finance are in the process of restructuring and transforming the industry and transportation in order to adapt to "green energies". The new Minister of Transportation of Québec has for an innovative mission the electrification of public transportation with new hybrid and electrical vehicles. Electrical cars become more and more accessible, Hydro installs battery recharge stations in every corner of so-called "Québec", even field vehicles will be electric in the near future. And all this with the objective to maintain the speed and the productivity of the industry. The infrastructure projects of energy transportation, as with roads, railroads, ports, pipelines and airports, are indispensable to the expansion of industry, a tentacular project in itself.

A myth is built around hydro-electricity as a green and renewable energy source. We brag about it almost as if it was the national joy of so-called "Québec" with its numerous fresh water rivers of



high flow. In reality, we should perceive hydro-electricity as an exploitable resource, commodifiable as much as iron, uranium or petroleum. Today, the territory is completely disfigured, there remains only a few high flow rivers that haven't yet been invaded by dams. The electricity itself that they speak of is actually a gigantic enterprise of ecosystem destruction, of river pollution and the destruction of ways of life of communities that depend on the river for survival. When a dam is constructed, the river is blocked and a reservoir of water that floods a large surface of the territory is created. The river in question overflows from its bed near the dam and dries up along all its length. The trees and plants that have been flooded die and release methane and carbon dioxide into the water and the air. The methane and the carbon dioxide are greenhouse gases; it is reported that 12% of greenhouse gases emitted on the colonized lands of the Canadian State originate from hydro-electric dams. Another consequence of these floods is the methyl-mercury contamination of the water, originating from the release of fossilized inorganic mercury in the soil. Once the ground has been flooded by water, the mercury is released and transforms into methyl-mercury, a neurotoxin that is consequentially found in the food chain. The fish, animals and humans that consume it may develop a variety of illnesses, such as cardiovascular disorders and cancer. It has been accordingly discouraged for people to consume the fish of these rivers for a period of 30 years following the flooding of a basin. To summarize, the plentitude of fresh-water rivers of so-called "Québec", in the past potable, have all become toxic. The animals and the humans that depend on them for drinking water and food are poisoning themselves or losing a source of potable water. **As a result: thousands year-old ecosystems and ancestral forms of life disturbed and destroyed.**





The first intention of Hydro-Québec is evidently the creation of consumer markets with the United-States, with a pretty discourse singing praise for hydro-electricity as being cleaner than coal electricity. On their website, they make the comparison. What they don't say, is that its the shitty industry put in place with its logic of monopolization since the beginning of colonization by the Europeans 500 years ago that causes the destruction of life. Hydro-Québec therefore explores all the American markets and talks of even undertaking other projects of dam construction for the few fresh water rivers still intact. They obviously don't have any reservations regarding the real damages caused by their thirst for wealth.

### The Bleeding of Electricity

Hydro-Québec owns approximately 62 hydro-electric centres. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the great rivers of the James Bay area and the North Shore have been used to feed a hydro-electric complex (i.e. the Caniapiscou, the Opinaca, the Eastmain and Ruper), and seriously disrupted following the installation of hydro-electric centers (i.e. Sainte-Marguerite, the Romaine and Toulnostouc). These famous high tension lines transport the electricity coming from the North and supplied to the entire province, its urban centers, its suburbs, its industries and its mines. As an example, supplying a single mine in heating and electricity, to render its below ground environment inhabitable for the people who work in it, is the equivalent energy consumption of a city like Trois-Rivieres. As those who oppose the project say, the province has no need to produce more electricity. In fact, most of the electricity produced is already surplus. At the moment we consume only 15% of the electricity produced, the rest is lost through transportation, or even wasted because it isn't profitable to stockpile it in batteries. Actually, if the produced current isn't consumed right away, its lost. Therefore, this 735,000 volt line will transport energy coming from the dams in the north: James Bay, Manicouagan, and the new dams of La Romaine on the North-Shore, **projects that have faced intense resistance by the inhabitants of the region during the past years.** The State accordingly justifies this project by saying the new dams provoke congestion on the existing lines.

Let's not forget that Hydro-Québec is a State company that has the monopoly on matters of electricity, that frequently gives contracts to companies with cloudy numbers, that imposes high fees, that expropriates land in exchange for ridiculously low compensation, and who works solely with the goal of favoring industry. Here, what is important to us goes far beyond the value of houses. There is the annihilation of the environment, a reality erased by all kinds

of false publicity of Hydro Québec. Because in reality, the energy of the industry comes from a carbon thermal center, nuclear reactors or hydroelectricity, **the paradigm stays the same:** productivity, the pillage of territories and the expansion of the market. No energy dedicated to industry could be clean.

We are fighting to re-appropriate our lives. We have the intention of destroying what destroys nature, because we need it to be well and live healthily. Industry, dams, mines, and deforestation are devastating parasites. It suffices to imagine being a bird flying in the sky contemplating the scenery to realize the devastation that has been initiated is irreversible, to see the holes in the forest, to see the flooded lands in the basins of the dams. We quickly understand that the ecology is far from being a priority of Hydro Québec and its shareholders. They pay themselves hunting and fishing trips in resorts for the rich, and appropriate the rest of the lands by buying cottages, they build chains and fences, put up signs that say "private property, access forbidden". Those responsible for these companies aren't entitled to forgiveness.

We honour all acts of resistance, we salute the courage of communities struggling for self-determination and wild freedom. We are those who oppose the ravaging deforestation in the forest of Ouareau, with the Cree who are opposed to the clear-cuts in the forest of Broadback, with Six Nations who are also fighting against deforestation in the Red Hill Valley related to the high tension line in the south of so-called "Ontario", with the Mi'kmaq who are fighting against fracked gas [ed. – see **Special Hydraulic Fracture**], with the Mohawks who threaten to block the Energy-East pipeline, with those who occupy Lax U'u'la (Lelu island) in blocking the construction of the Pacific Northwest LNG [ed. – *liquid natural gas*] terminal and with all the accomplices with wild and combative spirits.

In this very moment, deforestation of the company of the region has begun, as well as the establishment of access roads. There is still time to stop the construction and it isn't the State or any representative, even those with good will, who will help us. **What are we waiting for?**

## WHEN NIGHT FALLS, THE BATS COME OUT TO DANCE

Last Tuesday, August 16, a widespread power failure plunged Hochelaga<sup>[1]</sup> into darkness. *No more light in the streets, no more functioning cameras...* When we realized what was happening, we quickly exchanged knowing looks and smiled under the glow of candles. **We gathered our rain jackets and several tools, then left to play in the night.** The torrential rain had disrupted the stifling machine of the city and its system of surveillance. **The storm offered us a respite, a moment of chaos to not be missed. Completely drenched, with joyous hearts, we strolled in the streets, improvising our targets with excitement.** We took several precautions: planning an exit route for each location, and having lookouts. Darkness was our accomplice. We hurried to play until electricity returned, then headed to our homes without any problems.

We smashed the windows of three gentrifying stores: the restaurant Burrito Revolution and an e-cigarette store on Ontario, as well as the yuppie cafe *Le diner* on Ste-Catherine.

We slashed the tires of two luxury cars.

We covered several spots in graffiti. On the Arhoma bakery, which has already been targeted by a similar action in the past, we wrote: ***We're not gonna let you get away / Hochelag ≠ Plateau.*** On the Jean Coutu: ***You're also part of the problem / Fuck your empire.*** On the Dollorama: ***Fuck exploitation / Solidarity without borders.*** On the real-estate office Royal Lepage: ***We don't want your condos.*** We also redecorated all the cars in the car dealership on Ste-Catherine, where they plan to build 120 condos, using classics such as ***Not welcome*** or ***Eat it, yuppie***, but also funky inspirations like Spaghetti.

The next time that such an opportunity presents itself, we hope to run into you in the street!

1. ed. – Part of Montréal undergoing gentrification, with frequent resistance and sabotage by anarchists.



Bolts removed from about 30 pylons during summer 2016 using ratchets with 15/16 and 1 1/8 sized parts, seriously compromising their stability, by 'Friends of the Night' against the line and "the world that needs such constructions, in all its forms"

# TO LOVE THE INHUMAN

– a critique of John Zerzan’s “Animal Dreams”

*“Faced with the meaninglessness of the world – the real[...] the individual most often quakes and turns away. The experience of the real is literally unbearable, and philosophy has traditionally come to the rescue to save humanity from meaninglessness, to create the illusion of a truth...”*

– David F. Bell, introduction to *Joyful Cruelty* by Clément Rosset

Anarcho-Primitivist<sup>[1]</sup> John Zerzan’s thinking exemplifies just such an attempt at rescue, one not only unnecessary, but in fact unwanted, for an anti-civilization critique lived as a joyful life. This essay examines John Zerzan’s recent “Animal Dreams”, first situating it in a typical anarchist critique motivated through the enshrinement of particular reifications, then exploring how such action leads to Manichaeic thinking [*ed. – i.e. that breaks everything down into good or evil, light or dark, or love and hate (named after an Iranian prophet Mani): essentially, dualistic thinking*], and finally challenging specific claims made within his essay. An alternative mode of relating to the nonhuman closes the piece.

## Tenacious Spectres: Morality & Nature

Radicalization, that is, the development of one’s critical theory, can be understood largely in terms of dispossession by reification<sup>[2]</sup>; as one’s critique grows sharper, one increasingly liberates one’s life from these enslaving concepts. All anarchists worth the name have dispelled themselves of State, most have excised Capitalism and God, and many have also banished such subtle ghosts as Family and Production – but some, as a result of their radicalization, not only fail to dispel, but actually enshrine all the more fiercely, Morality and Nature.

Moral socialization is an odd, dissonant thing in the dominant culture. Children are taught at an early age to share, to treat others as they would like to be treated (the Golden Rule), to believe everyone’s opinions are of value, and similar maxims according to the altruistic paradigm generally descended from Christian and Enlightenment [*ed. – see ‘A Profound Dis-ease’*] beliefs, even if those value tables are never explicitly cited during this socialization. Simultaneous to this inculcation is children’s experience of realities often at odds with the prescriptions they receive: they see not only the concerted exploitation of the majority by the few, but also commonplace avarice among the many; they see the



obvious destitution of some, often disproportionately along visually recognizable demographic lines; and they see women’s opinions more or less subtly devalued in quotidian conversation. This dissonance stirs feelings of moral distress that need some form of catharsis. For some, this release is a naturalization of perceived evils, perhaps via an unknowable divine plan, a misanthropic dismissal of humanity as essentially flawed, or a self-identification with Social Darwinism. Others, though, balk at the horrorshow, as their rationalization of the dissonance is that Morality’s normative purchase is genuine and reality is simply out of step with it; they demand either a sweeping change or annihilation of the status quo and the earthly manifestation of heaven. Pyotr Kropotkin<sup>[3]</sup>, an inspirational figure to many radicals, preaches with precisely this kind of moral indignation: “Our principles of morality say: “Love your neighbour as yourself”; but let a child follow this principle and take off his coat to give it to the shivering pauper, and his mother will tell him that he must never understand moral principles in their direct sense. If he lives according to them, he will go barefoot, without alleviating the misery around him! Morality is good on the lips, not in deeds.”

Thus, *the process of radicalization for many is the moral impugment of the*

*world.* Though I am unaware of any empirical study, it has been my own experience (and, I suspect, that of most readers) that the vast majority of radicals born into the dominant culture were at least initially radicalized in this manner, typically as especially indignant progressive liberals, and the majority of this set still occupy that analytical space, having only clarified their morality. Morality’s ontological status is never called into question; indeed, in its besiegement by either the openly immoral or the falsely moral – i.e., *greed is good* or *people need authority or we would have the war of all against all* – amidst an obviously bleak culture, it is all the more vindicated as the Real, the Good, and the True.

In the same vein is the burgeoning anti-civilization anarchist who sees, on the one hand, the culture in which they are forcibly immersed, with its multifarious horrors of dehumanization, objectification, wilted affect, wanton waste, variegated and abundant interhuman oppression, and denuding of the Biosphere; and then sees, seemingly diametrically opposed, the nonhuman world with its vivaciousness, intimacy, immediacy of experience, nutrient and energy cycles in which nothing is wasted or wanted but the energy that the Sun or hydrothermal vents replace, various niches through which all lifeways are valuable, and species interactions in which, even as one kills another, one seemingly never acts against Life itself. It is a small leap, then, to see the Culture as the Evil against Nature, the Good.

## Which Side Are You On?

Being a radical thus comes to mean taking a position on the Manichaeic battlefield, fighting for and alongside Nature. Theoretically, it may mean embodying Nature or restoring an essential substance of wildness within oneself, as the battlefield may be not only material but also spiritual. Actionably, it may realize itself as protecting Nature via stopping particular non-human organisms from being killed, stopping industrial development in particular places perceived as wild or sacred, or attacking persons or infrastructure associated with Civilization; as well as aligning oneself personally with Nature via learning primitive [*sic*] skills, eating a particular diet, or adopting certain spiritual beliefs.

Again, these sentiments are eminently understandable and the actions may or may not be well placed, as what is beautiful in the organic, our habitat as human organisms, is being despoiled horribly by Civilization. The globalized, industrialized, spectacle-commodity culture is destroying kinds of beings at a rate one thousand times faster than they would normally go extinct, and huge portions of wildlife have been destroyed just in recent

decades as the process accelerates, reaching such a rate as to prompt the creation of a neologism, “defaunation”. Meanwhile, the always-present thinness of such efforts as conservation, sustainable agriculture, and green technology becomes an increasingly revolting joke, recently exemplified by the ridiculous efforts this past year of endangered species translocation<sup>[4]</sup> and the attempted displacement of indigenous populations in Alvaro Obregon for the construction of a wind power farm<sup>[5]</sup> [ed. – including the 3rd largest in Latin America, after a ‘wind-rush’ for industry; see *Return Fire vol.3 pg39*].

**Considering all of this horror, it is not especially poetically adventurous to describe the culture as a death engine, essentially inimical to the organic. And emotionally intense or poetic writing can be a useful tool and a breath of relief amidst a general bleachedness, so long as it avoids obfuscation by being clear about how, when, and why it is doing so. As a perhaps unfortunate linguistic consequence, calling oneself anti-civilization might leave one feeling obligated to be for something else that is similarly grand in scope, something bigger than our immediate lives and relations. But while Civilization is a kind of useful shorthand that can be quite clearly defined<sup>[6]</sup>, the abundant references to Nature, animality, and wildness coloring anti-civilization/anti-industrial literature, speech, and thinking are misleading vagaries at best and phantoms at worst.**

Civilization, itself a set of overlapping and mutually reinforcing reifications and their corresponding material infrastructure, is characterized and reproduced by exactly this kind of absolutist, dualistic, universalizing thought. Abstract and transcendental values are themselves intrinsically authoritarian and antithetical to embodied and vivacious life, even if they are posited for ostensibly liberatory purposes, as I have written of elsewhere<sup>[7]</sup>. To reiterate briefly, to compartmentalize one’s raw, lived-and-felt, moment-to-moment experience in order to render it, to self-alienate it, into such categories as Nature or wildness is itself an act of separation. **Insofar as our loving gaze assigns to our lover fantasies of perfection, mutilating them into a quasi-divine being into which we can dissolve our inadequacies and disappointments, thus completing ourselves, we have betrayed anything worth the name of love and entered into the realm of religion.** Anarcho-Primitivism (AP, whether the nouns or the adjective) is thus,

ironically, the stuff of civilized thinking, a pattern of thought that mourns for an imagined reunion with a de-anthropomorphized, but nonetheless extant, divinity.

To elaborate this point, I will unpack “*Animal Dreams*”, a recent essay by John Zerzan that appeared in the first issue of the biannual green anarchist journal *Black Seed*, as I find the AP analysis to be one of the most interesting ones with which I disagree because of something like convergent evolution: I arrive at superficially similar conclusions to the APs, but with a fundamentally different analysis.

### **Green Manichaeism: Anarcho-Primitivism as Cosmic Battlefield**

Before examining “*Animal Dreams*” in particular, some context is in order. I am not merely accusing: for Anarcho-Primitivists, the world is *avowedly* a Manichaean battlefield. Zerzan has emphasized more than once on his radio show *Anarchy Radio*, as well as in personal exchanges, that he is dismissive of any anarchist analysis that does not regard a Civilization/Nature dualism as metaphysically fundamental: Civilization with its slavery, death, or undeath versus Nature with its freedom, wildness, and life.

In “*Animal Dreams*”, Zerzan adds to the Good seemingly all non-human animals, who apparently not only occupy the proper side of Mani’s ranks but also serve as models for us to do the same. I will examine how Zerzan assigns to various animals (predominantly charismatic megafauna) humanistic and Christian virtues and how these characterizations are either misleading (because they reflect only one or a few examples among a great many) or simply wrong. Later, I will propose what I find to be a more appropriate relationship to the nonhuman.

### **Couple Like a Goose; Love Like a Wolf**

In sharp contradistinction to much of Zerzan’s writing that is, even where I disagree, compelling and provocative, “*Animal Dreams*” reads largely like a set of platitudes, some disturbingly normative for the culture. I want nonetheless to briefly begin where it has merit.

From both the piece itself as well as personal conversations with its author, it is clear that part of Zerzan’s goal was to repudiate the dreadfully common and grotesquely speciesist [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg10*] diminution of the inner lives/*umwelts* [ed. – *environmental factors collectively capable of affecting the behaviour of an individual*] / phenomenonalities of nonhuman organisms. This goal is certainly worthwhile and

admirable, especially in light of Behaviorist/Cartesian [ed. – see ‘*A Profound Dis-ease*’] residues that linger in both popular and academic cultures<sup>[8]</sup>. Zerzan aptly decries the allergy to so-called anthropomorphism, more accurately described in this particular case as qualitative inference to the presence of consciousness in nonhumans, an act of the very same kind of abduction that nearly every human commits with nearly every other human on an everyday basis<sup>[9]</sup>.

The common critique that humans can report their mental states while nonhumans cannot is laughable and evinces what a lack of understanding there is about communication: the whine of a distressed dog, the enticing change of color of a ripe fruit, the limb-waving and stridulation of a threatening tarantula, and the garish and warning colors of a toxic nudibranch [ed. – *a type of poisonous sea-going slug*] are all communication. Almost any pet owner, forager, or anyone else who has spent a good deal of time with nonhuman animals, including this author, would readily say that nonhuman animals reasonably seem to have an inner life that they are capable of communicating to a greater or lesser extent depending on the particular case. I agree completely with Zerzan that “*It is not ‘anthropomorphic’ to recognize that animals play<sup>[10]</sup>*”; and that we also can only loosely speculate what these inner lives are like, as “*we do not know how to even comprehend consciousnesses different from our own.*”

Where Zerzan errs, heavily and repeatedly, is his flagrant and nonsensical moralizing that dominates the piece. **He seems to wish to tell us, implicitly, the following: that we should value animals because they exemplify our popularly held morals, as he lists a number of cases of animals seemingly championing them; but also that we should view animals as moral exemplars, models of behavior, as “we are lost, but animals point to the right road.”** Besides the odd circularity inherent in this bifurcated claim that undermines its entire thrust (animals are good because they follow moral X; moral X is good because animals follow it), it is easy to find a number of counterexamples for every moral example Zerzan deploys.

Though he acknowledges, seemingly anticipating a critique like mine, that “*All is not sweetness and light in the non-human realm,*” he softens this admittance by adding “*especially in this shaken and disturbed world*”, as though the human, somehow *causa sui*, were perhaps *really* to blame. He proceeds to make this caveat close to meaningless by using the bulk of his essay to enumerate cases of non-human organisms exhibiting behaviors in line with liberal humanism or Christian ethics.

## Hierarchy & Domination in Non-Humans

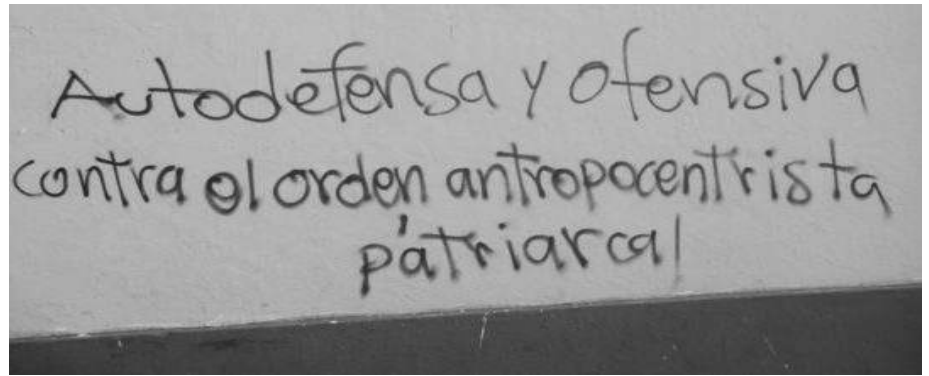
As an anarchist, Zerzan of course desires a world without formal hierarchy; he seeks to find animals, needlessly, to validate this desire – as though it were not sufficient for him to simply desire it, but that it instead needed to be written in the cosmos to be legitimate – and thus offers a repudiation of the commonly held idea of animal pecking order. It may indeed be the case that domestication induces hierarchy in some animals in whom it does not exist in the wild, such as has been recently observed with the behavior of wolves versus dogs. There are nonetheless numerous cases of dominating behavior in wild organisms.

Many parasitoids<sup>[11]</sup> seize control of their hosts' bodies, ending their reproductive possibilities through death or debilitation: barnacles of the genus *Sacculina* castrate their crab hosts in order to hijack their bodies, including their sex organs, for reproduction; the Gordian Worm larva inhabits an arthropod host and, maturing, forces the host to drown itself so that the adult worm may erupt from its dead body to reach an aquatic habitat; and wasps of the genus *Ichneumonidae* inject their eggs and symbiotic viruses into other insect larvae, restricting their metamorphosis and creating abnormally large larvae that, like bloated cattle, are gradually devoured alive by the maturing *Ichneumon* larvae<sup>[12]</sup>. Similar behavior exists in diverse organisms, the behavior having developed numerous times among creatures not closely related to one another: mollusks, nematodes, flatworms, and so on, including non-animals like fungi and viruses.

Besides the parasitic dimension, the social Hymenoptera (colonial bees, wasps, and ants) exhibit caste societies with a rigid division of labor and violent enforcement of hierarchy via physical mutilation, ritualized dominance/submission social interactions, infanticide, and other forms of what entomologists actually dub "policing". Again, similar eusocial, hierarchical behavior is exhibited by non-Hymenopteran insects like termites as well as non-insects like certain crustaceans – creatures that are not directly related evolutionarily – suggesting that, like parasitoidalism, domination is a tendency that life produces again and again, an eddy that the organic regularly recapitulates. There is thus nothing to be gained from looking at animals in some generalized way in order to legitimate our desires for anarchy.

## Patriarchy, Sexuality, & Gender Relations in Non-Humans

Patriarchy is a repugnant aspect of the dominant culture that seems to lie at the core of Civilization, perhaps being among



The graffiti, in Oaxaca, Mexico, reads:  
"Self-defence & offence against the anthropocentric patriarchal order"

the first forms of alienation and generative of the compulsory division of labor<sup>[13]</sup> [ed. – also see *Return Fire vol.2 pg6*]. Any thoroughgoing anarchist analysis demands a critique of it, but Zerzan seems to think, again, that we need to look to nonhumans to rationalize this critique – this venture is a useless one, as gendered behavior among animals reveals itself to be a riotous smorgasbord of possibilities.

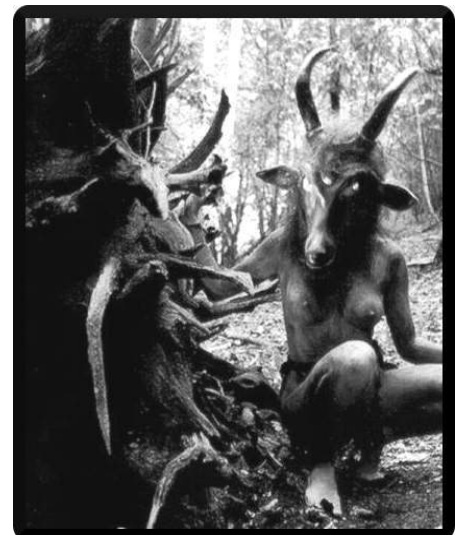
Among our closest relatives, despite Zerzan's highlighting of lioness hunting and elk patriarchy, the overwhelming majority of mammals are polygynous, often with harem-holding male dominance and sexual dimorphism that leaves the male considerably larger, stronger, and more aggressive. Perhaps the starkest example is that of the elephant seal, in which males violently compete for harems of females numbering up to the hundreds.

In a variety of invertebrates, again having evolved repeatedly in diverse phyla, mating takes place through *traumatic insemination*, in which a spined – literally weaponized – penis pierces the female's body to deliver sperm directly to her viscera. One theory for why this vicious method evolved is to bypass *mating plugs*, an adhesive substance secreted by penises to literally glue a female's reproductive tract closed after mating in order to block the sperm of competing males. I thus shudder at the brazenly general sentiment that "*animals[...] are the right road.*"

**Moreover, even engaging in comparative gender relations among the incomprehensible diversity of nonhumans is a close to useless endeavor given the incommensurability of gender across species.** In a great many animals, particularly many arthropods but also certain vertebrates like hyenas, females are physically larger and stronger, more socially and sexually dominant, and longer-lived, inverting the physical and social power relations characteristic of patriarchal humanity. And a good deal of genderfucking is present with the abundance of hermaphroditism and sex-changing among nonhuman animals – a huge diversity of animals are

capable of changing their sexual organs to make the best of their conditions. One is moved to wonder what could possibly be gained by making human value inferences from beings so different from ourselves, most of whom are indifferent to these human values.

Coupled with Zerzan's appeals to anti-patriarchy is a shockingly Christian sentimentalism for monogamy, as he cites geese and gibbons favorably for their long-term coupling. Why Zerzan is implicitly praising a human institution so closely associated with patriarchy, intimate abuse [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg46*], and commodity culture is bemusing *prima facie*; but his information is also simply wrong, as this proposition has been debunked along with so many others about nonhuman monogamy: studies since the late 70s have found that, for the goose, "*promiscuity is a part of the repertoire of yet another seemingly monogamous bird.*" An estimated 95-97% of mammals are similarly nonmonogamous. **In contrast, ruffs, wetland birds in the sandpiper family, mate in a manner resembling of a queer bacchanal that, I must say, were I ever to eschew my aversion to being prescriptive and morally reifying nonhumans, would be what I wish more of us would consider to be "the right road": among these highly promiscuous birds, there are three different male phenotypes, including a**





**female-resembling male that the very masculine, domineering male phenotype will mate with, both topping and bottoming, seemingly because the homoeroticism attracts the attention of observing females and entices them to join the orgy.**

Zerzan similarly cites examples of animal familiarity, devotion, and parental care – and, certainly, these exist, but only as some among a great many. With parenting and devotion, there is the octopus mother who starves herself, often fatally, vigilantly defending her young; all around her are the numerous and variegated marine organisms – cnidarians, mollusks, fish, crustaceans, etc. – engaging in the zero-parenting that is broadcast fertilization, in which eggs and sperm are both expelled into the water, the resultant zygotes carried away for a planktonic larval existence in which many are sure to perish. As far as familiarity, we see on the one hand the whipspider mother who watches over her eggs and then carries her young on her back while, strikingly among arthropods, she seems to affectionately caress them. On the other hand, we see the cannibalism among young sharks and strepsiptera (parasitic insects who superficially resemble flies), who devour their siblings before even leaving the egg or their mother's body, respectively; the incest among certain insects; and the parasitic parenting of cuckoos and certain insects, whose parents leave their offspring to be cared for by other species, as these host species mistake them for their own young through cloaking mechanisms.

There is thus among the animals no model for egalitarian gender relations and the ideal family. There is only an incredible variety of genders, gendered behavior, and familial relations that highlight how arbitrary human norms are at any particular time or place. If the world offers us no model, *why can we not choose our own* without recourse to it?

## MERCY & INDIFFERENCE

Continuing with Christian sentimentalism, Zerzan attempts to declaw the wolf, and perhaps predators in general, by saying it may be the case that *"wolves only kill animals that are near their end anyway – the old, sick, injured"*. Though hedged as a supposition, it is difficult not to see Zerzan attempting to soften predation into a world of mercy and remorse. And, again, he cherry-picks his evidence to find the conclusions he wants, ignoring readily available counter-examples. A 2009 observation of *Canis Lupus*<sup>[14]</sup> in a region in which they had a variety of potential prey found, based on sampling the wolves' scat, that 96.4% of the scat held remains of either roe deer or wild boar, thus indicating the wolves' primary prey. Of the prey, 74.1% of the roe deer and 84.2% of the

wild boar were juveniles, less than a year old. Over time, the wolves took turns targeting the roe deer and the wild boar, each during its birthing period, for the reasons one might expect: *"The positive selection of young roe deer and wild boar may be considered opportunist behaviour, because the individuals of this age class are easier to capture than adults due to their inexperience."* Indeed, *"Roe deer fawns are left alone by their mothers for long periods of time, making them even more vulnerable to wolf predation[...]"* Mercy, it ain't – baby-napping, rather. The authors had occasion to cite six previous studies, ranging from 1970 to 2004, that supported the conclusion that wolves target vulnerable juveniles preferentially. One might reasonably infer, as others have, that they might target the elderly and ill for the same reasons – simple ease and opportunism. Far from experiencing mercy or remorse, the manner in which wolf pups play at hunting to gradually increase their skills suggests to me that the wolf feels hunger, desire, joy, and exhilaration as it hunts and kills.

Of course, Zerzan is likely motivated by a desire to redeem the wolf from its popular demonization as infinitely murderous, killing without even the need to eat. To make such a case, I much prefer Farley Mowat, who, besides indicting human civilization as being the real mindless killer, writes at the conclusion of his loosely autobiographical novel *Never Cry Wolf*, *"Somewhere to the eastward a wolf howled[...]* for me, it was a voice which spoke of the lost world that was once ours, before we chose the alien role, a world which I had glimpsed and almost entered[...]" **Mowat here redeems the besmirched wolf not by apologizing for its killing, but rather by pointing at what seems a beautiful intimacy between the wolf and its world.** Similarly, in a theme exhibited throughout his work, Nietzsche [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg52*] saw in animality (including uncivilized humans) a kind of profound, child-like innocence; not a moral innocence of being gentle, humble, and meek, all of which he clearly despised, but an innocence of unmediated life in which one is in tune with their senses, makes no apologies for their instincts, and is unafraid to grasp immediate joy.

## Gaianism<sup>[15]</sup> & Misanthropy as Closeted Humanism & Anthropocentrism

At times, Zerzan exhibits nothing so much as his apparent biological ignorance. He writes, oddly misanthropically for someone who repudiates misanthropy, *"We are the*

*top of the food chain, which makes us the only animal nobody needs."* Besides the term *food chain* (Zerzan will later, inexplicably, use this same term in sneer quotes, as though he finds it unbelievable) being a bit of a misnomer – it is only one aspect of a food web, used to organize organisms into trophic levels, that is sometimes misleadingly employed to rank organisms in an Aristotelian Great Chain of Being-esque manner<sup>[16]</sup> – one is moved by Zerzan's statement to ask whether he has ever heard of dust and face mites, roundworms, flukes, or tapeworms, to name only a few and those very broadly, or, if we extend beyond animals, any number of decomposers, human gut flora, mitochondria, and so on *ad nauseam*. Zerzan is most definitely aware of the evidence that North American Indians interacted with their forest ecosystems so as to create pockets of sub-climax forest succession zones that increased biodiversity in the forest as a whole<sup>[17]</sup>, so why is he playing these self-shaming rhetorical games?

What is such a misanthropy except another form of human exceptionalism, another way of making the human the one and only Other who stands apart from everything else? As the Invisible Committee notes, referencing the



anthropocentrism motivating the widespread move toward naming our era the Anthropocene, *"For the last time, [Man] assigns himself [sic] the main role, even if it's to accuse himself of having trashed everything – the seas and the skies, the ground and what's underground – even if it's to confess his guilt for the unprecedented extinction of plant and animal species."*

Underlying all of the problems outlined so far, moreover, is the deeper question of anthropomorphism that Zerzan uses to frame the entire piece. **Zerzan quotes Henry Beston's apt statement, "For the animal shall not be measured by man", but he seems not to take it to heart.** Yes, of course it is a mistake to have such an intense allergy to anthropomorphism that one is averse to the abduction that nonhuman animals are conscious – such an attitude suggests massive alienation. But Zerzan has tumbled over the edge into an anthropocentrism that projects his own morality onto the nonhuman world. As I write elsewhere of his friend and frequent collaborator Kevin Tucker, Zerzan has committed the same error as the ancient Stoics: he rejects anthropocentrism, but, in doing so, he is in fact anthropocentric in a roundabout way.

Zerzan indicts others for projecting pecking order, Freudianism [ed. – for example, in *Animal Dreams*, that “the fallacy that the Freudian paradigm of murderous rivalry between fathers and sons represents the state of nature”], and hierarchy onto the nonhuman world, but he does the very same with his own values; once he has painted the nonhuman biosphere a color of his liking, obscuring and pretending not to notice its incredible variation, he swears his allegiance to it. He asks, posing as the *ingénue* after his obfuscation, “Might it not be that nature is for the happiness of all species, not just one?” I reply by asking what is this “nature” that is somehow different than the gestalt “of all species” and the world’s abiotic elements they inhabit and cocreate; and what would it mean for this totality to be “for” anything, as though the gestalt of innumerable valuing beings could somehow emergently value something in and of itself or, even if it did, that we could somehow comprehend this evaluation? Like Tucker, Zerzan has regularly distanced himself from the Left and has written apt criticisms of it<sup>[19]</sup>, yet he is still operating on the same Manichaeic logic that has characterized most forms of anarchism and leftism since their earliest days. Bakunin<sup>[19]</sup> saw human beings, originating in the objective good of Nature, as essentially moral until they were corrupted by the unnaturalness of the State; Zerzan extends this line of thinking by exalting the as-yet-uncorrupted nonhuman animals as moral exemplars.

### To Love the Inhuman

Since I was a very young child, for as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by nonhuman organisms. The stranger, the more inhuman a creature was, the more I loved it – it fascinated me to know, for example, that a creature like a schistosome (a blood fluke that parasitizes first snails, then mammals during its lifecycle, eventually inhabiting a blood capillary) has a life incomprehensibly different from my own: sensing mostly through smell, metamorphosing multiple times, living as though “a vein is a river”<sup>[20]</sup>, and mating perpetually as an adult. I am surrounded by aliens who are yet my kin, each enclosed in its own *umwelt*, such that the world is a high-infinite array of mutually mysterious yet mutually informing perceptual universes that are constantly spilling into one another. To call that vast and mysterious gestalt either good or bad, something to be either followed or rejected, is the greatest philosophical impropriety, as it entails tremendously overstepping what can be known or evaluated.

The only reaction that seems appropriate is something like Nietzsche’s Dionysian Pessimism, “a general approbation of the

real in all its chaotic and cruel presence”<sup>[21]</sup>, because it is strange and lovely, awesome and ecstatic to be alive – one is moved to joy despite the purposelessness and lack of objective value one readily perceives. I relish that my body eats and shits, fucks and rots, pointlessly – that it dissolves other creatures into it, annihilating their consciousnesses even as a myriad of new bodies and minds erupt from my effluence and will erupt from my dead flesh. I recall once when I, having just fucked in the Hambacher Forest [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; Some Light on the Investigation Leading to the Imprisonment of the Comrade Arrested on April 13th**], watched as several flies descended to start feeding on my ejaculate within maybe ten seconds – that is Dionysian Pessimism. In short, to love the inhuman, do not preach to it or of it – simply accept it as such, and revel in that acceptance.

1. ed. – Despite finding quite a bit of common ground with some who describe themselves as “primitivists”, we have a strong dislike for the terminology itself. The notion that the lifeways of pre-industrial peoples were “primitive” is present-centric, reductionist, and (if we measure ‘complexity’ in terms not defined by the dominant techno-logic and recognise the depth of methods and rituals employed by such peoples) simply inaccurate. Primitivists also often display a tendency to cherry-pick the parts deemed ‘relevant’ (in a utilitarian sense) to an anarcho-primitivist ideology while ignoring or underplaying the many other parts which said cultures used to understand and navigate their world; an operation more befitting colonialism and its particular scientific gaze. Additionally, this framing runs into the immediate problem of surviving cultures which are not civilised: “The use of the term “primitive” – which means “first” or “early” – for societies that have existed into modern times without developing civilization carries some questionable assumptions. How can societies that exist now be “first” or “early”? Did they just now appear? In a living world that is in constant flux, have they somehow remained static and unchanging? Can human development only happen one way – as the development of civilization? Besides, which of these societies is the genuine “primitive” one? They are certainly not all alike, or even all that similar. Homogeneity is a trait of civilization, not of these other social realities” (Wolff Landstreicher).

2. Reification is a term that has been used in closely related, but nonetheless significantly different ways in the history of critical theory. A particularly well-developed definition is articulated by Jason McQuinn in his “Critical Self-Theory” essay in the third issue of *Modern Slavery*, too lengthy to cite in its entirety here. Going beyond the typical understanding of reification as the phenomenon in which an abstract idea is concretized, McQuinn notes that reification “includes two correlative moments[...]. On the one side an activity is reduced to a passive object, and on the other side the

activity that is removed from the then passively-constructed object is projected onto a symbolic agent.”

3. ed. – A renegade of Russian nobility born in the late 19th Century, this anarchist was also a prominent naturalist scientist of the day, author of the famous book ‘Mutual Aid’. “Under the spell of [Charles] Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*, Kropotkin has sought in vain across all Siberia for keen competition between creatures of the same species. In place of it, he has witnessed a thousand different manifestations of mutual support; perhaps the latter is a more decisive factor in survival than competition per se. The only exceptions he can think of are among his own people: bureaucracies that resist improvement, regimes that stifle their subjects, prisons that deform rather than reform” (Anarchists Traveling Through History, Part II: Kropotkin Escapes). This work he combined with his organising with secret councils of revolutionaries (who later assassinated the Tsar of Russia), for which he was imprisoned, before being broken out during a hospital stay and escaping to England, where he continued his naturalism publishing.

4. “Episode 61: Hail Satan; It’s a Beautiful World” and “Episode 66: Make Total Destroy, and Bring Us the Champagne”, Free Radical Radio, 11/07/2014 and 12/10/2014

5. “Alexander Dunlap on Alvaro Obregon”, Free Radical Radio, 06/07/2015

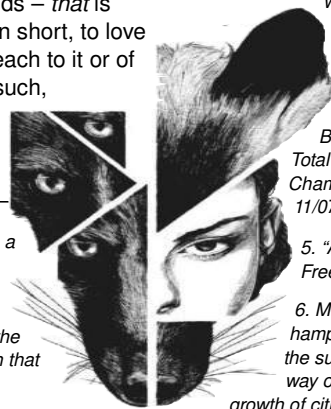
6. Many discussions of civilization are hampered by a lack of a clear definition of the subject. Briefly, by civilization, I mean a way of human life characterized by the growth of cities, areas of urban population sufficiently dense as to require the routine importation of food from corresponding rural surroundings characterized by agriculture. Civilized life generally includes all of the following, to varying degrees: collective activity tightly organized around a linear and numerical conception of time; a high level of ritual and symbolic culture; complex

and explicit social hierarchy; political representation; the formation of a State, which attempts to monopolize the use of physical violence and delegitimize non-State violence; bureaucracy; compulsory labor (work); and societal mores and ideology rationalizing racial or cultural supremacy, dominance of Nature, and social progress [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg11**]. Civilized persons are characterized by highly reified thought, as Civilization itself is largely a set of reifications intersubjectively constructed by persons acting in social roles that create and maintain corresponding infrastructure. To be anti-civilization, then, is to be anti-reification; it thus is at least *prima facie* suspect to be in some way for a different set of reifications.

7. “Corrosive Consciousness, Part I: How One Might Profane Green Platonism”, *Black Seed*, vol. 4, Spring 2015.

8. The mere need for an international assembly of scientists in 2012 to sign a document declaring that at least some nonhuman animals are in fact conscious (“The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness”) is a testament to this incredible alienation.

9. The ancient Problem of Other Minds – the fact that we ultimately have no way of knowing, of directly experiencing, the consciousness of other beings – is ultimately indissoluble. A difference of species does not change the problem fundamentally. Because we routinely assume other humans are subjects of a life, it is just as reasonable to do the same with at least some nonhumans.



“Out beyond ideas  
of right-doing and wrong-doing  
There is a Field  
I’ll meet you there.”  
– Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

10. All unreferenced quotes following this one are from Zerzan's "Animal Dreams" piece.

11. Parasitoids are organisms who, like parasites, spend a significant portion of their life upon or within a host organism that they use for some combination of food, shelter, and transportation. Unlike parasites, parasitoids necessarily kill, devour, or sterilize their hosts to complete their lifecycle. They are my favorite counterexample to the moralization of nonhumans, due to the fact that their behavior is often quite horrific from a Christian/humanist perspective - so much so, in fact, that no less a figure than Charles Darwin was moved to write of them to one of his colleagues: "I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of Caterpillars[...]" Here we see Darwin resisting a metaphysical flight from the real that David Bell describes in the epigraph.

12. Interestingly, Zerzan brings up the ichneumon, referring to it imprecisely as a fly [ichneumon are Hymenopterans, closely related to other wasps, bees, sawflies, and ants; they are not Dipterans, the true flies], in order to showcase its marvelous senses; he avoids bringing up its reproductive cycle that might turn moralistic stomachs.

13. The earliest known monument, Goebekli Tepe, depicts numerous erect penises prominently, seemingly as signs of masculine power. Zerzan himself has suggested that patriarchy may have generated the first division of labor in his "Patriarchy, Civilization, and the Origins of Gender".

14. Barja, Isabel. "Prey and prey-age preference by the Iberian wolf *Canis lupus signatus* in a multiple-prey ecosystem" *Wildlife Biology*, vol. 15

15. ed. - see **Invasive**.

16. ed. - Aristotle's hierarchical view of the universe was re-earthed by Christian theologians during the Middle Ages, and remained influential through to the birth of the modern era. God sits at the top of this pyramid, followed by angels, then men, then women, then 'primitives', then animals, then plants, then rocks, then sand, then soil etc. In the inherently body-hating tradition that Christian faith conveys, those at the top are perfect, while those at the bottom are imperfect (soil being all 'body' and no 'soul', whereas God is all soul and no body). We could say that in secular modernity, now abstract scientific law has replaced God at the top of this still-accepted pyramid, and that machines (who live forever and don't make 'human error') have replaced angels between God and 'men'...

17. Jacke, Dave and Toensmeier, Eric. *Edible Forest Gardens* [ed. - also, see **Invasive**].

18. Consider his "The Left? No Thanks!" as well as his excellent examinations of the historical role of unions in *Elements of Refusal*.

19. ed. - Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin, another influential 19th Century anarchist from Russia and bitter foe of its imperialism in east and central Europe (amongst that by other powers). Deported from France, apprehended in Dresden for participation in a Czech rebellion of 1848, and imprisoned in Russia before escaping to Japan, the U.S. and then Europe, where he joined insurrections such as that in Lyon, France, 1870.

20. The quote is taken from Zimmer, Carl. *Parasite Rex*.

21. Bell, David F. *Introduction to Joyful Cruelty* by Clément Rosset.

## WHY BE SO ATTACHED TO YOUR PENIS? - a fellow creature that gives new meaning to the phrase, "going both ways"

[ed. - For once something humourously written (as well as fascinating), which also could be read as a parody of the type of ('radical'-) moralising-via-the-'natural'-world described above; by anarcho-surrealist Ron Sakolsky, from *Fifth Estate* magazine #398.]

"I haven't seen anything like this before."  
- Bernard Picton, Curator of Marine Invertebrates, National Museum of Northern Ireland

Could the surreal imagination of even Karel Capek in his most biting satirical novel, *War With The Newts*, ever have conceived of a game-changer the likes of *chromodoris reticulata*, a red and white sea slug that can actually shed its own penis after mating and then replenish said appendage the very next day.

This disappearing penis trick is not the angst-ridden male nightmare erected by King Missile in their 1992 single, "Detachable Penis," or the liberating sexual fantasy of temporary phallic disposability as a matter of choice which also pops up in that same song. Rather, it is a verifiable fact of nature recently discovered by Japanese researchers.

The astounding results of their study were published in the Royal Society's *Biology Letters* journal in February 2013.

**The unassuming thumb-sized shell-less mollusk in question, which inhabits the same warm waters of South East Asia as those in which Capek's fictionalized newts were first discovered, has single-handedly turned "civilized" notions of phallic sexuality inside out.**

Practicing a sex life that is quite unnerving to the border cops of sexual repression, it seems that this shape-shifting creature is a "simultaneous hermaphrodite" or, in plain language, it has male and female sexual organs which it can use at the same time when mating.

So much for antiquated notions like penis envy! This versatile switch-hitting sea slug, with its exuberant double-barreled sexuality, might just be the most highly evolved creature in the animal world. During copulation, since both of the randy slugs involved can freely give and receive sperm, there can be two distinct parallel penises and vaginas at play in any mating situation.

Fancy that!

After copulation, each sea slug simply drops, ejects or snaps off its thread-like organ as the grand finale. *Ouch*, you might

say! While geckos are willing to part with their tails, few animals would be willing to part with their penises.

No problem though, since each slug has two internally-coiled backup penises, each of which it can use about twenty-four hours after a sexual liaison. Then, to top it off, once all three penises have been spent, the creature is capable of eventually growing new ones.

At one level, such a unique sexuality is all about the none-too-liberating goal of continuously breeding more slugs. Yet, at another, the creature's transcendence of normative gender categories upsets the Adam and Eve appletart and questions the dualistic assumptions of Noah's Ark. **At this latter level, its sluggish defiance of conventional male/female biology is positively blasphemous.**

Maybe, as Canadian journalist Tabatha Southey has wittily opined, the discovery of the sex life of *chromodoris reticulata* is even the real reason for Pope Benedict XVI's unprecedented resignation. **If he believes, as did his papal predecessor, John Paul II, that animals have souls, then what's a pontiff to do?** Southey writes: "*Consider the moral issues a detachable penis raises: If one of God's creatures uses a different penis every time he has sex, is he a virgin each time? Would any sea slug drawn into the service of the Lord have to stop being a priest for the 24 hours she didn't have a penis?*"

"All of this would be enough to throw any pontiff into spiritual crisis, but, what's more, the sea slug penis in question appears to be covered with tiny spines that scrape out any competing sperm inside the vagina-like organ of his/her partner as he himself attempts fertilization.

**"What Pope wouldn't feel overwhelmed?"**

Perhaps then it is only appropriate to end this inspiringly unsettling story by hereby formally nominating the humble sea slug for surrealist "anti-sainthood." And, fortunately for these lively creatures, Luciferian logic does not require the nominee to be dead as Catholic church dogma does for sainthood.

As an anti-authoritarian bearer of light, *chromodoris reticulata* illuminates our wildest dreams like an impossible anarchic silhouette shining brightly against the dark landscape of religious fundamentalism.

# THE FIRESTARTING

[ed. – An entry in 'Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology', from the second Bædan: a queer journal of heresy.]

*And on the eighth day, we burned it.*

Some time after his initiation, the initiate may become ready for the ritual of invocation. The anarchists having no laws to determine one's readiness nor elders to appoint the time, the initiates themselves must determine their willingness and make the necessary preparations. Though this can be done alone, it is usually the work of a few, for the invocation is not only a ritual of power but also one of bonding.

**The initiates' motives for calling the fire are varied.** They may do it to destroy, to cause trouble, to have fun, or to feel powerful, but none of these is the fire's allure. It is not a ritual of exercising one's own power but one of occupying a space through which power is transferred. There is little effort required for the initiates to acquire the materials and skills, and the power they invoke is far too great for them to call their own. **Though they may know it not, they summon the fire in order to be transformed: forged by its heat and fused to each other by its light.** Fire will break down and cast to the wind what it can, but what passes through it intact will grow in resistance to the forces that seek to break it. This is a quality much desired by the anarchist.

The fire started, the departure underway, the adept turns for a moment and stares at the shape of the power roaring as it tears through the world. She chokes on an attempt to give voice to the desire the fire's touch awakens: **that she would like to pause for a time, to absorb the heat and light of this towering blaze, to let herself be awed by the power she has summoned.** But she knows there is no time to linger, and tastes the bitter deprivation, even in her crime, of the desired encounter with chaos.





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“Geronimo walked alone down the back trail from where they had come. He disappeared in the shadows, pausing to listen, walking again.

The confinement of the hole and his days at San Carlos had deadened his trail senses. When running through the live oaks and piñon of the Dragoons, he had begun to feel them again faintly; the return of their life thoughts... their rhythms. Entering the shinoak grove, he had felt the return stronger, more intense.

Now, seating himself beneath a desert hackberry in full foliage, he watched a deer bird picking the yellow berries and dreamily relaxed the thinking of his conscious mind. Eyes closed, he shut out the senses of sight and sound.

Here, there were a community of plants, traveling together. A million years ago they had set out from the south, conditioning themselves as they came north, lengthening their roots to gather more drink; sparsing their foliage to release less of their moisture and their breath; heightening their perceptions for survival.

They had kept precariously between the Mother Mountain and the hot, dry plain to balance their needs. Their life rhythms were harmonious; they required order to survive. Their perception of danger was finely honed, not sluggish. They were alert.

Softly Geronimo chanted. Not words, but tones that matched the rhythm of their harmony. The tones were soothing and beautiful, rising and falling without break or abruptness. The rhythm became stronger. A haunting odor came to his nostrils from the leaves of creosote bushes. The burro bushes moved their branches in unison to the chant. Slowly Geronimo felt the rhythm tightening. Were the danger moving from them, the rhythm would have lengthened, growing more languid. Now, faintly, breaks of excitement came, staccato; and he knew the soldiers had not stopped. They were coming.

He rose, touching the trees and bushes lightly, and trotted back the way he had come.  
His warriors waited.”



– Watch for Me on the Mountain



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