

*Various Authors*

**Articles on Animal and  
Earth Liberation Struggles  
from “Green Anarchist**

2003

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# Words of Liberation from inside the Complex. *An Interview With U.S. animal liberation ex-prisoner Petey Schnell*

*How did you get involved in the animal rights movement?*

Well, after choosing vegetarianism, my earth and animal consciousness seemed to be ever growing, while becoming interested in looking into animal agriculture and the horrors behind such an industry was growing as well. After discovering and then bringing myself from a vegetarian lifestyle to a vegan one, I knew that a lifestyle change only was not enough.

Along with others, I organized to try and get the high school that I attended to choose more humane, alternative ways of studying the anatomy of a cat rather than dissecting the dead animal in this biology class.

Fortunately, this was the only dissection that took place in my school, but unfortunately we failed in our attempts to stop it. I grew up and went to high school in suburban New Jersey where I was introduced to the New Jersey Animal Rights Alliance by another animal conscious classmate. The connections I made through my involvement with this organization were my initial introduction to the animal rights movement.

*Do you consider yourself an animal rights activist?*

I find this a very interesting question. I've always been wary of labels such as this, just as I've been wary of any and all ways of possibly alienating the general public instead of inviting each and everyone to be active, to speak up and speak out. If I attend an anti-war demonstration, amongst thousands, bringing my sincere opposition to this specific war the demonstration is protesting, am I an animal rights activist there, or am I an antiwar activist? Personally, I would then be neither of those labels. I'd actually be a person, standing up for what he believes in, refusing to be scared of speaking his mind, even if it's in protest of what his government is proposing. If I'm organizing an antifur protest for example, I want you to be there not because you're an animal rights activist, and so then it's your duty to be in attendance. I instead want you to be there because you are sincerely in opposition to what the fur trade is all about, whoever you are. That's important, that's what matters the most. Yes, by definition, if you are active in any one political or social struggle you are then an activist, but I

sincerely think we need to start being sincerely conscious of how we might be alienating ourselves from the general public.

To create any type of change we need the power of the masses, thus it's important to try and appeal to the masses as best as we can, or at least make sure that the invitation is always there. So no, I don't consider myself an animal rights activist as I sit here now, writing these words that anyone is capable of, with this extreme earth and animal consciousness that anyone is capable of finding, in prison for acting on that consciousness that anyone is capable of as well.

*What led you to take a more direct approach to animal liberation?*

I guess the escalation of my rage and passion got to the point where I realized that I wasn't doing enough until I at least attempted to take such a direct approach at creating change. Granted, I guess some are not in the position to take the risks that go along with taking such a direct approach, whatever the circumstances are of their particular situation. I just realized that the temporary imprisonment that I may endure if captured, however long or short, isn't much compared to the lifetime of suffering that the animals must endure. I don't really think that it's much of a risk, as it is what's necessary in looking to create change.

*Why do you feel that breaking the law is acceptable or necessary in the fight for animal liberation?*

The overall attempt at creating any type of change, socially or politically, should be looked at as a puzzle, because just like a puzzle we need certain pieces to come together and become whole in order to be successful. Specific to animal liberation, we need those out there spreading the word about animal suffering and cluing the general public in on the vegan lifestyle, to create an overall consciousness. We need those on the legal front enforcing the acknowledgement of animals within the law and looking to ban such inhumane, legal events and practices such as the circus and racing, fur trapping and farming. Amongst the other puzzle pieces that I've neglected to mention as examples of necessary pieces in order for the proper connections to be made that will bring about change and bring this movement to success, is directly acting on behalf of the animals or yes, breaking the law. We need those out there breaking the law to bring immediate attention to an extreme situation. We need to present that the extreme situation that the animals are in, does call for extreme measures to be taken on their behalf. I feel that breaking the law should not be looked at as inappropriate even though it may be seen as such by the vast majority. Those willing to take a stand as the voice for the voiceless, those who value life over property, should look at the concept of breaking the law

as secondary to the action itself. What can be accomplished and the necessary aspect of the action itself is what is primary. The fact that a law enacted by the state will be broken posing possible consequences should merely serve as the risk involved when taking such actions.

*What about the legal system in your country? Do you feel that it is possible to make positive changes through reforms or other legal measures?*

Yes, I do feel it is possible to make positive changes through legal channels. Just like I stated above, everything is intertwined when looking at the end goal, which is to liberate the oppression indefinitely. Nothing should be left out of the equation; we need every possible solution to bring us to the end result. I know that legal measures are necessary toward liberation, especially when I think about Austria and other countries that have banned fur farming for example. Is it positive? Any accomplishment made in this struggle toward an end to animal suffering and bringing these sentient creatures closer to their liberation is nothing short of positive and should definitely be looked at as such.

*When you were arrested, how did it feel knowing that you could end up with a long prison sentence? In the U.S., sentencing tends to be much higher than in most European countries.*

Well, when Matt and I were first indicted in a U.S. Federal Court it was brought to our attention that both of the charges that we were indicted on each carried a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment. I knew that if I were found guilty I'd be sentenced to some amount of prison time since it was also made known that we would not be eligible for any type of probation. Although due to my experience with the criminal system here in the U.S. and from what research I've done on it as well, I've come to realize that the maximum penalties are meant to instill fear in the defendant(s) leading them to the possible option of cooperating or pleading out. To say that I was never overcome by fear that I would face a substantial amount of prison time, even though I was able to look at the situation realistically and refused to be misguided by maximum penalties would actually be a lie. The type of fear that I experienced was a fear of the unknown, not even really fearing the unknown amount of prison time I'd possibly end up receiving, even within the realistic realm of possibilities, but just not knowing what to expect of prison life in general. Realizing, as human beings we adapt to new surroundings very well and that when taking an interest in looking for it, strength is found in times of struggle. I was satisfied with expecting the worst and hoping for the best as a

general rule of thumb. This led to a really positive outlook that I fortunately still possess today.

*Did you ever consider cooperating more with the police to get a shorter sentence?*

Matt and I agreed in solidarity to let our lawyers negotiate with the prosecution to see what type of deal they could orchestrate that we'd be willing to comply to in solidarity. This came after we realized that fighting the case was an unrealistic fight and not only were we setting ourselves up for disappointment but we felt that we were just setting ourselves up to receive a longer sentence than if we plead out. Possibly a defeatist attitude but we saw it as a realistic conclusion. So a deal was made to accept responsibility for our actions and our intentions, which we did in solidarity, to plea to the lesser of the two charges and thus we were handed sentences of 14 months and 24 months respectively. Those sentences most likely would have been doubled had we taken the case to trial and lost.

Although this type of cooperation is the only kind that is acceptable, and we did it to avoid longer sentences so the day to be active once again would draw sooner rather than later, what's really important is that we did it in solidarity. We set out on the night in question, together as one entity, and on our way to the frontline we were arrested together, as one entity. Therefore, every decision revolving around our situation was made together, as one entity, with the consideration of each other's interests in solidarity through and through. As comrades with a similar drive to take action, passion, rage, and a thirst that needed desperately to be quenched for a liberated tomorrow, any other way of dealing with such a situation would have been completely unacceptable. That goes for us as well as anyone else captured at or on their way to the front lines. Solidarity from arrest to release (whenever that day may come) is the only option.

*Being in prison can be hard mentally and physically. How/where have you found the inspiration to stick with your beliefs?*

Certainly prison can be hard mentally and physically, and certainly some can deal with such a situation of isolation better than others and find the strength and stability to push through those hard times. Although, if what you believe in is sincere and has a truth to it that lies deep within your heart and soul, there is nothing at all that can take what you believe away from you or give you reason to find it again.

Personally, this experience has only reinforced what I so believe in and has given me many more reasons to believe. My earth and animal consciousness just grows and so does my will to fight. I know the slaughter and destruction remains

as I sit here, but turning away is not the option. Staying conscious and remaining true is the only option that I see sitting here on the inside or walking through life on the outside.

*Has the support that you've received helped you get through your time so far?*

Absolutely! Every day that I come away from mail call with a handful of letters from like-minded individuals, sending their support from all over the U.S. and all over the world, I'm filled with so much hope and joy. I hear the screams loud and clear that I am not alone in here, each time I open a piece of mail, not that I ever thought being alone in this struggle for animal liberation could actually be possible.

Although, when surrounded by the mainstream day in and day out, in isolation from the rest of the world and the progressive community you know and love, it is every reminder that action is taking place and people all over the world are standing firm as a voice for the voiceless that leaves you with a sensation that contributes to any and all amounts of strength you're left with. The feeling is really indescribable in all reality. I often wonder what this time would be like if I didn't have handfuls of mail to look forward to and dive into day after day in here. I think the alternative would leave this positive outlook I've been blessed with much harder to find.

*What does the word solidarity mean to you?*

Solidarity is the tie that binds any one progressive community together and the strength of this tie all depends on how solid the community is and how easily it can be broken. Solidarity should not be hard to find in any area of such community and its importance does not lessen in any one area nor is it any more important in any other area; it is equally important within the entire community. Solidarity is acknowledging the interests of every member of this community, considering everyone's wants and needs without bias. Solidarity is never letting another member of the community fall without a conscious attempt at embracing their fall at whatever cost. Solidarity is supporting each other completely and thoroughly. Solidarity is not only the tie that binds, but it is what puts the wheels in motion toward progress in any one movement.

*Do you feel that the destruction being caused to our earth, to people, and to the animals is reversible?*

Is it even possible at this point to make lasting positive changes? I really think this is the question that becomes the deciding factor for most people who consider

joining the struggle, which actually becomes a question of whether to become active or remain apathetic to the oppression, destruction, and slaughter that isn't going away. What can one person do when the problems of the world are so great and the destruction this world has endured already is so terribly overwhelming? A question that seems to be asked in the same breath.

These problems are not going away, unless we intervene. When conscious of what these problems are and the consequences that will be brought to this world if such problems are allowed to continue and evolve leads to the only viable option, which is acting out in defense of the voiceless and oppressed, with the intention of halting any further destruction. Imagine if everyone said, "I can't do anything, I'm only one person, and the problems are too great. Getting concrete results just doesn't seem possible."

As I've stated before, the greater the progressive community becomes, and the greater the movement becomes, in quantity, the easier it will be to get results and the closer we will be to bringing this beautiful earth and all her sentient creatures to a liberated state. So let's each stand firm, as an example to others resting on the fence, against all odds and absolutely refuse to give in.

*Do you have any regrets?*

No, I don't have any regrets. I've played the night in question over in my head so many times, realizing there are things we could've done differently in preparing for such a night, to decrease the likelihood of our possible arrest. Although this is just the process of living your life and then learning from the mistakes you may make along your way through the course of your life, even though this is a rather extreme way of doing so. I've really learned so much from this experience, stemming much further than how to make such a night successful. I find myself almost thankful even, rather than regretful. Thankful, not because I'm here in prison, learning what I have and am through revelations and realizations, but because I've let this situation bring me to such clarity and that I've come to conclusions given the circumstances of the situation.

*Is there anything you would like to say to the people reading this, any words of wisdom?*

Well, I've really enjoyed this interview, and certainly appreciated the chance to be heard and voice my opinion on these issues. I hope the statements I've made here are not looked at as words on paper, but instead are understood that this is where I stand on these issues, firmly and sincerely.



I live here behind these prison walls in isolation where my every will to believe and be strong is tested and still I stand firm in everything I hold true within my heart and soul. With every stance held firm, a promise is made to the earth and animals that I will never back down and will never give in. These are not words on paper, they are within me, burning, waiting to be released. These statements, what I believe, my passion, it's what consumes me. It never dies.

*When do you expect to be out?*

August 27<sup>th</sup> of 2003 is my expected release date, which is when my three years of supervised release begins, also a part of my sentence.

## *War & Peace. Iraq and the continuing war against life* by Jim Jones

The rationale of industrial society, capitalist or otherwise, is a constant war against life. The actual sustenance of society (or 'civilisation') has been the plunder, murder and enclosure of all life and the elevation of the State.

Industrial society requires that all life is turned into 'resources' to feed the machine of Industry; the Economy. The war against Iraq is not a quirk but is part of the life blood of this society; 'peace' in the context of this society is meaningless. The absence of declared war against a particular country is not peace but war by subtlety, it is war without television images, war unaccompanied by mass protest. An almost silent, extremely devastating war. Free flowing rivers are dammed, ancient forests are wiped out and turned into factories for producing wood and paper. Other species that we share the planet with are 'farmed', slaughtered en masse, while other millions are driven to extinction. Once free human beings are turned into workers, turned into yet another resource to serve the God of Economy, cogs in a machine that devours all life to feed its own survival.

The story of this all-devastating machine is one of invasion, plunder, genocide and imprisonment. Resistance through the ages has been incredible yet unfortunately has ended with taking over the reins of the machine and usually accelerating the destruction and misery, for example Christianity and Socialism. Where though does that leave resistance to the Empire today, dominated by one all-encompassing world power?

The obvious failures of the past must be left behind, our resistance must be determined, imaginative and based simply on the destruction of power and hierarchy. A 'resistance' based on half-measures or compromise is not resistance but acceptance of the status quo. A 'resistance' that accepts hierarchy and power is opposed to liberation.

The attack against Iraq was inevitable and further invasions, military occupations and genocidal operations are certain while this society continues to exist. The majority of the opposition to the attack on Iraq was sadly also very predictable, offering a replication of what has gone before. Still pleading to the mass murderers. still dependent on the spectacle to promote the protest rather than aiming to stop the spectacle. The only aim of which appears to be getting on the news and boosting flagging careers. Glimpses of autonomous resistance though shone through to provide inspiration and hope.

The war against Iraq is a symptom of a life way that needs to be stopped. The exhilaration of rebellion needs to be brought to the forefront, we are in the belly

of the Empire and we can pull the guts out of it. A great piece of graffiti recently declared “the war is everywhere” – exactly! The best way to support our brothers and sisters around the World and to reclaim our lives is by hitting the institutions, networks and infrastructure that sustain this nightmare. Simultaneously, we must also be constructing free association networks based on mutual aid and autonomy of every individual and group.

The Empire will crumble like all those that have gone before. Iraq was not the first and will certainly not be the last while the State, in any form, exists.

## ***I Find You Guilty.* New Statement from Rob 'Los Ricos' Thaxton**

This year started on an interesting note. On January 2<sup>nd</sup>, Oregon Department of Corrections Security Threat Group manager came by to visit. He threatened to send me into exile in Eastern Oregon – far from my daughter in Portland – if I didn't move out of the cell I shared with Brian McCarvill. Brian is currently suing ODOC over their mailroom policies, which result in the rejection of anarchist literature sent to him. This has been something that has bothered me the past 3 years. I have over 200 mail violations notices concerning letters and publications sent to me here in prison. Their favorite reasons for such violations are because the publications are anarchist-related or because of STG symbol – in this case, a circled A, a symbol used internationally for anarchy.

I support Brian's lawsuit. Plus he is a valued and trusted friend. We chose not to split up. On January 7<sup>th</sup>, we received write-ups about unauthorized activity and disobedience of an order. This had to do with a card writing campaign I'd initiated a month earlier. I'd asked people to send postcards to us with a circled A symbol on them, along with the caption "This is not a gang symbol". Two days after receiving the writeup, we were called to a disciplinary hearing. After discussing the issue with me, the hearings officer told me "I find you guilty of continuing to be involved in the anarchist movement." Pretty illuminating, as this was not what I was charged with. But it does actually sum up ODOC's attitude towards me. It has not been easy, but I have attempted to stay involved with events on the outside of these walls. I've been incarcerated since the international Reclaim the Streets day of solidarity to oppose the G-8 summit in Cologne, Germany, June 18<sup>th</sup> 1999. I've missed out on the Battle of Seattle, the anti-IMF/WB protests, the protests against both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions and GW Bush's bloodless coup. The summary of my hearing contained a few lies and halftruths, designed to make me appear to be a threat to the safety and the security of ODOC facilities, if not the world at large.

The hearings officer noted that I threatened to use my 30 years of organizing skills to cause trouble for ODOC. What I actually said was that I'd assured Benny Ward as well as the STG managers here at OSP that I would not use my extensive organizing skills to create trouble for them. And I asked if it would be too much to expect that I be allowed to have my mail? Apparently it is.

The most alarming aspect of this, though, is the fact that ODOC has come to the conclusion that I am a member of the Earth Liberation Front. This despite

the fact that I've never been arrested for, nor been questioned about any actions by the ELF. Indeed, there is no evidence or rumor of evidence that can connect me to the ELF in any way whatsoever. The ELF is a clandestine group whose sole purpose is to carry out acts of sabotage against corporations and research facilities that the ELF considers responsible for despoiling the earth. As such, it has been listed as a terrorist organization, and is one of the targeted focal points for several Joint Task Force(s) on Terrorism in cities, and stated across the US. I am a writer and an activist. It has been a deliberate decision on my part not to undertake acts of sabotage, since I lack the skill and knowledge to do so effectively and safely. So far, no one has been hurt or killed by an ELF action.

Despite losing my job in the prison infirmary, being sent to the hole for 120 days and being labeled a terrorist, I will continue to write for anarchist and alternative publications. I am an enemy of the New World Order. We, the people, shall overthrow the rule of corporate power. Sí Se Puede!

## Josh Harper Statement on Home Raid

As many of you have heard by now my home was raided last Wednesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The FBI have been telling reporters that it was in relation to arson, animal enterprise terrorism, interference with interstate commerce, etc, etc. I'm sure that by now the pro-drunk driving crew at Consumer Freedom are celebrating my certain demise, and HLS collaborators everywhere are picturing the day that they can happily return to making money without us pesky activists saying something about it. I can see them now, visualising the boxes and boxes of FBI loot coming out the door, cheering as they think up the next chemical to pour down a beagles throat. What they should be visualising is this:

Me not giving a fuck and continuing to fight them the same way I have since I first got involved in this campaign.

The raid on my home is next to meaningless to me. I am angry, as anyone would be, that my personal belongings were taken. I'm saddened to see my baby pictures go. I am wondering why the FBI failed to report that they took a computer from my room. I am doubting that I will ever get to enjoy the pictures from my birthday party that were on the camera they stole. (Note to the Feds: the dancing pictures should be particularly funny. I hope you die laughing.) But my anger over those things is fleeting. In case people have failed to notice the FBI does this sort of thing every few years with me. I have grown used to it and realised that in the grand scheme of things it isn't such a big deal.

I am in England right now and amazed at some of the people I have met here. Having their homes raided is old news to them. They take it in stride and keep on attacking the bastards who are ruining this world for the rest of us. They get arrested, go to jail, and then get off their asses and go back to it. I intend to do the same thing now, and in a few years when the FBI goes on their next attempt to intimidate me I will do the same.

So I hope that everyone out there doesn't let this raid scare them. The FBI have nothing on me. Nothing they took can get me in any sort of trouble, although I am sure they will justify the raid with a publicised arrest and then let the matter quietly drop as my attorneys destroy their case, just as they always have in the past. I'll deal with it, just as I know you all would. We have alot of work ahead of us, lets get to it shall we?

For VICTORY!

Josh Harper

## ***Beyond the E.L.F.* Craig Rosebraugh on creating a new direct action movement against capitalism and industrialization.**

While the Earth Liberation Front has shown to have quite an impact in the United States since 1997, its targets have arguably been limited in nature. As the E.L.F. is at least in theory an organisation focused on environmental issues, its actions have stayed largely within that social movement. To their credit the E.L.F. has demonstrated a knowledge and understanding of a larger problem in society: the drive for profit and capital. Using economic sabotage the group has inflicted well over \$34 million in damages since 1997 in the United States on entities profiting off the destruction of the environment. But is this enough?

The E.L.F. is definitely on the right track as far as tactics of economic sabotage are concerned. Yet there is a clear difference, strategically speaking, between burning a building completely to the ground and causing minor damage through various forms of vandalism. Granted I am under the assumption that the basic motives for all these actions would be the same and therefore would applaud the brave and heroic individuals for working to save the environment and smash corporate greed.

The main difference in my mind though lies in not only the monetary amount of damage done to a given target, but also in the target itself. The idea being that if an individual desires to engage in economic sabotage she/he should pick the best target possible at any given time. Then the best tactic should be chosen at each given time to ensure the most damage will be done. So how is this done? How are the best targets selected?

In my mind the best targets are those that will have the most effect in stopping the exploitation, destruction and deaths of the natural environment and all life coexisting on the planet. One must make every effort to look beyond individual social issues, be it human, animal, and/or environmental, to the higher cause of these problems. The desire, or manufactured desire, of the need for profit, material items, and ownership is at the heart of arguably many of these social issues. Yet instead of concentrating on fighting this desire most activists, largely of the leftist persuasion, appear content with continuing the exhausted state sanctioned legal means of protest, which have little effect. Underground organizations such as the ELF and the Animal Liberation Front have demonstrated a greater understanding of the role desire plays in the environmental and animal liberation movements. They have taken concrete steps to fight this desire within their own movements.

Yet the real desire taught to us along with the American Dream, Apple Pie and Baseball is most often overlooked or clearly unseen.

There needs to be a direct focus on fighting the desire created by industrialization and the westernized way of life. It needs to be a direct action focus using not state-sanctioned forms of protest but underground guerilla tactics in the form of economic sabotage and beyond.

So how do we go about combating this desire? How do we go about choosing targets that will have most impact? The idea in the United States is to look at just what makes the country what it is. What symbols, what propaganda, what physical objects are involved in creating the atmosphere of desire? What makes the United States economically operate? Who and what are the information sources in the US that push and create the propaganda? Are there targets that could be selected which involve and effect many corporations? Are there symbolic targets that if destroyed would place a major blow to the false reality?

Think big. Wall Street, the stock market, Statue of Liberty, US Capitol, Mt Rushmore, Disneyland, media conglomerates, military installations, government agencies (CIA, FBI, BATF, USFS, etc.), large multinational corporations, automobile manufacturers, etc. Realize the difference between pulling up an acre of G.E crops and destroying Monsanto. The difference between sabotaging logging equipment and destroying MAXXAM/Pacific Lumber. The difference between spraypaint and fire.

When the ELF torched Vail resorts Inc. in 1998 the organization was on the right path toward targeting desire. Vail is known worldwide as the ritzy, only for the rich, ski resort. A perfect symbol of desire. If you begin with nothing, work hard all your life, you too can become wealthy, powerful and can visit the planets premiere facilities, including Vail. Those who can't are supposed to desire it.

The idea for a movement against capitalism and industrialization directly is nothing new. The Luddites 1811 – 1813 in England, used direct action with some success to combat the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. Before the revolution hit many people for centuries worked out of their cottages and small shops in villages on machines which would be run by one person. Suddenly, industrial society appeared with new complex machinery commonly housed in multiple story buildings. This new way of working threatened and eventually killed the means by which livelihood had been achieved for years. The luddites fought back using similar economic sabotage tactics seen today. Over an estimated \$1 million in damages were inflicted on business owners during this two year time period. Some manufacturers agreed to actually stop using the new complex machines due to the Luddite threat of action.

The tactics of the Weather Underground in the US in the late sixties to early 1970's also appeared to be focused against the ideology existing in the United



States. While their operations appeared somewhat reactionary and their group politics arguably questionable, they did succeed in demonstrating that symbolic and real targets like those mentioned above are impossible to hit.

This demonstrates the possibilities of direct action against the idea of desire. The Luddites and Weather Underground are just two examples of earlier organizations targeting capitalism and industrialization through direct action.

The thought behind all of this is not to discourage, but rather encourage to get active and stay active in a way that will produce results. If the goal is to end environmental destruction, and the suffering and murder of life on this planet then a clear look must be taken at the real enemy. Whether the group is the Earth Liberation Front or some new organization, the importance lies in re-thinking targets and choosing those which will produce the greatest success and damage. In either case the actions must not only become more strategic and be of an intensified scale but they must also occur with a much greater frequency.

## ***Evolution of the Offensive.* Final statement of Leslie James Pickering as spokesperson for the north american earth liberation front press office**

By far, more than any other events within the context of my life thus far, the actions of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) have been the most eye-opening, inspirational and empowering. The actions of the ELF have restored a hope in me that had otherwise been beaten into submission by the oppressive daily cycle of life within contemporary American civilization.

When I was a teenager growing up in suburban New York state I, like many of my peers, would do almost anything thinkable to break the mundane reality of our existence. One of the activities that drew my attention was attending loud, angry independent music events. These events appealed to me because they were welcoming atmospheres for me and my peers to vent our legitimate frustrations with the social and political situations we have been born into and forced to swallow. At one of the first of these shows I attended I was handed some literature, an independent publication, about an organization called the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). At first I didn't think much of it, a souvenir to bring home and maybe hang on my bedroom wall, and I stuffed it in my backpack.

It wasn't until later, when I had the time to look it over, did I realize the implications these stapled photocopies would have on my life. It turned out that the ALF was an 'underground' organization that struggled for the freedom of animals by 'liberating' them from factory farms, vivisection labs and other abusive institutions. The ALF were fugitives who broke the law to fight for freedom, much like many of our cultural heroes; George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, the Boston Tea Partiers, Robin Hood, etc. I was fascinated. At this point I naturally had an appreciation for nature, but was not especially an 'animal lover', nor have I ever been. I had never considered being a vegetarian and had no awareness of any popular movement for animal rights. The direct, illegal tactics of the ALF simply made sense to me on an honest, fundamental level, based on my natural instincts for self-defense and the little I had learned about revolutionary / social movements from school and conversations. My fascination with this sensational organization soon led me to learn of the popular movements for the freedom of animals and environmentalism, and later to study any and all revolutionary / social movements that I could scrounge up information on. In 1997 the Earth

Liberation Front (ELF) began taking 'Direct Actions', similar to the actions of the ALF.

From the onset the direct actions of the ELF were causing millions in damages to corporations and government agencies that were profiting from destroying the Earth. The actions and existence of the ELF created an enormous wave of attention across the US as authorities fruitlessly scrambled for evidence, often barely beginning one investigation before the ELF would strike again. Because of my efforts and dedication over the last decade I have been privileged to be in the position of spokesperson for an organization known as the North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office. The press office has been referred to by the media as a 'clearing house' for the anonymous 'communiqués' of the ELF, but for me personally has been an opportunity to publicly speak my belief in direct action and to help the movement gain the public's attention and support.

I support the actions of the Earth Liberation Front and the Animal Liberation Front whole-heartedly. I unwaveringly support revolutionary action to bring about the liberation of the Earth and its animal nations, including the liberation of the human race. I feel that illegal actions, like those of the ELF & ALF, are a 100 % necessary aspect of a successful struggle for liberation, and hope to see the continuation and the rapid escalation of their activities until the Earth and all of us who live here are free of institutionalized oppression. That being said, shortly after co-founding the ELF Press Office I 'vow(ed) to speak the truth about the ELF.' I have since done the best job I could with my limited resources and opportunities to fulfill this promise, and I will continue to do so. However, I have come to realize that being in the position of spokesperson for the organization has presented me with difficulties in speaking this truth. There is an existing atmosphere of opinions within those who support the the ELF on the manner in which the underground organization should be represented. I am only able to honestly represent the movement in the light in which it appears to me, which is not necessarily the same light as all other supporters. As I see it, the ELF are part of a larger movement struggling for revolutionary change globally. The tactics that they engage in, which many consider 'Non-Violent Sabotage,' are a direct result of their analysis of the oppression they struggle against and the level of activity they perceive to be effective within the contexts of their actions. I consider the ELF a loose network of clandestine guerrilla groups struggling for revolution on a global scale. I see, and personally hope, that there is no proof that the movement in general should view the tactics of the ELF as the end all of action taken for liberation. I see absolutely no logic in a judgment that struggle perceived as 'non-violent' is the only legitimate kind to be waged.

In addition, I have no problem admitting that I personally do not consider the actions of the ELF and ALF 'non-violent,' as any dictionary will clearly spell out.

Again, this does not mean that I do not support these actions 100%, only that I do not consider them 'non-violent' and do not believe 'non-violence' is the only legitimate means by which to struggle for liberation. Any dictionary will tell you that violence is more or less, any act that aggressively harms or threatens harm to anyone or anything. Therefore, if actions were 'non-violent' they would fail to even threaten harm to anything, which I certainly do not consider to be the case with the ELF. The entire intention of the ELF is to bring about liberation through engaging in effective acts of sabotage against oppressive institutions, to not even threaten harm to these institutions would therefore be failure. But regardless of what the dictionary says I believe that attaching the 'non-violence' label to these actions is based on a misguided understanding of public opinion and fear of a liberal backlash that comes regardless. I also believe the blind endorsement of this label is counterrevolutionary. Any notion that alleged 'non-violence' is the only way by which to achieve liberation is ill-informed and condemning of the many other effective tactics that have, can and must be put into practice in successful revolutionary movements. Throughout history liberation has been achieved through a healthy balance of a variety of tactics, many which have been considered 'non-violent' and many which have been considered violent. Even the most popular examples of 'nonviolent' resistance were far from existing in a vacuum. During the same period that Gandhi and MLK were waging their non-violent struggles numerous other organizations were struggling for the same liberation through what were considered violent means, and undeniably having a massive effect on the progression of the overall movements. In fact, I've yet to find a historical example of a successful revolutionary movement that consisted strictly of 'non-violent' activity, and do not believe that one is possible in our contemporary setting. Recently I appeared on a short television spot regarding the February 12, 2002 Congressional Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health. Also on this clip appeared an unnamed representative of an unnamed organization allegedly from the mainstream environmental movement. Among other less interesting things he said, "Violence, when used in this county, is simply wrong." I have found that a lot of the ideological basis for 'nonviolence' in the United States is fundamentally nationalist.

Why is it that when it comes to clearly violent struggle outside the borders of the United States, such as that waged by the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, the majority of liberals are quick to lend their ideological support, while those same liberals adamantly condemn the actions of the ELF and ALF here within the borders of such a powerful and oppressive United States Government? I believe this is because they have been brainwashed by the system into buying the line that within US borders somehow revolutionary change can magically be achieved through reformist activity. I think we need to wake up and realize that the US

is a global power, force-feeding its suicidal capitalist American Dream down the throats of everyone on the face of the planet.

Revolutionary change has never been achieved through reformist activity and is certainly not going to be handed to us on a silver platter by the Government of the United States. I have also found almost all of the popular cheerleaders of 'non-violence' are/were strongly religious people who endorsed the tactic largely due to how it related to their religious beliefs, not necessarily on the effectiveness to bring about revolutionary change. Recognizing the connection of 'non-violence' to religion was important to me because it helped me realize the larger intentions of the philosophy. The belief that one species, the human race, can somehow live an entirely 'non-violent' existence on this planet, when it is perfectly clear that no species throughout all of nature is capable of this, is blatantly anthropocentric.

The belief that humans are separate and somehow exempt from the laws of nature is a major cause of the disastrous unbalance that our species now suffers from. Often it seems that blind adherence to 'non-violence' philosophy is based on a reactionary denial of the level of resistance that it'll take to bring about revolutionary change. When many begin to comprehend the level of oppression we face today, 'non-violence' philosophy gains appeal as a very comfortable heaven / fairyland where liberation can be achieved strictly through personal changes. I consider this state of denial a kind of psychological illness common among liberal North Americans. I strongly feel that anyone hypnotizing the people with the 'non-violence' as gospel dog-and-pony show is a criminal, disarming us in a time when we desperately need to defend ourselves.

This denial of what really needs to happen to liberate the Earth and ourselves from the deadly path that the system is leading us all down is a major factor in our inability to achieve that liberation. The outright condemnation of violent revolutionary action in America needs to come to an end before a true revolution can effectively take place. The system knows this, and its pigs are working harder than ever to brainwash the public into calling the ELF terrorists and the Pentagon a force for freedom. More than anything else, I simply recognize the right and at times the necessity and duty of all people to defend ourselves when taking a beating, to fight for our very lives. This right is not only extended to those being crushed by the hands of this beast, but also to those of us being digested in its belly. In addition to the non-violence issue, I do not believe that the actions of the ELF are strictly environmental in their scope. It has probably already become clear that I recognize the actions of the ELF as acts of revolution, not reform. I have attempted to express this in every piece of literature, every interview, every public presentation and every conversation that has occurred as a result of my participation in the ELF Press Office, and increasingly so in recent months.

I can not perceive the Earth without conjuring up images of all life taking root within this atmosphere. The liberation of the Earth equals the liberation of everyone of us. And as I see it, the liberation of the Earth and the liberation of all species of the Earth is the goal of the Earth Liberation Front. I do not see the organization as simply an environmental group satisfied with the economic damages they inflict and attention they draw from each of their individual actions. I do not see the ELF only caring about the oppression caused by Vail Resorts Inc. and Boise Cascade. These are just platforms for a much larger message to get out on a global scale, and that message is "WE'RE NOT TAKING ANY MORE!" I see the objectives of any revolutionary movement for liberation being to off the oppressor, to smash the system of oppression and to create a free and just society in its place. I see no exception to this in the case of the ELF, and I certainly do not hope that I am wrong.

Currently, the Federal Bureau of Investigation consider the ELF & ALF 'number one priority' among domestic terrorist threats. This is nothing new, the same thing has been said about revolutionary organizations in the past that the system has perceived as a threat. This is, however, a noteworthy point in the struggle for liberation. It is recognition from the oppressor. The system does perceive this movement as a threat and is using an increasing amount of its resources to stomp out this threat. This is a point at which the struggle needs to evolve in order to survive, so not to suffer the same fate as revolutionary struggles of previous generations. This system has clearly proven itself to value its progress above and beyond anyone and anything. It represents a pursuit of profits and property at the expense of the people, the natural elements of the Earth that sustain our lives, and of the planet as a whole.

This 'American Dream' is a death wish and we cannot allow it to nail our coffins shut. The struggle must constantly assess and reassess the oppressor and the oppressor's perception of the struggle. New tactical directions must evolve with these assessments. I, for one, have begun to question the power and use of any official press office for an autonomous organization or movement. If the purpose of a press office is to draw much needed attention to a movement then is there a point at which that press office is no longer needed or practical? Where is the point at which, within the context of an existing movement, the direct actions of the movement are able to speak for themselves? I recognize that all forms of institutional oppression flow from the same source, the institution, the system that dictates nearly every facet of our lives under its twisted objectives. Therefore, I am not an environmentalist, I am not an activist, I'm not a reformist nor any form of liberal. I am a revolutionary. I advocate the return of all power to the hands of the people by any means necessary on a global scale. I see anything short of this as failure, and as disastrous. And I'm not about to deny this reality because

of any existing atmosphere of opinion within the popular liberal environmental movement.

To deny this reality is to limit the ability of this movement to evolve into one that truly has the capacity to achieve the objective of liberation. Arguing for a 'non-violent,' single issue revolution has placed us in a position of hypocrisy, and has allowed us to be backed into corners with our arguments. I believe that the movement hasn't gained the public support that it needs to be successful because the intelligent public can see these glaring holes in our arguments. I have found that public opinion is not as the media represents it, and is far from what liberals perceive it to be.

I recognize that the only way to build a successful revolutionary movement is to present a sound and powerful argument, backed up by effective action. I believe that once this movement is presented to the oppressed peoples of the Earth public support will be powerfully behind it. 'Non-violence,' economic sabotage and armed propaganda are tactics, not strategies, not gospel, and certainly not the only effective actions to be taken as part of a successful revolutionary movement. Like the tools of a toolbox, each have a specific use and specific results. Depending on the job you have you choose a tool, or a set of tools, from your toolbox to use. You don't choose only the tools that fit most comfortably in your hand or that are the prettiest, you choose the ones that'll get the job done. Sometimes these tools do fit comfortably in your hands, but most of the time they give you blisters. No matter what though, at the end of the day, the objective is always to have the job completed. It's idiotic to shun the sledge hammer when you're working to knock down a wall. Our arguments and actions need to be sound, thorough and brutally honest. We need to awake from our coma and struggle for a realistic, not utopian, solution. No matter how uncomfortable this may seem to many of us it's nothing compared to what will happen if we don't, and what is happening already.

LONG LIVE THE ELF!

LONG LIVE THE ALF!

DOWN WITH THIS INSANE SYSTEM THAT PLAGUES THE EARTH AND  
ITS PEOPLES!

REVOLUTION IS LIBERATION!

With this statement I officially resign from my role with the North American Earth Liberation Front Press Office, but I am by no means silencing myself. I intend to continue with increasing effort to struggle for revolutionary change without being bound to any dogmatic atmospheres of opinions. I encourage and welcome communication of any kind and can be reached at the below e-mail address.

Leslie James Pickering  
no-one@tao.ca



## Solidarity Means Attack

Before starting this short rant I want to address the fact that I'm probably going to piss off and alienate some of the 'supporters' I have by writing this. Tough shit. The reason I'm writing this is not to make friends, it's to make people think. If you get offended by what I've got to say there is probably some reason beyond that I'm just an asshole, but that's a title I'll gladly accept if this gets even one person to expand their efforts toward actually putting ecocidal corporations out of business for good.

There are many people out there who call themselves 'supporters' of the ALF, ELF, Earth First!, or other groups doing direct action, but if all these supporters out there only support from outside the movement they are doing little more than pacifying their consciences. Solidarity means attack.

Solidarity is defined in my cheap-ass prison dictionary as a unity of interests among a group, and unity is defined as singleness of purpose or action (my emphasis). If someone states that they are in solidarity with myself or other ecologically motivated saboteurs that singleness of purpose is to stop the destruction of the many different life forms that share this planet with us. So if one is truly in solidarity with us (s)he does not only sit around talking about how much they support direct action (s)he gets their hands dirty and takes action. I do not consider wearing some environmental group's t-shirt or simply stating that one supports direct action solidarity. The ecocidal forces destroying life on this planet need to be taken out, and talking just isn't going to do it. The dissemination of news of actions can be a valuable tool, the kind of thing that inspires action, but it is action that will bring this system to its knees while those who only speak of support continue to live on their knees giving fellatio to the master by perpetuating the myth that we are free because we can say that we support direct action.

Talk is not enough, it's not even close if there were as many people swinging hammers in the forest as there are people running chainsaws those chainsaws wouldn't be running long. I've heard some supporters of direct action say that direct action and sabotage aren't for everyone, well why the fuck not? When I've raised this question in the past with 'white male privilege' has been raised as an issue. Though this may be a valid point, some people seem to be more interested in pointing fingers than confronting the privilege (though I probably shouldn't call it privilege but stupidity) that allows them to sit back in relative comfort while allowing, through inaction, life form after life form to be eradicated. Talking about supporting sabotage and direct action just isn't going to cut it. This isn't

about competition, it's not about who has monkeywrenched more machinery or who has liberated more lab animals, it's about the fact that if we all don't start doing something soon we are all fucked. It's not about the one or two or two hundred species you didn't give enough of a fuck about to spur you into action, it's about the web of life and how your inaction is tantamount to your condoning the natural worlds destruction.

To put this into simpler terms ñ every life form on this planet is on the road to extinction that's paved by the human race, and you are to blame if you don't do something drastic to stop civilizations destructive course. Solidarity is not a word to just throw around to make you feel like you belong. Solidarity means attack.

Critter

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# *The Inseparable Earth and Animal Liberation Movement* by Craig 'Crittter' Marshall

Many people in positions of power (congress, FBI, etc.) corporations which by their inherent 'nature' profit from the destruction and exploitation of nature (or as they put it 'resources'), and the mainstream environmental movements all claim the ELF's tactics are too extreme, I on the other hand do not feel they are extreme enough.

My co-defendant is serving 22 years and 8 months for burning a few SUV's, and if his lawyer hadn't died in the middle of our trial thus, because of a technicality, forcing the prosecution into offering me a much improved plea deal of five and a half years, I'd also be serving an absurdly long sentence for an action with minimal results.

Most people do not get caught for their actions which only proves how effective planning and dedication can be. However, if people are risking many years of their lives, shouldn't they be doing so in actions that are far more effective than torching a few trucks? I'm fairly sure that if my coconspirator and I had burnt the factory that produced these trucks we wouldn't have been facing more than the 22 plus years my co-defendant ended up getting.

Though such an action would have been a great improvement over what we accomplished I also believe this would not have gone far enough, another factory would be built and the destruction of the earth would continue.

What we need to attack is the totality of the death machine that is industrial society, AKA: civilization. The earth and its creatures are being assaulted 24 hours a day on an enormous scale. How can we hope to stop this destruction by doing utterly ineffective actions such as burning a few trucks? Those who attack the biotech industry are making bigger, longer lasting dents in the machine's armour, but these are still just dents. We need to cut off the head.

No matter how many animals are rescued, no matter how many trees are saved, if the current technological state progresses or even carries on at the rate it is currently destroying the eco-systems all life depends on, life on this planet is doomed. Civilization as we know it depends on the domination and exploitation of every type of 'resource' (whether living or habitat for the living) and cannot exist without such exploitation. Humans were once mostly nomadic, with few exceptions, only settling into permanent villages as plants and animals were domesticated. The exploitation of these life forms allowed the populations of

these beginnings of civilization to increase which in turn allowed for the ‘need’ to further exploit the plant and animal populations and in turn the eco-systems which these life forms need to survive.

Flash 10,000 years into the future . . . Today, there are very few places on earth where humans have not tried to and for the most part succeeded in forming some dominating relationship over the life forms which dwell there. The vast majority of the so-called civilized world has been scarred and/or covered over with concrete. The current rate of extinction rivals that of the dinosaurs, and while saving a particular grove of trees or all the hostages at a particular farm is a noble cause, it’s like trying to use a bandaid on a fucking chest wound.

If we could save every animal in the world from suffering in factory farms and labs, in the long run, what good would it do if there were no wild places left to free them into? Conversely, what would be the point of protecting the last wild spaces if the animals were all domesticated — their wild spirits broken? These struggles are inseparable. All the different aspects of civilization conspire against all that is wild. It is the totality of it — not just one element, that dooms life . . . that is, if we allow it to continue unabated.

Our struggles can not ever hope to be effective as long as we each only focus on one aspect of the dis-ease of civilization. We must attack the totality of it every single day. We must be relentless in our struggle — for civilization is ever progressing on its death march and we can not allow it to continue to trample over every existing life form. We must challenge the assumptions that are integral to the everyday existence of industrial society. We must attack the hubs of the wheel of oppression. The majority of people fighting for the liberation of one life form unknowingly or unthinkingly support the oppression of many others everyday. No? Well then its safe to assume you don’t use electricity? I do realize there are necessary evils if we want to be effective in our struggles, such as the use of petro-fuels in igniting huge bonfires in which we can watch corporations go bankrupt, but we must be aware of the negative impacts our actions (and tools) have on ecosystems (both local and distant).

Of course I am not condemning anyone who goes out and torches a sawmill, if that’s what you want to do, by all means burn the fucker to the ground. At the very least you will be making this hostage smile, but just be aware that you are NOT stopping the earth’s destruction, at best you are just slowing it down.

We need to relearn how to coexist with nature, to live in eco-systems rather than on top of them. As has been said, ‘I have seen the enemy and it is me’. It is hypocritical to attack one aspect of industrial society’s nature destroying machinery at night and then lend support to another by making purchases in the morning. We cannot carry on with our lives in the manner of those who condone

civilization. Civilization from its inception has been rooted in domination, it is dependant on it for its continued survival.

We need to get back to a sustainable culture — one in which we live in harmony with nature — but will this happen as long as industrial wastes, from packaging to poisons, are being pumped out by corporations whose only concern is profits? People have been led to believe that comfort and security come from working at least half their waking hours so they can buy things that will save them time and energy. Am I the only one who sees the utter ridiculousness of this? Fortunately not, but more of those who see it need to realise that even if they stop participating in this work/consume/die culture, the others who are still taking part are helping to poison all of us.

While burning down a sawmill may slow the ecocide being perpetuated by industry, I think a much more effective tactic is to take out the consumer goods before the point of production by destroying power plants and laboratories that enable such a cancerous society to exist. Every moment that is not being spent on destroying industrial society is tantamount to condoning its destruction of us and every other life form. We are being poisoned by toxins that are being pumped out 24 hours a day, yet the average person spends less than 24 seconds a week doing anything about it.

Hopefully this will not make you pat yourself on the back if you do more, hopefully it makes you realize how much harder those of us who are doing something need to attack. Each of us must face the totality and decide whether or not we want to continue to strike at the fingers of the beast that has all life in a chokehold, or if we need to strike at the head. Don't get me wrong, biting off one of these fingers is never a bad thing, but unless it is part of a larger strategy it is not going to put an end to the human domination of animals and nature.

We will never succeed in convincing corporate interests to stop the exploitation of animals and the earth — it is against their 'nature'. We want to protect life at all costs; they want to protect a way of life no matter what the cost. Their job is to make as much money as possible regardless of the suffering. Our job is to put the bastards out of business because of the suffering.

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## *The Elf and the Spectacle by ASAN*

The “decentralized cell organization” of the Earth Liberation Front is today often presented by the media and its supporters as the most extreme, the most “heavy”, and the most radical challenge of Radical Greens to the dominant order. As a “front”, the ELF takes a bit of the Che Guevara image of third-world “national liberation” movements such as the Algerian “National Liberation Front” and extends it to a world scale.

Still how many aspect of this society are ultimately challenged by the practice of the ELF and their supporters? Like ELF supporters, we see a pressing need to ultimately put an end to the present horrific society. Unfortunately, we see the organizational setup of the ELF as reinforcing many of this society’s relations of representation, specialization and authority at the same time it challenges the immediate physical power of the system.

The underground cells of the ELF wind up as essentially specialists in destruction, intentionally cut-off from the entire milieu by the necessary security culture. Indeed, the more elaborate the vandalism pulled off by ELF cells, the more such cells have the appearance of elite military units. Not only do most people feel like they could never join such an effort, many people feel like “these experts will just create the revolution for us”.

Just as much, the above-ground “ELF supporters” windup as followers, viewing their activity as just an adjunct to the “real work” of the ELF. And both ELF activists and followers are dependent on the mainstream media to report their actions, which otherwise do not touch the lives of the mass of dispossessed people. Many “radical greens” today rightly look to the inspiring example of native communities, which have generally lived in balance with nature for thousands of years.

With this, some recognize that while we are not natives, we cannot survive unless we also become part of a human community, a community which involves balanced, direct relationships with nature and with each other. We must escape the present rootless, atomized social relation of modern humans. And some key parts of these social relations are people’s fixation on media and celebrities and their unquestioning obedience to experts, specialists and authorities. Many in the Radical Green/ELF milieu come out of the punk, mainstream activist, or animal rights “scenes”. However well intentioned, these “alternative scenes” are, they have much of the logic of the present order, sometimes in extremes. They are often rife with stars, divisions between who is or isn’t “cool”, fixation with pose and image, and so on.

We aren't saying that those in these groups can't escape this order but ELF ideology allows a similar dynamic to arise and works to prevent any critique of it. We aren't saying that we would-be revolutionaries should regard ourselves as the nucleus of a new society. We aren't surprised by the gulags and Chernobyls that activists of "real" liberation fronts have constructed in Russia, Algeria, Nicaragua, China and many other places.

While most Radical Greens don't view themselves as a vanguard party, the horrors of re-education camps and so-forth are a natural product of the dictatorship of specialists in liberation. Since such a dictatorship is naturally a product of this society's entire dynamic, we must actively avoid the role and the logic of specialists in revolution.

The practice we see instead of specialization is to work to inspire a developing community of resistance. And we should realize a community of resistance already exists on some level everywhere. The most powerful tactics for us are those tactics which allow the dispossessed to seize direct control of their lives — strikes, riots, squatting and occupations of streets and neighborhoods. These may only be possible in some circumstance but the dispossessed will always be resisting work and commodity relations by slacking off on the job, shop-lifting, dodging fares and many other tactics.

We aren't limiting ourselves to a laundry list of tactics or to only doing actions approved by a democratic central committee. But at the minimum, those wishing to be revolutionaries need to be able to be part of a diverse, organic community. The specialization, the cutting off of contacts, the continuous panic, and the media-focus necessary for ELF practice is a serious barrier to this. To create a new society, we must be able to talk about all aspects of how we are living and how we want to live.

Yet the ELF practice makes it impossible to talk about even simple questions like which "targets" are valid. We don't make this critique on the grounds of pacifism or arguments around "any resistance will make you like your enemy". Rather we look to means of resistance, revolt and revolution which use a human community as both the end and the means. From Spain in 1936 to Paris in May of 1968 to the upsurge in Argentina today, we see the self-organization of the masses as a force which is capable of sweeping away governments and ultimately social systems. The Argentine Popular Assemblies today organize to help the unemployed at the same time they work for the defeat the present state. Not only is this self-organization quite capable of bringing the end of the present social system, it can be a way for a community to directly control it's activity. It can be a nucleus of a new society.

ASAN  
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# *Perpetuating the Spectacle* by Craig Marshall

April 2002

*[ed: a response to the article "The ELF and the Spectacle by ASAN].*

This is a short critique of the brief essay *The ELF and the Spectacle* which to me comes across as purely academic diatribe with very little basis in reality. It does, however make some very valid points, though few and far between. I agree wholeheartedly that people need to move beyond participating in 'scenes' and truly develop a culture of resistance to be effective, but the author(s) fail to recognize that people doing radical actions are quite possibly people very active in helping to develop sustainable communities. I'm wondering how many people actually in the "Radical Green/ELF milieu", not the "scene", that the author(s) know. Most who are purely in the "scene" do not take action, while most who take action are not just in a scene.

People who take action do so because they feel strongly enough about something to risk their relative freedom and/or lives to fight for what they believe in, so what are the chances that these people do not participate daily in being together "a community which involves balanced, direct relationships with nature and each other"? I, as one who is imprisoned for taking action, take exception with the stereotype the author(s) are helping the mass media to convey. All of the imprisoned saboteurs that I know personally, or am familiar with, lived lives prior to incarceration that were strongly based in helping our communities strive for a more harmonious relationship with the natural world we are all part of. Suddenly, there's something wrong with using every tool in the tool box available to us to fight back?

The author(s) seem to be attempting to perpetuate the myth that we who feel strongly enough to take action are not part of the "mass of dispossessed people". It is precisely because we are part of the dispossessed masses that we feel the loss caused by society's destruction of, and alienation from nature, enough to be driven to act. Those who sit on their asses and write about inspiring the dispossessed masses fail to realize that the greatest inspiration is action. The actions I speak of include but are not limited to creating free spaces, community gardens and huge bonfires in which we can watch corporations go bankrupt, actions that those in the "Radical Green/ELF milieu" are quite likely to participate in.

The entire premise of The ELF and the Spectacle article, that people who do ELF type actions are not part of the dispossessed masses or “part of a diverse, organic community”, is false. People who do ELF actions come from a wide variety of backgrounds, but the one thing they have in common is that they have been affected by the destruction of nature and because of this have been driven by some internal force to take action. These people are precisely the “dispossessed” that the author(s) speak of who are developing communities of resistance. Your mother could be the one striking the match tonight, but if she is, I can almost guarantee, in the future she will not be sitting around writing a rant condemning the dispossessed who have been moved enough to put their safety on the line because in the long run, she realizes its her life, the lives of her children and that of every living creature on the line.

There will always be people developing communities of resistance who feel the need to strike out against the dominant order; they have my deepest respect, and I don’t feel they should apologize or hold back because they are some for the few who are moved enough to strike back. They also don’t need so-called “would be revolutionaries” joining the mass media’s efforts to discredit and marginalize their actions. People have been doing these actions long before the ELF was conceptualized and as a tactic that uses one of the state’s own tools (i.e. the media) to promote more such actions, I believe the ELF has been a resounding success.

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