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What is Green Anarchy?

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Bridging both time and work, the following is an article that was featured in one of Green Anarchy magazine's "Back to Basics" primers. We see this as a starting point for further exploration and discussion. The topics covered are central to a green anarchist critique or perspective. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather the beginnings of what we hope will be an ongoing conversation – one to be further expanded, updated, and explored in subsequent issues of Black Seed.

This primer is not meant to be the "defining principles" for a green anarchist "movement", nor an anti-civilization manifesto. It is a look at some of the basic ideas and concepts that collective members share with each other, and with others who identify as green anarchists. We understand and celebrate the need to keep our visions and strategies open, and always welcome discussion. We feel that every aspect of what we think and who we are constantly needs to be challenged and remain flexible if we are to grow. We are not interested in developing a new ideology, nor perpetuating a singular world-view. We also understand that not all green anarchists are specifically anti-civilization (but we do have a hard time understanding how one can be against all domination without getting to its roots:

civilization itself). At this point, however, most who use the term “green anarchist” do indict civilization and all that comes along with it (domestication, patriarchy, division of labor, technology, production, representation, alienation, objectification, control, the destruction of life, etc). While some would like to speak in terms of direct democracy and urban gardening, we feel it is impossible and undesirable to “green up” civilization and/or make it more “fair”. We feel that it is important to move towards a radically decentralized world, to challenge the logic and mindset of the death-culture, to end all mediation in our lives, and to destroy all the institutions and physical manifestations of this nightmare. We want to become uncivilized. In more general terms, this is the trajectory of green anarchy in thought and practice.

Anarchy vs Anarchism

One qualifier that we feel is important to begin with is the distinction between “anarchy” and “anarchism”. Some will write this off as merely semantics or trivial, but for most post-left and anti-civilization anarchists, this differentiation is important. While anarchism can serve as an important historical reference point from which to draw inspiration and lessons, it has become too systematic, fixed, and ideological...everything anarchy is not. Admittedly, this has less to do with anarchism’s social/political/philosophical orientation, and more to do with those who identify as anarchists. No doubt, many from our anarchist lineage would also be disappointed by this trend to solidify what should always be in flux. The early self-identified anarchists (Proudhon, Bakunin, Berkman, Goldman, Malatesta, and the like) were responding to their specific contexts, with their own specific motivations and desires. Too often, contemporary anarchists see these individuals as representing the boundaries of anarchy, and create a W.W.B.D. [What Would Bakunin Do (or more correctly–Think)] attitude towards anarchy, which is tragic and potentially dangerous. Today, some who identify as “classical” anarchists refuse to accept any effort

in previously uncharted territory within anarchism (ie. Primitivism, Post-Leftism, etc) or trends which have often been at odds with the rudimentary workers' mass movement approach (ie. Individualism, Nihilism, etc). These rigid, dogmatic, and extremely uncreative anarchists have gone so far as to declare that anarchism is a very specific social and economic methodology for organizing the working class. This is obviously an absurd extreme, but such tendencies can be seen in the ideas and projects of many contemporary anarcho-leftists (anarchosydicalists, anarcho-communists, platformists, federationists). "Anarchism", as it stands today, is a far-left ideology, one which we need to get beyond. In contrast, "anarchy" is a formless, fluid, organic experience embracing multi-faceted visions of liberation, both personal and collective, and always open. As anarchists, we are not interested in forming a new framework or structure to live under or within, however "unobtrusive" or "ethical" it claims to be. Anarchists cannot provide another world for others, but we can raise questions and ideas, try to destroy all domination and that which impedes our lives and our dreams, and live directly connected with our desires.

What is Primitivism?

While not all green anarchists specifically identify as "Primitivists", most acknowledge the significance that the primitivist critique has had on anti-civilization perspectives. Primitivism is simply an anthropological, intellectual, and experiential examination of the origins of civilization and the circumstances that led to this nightmare we currently inhabit. Primitivism recognizes that for most of human history, we lived in face-to-face communities in balance with each other and our surroundings, without formal hierarchies and institutions to mediate and control our lives. Primitivists wish to learn from the dynamics at play in the past and in contemporary gatherer-hunter/primitive societies (those that have existed and currently exist outside of civilization). While some primitivists wish for an immediate and complete return to gatherer-hunter band soci-

eties, most primitivists understand that an acknowledgement of what has been successful in the past does not unconditionally determine what will work in the future. The term “Future Primitive,” coined by anarcho-primitivist author John Zerzan, hints that a synthesis of primitive techniques and ideas can be joined with contemporary anarchist concepts and motivations to create healthy, sustainable, and egalitarian decentralized situations. Applied non-ideologically, anarcho-primitivism can be an important tool in the de-civilizing project.

What is Civilization?

Green anarchists tend to view civilization as the logic, institutions, and physical apparatus of domestication, control, and domination. While different individuals and groups prioritize distinct aspects of civilization (ie primitivists typically focus on the question of origins, feminists primarily focus on the roots and manifestations of patriarchy, and insurrectionary anarchists mainly focus on the destruction of contemporary institutions of control), most green anarchists agree that it is the underlying problem or root of oppression, and it needs to be dismantled. The rise of civilization can roughly be described as the shift over the past 10,000 years from an existence within and deeply connected to the web of life, to one separated from and in control of the rest of life. Prior to civilization there generally existed ample leisure time, considerable gender autonomy and equality, a non-destructive approach to the natural world, the absence of organized violence, no mediating or formal institutions, and strong health and robusticity. Civilization inaugurated warfare, the subjugation of women, population growth, drudge work, concepts of property, entrenched hierarchies, and virtually every known disease, to name a few of its devastating derivatives. Civilization begins with and relies on an enforced renunciation of instinctual freedom. It cannot be reformed and is thus our enemy.

Biocentrism vs Anthropocentrism

dynamic and aspect of our reality, connecting with our feral fury to defend our lives and to fight for a liberated existence, developing more trust in our intuition and being more connected to our instincts, and regaining the balance that has been virtually destroyed after thousands of years of patriarchal control and domestication. Rewilding is the process of becoming uncivilized.

For the Destruction of Civilization!

For the Reconnection to Life!

One way of analyzing the extreme discord between the world-views of primitive and earth-based societies and of civilization, is that of biocentric vs anthropocentric outlooks. Biocentrism is a perspective that centers and connects us to the earth and the complex web of life, while anthropocentrism, the dominant world view of western culture, places our primary focus on human society, to the exclusion of the rest of life. A biocentric view does not reject human society, but does move it out of the status of superiority and puts it into balance with all other life forces. It places a priority on a bioregional outlook, one that is deeply connected to the plants, animals, insects, climate, geographic features, and spirit of the place we inhabit. There is no split between ourselves and our environment, so there can be no objectification or otherness to life. Where separation and objectification are at the base of our ability to dominate and control, interconnectedness is a prerequisite for deep nurturing, care, and understanding. Green anarchy strives to move beyond human-centered ideas and decisions into a humble respect for all life and the dynamics of the ecosystems that sustain us.

A Critique of Symbolic Culture

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

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

The Domestication of Life

Domestication is the process that civilization uses to indoctrinate and control life according to its logic. These time-tested mechanisms of subordination include: taming, breeding, genetically modifying, schooling, caging, intimidating, coercing, extorting, promising, governing, enslaving, terrorizing, murdering...the list goes on to include almost every civilized social interaction. Their movement and effects can be examined and felt throughout society, enforced through various institutions, rituals, and customs. It is also the process by which previously nomadic human populations shift towards a sedentary or settled existence through agriculture and animal husbandry. This kind of domestication demands a totalitarian relationship with both the land and the plants and animals being domesticated. Whereas in a state of wildness, all life shares and competes for resources, domestication destroys this balance. The domesticated landscape (eg pastoral lands/agricultural fields, and to a lesser degree—horticulture and gardening) necessitates the end of open sharing of the resources that formerly existed; where once “this was everyone’s,” it is now “mine”. In Daniel Quinn’s novel *Ishmael*, he explains this transformation from the “Leavers” (those who accepted what the earth provided) to that of the “Takers” (those who demanded from the earth what they wanted). This notion of ownership laid the foundation for

mantle the death-machine. It is also important to understand that we, at some point, have all come from earth-based peoples forcibly removed from our connections with the earth, and therefore have a place within anti-colonial struggles. We are also inspired by the feral, those who have escaped domestication and have re-integrated with the wild. And, of course, the wild beings which make up this beautiful blue and green organism called Earth. It is also important to remember that, while many green anarchists draw influence from similar sources, green anarchy is something very personal to each who identify or connect with these ideas and actions. Perspectives derived from one’s own life experiences within the death-culture (civilization), and one’s own desires outside the domestication process, are ultimately the most vivid and important in the uncivilizing process.

Rewilding and Reconnection

For most green/anti-civilization/primitivist anarchists, rewilding and reconnecting with the earth is a life project. It is not limited to intellectual comprehension or the practice of primitive skills, but instead, it is a deep understanding of the pervasive ways in which we are domesticated, fractured, and dislocated from our selves, each other, and the world, and the enormous and daily undertaking to be whole again. Rewilding has a physical component which involves reclaiming skills and developing methods for a sustainable co-existence, including how to feed, shelter, and heal ourselves with the plants, animals, and materials occurring naturally in our bioregion. It also includes the dismantling of the physical manifestations, apparatus, and infrastructure of civilization. Rewilding has an emotional component, which involves healing ourselves and each other from the 10,000 year-old wounds which run deep, learning how to live together in non-hierarchical and non-oppressive communities, and deconstructing the domesticating mindset in our social patterns. Rewilding involves prioritizing direct experience and passion over mediation and alienation, re-thinking every

freedom and desire. Anti-civilization anarchists owe much to the Situationists, and their critique of the alienating commodity society, which we can break from by connecting with our dreams and unmediated desires. Nihilism's refusal to accept any of the current reality understands the deeply engrained unhealth of this society and offers green anarchists a strategy which does not necessitate offering visions for society, but instead focuses on its destruction. Deep ecology, despite its misanthropic tendencies, informs the green anarchist perspective with an understanding that the well-being and flourishing of all life is linked to the awareness of the inherent worth and intrinsic value of the non-human world independent of use value. Deep ecology's appreciation for the richness and diversity of life contributes to the realization that the present human interference with the non-human world is coercive and excessive, with the situation rapidly worsening. Bioregionalists bring the perspective of living within one's bioregion, and being intimately connected to the land, water, climate, plants, animals, and general patterns of their bioregion. Eco-feminists have contributed to the comprehension of the roots, dynamics, manifestations, and reality of patriarchy, and its effect on the earth, women in particular, and humanity in general. Recently, the destructive separation of humans from the earth (civilization) has probably been articulated most clearly and intensely by eco-feminists. Anti-civilization anarchists have been profoundly influenced by the various indigenous cultures and earth-based peoples throughout history and those who still currently exist. While we humbly learn and incorporate sustainable techniques for survival and healthier ways of interacting with life, it is important to not flatten or generalize native peoples and their cultures, and to respect and attempt to understand their diversity without co-opting cultural identities and characteristics. Solidarity, support, and attempts to connect with native and anti-colonial struggles, which have been the front-lines of the fight against civilization, are essential as we attempt to dis-

social hierarchy as property and power emerged. Domestication not only changes the ecology from a free to a totalitarian order, it enslaves the species that are domesticated. Generally the more an environment is controlled, the less sustainable it is. The domestication of humans themselves involves many trade-offs in comparison to the foraging, nomadic mode. It is worth noting here that most of the shifts made from nomadic foraging to domestication were not made autonomously, they were made by the blade of the sword or barrel of the gun. Whereas only 2000 years ago the majority of the world population were gatherer-hunters, it is now .01%. The path of domestication is a colonizing force that has meant myriad pathologies for the conquered population and the originators of the practice. Several examples include a decline in nutritional health due to over-reliance on non-diverse diets, almost 40–60 diseases integrated into human populations per domesticated animal (influenza, the common cold, tuberculosis, etc), the emergence of surplus which can be used to feed a population out of balance and which invariably involves property and an end to unconditional sharing.

The Origins and Dynamics of Patriarchy

Toward the beginning in the shift to civilization, an early product of domestication is patriarchy: the formalization of male domination and the development of institutions which reinforce it. By creating false gender distinctions and divisions between men and women, civilization, again, creates an "other" that can be objectified, controlled, dominated, utilized, and commodified. This runs parallel to the domestication of plants for agriculture and animals for herding, in general dynamics, and also in specifics like the control of reproduction. As in other realms of social stratification, roles are assigned to women in order to establish a very rigid and predictable order, beneficial to hierarchy. Women come to be seen as property, no different than the crops in the field or the sheep in the pasture. Ownership and absolute control, whether of land, plants,

animals, slaves, children, or women, is part of the established dynamic of civilization. Patriarchy demands the subjugation of the feminine and the usurpation of nature, propelling us toward total annihilation. It defines power, control and dominion over wildness, freedom, and life. Patriarchal conditioning dictates all of our interactions; with ourselves, our sexuality, our relationships to each other, and our relationship to nature. It severely limits the spectrum of possible experience. The interconnected relationship between the logic of civilization and patriarchy is undeniable; for thousands of years they have shaped the human experience on every level, from the institutional to the personal, while they have devoured life. To be against civilization, one must be against patriarchy; and to question patriarchy, it seems, one must also put civilization into question.

Division of Labor and Specialization

The disconnecting of the ability to care for ourselves and provide for our own needs is a technique of separation and disempowerment perpetuated by civilization. We are more useful to the system, and less useful to ourselves, if we are alienated from our own desires and each other through division of labor and specialization. We are no longer able to go out into the world and provide for ourselves and our loved ones the necessary nourishment and provisions for survival. Instead, we are forced into the production/consumption commodity system to which we are always indebted. Inequities of influence come about via the effective power of various kinds of experts. The concept of a specialist inherently creates power dynamics and undermines egalitarian relationships. While the Left may sometimes recognize these concepts politically, they are viewed as necessary dynamics, to keep in check or regulate, while green anarchists tend to see division of labor and specialization as fundamental and irreconcilable problems, decisive to social relationships within civilization.

The Rejection of Science

out by the failures before them. The Left is a festering sore on the ass of humanity, environmentalists have been unsuccessful at preserving even a fraction of wild areas, and anarchists rarely have anything provocative to say, let alone do. While some would argue against criticism because it is “divisive”, any truly radical perspective would see the necessity of critical examination, in changing our lives and the world we inhabit. Those who wish to quell all debate until “after the revolution”, to contain all discussion into vague and meaningless chatter, and to subdue criticism of strategy, tactics, or ideas, are going nowhere, and can only hold us back. An essential aspect to any radical anarchist perspective must be to put everything into question, certainly including our own ideas, projects, and actions.

Influences and Solidarity

The green anarchist perspective is diverse and open, yet it does contain some continuity and primary elements. It has been influenced by anarchists, primitivists, Luddites, insurrectionalists, Situationists, surrealists, nihilists, deep ecologists, bioregionalists, eco-feminists, various indigenous cultures, anti-colonial struggles, the feral, the wild, and the earth. Anarchists, obviously, contribute the anti-authoritarian push, which challenges all power on a fundamental level, striving for truly egalitarian relationships and promoting mutual-aid communities. Green anarchists, however, extend ideas of non-domination to all of life, not just human life, going beyond the traditional anarchist analysis. From primitivists, green anarchists are informed with a critical and provocative look at the origins of civilization, so as to understand what this mess is and how we got here, to help inform a change in direction. Inspired by the Luddites, green anarchists rekindle an anti-technological/industrial direct action orientation. Insurrectionalists infuse a perspective which waits not for the fine-tuning of a crystalline critique, but identify and spontaneously attack current institutions of civilization which inherently bind our

others to take action, and are effective means of not only bringing attention to environmental degradation, but also as deterrents to specific earth destroyers. Insurrectionary activity, or the proliferation of insurrectionary moments which can cause a rupture in the social peace in which people's spontaneous rage can be unleashed and possibly spread into revolutionary conditions, are also on the rise. The riots in Seattle in 1999, Prague in 2000, and Genoa in 2001, were all (in different ways) sparks of insurrectionary activity, which, although limited in scope, can be seen as attempts to move in insurrectionary directions and make qualitative breaks with reformism and the entire system of enslavement. Political violence, including the targeting of individuals responsible for specific activities or the decisions which lead to oppression, has also been a focus for anarchists historically. Finally, considering the immense reality and all-pervasive reach of the system (socially, politically, technologically), attacks on the techno-grid and infrastructure of the mega-machine are of interest to anti-civilization anarchists. Regardless of approaches and intensity, militant action coupled with insightful analysis of civilization is increasing.

The Need to be Critical

As the march towards global annihilation continues, as society becomes more unhealthy, as we lose more control over our own lives, and as we fail to create significant resistance to the death-culture, it is vital for us to be extremely critical of past "revolutionary" movements, current struggles, and our own projects. We cannot perpetually repeat the mistakes of the past or be blind to our own deficiencies. The radical environmental movement is filled with single-issued campaigns and symbolic gestures and the anarchist scene is plagued with leftist and liberal tendencies. Both continue to go through rather meaningless "activist" motions, rarely attempting to objectively assess their (in)effectiveness. Often guilt and self-sacrifice, rather than their own liberation and freedom, guide these social do-gooders, as they proceed along a course that has been plotted

Most anti-civilization anarchists reject science as a method of understanding the world. Science is not neutral. It is loaded with motives and assumptions that come out of, and reinforce, the catastrophe of dissociation, disempowerment, and consuming deadness that we call "civilization." Science assumes detachment. This is built into the very word "observation." To "observe" something is to perceive it while distancing oneself emotionally and physically, to have a one-way channel of "information" moving from the observed thing to the "self," which is defined as not a part of that thing. This death-based or mechanistic view is a religion, the dominant religion of our time. The method of science deals only with the quantitative. It does not admit values or emotions, or the way the air smells when it's starting to rain—or if it deals with these things, it does so by transforming them into numbers, by turning oneness with the smell of the rain into abstract preoccupation with the chemical formula for ozone, turning the way it makes you feel into the intellectual idea that emotions are only an illusion of firing neurons. Numbers themselves are not truth but a chosen style of thinking. We have chosen a habit of mind that focuses our attention into a world removed from reality, where nothing has quality or awareness or a life of its own. We have chosen to transform the living into the dead. Careful-thinking scientists will admit that what they study is a narrow simulation of the complex real world, but few of them notice that this narrow focus is self-feeding, that it has built technological, economic, and political systems that are all working together, which suck our reality in on itself. As narrow as the world of numbers is, scientific method does not even permit all numbers—only those numbers which are reproducible, predictable, and the same for all observers. Of course reality itself is not reproducible or predictable or the same for all observers. But neither are fantasy worlds derived from reality. Science doesn't stop at pulling us into a dream world—it goes one step further and makes this dream world a nightmare whose contents are selected for pre-

dictability and controllability and uniformity. All surprise and sensuality are vanquished. Because of science, states of consciousness that cannot be reliably disposed are classified as insane, or at best “non-ordinary,” and excluded. Anomalous experience, anomalous ideas, and anomalous people are cast off or destroyed like imperfectly-shaped machine components. Science is only a manifestation and locking in of an urge for control that we’ve had at least since we started farming fields and fencing animals instead of surfing the less predictable (but more abundant) world of reality, or “nature.” And from that time to now, this urge has driven every decision about what counts as “progress”, up to and including the genetic restructuring of life.

The Problem of Technology

All green anarchists question technology on some level. While there are those who still suggest the notion of “green” or “appropriate” technology and search for rationales to cling to forms of domestication, most reject technology completely. Technology is more than wires, silicon, plastic, and steel. It is a complex system involving division of labor, resource extraction, and exploitation for the benefit of those who implement its process. The interface with and result of technology is always an alienated, mediated, and distorted reality. Despite the claims of postmodern apologists and other technophiles, technology is not neutral. The values and goals of those who produce and control technology are always embedded within it. Technology is distinct from simple tools in many regards. A simple tool is a temporary usage of an element within our immediate surroundings used for a specific task. Tools do not involve complex systems which alienate the user from the act. Implicit in technology is this separation, creating an unhealthy and mediated experience which leads to various forms of authority. Domination increases every time a new “time-saving” technology is created, as it necessitates the construction of more technology to support, fuel, maintain and repair the orig-

tivity or strategy aimed at adjusting, altering, or selectively maintaining elements of the current system, typically utilizing the methods or apparatus of that system. The goals and methods of revolution cannot be dictated by, nor performed within, the context of the system. For anarchists, revolution and reform invoke incompatible methods and aims, and despite certain anarcho-liberal approaches, do not exist on a continuum. For anti-civilization anarchists, revolutionary activity questions, challenges, and works to dismantle the entire set-up or paradigm of civilization. Revolution is also not a far-off or distant singular event which we build towards or prepare people for, but instead, a life-way or practice of approaching situations.

Resisting the Mega-Machine

Anarchists in general, and green anarchists in particular, favor direct action over mediated or symbolic forms of resistance. Various methods and approaches, including cultural subversion, sabotage, insurrection, and political violence (although not limited to these) have been and remain part of the anarchist arsenal of attack. No one tactic can be effective in significantly altering the current order or its trajectory, but these methods, combined with transparent and ongoing social critique, are important. Subversion of the system can occur from the subtle to the dramatic, and can also be an important element of physical resistance. Sabotage has always been a vital part of anarchist activities, whether in the form of spontaneous vandalism (public or nocturnal) or through more highly illegal underground coordination in cell formation. Recently, groups like the Earth Liberation Front, a radical environmental group made up of autonomous cells targeting those who profit off of the destruction of the earth, have caused millions of dollars of damage to corporate outlets and offices, banks, timber mills, genetic research facilities, sport utility vehicles, and luxury homes. These actions, often taking the form of arson, along with articulate communiqués frequently indicting civilization, have inspired

good intention, the organizational model comes from an inherently paternalistic and distrusting mindset which seems contradictory to anarchy. True relationships of affinity come from a deep understanding of one another through intimate need-based relationships of day-to-day life, not relationships based on organizations, ideologies, or abstract ideas. Typically, the organizational model suppresses individual needs and desires for “the good of the collective” as it attempts to standardize both resistance and vision. From parties, to platforms, to federations, it seems that as the scale of projects increase, the meaning and relevance they have for one’s own life decrease. Organizations are means for stabilizing creativity, controlling dissent, and reducing “counter-revolutionary tangents” (as chiefly determined by the elite cadres or leadership). They typically dwell in the quantitative, rather than the qualitative, and offer little space for independent thought or action. Informal, affinity-based associations tend to minimize alienation from decisions and processes, and reduce mediation between our desires and our actions. Relationships between groups of affinity are best left organic and temporal, rather than fixed and rigid.

Revolution vs Reform

As anarchists, we are fundamentally opposed to government, and likewise, any sort of collaboration or mediation with the state (or any institution of hierarchy and control). This position determines a certain continuity or direction of strategy, historically referred to as revolution. This term, while warped, diluted, and co-opted by various ideologies and agendas, can still have meaning to the anarchist and anti-ideological praxis. By revolution, we mean the ongoing struggle to alter the social and political landscape in a fundamental way; for anarchists, this means its complete dismantling. The word “revolution” is dependent on the position from which it is directed, as well as what would be termed “revolutionary” activity. Again, for anarchists, this is activity which is aimed at the complete dissolving of power. Reform, on the other hand, entails any ac-

inal technology. This has led very rapidly to the establishment of a complex technological system that seems to have an existence independent from the humans who created it. Discarded by-products of the technological society are polluting both our physical and our psychological environments. Lives are stolen in service of the Machine and the toxic effluent of the technological system’s fuels—both are choking us. Technology is now replicating itself, with something resembling a sinister sentience. Technological society is a planetary infection, propelled forward by its own momentum, rapidly ordering a new kind of environment: one designed for mechanical efficiency and technological expansionism alone. The technological system methodically destroys, eliminates, or subordinates the natural world, constructing a world fit only for machines. The ideal for which the technological system strives is the mechanization of everything it encounters.

Production and Industrialism

A key component of the modern techno-capitalist structure is industrialism, the mechanized system of production built on centralized power and the exploitation of people and nature. Industrialism cannot exist without genocide, ecocide, and colonialism. To maintain it, coercion, land evictions, forced labor, cultural destruction, assimilation, ecological devastation, and global trade are accepted as necessary, even benign. Industrialism’s standardization of life objectifies and commodifies it, viewing all life as a potential resource. A critique of industrialism is a natural extension of the anarchist critique of the state because industrialism is inherently authoritarian. In order to maintain an industrial society, one must set out to conquer and colonize lands in order to acquire (generally) non-renewable resources to fuel and grease the machines. This colonialism is rationalized by racism, sexism, and cultural chauvinism. In the process of acquiring these resources, people must be forced off their land. And in order to make people work in the factories that produce the machines, they must be enslaved, made de-

pendent, and otherwise subjected to the destructive, toxic, degrading industrial system. Industrialism cannot exist without massive centralization and specialization: Class domination is a tool of the industrial system that denies people access to resources and knowledge, making them helpless and easy to exploit. Furthermore, industrialism demands that resources be shipped from all over the globe in order to perpetuate its existence, and this globalism undermines local autonomy and self-sufficiency. It is a mechanistic worldview that is behind industrialism. This is the same world-view that has justified slavery, exterminations, and the subjugation of women. It should be obvious to all that industrialism is not only oppressive for humans, but that it is also fundamentally ecologically destructive.

Beyond Leftism

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

same, the institution of a collectivized and monolithic worldview based on morality.

Against Mass Society

Most anarchists and “revolutionaries” spend a significant portion of their time developing schemes and mechanisms for production, distribution, adjudication, and communication between large numbers of people; in other words, the functioning of a complex society. But not all anarchists accept the premise of global (or even regional) social, political, and economic coordination and interdependence, or the organization needed for their administration. We reject mass society for practical and philosophical reasons. First, we reject the inherent representation necessary for the functioning of situations outside of the realm of direct experience (completely decentralized modes of existence). We do not wish to run society, or organize a different society, we want a completely different frame of reference. We want a world where each group is autonomous and decides on its own terms how to live, with all interactions based on affinity, free and open, and non-coercive. We want a life which we live, not one which is run. Mass society brutally collides not only with autonomy and the individual, but also with the earth. It is simply not sustainable (in terms of the resource extraction, transportation, and communication systems necessary for any global economic system) to continue on with, or to provide alternative plans for a mass society. Again, radical de-centralization seems key to autonomy and providing non-hierarchical and sustainable methods of subsistence.

Liberation vs Organization

We are beings striving for a deep and total break with the civilized order, anarchists desiring unrestrained freedom. We fight for liberation, for a de-centralized and unmediated relationship with our surroundings and those we love and share affinity with. Organizational models only provide us with more of the same bureaucracy, control, and alienation that we receive from the current set-up. While there might be an occasional