

# WHY DO THESE FERAL FANATICS, THESE REJECTS OF ANARCHISM, THESE OFF-THE-DEEP-END ECOLOGISTS, THESE GRANOLA-MUNCHIN' HARBINGERS OF CHAOS NEED TO SPEND SO MUCH TIME ATTACKING CIVILIZATION?

Re-printed from *Disorderly Conduct* #6



*With all that's goin' on in the world, why do these feral fanatics, these rejects of anarchism, these off-the-deep-end ecologists, these granola-munchin' harbingers of chaos need to spend so much time attacking civilization?*

The following communiqué was found at the site of a recently disrupted secret meeting in Dover, Delaware, which was to facilitate a coalition between Chevron, Pepsi-CO, Microsoft, the Sierra Club, the Northern New Jersey Federation of Anarcho-Stalinists, Michael Albert, and the Institute for Social Ecology. This disruption seems to be evidence that insurrectionary green-anarchist and anarcho-primitivist actions and ideas are spreading!

## COMMUNIQUE # 23

WE ARE OFTEN TOLD THAT OUR DREAMS ARE UNREALISTIC, OUR DEMANDS IMPOSSIBLE, THAT WE ARE BASICALLY OUT OF OUR FUCKIN' MINDS TO EVEN PROPOSE SUCH A RIDICULOUS CONCEPT AS THE "DESTRUCTION OF CIVILIZATION." SO, WE HOPE THIS BRIEF STATEMENT MAY SHED SOME LIGHT ON WHY WE WILL SETTLE FOR NOTHING LESS THAN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT REALITY THAN WHAT IS FORCED UPON US TODAY. WE BELIEVE THAT THE INFINITE POSSIBILITIES OF THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE EXTEND BOTH FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS. WE WISH TO COLLAPSE THE DISCORD BETWEEN THESE REALITIES. WE STRIVE FOR A "FUTURE-PRIMITIVE" REALITY, ONE WHICH ALL OF OUR ANCESTORS ONCE KNEW, AND ONE WE MAY COME TO KNOW: A PRE/POST-TECHNOLOGICAL, PRE/POST-INDUSTRIAL, PRE/POST-COLONIAL, PRE/POST-CAPITALIST, PRE/POST-AGRICULTURAL, AND EVEN PRE/POST-CULTURAL REALITY - WHEN WE WERE ONCE, AND MAY AGAIN BE, WILD!

WE FEEL IT IS NECESSARY TO RAISE SOME FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS AS TO WHERE WE ARE NOW, HOW WE HAVE GOTTEN TO THIS POINT, WHERE WE ARE HEADED, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM. THIS SHOULD NOT TO BE SEEN AS IRREFUTABLE EVIDENCE, THE ANSWERS, OR PRESCRIPTIONS FOR LIBERATION; BUT INSTEAD, AS THINGS TO CONSIDER WHILE WE FIGHT AGAINST DOMINATION OR ATTEMPT TO CREATE ANOTHER WORLD.

WE BELIEVE ANARCHY TO BE THE ULTIMATE LIBERATORY EXPERIENCE AND OUR NATURAL CONDITION. BEFORE, AND OUTSIDE OF, CIVILIZATION (AND IT'S CORRUPTING INFLUENCES), HUMANS WERE, AND ARE, FOR LACK OF BETTER TERMS, ANARCHISTIC. FOR MOST OF OUR HISTORY WE LIVED IN SMALL-SCALE GROUPINGS WHICH MADE DECISIONS FACE-TO-FACE, WITHOUT THE MEDIATION OF GOVERNMENT, REPRESENTATION, OR EVEN THE MORALITY OF AN ABSTRACT THING CALLED CULTURE. WE COMMUNICATED, PERCEIVED, AND LIVED IN AN UNMEDIATED, INSTINCTUAL, AND DIRECT WAY. WE KNEW WHAT TO EAT, WHAT HEALED US, AND HOW TO SURVIVE. WE WERE PART OF THE WORLD AROUND US. THERE WAS NO ARTIFICIAL SEPARATION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL, THE GROUP, AND THE REST OF LIFE.

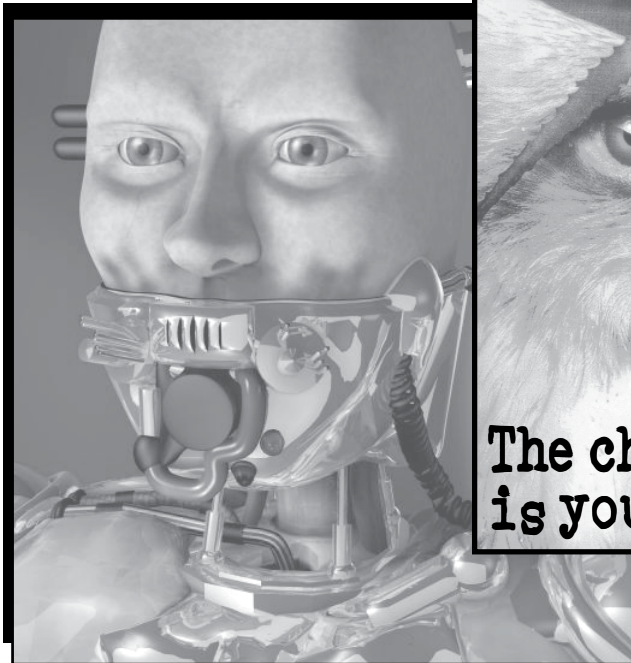
IN THE LARGER SCOPE OF HUMAN HISTORY, NOT LONG AGO (SOME SAY 10,000 TO 12,000 YEARS AGO), FOR REASONS WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ABOUT (BUT NEVER REALLY KNOW), A SHIFT BEGAN TO OCCUR IN A FEW GROUPINGS OF HUMANS. THESE HUMANS BEGAN TO TRUST LESS IN THE EARTH AS A "GIVER OF LIFE", AND BEGAN TO CREATE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE EARTH. THIS SEPARATION IS THE FOUNDATION OF CIVILIZATION. IT IS NOT REALLY A PHYSICAL THING, ALTHOUGH CIVILIZATION HAS SOME VERY REAL PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS; BUT IT IS MORE OF AN ORIENTATION, A MINDSET, A PARADIGM. IT IS BASED ON THE CONTROL AND DOMINATION OF THE EARTH AND ITS INHABITANTS.

CIVILIZATION'S MAIN MECHANISM OF CONTROL IS DOMESTICATION. IT IS THE CONTROLLING, TAMING, BREEDING, AND MODIFICATION OF LIFE FOR HUMAN BENEFIT (USUALLY FOR THOSE IN POWER OR THOSE STRIVING FOR POWER). THE DOMESTICATING PROCESS BEGAN TO SHIFT HUMANS AWAY FROM A NOMADIC WAY OF LIFE, TOWARDS A MORE SEDENTARY AND SETTLED EXISTENCE, WHICH CREATED POINTS OF POWER (TAKING ON A MUCH DIFFERENT DYNAMIC THAN THE MORE TEMPORAL AND ORGANIC TERRITORIAL GROUND), LATER TO BE CALLED PROPERTY. DOMESTICATION CREATES A TOTALITARIAN RELATIONSHIP WITH PLANTS AND ANIMALS, AND EVENTUALLY, OTHER HUMANS. THIS MINDSET SEES OTHER LIFE, INCLUDING OTHER HUMANS, AS SEPARATE FROM THE DOMESTICATOR, AND IS THE RATIONALIZATION FOR THE SUBJUGATION OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND FOR SLAVERY. DOMESTICATION IS A COLONIZING FORCE ON NON-DOMESTICATED LIFE, WHICH HAS BROUGHT US TO THE PATHOLOGICAL MODERN EXPERIENCE OF ULTIMATE CONTROL OF ALL LIFE, INCLUDING ITS GENETIC STRUCTURES.

A MAJOR STEP IN THE CIVILIZING PROCESS IS THE MOVE TOWARDS AN AGRARIAN SOCIETY. AGRICULTURE CREATES A DOMESTICATED LANDSCAPE, A SHIFT FROM THE CONCEPT THAT "THE EARTH WILL PROVIDE" TO "WHAT WE WILL PRODUCE FROM THE EARTH". THE DOMESTICATOR BEGINS TO WORK AGAINST NATURE AND HER CYCLES, AND TO DESTROY THOSE WHO ARE STILL LIVING WITH AND UNDERSTANDING HER. WE CAN SEE THE BEGINNINGS OF PATRIARCHY HERE. WE SEE THE BEGINNINGS OF NOT ONLY THE HOARDING OF LAND, BUT ALSO OF ITS FRUITS. THIS NOTION OF OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND SURPLUS CREATES NEVER-BEFORE EXPERIENCED POWER DYNAMICS, INCLUDING INSTITUTIONALIZED HIERARCHIES AND ORGANIZED WARFARE. WE HAVE MOVED DOWN AN UNSUSTAINABLE AND DISASTROUS ROAD.

OVER THE NEXT THOUSANDS OF YEARS THIS DISEASE PROGRESSES, WITH ITS COLONIZING AND IMPERIALIST MENTALITY EVENTUALLY CONSUMING MOST OF THE PLANET WITH, OF COURSE, THE HELP OF THE RELIGIOUS-PROPAGANDISTS, WHO TRY TO ASSURE THE "MASSES" AND THE "SAVAGES" THAT THIS IS GOOD AND RIGHT. FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COLONIZER, PEOPLES ARE PITTED AGAINST OTHER PEOPLES. WHEN THE COLONIZER'S WORDS DO NOT SUFFICE, THE SWORD IS NEVER FAR AWAY WITH ITS GENOCIDAL COLLISION. AS THE CLASS DISTINCTIONS BECOME MORE SOLIDIFIED, THERE BECOMES ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE, AND THOSE WHO DO NOT. THE TAKERS AND THE GIVERS. THE RULERS AND THE RULED. THE WALLS GET RAISED. THIS IS HOW WE ARE TOLD IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN; BUT MOST PEOPLE SOMEHOW KNOW THIS ISN'T RIGHT, AND THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT AGAINST IT.

THE WAR ON WOMEN, THE WAR ON THE POOR, THE WAR ON INDIGENOUS AND LAND-BASED PEOPLE, AND THE WAR ON THE WILD ARE ALL INTERCONNECTED. IN THE EYES OF CIVILIZATION, THEY ARE ALL SEEN AS COMMODITIES - THINGS TO BE CLAIMED, EXTRACTED, AND MANIPULATED FOR POWER AND CONTROL. THEY ARE ALL SEEN AS RESOURCES; AND WHEN THEY ARE OF USE NO LONGER TO THE POWER-STRUCTURE, THEY ARE DISCARDED INTO THE LANDFILLS OF SOCIETY. THE IDEOLOGY OF PATRIARCHY IS ONE OF CONTROL OVER SELF-DETERMINATION AND SUSTAINABILITY, OF REASON OVER INSTINCT AND ANARCHY, AND OF ORDER OVER FREEDOM AND WILDNESS. PATRIARCHY IS AN IMPOSITION OF DEATH, RATHER THAN A CELEBRATION OF LIFE. THESE ARE THE MOTIVATIONS OF PATRIARCHY AND CIVILIZATION; AND FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS THEY HAVE SHAPED THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE ON EVERY LEVEL, FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL TO THE PERSONAL, WHILE THEY HAVE DEVoured LIFE.



**The choice is yours.**

THE CIVILIZING PROCESS BECAME MORE REFINED AND EFFICIENT AS TIME WENT ON. CAPITALISM BECAME ITS MODE OF OPERATION, AND THE GAUGE OF THE EXTENT OF DOMINATION AND THE MEASURE OF WHAT STILL IS NEEDED TO BE CONQUERED. THE ENTIRE PLANET WAS MAPPED AND LANDS WERE ENCLOSED. THE NATION-STATE EVENTUALLY BECAME THE PROPOSED SOCIETAL GROUPING, AND IT WAS TO SET FORTH THE VALUES AND GOALS OF VAST NUMBERS OF PEOPLES, OF COURSE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE IN CONTROL. PROPAGANDA BY THE STATE, AND THE BY NOW, LESS POWERFUL CHURCH, STARTED TO REPLACE SOME (BUT CERTAINLY NOT MOST) OF THE BRUTE FORCE WITH ON-THE-SURFACE BENEVOLENCE AND CONCEPTS LIKE CITIZENRY AND DEMOCRACY. AS THE DAWN OF MODERNITY APPROACHED, THINGS WERE REALLY GETTING SICK.

THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVILIZATION, TECHNOLOGY ALWAYS PLAYED AN EVER-EXPANDING ROLE. IN FACT, CIVILIZATION'S PROGRESS HAS ALWAYS BEEN DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO, AND DETERMINED BY, THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVER MORE COMPLEX, EFFICIENT, AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES. IT IS HARD TO TELL WHETHER CIVILIZATION PUSHES TECHNOLOGY, OR VICE-VERSA. TECHNOLOGY, LIKE CIVILIZATION, CAN BE SEEN MORE AS A PROCESS OR COMPLEX SYSTEM THAN AS A PHYSICAL FORM. IT INHERENTLY INVOLVES DIVISION OF LABOR, RESOURCE EXTRACTION, AND EXPLOITATION BY POWER (THOSE WITH THE TECHNOLOGY). THE INTERFACE WITH, AND RESULT OF, TECHNOLOGY IS ALWAYS AN ALIENATED, MEDIATED, AND HEAVILY-LOADED REALITY. NO, TECHNOLOGY IS NOT NEUTRAL. THE VALUES AND GOALS OF THOSE WHO PRODUCE AND CONTROL TECHNOLOGY ARE ALWAYS EMBEDDED WITHIN IT. DIFFERENT FROM SIMPLE TOOLS, TECHNOLOGY IS CONNECTED TO A LARGER PROCESS WHICH IS INFECTIOUS AND IS PROPELLED FORWARD BY ITS OWN MOMENTUM. THIS TECHNOLOGICAL SYSTEM ALWAYS ADVANCES, AND ALWAYS NEEDS TO BE INVENTING NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT, FUEL, MAINTAIN, AND SELL ITSELF.

A KEY PART OF THE MODERN-TECHNO-CAPITALIST STRUCTURE IS INDUSTRIALISM; THE MECHANIZED SYSTEM OF PRODUCTION BUILT ON CENTRALIZED POWER, AND THE EXPLOITATION OF PEOPLE AND NATURE. INDUSTRIALISM CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT GENOCIDE, ECOCIDE, AND IMPERIALISM. TO MAINTAIN IT, COERCION, LAND EVICTIONS, FORCED LABOR, CULTURAL DESTRUCTION, ASSIMILATION, ECOLOGICAL DEVASTATION, AND GLOBAL TRADE ARE ACCEPTED AND SEEN AS NECESSARY. INDUSTRIALISM'S STANDARDIZATION OF LIFE OBJECTIFIES AND COMMODIFIES IT, VIEWING ALL LIFE AS A POTENTIAL RESOURCE. TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRIALISM HAVE OPENED THE DOOR TO THE ULTIMATE DOMESTICATION OF LIFE - THE FINAL STAGE OF CIVILIZATION - THE AGE OF NEO-LIFE.

SO NOW WE ARE IN THE POST-MODERN, NEO-LIBERAL, BIO-TECH, CYBER-REALITY, WITH AN APOCALYPTIC FUTURE AND NEW WORLD ORDER. CAN IT REALLY GET MUCH WORSE? OR HAS IT ALWAYS BEEN THIS BAD? WE ARE ALMOST COMPLETELY DOMESTICATED, EXCEPT FOR THE FEW BRIEF MOMENTS (RIOTS, CREEPING THROUGH THE DARK TO DESTROY MACHINERY OR CIVILIZATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE, CONNECTING WITH OTHER SPECIES, SWIMMING NAKED IN A MOUNTAIN STREAM, EATING WILD FOODS, LOVE-MAKING, ...ADD YOUR OWN FAVORITES) WHEN WE CATCH A GLIMPSE

OF WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO GO FERAL. THEIR "GLOBAL VILLAGE" IS MORE LIKE A GLOBAL AMUSEMENT PARK OR GLOBAL ZOO, AND IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF BOYCOTTING IT 'CAUSE WE'RE ALL IN IT, AND IT'S IN ALL OF US. AND WE CAN'T JUST BREAK OUT OF OUR OWN CAGES (ALTHOUGH WE'RE HELPLESS UNLESS WE START THERE), BUT WE GOTTA BUST DOWN THE WHOLE FUCKIN' PLACE, FEAST ON THE ZOO KEEPERS AND THOSE WHO RUN AND BENEFIT FROM IT, RECONNECT WITH OUR INSTINCTS, AND BECOME WILD AGAIN! WE CANNOT REFORM CIVILIZATION, GREEN IT UP, OR MAKE IT MORE FAIR. IT IS ROTTEN TO THE CORE. WE DON'T NEED MORE IDEOLOGY, MORALITY, FUNDAMENTALISM, OR BETTER ORGANIZATION TO SAVE US. WE MUST SAVE OURSELVES. WE HAVE TO LIVE ACCORDING TO OUR OWN DESIRES. WE HAVE TO CONNECT WITH OURSELVES, THOSE WE CARE ABOUT, AND THE REST OF LIFE. WE HAVE TO BREAK OUT OF, AND BREAK DOWN, THIS REALITY.

**WE NEED ACTION.**

**To put it simply, civilization is a war on life. WE ARE fighting for our lives, AND WE DECLARE WAR ON civilization!**



**T.H.U.G.  
(TREE HUGGIN' URBAN GUERRILLAS)**

# The Origins

## Introduction

The success of civilization can be gauged by just how much it has limited our vision and our aspirations. It's nearly impossible for any one of us to really grasp just how much we have lost by our domestication. Our senses have been dulled; we've been trained to not trust our instincts, subjugated to a fully dehumanized, mechanical hierarchy; living in boxes within boxes within boxes. We mow our lawns, we play along, and we spend our entire lives being pushed through the linear future that has been scientifically determined to breed the most 'efficient' consumers. We play along, yet everyone one of us has that urge, that feeling that something is wrong, or there could be something more. For millions of years we have lived in a way that is completely different from this. We always have to remember that when we're looking at 'savages' and 'primitives' we are really looking at wild (or *more* wild as the case may be) versions of ourselves. They are no different from us in any physical or mental sense, other than the fact that *they have not been beaten down.*

In order to understand just how deep civilization's tentacles are, it is necessary for us to begin by looking at its origins. This is essentially the drive of the anarcho-primitivist critique of civilization. It is not so much an attempt to lay out a 'paradise lost' as it is a recognition of the state we have lived for the majority of our existence within the community of life, or 'natural anarchy'. As anarchists, we should be questioning all that systematically denies the ability of self-determination and autonomy. From the anarcho-primitivist and green anarchist 'perspective,' that 'thing' has a name and origins; and like everything else, understanding how it arose gives some indication of how it could be made to fall.

## Who we have been and may be again:

Humans have lived by hunting and gathering for more than 99.9% of our existence. It is believed that this adaptation was developed relatively early in the chain of evolution which was preceded by gathering and scavenging. Our most significant changes into our current form, both physically and mentally, come as gatherer-hunters. This is something that civilization will always have to deal with; however, our instinctual being is always the hardest to conquer.

The current form of mega-technological civilization is only a continuation of the domestication process that has its roots in domestication of plants and animals. It seems that civilization is, at base, a process of continually perfecting an absolute mediation; bring us full force into a synthetic society. From being born into hospitals and shot up with chemicals, to a degrading schooling process, to work and 'retirement,' our lives are set out as one large civilizing project. Every aspect of our wild selves is turned upon itself until we are dulled to our senses, hearing, sight, perception, and *instinct.*

All of this goes against the way that humans have lived as gatherer-hunters. Gatherer-hunter societies are typically free-flowing, egalitarian, without property, self-sufficient, mobile, and flexible, with far less focus on taboo and rigid kinship systems. There are no positions of power and leadership is only circumstantial. The most important aspect to draw from this is that gatherer-hunter societies live freely off of the 'abundance' of the earth. If someone is hungry, they are more than capable of collecting, hunting or fishing for food. Children and the elderly are not seen as burdens, and are not talked down to,

but given the same respect as anyone else in the community. There is no strict specialization of roles or hierarchy of values put on 'work' done. A look into these societies is far from the Hobbesian view of 'primitive' life as "nasty, brutish and short". The implications of this are extremely radical, as the nomadic gatherer-hunter lifeway that has made up the bulk of human history is as close to an anarchist reality to have ever existed.

## So where did things start to go 'wrong'?

Like anything, everyone has their own conception of where things 'went wrong'; looking towards origins is no different. It is important to understand that civilization exists as a totality; 'civilization' itself is abstract, not tangible. It cannot exist on its own; it must be enacted and carried out. This means that civilization is as much a mentality as it is a concrete reality that flows from that. The two are completely tied together, so looking at the critiques of civilization opens up various realms of possibilities.

The emphasis on symbolic thought is an important starting point as it shows the basic tendencies that really opened up the potential for absolute mediation. What is meant by symbolic thought is a movement from direct experience into mediated experience. This comes in the form of language, art, number, etc. Pointing towards symbolic thought at the base of civilization is important as it brings into question the much upheld assumptions among us civilized folk as to what it means to be human. The critique of symbolic thought has in many ways countered the 'Artificial Intelligence' type emphasis on the role of language in humans (Chomsky is the most notorious of this crowd).

Symbolic culture refers to an ideology of symbolic thought, meaning that your entire perception is mediated through some form of symbols. It's beyond just giving things names, but having an entire relationship to the world that comes through the lens of representation. It may seem hard to see how any of this is relevant or applicable, but consider that the 'Spectacle' is our current form of symbolic culture and it becomes a bit easier to see the kind of importance all this plays. Symbolic thought and symbolic culture define our reality and frame our relations, so long as we can only appeal to each other through an emotionless, detached mediation. It becomes nearly impossible to re-emerge as full beings. The critique is vital because it is an indication of just how much civilization has become the 'machine in our heads' and it is a pivotal point for the domestication process.

## What relevant changes took place?

The shift from nomadic gatherer-hunters to semi-sedentary horticulturalists was one of the most significant changes to occur in human history. This movement can be seen as the real physical grounding towards civilization and for three extremely significant reasons: **surplus**, **sedentism**, and **domestication**. Though there is a lot of bleed between nomadic gatherer-hunters and semi-sedentary horticulturalists, a more immediate distinction can be made between those with and without surplus (accumulation of necessities such as food, primarily). While all three may not be present in any one society, it is important to recognize the role that all three play and the effects they have.

**Surplus:** The effects of surplus are strongest and are arguably the most important area to look at as far as an anarchist critique is concerned. In societies prior to surplus, there was no concept of property. The world was essentially a part of oneself and everything was more

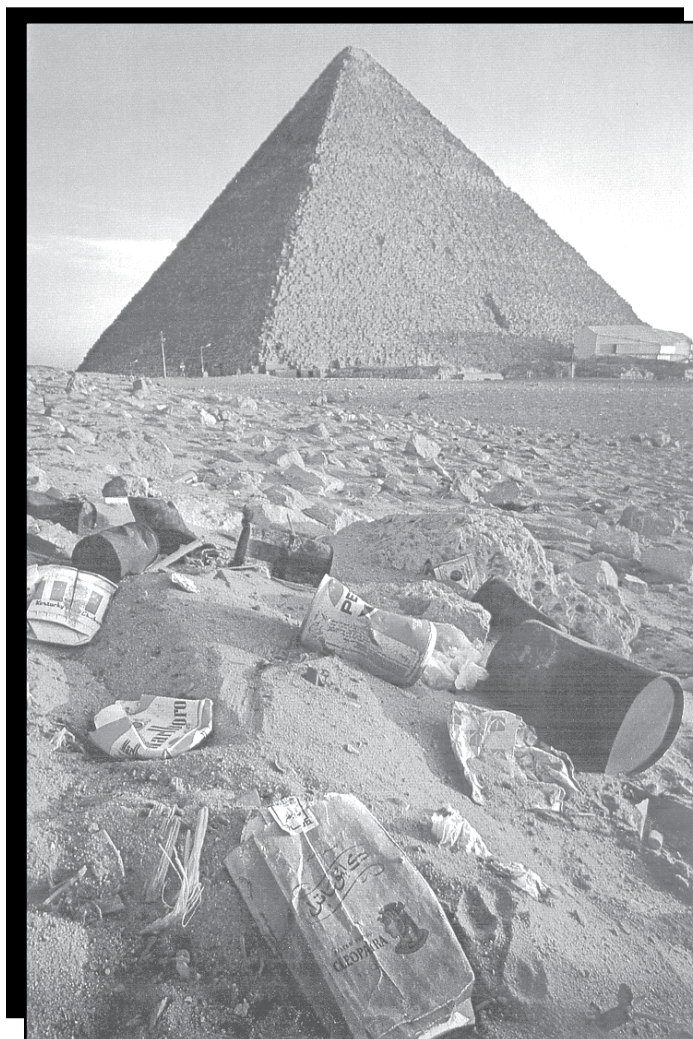
or less 'fair game.' In such a world, there is no need for property, as all are capable of making the same tools and everyone has equal access to 'resources.' Surplus caused a break with all of this.

Surplus applies to the compiling of food (mainly) in some kind of storage as a mainstay of future consumption. Societies where food is stored create a massive break with the immediate gratification known in all other previous societies and for the first time put a barrier between hunger and fulfillment. The creation of surplus also requires a method for distribution of stored goods. As a chasm grows between food procurement and consumption, an equal chasm grows between those who have access to distribution and those who don't. For the first

time in history, there is private property and egalitarianism begins to erode. The kind of radical social changes that occur at this point give reason to believe that surplus and property play an extremely pivotal role in the formation of power and the rise of civilization.

**Sedentism:** Sedentism tends to be closely linked with surplus as it only makes larger and longer storehousing more possible. Sedentism refers to the process of people settling in areas for longer periods of time. Nomadic hunter-gatherers tend to live within one or two regions (depending on the extremities of the seasons) but move around often. Horticulturalists are generally semi-sedentary, meaning they will live in an area between 7-20 years on average.

The problem with sedentism is the tendency to foster a one-way relationship with the bioregion, generally living in an area until it is no longer usable to them. Socially and politically, sedentism only feeds surplus and people begin to hoard not only food but general objects. There begins to develop an increase in materialism and all the social ills that go along with it. Sedentism is generally associated with horticulturalists, but the basic problem can be seen amongst the sedentary gatherer-hunters who lived along the northwest coast of North America who were able to create a huge surplus from a primarily fish derived diet.



**\* (Note on scientism and dates: Any attempt to positively pin-point certain events within the human time span are going to be reliant on rather questionable methods of dating/science. Current debates over how long homo sapien sapiens (people physically like us) have existed go as far as 20,000 to 200,000 years and more. Every so many years, commonly accepted dates get pushed back or forward. For these reasons, it seems less important to lay out the technical findings in this realm, but focus on the content instead. Dates regarding the existence of humans in some stage can go anywhere from 2 to 6 million years. There are currently debates over the validity of sub-species delineation. For our purposes here, what is important is not the strict number of years we have existed as this or that, but how we existed and why things started to change. The purpose of this primer is not so much to focus on the when, but the how and why leading towards the most important and open question: what can be done about this?)**

# of Civilization

*A collaborative effort of the Green Anarchy Collective and the Coalition Against Civilization*

Sedentism is also inextricably linked to population growth. While this is tied to food cultivation as well, it seems that the nomadic lifestyle was also an extremely efficient method of population control. When people began to settle, they began to find ways around the natural restrictions to overpopulation. While the societies where these dynamics originated are far closer to the ecology of life, they must also be recognized as having a lot of the same problems as our society, on a smaller scale. In these societies you start to have overcrowding; fighting becomes a bigger issue, and fatal battles become far more commonplace. Essentially, when people became totally sedentary, they began to step away from a way of life that worked for millions of years and took a huge leap towards our current situation.

**Domestication:** The domestication of plants and animals (and ultimately ourselves) has caused much debate. There are more theories over the reasons why and when than most other issues addressed here. It serves us little good to try and reiterate and argue those points here; so we will focus primarily on the effects of domestication. However, some accept one or two original points of independent domestication, while others would point towards five or so. The reluctance to accept one or two points of independent domestication seems to be highly linked to the refusal of contemporaries to accept that past civilizations may have had the ability to travel long distances and the technology to cross oceans, which seems to have been the case. The issue is politically motivated, as well as the fact that the notion of many independent domestications feeds the Social Darwinist view of civilization as an inevitable end point that all societies are trying to achieve, which is just the outpouring of linear rationality and justification.

Domestication is widely accepted as originating in the Fertile Crescent area of the Middle East around 13,000 to 10,000 years ago. The introduction of domesticated species (plants prior to animals excluding the self-domesticated dog) was a slow process that was marked by cultivation. This point is widely marked as a significant step away from 'the way things were,' as domestication is a process of complete human domination. It does not come about by merely shitting seeds or encouraging the growth of specific wild plants, but the direct and intentional altering (at the genetic level) of a species for the benefit of humans through breeding. Paul Shepard wisely pointed out that this is the first step towards genetic engineering.

It represents stepping into a completely alien relationship with the earth. Or as it has also been put: a distrust of nature. The earth is no longer the source of life itself, but it becomes a field to control. The spiritualities and religions of domesticated societies begin to create worship of specific representations (soil, rain, seed, sun, etc.), instead of non-reified interaction with the elements of life. This has a profound effect on the relationship of a people to the community of life. It amplifies the effects of surplus in a way that it is not just accumulation of something wild. It is *production*. For the first time people have 'produced' something. From seed to consumable, usable product, it is now theirs; coming from a piece of land that is exclusively theirs, and must be protected. As having placed major significance on property and production, it seems that domestication is itself an authoritarian act upon the world and a major step toward hierarchy.

## What are the social implications of this?

Within the field of anthropology there are five generalized categories of subsistence, which seems relevant to all of this. They are: **hunter-gatherers, horticulturalists, pastoralists, intensive agriculturalists, and industrial agriculturalists.**

The form of subsistence is directly linked to the kind of socio-political form that society takes on; and, therefore, is important to draw out here.

**Hunter-gatherers** tend to be anti-political, as decisions are made by consensus and there are no institutions through which legal action can be taken. Problems are solved by direct confrontation and reaction. Subsistence and all livelihoods come from immediate gratification, and while there are gatherer-hunter societies that have sedentism and surplus, they are the exception. Gatherer-hunter societies are marked by a complete lack of specialization and roles such as the shaman are more common and accessible. Typically nomadic and egalitarian, organized at band level and sometimes tribal level.

**Horticulturalists** are a wide range of people who get anywhere from 20% of their subsistence from cultivated crops to nearly all of it. Horticulture is supplemented by hunting, gathering and fishing. It refers more specifically to cultivation of crops, but domesticated animals figure very prominently for many horticultural societies, especially in the South Pacific. They tend to live in more tropical regions and are semi-sedentary, living in certain areas for extended periods of time and then moving again. Their technology is relatively simple using hoes, slashing and burning areas for cultivation with fallow periods that allow land to revive itself to some degree.

At this point, there is a huge increase in the role of strict taboo and religiosity as well as centralization of religious power of the shaman. What emerges in response to this is a rise in witchcraft, sorcery and general distrust among the people. There is a turn towards urbanization and an institutionalization of certain social roles and a typical movement away from egalitarianism towards patriarchy.

The movement towards patriarchy is strongly linked towards the creation and social centering of property and production. As hunter-gatherers had no real 'property', there was very little to be concerned with, as far as inheritance goes. However, the introduction of land ownership and 'means of production' creates another issue which has generally not been dealt with communistically (all things belonging to the tribe). Private property was the first form of property, and it became very important to have a strongly defined lineage. This

was a major factor in the origin of patriarchy. What starts out primarily as the passing of political status through the male line (even in some matrilineal societies), forms into a solid system of patriarchal control through the inevitable growth of sedentary societies and complexity that arises.

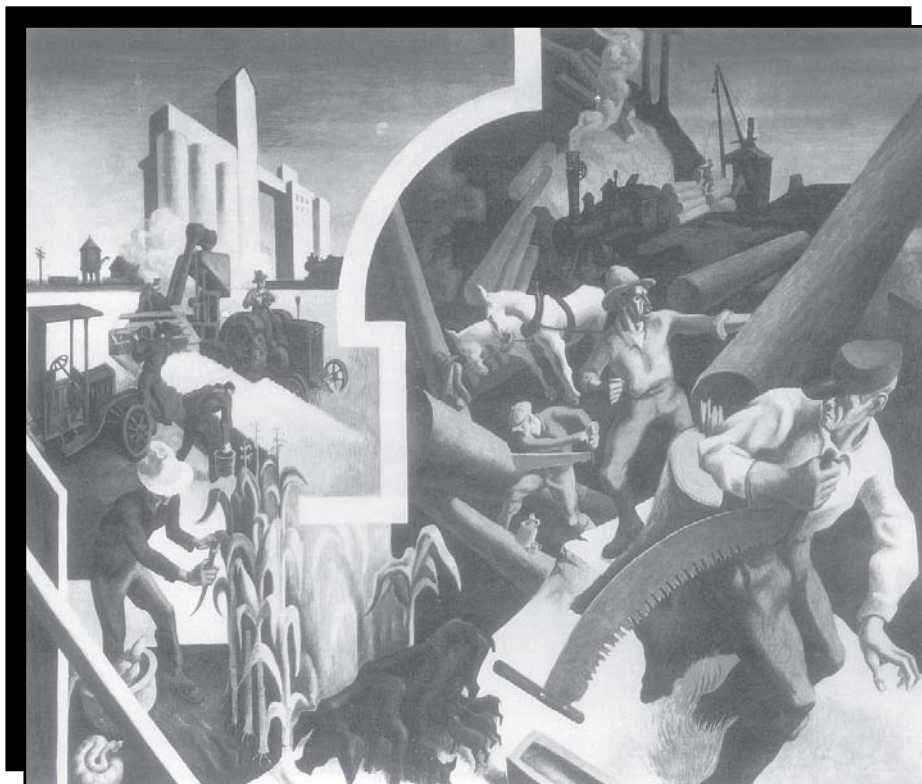
**Pastoralists** are people who live by and for their domesticated animals. They usually have a few species, but are centered in every aspect around one species. There are ranges in their dependency upon other societies (the Nuer for example were more independent as they practiced horticulture as well), but by and large, pastoralists act almost as a specialization of cultivating societies. Being centered on very specific animal patterns, they migrate seasonally for grazing land. Because of this process, they are in a sense the first real merchant class. They would trade and carry goods from societies on one end of their grazing area to societies on the other, picking and leaving as they moved along.

Their social organization tends to be far more towards the more chiefdom-oriented horticulturalists. They also carry a lot of the baggage of patriarchy as their societies are as inheritance-based (if not more so) than their cultivating counterparts. Like the horticulturalists, however, many maintained some level of anti-state mechanism in their culture and are 'technically anarchistic.'

The level of domination inherent in domestication, however, remains an issue of authority.

**Intensive Agriculturalists** are a further step into the civilization from horticulturalists. They are technologically defined by the use of fertilizers, ploughs, irrigation, etc. Another big step here is the move from multi-crop fields into mono-cropping. This is the level of civilization where things really start to solidify and many of the great 'barbarian' empires appear now, direct precursors to industrial agriculture.

**Industrial agriculture** is, as the name implies, agriculture run as any other industry, using larger, more complex machines, and feeding the ultra-stratified society that produces them.



This way of life is split between tribal organization and chiefdoms. The stress on the land is much stronger than that of the gatherer-hunters and although it can sustain life longer than agriculture, it is still plagued by continued growth and the consequences of such. Warfare is one reaction to the removal of a natural population limit inherent to nomadism, and in many horticultural societies it has been accepted as 'the way things are'. Many of these societies are still generally anarchistic as the 'leadership' position (Big Men) has no real power aside from influence. Although many horticultural societies are also 'chiefdoms' which are ranked, hierarchical societies.

What is important here, aside from the issues of surplus, sedentism, and domestication, are issues such as specialization which begins to arise as people become less involved with direct subsistence.

## Conclusions?

What we can see when looking at this kind of 'pattern' of 'development' is the move from open, egalitarian societies to closed societies tending towards absolute hierarchy. The first step towards our current reality is the idea of property, which emerges at a fairly recent time and has always been met with resistance. Aside from the inherently authoritarian nature of domestication, a few further social aspects are of interest: the rise of warfare, the development of technology, the creation of cities and empires, and the collapse of these civilizations.

As mentioned earlier, warfare was one possible means of keeping populations in check after sedentism took a step away from the 'natural birth control' inherent in a nomadic lifestyle. It not only became ritualized among many horticultural societies, but it became one of the strongholds of the state. The earliest empires were noted for the superior armies that were the product of ultra-specialization. A state can function only as long as it has its necessities taken care of. Cultivation is an ecologically taxing process and growing populations need more food. Armies defend and protect this expansion.

When you look at the population numbers, the rise coincides directly with the level of empire present. In this respect, warfare, conquest and colonization become the health of the state. As the professional armies develop, so does their bloodlust until it's no longer just an issue of needing land, but also having sworn enemies and the need to wipe out 'potential threats.' This applies as much today as it did 500, 2,000, 3,000, 5,000 years ago. The more complex the society becomes, the more complex its technology becomes and the more 'efficient' its killing capacity, until armies are so large that huge numbers can be systematically wiped out, ultimately, by the push of a button.

This same pattern arises with the move from tools to technology. A tool is simple; and humans, much like most animals, have nearly always used them. A tool can be made on site by a single person relatively easily (after the skill has been picked up at least) and the end product is usually not a burden to remake. Technology arises with sedentism in particular as people can spend more time and collect more objects to make more time-invasive things. Technology is a system, it requires other technology to continually be produced and it requires the technological mentality of a society to continually produce it. Far from being neutral or labor-saving, it has only increased the destructiveness of society and fostered the problems inherent in property.

As has been alluded to previously, the rise in population, with an increased spatial focus and complexity, builds cities. Cities are a very recent occurrence and completely define what civilization is. They are a concrete hierarchy and everything in them, from structure to raw materials speaks eloquently of those who build and maintain them. Cities are the product of specialization and cannot exist without creating an institutionalized division of labor which requires people to do certain tasks, whether they like it or not (as we all can relate). They are an imposition not only upon the earth, but upon those who live within and outside of them. The delusion of 'green cities' is possible only so long as the ecological and war-related costs are ignored (on top of the psychological and physical costs of those who live within the city and its counterpart, the country).

It seems appropriate to conclude a brief look into the origins of civilization with a look at its seemingly inevitable fate: collapse. Domestication seems to lay the seeds for a history of perpetual collapse. It happened in Rome, Mesopotamia (the cradle of civilization), Egypt, Mesoamerica, the South-Western United States, the Ohio Valley and so on. Every single empire grows and grows till it becomes physically dependent upon others for its survival. The agriculture which lays the groundwork for the growth of empire degrades the land until necessities can only be met through vast networks of trade, taxation, and theft, and such an empire can only last so long.

Never before has this planet seen an empire as large as the current American Empire, which is already in massive debt and taking a final stand to hold its power. Our current civilization has become truly a global civilization and all of the tentacles of civilization are linking up as one. Civilization, in its entirety, is now dependent upon global, industrial society which is systematically destroying the land, air, water, and life on this planet. Much as we have 'progressed,' we often forget that we are still dependent upon the earth for survival, collectively and individually, a lesson that may be recalled as we meet with social unrest and ecological limits.

What can be learned from all of this is not only that there is another way of life that exists that our bodies have yearned for, but that we can find ways to resist and ways to bring about the world that we want to live in. This should not be a conclusion but a springboard for more searching in every way possible. Nothing lasts forever and civilization has only been (and will only have been) a drop on the human timeline. Civilizations rise and fall, but 'Civilization' has continued on. The point is to help erase 'Civilization' itself. We can look to its origins to see how it has developed, and combine this knowledge with our dreams to destroy 'Civilization' once and for all. **Another world has existed, and another world is possible!**

## Afterward: A Future Primitive?

Originary considerations have to do with how human life used to be, with who we have been and, in some fashion, may be again. Such investigations give us things to look at, to reflect upon; nor as a source of an ideology to impose, not some 'How It Must Be' dogma. In this unprecedented and fearful time, the question of practice is open. In fact, maybe one thing many can agree on is that something new is needed. It seems to us that examining the beginnings of this ongoing disaster is a worthy exercise. **Do we not need all the help we can get?**

*For the Destruction of Civilization and the Reconnection to Life!*

**The Green Anarchy Collective**  
and  
**The Coalition Against Civilization**

BACK TO BASICS volume #1

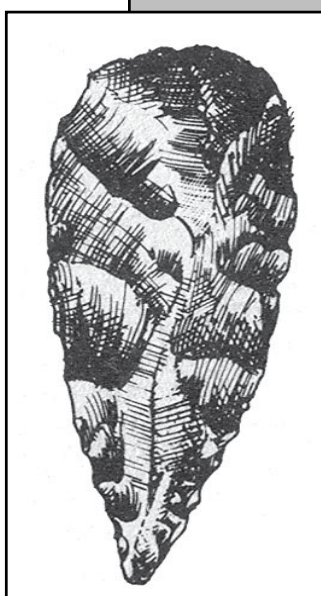
## Some Suggested Readings:

*Although there are not enough overly-accessible books in print on the subject of origins, most of these texts provide a good background to what has been discussed in this paper, as well as additional information and thoughts on the problematic social grouping known as civilization. Most are rather easy to get through and in print:*

- *Elements of Refusal, Future Primitive, Against Civilization, and Running on Emptiness*, all by John Zerzan; various publishers (contact GA)
- *Against His-story, Against Leviathan!*, by Fredy Perlman; Detroit: Black and Red, 1983
- *Societies Against the State*, by Clastres, Pierre; New York: Zone, 1987.
- *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, by Jared Diamond; New York: Norton, 1997.
- *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, by Susan Griffin; San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1978.
- *In Search of the Primitive*, by Stanley Diamond; New Brunswick: Transaction, 1987.
- *My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization*, by Chellis Glendinning, Boston: Shambhala, 1994.
- *Man the Hunter*, edited by Richard B. Lee & Irven DeVore; Chicago: Aldine, 1968.
- *Myth of the Machine: Pentagon of Power*, by Lewis Mumford; New York: Harcourt, 1970.
- *Myth of the Machine: Technics and Human Development*, New York: Harcourt, 1967.
- *Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations*, by Clive Ponting; New York: Penguin, 1991.
- *Stone Age Economics*, by Marshall Sahlins; Chicago: Aldine, 1972.
- *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*, by Paul Shepard; Washington DC: Island, 1998.

Check-out:

[www.blackandgreen.org/biblio.html](http://www.blackandgreen.org/biblio.html)  
for some more suggested readings.



*"We inhabit the factory and the factory inhabits us. The clothes we wear, the food we eat, the buildings in which we live, work and die, the books we read, the media we ingest, the ideas we think—are all factory produced. And yet chaos is everywhere. Even as I walk through the barren waste of the shopping centre, I look up and see the sun boiling, the clouds scudding by, a flock of birds veering across the sky—and I feel the exquisite pulses, flows and currents that flow through my body."  
- John Moore*

## Anti-Civilization Contacts:

### Green Anarchy

PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440  
[collective@greenanarchy.org](mailto:collective@greenanarchy.org)  
[www.greenanarchy.org](http://www.greenanarchy.org)

### Coalition Against Civilization

PO Box 835 Greensburg, PA 15601  
[www.coalitionagainstcivilization.org](http://www.coalitionagainstcivilization.org)  
[www.speciestraitor.cjb.net](http://www.speciestraitor.cjb.net)

### Wild Roots

PO BOX 1485,  
Asheville, NC 28802  
[email:wildrootsnc@ziplip.com](mailto:email:wildrootsnc@ziplip.com)

### Black and Green Network

[www.blackandgreen.org](http://www.blackandgreen.org)

### Green Anarchist

BCM 1715, London  
WC1N 3XX, UK  
[www.greenanarchist.org/index.html](http://www.greenanarchist.org/index.html)

### Do Or Die

c/o Prior House  
6 Tilbury Place,  
Brighton East Sussex  
BN2 2GY England

### Terra Selvaggia

(Silvestre)  
(anti-civ italian publication)  
via del Coure no. 1  
56100 Pisa, Italia

### lavor di anarquia

C/Mestres Casals i Martorell 18,  
E-08003 Barcelona, Spain  
[llavorda@anarchie.net](mailto:llavorda@anarchie.net)

The ORIGINS of CIVILIZATION