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Let us be clear that ecocide is happening.

While we may yet avoid the severest possibilities of global ecological collapse the situation has long been grim. And it's not just a matter of capitalism or the state making uniquely bad decisions, the tensions at play are deep — at the core of homo sapiens itself.

Human cognition and social collaboration have created an explosion of evolution temporally detached from meaningful feedback from our surrounding ecology. *Biological* evolution proceeds at the pace of generations and incremental gene changes, but our thoughts leap far ahead, able to generate incredibly complex constructions in a minute. This provides our surrounding environs little time to adapt or react. Technological evolution proceeds far faster than biological evolutionary processes can send effective feedback, and of course political and infrastructural behemoths insulate us from caring about feedback at all. The only signals that arrive from our abruptly introduced technics tend to be cataclysmic: the extinction of entire species, the collapse of food chains.

Our skulls have become like little island ecosystems, sped up in time a millionfold, generating diseases and wildlife (in the form of physical and cultural technologies) that the rest of the Earth is completely unprepared to deal with. Our monsters have escaped beyond our heads to the mainland and ravaged it.

We humans are a part of nature, in the sense of being physical and as products of a biological past, but we are apart from the slow pace of stabilizing feedback loops in the Earth's biosphere. Every active striving mind is a little cambrian explosion, grenades tossed out into the world, ripping up the flesh of the existing. We cannot be anything else without stilling our thoughts to the pace of our ecosystem and its glacial evolutionary pressures.

The catch is deep: Our ecological context — even our bodies — are too complex for us ever to perfectly predict the consequences of our actions. But to slow ourselves down, to refuse to reflect and iterate inside our minds, to return to pure unexamined instinct, would be to kill our very consciousness. To think, to reflect, is to generate possibilities, spiraling out of control in surprising and sometimes dangerous and destructive ways. We can embrace the death that is predictability and become mindless cogs in a stabilized ecosystem, or we can embrace the risks and dangers of freedom, of invention and exploration. We can retreat to the reassurances of essentialistic identity, a role to dutifully and mindlessly fill, or we can assume active responsibility, recognizing that inherently involves creating new problems alongside our new solutions.

In a sense, every political issue is either a facet of this underlying tension, or a distraction from it.

Years ago, during the collapse of Deep Green Resistance, a primitivist who had been shouting transphobic garbage at those of us confronting his buds suddenly switched up approaches: "Of course I'll happily work with nazis to stop civilization! Nothing else matters!" Realizing he'd lost the

room he decided to storm out chanting "Do What Thou Wilt!" Because of course he did.

But embarrassingly — even though I strenuously oppose it — I still have a bit of sympathy for that position.

Despite it being first published in 1995, I steadfastly avoided reading *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience*, by Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier.

There is a sense, for most anarchists who came up around that era, of Old Man Bookchin as a villain. This narrative is a powerful one, almost worthy of staged wrestling. An old codger, arrogant and representing the Evil Old Left, goes to war against The Kids, makes a fool of himself, eventually becoming so defeated he gives a speech about how he wasn't an anarchist anyway and frees us all from his campaign to rule anarchy and make us go to town hall meetings.

Even those who lean Red tend to sell this narrative as "I mean he made some good points about some fraction of shitty people on the other side, but oh man did he turn into a crotchety disconnected fuck, and his acolytes were embarrassing."

Janet Biehl is one of those self-professed acolytes, one who still proudly sees herself as carrying on his work — even doubling-down on Bookchin's embrace of statism, explicitly going *even further than him*. While Peter Staudenmaier apparently remains an anarchist of some measure, he's likewise solidly in Bookchin's tradition. This is all incredibly relevant because Ecofascism was widely seen as a very explicit part of a volley between Bookchin's circle and his detractors.

In those ancient days of yore the chief split in anarchism was Greens vs Reds. And the Bookchinites — for all of their talk of environmentalism — were solidly representative of Team Red.

With such context there was no mistaking a title like "Ecofascism" — this book was calling all green anarchists who disagreed with Bookchin, or rather who he disagreed with, "fascists."

So for two decades I never bothered to read the book. After all, everyone was clear about the contents. Just a strew of cherry-picked instances where some rando in the nazi party once said something nice about trees, a giant preposterous turd of guilt-by-tenuous-association. More of a last desperate insult than a book. When someone leaves dogshit in a flaming paper bag on your porch you don't stop to read the bag.

It's weird how long and how deeply seated these tribal instincts remain. I've publicly said that "nihilism" is best understood as the anti-intellectual glue that critically underpins and sustains ideologies like fascism. I've also compared the murder-fetishizing "eco extremist" group ITS to fascists, asking what ethically relevant difference there is between those two ideologies that should make our responses any different. The backlash to such statements rarely bothered with coherence. The old narratives, the old tribal identities, run deep. To many in the postleft these essays of mine were just another figure taking Bookchin's place. The evil heel come to attack our family, call us all fascists, probably try to get us beat up by antifa for not being cookie-cutter leftists who drink the sjw syndicalist koolaid. An anarcho-cop. Or something. But you know? I still carried those same tribal biases — that deep seated postleft hostility — to Ecofascism.

And yet while Ecofascism is an imperfect text, mired by a few instances of Bookchinite ideological axe-grinding, I was surprised by how plain, straightforward, and uncontroversial much of it is.

Before reading it I dug up some old reactions, hoping to steel myself with some good snark. But even before reading Ecofascism it was disheartening how poorly the responses I once aligned with hold up. Lots of variations of "ummm actually The Real Fascists are anyone chopping down trees."

Even the best critiques were little more than the obvious one, "Every ideology has overlap you can point to with every other ideology. That some in the nazi regime were into environmen-

this deep association, much less to combat it, requires us to go beyond the muddled lens Bookchin provided.

in claims about other things. Terms like "reason" get hijacked and warped in certain discourses until they connote not critical thinking but the imposition of certain regimes of codified administration.

And hooo boy did Bookchin love him some bureaucratic dystopias of collective tyranny. Thus the most problematic conflations are made worse by his defenses, poisoning anarchist discourse for over a generation.

Ecofascism: Lessons From The German Experience is deeply saddled with all this history, today it feels like a corpse from an ideological conflict where none of the combatants had a future. This is a shame because unlike more rigorous books like *The Politics of Blood and Soil: Environmental Ideals in Nazi Germany,* it's tailored in a generally wonderful way to be succinct and accessible to the anarchist movement broadly.

I've thrown a lot of heat at the ideology responsible for the book, but truth be told *I like it.* My worry is that I'm only able to give it a charitable reading being decades removed from the conflict and having burned my own bridges with the postleft mainstream. I doubt that many others long pickled in the tribalism of the postleft will have any new motivation to pick it up, or at this point anything else in its vein.

Hitler being a vegetarian has long been the classic go-to example of an irrelevant ideological position.

But what if it wasn't?

What if all the "right-wing hippie" stuff the nazis did was not random noise, but deeply related to their underlying ideology? What if the seemingly insane grab bag of positions the nazis held are in fact relatively coherent together?

Ecofascism isn't a jumble of marginal gotcha associations, it lays out convincingly the significant role that ecology played in the development of national socialism. Hitler's variant of fascism — the most influential one by far — was deeply tied to narratives of "ecology" and the direct essentialisms and rejection of thought that provides. However to truly understand

talism is irrelevant. To even point that out at length is obviously to try to slander by association."

From the outset no one wanted to concede the term "ecofascist." And indeed "there's no such thing!" has become such an instinctive response in postleft circles it's astonishing. *Sure there are lots of fascists into ecology, but that doesn't mean you're allowed to use a term to describe them!*

In circles far removed from antifascist scholarship "fascism" is such a charged insult, such an empty "the mostest bad thing" that ranks must apparently be closed against any invocation. All critical evaluation must be put to the side. At best you can read one article, one book, on fascism that confirms your own biases and adamantly refuse to read further. It shouldn't be a surprise that green anarchist discourse on fascism has remained often laughably fractured and wingnutty. "Um nationalism isn't essential to fascism, modernism is, so my white nationalist pagan buddies aren't fascistic. By definition they can't be." To this day I'm still in no small awe of the person who argued that Individuals tending Towards Savagery are the exact opposite of fascists because their macho fetishizing of random murder constitutes the unleashing of libidinal passion rather than its suppression.

Obviously under contention is the question of what's at *core* in fascism. What defines fascism?

And there's an even deeper issue at stake here, that of how we distinguish and process concepts in general. What defines *any term*? Is anarchism a goal (a classless society where everyone forms communes and goods are kept in a common repository where every Thursday according to a modified consensus process…), is it an ethical philosophy (seek to increase freedom for everyone), is it a code of behavior (never initiate aggressive violence), is it a motley collection of rituals in a subculture (consensus, food not bombs, punching cops…)? Is it a relatively closed discourse where everyone reads similar authors and uses similar terms? Is anarchism what the largest majority

of people think it is from newscasters and hot topic (smashing windows to get a world where everyone kills everyone else because 'fuck the man')?

Similarly is science a sociological phenomenon in Western Educated Industrial Rich & Democratic cultures? Is it an array of institutions? Is it a methodology? Or is it a direction of thought, a type of desire?

There is of course substance to all of these definitions, and they can interplay and interrelate. But we should beware the person who attempts to blur them all together — much less take such mixed associations as a package deal. Understanding that different people have different definitions in mind — sometimes blurred conflations — is not the same thing as there not being a more useful definition. Ultimately radicals try to use language and conceptual schemas to "cut reality apart at the joints" — to emphasize what is most deeply rooted and what can be moved. To map not just myopic particulars of the existing but the full breadth of the possible.

So is fascism being mean or telling other people not to do stuff? Is fascism giant industrial death machines? Is fascism any form of statism?

For decades academics and antifa scholars have settled on a rough consensus: fascism is anti-modern palingenetic ultranationalism, the slicing of empathy for outsiders and fetishization of a violent return to a mythologized past — with an archipelago of frequently connected positions like patriarchal and white supremacist essentialisms. But, as befits pragmatic activists, this is more a political definition than a philosophical or psychological one.

To try to speak of fascism as *philosophy* clearly a lot of the arbitrary particulars like antisemitism have to drop out. Even most racists wouldn't argue that there's an a priori concept of whiteness. Instead one is left with is an intensification of the ideology of power that already rules the world around us. People who see things exclusively in terms of coercion, identity,

Should then we really be that surprised that Bookchin failed to really grapple with the issues of complexity at play in our ecological embeddedness?

Human brains cannot productively manage or understand the biosphere any more than soviet central planners could manage or understand the market. But neither can we silence the innate destructiveness of our creativity and inquiry enough to live in "harmony" within nature as purely instinctive cogs.

This is not to suggest that a war of extermination is called for, but a divorce — hopefully as amiable as possible, and with some alimony. Perfect restorative justice is impossible, but we can do some bare minimums: pull up the pavement, close the factory spigots, regrow the Sahara, retreat to closed cities, and ultimately depart the Earth.

Active thought inherently means risk, instability, and disruption. We cannot embrace embeddedness as Beings while also expanding our freedom in the unending process of Becoming. Bookchin's social ecology was in the final evaluation a misguided desperate attempt to bridge that unbridgeable chasm.

Once we peel down to the most fundamental choices it becomes apparent that fascism and primitivism aren't vastly different ideologies awkwardly mashable together — no, they're closely related because they arise from the same root. The same reactionary impulse to embrace the stable and pre-existing.

This is a reality Bookchin was terrible at getting at because 1) he was loath to really examine the inclination to naturalistic fallacies he'd inherited from Kropotkin, and 2) because he was certainly no consistent champion of liberty.

So Bookchin's evaluation remains surface-level: the problem is that the bad greens are rejecting the historical baggage of the left, like the enlightenment and rationality. But the problem is that terms like "modernism," "rationality," and "the enlightenment" long ago became giant messy jumbles of both good things and bad things, allowing people to use appeals about some things to provide cover for or implicitly bundle

in an ideological war removed from fascism proper, *even as it was also a solid book on fascism.*

It's worth emphasizing that Bookchin saw himself as a green. He attempted to chart a center path that avoided the conflict between agency and nature, between thought and stasis. He saw the historic rise of states and social hierarchies as a profoundly irrational mistake, an artifact of a turbulent transition from biological evolution to social evolution.

> "After some ten millennia of a very ambiguous social evolution, we must reenter natural evolution," and establish "no less a humanization of nature than a naturalization of humanity." [Ecology of Freedom]

And this will be,

> "natural evolution rendered self-conscious, caring, and sympathetic to the pain, suffering, and incoherent aspects of an evolution left to its own, often wayward, unfolding" [Remaking of Society]

Here's the rub though: what if all that is impossible?

What if humans simply can't extensively interface with the biosphere in a way beneficial to both?

Bookchin was shit at understanding or grappling with complexity and information theory. His economic vision was an atrocity of participatory bureaucracy — of endless meetings — that almost instantly repulses every anarchist to look at it, no matter how sympathetic they might otherwise be inclined. It was also, as is obvious to anyone with any economic literacy, impossible. You simply can't scale up collective decisionmaking in a way still responsive to or satiating the desires of actual individuals beyond a small land project. Complex technological projects or products — much less any innovative or fluidly adaptive economy — require market dynamics.

and hierarchy… a simplistic but all encompassing game that they want to win. Fuck empathy, ethics, compassion, love, and all manner of other intellectual inquiry. Fuck the mind even, let's fetishize the brutest of force. Might is right. One's immediate tribe against all others.

It is however important that we don't run *too* far away with such a sweeping philosophical understanding while the political reality of fascism continues marching.

In the popular discourse fascism is often stripped down to mass murder and an authoritarian state. But while these are bad they are also hardly unique. Was it "fascism" when Genghis Khan exterminated a large fraction of the human population? Was it fascism when King Leopold enslaved and slaughtered millions? Was the European colonization and campaign of extermination across the Americas fascism? Was the Ran Wei state that exterminated the Wu Hu and Jie fascist? Was Mao? Were early raiding tribes fascist?

We can certainly conclude that they are *ethically comparable situations* — even emphasize their fascistic character — without entirely reducing "fascism" to such a thin smear in the process. Maoism, imperialism, fascism, these can all be horrific in unique ways. It can be illuminating to point out the fascist assumptions of thought processes at play in each. It can be productive to talk of "red fascism" or call a certain forces "fascistic." But it is also important to recognize that ideologies leading to mass murder are not homogeneous. Marx's implicit authoritarianism may have imbued marxism with a certain inclination towards totalitarian horrors, but you will never be able to stop either marxism or fascism if you mush them together as a single undifferentiated gruel of badness.

Primitivism is conceptually distinct from fascism.

And ecology is not national socialism.

Obviously.

There are different core ideas. And they emerged somewhat differently. For example John Zerzan's marxist roots are quite

obvious — he didn't come to his politics via Evola or Schmitt. Of course there are some blurred roots, as with many of the aristocratic class that retreated to liberal arts in the early 20th century who set themselves against civilization, the modern world, and technology — see for example Heidegger and many of Kaczynski's professors at Harvard. But on the whole they're distinct ideas with largely distinct social context.

Fascism and primitivism are not the same thing.

However they're just as obviously *close* to one another. There are quite large and meaningful overlaps between green ideologies and fascist ideologies. And there are a fuck ton of nazis who explicitly ground their politics, who justify their philosophy, in ecological terms.

To obscure this requires aggressively obscuring what fascism is — reducing it to merely any old authoritarianism, or adopting patently false and outdated narratives about it being inherently capitalist, modernist, or formally statist (see for counterexample the "national anarchists").

A cataclysmic return to a mythologized past, a localization of one's attention and empathy, a reification of essentialistic identity, of a natural state of being and natural order… These flow smoothly from and alongside the same core impulses that drive all sorts of people to speak of a return to nature. There is the same underlying dynamic whether fascist or primitivist.

A sincere anarchist like Zerzan might have a very different thing in mind when talking of human nature, but in both cases the agential, the ethical, the component of active philosophical inquiry is abandoned. The Good is not something to be investigated, critiqued, or more fully discovered, but just defaulted to. It arrives fully formed like commandments or a holy bible — and usually just as arbitrary — there just is some blueprint, some state of being, some primal configuration, that we are to studiously obey. And in this nihilistic sort of abnegation we find something framed as "liberation," freedom from thought, freedom from the stress of agency and evaluation.

fixture between ecology and fascism. Bookchin is cited laying out at least a part of it in the book, "An ecology that is mystical, in turn, may become justification for a nationalism that is mystical."

But sadly when it gets to the modern context *Ecofascism: Lessons From The German Experience* pulls its punches in part by clearly working for the bookchinite agenda.

In fact Bookchin comes off pretty terrible from an antifascist lens. Biehl quotes an exchange he had with Rudolph Bahro and devotes a good number of pages exposing all Bahro's fascist associations and statements, this all leads up to a giant pull quote where old man Bookchin totally pwned Bahro or something after accepting a speaking invitation from him. Yeah, you read that right. Record scratch. *Accepting a paid speaking invitation.* This is as thudding a section as Jeff Tucker's bit in his own book where he casually admits a millionaire nazi tried to recruit him.

One gets the distinct impression that Bookchin — always one for a paid speaking gig and with the classic naivety re No Platform of an old left dinosaur — done screwed up and now it's incumbent upon his followers to clean up after him, working their asses off to reframe the narrative to antifa.

Hey maybe Bookchin accepting a speaking gig from a fascist — or at least pretty fashy — leader was a smart strategic decision that did more good than harm. Who am I, now decades removed, to judge? But you certainly get the impression that Biehl knows it looks fucking bad and is writing very much to turn that around.

I've framed this review, far more strongly than in my last few reviews of antifascist books, around the non-fascist ideologies at play: The broadly "eco" ideologies of primitivism, deep ecology, anti-civ, wildism, eco-extremism, etc, a hodgepodge of very close positions that I have treated in a relatively slapdash manner, but also the positions of the attackers here, bookchinism, social ecology, libertarian municipalism, etc. It's hard to do anything else. This is a book that served as a weapon

But then primitivists are familiar with such ends-and-means tradeoffs. John Zerzan wears glasses. Ted Kaczynski used technology to kill people. There is almost always going to be some pragmatism in how one engages in a world not of your liking, especially when one wants to see cataclysmic change. While I would hope that no one reading this would ever accept an industrial nationstate war machine as a valid means, we must concede that there is always danger of seductive expediency in our means.

That leninism claims roughly the same values or goal as anarcho-communism actually *is* reason to pause and reflect on how such a catastrophic divergence "in application" could take place and if any lingering seeds of such are still present in anarcho-communist ideology. Just because we missed the turn off to full blown industrialized nationstate slaughter doesn't mean we've avoided all corruption. There is a place for green anarchist critiques that diagnose common threads between the industrialized murder machines of our era.

But it would be useless rhetorical flourish to define fascism merely in terms of such extreme statist means, and the myriad fascists that since the third reich have positioned themselves against both the state and industrial society should remind us that fascism is an evil philosophy prior to the evil means it chooses. Today one can point to shit like the Wolves of Vinland and Augustus Invictus (now a huge fan of Uncle Ted), and in the 1995 Janet Beihl certainly had no shortage of examples. Who can in this era truly object to Wolfgang Haug's line that the, "The New Right, in effect, wants above all to redefine social norms so that rational doubt is regarded as decadent and eliminated, and new "natural" norms are established."

Today's often occult ecologists going on about cosmic dark life force or rambling about "wild nature" and intuition are not wingnutty deviances from historical fascism, but in a long and unbroken line. And it's not hard to see why naturalistic fallacy essentialism and hostility to thought becomes a common

Green ideologies are hardly alone in making disastrous turns to the naturalistic fallacy — one could certainly name a number of communists and capitalists — but they are unrivaled champions at it. And this is grounds on which green ideologies could be said to have somewhat more in common — at root — with fascist ideologies than communists and capitalists do.

No primitivist, anticiv, or green of any note is calling for the precise aesthetics of auschwitz. But we all realize that calls for mass murder are relatively commonplace. One doesn't have to go dredging up your neighborhood wingnut with a blog blending pagan, primitivist, and fascist shit, there's a long history of racist, patriarchal, and generally essentialistic garbage in green circles. Even Ivan Illich supported the "natural order" on eugenics grounds to avoid the "genetic deterioration" he thought characterized the current era. The reactionary garbage gotten up to by influential figures like Dave Foreman, Edward Abbey, and Ted Kaczynski is too long to ever list.

What I want to argue is that this reflects the deeper and more fundamental tension over how we respond to human thought/agency and its disruptive effects. Do we embrace it or suppress it? Fascism and many green ideologies are caught in the undertow on one side of this, thus their propensity to swirl together.

In an infamous statement defending a particularly reactionary publication, folks recently asked the baited rhetorical question, "what if the Earth truly was first?"

Well in a certain sense that's a particularly horrifying question. Taking the bumper sticker slogan of reactionary greens like Foreman and trying to extrapolate absolutist philosophical conclusions. And yes, the ramifications can only be something close to the total extermination of conscious life. At the Wildist Institute John Jacobi has literally claimed that rocks are more valuable than people. The ultimate conservative position! Thinking, agency itself, it changes things and that kind of change is bad.

I'm obviously not saying that the National Socialist German Workers' Party had "human extinction and the banning of consciousness" as a plank in their platform, even they didn't go so far. Nor are any of the "western civilization" praising "identitarian" brats of our era dreaming of an ethnic purge that leaves little more than rocks behind in Europe. But the nihilistic rejection of engaged thought and empathy in favor of essentialism, a violent return to a mythologized past? These are clearly somewhere in orbit, even if they hadn't yet descended to the surface.

The sorts of ideological flights present in the most extreme green circles in many ways look like a purification of the same ideological forces at play in Hitler's Germany. Do we embrace the complications wrought by thought, or turn away from it? When reason struggles or exposes complications do we double down on reason itself ("the very mistake that got us here") or abandon it? Do we choose liberty or security?

If there is a sin to *Ecofascism: Lessons From The German Experience*, it's that it doesn't sufficiently tackle these deeper issues. The Bookchinite invective hits the broad outlines, but terms like "mystical" or "irrational" don't really provide grounding or explain the stakes. Often the framing is a direct borrowing of Bookchin's grumping about the anarchist milieu, this is dangerous because it means a host of arguments are alluded to but not directly made. A necessary sin in some contexts, but no one who has soaked up the critique of "humanism" as just a form of "human nationalism," for example, is going to respond well to positive references to humanism or implicit appeals that anyone objecting to it is therefore a reactionary.

What *Ecofascism: Lessons From The German Experience* tries to do instead of working out a deep underlying argument for why fascism and ecology would come into orbit with one another, is to provide a list of encounters. In this you can see why critics ragged on them so strenuously. But the examples

Still, it is of course a very big deal that the nazis built an industrial war machine. They weren't full-blown primitivists. Obviously.

The nazis certainly believed in environmentalism and drastically reducing the "overpopulation" of Europe and the world, but they were just as much committed to the supremacy of the mythical aryan race and a nationstate project and war machine in order to accomplish their ends. The Nazis mandated organic farming, but they weren't tearing down the entire agricultural sector. In their bid for power they build giant infrastructural projects like the Autobahn, and a bunch of bureaucratic oversight to make such "in harmony with nature" doesn't ultimately amount to much. There was internal protest by the ideological true believers within the nazi movement against shit like draining wetlands, but it still went ahead.

The radical environmentalists attempted to pass a sweeping "Reich Law for the Protection of Mother Earth" and had every ministry on board save the ministry of the economy which was more preoccupied with the mining and industrialism necessary to wage war.

This is pretty much the story of the nazi party, while a reactionary ecological ideology underpinned its aspirations, they needed to get shit done in order to achieve said ends and this ultimately meant an industrial war machine.

For those who see the mechanization of slaughter in the 20th century as a particularly stark, qualitative, and objectionable break with prior millenia of mass slaughter, fascism serves as merely the most emblematic example. In this view it's something more aggregate like "modernism" that's responsible for our sense of horror at the nazi regime. And one certainly can feel a pull to collapse marxism, capitalism, and fascism together as the some deeper core ideology, since the means they chose ended up being so strongly convergent.

Now it's worth noting — and *Ecofascism: Lessons From The German Experience* as per its title does *not* note — that the story is a little different in Italy, the place where "fascism" was originally launched. The primordial roots of fascism there are interesting and — while less influential than the national socialist expression — still prevalent in distinct ways in contemporary fascist milieus. A "modernism" that wants to destructively strip away all legacy of the past initially paired well with a Mussolini's spin on a violence-worshiping nihilism. Of course there were plenty of futurists who were anarchists and condemned and fought against fascism, and so too were there no doubt some ecologists who fought the nazi regime. *Ecofascism* makes no attempt to note any of these complications.

But the arc from Italian modernism to German ecology is worth examining. Because of course Italian fascism ultimately turned against the futurists — borrowing from German conservatives critiques of globalized culture and thus denouncing futurist art as degenerate. Yet at the same time that the nazis were centrally appealing to the past and essentialism in a way that deeply conflicted with certain "modernist" notions, they were also embracing giant artificial edifices from parades to a war machine. While scholars generally place fascism as centrally anti-modern, certainly some saw it as providing titanic new narratives and structures that could sweep away the past. *New* mega narratives and structures? Seems a bit at odds with a return to the simple natural life.

Yet despite their name, the futurists were less about all the connotations of "progress" than about violent masculine destruction, essentialised maleness, the violent destruction of the existing order. Indeed this worship of the new, of titanic mechanized warfare, came grounded in a notion of a return to essential, natural identity. So even in the currents that were most deeply appreciative of industrial horror, there was still a naturalistic fallacy that worshipped a kind of consciousness & rationality snuffing violence.

of crossover they point to are quite solid ones, and actually quite overwhelming in collection.

I'll admit, while I'm familiar with much of what Biehl and Staudenmaier covered, the sharpness of some examples and the unrelenting storm of them shocked even me.

In common precursors to nazi and green thought like Ernst Moritz Arndt one finds explicit claims that things are interconnected as a single whole and thus a human is equally important or unimportant as a worm or a stone. Not so far from Jacobi. *Agency, consciousness, and freedom? Who needs them.* This return to inert stones would shock many green anarchists I know, who are motivated to value ecosystems in no small part because of the dynamism, *fluidity*, and adaptability they see in them, but the "organic" that the nazis loved didn't have those connotations, but instead cast everything as an *organ* of a greater (static) whole. In other influential extreme reactionaries like Wilhelm Heinrich Reil one finds literal talk about the "rights" of the forest.

Both of these figures took the essentialist and anti-sentience strands of their environmentalism to hyper-nationalist and anti-semitic conclusions. Wholeness and the cosmic spirit (Gaia anyone?) leveraged so as to erase individual agency and cast everyone as cogs in the great machine of nature, of a bioregion, of a nation… And when the enemy is cosmopolitanism and rationality, anti-semitism is always close behind.

Ernst Haeckel, who literally coined the term "ecology," tied holism and biological essentialism together into racism, nationalism, imperialism. Monism tied this hyper authoritarianism to environmentalism plainly: humans are uppity cogs whose limited cognitive capacities can never hope to overcome nature, so we must return to our role as relatively unthinking cogs. Natural order as a justification for social order.

What *Ecofascism: Lessons From The German Experience* highlights is the way that national socialism emerged from a German milieu of conservatives and new agey movements that

centered around environmentalism and rejection of rationality. An example of the new agey side, the Wandervogel youth movement took mysticism and hostility to reason as part of an agenda of "free spirits," eventually smoothly transitioning from nature worship to Fuhrer worship.

Among recognized philosophers we have Ludwig Klages, author of "Man and Earth," who took all of this, complete with hostility to utilitarianism and "ideology of progress," directly to hyper conservatism, nationalism, and anti-semitism. And — oh what's this? — the great evil he identified behind all the things he opposed? Our minds. All rational thought must be abolished.

And of course we all know about Heidegger, whose nazi ass was all about the essentialism. We find ourselves thrown into the world, with all kinds of happenstance embeddedness, our bodies, social context, environments, our place of birth, etc, and rather than achieve any agential distance from such arbitrary particulars, The Great Nazi Philosopher instead wants us to embrace them. A fundamentally and inextricably anti-intellectual take, being rather than becoming, identifying with our situational chains rather than true fluidity and agency.

Okay, sure, so nazis and eco movements often share common roots, and these founding figures saw the right-wing politics we broadly associate with the term "reaction" as obviously bundled with a return to nature as well as a deeper valuing of it. But these are just part of the context! The inter-war period was complicated and messy, surely the nazi connection with these environmental movements was shallow, cherry-picked?

Well if we could — like the right libertarians at the Mises Institute — somehow ignore that the central nazi slogan was fucking Blood and Soil, Staudenmaier gives no quarter, tying these hyper reactionaries at the center and dawn of the environmentalist movement to the nazi past. Richard Walther Darre, for example, a major nazi and environmentalist, with an account

even claiming he personally convinced Hitler and Himmler of the necessity of exterminating the jews.

But maybe that's unfair. Let's fucking listen directly to Hitler shall we?

> "When people attempt to rebel against the iron logic of nature, they come into conflict with the very same principles to which they owe their existence as human beings. Their actions against nature must lead to their downfall." [Mein Kampf]

It should be no surprise to anyone that Hitler was hella into natural laws, natural forces, natural identities, natural roles, that he was an avid fan of numerous environmentalist practices and claims. But even while it's obvious and known to anyone who's read him, it's still something our mainstream discourse broadly shies away from directly recognizing. And it's not just human essentialism, but a subjugation of human consciousness under nature, "Throughout the writings, not only of Hitler, but of most Nazi ideologues, one can discern a fundamental depreciation of humans vis-a-vis nature." (Robert Pois, National Socialism and the Religion of Nature)

On and on it goes. Walter Schoenichen, head of the Reich Agency for Nature Protection, tying nazism to environmental organicism and holism, speaking of the "overcivilization" of humans. Hitler and Himmler enthusiastically on board with all this stuff.

And it wasn't marginalia or aesthetic trappings divorced from policy. Reich Chancellor Rudolf Hess, who Hitler named as his "closest advisor," second in line after Goring to succeed the Fuhrer, helped implement the ideological environmentalism of the nazi party into a host of laws, reforestation programs, legal protections for species, blocks against industrial development, etc. The Nazis created the first nature preserves in Europe.