

Wildism: The Nasty End-Game of Primitivism

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Recently we've seen a few newcomers to anti-civilization politics, from The Unter-rified to Jeriah Bowser to some oddly liberal writers who blog in various places. But one of these newcomers, the wildists, who are closely connected to Ted Kaczynski, do not only exhibit the most dangerous tendencies of primitivism, they distill the reactionary politic into its most heinous concepts. In fact, they even embrace the term "reactionary." Because of this, I actually welcome the wildists. For a long time anarchists from non-primitivist tendencies have been warning that people like Zerzan and Tucker are playing with fire, and now we can finally see what the endgame looks like.

Because most of the information about "wildism" is online, it was fairly easy to research them, but they tend to delete their documents frequently, so I apologize if I misrepresent some recent position on the basis of one of their earlier ones. They don't seem to have changed much though, except for the fact that over time they've turned anti-civilization politics into a comprehensive theory, one of the only impressive things about them.

A. Their Beginnings and History

Wildism started off as just another brand of primitivism, although it wasn't called "wildism" then. John Jacobi, one of the main activists behind the ideas and groups, started a student group at UNC Chapel Hill that put out a primitivist publication called FC Journal, named after the Unabomber "group" Freedom Club. Jacobi's big idea was primitivism separated from anarchism, since he saw anarchism as a holdover from the time anti-civvers were still (thankfully) "perverted" by left-wing ideas. Some primitivists were interested at the time and even decided to interview him, apparently unaware of the warning signs.

It interesting to note how starkly some of the statements in the interview differ from the writings Jacobi is putting out now. For example, in the interview he complains about Kaczynski's "very mechanical" way of writing, whereas now he writes in an extremely academic manner, abstracts and all.

Since he seems to show a certain affinity for nasty communist tactics like entryism, we can assume he was saying these things mostly to capture the attention of anarcho-primitivists and enlist their help for his revolution (or "reaction," now) before trying to separate them from the anarchist movement. Other sources have confirmed that this is their impression now.

Apparently around this time he had many public arguments with Kevin Tucker and other anarcho-primitivists about conservation, wilderness, and anarchism, and Tucker ended up publicly announcing that he wanted nothing to do with the group. You can read one undeleted conversation on Tucker's Black and Green forum, where Jacobi's rage is by that time very clear.

This interview marks the time that the editorial team behind FC Journal decided that their strategy wasn't working and instead focused on the wilderness conservation

movement. They renamed their magazine “The Wildernist” and officially started calling themselves “wildists.” They also joined up with several groups in Spain who are closely connected with Ted Kaczynski. These groups seem to do nothing but publish very occasional writings on a list of blogs that do nothing but repeat the ideas in Kaczynski’s manifesto.

Although it was not publicly announced, these groups do not seem to be working together anymore. Like all forms of primitivism, wildists are highly prone to factionalism and splits over very minor arguments, so it would not be surprising. Although most of the Spanish blogs still have a link to The Wildernist, most no longer link to the wildism.org homepage, and the wildism.org homepage no longer links to them, nor does it host the official Statement of Principles that they put out when they joined up. When I emailed Jacobi anonymously, he was vague about his relationship to the groups, and encouraged I get into contact with them.

Now The Wildernist has shut down and the wildists focus exclusively on wildism.org. They put out a journal called “Hunter/Gatherer” and host a dead subreddit at /r/wildism. Their writings (or Jacobi’s writings, since he is the only one publishing them) are some of the best that have come out of the anti-civ movement as far as quality is concerned, and they are intellectually rigorous, but their ideas are repugnant.

B. Their Ideology

Wildists are essentially conservative and scientifically informed primitivists. They believe that all the same things that primitivists and anti-civvers believe: leftism is bad, we should all live closer to nature, civilization must be destroyed. Their differences are enough to warrant a separate name, however. They focus on industry far more than the normal primitivist does, they do not hide their reactionary conservatism, they rely on sociobiology and other biologically reductionist ideologies for their theory, and they are unabashed about proposing an organized effort against industry in the same vein as the Russian Revolution. They also seem to suffer from the same problems as DGR if DGR was less tied to traditional activist causes. (They could NOT be called primitivists.)

Jacobi puts it this way: although the primitivists want mostly the same things, they want them for different reasons, or “on the basis of different values.” Primitivists tend to rely on the myth of the noble savage, but wildists, who derive their knowledge of indigenous lifeways from the sociobiologists and ethologists, believe that indigenous people were violent and patriarchal, but still advocate returning to that way of life. This should give you a sense of their “values.” To anyone familiar with the writings of Kaczynski, this should sound familiar. Interestingly, sociobiologists like Richard Dawkins are known for using the same “scientific” findings to argue for civilization, but wildists don’t seem to be bothered by this.

Wildists also talk about “conservative values” like “courage, ordered freedom (wildness), cognizance of human folly, loyalty especially to relations, an appreciation for nature, a recognition of the value of struggle, a disdain for the jolting revolutionary projects of the progressivists, etc.” Ordered freedom?

Finally, wildists are, like all anti-civvers, hypocrites, but to an even greater degree, if you thought that was possible. While all primitivists have argued for using the machine to defeat the machine to justify their computer use, Jacobi is an information science major, and most of the members of his group seem to also be college students in science majors as well. Unless he is an awful student, he has probably been involved in researching the same technologies he advocates destroying, especially at a research university like the University of Chapel Hill.

C. Why This Relates to Primitivism

In reality, these wildists were a long time coming. Primitivism has for a long time hosted reactionary elements. One of the former editors of Green Anarchy turned out to be a fascist, several members of the ELF have flirted with folk fascist symbolism, and even Zerzan has openly admitted that he is influenced by Spengler and Heidegger. (Spengler was a racist who thought that miscegenation was weakening civilization and Heidegger was a card-carrying Nazi.) Should this surprise anyone? The primitivist’s open advocacy of genocide is something that first came from racist politics, and anyone can see how it fulfills the same role now, when most “overpopulation” comes from third world countries. Even more, they advocate the end of civilization because “leftism” is making it weak, and almost anyone who has interacted with the anti-civ milieu can see how it attracts young white bored middle class boys who are more than anyone susceptible to Nazi politics.

Wildists also seem to be unaware that many of their “scientific” forebears were precursors of Nazi politics. Ernst Haeckel, who almost single-handedly laid the foundations for modern biology, was a strong advocate of eugenics and even founded an organization dedicated to the practices called the Monist League, which has since been connected to the Nazis. And one of the founders of ethology / sociobiology was Konrad Lorenz, who was an actual Nazi for many years, and said plainly that his work was an attempt to make the Nazi ideology scientific.

Many sociobiologists and supporters of sociobiology are also closely tied to modern scientific racism. The founder of the field, EO Wilson, spoke of “the delicate question of differences between humans” and rightly received much criticism for it from the great evolutionary biologist Stephen J. Gould. Philip Rushton argues that the stereotype of ranking blacks, whites, and asians by intelligence in that order is true. Charles Murray has advocated genetic intelligence differences between whites and blacks in *The Bell Curve*. And many of these people have recieved funding from The Pioneer Fund, which was founded by a eugenicist and continues to be tied to eugenics and scientific racism.

If nothing else, this is the result of primitivism's disdain for any race and class-based analysis because it is too "leftist." They have paved the way for reactionary elements in the milieu, and at most they are seen by other anarchists as harmless kooks, not budding and dangerous ideologues.

But as environmental problems get worse, their ideology only continues to grow. Again, we have all witnessed the upsurge of very reactionary primitivist elements in the last year. The Unterrified has also advocated separating from anarchism, and with Zerzan continues to talk about "decadence and decay" because of civilization. Kevin Tucker still advocates attacking the electric grid, which would leave many people with medical issues dead. And Zerzan continues to berate leftism, as if being concerned with the poor and weak was a bad thing.

In other words, I sense that Jacobi was ultimately right: primitivism has nothing to do with anarchism, and anarchism has nothing to do with primitivism. It is time that we find a better way to address our environmental problems without advocating the death of millions and without giving up OUR values of solidarity, equality, and freedom.

The Ted K Archive

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