



The New Anarchy:  
Truth, Nature,  
Beauty and  
Witness

Crow Qu'appelle in  
conversation with  
Paul Cudenec

*“There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose  
time has come”*

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## PREFACE

*“In the ruins of this civilization, we need to plant a mighty tree of authentic wisdom that will watch over the health, freedom and future of humankind for many centuries to come”.*

So concludes the foreword to *The Withway*, the 2022 book by Paul Cudenec, the mystic and philosopher increasingly recognized (albeit not by himself) as the world’s greatest living anarchist thinker.

The author makes it clear that this book is not a manifesto, but rather a contribution to the process of political reorientation made necessary by the ideological collapse of the Left in the wake of the COVID psy op.

He states: “*The Withway* is an attempt to identify the deeper issues at stake and point at a different way of seeing the civilizational choices with which we are being collectively presented. It is not, as will be readily apparent, a political manifesto or a detailed programme for action. It is, rather, an exploration of ideas which is intended to act as a preliminary signpost, a rough sketch of the way in which many of us

know intuitively we ought to be heading”.

To refer to the work as a preliminary signpost is rather modest, for the author sets out an exquisitely well-reasoned argument. If its ideas catch on (and I believe that it is only a matter of time before they do), then we may well look back on this book as a turning point in the trajectory of anarchist philosophy.

So far as I am concerned, this book is as important as Ronald Wright’s *A Short History of Progress* or David Graeber’s *The Dawn of Everything*.

Its subject matter is something that is near and dear to my heart, because the philosophy that Paul espouses is pretty much exactly what I also believe.

For this reason, I have a lot to say about *The Withway*, which is the best articulation of this philosophy which I know of. Therefore, in these interviews I explore some of the ideas which Paul so skilfully elucidates in this ground-breaking new book.

But before I do so, I’d like to set the stage by saying a bit about how my story relates to that of Paul, and to that of *Nevermore Media*.

The truth is that were it not for Paul Cudenec, *Nevermore* would not exist, and I do not know what I would be doing with my life.

When I encountered his writing, everything changed for me. I knew what I had encountered.

This was the antidote to the poison of post-modern nihilist bullshit which had infected the Left.

I'd found the medicine that could cure the hideous *ennui* of postmodern alienation, and knew that I had to do something with it. I had been searching for ideas that could serve as a basis for unity for a new political movement, and I had found what I was looking for.

The world was withering for want of wisdom, and I had discovered a fountain of wisdom which seemed to stretch back to the dawn of time.

I had my work cut out for me.

It was in the dark days of lockdown when I resolved to scour the web for whatever authentically revolutionary voices remained amidst the rubble of the Left.

It was heartbreaking to see so many of my supposed comrades betraying the values of the anarchist counterculture.

At that point I felt, for the first time in my life, that punk was pretty much dead. The culture within which I have lived my entire adult life was no more.

It felt like a world had been destroyed.

I remembered the words from a punk song – *“If it doesn't matter now, then it never really did. And without this, we might as well be dead”*.

Had everything that I had based my life on since I was fifteen been a lie? If people were so

willing to throw their values out the window at mere rumours of a virus, was it not reasonable to assume that they never truly believed in them in the first place?

Maybe anarchism was just a fashion, one that I had taken way too seriously.

And if (almost) no one else believed in the principles of anarchism, could it be that it was because those principles were not sound? Did I need to grow up and accept that state violence, economic exploitation and coercive power were simply the way of the world?

Should I accept that activism is useless, that resistance is futile, and that it is folly to take up arms against the Great Machine, whose destiny has always been to swallow up the whole world?

It was in such bitter spirits that I began my search.

My spirit was soon to be lifted, for it was not long after beginning that I encountered a blog post with an eye-catching title – Anarchists Against Freedom. Was this what I thought it was?

I clicked on it, and was delighted to see that it was. I wasn't alone! There was someone out there who felt exactly as I did about the absurd phenomenon of so-called anarchists fervently preaching compliance with the authoritarian dystopia being justified with the flimsy-ass excuse of a bad flu.

As soon as I read *Anarchists Against Freedom*, I was hooked on Paul's writing. Here was an authentic anarchist voice who had distilled the essence of anarchist philosophy down to its purest possible form.

I dived into his body of work, and discovered to my delight that not only was he a green anarchist, the tradition to which I also belong, but he was also well-versed in metaphysics, mysticism, literature, Jungian psychology, Eastern philosophy, anthropology, archaeology, comparative mythology, and more.

Very soon, I knew that I had encountered the teachings of a true spiritual master.

I did not need to be converted to his way of thinking. It was very much what I already believed in my heart. But his philosophy was much more fleshed-out and complete than mine.

Mine was a philosophy of the heart, and Paul Cudenec had put it down into writing, placing it in its proper place in world history.

He had explained to my intellect what my soul already knew. It was glorious.

For years, I have described my anarchism as the political expression of something which is not itself political. By this, I meant that there was something more important to me than politics. Something existed on a higher plane in my mind, where it could not be corrupted by the vulgar machinations that are inherent to politics.

Here, outside of time, nestles an idea which Jung called the Oceanic Feeling, a sense of being part of some cosmic unity whose essence is alive, loving, and fundamentally good.

I suppose this would be the difference between my philosophy and that of many Leftists, who no longer seem committed to any overarching principles. Call it what you want – I believe in God.

This has set me apart from many of my Leftist comrades with whom I have organized for years, especially the type of middle-class, urban radicals who inhabit university campuses and NGOs.

That said, I soon found that my commitment to my spiritual practice created a natural affinity amongst myself and others who shared a deeply-felt sense that things are not as they should be in the modern world.

I was never alone in my belief that it falls to all people of conscience to do what they can to bring humanity back into balance with nature.

My path led me both to participation in indigenous ceremonies and indigenous political movements, and I started assimilating more of a holistic, spiritual perspective into my political imagination.

I was certainly not the only anarchist who began to absorb such influences. Since at least 2010, the anarchist movement in Canada has



been deeply intertwined with indigenous movements, to the point where it is sometimes difficult to discern where one ends and the other begins. Thus, many anarchists began to absorb a spiritual perspective by osmosis.

It was necessary. Spirituality played such an important part in these movements that it was not possible to participate in them without respecting this dimension.

The fight at Standing Rock, for instance, was not a dispute over land use, but a battle between two visions of the world.

One cosmovision was obsessed with profit at all costs, and saw natural resources as existing to be exploited, whereas the other saw nature as sacred and capitalist greed as a manifestation of a type of mental illness.

One worldview was materialist. The other was spiritual. So anarchists found themselves spiritually united against materialism. And so both materialism and atheism began to fall out of fashion.

Even veganism, which during the 90s was a defining feature of green anarchism, faded into the background. It seemed hypocritical and Eurocentric to condemn another culture for hunting when the Dominant Culture was destroying whole ecosystems at a breakneck pace.

So, for those of us who have been on the

front lines for the past ten years, there is nothing new about the idea that a new political tendency is emerging.

People have been speaking of The New Anarchism for the better part of a decade, but it remains mostly an oral tradition.

The New Anarchism is not based on the idea of a revolutionary proletariat seizing control of the means of production and setting up a bunch of committees.

The idea is rather of a transformation to a way of life rooted into the ecology and cultural contexts of many different locales. If the goal is decolonization, that also means re-indigenization – to create autonomous or semi-autonomous zones within which independent communities adapt themselves to the ecological realities of specific locales.

Some have called this bioregionalism, which flowed quite easily from the values of the anti-globalization movement.

The New Anarchism aims at nothing less than the transformation of the economic and political organization of free human societies based on principles of non-aggression, mutual aid, and voluntary association.

The goal is simple – to bring human societies into harmony with nature. But the vision of the New Anarchists does not end there.

There exists also a sense that such a trans-

formation of human activity must also be accompanied by a transformation of our ways of relating to one another, and even to ourselves. There exists an understanding that modern civilized humans are part of the problem.

Many of us in First-World countries were reared on a diet of propaganda, privilege, porn, and post-modernism. We have been taught to consume rapaciously, and to express our individuality through consumerism.

We know that we are part of the problem. And so the revolutionary project for the New Anarchists is not to bring back the Terror of the guillotine, nor to storm the 21st century equivalent of the Winter Palace, but to learn another way of Being. It is a process of healing. It is a process of learning. It is a process of Becoming Human.

That is to say, the soul-searching has begun. We know what we must do. We must return to first principles. We must re-examine our beliefs and interpretations of reality. We must be willing to adjust, to adapt, to discard that which does not serve us.

And this soul-searching must extend to the deepest levels. We must leave no stone unturned, no taboo untouched. We must be secure that we have a solid World-Story through which we are able to understand our place within this mysterious web of life we are all part of. Without

this, we are adrift, plastic bags tossed this way and that by the whims of the winds.

We must question reality itself, and the language through which we construct it, and realize that Western Civilization is not, as we have been led to believe, the Supreme Apex of human potential.

We have to be willing to conceive of the possibility that the Myth of Progress was never anything but a lie invented to justify plunder and exploitation.

This leads us to biocentrism, another core tenet of the New Anarchism. Simply put, biocentrism is the belief that the natural world does not exist in order to be exploited by human beings. Rather, human beings are seen as existing within a biotic community which includes not only all plants, animals, and fungi, but also rivers, mountains, and celestial bodies like the Sun, the Moon and the Stars.

Whereas the revolutionaries of the 20th century extended a spirit of brotherhood towards all humanity, the New Anarchists extend it further still. We pledge our allegiance neither to any nation, nor any creed, but to the Great Circle of Life itself, from which we each emerged, and to which we shall return.

Some have called this progress ethnogenesis. We must become a People. We must free ourselves from dependence upon the machine, for

we will never get anywhere biting the hand that feeds us, but this is only the beginning.

It is not enough to reject the Dominant Culture, but to create a culture of our own. We must become a People, and in order to do so, we must plant our roots deep in the soil of ancient wisdom, because time is of the essence.

The world is in crisis, and with crisis comes opportunity. A window has opened up. There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.

And it seems that the time has now come for the New Anarchists to emerge from the shadows. It is a radical philosophy, of course, but perhaps its time has come.

What Paul has done is to actually put this philosophy down in writing, and to make it logically consistent.

Though what he writes is breath-takingly fresh and original, Paul insists that there is nothing new about this philosophy, and that in fact it can be found throughout history in every corner of the world.

And this is an area in which Paul shines, showing off his dazzling mastery of the philosophy of the world, referring as much to Eastern philosophies such as Taoism, Confucianism, and Hinduism as to the European intellectual tradition.

In doing so, he proves the existence of a

philosophy which recurs time and time again in different parts of the world.

After reading *The Withway*, I am now more convinced of this than ever. Technologies change, ideas go in and out of fashion, but wisdom is wisdom and truth is truth.

If something is True, it is True forever. And for that reason, there is no need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to philosophy. All the answers to our questions are to be found in the traditions of the past. We need only to rediscover them.

As I have explained elsewhere, one of Paul's core ideas is that of anarcho-perennialism, which is the idea that there is a certain natural philosophy which human beings will forever rediscover.

A society can fall out of balance, forsake its ancestral wisdom, and cease to value the Truth. But such deviation from the Tao can only last so long. The universe, like any other living body, is self-regulating.

If there is an imbalance, the imbalance will be corrected. And when that imbalance is corrected, the members of that society will learn to value Truth and Wisdom once again.

So, it is with pleasure that I present this series of interviews in which Paul and I explore the philosophy which he lays out in his seminal new work.

In the meantime, I encourage everyone to check out *The Withway*, a free PDF of which is available at [winteroak.org.uk](http://winteroak.org.uk).

For the Wild,  
Crow Qu'appelle

## FIRST CONVERSATION

### TAOISM, DIVINITY, AND THE NEW ANARCHISM

*“The way is broad, reaching left as well as right. The myriad creatures depend on it for Life yet it claims no authority. It accomplishes its task yet lays claim to no merit. It clothes and feeds the myriad creatures yet lays no claim to being their master”.* Lao-Tzu.

This quote seems as good as any a place to begin an exploration of anarchist spirituality, for the Tao Teh Ching presents the most purely anarchistic vision of spirituality that exists in any major world religion.

Therefore, it is the perfect place to start our discussion of the evolving relationship of anarchism and spirituality.

It is no secret that (most) anarchists have had an antipathy to religion for many generations, and far be it from me to pretend that this is baseless. Religion has been used as a tool of social control for millennia, and deserves much of



the rancor that it inspires.

That said, I've got news for those of you at the back of the room. Materialism is a dead dog. With the discovery of quantum physics in the 1920s, science proved the existence of magic. If you believe in the clockwork universe, in which all phenomena are produced through cause-and-effect on the material plane, you subscribe to an idea which has been disproven for a century.

Let me say that again – materialism has been disproven. We now know the observer cannot truly be separated from that which is observed. There is simply no vantage point from which an observer could form a objective perspective, because we all exist within a matrix of interacting energies, and by interacting with something, we influence it energetically in some way.

Now, to me that's pretty fucking cool. It's thrilling to know that human consciousness cannot be separated from the observable, measurable phenomena of the physically manifesting universe. That means that we might have magical powers – the ability to influence reality with the force of our minds. Who wouldn't be thrilled at such a discovery?

Materialists, that's who. They are not fucking down with magic, that's for damn sure. Why not? Who knows? Maybe they have guilty consciences and are afraid of Divine Justice or

something. Or maybe have a vested interest in keeping us misinformed about the true nature of reality.

Whatever the case may be, it cannot be said enough that the materialists do not have a leg to stand on. Materialism has been scientifically disproven. If you believe that you are living in a mechanistic universe where consciousness can be separated from the cause-and-effect interactions of discrete physical objects, you do not believe in science. You believe in materialism.

Despite the fact that the evidence has been in for a long time, the paradigm shift from materialism to a new understanding of reality has not yet occurred in the popular imagination of First-World countries.

Think about that. For a century, we have been living within a deceased paradigm, all because scientists don't want to admit that magic is real. It's pretty fucking pathetic, to be honest. Almost makes you wish for a good hard rain to wash away the intellectual grime of the Industrial Age, doesn't it?

If it does, then I've got some good news for you. The rain has come.

*“From Wakan Tanka there came a great unifying life force that flowered in and through all things – the flowers of the plains, blowing winds, rocks, trees, birds, animals – and was the same force that had been breathed into the first*

*man. Thus all things were kindred and were brought together by the same Great Mystery”.*

Standing Bear

*“While the Wise know of its existence, the Foolish do not, for their hearts are heavy with selfish desire. This harmonious Spirit exists not only in man, but also in the birds, the beasts, and the fishes, and even in plants. Beasts play, birds sing, and fishes jump; while plants flourish, bloom, and ripen. They know how to enjoy that Spirit: man oftentimes does not”.* Kaibara Ekken (Japanese Confucian scholar)

*“The springtime wind is that which scatters the cherry blossom or that which caresses the waves. The summer heat likewise, is that which withers the full-blooming greenery or that makes the children play on the beach. Just as we discover ourselves in sorrow or joy in the midst of the wind that scatters the flowers, it is ourselves that we hear, drained of all energy, in the blazing sun which beats down on the trees. This is to say that we discover ourselves within fûdo, ourselves as a social organism”.* Watsuji Tetsuro

In restoring the concept of consciousness to the universe, Paul Cudenec does not draw upon any one cultural tradition. Rather, he shows that congruent ideas have emerged independently in every part of the world, and are also confirmed by the discoveries of scientists in recent years.

For example, he explains that: *“Russian-*

*Swiss scientist Constantin von Monakow devoted his life work to showing how human beings are closely bound up not just with one another but with animals, plants and nonorganic bodies, into which we merge after death. He writes: "There is an undeniable glory in the thought that an indelible temporal bond links us, not only with our ancestors and our descendants, but above all also with the whole rest of the organic world".*

In restoring magic to its rightful place within philosophy, he does not fall into superstition or blind faith. Rather, what he offers is an anarchist conception of God, or Divinity, or Spirit, or whatever it is that you want to call the mysterious life-force animating the universe.

Of course, Paul is not the first to offer such a conception. The great psychologist Otto Gross, who converted Carl Jung to anarchism, had his own articulation of this idea. He called it Synergetik, or social energy, the force which binds together large numbers of individuals of all species.

Of this force, Paul writes: *"This could be observed in a school of young fish: 'The entire school moves uniformly like an organism, particularly in fight or flight'. This natural solidarity, says Gross, is an innate 'will to relate': an urge to witness which does not need to be taught. Human beings are not separate, isolated units with no connection to those around them,*

*any more than they are mere appendages of the collective, bound always to submit to its control. Withness is always a two-way process, a relationship and not a hierarchy. The individual thrives as a free and fulfilled human being when she or he has the support of a community. A community thrives when it is made up of free and fulfilled human beings. The richness is in the symbiosis”.*

Now, tell me – who could be against that? What better basis of unity than that of this social energy, of which all living organisms are a part? What basis for solidarity could be more compelling than the fact that we are all manifestations of this force?

The time has come to toss materialism in the trash bin of history and move on to a magical new reality in which we make common cause with all of our relations in this Great Circle of Life!

I rest my case.

And without further ado, I present the first of this series of interviews with the great Paul Cudenec!

**CROW:** In your book, you do not use the word God to describe the essence of the Natural Order of the Universe, preferring to use the word Withway, the Tao, the Dharma, Fudo, or withness. Because I am familiar with your work,

I know that you are a universalist, which is to say that you believe that the universe is a single living organism. It seems appropriate to me to refer to this Supreme Being as God, and to the Withway as God-consciousness. Is there a reason you shy away from the word God?

**PAUL:** I think the word God risks being misunderstood – by different people in different ways. On a personal level, it takes me back to the language of a rather dry dogma that I rejected at a very early age. I have discovered and committed myself to the universal life energy through an independent intellectual and intuitive process, rather than by means of any religious tradition.

That is not to say that I have not often been greatly moved by cultural manifestations of the Christian faith, in old churches and cathedrals across Europe, as well as in sacred art and music. Islamic spirituality has also inspired me, mainly through my reading but also in the extraordinary energy I drank in during a visit to Istanbul a dozen years ago.

Sometimes it is easier for me to think in terms of Allah than of God, despite – or maybe because of – me not being a Muslim. The word has fewer negative connotations for me than the name of the stern and remote patriarch of childhood church services who would not let me

play with my friends on a Sunday and apparently regarded me as a sinner, even though I was pretty sure I had done nothing seriously wrong! I have the impression that the concept of Allah is closer to the impersonal, indefinable cosmic oneness that I have in mind. But it would be disrespectful for me to generally use that term without belonging to the faith in question.

**CROW:** In *The Withway*, you refer as much to poets like T.S. Eliot and William Blake as to classical anarchist philosophers like Pyotr Kropotkin and Voltairine de Cleyre. In doing so, I think that you shed light on something that we as anarchists should herald as the true legacy of the anarchist tradition, and that this is the enormous influence of anarchism on world literature.

Unbeknownst to many anarchists, many of the world's most revered authors were either themselves anarchists or were heavily influenced by anarchism. A short list would have to include Percy Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft, Rimbaud, Tolstoy, Kafka, Orwell, Hemingway, Dostoyevsky, Voltaire, James Joyce, B. Traven, Terence McKenna, and Robert Anton Wilson.

Yet most people interested in the history of anarchism seem to overlook the most interesting anarchist thinkers. Why do you think this is, and what do you think can be done about it?

**PAUL:** Personally, I think it is inevitable that many great writers are influenced by anarchy, because anarchy is a human expression of the life energy itself! The trouble is that there is a secondary manifestation of primal anarchy which is tied to the political realm. Some of those you name were also anarchists in this sense, but you couldn't say the same for T.S. Eliot, for instance. That is one reason why I wanted to feature his work in *The Withway* – to open out the vision I am advancing beyond the limits of the merely political, to embrace thinking aligned with my own by way of feeling and ethical aesthetics rather than simply by political ideology.

To answer your question, I suspect that, on the one hand, many of those writers would not be recognised as anarchists by those who defend too narrowly the letter of the political faith and, on the other hand, anarchist ideas and inspirations have been deliberately and systematically marginalised by the dominant system and thus not mentioned in relation to writers regarded as important. Quite a pincer movement!

What we can do about it is to broaden our vision and ourselves make the connections that others refuse to make. Moreover, we can build a culture based on the understanding of the need to do just that: one with a holistic and multi-dimensional approach built into all its



assumptions and approaches.

**CROW:** Years ago, I wrote that the task of the revolutionary was to make radical ideas seem like common sense. One of the things that captivates me about your work is the ease with which you explain metaphysical concepts. Could you please explain why an understanding of metaphysics is essential for any truly revolutionary movement, and offer some advice to those who are encountering metaphysical ideas for the first time?

**PAUL:** Authentic political ideas are an extension of metaphysical thought down into a more practical level. In other words, metaphysics provides the principles required for a truly coherent political philosophy. An authentic political philosophy – which is necessarily a revolutionary one in the context of our debased and artificial contemporary society! – is not only guided by those principles but it is also *aware* of being so. It thus enjoys a consciousness of itself that raises it far above the level of what usually passes for political ideology today.

The first of these principles, from which all else cascades down, is that the universe is a single living entity. On a more practical level this manifests itself in the holistic understanding that everything is inter-connected. It frees us to

treasure human diversity, safe in the knowledge that humans already naturally form part of one single organism. It tells us that, because of this oneness, we are capable of co-operating communally in a spirit of mutual aid without the need for top-down governance. It also reminds us of our essential belonging to nature and therefore the absurdity of seeing the natural world as an object, a mere resource to be plundered at will.

It further informs us as individuals of our need to act as what we truly are – provisional physical manifestations of the cosmic oneness – and not to base our lives on the sorry illusion of being separate beings necessarily guided solely by self-interest and the fear of personal death.

The primary principle of unity also informs our understanding of the superiority of quality over quantity, one of the most important subsidiary principles. When we grasp that the universe is one single entity, rather than a mere accumulation of smaller separate entities, we can also see that quantity is an illusion. It is merely a dividing-up of the whole into many parts. The cake is cut up into lots of slices, but the result is not an overall increase in the quantity of cake!

On the political level, this leads us to see clearly that all the production of objects around which our industrial society has been built, all its so-called fabrication of “wealth”, is a pitiful delusion. In creating “quantity” it has merely cut

up and moved around the existing reality and, in doing so, destroyed the quality of the original living organism (nature, human communities).

My advice to anyone interested in metaphysical thinking is to seek clarity, above all. The best metaphysicians, notably René Guénon, are crystal clear. You might have to re-read certain passages to grasp what they are saying, if you are not familiar with their approach, but the effort is worthwhile because the sense is always there and always coherent within the overall framework.

Unfortunately there is a lot of pseudo-metaphysical material around which tends to get bogged down in a lot of picturesque and unconvincing detail (there are seven types of this, 23 levels of the other, endless obscure sub-classifications and labels), often indulges in a sentimentality which has no place in serious metaphysics and, because it does not actually flow down from primal principles, can seriously contradict itself.

This kind of stuff is to be avoided like the plague. Metaphysics is about the search for eternal and universal truth and we tend to recognise that truth when we encounter it, because it is ingrained within us – even if we have never consciously formulated that truth.

If you don't intuitively recognise the truth in the writing, then it's probably not worth reading.

You'd do better to go for a long walk on the hills and let the knowledge surface from within you.

**CROW:** Okay, that concludes our first interview. I recommend that the reader who is interested in exploring Paul's ideas check out his website Winter Oak. Since we have been discussing metaphysics, I specifically recommend the following essays: Towards an Anarchist Metaphysics, Necessary Subjectivity, Denying Reality: a dangerous delusion.

## SECOND CONVERSATION

### VILLAGISM, PACIFISM, AND THE LEGACY OF MOHATMA GANDHI

*“I believe that if India, and through India the world, is to achieve real freedom, then sooner or later we shall have to go and live in the villages – in huts, not in palaces. Millions of people can never live in cities and palaces in comfort and peace”.* Mohandas Gandhi.

In recent years, the name of the once-revered Mohatma Gandhi has been dragged through the mud. Leftists of various stripes have assailed his legacy, accusing him of being a willing pawn of British imperialists. Anarchists have participated in this defamation, or revisionism, or whatever you want to call it.

In 2011, Frank Lopez critiqued Gandhi’s pacifism in his influential documentary *END:CIV*. In 2012, Gord Hill went further, publishing a zine called *Smash Pacifism*, in which he attacks the legacies both of Gandhi and of Martin Luther King. And Peter Gelderloos and Derrick Jensen have also been hyper-critical of

pacifism in their influential works *How Non-Violence Protects the State* and *Endgame*.

In the light of these developments, I read Paul Cudenech's description of Gandhi's vision of a post-industrial society with interest. I had been unaware of Gandhi's philosophy of Villagism, which has a much more anarchistic character than I had previously been aware.

To give you an idea of this philosophy, I'd cite Gandhi's words here: *"There is no doubt that most of our wants can be supplied by the villages. When we become village-minded we shall not want imitations from the West or machine-made products"*.

*"My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet inter-dependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity"*.

*"My economic creed is a complete taboo in respect to all foreign commodities, whose importation is likely to prove harmful to our indigenous interests. This means that we may not in any circumstances import a commodity that can be adequately supplied from our country"*.

Personally, I am not knowledgeable about India, and I generally try to refrain from having strong opinions on subjects about which I am uninformed. For that reason, I decided to interview Paul on the subject of Villagism,

Pacifism and the legacy of Gandhi. We also touch on other subjects such as the historical roots of anarchism in anabaptism, Sufism, the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and the indigenous intellectual tradition of Turtle Island. Enjoy!

**CROW:** In *The Withway*, you speak of Mohatma Gandhi's philosophy of Villagism, which you define as a shared vision of decentralised communities based around traditional crafts and culture. This resonates with me because it is, broadly speaking, the goal of the indigenous sovereignty movement on Turtle Island. I remember, years ago, hearing someone describe the goal thusly. "There's no sovereignty without food sovereignty, and there's no food sovereignty without an intact land base. So we must defend the land".

Now I live in Chiapas, where the Zapatista movement asserts that "*the land belongs to those that work it*" and defends the interests of a network of autonomous villages.

So although I am only just encountering the term "Villagism" now, it seems to describe something that is already a core part of my philosophy.

Now, Gandhi is certainly a household name, and was a major inspiration to an earlier generation of anarchists (such as Ammon Hennessy and the Catholic Workers). Do you feel

that his philosophy has been misrepresented in recent years?

**PAUL:** Yes, and deliberately so, I suspect. First of all, it was stripped of its anti-industrial and decentralizing aspects to be presented as merely a philosophy of pacifism and of Indian national independence.

Since the latter has long been a superficial historical reality (although India never really became free of the malignant imperial entity which has now mutated into globalism), it has been deprived of its radical edge and framed in a purely historical context, like the original slave trade.

We are meant to believe that, thanks to the benevolent forces of liberal-commercial progress (into which Gandhi has been somehow recuperated) all that colonial occupation and exploitation is now safely in the past!

Just to skip back to Gandhi's pacifism – for me, this was clearly the best strategy available to him. The sheer numbers of Indians were their resistance trump card.

Personally, I think we should avoid fetichizing either violence or non-violence. Each situation calls for its own response, to be determined by those involved on the basis of their own inner ethical compass.



**CROW:** What do you make of the recent efforts to cancel Gandhi? I think it's worth noting that anarchists such as Gord Hill have played an active role in this.

**PAUL:** I have heard a bit about this, but I haven't read the stuff, so I can't answer in detail. I would say, though, that what interests me are the ideas expressed directly by Gandhi and his colleagues, like the Kumarappa brothers, which have greatly inspired me. I recommend people go to those sources and read them, rather than relying on second-hand accounts which may well be designed to deceive.

The historian Carroll Quigley spells out how the imperial ruling clique, which owns pretty much everything today, has made a point of controlling not only the present (via the media), but also the past, via academia and the writing (and publishing) of history.

When you throw in the extent to which so-called "radicals" have been corrupted by those same networks (on which I have written quite a lot since 2020), we are left with a bleak Orwellian picture.

The villagism, simplicity, self-sufficiency and decentralization proposed by Gandhi represent the exact opposite of the authoritarian transhumanist world totalitarianism sought by the system. It would make perfect sense for them

to deliberately undermine Gandhi's thinking, via the *ad hominem* approach they so often favour in the absence of any real philosophical or ethical arguments.

Discrediting these ideas among those most likely to adopt them, such as anarchists, would be especially important, so the smears would have to be devised with that audience in mind.

I see this sort of shallow "debunking" approach all the time regarding the organic radical thinkers whose legacy I promote. It is always a favoured approach to claim that the writer in question was secretly working for the system all along – nothing like that to put off an actual radical! And people parrot these stupid lines, without knowing what they are talking about.

Go away and read George Orwell or Aldous Huxley, essay for essay, line for line, and tell me that you really believe they wanted to bring about the dystopias they were warning us about! It's absurd! They could do the same thing to me and you, when we're dead and gone and unable to defend ourselves. There's a definite *modus operandi* there, which has been analysed with regard to Wikipedia, for instance. History is rewritten to suit the needs of the system.

Once you realise that the system exists, that it knows no moral qualms, and that it is eminently capable of fabricating history, then frankly it becomes absurd to imagine that it

would not do so!

Once you realise that many “radicals” and “anarchists” are fake, and controlled by the system, then you become very wary of narratives coming from that direction which only protect and reinforce the dominant worldview. Question everything!

**CROW:** As long as we are discussing Villagism, I think it would be appropriate to bring up the example of anabaptist groups such as the Quakers, Mennonites, Hutterites, and Amish. If you are advocating for Villagism as a revolutionary strategy, I think that it behooves you to study the examples of these movements, all of which have been living exactly such an ideology for hundreds of years.

If I understand you correctly, you are advocating for secession from industrial society and the formation of autonomous communities which do not depend on the industrial system. Furthermore, you advocate for a type of spiritual perspective. It sounds a lot like what you’re advocating for is a strategy of going Amish. How does your philosophy differ from that of the Amish and where do the two overlap?

**PAUL:** I don’t know a lot about the Amish philosophy, I’m afraid, but if it’s about communities becoming independent from the

system, then I am obviously sympathetic. I am in contact with networks here in France that are aiming for the same thing – since the Covid moment, the interest and urgency has soared.

Of course, the big problem is that the system will not simply sit back and let people slip out of its control. Industrial society was only created in England in the first place by enclosing common land and thus forcing people out of their traditional lives of so-called subsistence. Uprooted and dispossessed, they were forced to accept wage slavery in the system's new factories.

Seeking autonomy today is also to declare war on the system. But if enough people, everywhere, try it at the same time (in the narrow window of concentrated resistance that the system has itself provoked), and are prepared to defend themselves to the very end, has the system got the physical means to make us all submit? I suspect not, which is why I consider this approach a cause for hope.

As far as spirituality goes, I don't think you can live simply, on the land, in a small stable community, and not feel the soulful sensitivity to place, people, belonging, landscape, animals, seasons and a slow passing of time, hinting at the eternal, that has been torn away from us by the modern industrial racket.

**CROW:** As you know, I was raised Mennonite, which is a pacifist anabaptist denomination of Christianity. An important part of my upbringing was being aware of the history of my people. As you know, not all anabaptists were originally pacifists. There were revolutionaries who preached for full-on war against the Roman Catholic Church and the states with which it was allied. These revolutionaries are known to history as the People of the Sword, whereas the People of the Staff, from whom I am descended, advocated for secession, economic self-sufficiency, and refusal to serve in the military. It would be hard to argue against the fact that the strategy of the People of the Staff has yielded better results than that of the violent anabaptist revolutionaries who took over Munster in the 16th century.

And this leads me to my interest in pacifism as an effective political strategy. Whereas the People of the Sword have long since vanished, the People of the Staff have spread to every corner of the Earth. There are over two million Mennonites worldwide, with countless autonomous or semi-autonomous communities spread throughout the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Yet anabaptists are rarely mentioned in contemporary anarchist discourse. Why do you think this is?

**PAUL:** I think it just doesn't fit in with the narrow definition of anarchism today adopted by so many of its adherents, to the great detriment of the philosophy. Any form of religion or even spirituality is a complete no-no, for many comrades. Christian anarchism is regarded as strange and marginal.

**CROW:** One of the things that I appreciate about your work is how you trace anarchist ideas back much prior to the French Revolution, when the word anarchism was invented. It should be common knowledge, I think, that anarchism is derived from anabaptism, but atheist anarchists seem to downplay this fact. Why do you think it is that anarchists have so long had such a limited interest in their own history?

**PAUL:** As you know, there is more than one way of seeing anarchism. The first book I ever read about the subject, many years ago now, was George Woodcock's classic *Anarchism*, and there he mentions anabaptism as part of the movement's "family tree". Peter Marshall, in *Demanding the Impossible* also traces the philosophy back to, and indeed beyond, that period, and it has always seemed obvious to me that anarchism was the continuation of something that already existed. That's how things work!

But there are others whose definition of anarchism is much narrower and confined to the political movement giving itself that name. That is also legitimate, but confusion is caused, as ever, by the use of the same word to describe different things.

I don't think you can separate anarchists' lack of interest in their movement's history from the general ignorance of history in contemporary society – or real history, anyway. The information people consume and share revolves entirely around what is happening right now, today, and the past is invoked merely to back up narratives which justify a particular present.

Some young identity-politics anarchists are now so trapped in their artificial techno-ideological bubble that it must, furthermore, be very difficult for them to identify with a past world inhabited solely by “cisgendered” men and women who paid no attention to their pronouns and enjoyed no access to the internet.

**CROW:** In your book *The Stifled Soul of Humankind*, you trace anarchist ideas back even further than the Radical Reformation, proposing the theory that Europeans Crusaders may have encountered radical Sufi sects in the Middle East and brought these ideas back to Europe with them. Do you believe that Sufism is a major influence on anarchism?

**PAUL:** I think it goes deeper than that. Anarchism (or anarchy) is the manifestation of natural law in the human mind – it is the realisation that we are part of organic nature and that our individual freedom is, at one and the same time, necessary for the well-being of the communal whole and dependent on the well-being of the communal whole.

This deep knowing, which is part of the underlying innate pattern of the human mind, is expressed in different cultures, at different times, in slightly different forms and with different labels, such as Tao or dharma or asha.

Sufism was a continuation of this knowledge, fed by various ancient sources, which managed, by its association with the dominant regional religion, to avoid being crushed by power, or forced deep underground, in the way of European pagan survivals.

So Sufi ideals would have appealed to those Europeans in the same way that they appealed to me – as openings to an ancient mystical wisdom which had largely disappeared from view in Christian Europe.

There are definite traces of Sufi influence in medieval heresy, but these influences would also have merged with currents still surviving in Europe (not least within Christianity) to inspire the Brethren of the Free Spirit and the Cathars



and the anabaptists and so on.

Sufism is very compatible with anarchism (as a recent book on Sufi anarchist Ivan Aguéli confirms) but it is not really the specificity of Sufism that is important here, as much as its role in reviving within us a sense of spiritual truth and freedom that is often buried beneath many layers of oppressive falsehood.

Anarchy, for me, is another particular manifestation of this eternal gnosis, in a form suited to contemporary society.

However, I have to say that a certain kind of 2020s anarchism is no longer an appropriate vessel for this gnosis, as I am sure you would agree. In a way, this is the task you and I have set ourselves – to rescue anarchism from that oblivion and to enable it once more to become the ideological opening through which the light of ancient truth can shine in the world today.

**CROW:** In the recent book by the late great anarchist David Graeber (R.I.P.), *The Dawn of Everything*, he and his co-author David Wengrow establish the major influence that the indigenous intellectual tradition of Turtle Island had in influencing the political thought of Europe.

In particular, the two authors rescue the Huron-Wendat orator Kondiaronk from obscurity, revealing him to be one of the great thinkers of the Enlightenment. This seems to

further bolster your argument that there is nothing European about anarchism (except perhaps the word), and that the history of anarchism extends much, much further than is generally imagined. What do you think of Graeber and Wengrow's argument? Should we be looking to indigenous societies for inspiration on how human beings can organize themselves?

**PAUL:** Yes, their argument certainly rings true. For Europeans, it was as if they had rediscovered a way of living which no longer even lingered on in the collective memory, except in terms of a Golden Age or the Garden of Eden. They saw that people could live naturally, simply, happily, without all the artifice that had choked up their own world.

While the system that had enslaved them in Europe went on to enslave indigenous people elsewhere, a certain historical or anthropological awareness was nevertheless sparked which led to deep-rooted criticism of what was now revealed to be a specific Western "civilization", rather than just some kind of permanent divinely-ordained hierarchical normality.

Yes, of course indigenous societies can inspire us, not because we want to mimic their particularities, but because they reveal to us an old and healthy way of living, in harmony with the rhythms and patterns of nature, which all

our ancestors once enjoyed and which will hopefully one day be enjoyed again by future generations.

## THIRD CONVERSATION

### THE RELIGION OF BEAUTY. ART, AESTHETICS, ROMANTICISM AND THE WITHWAY

*“We can assert with some confidence that our own period is one of decline; that the standards of culture are lower than they were fifty years ago; and that the evidences of this decline are visible in every department of human activity. I see no reason why the decay of culture should not proceed much further, and why we may not even anticipate a period, of some duration, of which it is possible to say that it will have no culture”.*  
T.S. Eliot, 1948.

*“Anything based on the toxic anti-values of separation, self-interest, exploitation, slavery, domination and greed, anything and anyone fundamentally bad, can never transmit beauty. As Ellul insists: ‘Everywhere, Technik creates ugliness’”.* Paul Cudenec, 2022

In beginning to speak of Beauty, the knowledge

of which is indisputably subjective, it feels appropriate to speak in the first person, to speak of the importance of Beauty in my own cosmovision.

Truthfully, to my mind, nothing but Beauty is truly important. To me, that which is beautiful is good, that which is good is beautiful. Therefore, in forming my political consciousness, I refer not to any objective set of logical principles, existing on some vaunted plane, but to my own capacity, born of some sense of reverent awe for That Which is Beautiful, to appreciate that which is good, and to know it by the feeling of ecstasy that it produces within me.

In other words, I am a Romantic. I am not a rationalist or an objectivist or anything else. I will argue in rational or logical terms if it seems to me worth the trouble of doing so, but make no mistake – I am a Romantic, and I make no appeal to any authority higher than that of my own sense of Beauty.

At the end of the day, I am an activist not because I am a Bodhisattva animated by boundless compassion for the suffering of Mankind. I am a revolutionary because my spirit is offended by the ugliness of the modern world. I am a revolutionary because I believe that humanity is capable of so much more than the vulgar endeavour of profiteering and domination with which it has been obsessed for centuries.

Truthfully, I hate politics. It is the domain ruled by those who think themselves clever, but do not love wisdom. By the time that I die, I hope that I am regarded not as political thinker, nor as an activist, nor even as a mystic, but as an artist.

But I digress. Let us approach the subject at hand.

Perhaps it is because I am essentially guided by a sense of a sense of aesthetics that I am so drawn to the work of Paul Cudenec, for he is one of the few contemporary anarchist philosophers who seems to me guided by the desperate longing for Truth which has inspired mystics since the beginning of time.

In *The Withway*, he writes: *“When nature is able to express itself fully and clearly through the human mind and hand, its original beauty shines through. For 19th century art critic John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelite movement he inspired, there was a witness in medieval society which remained visible in its artistic achievements, such as the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe. Gothic, in Ruskin’s eyes, was a form of art that was natural, human and beautiful, an art which expressed a social world of ‘tranquil and gentle existence, sustained by the gifts, and gladdened by the splendour, of the earth’. These three qualities – natural, human and beautiful – always go together in Ruskin and the Pre-*

*Raphaelites' shared vision and are contrasted with a modern industrial world which is artificial, inhuman and ugly".*

Elsewhere, he quotes William Morris, who wrote: *"Everything made by man's hands has a form, which either must be beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with Nature, and helps her; ugly if it is discordant with Nature, and thwarts her; it cannot be indifferent".*

In *The Withway*, Paul Cudenec refers more to poets and artists such as William Blake and T.S. Eliot than to classical anarchists such as Pyotr Kropotkin and Nestor Makhno. Indeed, quotes from classical anarchists such as Emma Goldman, Errico Malatesta, and Mikael Bakunin are notably absent.

*"Alfred Noyes depicts Ruskin as the prophet of the new religion, 'the religion of beauty'. He taught the young artists that it was in nature that they would find the aesthetic inspiration that had infused the Gothic cathedrals with their forest-like interiors, urging them to 'go to Nature... rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing'. 'It is simply fuller Nature we want', declared William Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelites honoured not only the artistic tradition of the Middle Ages but also its way of thinking. Ananda Coomaraswamy explains that from the medieval perspective, the form, beauty, goodness and truth of a thing are seen as deeply*

*connected, almost synonymous. Art, like nature, is the outpouring of universal light. The individual artist is just one natural channel through which this light passes and makes its beauty visible, on a canvas or in a sculpture as in a mountain or a forest”.*

**CROW:** Okay, let’s talk about art! In *The Withway*, you present Beauty as a value in-and-of-itself, intimately connected to the ideas of Truth, Nature, Witness, and Anarchy. Personally, I agree wholeheartedly with this. I have long believed that Truth is Beauty and Beauty is Truth, and much of my political activism is inspired by a feeling of Disgust at the Falsity, Artificiality, and Ugliness of the modern world, which values neither Truth nor Beauty.

To me, my morality is very much informed by my sense of aesthetics. So far as I am concerned, that which is Beautiful is Good, and that which offends my sense of Beauty is Bad. (I should clarify here that I am not referring here to something which is more conceptual than visual). Is this how your mind works also?

**PAUL:** Yes – in the same way that we can use our sense of smell to tell if food has gone off or is still good to eat, our innate sense of visual aesthetics alerts us to something about the inner quality of what we are observing. However, we



also need to be aware that aesthetics can sometimes be used to deceive us into seeing value in something which is only superficially beautiful. I wrote a bit about this in my novel *The Fakir of Florence*, which as well as being a work of fiction is also, in fact, an account of my real-life thoughts about the art I discovered in that astonishing city in the course of a month I spent there in 2015.

While deeply moved by the light of purity, the sacred simplicity, of earlier works of the Quattrocento (15th century) in Italy, I ended up questioning whether the Renaissance was not the stage at which the cultural rot was already beginning to set in.

I wrote: *“The authentic and powerful purity that motivated the art has been hijacked, stolen, and its magical force is now harnessed for the impure ends of those who own the object, the gallery, the civilization that can claim the art as its heritage. That is what has been making me so uneasy here. I have been dragged into a world which proclaims that money is not, after all, incompatible with inner beauty. I have been fooled by the cultural recuperation of the Florentine past into half-accepting the enormous lie it dreamt up – that there was nothing unholy, ugly or fundamentally wrong about living for financial profit”*.

And a bit later I added: *“By the time we*

*reach the 16th century the gold has disappeared from the works of art themselves and fled out to the frames in great heavy, ugly, twists of ostentation. The heavenly light, too, has fled from the paintings”.*

**CROW:** I remember reading one of the Situationists saying that the problem with modernity was not greed, but bad taste. His argument was that if people had a taste for that which was truly good, they would not waste their lives working to accumulate wealth to buy consumer goods to impress their neighbours, but live their lives ecstatically “following their bliss” (to borrow a term from Joseph Campbell). On an individual level, does following the Withway mean following one’s bliss?

**PAUL:** I agree with that Situationist comment. I have always felt an aesthetic aversion, which cannot be separated from an ethical aversion, to all that is commercial, that is to say built on a desire for profit and the search for status and thus domination over others. The world of “business” and advertising and marketing is ugly on the inside and the outside. I would say that accepting this feeling within me, and letting it become one of the foundations of my own worldview, was part of my orientation towards the Withway.

But what about people who don't find that world repulsive, who are attracted to its deceptive surface glitter? I would say they that they have some work to do in breaking through all the layers of cultural assumptions that have led them astray. The deepest place we can go within ourselves is the collective place, that of humankind, nature and indeed the underlying patterns of the whole living cosmos.

So ultimately good taste, a taste which corresponds to beauty and truth, is not about a personal outlook. It is rather about the extent to which we have managed to allow greater truths, shared truths, to shine through the dirt and distraction of a narrow and self-centred existence. Real individual strength means breaking out of the individual level to know the greater reality which gives meaning to our temporary existences.

**CROW:** Now, I have basically made it my life mission to drink deeply from the well of life, although in practice this produces despondency as well as bliss, for I often despair at the ugliness of the modern world. This has involved prioritizing my own desires and creative vision above all else, which could easily be construed as selfishness.

**PAUL:** This is the thing – it is only by embracing

our own inner creative desires that we can access greater truth. Otherwise, we are merely looking at second-hand photocopied versions from other people's experiences and visions. They may tell the truth, and guide us in our search for the truth, but they are not the truth itself. That truth, which is also light and beauty, is primal and has to be experienced directly if it is to be experienced fully. To seek within yourself is also to go beyond yourself. If you pursue your own path with absolute authenticity and courage, you will find that you are walking the Withway.

**CROW:** I like your focus on Beauty as a universal value which should guide revolutionary politics. I personally reject the lionization of the archetype of the Worker as revolutionary protagonist that was so prevalent throughout the 20th century. To me, it seems disingenuous to identify the revolutionary subject in economic terms.

Rather, I prefer to cast the Artist as the revolutionary subject, as the Hero and protagonist of political struggle. To me, no one is more heroic than the person who follows the highest aspirations of their spirits. As I argued in *Love Has Been Abolished*, what is needed in this day and age is a rebirth of the Heroic. What do you think of the idea that the Archetype of the Artist might serve as a model for revolutionaries

to aspire to emulate?

**PAUL:** It is certainly odd to lionize “the Worker”, given that freeing human beings from their debased status of being merely “workers” should be at the heart of our revolt. And yes, we need to cast off the blinkers of “economic” utility in order to catch sight of the other world of which we dream.

The Artist in the broad sense, certainly – Colin Wilson used the term *The Outsider* to mean this and we might also talk about *The Rebel*. The essential element is that this is a man or woman who has risen above the level to which this system works so hard to reduce us, who even regards their own life and security as of lesser importance than the Cause to which they are committed.

This, to me, is what is inspiring about the idea of a revolutionary. This is not even about an individual reaching some kind of heroic status – the pure ideal would maybe be someone who is so selfless that they remain entirely anonymous in the struggle.

**CROW:** You are clearly inspired by English, French, and German Romanticism. Could you please share your thoughts on the connections between anarchism and Romanticism?

**PAUL:** I am not sure if I have been influenced by Romanticism or it is just that I have found in Romanticism a spirit that I recognise as my own. It is about a type of person perhaps, a particular way of seeing and living life. It is about being animated by the vital spirit within, rather than calculating the best means of achieving personal material advantage or security.

It's about being in touch with greater forces than your individual life and yet insisting that you as an individual will not be crushed and subdued by the society around you.

It is, you could say, the half of anarchism that has been lost by the contemporary conformist clones who have stolen its name. It is the recognition of what we were discussing earlier – that it is through the expression of innermost individuality that we can play the role we were born to play in the collective self-realisation of our communities and our species.

It is a question of being fully alive rather than half-dead like so many people seem to be today. A society made up of half-dead individuals can only ever be half-dead itself.

**CROW:** It seems to me that a critique of Technik goes back to the very beginning of both anarchism and feminism. Mary Shelley, author of *Frankenstein*, uses the metaphor of an early human victim of a twisted science experiment to

throw shade on modernism. Now, it bears mentioning that Mary Shelley was the lover of the anarchist Romantic poet Percy Shelley and the daughter of William Godwin, who is sometimes cited as the first anarchist.

**PAUL:** Well, yes. William Blake had the same critique. It seems obvious to me that a movement which aims for the liberation of humanity from slavery would be hostile to the tools with which that slavery is imposed!

That initial, intuitive, response has since been hammered out of would-be rebels by the relentless propaganda of the industrial system, which ridicules and shames those who oppose its machineries and lies. We are described as being stupid, naive or uncaring about the well-being of those whose lives it supposedly improves. The word “reactionary” is often deployed in contrast to the “progressive” support for Technik and its world, in a bid to render an anti-industrial position impossible for anyone who wants to belong to officially-authorized anarchist or “left-wing” circles.

This smearing strategy is of course today very apparent in the attacks on “anti-vaxxers” who refused to bow to “The Science”. But this is just the latest manifestation of a manipulation that has been going on since Shelley’s days.

**CROW:** You are clearly a huge fan of Richard Jefferies. Winter Oak Press has published two books about him, and you cite him as a major influence in various places throughout your body of work. I'll confess that I know nothing at all about Richard Jefferies. Could you please explain the influence that he has had on your life, and why he is an important thinker?

**PAUL:** We republished one book about him (by Henry Salt) and one by him, *The Story of My Heart*. The personal importance of Jefferies for me lies in his descriptions of his walks in nature, in which he connects spiritually not just with that particular place but with the living world in general, across the millennia. He rises out of his body and his time to speak of that of which I have always yearned to know.

When I first read Jefferies, he provoked a deep spiritual pain within me, born of the fact that because of my circumstances I was rarely able to immerse myself in a presence with nature such as he described. I remember putting one of his books aside, at one stage, because it made me miserable to realise what I was missing out on!

This feeling was probably increased by the fact that Jefferies died young after years of declining health (TB) and expressed until the very end his frustrated desire to live and to live fully. When I read him, I felt my own life slipping



away too fast, as well. But ultimately he pushed me into spending more and more time in the countryside, particularly on the chalk Downlands of which he often wrote, and I found that I too was able to experience what he had experienced. I had a spiritual awakening which changed the whole course of my life. What a debt I owe that man!

This probably answers your question as to why I think he is an important thinker, but I could add that his 19th century novel *After London* (a sort of early science-fiction work about a post-industrial England) was an influence on William Morris and thus on the whole “utopian” socialist/anarchist tradition consigned to the dungeons of wrongthink by industrialist Marxism.

**CROW:** One of the things that I liked about *Deep Green Resistance*, the influential book co-written by Derrick Jensen, Lierre Keith, and AricMcBay, was its focus on the Wandervogel, who might be thought of as the first anti-industrial counterculture.

**PAUL:** Yes, I wrote a little piece about the Wandervogel recently, in fact. That whole early 20th century scene, particularly around Ascona, in Switzerland, was remarkably similar to the 1960s counterculture that gave so much hope to

the likes of Theodore Roszak. The revolt was ended by the Great War then Adolf Hitler. Progress marches on!

**CROW:** One thing that I admire about you is that you have exhibited the moral courage to have unfashionable opinions over the course of your career. One example of this is to be found in your defence of German Romanticism, also known as the Völkisch movement, during the Anarchist Inquisition, a period of time when Alexander Reid Ross (who has since been exposed as an intelligent agent), Shane Burley, Spencer Sunshine and others sought to associate Völkisch ideology with nazism.

You do an exquisitely thorough job of debunking this misconception in *Organic Radicalism: Breaking Down the Fascist Machine*, which has been published as a zine by *Nevermore Media*.

For those readers unfamiliar with ARR and the Anarchist Inquisition, could you please tell us why it was necessary to write a defence of German Romanticism?

**PAUL:** I am not sure there would be any point in expressing my opinions if they were already fashionable! The question of the Völkisch movement is tied in with the story of the Wandervogel. The terrible thing is that because

part of the movement was co-opted by the Nazi regime, it is now often used by defenders of the system, like Ross, to argue that the whole back-to-nature ethic risks leading to Nazism.

This is total rubbish, of course. Nazism, like Fascism and indeed Soviet Communism, was a hyper-industrialist phenomenon which cynically hijacked anti-industrialist feeling in Germany to garner support. The system always does this. At the same time as it crushes opposition it sucks it up, contaminates it with its own toxicity and then spits it back in our faces!

The point I make in the article in question is that we now have to not only take on board the truth that the Völkisch movement was not actually compatible with Nazism, but also that this truth has been deliberately and cynically distorted in order to prevent the emergence of similiar anti-industrial movements in the future.

This additional layer of understanding has to become part of the core philosophy of our 21st century anti-industrialism – we need an incredibly wised-up movement, aware not only of industrialism itself but also of the system behind industrialism and the insidious ways in which this system operates.

**CROW:** Amen to that. And with that, we conclude this interview. Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions, Paul, and I hope

that I have inspired at least a few people to read *The Withway*. It feels appropriate here to quote the closing passage from that book, for I believe that here Paul returns to an idea which is the alpha and omega of not only all anarchist philosophy, but all philosophy.

Philosophy is nothing other than the love of wisdom. And if I am sure of anything in this life, it is this – the appreciation of beauty is the beginning of wisdom.

Paul ends *The Withway* with the following words:

*“The Withway is an old way asking to become the new way. It is the eternal way, the human way within the natural and universal way. ‘What intense joy we can gain in sensing the wondrous phenomenon of Heaven and Earth – the light of the sun and the moon; the passing and re-passing of the four seasons; the changing shapes in cloud and mist; the mountain’s profile; the dancing stream; the soft breeze; moisture of rain and dew; purity of snow; smile of flowers; growth of fragrant herbs; infinite life of birds, beasts, fishes and insects,’ writes Ekken.*

*‘To make ourselves conversant with this wonderful nature is to expand our hearts, purify our feelings, arouse holy thoughts, and wash away all low and unclean desires. This is called inspiration, for the goodness which is within is aroused, and flows out at the touch of the outer*

*world'.*

*When you have finished reading this, why not go outside and look up at the blue sky, the clouds or the stars?*

*Listen carefully. Even in the densest city, you will hear it. The call of an unseen bird. The giggle of an invisible child. Leaves set a-rustling by a breeze from beyond. Phantom faery voices singing of time long gone, of time yet to come.*

*Listen carefully. The Withway is calling us home”.*

## FOURTH CONVERSATION

### TABOO AND THE ZEITGEIST. IS ANARCHIST OUTRAGE AGAINST THE ROTHSCHILDS GREATLY TO BE WONDERED AT?

*“An Anarchist outrage on one of the Rothschilds is not greatly to be wondered at. In France as elsewhere they are so wealthy and hold so prominent a place that they stand out as the natural objects which Anarchists would seek to attack”. The Times (a London newspaper), 1895*

*“I am painfully conscious that there are people who seem unable to distinguish between certain Jewish people in particular and Jewish people as a whole: writing this piece while attempting to give no ammunition to such elements has been a thanklessly delicate task. It would have been a thousand times easier to have written about the Rothschilds if they had been one of Europe’s many historical Roman Catholic or Protestant banking families: nobody would have imagined*

*for a moment that my criticisms applied to all or even most Catholics or Protestants. But these other dynasties have not played the same central role in creating all that is worst in our contemporary world and so it is on the many sins of the Rothschilds that I am nevertheless obliged to focus".* Paul Cudenec, December 2022.

Were it not for censorship, *Nevermore Media* would not exist. For years, I had been writing for various anarchist publications, such as the *Earth First! Journal*, *Slingshot*, *It's Going Down*, *Montreal Counter-Info*, *Northshore Counter-Info*, *Anarchist News*, *Attaque*, and others. When I started critiquing the draconian lockdowns and the insane authoritarianism of the COVID psy-op, some of my critiques were published in the legacy anarchist media, but eventually they all started censoring me. So I decided to start my own project.

When I look back on the work that we were doing in late 2020 / early 2021, it seems quite mild. We weren't saying anything that would have been controversial prior to March 2020. Rather, we were insisting that we must stay true to the animating spirit of the anarchist tradition, which is to refuse and resist the implementation of authoritarian measures.

At the time, I felt that I risked making myself a social pariah by daring to make even these

mild critiques. That was how high the stakes were at that point. Dissent was taboo, and it was scary to break this taboo.

Fast-forward two years, and here we are. Shockingly, the world does seem to have mostly returned to normal, although it is difficult to trust this apparent normality in the face of what we now know about the power of 21st century propaganda. I'm still waiting for everyone to admit I was right about everything, but hey, life is good and for now, I can do whatever I want. To me, that's worth celebrating.

Yes, I know that in all likelihood, this is just a lull whilst the players position themselves for the next round of the insane game of power.

But if this is just the calm before the storm, does it not then behoove us to make the most of the time we do have? Nothing is ever promised in this life. As the song goes: *"Drink, and be Merry... For tomorrow, we may die!"*

The good news is that it is no longer taboo to talk disparaging of masks, "vaccines", or of authoritarianism justified in the name of biosecurity.

We can all breathe a sigh of relief.

The bad news is that we now know how malleable the minds of our fellow human beings are, and how at the wave of his wand, the Wizard of Oz could again turn the world upside-down.

I think a lot of us did lose some friends due to



taking a controversial political stance, but I don't think that I'm alone in having a "good riddance" attitude towards these zealous dupes.

Honestly, for every friend that I've lost, I've made at least three. And I know that a lot of my fellow dissidents have had similar experiences. I think that a lot of us feel mentally and spiritually stronger than we were before. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, right? The experience of confronting the fear of social disapproval and living to tell the tale has made me more confident in my ability to speak my truth, and from what I've observed, my fellow-travelers feel likewise.

It is perhaps for this reason that many people involved in the anti-lockdown movement are now willing to break other taboos.

For instance, various *Nevermore* contributors have come out of the closet to express their misgivings about the precipitous growth of transgender ideology.

Because anarchists have historically placed high value on the freedom of individuals to transgress against societally-imposed social roles, anarchists have been supportive of the rights of sexual minorities, including transgender people.

In recent years, however, it has become unignorable that trans ideology is not at all a grassroots phenomenon, but is very clearly

financed by the pharmaceutical industry. In other words, pharmaceutical companies are marketing mental illness in order to sell drugs, including to children far too young to give informed consent to irreversible medical interventions.

Furthermore, there are also clear parallels between trans ideology and transhumanism. If anyone has any doubts about this, I refer them to the lecture *From Transgender to Transhumanism* by Wild Willing Wisdom, which focuses on the trans ideologue Martine Rothblatt, who is both a pharma executive and a rabid transhumanist.

But the trans issue is not the only area in which anarchists are confronting long-held taboos. There has also been a willingness to critique Marxism and feminism (see *Goodbye Mr. Marx* and *The Tao of Gender* by Darren Allen).

There has even been a willingness to break the taboo against pointing out that some of the international bankers most responsible for the Great Reset are Jewish.

Let me set the scene. Back in 2018, James Corbett released a documentary called *The WWI Conspiracy*, in which he alleges a conspiracy involving a British mining tycoon named Cecil Rhodes (after whom the country of Rhodesia was named).

The story is complicated, and I won't summa-

rize it here, but basically Rhodes wanted to engineer a conflict as part of a plan to unite the U.K. and the U.S.A. in an Anglo-American world empire.

Although this documentary does portray Rhodes as a “Rothschild man”, Corbett does not make the banking dynasty the focus of his narrative.

This left me wanting to know more about the role that the Rothschilds have played in world history and what role they are playing in the Great Reset.

James Corbett did address this question in an episode of *Questions for Corbett* entitle WWI Q & A, but his answer did not allay my suspicion that certain things were being left unsaid.

My curiosity deepened when I came across the concept of the Global Public-Private Partnership in the work of Iain Davis, one of the brilliant and insightful analysts I’ve encountered in recent years.

He presents a very reasonable hypothesis about how an operation as massive as the COVID psy-op could feasibly be orchestrated. He presents a model of how globalist institutions cooperate, which he presents in an easy-to-digest graphic.

What I’d like to call your attention to is the fact that an institution called the Bank for International Settlements is at the absolute top

of the pyramid.

This gave me a bit of a jolt, because I'm ashamed to admit that I didn't even know that such an institution existed!

I did a bit of digging and found out that the B.I.S. is the "central bank of central banks" and able to create money out of thin air. According to Iain Davis, this was empirically proven in a research paper entitled *Can Banks Individually Create Money Out of Nothing?*

David Graeber, the famous anarchist economist, confirmed this in his article *Against Economics*, in which he wrote: *"In 2014 a German economist named Richard Werner... discovered that, in fact, loan officers do not check their existing funds, reserves, or anything else. They simply create money out of thin air, or, as he preferred to put it, 'fairy dust'"*.

So, since that time, I began wondering who exactly owns the Bank for International Settlements, because it seems to me that whoever controls the global money supply has a pretty strong claim to being the ruler of the world.

My mind went back to a conversation that I had with a Jewish conspiracy theorist known as the Raging Rabbi, in which he suggested that the Rothschild banking dynasty has far more power in international finance than is generally acknowledged. (This is one of my favourite

interviews that I've done and I encourage the reader to check it out. I think it's pretty entertaining.)

In this interview, my friend suggested the possibility that the Rothschilds might belong to a heretical Jewish sect known to history as the Sabbatean-Frankists, which was led by a false messiah named Jacob Frank.

According to Wikipedia: *“Frankism was a heretical Sabbatean Jewish religious movement of the 18th and 19th centuries, centered on the leadership of the Jewish Messiah claimant Jacob Frank, who lived from 1726 to 1791. Frank rejected religious norms and said that his followers were obligated to transgress as many moral boundaries as possible”*.

According to an article by Jay Michaelson in *American Jewish Life*: *“He (Jacob Frank) rejected the Torah (once threatening to defecate on it if angry rabbis didn't leave him alone). He converted to both Islam and Catholicism. He slept with his followers – and maybe even his daughter. He preached a nihilistic doctrine that saw this world as intrinsically corrupt and believed that the best way to imitate God was to cross every boundary, transgress every taboo and mix the sacred with the profane”*.

As the Raging Rabbi put it: *“They believed in redemption through sin. They would take part in orgies, wife-swapping, all different kinds of sinful*

*behaviour in order to hasten the redemption. This movement is thought of as being disappeared by Jewish historians, but one rabbi, Rabbi Marvin Antelman, in his book To Eliminate the Opiate, posits that this movement continued to exist past the 1800s and continues to exist to this day, and the Rothschilds are involved in it”.*

I encourage the reader to watch the interview, because my friend has a lot of other valuable insights.

After conducting this interview, I made a conscious choice not to go down this rabbit hole. I had a feeling that doing so would lead me to a bunch of biased, anti-Semitic sources, and I didn't want to sift through a bunch of hateful garbage. In any case, I had plenty of other rabbit holes to explore. But my interest had been piqued, and my ears started perking up whenever I came across a reference to the Rothschilds in my research.

Fast-forward a year or so, and I noticed that the name of Cecil Rhodes kept popping up in the alternative media. *Unlimited Hangout*, for example, published a very informative piece by Matthew Ehret entitled The Rhodes Scholars Guiding Biden's Presidency.

Here, too, however, the focus remained on Cecil Rhodes and his co-conspirator Lord Milner, who described himself as a “British race patriot”. The Rothschilds are mentioned only in passing.

All this made me increasingly curious. I was beginning to suspect that the researchers I was following were glossing over the role played by the Rothschilds for fear of being seen as anti-semitic. And who could blame them? After all, wasn't Hitler's rise to power fuelled by paranoid conspiracy theories about how Jewish bankers were responsible for WWI?

Then again, if it's true, it's true. Should we refrain from criticizing Jeffrey Epstein, Ghislaine Maxwell, or Harvey Weinstein because they happen to be Jewish? It would be bizarre if their ethnicity provided an excuse for their crimes, wouldn't it? Yet their crimes pale in comparison to those of the Rothschilds, do they not?

Clearly, to write about such a subject matter requires great tact. This is true not only because certain powerful interests like to accuse their critics of anti-semitism, but also because anti-semitism is very much alive and well in the present day. We don't want to give ammo to those who want to blame everything on the Jews, as if the Jewish people were a monolithic group run like a corporation.

As an Israeli conspiracy theorist I interviewed put it: *"Not all Jews are globalists, and not all globalists are Jews"*.

I feel like Iain Davis skated this line nicely in his piece *The NWO is Not an Anti-Semitic Trope*, in which he writes: *"The 'new world order' is a*

*phrase that gets flung around by all sorts of people for a variety of reasons. It is occasionally expressed in distinctly antisemitic terms. Some people believe that the NWO is evidence of a 'Jewish plot to enslave humanity'. Very few people, who have researched and studied the NWO, share this view. It is not supported by the evidence. Nonetheless, the false allegations of antisemitism provides a very useful canard which 'debunkers' consistently throw at anyone who mentions the NOW".*

It is worth noting that Iain Davis does not believe that the Rothschilds are the supreme rulers of the world. Rather, he believes that: *"The self-proclaimed leaders of the NWO are drawn from the so-called 'Superclass'. Their only distinguishing attributes are immense private wealth, a ruthless willingness to act and an unshakeable belief in their divine right to rule. The 'old money' dynasties, sometimes referred to as the Black Nobility, have maintained their financial and economic control for nearly a thousand years. They have been joined, in recent centuries, by banking families, industrialists and latterly the 'new money' from the post WWII entrepreneurial, billionaire set".*

Elsewhere in this same piece, he quotes the historian Prof. Antony C. Sutton (author of *Wall Street and The Bolshevik Revolution*), who wrote: *"The persistence with which the Jewish-*



*conspiracy myth has been pushed suggests that it may well be a deliberate device to divert attention from the real issues and the real causes. What better way to divert attention from the real operators than by the medieval bogeyman of anti-Semitism?"*

I continued my reading, and came across a book called *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* by an American professor named Gary Allen, which convinced me that it would be foolish to disregard the influence that bankers and industrialists have had in shaping the modern world.

So, it was with interest that I read Paul Cudenec's article *A Crime Against Humanity – The Great Reset of 1914-1918*, in which the author explores how certain financial interests conspired to bring about WWI in order to gain power and profit financially.

The article is a tour-de-force, and I wrote Paul to tell him how much I loved it. He wrote me back and we corresponded a bit about it. The Rothschild name came up in the piece, but was not its main focus. I questioned him a bit about this angle of the story.

Imagine my surprise when shortly thereafter, Paul publishes an entire book(let) on the very subject I was so curious about!

The book(let) is called *Enemies of the People – Dictating the Future* and is an important history

lesson to anyone wishing to understand the influence of this immensely powerful criminal dynasty.

I believe that by providing an exhaustively-researched booklet such as this, in which some of the most infamous crimes of the family are laid out, Paul Cudenec has done the truth movement a valuable service.

If we are to know something about 21st century globalism, we must know some of the history which led up to the current moment. And though it would be disingenuous to blame all the problems of the world on one family, it is clear that the Rothschilds are deeply involved in some very gnarly skulduggery and we need to be able to talk about this fact without people getting their panties in a knot.

In *Enemies of the People*, Paul does a stellar job of navigating this minefield by sticking to well-documented historical facts, and by making reference to the work of respected historians such as Carroll Quigley, Niall Ferguson, Anthony Sutton, Jim Macgregor and Gerry Docherty.

Rather than relying on bombastic rhetoric, Paul lets the facts speak for themselves. It is not until the end of the book that he shares his personal views, and even then, he keeps it short and sweet.

I think this is the right approach. In investigating a controversial subject, the first

responsibility of the intellectually honest person is to secure the facts.

And that is exactly what Paul has done. One need only glance at the bibliography included in *Enemies of the People* to see how deeply Paul has delved into this subject.

To give you an idea of how much research has gone into this work, I ask the reader how long it would take them to read a book such as Carroll Quigley's *Tragedy and Hope*, which clocks in at a whopping 1348 pages.

Next, consider the fact that this is only one of the dense historical tomes upon which Paul based his research. He also draws heavily on other works, including: *Hidden History: The Secret Origins of the First World War* (by Gerry Docherty and Jim Macgregor), *Prolonging the Agony: How The Anglo-American Establishment Deliberately Extended WWI by Three-and-a-Half Years* (by Gerry Docherty and Jim Macgregor), *The House of Rothschild* (by Niall Ferguson), *Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution: The Remarkable True Story of the American Capitalists Who Financed the Russian Communists* (Anthony C. Sutton).

Suffice it to say that a huge amount of effort went into producing this 100-page booklet, which you can think of as a combined executive summary of these important works.

On that note, I want to encourage people to

get in touch if they find any factual inaccuracies in *Enemies of the People*. To make things interesting, I will offer a \$100 prize (payable in Bitcoin) to anyone that finds a single error in it. Even if the error is just a typo, I'll pay up. I want all the scoffers out there that they don't have a leg to stand on. You can stick your fingers in your ears and sing "La-La-La" at the top of your lungs, but you can't dispute its claims on the basis of their historical accuracy.

I think I make my point clear. Paul has done his homework. He has documented his every claim with an abundance of irrefutable facts, and those facts speak for themselves.

Okay. I want to pause for a second here for a moment and reflect a bit about Taboo and the Zeitgeist. In the past twenty years or so, there has been a rapid narrowing of the range of permissible discourse. During the COVID psy op, the Overton window shrunk. More and more ideas became unthinkable. Rigid conformism was *de rigueur*.

But, obviously, you can't just keep narrowing the range of allowable thought indefinitely. At some point, something's gotta give, and when it does, things will start moving the other way. And it's clear to me that this has already started happening. The tides have turned. And praise be to Allah for that.

I predict that the next decade will bring with

it a spirit of radical inquiry, as more and more people are forced to think for themselves as the propaganda pumped out through the media becomes more and more unbelievable and Technik enters into its death throes.

And what does radical inquiry mean? It means questioning assumptions that everyone takes for granted. It means breaking taboos. It means thinking thoughts that your teachers didn't tell you to think. It means examining your own beliefs, and considering alternative ones.

The COVID era has shown us that people are capable of rapidly changing their beliefs, and as the system flails and thrashes, a whole lot of people are going to be re-evaluating their own reality tunnels.

That's when (some) people will figure out that the world is made out of ideas, and that ideas are more powerful than weapons. If you ask me, that's what we should be preparing for – the moment of revolutionary potential that will come when the old paradigm finally gives way, and we're able to cross the chasm, and if we get to the other side first, we'll be in a much better position to actually execute effective strategies.

Or maybe this is wishful thinking. I guess we'll see.

But I'm pretty sure that people are going to start using their brains at some point, and at that point, all bets are off.

But I digress.

Anyway... How are you feeling?

I really am curious, because that's the thing with taboo, isn't it? If no one is allowed to talk about certain things, it means you don't know how others feel about them. And that tends to produce a lot of unease, especially among the more self-conscious types. Everyone wants to be approved of by their peers, which means that they want to think the right kind of thoughts.

But when something is truly taboo, no one knows what the right kind of thoughts even are! All they know is that it's safer not to talk about certain things, and they might get in trouble if they ask too many questions.

So let me ask you again: How does this article make you feel?

Does it make you nervous? Are you scandalized? Do you think it would scandalize your friends? If so, which ones? What would your other friends think?

How does the cop in your head feel about the fact I'm saying things that you're not supposed to say? Have I gone too far? If so, what are you going to do about it?

Does the fact that I've written these words change the way you feel about me? Do you think that I'm doing something dangerously irresponsible? Do you think I'm confused and misguided? Or do you respect me more?

Now, let me ask you this: If it could be proven beyond all reasonable doubt that some of the most powerful people in the world are Jewish bankers, would you really be that surprised? Or would it merely confirm something you've long suspected?

I encourage you to pay attention to your first thoughts, because those untamed thoughts are YOUR THOUGHTS. I'm guessing that many of the people who read this article will get to the end of it and not be sure how to feel about it.

And that's the thing about taboo. It makes people strangers to themselves. It makes people crazy, because it makes people unable to recognize their own thoughts as their own. It makes people scared to think, because they might accidentally think a forbidden thought. It makes people weak.

As I was writing this piece, I was listening to a ton of Leonard Cohen. I kept listening to one song in particular over and over again. To me, this wraps it up perfectly.

The song is called *Everybody Knows*.

**CROW:** While it should come as no surprise that power-mad capitalists would seek to dominate the world, there has long been a taboo amongst Leftists in critiquing 20th century globalism, because to do so thoroughly will lead one to the realization of the central role that the House of

Rothschild has played in the history of capitalism. In other words, there is some truth to the old trope of Jewish bankers ruling the world. Nor is the fact that they are Jewish an irrelevant detail – this ruling clique weaponizes accusations of anti-semitism against its critics, conflating Judaism and the tiny number of Jews involved at the high levels of international finance.

Arguably, the people who should be the most incensed by this deft manouvring are the working class Jews of the world. The Rothschilds, Warburgs, and Schiffs are essentially using them as human shields.

That said, not all globalists are Jewish and not all Jews are globalists. Indeed, many Jews have been on the front lines of the fight against the likes of the Rothschilds, including anarchists such as Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Gustav Landauer, Voline, Benjamin Tucker, Murray Bookchin, Abbie Hoffman, David Graeber, and Howard Zinn.

Now, it seems that the ice has been broken, and many anarchists that I respect, such as James Corbett, Iain Davis, and yourself, are willing to criticize the Rothschilds and other dynastic crime families who happen to be Jewish. Could you speak a bit about this?

**PAUL:** I agree with your statement. The main relevance of the Rothschilds' Jewishness is that



it makes it difficult to criticise them without being accused of anti-semitism. They obviously don't give a hoot about their "lower" co-religionists, but are happy to hide amongst them. I think it is of crucial importance to break this taboo, which has been preventing criticism of those who most merit criticism, and the best way is to directly name the Rothschilds (and others where relevant) and to state clearly that our opposition is to their activities and not to their religious or ethnic identity.

I have been trying to help this process along, with the recent booklet *Enemies of the people: the Rothschilds and their corrupt global empire*.

**CROW:** One of your core ideas is anarcho-perennialism, and you have identified anarchist tendencies within Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity. However, I have yet to see you write of anarchistic tendencies within Judaism. Now, I know the Bible much better than most people do these days, and I have to admit that Judaism and anarchism are difficult to reconcile. For instance, the belief of Jews that they are God's chosen people seems to be an example of a type of partiality incompatible with a spirit of universal brotherhood. As you pointed out in *Bringing Down the Fascist Machine*, Nazism was wholly incompatible with the original spirit of the Völkisch movement, because Nazism denies

that Jews are part of the manifestation of the universal life force that the original Völkisch movement revered. But is not the Jewish belief that the Jews are God's chosen people equally misguided?

**PAUL:** I have written about Martin Buber and Gustav Landauer, who combined Jewish spirituality with an anarchist outlook (libertarian socialist in Buber's case, perhaps). But I just don't know enough about the Jewish religious outlook to go any further. I would be interested to look into it at some point. Something I did read somewhere was that although the Jews are said to be "chosen", their religion says they are chosen to act in the interests of universal humanity – which was not the outlook of the Nazis nor, I suppose, of similar tendencies within political Zionism.

**CROW:** Your work in restoring spirituality to anarchist theory has parallels in the work of Derrick Broze, who I would consider to be one of the most important living anarchist thinkers.

In his book *The Conscious Resistance*, he identifies anarchistic tendencies within different religions. When it came to Judaism, however, most of the examples of Jewish anarchists he cited were not religious.

Do you think that there are points of reso-

nance between religious Judaism and anarchism, or do you consider the fact that some great anarchist mystics have been Jewish to be incidental?

**PAUL:** I think we can be influenced by the religion of our birth without being overtly “religious”. Michael Löwy, an interesting writer, certainly sees a strong connection between underlying Jewish religious concepts and anti-capitalist romanticism of early 20th century Central Europe.

The individuals and movement he discusses in no way corresponded to the anti-semitic cliché of calculating materialists (currently revived as a supposed “anti-semitic trope” which is instrumentalised to silence criticism of calculating materialists!). Instead they were involved in a cultural critique of modern capitalist civilization in the name of pre-modern or pre-capitalist values, he says. They were revolting against the quantification and mechanisation of life, the reification of social relationships and the dissolution of community in the industrial age.

The moral basis on which they made this judgement – and for me it is very much a moral stance – can arguably be traced back to their Jewish religious backgrounds.

Franz Kafka, for instance, talked about the

impurity of commercial society. Commercial “values” are the antithesis of all authentic spiritual belief and each of us may express our deep aversion to the reign of quantity via the religious culture in which we were brought up.

**CROW:** So long as we’re talking about anti-semitism, we might as well talk about fascism, which has become quite a confusing subject in an age in which self-proclaimed anti-fascists support extremely authoritarian policies! One is reminded of Orwell’s comment in his classic 1946 essay *Politics and the English Language*: “*The word fascism has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies ‘something not desirable’.*”

Clearly, such a definition is not very useful. I agree with with C.J. Hopkins when he says: “*I think we’re in a new world, a new paradigm, where terms like ‘fascism’ and ‘Marxism’ are only useful up to a point and are often unhelpful.*”

He goes on to explain: “*When I use the term ‘fascism’, I use it in the vernacular sense – i.e., not to refer to the twentieth-century totalitarian systems most people are familiar with but rather simply to mean ‘extreme authoritarianism’...*”

You have taken a different approach, instead identifying fascism as a mode of governance that the capitalist system adopts when it is under threat. In that sense, fascism and liberalism are not diametrically opposed, but two possible

manifestations of capitalism. In *Enemies of the People*, you quote Carroll Quigley, who defines fascism as: “*the adoption by the vested interests in a society of an authoritarian form of government in order to maintain their vested interests and prevent the reform of the society*”.

Now, nothing in that definition necessarily implies anti-semitism, or even racism, and indeed the Italian and Spanish variants of fascism were far less predicated on racism than Nazism was. (For a great history lesson about the difference between German, Italian, and Spanish variants of fascism, I highly recommend the first three chapters of *The Unquiet Dead*).

Despite the fact that people of many ethnicities fell victim to Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco, fascism remains extremely connected with anti-semitism in the popular imagination, and the strong aversion that most people feel to fascism seems to largely stem from a deeply-felt aversion to the rabid racism of the Nazis.

So, let me ask you a series of related questions. First, what is fascism, and how does it relate to racism? Second, why is the term so difficult to define, and why does it present such confusion? Third, how do you suggest we frame things in order to present a clearly anti-fascist position whilst simultaneously distancing ourselves from the debased anti-fascism of the woke left?

**PAUL:** I like the Quigley quote on fascism, which is of course why I used it. Interestingly, though, his definition could also apply to (state) communism, which one could not accurately define as historical fascism, although there are parallels.

I think the confusion around the term 'fascism' stems from the fact that the ideology was fake, a construct. The nationalism of grassroots fascists was no doubt real enough, but it was merely being used to manipulate them, in the same way that the desire for social justice felt by grassroots communists was (and is) used to recruit them into a movement ultimately serving other purposes.

Both the Nazis and Bolsheviks were quick to wipe out radical parts of their broader movements once they had used them to secure power.

The racism of the Nazi movement was, I suppose, a corruption or degeneration of the idea of belonging, of valuing one's own distinct cultural heritage, which was transformed into a blind sense of superiority and contempt for other peoples.

This racism didn't start with the Nazis, though, and was very much a feature of British Imperialism, which I regard as a direct predecessor of fascism.

The anti-Jewish racism of the Nazis is certainly what they are most remembered for, but this was part of a general dehumanising outlook which is typical of modern industrial society as a whole.

This, for me, is the real lesson we should have learned from Nazism – the dire consequences of an outlook which regards human beings as objects, as productive or unproductive units, as human capital, as disposable elements. This is not an issue which is confined to the specific treatment of Jews by the Nazi regime. I think that understanding this broader context in which fascism can be placed is the key to a newly-imagined anti-fascism.

While the “woke” opposition to fascism focuses purely on the surface, such as on the Völkisch or nationalist ideas which it used as a vehicle for its power-grabbing project, our opposition should address its deeper essence, the way that fascism was merely an authoritarian form taken by the existing system in order to pursue its aims without the inconveniences of democracy or trade unionism and indeed in order to remodel human beings to better serve the interests of power and production.

If we target our criticism at the system as a whole, and understand that when we criticise fascism we are talking about one form that this system has taken, we should be able to avoid the

ideological red herrings deployed by the system to impede real understanding of, and opposition to, its functioning and its goals.

**CROW:** In recent years, the word “eco-fascism” has been floating around, though the term lacks a clear meaning, as far as I can tell. That said, one recurrent reference point is the belief that the human species is a virus infecting planet Earth. Would you care to comment on eco-fascism and the idea that humankind is a virus?

**PAUL:** Yes, the term is confused one and is used by different people to mean different things. Because it is deployed by the likes of Alexander Reid Ross to attack authentic green anarchists, I tend to avoid it.

It is also used to describe the authoritarian eugenicist tendencies of the power nexus, and in that sense it is partly understandable. But there is a fundamental problem with the term in that that fascism was never remotely “eco”, although it did pretend to be, in Germany.

There is a connection here with the current “sustainable” global system, which is also fascistic and also pretends to be “eco”. But it does not seem to me to be at all helpful to attach the terms “eco” and “fascist” to each other, as if real greenness could ever have anything to do with a hyper-centralized, ultra-industrial acceleration-



ist modernist movement such as fascism.

The idea that the human species is a virus is utterly odious and speaks only of the guilty conscious of those who voice such an opinion – they are the virus, not the rest of us!

**CROW:** Green anarchism was greatly influenced by deep ecology, an ideology which was not shy about its belief that the Earth was overpopulated. Arne Naess, the most important theorist of deep ecology, advocated for a gradual reduction in the human population. In recent years, however, I have been influenced by thinkers such as James Corbett, Iain Davis, and others who refute the idea that the world is overpopulated. Personally, I feel like that there are valid arguments on both sides. Where do you stand?

**PAUL:** On balance, I don't think the world as a whole is necessarily overpopulated. Parts of it, such as the south-east of England where I come from, are certainly overcrowded, but that is a result of the centralisation of power and wealth by the industrial system and its empire.

The system certainly encouraged population growth for a long time, to increase its own profits, in the same way as it has always felt entitled to uproot vast numbers of people and shift them to other continents in order to suit its

purposes (whether as slaves, “settlers” or “migrants”). Maybe it has now decided that this economic need can be met by automisation?

The idea of reducing the population by killing people, or making them infertile, is abhorrent. Left to themselves, communities naturally regulate their size in relation to the resources available. A hundred years from now, pretty much everyone alive today will be gone anyway, regardless of what happens in the interim, so the “problem” of population is somewhat illusory, I feel. It distracts attention from the underlying issues of industrialism and globalism/imperialism.

**CROW:** Thanks Paul and thanks to everyone who has read through to the end of these interviews.

## FOR MORE INFO

The conversations in this book were all originally published at [nevermoremedia.substack.com](http://nevermoremedia.substack.com), where links to cited works can be found. *Nevermore Media* also has a site at [nevermore.media](http://nevermore.media). For Paul Cudenec's writing, go to [winteroak.org.uk](http://winteroak.org.uk) or [paulcudenec.substack.com](http://paulcudenec.substack.com).