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There's Nothing Anarchist about Eco-Fascism

A Condemnation of ITS

Scott Campbell

May 12, 2017

“When horror knocks at your door, it’s difficult to hide from. All that can be done is to breathe, gather strength, and face it...I shared news of the woman found in University City. From the first moment, I was angered and protested the criminalization of the victim. The next morning I woke up to the horror and pain that she was my relative.”

– Statement from the family of Lesvy Rivera to Mexican society

“[W]e take responsibility for the homicide of another human in University City on May 3rd....Much has emerged about that damned thing leaning lifeless on a payphone... ‘that she suffered from alcoholism, that she wasn’t a student, this and that.’ But what does it matter? She’s just another mass, just another damned human who deserved death.”

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– 29th Statement of Individualists Tending Toward
the Wild (ITS)

Some things shouldn't have to be said, but as is too often the case in this disaster of a world, that which should be most obvious often gets subsumed to the exigencies of politics, ideologies, money, emotion, or internet clicks. The purpose of this piece is to condemn the recent acts of eco-extremists in Mexico and those who cheer them on from abroad.

This critique does not aspire to alter the behavior of Individualists Tending Toward the Wild (ITS), Individualities Tending Toward the Wild (ITS), Wild Reaction (RS), Indiscriminate Group Tending Toward the Wild (GITS), Eco-extremist Mafia, or whatever they will change their name to tomorrow. Like any other deluded, sociopathic tyrant, these individuals have declared themselves above reproach, critique, reason, or accountability. They have appointed themselves judge, jury, and executioner; the guardians and enforcers of Truth using a romanticized past to justify their actions. As absolutist authoritarians, they have constructed a theoretical framework that, while ever-shifting and inconsistent, somehow always ends with a justification for why they get to hold a knife to the throats of all of humankind. In short, they think and act like the State.

There was a discussion about ITS on an *IGD* podcast from last December. For those unfamiliar, ITS and its spawn of affiliated acronyms publicly emerged in 2011 as an anti-civilization grouping that blew things up and tried to kill people they didn't like, primarily university research scientists. In early statements, they spoke of favorably of anarchism and revolution. Over the course of just a few years and various groupings and splittings, they adopted a firm stance of rejection and reaction. They disavowed anarchism, revolution, leftism, or anything related to the social or human. They proudly adopted the mantle of eco-terrorism and proclaimed their disgust

for the likes of John Zerzan or Ted Kaczynski, who they previously praised.

Unsurprisingly, through their increasing isolation and reactivity, ITS has turned into just plain murderers. (Or at least they'd like you to think so.) "The human being deserves extinction" and "We position ourselves against the human being, without caring about the use of civilization to carry out our acts" is now their creed. As such, in the State of Mexico, ITS claims it went out hunting for loggers to kill, but not finding any, they decided to ambush, shoot and murder a couple on a hike on April 30th, because, "We just want it to be clear that no human being will be safe in nature." They suggest humans should instead stay in the cities, but then claim responsibility for the May 3rd femicide of Lesvy Rivera at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, stating, "Not even in your damned cities will you be safe." The ITS phenomenon, while beginning in Mexico, has spread throughout much of Latin America, with groups using the ITS name claiming responsibility for attacks – including attempts at the mass murder of ordinary, working-class people – in multiple countries.

Understanding what led to the creation and evolution of groups such as ITS is a topic best addressed in a separate piece. As mentioned above and in the podcast, they find their roots in the insurrectionary and anti-civilization streams of anarchism. Mexico in particular has a vibrant clandestine, direct action insurrectionary movement. Mexico is also where 99 percent of all "crimes" go unpunished, where narcos, police, military and politicians either work hand in hand or kill one another and anyone else nearby in the tens of thousands. They also team up against aboveground social movements – repression being the only language the Mexican state speaks. It is not difficult to understand, in a country being gutted by neoliberalism, where appeals to the state are met with batons and bullets, where anarchists are already blowing things up, and where

everyone else with an agenda seems to be killing people and getting away with it, why a group like ITS would emerge.

Yet at the same time in Mexico, aside from a few websites, ITS and its actions have not been praised or embraced by anarchists or anyone else. This likely also contributes to the escalating violence on ITS's part – no one really pays attention to them except to dismiss or condemn. At least one anarchist group has publicly stated its belief that ITS is a state-run operation, designed to delegitimize the broader radical movement.

It seems more likely that ITS is a genuine group that believes what it says. Whether it has actually done what it says is another matter. Some attacks have certainly occurred, but a curiously large number of ITS attacks fail or go unmentioned anywhere except in their statements. They claim this is due to the police and media conspiring to not call attention to their acts. Yet the typical insurrectionary anarchist direct action is almost always reported with precise information, photos showing the damage caused, and can be verified in corporate media reports. How ITS is so much worse than other direct action groups at carrying out direct actions is an unanswered question. That ITS killed any of the three people they recently claimed to have killed is unlikely. The statement shares no details of the killings and only includes a photo taken from Facebook. Especially with regards to the femicide of Lesvy Rivera at UNAM, ITS is likely seeking to get a free ride on the coattails of a tragedy that has generated considerable action and coverage amongst the anarchists and radicals they hate so much yet whose attention they so desperately seek.

So do we anarchists give it to them? Admittedly, even the existence of this piece is a capitulation to their attention seeking. But worse are those that promote, even implicitly, the actions of ITS. Sites such as Anarchist News, Free Radical Radio, Atassa, and Little Black Cart. The “a retweet does not constitute endorsement” excuse doesn't fly here. As ITS says, “We've been warning you since the beginning.” And now they are claiming

to have killed three humans simply because they were human. Will ITS fans continue to distribute the propaganda of a group that by its own admission is not only *not anarchist*, but proudly terroristic, rejecting of all ethics, morals, or principles of liberation? They solely exist to kill people. It should not have to be explained why such a position does not merit support. Of a less pressing matter is the way in which ITS conceives of “nature” is itself a social and civilizational construct. Their (already constantly shifting) ideological basis for murder falls apart under any real scrutiny.

Some defend the publications and discussions (or trolling, as it were) they engender because while perhaps they don't agree with killing people, the analysis ITS presents is intellectually stimulating and worthy of consideration. If ITS did kill her, Lesvy Rivera can surely appreciate that her brutal murder was found intellectually stimulating for some. It is the peak of colonial, racist arrogance that those from the safety of their U.S. or European homes feel comfortable debating the finer points of an ideology that amounts to brown people killing other brown people. We eagerly await the publishing on these sites of ISIS or al-Qaida communiqués due to their intellectually stimulating critiques of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East.

The only support ITS should be receiving from anarchists is encouragement that they practice their dedication to human extinction on themselves. Just as the fascists of ISIS are meeting a true anarchist response, the fascists of ITS should be called to task, rather than coddled.