

A LETTER TO: “HALPUTTA HADJO”

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Contents

Are the Calusa a Model for Anti-Civilization Anything? Nice Try, But You Fail	3
Models Lacking Existence across Broad Scales of Time and Space Hold Little Weight .	4
The Human Species DOES have Agency, and it Matters	6
Environmental Conditions Cannot Determine All Outcomes	7
I'm an Anthropocentric, Rationalist, Empiricist Anarcho-Primitivist and Proud of It .	7
Marx? Nice Try, But You Fail, Again	8
“God” Cannot Save the Earth	9
Do Anti-Civilization Anarchists Have a Doctrinal Obligation to Stand in Solidarity with People only because they are Indigenous?	10
If Our Allegiance is not simply to the “Indigenous”, Where Does it Lie?	10

Thank you much for your recent compiling of the Calusa record and for bringing to light in the anarchist/anti-civilization milieu yet another cultural adaptation which those of us resisting civilization, and forging lifeways outside of it, should do our utmost to avoid repeating.

"The Calusa: A Savage Kingdom" is a well-written, and welcome, addition to the analysis of what has gone wrong for humans living on planet earth, but it falls very short of offering anti-civilization militants anything other than a clear view of how pitiable is the operating psychology of the nihilist and so-called "eco-extremist" camp.

You present the Calusa as a supposed example of a non-domesticated, immediate-return, ecologically-integrated culture, and representative of a model for a realistic and enduring resistance against civilization. Let me clearly explain to you how and why none of this is accurate.

You present anarcho-primitivist positions and analysis as "rational", "anthropocentric", and backed by basic knowledge gleaned from the anthropological record, which you posit are all faulty backings. Let me explain to you why those backings are far from faulty and why as an anarcho-primitivist I shall not recoil from being labeled as any of these.

You offer the nihilist and 'eco-extremist' reaction to our world crisis and posit that anarcho-primitivist models and agendas are ideological and invalid. Let me explain to you why it is, rather, the nihilist and 'eco-extremist' response which is wholly inadequate and why the anarcho-primitivist position and praxis leaves the nihilist and 'eco-extremist' reaction in the dust when it comes to overall capacity and intelligence.

Before doing that, however, I want it to be known that I speak only for myself and have no intention of speaking for "Zerzan/Tucker et al." or other anarcho-primitivists that I don't know, although I am sure that some of those people will be in agreement with most of what I have to say here.

Are the Calusa a Model for Anti-Civilization Anything? Nice Try, But You Fail

Viewed in the broad context of history, there is nothing exceptional about the Calusa or their resistance. Your reference to the Calusa as resisters is no more notable than many other references to indigenous groups as resisters throughout known history. Resistance occurred, and continues to occur, everywhere, amongst all types of cultures and subsistence adaptations.

If the Calusa stand out at all, it is because they are representative of the classic intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complex model which anthropologists generally agree spawned domestication and civilization to begin with. You say that the Calusa were not domesticated "in the Spanish eyes" but the entire case study you present makes very clear that the Calusa's civilized features very much overshadow their wild and free hunter-gatherer ones.

Intra-species domestication, in whatever form; agriculture, animal husbandry etc., does not need to be present for the traits of civilization to make their appearance within a culture, as you seem to assume, and the longstanding anarcho-primitivist reference to the pitfalls of certain sedentary hunter-collector-fisher adaptations has been presented primarily to make this point.

Of the Calusa's civilized, and thus pathological, elements there are many.

You cite references which maintain that the Calusa broached carrying capacity and thus grew their population to the point where they could unleash military conquests against smaller-scale groups and use military coercion to force them to collect resources above their daily needs in

order to pay tribute to elite Calusa chieftains. You yourself acknowledge that the cultural groundwork for this was likely well in place prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, which, based on the anthropological record of intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complexes is entirely logical and obvious.

At least you are intelligible enough to recognize this small snippet on how the “continuity” of learned cultural behaviors plays out in reality. But it seems you are incapable of differentiating between delayed-return and immediate-return systems and how the learned behaviors resulting from these two different adaptations present entirely differing outcomes for cultural continuity.

You attempt to assert that because agriculture was absent and subsistence was achieved primarily from fish, which were neither dried nor stored, the Calusa maintained a more or less immediate-return system. Yet tribute systems are certainly delayed-return systems, employed by elites as tools to control the distribution of goods and reinforce hierarchies – often leading to institutions such as slavery and ritual human sacrifice - all of which were core attributes of Calusa culture, but ones that you brush over as if they are irrelevant and inconsequential to civilization’s assault on both the non-human and human world.

You make an initial attempt to suggest that the Calusa had no slaves, but then without a wince, you later inform us that Calusa elites did have “servants” whom were sent into the afterlife to accompany their masters in death, a practice which you apparently have no objections to. You also seem to have no objections to Calusa ritual child sacrifice practices, even though you advance virtue in that the Calusa both revered their children and refused to discipline them. The Calusa ritualized and sanctified the murder of their children while simultaneously revering them? Never mind that ritual human sacrifice generally arises in village-based situations where the resulting dynamics of resource intensification and expanding population have produced high social and environmental tension. That sounds an awful lot like civilization to me.

For more than a decade anarcho-primitivist analysis has made clear that slaves and ritual human sacrifice are common characteristics of many known intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complexes, including some sedentary, marine-based, fisher-collector cultures. Thanks much for reinforcing this very important point for us. We shall not waver from making clear to the world what the established mechanisms for social pathology are.

Models Lacking Existence across Broad Scales of Time and Space Hold Little Weight

You celebrate that the Calusa adaptation “lasted for centuries”. Anarcho-primitivists don’t use centuries as a baseline, we look to the entire timeline of *homo* for what has been the most successful ecologically non-damaging sociocultural adaptations.

You say that the Calusa were able to become a *regionally dominant* “paramount chiefdom...all without *radically altering* their hunter-gatherer-fisher lifestyle”. Compared to the over one-million years that humans lived on this planet purely as small-scale nomadic hunter-gatherers, intensifier-redistributor-warrior based adaptations, such as that of the Calusa *are* RADICAL ALTERATIONS.

Consequently, your presentation of the Calusa as a praiseworthy model in any way lacks all cognizance of temporal and spatial scale. You fail to recognize that in the broad measure of human history, intensifier-redistributor-warrior complexes are absolute breakaways from what worked

and was sustainable elsewhere for eons. You fail overwhelmingly in recognizing that intensifier-redistributor-warrior complexes are representative of the beginnings of civilizations and are thus absolutely not models for the maintenance of our animality (as you also failingly assert).

Intensifier-redistributor-warrior complexes are a massive departure away from the much more ecologically direct and connected lifeways of the immediate-return band-level adaptation which was employed for 99% of human history. This is the mode by which humans live as part of a free-flowing wild ecology and not against it.

Non-agricultural, hunter-collector-fisher based adaptations, which often lead to evolving intensifier-redistributor-warrior complexes, seem to surface sporadically in the Old World at perhaps 30,000 years ago, at best, and it wasn't long from there until civilization. As a classic intensifier-redistributor-warrior complex, and essentially a regional empire, the Calusa were well on their way towards intensifying civilized modes when the Spanish arrived. If not interfered with by Euro-colonial conquest, how would the Calusa have evolved? At the very least, based on their known adaptations, the Calusa would be far more capable of increasing their growth and enhancing domestication than would be a small band of immediate-return people moving through the area.

Was there always a Calusa extant in south Florida? No. But it is a safe bet that for thousands of years prior to the establishment of the Calusa, small-scale nomadic hunter-gatherers roamed in and out of the region. The Calusa represent a single adaptation to this particular ecology, and likely an unprecedented one. Just as similar case studies inform us, the sedentary fisher-collector orientation which the Calusa took on would inevitably evolve into increasing economic and sociopolitical complexity. Feedback loops resulting from associated learned behaviors led to the buildup of an intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complex and therefore the maintenance of a trajectory - similar to that of the Calusa's Mississippian and Meso-American cousins - headed for disaster regardless of Spanish incursion or not.

Nonetheless, Euros (who are simply the representatives of intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complexes at much more highly advanced stages) did colonize and dominate a good portion of planet. But this all seems well to the nihilist, as long as the Calusa can "salvage" Euro industrial goods. It is no matter at all that the Calusa idolization of Spanish trade goods led to evolved dependence on these goods and that Calusa elites used these salvage operations for furthering regional economic intensification. For the "anti-civilization" nihilist, this is only a side-note, never mind that dependence on outside goods and increasing commodification of such goods is a major characteristic of ecologically destructive civilizations everywhere. Seen in this temporal-historical context, the Calusa at the time of contact were not resisting civilization per se, they were merely resisting control and domination of their *KINGDOM* by the Spaniards.

As you imply, in specific circumstances, it is probably true that, due to their inevitable long-term buildup in capacity for logistical military organization, intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complexes such as the Calusa, were more capable of maintaining a certain level of resistance against the colonial onslaught, for a time. Due to the known lack of capacity or interest immediate-return hunter-gatherers place toward logistical military organization, it may very well be that they were much less well positioned to fight back directly against attempts at conquest than are intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complexes. It is also the case that nomadic immediate-return hunter-gatherers maintain a much greater capacity to move further into their environs than do distribution system dependent, sedentary, and warring people, such as the Calusa.

Regardless, we as anarcho-primtivists will always refuse to build armies. Go ahead and have your militarist fantasies, we will take our chances without entertaining such pathological formations. And we know for certain that small-band nomadic hunter-gatherer oriented methods of resistance and evasion also have the capacity to endure.

Today is there any past intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complex based culture remaining on earth independent from mass-civilization? No. All of the past intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complex based cultures have been fully absorbed by industrial-civilization. But against-all-odds there do remain a handful of largely self-sufficient and relatively independent small-scale, mostly, hunting and foraging people in the jungles of Southeast Asia, Oceania, Africa, and South America. Sadly, their time seems to now becoming increasingly short, but they have endured far longer against the onslaught of civilized domination than people such as the Calusa who were already culturally geared towards growth, intensification, and acculturation at the time of 'contact'.

The Human Species DOES have Agency, and it Matters

In the Americas for at least several millennia small-bands of much more wild and free, and thus ecologically integrated and animal-like, people existed simultaneously with more settled hunter-collector-fishers and evolving intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complexes. Due to their own past experimentations, trading, or by being raided, many small-band hunter-gatherers did not lack experience with intensifier-redistributor-warrior modes. They learned their lessons and thus employed their agency towards a conscious avoidance of falling into sedentary and/or delayed-return traps, and in doing so maintained what amounts to an entirely more stable and enduring human adaptation, socially, psychologically, and ecologically.

This happened due to the human capacity for agency. All indigenous humans employed their agency, and therefore utilized the human capability to respond to challenges and choose particular pathways. We still maintain that capacity now, providing we don't throw in the towel, renounce this capability, and become nihilists.

Certain response patterns, such as sedentary collecting or becoming a nihilist desperado, definitely do become more plausible in specific environments, such as in ultra-resource-rich marine environments or in physically and psychologically overwhelming techno-industrial environments. Specific variations in human social responses to specific environmental characteristics, like resource abundance or the daunting psycho-social pressure and stress created by civilizations, always prove to be either more or less adaptive across time.

Within civilization (including intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complexes), response patterns are often primarily generated by elites and promoted to the masses as the most beneficial responses, they are experimented with and practiced and become socially learned over time and eventually become subject to inertia, while alternative response patterns are not practiced and thus not learned. Elites select for response patterns which benefit their positions of power and actively enforce the masses in adhering to these patterns - generally leading towards further intensification, growth, domestication, and thus civilization.

In the face of overwhelming power, and the resulting psycho-social dependence on the entire superstructure, it is easy to understand why many in the masses adopt a feeling that they have no agency. But we have not lost our agency. We make active choices every day and we can make

conscious decisions about how to confront our future based upon what we objectively know of this world.

Environmental Conditions Cannot Determine All Outcomes

The biologically reductionist, environmentally determinist, obscurantist framework you present can never account for all the variations in human behavior and sociocultural evolution. While you engage in classic *environmental determinism*, and take on the narrow position that humans will organize simply as any animal would under the dictates of a particular ecology, the long-time anthropological consensus is that strict environmental determinism has never existed, does not account for other complex variables, and particularly does not account for the role of human agency in sociocultural evolution.

Certain environments no doubt offer humans opportunities for specific behaviors and make some behaviors more likely, but behavioral choices are also guided by agency. All evolved socio-cultural patterns are ultimately socially assisted and result from feedback loops associated with learned cultural responses.

As such, resource intensification is *culturally determined*, not environmentally determined. Do wild animals in ultra-resource-rich marine systems automatically fall into delayed-return oriented modes? No. It is through sociocultural agency that humans, in this manner unique from other animals, are the only species which has ever developed a delayed-return adaptation in such environs. And we know for certain that not all humans who have utilized such environments have fallen into this trap. But what human societies have fallen into this trap? Intensifier-redistributor-warrior complexes and large-scale civilizations of course!

Anarcho-primitivism has always been unflinching that specific ecologies can play a role in human socio-cultural evolution, and this point is made so that in the future we can predict outcomes based on the various responses we can choose to employ in particular situations and environments. Because of our understanding of this, my friends and I CAN consciously adapt to a rich aquatic environment and harvest marine resources for survival without automatically falling into modes of intensified production and resulting surplus management. If intensified modes begin to evolve, as anarchists who have developed the capacity for self-reliance, it is our choice to walk away from the situation, if we so desire. We also have a choice regarding what particular direct actions against civilization we take now and how we promote or advertise them. We do what we do for our own well-thought-out reasons. No person or entity can dictate our choices for us and we make no effort to dictate yours.

I'm an Anthropocentric, Rationalist, Empiricist Anarcho-Primitivist and Proud of It

With a baseline that our positions and actions should be grounded by reason and knowledge, rather than by ideological or emotional responses, I shall stake my claim to what is "rational", without reservations.

Anarcho-primitivism is rational in that it is not subject to ungrounded philosophical attempts to mystify human sociocultural phenomena and thus direct attention away from the foundational causes of our social and ecological plight.

I have no shame in being a “rational political actor” and I act because today we DO have “the benefit of issues such as personal autonomy and hierarchy”. We have that “benefit” certainly, and we make an agent-based choice to use it in application towards the best possible future.

Anarcho-primitivism as I know it proclaims no “true human nature”, we only attempt to uphold what all known evidence has shown us works and endures without annihilating the planet and without turning individuals and cultures into sociopaths. And yes, this information is not rocket-science, it IS easily available from the historic and pre-historic record as a whole, including from the basic anthropological record. We wish more people would spend some quality time investigating the record for themselves, as we have spent many years doing, and we make no qualms about logically relying on it for our influence. None of this is a claim to “divine power”. It is only a logical and objective knowledge of human-earth reality. It comes down to basic common-sense, un-muddled by the confused, philosophical, nervousness packaged within the sociopathic baggage of the nihilist, who finds self-glorification in attacking anything and everything willy-nilly.

No doubt, a directed confrontation with the actual causes of our social and ecological crisis is complex and mentally and physically daunting. It’s a lot easier to just lose oneself in hopeless, postmodernist nihilism and put ones energy into blabbering on endlessly on social media or, for the more bold and desperate, to lash-out physically against anyone at random. Choosing such routes are your issues and problems, not ours. We are beyond that.

Anarcho-primitivism has long offered unsurmountable evidence for the logic and legitimacy of our positions and for how they drive our plans and actions (which are also based on the lived personal experiences of our friends actually existing in wildness).

Anarcho-primitivist oriented analysis of the human condition is an offering which most *rational* people who become educated on the matter will choose, and have chosen. And it is entirely our choice to choose it, and it is your free choice not to choose it. We assert that we do have agency and that we as a species do not need to end up where we are currently going. Human agency gives us the capability to make rational choices towards that end; visionless nihilists such as you will not rob that from us with your half-assed indolent pessimism.

Your charge of “anthropocentrism” is very much laughable. I myself am a proud feral and animal anthropocentrist. Short of suicide, it is impossible to be authentically ecocentric while not at the same time anthropocentric. Anarcho-primitivism is anthropocentric in that it IS ecocentric. These are one in the same. Anarcho-primitivism asks: what is simultaneously the healthiest situation for BOTH our species and for all other biodiverse communities of wild species? This is the condition we strive for. We do not strive for anthropicide, random haphazard killing, or some primate-avist devolution to Australopithecus, as seems to be part of the logical conclusion of what both you and the so-called ‘anti-civ vegans’ are promoting.

As “eco-extremists”, if your ‘ecocentrism’ is not simultaneously anthropocentric then, as the grand finale to your next go-around, it would make a lot of sense for you to just kill yourselves, because no matter how desperately you try you will certainly not succeed in killing off humanity.

Marx? Nice Try, But You Fail, Again

Your attempt to cite Marx’s materialist baseline misses everything. You should investigate this much more thoroughly before spouting off about it.

Without going deep into Marx, let's be clear that, for Marx, mode-of-production, not ideology or environment, was the foundational determining influence on social outcomes. Similarly, anarcho-primitivism is culturally materialist at base, maintaining that socioecological relationships and related human psychologies evolve first from mode-of-subsistence, and thus, in this regard, while throwing out the inadequacies of dialectical materialism, we are in alignment with Marx's position that human sociocultural environments originate first from material infrastructure.

A cultural materialist analysis very clearly displays how nomadic immediate-return modes evolve towards substantially differing trajectories than do sedentary delayed-return modes. A cultural materialist analysis makes very clear the high likelihood that specific hunter-collectors who took on more sedentary, delayed-return oriented patterns, and subsequently evolved into intensifier-redistributor-warrior complexes, ultimately created civilization. This is the general agreement in mainstream anthropology and has been for over four decades. Anarcho-primitivists see it only as straight-forward and logical to agree with that position and to apply that knowledge to what we do in the here-and-now.

Guided not by ideology, but instead by all known evidence from a comprehensive cultural materialist analysis, we are highly confident in our "plan" and will not be thwarted. Time shall show what is the most adaptable and intelligent way forward.

So nihilists, if your *resistance efforts* actually end up being effective at all and you subsequently decide that you actually want to live, you will need to eat. As the crisis of civilization deepens the opportunities for parasitic thieving may very well decline and thus it will be time for you to get to work on building up your own modes-of-production and a resulting cultural praxis. Let this be the intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complex model if this is what you have deemed best and what you desire. I don't see anyone trying to stop you. We will push forward with what WE have determined to be one of our vital components of action, which is total immersion in re-learning to live as humans non-intensively within a wild land-base. If you can't see the wisdom in that, it's your problem, not ours.

"God" Cannot Save the Earth

Religious ideology in itself, without being grounded in a sustainable mode-of-subsistence, cannot equate to an actualized and enduring physical resistance against the juggernaut of civilization. Yet, your analysis provides little in regards to the relationship between material reality and resistance. You romanticize the Calusa obsession with symbolic artifacts, masks, and priestly rituals and portray a situation where resistance for the Calusa was motivated almost entirely by religious belief. You seem to assert that we must simply believe in a "pantheon of pagan gods" and that then we too shall have the power and backing to maintain an adequate resistance to civilization.

The Calusa resisted the Spanish simply because of their strict allegiance to pagan beliefs? Did no other indigenous people in history resist or maintain allegiances to their own unique animistic spiritual worldviews? Or was resistance only possible within the *pagan* intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complex? In our confrontation with civilization, should we now be striving for an unbendable allegiance to a culture, to a religion, and its gods?

From this standpoint, if only ISIS worshipped “pagan gods” they would also meet your criteria for a model. After all, ISIS also has no qualm with killing servants and children or randomly targeting anyone or anything. Are “eco-extremists” now prepared to pledge solidarity to ISIS? Perhaps you could learn something from ISIS since they seem to be far more effective than you have been at attacking *infidels* who don’t believe in their “God”.

For anarchists everywhere, let me reassert – NO GODS, NO MASTERS – we maintain both the wisdom and the resolve to create situations which allow such optimal socioecological conditions, devoid of ‘gods’ and devoid of servitude to any ‘chiefs’ or masters – and you seem to be proving that you lack such resolve, that you are unworthy and incapable of this.

Do Anti-Civilization Anarchists Have a Doctrinal Obligation to Stand in Solidarity with People only because they are Indigenous?

It was nice of you to express your appreciation for the “flexibility” of the British Columbia green-anarchists in their assistance to the plight of the Tahltans. They have made a rational free choice not to organize their personal lives around subjugation by a separate culture and they have that right, no?

I have experiences with divergent groups of contemporary indigenous people and I can assure you that oftentimes the socioeconomic dynamics present in some of these communities are not amendable to an anti-civilization praxis, and thus I pledge solidarity to the British Columbia green-anarchists on their free choice to not be subjugated by the whims of a people simply because of who their ancestors were, the color of their skin, and for the cause of liberal political correctness.

No, we shan’t “forgive them” (not any of the intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complex cultures) of their hierarchy and authority. We honor their struggle and their resistance but we are not uncompromisingly allegiant to them or their lifeway and we never will be. If the time of the Calusa was also our time, the Calusa would certainly be our enemies and to be avoided, just as would be the Spaniards—our human agency would be utilized as the foundational means by which we would evade ever becoming subjugated by the likes of any of them.

If Our Allegiance is not simply to the “Indigenous”, Where Does it Lie?

Anarcho-primitivism is an allegiance to a specific human adaptation to life on this planet, a way of life which all known evidence shows us has endured sustainably and in intimate relationship with wild ecology for eons longer than any other. With this objective knowledge in hand, anarcho-primitivists will maintain our human agency and use it to take the types of actions we deem most effective and to simultaneously create the types of societies WE WANT to create. That is our prerogative.

And it’s your prerogative, as nihilists, to believe that humans have no agency, and that we are all just whirling around in a chaos which we can do nothing about. We’re not trying to interfere with your right to believe that, but we will never flinch in pointing out to the world what a weak-minded cop-out nihilism, at this stage, truly is.

All-in-all, those paying attention will make their own rational choices on which way to proceed from here. Anarcho-primitivists have done our best to present the situation as we see it and we

believe that wise people paying attention to the details will side with us and use their own agency to move forward with resistance through both strategic direct actions and through rewilding. We cannot convince every person and we do not desire to. We have made our case and we are standing our ground.

You postulate “pessimism for civilized humanity” as one of your core bullet-point stances, but your attempt to use the Calusa as a case-study makes it very obvious that you fail greatly to understand what “civilized humanity” actually is. And then you offer no solution other than the subterfuge of renouncing your humanness and mindlessly attacking anything.

Worshipping the “gods [of] rage and revenge” and a “loaded pistol” are proclaimed as the *only possible reaction*. These are the proclamations of a whining sociopathic dud offering nothing but defeat.

I fully understand, and am sympathetic to the fact, that you personally are so hemmed-in by the constraints of civilization that you have deemed such a formula worthwhile. Yes, some of us have been lucky enough to have been presented with different opportunities. And many of us, through intense personal struggle, have created opportunities for ourselves that attempt to do away with civilized constraints, rather than proclaim defeat and surrender to them. That that hasn't been the way things have worked out for you personally, well that's just the way it goes. There are seven and a half billion humans in existence and most of us are just about completely fucked, I'll give you that, but no matter where you are or who you are there are still choices.

No matter how desperate one's situation, it's a personal choice whether to fight or surrender, and if one chooses to fight, the methods of doing that are a personal choice as well. Time will reveal the outcome of our choices.

Although cloaked in its 'I am more radical than thou' self-righteous aggrandizement, the defeatist desperation of nihilism is highly apparent. One only needs to pay attention to history in order to grasp the lack of fitness in this formula and to get a sense of where it will lead you. As did the Calusa, in your state of despair, you too shall “disappear gradually” (or rapidly) in the worthless mass-religion, warrior-god, militarist maladaptation which you romanticize in your article.

And we wonder why are you so worried about us, what we say, and what we are doing? Is it because what anarcho-primitivism offers to the world amounts to so much more than what you are offering? I'd say so.

We can share a mutual desire that civilization as we now know it falls but we offer no allegiance to shortsighted “eco-extremist” nihilists.

Enjoy your desired place of ‘resource abundance’, mass society, warlords, chieftains, slaves, ritually sacrificed children, pagan idolatry worship, your religion, your bloodthirsty fascistic vision – stay in the swamps you have conquered and in which you have built up your sedentary human dominated village environments. And if you seek to expand from here (as always did the intensifier-redistributor-warrior-complexes which you so admire), our spiked dead-falls and tripwire snares will be set for you.

Anarcho-primitivists are not, as Ted Kaczynski once attempted to claim, *flower children dancing around the fire circle*. But, unlike you, we don't seek pointless or nonstrategic violence. In the face of the Leviathan we easily see where that leads. Nonetheless, do not doubt that we WILL fight for this.

I shall reaffirm - WE HAVE SEEN THE WORLD WE WANT TO LIVE IN AND WE WILL FIGHT FOR IT.

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