

# **Why do we publish such objectionable things?**

Little Black Cart

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This attempt to clarify obvious facts is in response to the new call to arms by Scott Campbell but really isn't about him. He serves as an excellent example of an approach to anarchism that we do not share, and so will stand in for all those who agree with his position but tbh it's hard to feel particularly strongly about him specifically.

## **What does a publisher do?**

This should be obvious to anyone paying attention but the role of a book publisher is to produce written material, perhaps from a position, perhaps for an audience, but always in relationship to authors, readers, and the world at large.

The first two books LBC published were by communists who believed in the potential active agency of the essential proletariats. They believed the wielders of infrastructure could overthrow the world. While we found their arguments fascinating and their thinking complex (enough) we were not persuaded by their conclusion. We thought their argument was worth airing out, fully, but we did not confuse our own ideas, dreams, and passions for theirs. We were not those books we published. We might be friends but we are not allies.

Eco-extremism, an idea borne of the body and practice and text that Ted Kaczynski, put into practice by a variety of people we do not know, is compelling because it makes some fascinating arguments and has some complex, and some painfully simple, thinking within it. We are, ultimately, not persuaded by their conclusion but we think it's worth fully airing out.

The ideas we wish to publish are visionary, world-wrecking, ideas about a passionate, critical, fiery anarchy unleashed upon the world. Perhaps we are anachronisms but we believe what we are putting out into the world can inform future authors as it informs me.

## **The post-anarchist moment**

Anarchism has failed a lot of people. We have written and published about this failure since the Occupy Movement sparked and sputtered, but it's worth restating as a frame for thinking about critiques of anarchism today. Anarchism has always been an idea too big for itself, with a grasp that far exceeds its reach, and that's hard to swallow when there is such desperate need. This world is tearing people apart, from the environmental destruction, to all kinds of diminishing returns in late capitalism, to the rise of nationalism in the US (and around the world), but our role, as we see it, is to play the long game. We accept the failure of anarchism while remaining anarchists ourselves. One of our responses to the horrible conditions of this world is to underpromise what we are capable of. This makes us the target of those who believe anarchists should deliver the new world out of this decaying shell. We wish them well, and frankly would benefit if their apocalyptic vision comes true, but our work is not the same as theirs.

Eco-extremism, the idea that our ecological world is coming to an end and we should fight hopelessly against it is one post-anarchist approach we can understand. Another—which currently takes the form of antifa but which we recognize in other shades of social anarchist engagement with the current political crises—states that ideology (to wit, anarchism) isn't as important as boots on the ground fighting against our enemies. A fair point, but one that significantly leaves open the question of where do the enemies begin and end? Anarcho-Liberalism, or the politics of compromise, is another (permanent) form of post-anarchism. I have many peers who have

seen and agree with the anarchist critique of Exchange and the State but who want the terrain of their conflict with it to be in a social world. Sure, call-out culture is part of this, but so too is raising kids in a radical way, with people you share values with, with straight teeth, humility, and values that are middle-class (although never stated as such).

This post-anarchist moment shakes out similarly to other post moments (like the ex-hippies, ex-punx, and ex-vegans, all of which we have directly experienced too). These post moments involve some people doubling down on some aspects of the original ideas while abandoning other aspects of those same ideas, some people forgetting they were ever involved or what they were involved in, and most people just moving on in exactly the same trajectory they were on when they started. Since anarchism is largely a white, middle-class, suburban movement, it is no surprise that so too is the post-anarchist moment, at least in the US.

And that is why eco-extremism is so interesting. Here are groups of people taking a hard line, (no pun intended) whose socio-economic position is not like the people we see passing through. We probably hate and definitely disagree with these individuals but their practice of their ideas reflects a culture that we are outside of. We wish we had a contact who we trusted to know the difference between the rhetoric and the reality. We know Scott Campbell isn't that actor, neither is Abe Cabrera.

## **Atassa**

Atassa is relevant to the extent that it explores this seam. I'll review some of its contents here. Abe outlines what the eco-extremist position is. 1) Pessimism towards human endeavors 2) Wild Nature is the primary agent in the eco-extremist war 3) Listening to the call of the ancestors against the destruction of a way of life 4) individualism against mass society 5) indiscriminate attack as an echo of Wild Nature itself. 6) Nihilism as a refusal of the future 7) Paganism/animism as attempts to rescue ancestral dieties.

John Jacobi's article is an attempt to contextualize eco-extremist thought for a North American audience. It does it by telling the story of a young man who starts corresponding with Ted Kaczynski and is put into context with people trying to live the ideas that he preaches ("The Apostles"). In this excellent piece you learn about the factionalism of the indomitistas and how ITS fits in with this history of ideas. This is a history of 21<sup>st</sup> century eco-radicalism, of which eco-extremism is but a portion.

There are a few translations in *Atassa* #1 but the one I'll mention here is a lesson drawn from The Battle of Little Big Horn (from *Regression* #3) which is about the violence attempted (and ultimately failed) by Sitting Bull and his peoples attempt to defend themselves against the European menace. The conclusion is worth repeating "Thus in the response to the question of means, we say that we cannot limit ourselves to the old weaponry just because we criticize the technological system. We should use the weapons of the system against itself. Just as the Native American participants did not hesitate to use those repeating firearms, we are not going to hesitate to use any modern weapon that might cause the enemy casualties."

Ramon Elani (also an editor of *Black Seed*, hence the tarring of that project with the same brush as the actions of ITS, a group based in Mexico) has a piece called the Return of the Warrior that returns to Pierre Clastres (who engaged anarchists have been interested in for the past 30 years) and reviews his work on what makes a society, what makes a state, and how violence may

be the solution to both problems. This thinking is also followed up in his newest piece in *Black Seed* #5 (which is reprinted here).

This is a review of less than the first half of the first issue of *Atassa*. You can disagree with it, you can argue with it, but you cannot confuse it with support for the killing of comrade anarchists, with authoritarianism, or with murdering people, any more than is reading *Helter Skelter*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, or *Monster*, or even the bulk of CCF and IAF material. I agree that the strategy, ethics, and sociability of these texts should all be questioned but shouting out emotionally-laden conclusions as if they are facts is not how to begin. I would love to publish texts that criticize these ideas and groups. This post-anarchist moment needs this kind of debate and I'm glad *Atassa* is inspiring this kind of emotional reaction. I just hope there are followthroughs more complex than the existing bombastic, moralistic, and accusing internet essays. This is not to say I'm against bombast, discussing morals, or accusations, but let's use them to begin a conversation, rather than end one.

## Social Struggle

We deeply respect those anarchists who believe that anarchist practice is social struggle or it is nothing. We do not agree but we respect this position and apologize that our respect isn't always clear, as we focus on other things. We take disagreement as a central part of our anarchist practice and assume others do as well.

Social struggle can be intoxicating. We have been high ourselves and we are not saying it is for naught. We are saying that it is part of what makes interesting people—all of our closest friends have fought the same pyrrhic battles you are fighting today—but it is only a part. It is also a bunch of other things that we, and our friends, criticize all the time. It is often paternalistic, christian, futile, embarrassing, and self righteous, whereas our nihilistic excesses can seem childish, funny-not-funny, embarrassing, edgelordy, and insufficiently serious. These are called different perspectives and our disagreements could start from the baseline of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each other's positions.

LBC does NOT support ITS or violent attacks against anarchists. This does not mean that we believe that all anarchists are the same or even on the same team but this so called support we have been accused of isn't material, ideological, or real. Accusing us of supporting ITS is a way of using guilt by (three degrees of) association instead of by argumentation. *Atassa* is a journal of eco-extremism and is not the same thing as a group from another country who travel in some of the same ideas. People who spend their time calling publications (that do not make calls to action) "authoritarian" and smearing potential collaborators with a pile of name-calling instead of fighting for the social struggle they claim to desire, are wasting their time, and ours.

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