

# The Revenge of Albion

Readers Respond To David Watson's "Swamp Fever"

Various Authors

1998

*FE Note:* David Watson's "Swamp Fever" appears in *Fifth Estate* #350, Fall, 1997

## Worth The Effort

Dear Fifth Estate:

Since I am someone drawn into the dispute between *Green Anarchist* (GA) and the so-called "Neoist Alliance" because of my long-standing support for GA against state repression, I would like to make the following comments concerning your article.

Overall I thought it was excellent and thoughtful, and found it very much worth the effort and since the imprisonment of three people associated with GA in November, there has been a heartening ground swell of support. Watson is right to posit the possibility of a connection between the state attack on GA and that by the Neoists. As the Oxbridge/public schoolboy Fabian Tompsett stated in a pamphlet written under his pseudonym Luther Blissett, "I do hope that this pamphlet has helped to undermine any lingering sympathy for GA, who are trying to muster support during their current court case." [*Militias: Rooted in White Supremacy*, 1997] To me, this is a key point, explaining why it was that Home/Tompsett should have apparently out of the blue decided to launch the campaign of lies and disinformation against GA, with whom they have never had any ideological affinity or personal connections.

This follows their previous attacks on another anarchist group Class War, just as the state campaign against them was heating up—and that campaign too included lying accusations in the bourgeois media that Class War were "fascist." *Plus ça change, c'est la meme chose!* Indeed, given that neither Home nor Tompsett claim to be anarchists, and as you rightly point out, they frequently denounce anti-fascism, any genuine anti-fascist motivation is lacking on their part.

Speaking of a trilogy of his novels, Home recently stated he is "interested in the relationship between anarchism and fascism as ideologies. There's a structural similarity in the way the two ideologies function and in particular the fetishization of the role of the state in politics and a failure to deal radically with economics—as you go through the three books, your ability to distinguish between the two ideologies becomes more difficult" [*Gay Times*, August 1997].

Apart from the political illiteracy and insult to anarchists who gave their lives fighting fascism, if Home regards the two as virtually indistinguishable, then he is not in much of a position to criticize anarchists for "fascist" sympathies. Shortly after he published the *Green Apocalypse* twaddle, Tompsett admitted to me and a GA member that he didn't even know what fascism was, that being a matter for "sociologists"—something which hadn't stopped him too smearing GA as "fascist." And so on.

Another feature of Home's "discourse" is homophobia, notwithstanding the two-page plug for him in *Gay Times* quoted above. I am thinking here of the (bogus) short story competition launched by him/ Tompsett in 1996, supposedly organized by me, in which beneath a fictitious and evidently exemplary account of gay sex involving me and another anti-fascist called for entries to be "as lewd and malevolent as possible"-illustrating that is how Home/ Tompsett perceive gay sex.

Sure enough, the "winning entry" by Home referred to gay people as "turd-burglars," "shit-stabbers," and "Shit-Tifters." While anti-fascist critics of Home have sought to keep things on a political level, Home/Tompsett have rarely ventured out of the sewer of personal abuse—a device to conceal the poverty of their arguments that I am glad to see hasn't fooled Watson.

Watson is also right to zero in on the Neoists' "barren unexamined defense of industrialism," and his comments that GA should seek to explain the theory their practice is based on is correct, although Steve Booth (were he not otherwise detained in prison, as he is) would no doubt argue he has already done this in his two publications *Politics & the Ethical Void* and *Love is Not Enough* (both available from GA).

As an ally of GA, but not an anarchist myself, I would also observe that your comments on the occasional incautious and counter-productive use of language by GA is a point well-made, and I hope they take this comradely criticism to heart. Any connection of Home/Tompsett to any kind of left politics is tenuous and artificial—whereas the sycophantic adoration by Home of the undeniably fascist ex-National Front member Tony Vakeford is beyond any doubt. The output of Home/ Tompsett is hardly, as Watson correctly deduces, "satire," it is disinformational sewage that consciously seeks to serve the state's purposes.

There is a need to improve the level of genuine political debate in the radical milieu, and it is to be hoped that the various points made by Watson will be addressed by all who call themselves "primitivist." Or indeed those who don't—the failure of other anarchists to engage constructively with GA's ideas is a great pity. But debate of a serious nature about how to advance progressive politics isn't something the "Neoists" are interested in or even capable of—their talents are far more venal, a blend of the techniques of Goebbels with the veracity of Stalin.

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*FE Note:* The Winter 1997–98 issue of *Notes from the Borderland* is available from the above address for 2.50 pounds.

## Futile Practice

Dear Fifth Estate:

It was with great effort that I waded through David Watson's "Swamp Fever..." (FE Fall 1997); I was perpetually bogged down in his convoluted style. Still, I must congratulate Watson on drawing his line of anathema with little of the Bookchinesque mean-spiritedness I'd expected after certain tidbits in the Summer issue (though Watson should get over his grudge against John Zerzan) and must thank him for making it clear that when *Fifth Estate* wrote critically about the dialectic of civilization and empire this was not intended as a theoretical tool for creating an insurgent praxis aimed at the destruction of civilization.

It was apparently intended as some sort of metaphor to inform a futile practice of "new" left style community organizing married to radical environmentalism.

It is interesting to note that it usually seems to be the humble, tolerant, patient radicals who end up excommunicating the extremists—but then that simply follows in the footsteps of Christian history—the religion whose servile values Watson wants us extremists to practice.

For the destruction of civilization and the exploration of new ways of living,

Wolfgang Ivers

New Orleans

## Not Humbled

Dear FE:

It wasn't "humbling" [to us that] you read the documents we sent you—the Neoist attacks on *Green Anarchist* are important because of the "invisible dictatorship" they've extended through UK's Type 3 milieu since the 1980s and because of their State links—but close the debate, if you will.

It's naughty of you to suggest we support everything listed in GA's community resistance diary when you know "acts of community breakdown are also listed as well as clear acts of community resistance; both are harbingers of the coming collapse of authority and civilization." And if even Malthusianism isn't "fascistic," why are all violent acts of resistance? GA doesn't "distribute the early writings of Richard Hunt," incidentally, except a few inoffensive posters.

If we're "forging a tendency to carry out civilization's destruction," isn't FE doing the same by putting forward your analyses of it? Apparently not. "It is one thing to write critically about the dialectic of civilization and empire" and another to actually do something about it. The difference is three years, how long three GA editors got last week. They just wrote too, actually, but didn't confine themselves to safe areas like "re-creating community" with neighbourhood sing-alongs and homegrown lentils. All that's fine, but as MOVE discovered, if it's working, the State bombs you.

We did all that in the 1980s, along with PC moralism, economism, ideological rigidity, "third world revolutions" and other Hunt stuff. We've concluded the only way to make space to be human is to get the State off our backs, worming away at the edges for rest—bite where we can—culturally, economically and knock-out punches to the infrastructure where we can't. "Macho militarism?" We're not surrendering ourselves to a military structure or anything and if all resistance beyond back sales is gonna inevitably recreate Leviathan, we might as well top ourselves now or, worse, get jobs.

Watson doesn't like Fredy Perlman in the same *Into The 1990s* chapter as the Unabomber. We bet he likes being in that chapter himself even less. While there's still Feds, anyway. Like being Walter Pater, Dave? We can't be anti-civ resisters as he's not sprinkled his ideological holy water on us or rather he's trying to pull the plug now it's getting stormy, out of his control.

This "I am not a Watsonist" routine fools no-one. Another grand old man did it last century and founded the biggest secular religion going. John Moore can speak for himself, but the attack on his *Primer* sounded like "no catechism but mine" to us. All this about "nuanced diversity" &c what Watson doesn't like is heresy against his sacred scripture. That's why he appended a loyalty test to his article on what most showed him up as a hippie, the sacred. Alienation shouldn't be worshipped, it should be destroyed. We're not gonna do that by reviving animism or liberal "do unto others" BS because Power just don't work that way.

Yours for the destruction of Civilization,

John Conner

Oxford Green Anarchists, UK

## Butthead Disses Cakehead

Dear Fifth Estate:

While I was pleased David Watson took a public position on both *Green Anarchist* and John Moore in his "Swamp Fever" article (*Fifth Estate*, Fall 1997), I felt that at times he indulged in gross misrepresentation.

More than half of *The Green Apocalypse*—one of the publications Watson was allegedly reviewing—is taken up with documents produced by diverse hands, and yet Watson quotes from these without explaining what they are. For example, failing to identify his source as a reprinted leaflet entitled *The Sordid Truth About Stewart Home*—in which it is ludicrously claimed that I have sex with animals and that Murray Bookchin is one of my pen names—Watson claims Bookchin "is cited approvingly by the Neoists in *Green Apocalypse*."

The notion of approval is a completely inappropriate description of the way in which the Bookchin quote is used, and Watson makes no attempt to establish who authored the piece. It is telling that Watson should attempt

to conflate “the Neoists” with Bookchin, despite the fact that his ongoing dispute with this anarcho-bore is of little interest to me or any of my acquaintances. Likewise, Watson cites the ridiculous assertion that “Syndicalism shows that it is possible to have a complex industrial society without hierarchies” from an anonymous leaflet reprinted in the documents section as if it proved that “the crux of the Neoist argument is simply a barren, unexamined defense of industrialism and mass technology.”

As well as reproducing a large number of documents, *The Green Apocalypse* contains responses to much of the *Green Anarchist* material it reprints. Since Watson reiterates a number of *Green Anarchist* slurs already reprinted and responded to in *The Green Apocalypse*, it would be advisable for anyone commenting on “Swamp Fever” to read the pamphlet.

To take just one example, I do not intend to waste my time by repeatedly explaining how a satirical leaflet attributed to a non-existent Green Action Network is not an example of “forgeries claiming to be from Green Anarchists.” It is, however, amusing to speculate that it was the similarity between the parodic leaflet and the politics espoused by Green Anarchist that led Watson to confuse the names “Green Action” and “Green Anarchists.” It should be stressed that Watson’s use of the capitalized plural term “Green Anarchists” can be explained as a typo, or as a deliberate attempt to ensnare careless readers. Watson might like to clarify his position on this.

Watson’s failure to provide a credible summary of the arguments to be found in *The Green Apocalypse* can be illustrated by his claim that: “Around the time of the Persian Gulf War, everyone in the dispute agrees, *Green Anarchist* founder Richard Hunt went over to an explicit right-wing or eco-fascist position.” While I have argued that Hunt was a founder of Green Anarchist, reprinted in the documents section of *The Green Apocalypse* are materials in which the current editors of the publication implausibly deny this.

Watson seems to agree with some of the arguments I have made about the right-wing nature of Hunt’s ideology but the word “explicitly” is misleading. My view is that, Hunt’s positions have always been right-wing regardless of the fact that he still claims to be a part of the political left. Likewise, from material reprinted in *The Green Apocalypse*, it is clear that the public line of the current editors of *Green Anarchist* is that Hunt held left-wing views prior to the Gulf War, before inexplicably turning fascist overnight. This position appears to have been adopted because in texts such as *Green Anarchism: Its Origins And Influences*, the current editors of *Green Anarchist* use Hunt’s theories as an ideological framework for their ongoing activities.

Watson misrepresents the positions of all those involved in the dispute he is writing about. To deal thoroughly with the many errors “Swamp Fever” contains would take more time than I am prepared to devote to the task. Besides, it is pointless attempting to engage Watson in debate since his rhetoric is even more ridiculous than that of an old tailors dummy which I keep in the attic and which I sometimes put out on the pavement, so that I can crawl inside it. Thus hidden, I frighten passing pedestrians with my hamster impersonations, while shying lone and languid peanuts down the street. After reading “Swamp Fever” and “On The Road To Nowhere,” I consider this hobby considerably more serious than the *Fifth Estate*.

Indeed, Watson’s absurd posturing has earned him the nickname Cakehead here in London. He clearly hasn’t learnt his A, B, C of revolution because if he had, he’d know that the slogan “Long Live Death” was chanted not only by Spanish Falangists but also by those defending the Paris barricades in 1848.

Personally, I prefer the variant of this slogan that runs “Long Live Life.” Finally, if you wish to print this letter, it should be run in full with the heading “Elementary My Dear Watson.”

Yours faithfully,  
Stewart Home  
London UK

## Cozy Ghetto

Dear FE:

It is a lamentable commonplace that radicals all too often expend more energy lashing out at one another over relatively minor differences, rather than opposing the common enemy. David Watson’s “Swamp Fever” sadly confirms this truism.

I could spend time engaging in amateur psychologising about Watson's motives for attacking me and the British green anarchists, but what would be the point? This would merely increase the bad blood and ill-feeling. But it is worthwhile thinking about what outcome Watson hopes to achieve by taxing us with all manner of errors.

Are we to beat our breasts and repent? Promise to mend our ways? Apologize for daring to deviate from the correct line as set out by David Watson? "Swamp Fever" is replete with Watson's usual proprietorialism over certain ideas, people and places-i.e., the very things of which he accuses Bookchin in *Beyond Bookchin*. Has "Pope" Watson spent too much time mulling over the remains of "Dean" Bookchin?

Watson has difficulties with the term anarcho-primitivism (although curiously, not with either anarchist or primitivist!). So do I, and the opening of my *Primitivist Primer* carefully qualifies my use of this term. These qualifications are dismissed by Watson out of hand. Watson is correct in warning against codification, systematization and vulgarization, but these are the very things I am at pains to guard against in the *Primer*.

Watson ignores the anarchist precedents for the *Primer* (e.g., Malatesta's *Fra Contadini Dialogues* or Berkman's *ABC of Anarchism*) as well as the inevitably generalized nature of such introductory texts. The fact that the *Primer* aims to achieve a goal which others (including *Fifth Estate*) have signally failed to attain-, diffusing anarchist primitivist perspectives beyond the radical fringe-is not even acknowledged. But then again, once one has established one's niche within the cozy anarchist ghetto, who wants to imperil one's position there? Certainly not Watson! God forbid that there might actually be such a thing as "militant primitivism" (Watson's words)-i.e., that people might act upon these impulses rather than merely play intellectual games with them.

There may well be flaws in my *Primer* and "City Primeval." I am the first to acknowledge that. But, given that they at least take seriously and treat sympathetically ideas and practices developed in part by *Fifth Estate* and in Detroit, do they deserve such a hostile reception? Do they not deserve any credit? The answer, of course, is no. Rather than engage in comradely discussion, Watson treats me (and the green anarchists) as hostiles who need to be repelled and condemned. Taxing us with being simultaneously derivative and deviant, Watson prefers to concoct a Neoist-style fantasy that we are conspiratorially cooking up a political tendency or ideological racket.

No one should be surprised by any of this nonsense. As the *Fifth Estate* continues to retreat from its anti-civilization critique of the late 70s/early 80s, and as Watson shifts further towards that leftist/ reformist abomination, social ecology, those who continue along the anti-civilization trajectory-on whatever side of the Atlantic (or anywhere else)-are likely to be reviled.

The saddest thing about this whole business is that the FE staff-without even bothering to investigate the issues-sees fit to endorse Watson's position by penning a supportive introduction to "Swamp Fever." Some of us will continue to contest the totality (or Leviathan, or civilization, the megamachine, or whatever terminology you prefer). Sadly, it seems at present that *Fifth Estate* will no longer be with us-and if Watson's essay is any indication, will in fact be against us.

In genuine sorrow,  
John Moore  
Rickmansworth, Herts, England

## ***Watson replies***

If nothing else, the letters above, from *Green Anarchist* editor John Conner, Neoist egocrat Stewart Home, and (as he has been christened by *Green Anarchist*) "leading British Primitivist" John Moore, painfully illustrate the intellectual poverty of the milieu my "farewell to primitivism" described. Despite the angry letters, I believe I went to great lengths to sort out the GA/Neoist controversy fairly and to defend Green Anarchists from Neoist slanders, before going on to what I consider the larger issues.

I also felt a need to distance my own FE work from *Green Anarchist* and self-described anarcho-primitivists, and to raise some questions about their perspectives (and anarcho-primitivism in general), questions that I think were measured and fair, even if I took a few (well deserved, I still maintain) sarcastic shots at what I consider particularly objectionable *Green Anarchist*/primitivist utterances. For their part, anarcho-primitivists are apparently not satisfied with anything less than complete, uncritical devotion; for honestly raising important differences with people

whose ideas I find fatuous and even offensive (and who after all advertise my own writing in their literature as somehow representative of or influential on their current), I'm accused of defending a "sacred scripture." I'm not even allowed to defend my own views; criticism and debate are automatically perceived as attack and the counter-attacks begin. (I can't resist pointing out John Moore's inability to recognize the difference between hostile condemnation and honest criticism. He's surprised that the FE might treat the claims of those who think themselves "with" us with the same skepticism we examine those who clearly are not—the same process of inquiry to which we have subjected ourselves. But if there is, "strictly speaking ... no anarcho-primitivism," as he wrote in his primer, what does he expect? He should be glad he didn't get into an argument with us during our radical high point—according to him—in the beginning of the 1980s; we were a lot harsher and a little less fair, I suspect, toward those with whom we disagreed in those days.)

I may have been inaccurate in reporting that #1, *Green Anarchist* has relied too much on the early role and ideas of a founder who has turned fascist, Richard Hunt. It nevertheless does seem that Hunt gets far too much attention in their various histories (even as his career demonstrates, my point that primitivism, like other transgressive responses to repressive civilization, is not immune to the seductions of authoritarianism and the possibility of ethical collapse). Why don't they scrap everything to do with him once and for all and start their discussions of primitivism, say, with the Diggers? Why is he anything more than a footnote? (And why are they so interested in publishing histories of their movement at all, when it has existed for such a short time and accomplished relatively, so little?)

John Conner considers me "naughty" for questioning his publication's glamorization of sociopathic attacks against innocent people, random shootings and arson, Taliban mob lynchings, etc., since all such acts are only "harbingers of the coming collapse.... This is a rather flaccid qualifier from a magazine that advocates "the destruction of civilization" as a conscious praxis. In fact, neither the publication nor Conner bothers to distinguish what might arguably be justifiable acts of violent resistance from asocial or authoritarian violence. There is no attempt to make sense of the disparate acts listed under the suggestive heading, "Diary of Community Resistance"; nor is any credible argument proposed that they are anything other than the familiar, nightmarish accumulation of brutality that has gone on for millennia and that could go on for a long time to come.

Furthermore, I cited *Green Anarchist* texts that call the Aum cult's poisoning of Japanese subways and the neo-Nazi bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building "inspiring," and their comment that the Unabomber letter-bombings and confused manifesto expressed the best and the predominant thinking in contemporary North American Anarchism," and asked GAs, "What does this have to do with radical theory or practice? What does GA stand for?" I guess we have their reply. Moore insinuates I need psychological evaluation for bringing up "relatively minor differences," and Conner thinks getting thrown into jail proves GAs right and righteous, that raising doubts makes me a cowardly do-nothing akin to... nineteenth-century Renaissance scholar Walter Pater (you really know how to hurt a guy, John!).

Stewart Home's sorry response should give a good idea of the incoherence of his pamphlet. Figuring out who said what in *Green Apocalypse* is far from easy, particularly given Home's stated project of scandal and scission, of "projection and unconscious mirroring," and of a cynical Neoist manipulation and displacement of the "anchored authorial voice" that abdicates any responsibility for what one has said. But after once more reviewing the texts, I'm confident I got it correctly. As for his explanation of the origins of the cry, "Long Live Death," it may even have been used by rebellious Roman slaves and Barbary pirates, for all I know, but it is most notorious as a slogan of the Spanish fascists. To use it and then pretend otherwise is a gesture as dishonest as it is vacuous.

Sadly, John Moore substitutes voluptuously wounded indignation for principled debate. But he can't have it both ways. It makes no sense to start by saying I have attacked people over insignificant differences and then finish with the claim that the FE has been in decline for more than a decade, and that I am shifting toward "leftist/reformist abomination." Either we have serious differences or we don't. (Nor can one take very seriously his stated desire to avoid ill-feeling, given his letter's rancor.) Even if my essay was unfair, Moore could have taken the opportunity to explain, however briefly, his idea of FE decline and what was so remarkable about our contributions early on, or defended his thesis of the origins of primitivism in Detroit in his essay "Primeval City," or explained what he means by the "totality" he claims to fight. There would have at least been an argument. We are supposed to accept on faith that raising discomfiting doubts about such matters is only hostile "nonsense."

Moore's disclaimers notwithstanding, to me the whole idea of a *Primitivist Primer* smacks of codification. (His claim that his primer somehow diffuses anarcho-primitivism beyond the fringe of a radical fringe is simply delusional.) Though it's true he qualifies that "[strictly speaking, there is no such thing as anarcho-primitivism," and that "individuals associated with this current do not wish to be adherents of an ideology," that does not keep him from forging full-steam ahead, explaining the term by (mis-) quoting an FE essay I wrote, and going on to discuss how "anarcho-primitivists" see things, and how "the perspective of anarcho-primitivism" is more radical than all other radical currents, and even finishing up by establishing a network with a list of anarcho-primitivist "aims." This approach parasitically packages the ideas of diverse others (among them people who have little or nothing in common with one another), and privileges Moore as their hagiographer. When I, the first person he cites as a founder of this current, take him seriously enough to question and distance myself from it, Moore accuses me of my "usual proprietorialism," of wanting to be Pope of a "movement" I wouldn't even care to join! He cannot seem to respect my right, established in his own introduction, to decline to be in his club.

As for his essay, "City Primeval: Fredy Perlman, Primitivism, and Detroit," I may be over-sensitive, but I doubt Moore would appreciate it any more than we did if others packaged his actual experiences and texts to fabricate some self-serving theoretical point of their own. People here were generally bemused or annoyed to see his lavishly inaccurate descriptions of our activities employed to argue that the FE circle created "the praxis that has come to be called primitivism," encapsulating "the origin of primitivism [and] locating it precisely in the lived experience of Detroit's inner-city dwellers," and that Fredy Perlman, a ferocious opponent of ideological homogeneity and system-building, had created "a primitivist theoretical agenda" (an agenda one will now presumably be able to find at least partially explicated in the primer of our "leading British Primitivist"). As one of the natives under the anthropologist's magnifying glass, I think I had the right to declare his thesis of the Detroit origins of "anarcho-primitivism" ("or whatever terminology you prefer") a wish-fulfillment and fantasy, and to point out its myriad problems. One would think that Moore might receive objections from the very subjects of his research a little more circumspectly. But dogmatism and defensiveness go together.

Some words are in order on Wolfi Lanstreicher's letter. When I read Wolfi's work I can only shake my head and pity poor old Nietzsche, misused and abused once again. Wolfi likes to skip along beyond good and evil; thus in an essay on the Unabomber ("Fixed Ideas and Letter Bombs," published under the name, Formerly Feral Faun in the Spring 1997 *Green Anarchist*), he writes, "The whole is beyond reform and revolt against the totality is necessary—which means that attacks against any part of the social system can be worthwhile as long as they are aimed at taking back one's life..." Critical of the Unabomber's "fixed idea" of freedom, he counters, "The only freedom I consider to be worth pursuing is that my life be my own to determine, that my interactions be my own to create, that my self-enjoyment be central to how I live my life." This onanistic solipsism fails to recognize that our lives are never entirely "our own" to determine; we live in a world that forces us to choose. But Wolfi's fixed idea has interesting ethical ramifications—ramifications that bring to mind *Green Anarchist*, which publishes him approvingly and praises his zine, *Venomus Butterfly*. He says of the Unabomber's victims, blithely, "The few deaths are no loss to me—in fact, I smile, thinking 'One less technician to control my life.'" But killing off technicians one by one seems like an extremely slow way to destroy the industrial system." (Perhaps Wolfi can convince the Aum cult to release larger amounts of poison gas.)

Wolfi dispatches ethical problems effortlessly. The question of violence, for example, presents no difficulties. In "a world in which individuals can create their own lives and interactions in accordance with their desires ... conflict, and therefore violence, is inevitable. It is the state's monopoly on violence that I oppose, and when individuals use violence against the state (or any other aspect of the system of social control) and its tools, they are breaking that monopoly." Of course, they break that "monopoly" when they slaughter (and perhaps eat?) one another, too (and if the totality is the target, even baby-sitting grandmas best beware), but Wolfi won't object. "Taking a life," he assures us, "is not the ultimate act of domination. Forcing someone—or hundreds, thousands, millions, billions—into dependence on a social system that bleeds their lives away to reproduce itself ... that is the ultimate act of domination. The killer lays no claim to the life of the victim until they kill them, and even then they lay no claim to the life but only to the ending of that life.

He apparently wants to “democratize” or “socialize” violence, to redistribute it; the state’s violence justifies the individual’s resorting to ... anything. But as most people know, the State has no monopoly on violence. Wolfi’s is the gay science of a Freddie Krueger.

“Verily,” said Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, “I have often laughed at the weaklings who thought themselves good because they had no claws.” But Wolfi turns tragedy into farce, thinking the appearance of a set of claws license to do whatever he spontaneously wills. He forgets that Zarathustra has just told whoever cares to listen to “let your kindness be your final self-conquest. Of all evil I deem you capable: therefore I want the good from you.” When Wolfi, on the other hand, concludes that he “will gladly sacrifice anything or anyone to create my own life and interactions as I choose,” and that “‘Human community’ is an abstraction,” one can glimpse where the slippery slope is heading. He’s already living in the world he desires.

Wolfi’s logic brings to mind an encounter in 1971 between Noam Chomsky and Michel Foucault described by James Miller in his book, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*. After Chomsky had called for an anarchist society, “a federated, decentralised system of free associations,” Foucault challenged him, asking, “When, in the United States, you commit an illegal act, do you justify it in terms of justice or of a superior legality, or do you justify it by the necessity of the class struggle, which is at the present time essential for the proletariat in their struggle against the ruling class?”

Taken aback, Chomsky replied that maintaining the principle of justice was imperative, despite the emptiness of bourgeois laws, adding, “We must act as sensitive and responsible human beings.” Foucault disagreed, responding that such ideas were merely repressive ideology. “The proletariat doesn’t wage war against the ruling class because it considers such war to be just,” he countered, but “... because for the first time in history, it wants to take power... One makes war to win, not because it’s just.” A revolutionary regime might be bloodier than the regime it overthrew, but that according to Foucault was no reason to object to it. Afterward, Chomsky commented, “I felt like I was talking to someone who didn’t inhabit the same moral universe...” It may not be a perfect argument, but one must stand wholly with Chomsky and against Foucault on this question. Wolfi has declared his position. Others must decide for themselves. I think it would be one more terrible irony if the primitivist insight itself became only another rationalization for entropic madness, another ideological dead-end, another millennium, fundamentalist cult.

We seem to be witnessing the break-up of the last remnants of the ultra-left. Its politics, from autonome to anarcho-primitivist, remain transgressive but can no longer be described as authentically revolutionary. In fact, what does it now mean to be “revolutionary”? We face a series of dire questions and uncertainties at a time when civilization itself is becoming increasingly unstable, and with it whatever human social and characterological capacities that might promise a way out. One can scream more loudly, pour poison gas in the subway, send bombs through the mail, or commit group suicide in hopes of arriving at the other side of a comet if one so chooses, but that will only provide more symptoms, not serious responses to the malaise.

Jaspers once commented that Heidegger’s “total conception of ... being” would inevitably become “another veil which is more fatal because it is precisely, with sentences that come closest to Existence that real Existence is apt to be missed and to become unserious.” One is reminded of the anarcho-primitivists’ mix of insight and palpable folly. Their simplistic opposition to the “totality,” their self-righteous celebration of catastrophe, and their grim conviction that their militant posture is not only theoretically correct but ethically viable, make theirs one more manifestation of a most tragic unseriousness. In his manifesto, their hero “FC” reminds them, “We have no illusions about the feasibility of creating a new, ideal form of society. Our goal is only to destroy the existing form of society.” My essay was intended to challenge that diseased logic, and the murderous certainties of those now attracted to it. That required defending (as I see it, of course-I shouldn’t have to remind people of that obvious fact) the primitivist insight from its own adherents.

## **A Hard Anal Knot**

Dear FE:



A hard Anal Knot keeps being tied, and re-tied, inside the collective skull. I thank David Watson for trying, one more time, to unravel it. ("Swamp Fever: Primitivism & the Ideological Vortex," FE Fall 1997).

Following the Bookchin, Biehl & Staudemaier definitions of "eco-fascism" "earth mysticism," "biocentrism," "a belief in intuition," "holistic organicism"—this condition increases as we go backwards in time. Our earliest human ancestors were the original "eco-fascists." CroMagnons chewed hallucinogenic mushrooms in ecstatic chthonic rites inside the paleolithic caves. They holistically identified with, imaged and imitated the animals they hunted. Our sciences, technologies, medicines, musical, pictorial and linguistic arts originated in their intuitively recognized experience of the cycles and processes of the natural world surrounding and within them: Homo Sapiens was virtually born out of such "eco-fascism." Is this what B, B & S intend to say?

Today's descendants of these Stone Age Nazis are not the Eco-Hippies, Deep Ecologists and Earth First!ers targeted by B, B & S, but what remains of our planet's "primal" or indigenous peoples: the tribes of North and South America, Australian Aborigines and New Zealand Maoris, the Kalahari Bushmen and Congo Pygmies, the Sami, the Siberian shamanic tribes, the Berber Tauregs of Morocco: these "biocentric" and "spirit-ruled" drug-using magico-mythic pagan trippers are all eco-fascists, yes??

Every one of us at birth, in fact, is a Total Fascist. From birth to age 8, we are those polymorphous perverse Luddite Nazis who "make the trains run on time."

After that, we "become rational beings" and never trouble the world again. Huh???

Something about "logical conclusions." Just being born on earth, according to the B, B & S criteria, makes us inherently eco-fascistic." We must then be separated from our sense of ourselves as living beings on a living planet; such "holistic" knowledge must then be demonized to break and/or repress our passionate devotion to earth, which is the source-after all-of our life. But this "organic identification" must be condemned, disciplined, subverted and eventually exterminated toward the goal of making us all "rational beings"—i.e., like Bookchin, Biehl and Staudemaier.

This is not a joke. We've been here before. To define our species as, in its "natural condition," Eco-fascistic, is no different from the religious idea that we are, "by Nature," "evil" "Born in sin," "innately corrupt..... heathen, savage, liable to backslide into bestiality"—this is the traditional patriarchal religious description of The Human Condition. Unless, of course, we are "straitened" by an officially imposed system of: law, morality, ideological correctness. Beaten upside the head, and B, B & S would have it, by Rods of Rational Praxis.

Fascism is a State of Mind: the daily tyranny of Ideology Enforced by Terror. As David Watson argues: "Context matters." So does 3 million years of Hominid existence. So does the pragmatic question: just who carries the Biggest Stick?

Without exception, it has been the opportunistically designated Earth-Mystic, BioCentric, Pagan-intuitive human groups who are invaded, colonized, enslaved destroyed by precisely "higher order" states of national, religious and corporate powers. The conquerors always claim "progress," "rational enlightenment," "superior civilization," and "scientific/technologic advancement" as their excuse to rob, exploit and/or wipe out the hippie-naked, stoned-on-nature, "non-rational" communities.

Late summer 1997, here in Humboldt County, four young Earth First! demonstrators self-chained to a tree stump inside the office of pro-timber-industry Congressman Frank Riggs had their heads pulled back, their eyelids forced open, and pepper spray daubed with Q-Tips sprayed directly into their eyes by fully-armed, helmeted members of the local Sheriff's Dept. Who are the "fascists" in this scenario? According to Bookchin, Biehl and Staudemaier, the "dangerous People" here are the passionately "biocentric" young women who chained themselves to the tree stump and refused to give in, for a long, long time despite searing pain and cop-inflicted humiliation. The Conquest. The Inquisition. The Interrogation of Witches. COINTELPRO. Nothing is more "rationally arrived at" than the torture room. Concentration camps. Every prison cell. Are B, B & S this ignorant of human psychological history, or are they just flat-out liars? In either case, how much time and energy has been spent in a decade of diversionary debate with, and within, their retro-terms: terms which define "the Enemy" as our constituent matter in its functional trace of bioconscious interconnection with all sentient and dreamt things of the cosmos—an "enemy" they dogmatically presume to attack, denounce and replace one more time with "man's plan for Your Life" (i.e., read their books).

The introduction to Biehl and Staudenmaier's *Lessons from the German Experience*, states: "ecological ideas have a history of being distorted and placed in the service of reactionary ends—even of fascism itself." Substitute "rational ideas" (or "religious ideas" or "liberal ideas" or "scientific ideas" or "esthetic ideas" or any kind of ideas) for B & S's "ecological ideas" if you need a measure of the stunning uselessness and banality of their definitions.

German Fascists also: breathed air, drank water, ate food, fucked, slept, pissed, shit, and sweat. They used their language to affect and manipulate the world. They sat at their desks and wrote books. So do Staudenmaier, Biehl and Bookchin. So do we all. Therefore...?

Barbara Mor  
Eureka, CA

## Multi-Use Name

Hi there:

This may be of some interest to your readers regarding "Swamp Fever." In his essay on the "ugly dispute" between the Neoist Alliance and *Green Anarchist*, David Watson repeatedly mentioned one "Luther Blissett."

Watson is apparently not aware of the fact that LB, far from being a single author, is a multi-use-name, an open identity adopted by several people and radical groups all over Europe. The Luther Blissett Project—named after a retired Afro-Caribbean soccer player—is not a "neoist" thing either. That name may have been used by the Neoist Alliance (which is not really a "neoist" thing itself), but since 1994 it's also been widely adopted by hundreds of radicals, ultra leftist pranksters and "anti-media guerrillas" in Germany, Spain and especially Italy, where LB's most famous actions and scams got journalists fired, court trials sabotaged, corporate money wasted, even a phony Hakim Bey book published etc.

While the concept of "Luther Blissett" as a "collective cultural terrorist" stems from such Marxian notions as the "General Intellect" (from the *Grundrisse*) and the *Gemeinwesen/Gattungswesen* (the community-species being), the Project is no playground for wanna-be academics or middle-class tossers. LB's praxis includes both grassroots sabotage and high-level technological hoaxes.

You might find the Luther Blissett Project too "marxist" (or even "post-modernist")—certainly it's got no discernible "primitivist" stance, but if you are curious (and monoglot) you can visit the following English language website: <http://www.ecn.Grg/deviazioni/Blissett> (mirror site at [www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/6812](http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Rampart/6812)).

There's plenty of books and other material by/on LB available in Italian and German, but that stuff would be hard to find in North America. By the way, *Transgressions* is not a "neoist-inspired" journal (if it were, why the hell would "anarcho-primitivist" John Moore submit his pieces?). It is published by the Geography Department of the University of Newcastle, UK.

Belletati  
London

## History of the Circle A

Dear FE:

In your Summer 1997 issue I read a short note on the Circle-A, at the end of the article "The History of the Black Flag." The author says, "Even harder to track down is the origin of the Circle-A as an anarchist symbol." I can tell you the truthful history as a privileged witness.

In 1964, the bulletin of French young anarchists (*Jeunesse Libertaire*) proposed the Circle-A as a brand new symbol for anarchists. That proposal had no following in France at the time, but it had a certain success in Italy, where my group, *Gioventu Libertaria*, Milano, on my suggestion, adopted it: sporadically in 1965, then regularly from 1965 on, not only in Milano but also in other cities by other members of the small federation which we were part of (Federated Groups of Young Anarchists).

A European conference of Anarchist Youth, held in Milano (December 1966) and an International Anarchist Camping organized on the shores of Como lake (July 1967) helped to spread the Circle-A outside Italy (and back to France too). Then May '68 did the rest.

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*FE Note:* It may predate even the above. We recently saw a documentary produced for Spanish television on the Civil War which showed an anarchist militia fighter with the symbol on his helmet.

# fifth Estate

Various Authors  
The Revenge of Albion  
Readers Respond To David Watson's "Swamp Fever"  
1998

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