

*B.C Sadlee is the pseudonym of a depressed old anarchist and animal liberationist who still lives in Eugene. He hates cages and loves books.*

In April of 2022 I received an email from a professor named Thomas Zeitzoff requesting an interview for a book about the climate crisis. We exchanged a few messages and I recommended some people he should reach out to. We were discussing meeting up when my paranoia- honed by years of involvement in campaigns under federal investigation- led me to look into the courses he was teaching at American University. I found that they featured a focus on, "prevention of terrorism, and homeland security policy." AU's School of Public Affairs, where Zeitzoff works, also administers the Department of Justice, Law, and Criminology. Uncomfortable with even the smallest possibility that my interview could be used to help an aspiring Fed someday imprison a friend, I made an excuse to cancel our interview. Many old comrades, acquaintances, strangers and a couple of fuckin' cops did meet with him, however, and eventually his research resulted in *No Option But Sabotage* (Oxford University Press, 2026.)

Zeitzoff's analysis focuses on the question of what happened to radical environmentalism in the wake of the Green Scare. Given the intensity of the climate crisis and the ever-worsening impacts on people and eco-systems, why has a new generation of radicals not taken up the more extreme tactics of groups like the Earth Liberation Front? I was hopeful that his conclusions would go beyond the theories already widely discussed in academic accounts and movement media. Sadly, there are no new insights here: activist turn over, the effects of repression, the increasing power of surveillance technologies, and the changing concerns and protest priorities of the Black Lives Matter generation are offered as explanations, along with a surface level evaluation of the donor pleasing politics of environmental NGOs.

The first several chapters are meant to serve as a primer on

the early days of radical environmentalism and the intersecting tendencies. No Option manages to hit all of the well worn territory here while missing everything else. The timeline chosen by the author omits the actual origins of the movement in order to focus on Earth First! as the starting point, so you get Abbey's Monkeywrench Gang, but not Harrison's A Good Day To Die, Dave Foreman, but not Jim, "The Fox," Philips, the symbolic cracking of the Glen Canyon Dam but not the vandalism and sabotage of John Walker and the Eco Raiders, and so on. By giving a bare bones and already exhausted history with a heavily revised timeline, Zeitzoff misses that Earth First! was a continuation of radicalism already in progress.

There is a sincere effort to understand the political currents and people involved in the waves of lock downs, occupations, sabotage, and arson that marked the era of environmental militancy, but No Option fails that task many times. How unfortunate is it that a book published by Oxford University Press claims Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, "... had their roots in animal liberation and ALF tactics."? Yikes!

No Option is accessibly written and assumes the reader is new to the topic of the book's tagline: "The radical environmental movement and the climate crisis." It happily avoids the flat, styleless prose of many researchers, even if the structure can be a confusing slog at times. (This is particularly true in the six page aside about the right wing embrace of raw milk that interrupts an otherwise excellent chapter charting the threat of ecofascism.) Zeitzoff conducted interviews with more than 100 people over the course of 3 years to form the bulk of the text, and

there are some moments in this book where his outsider's perspective and status as a researcher of political violence are a strength. He doesn't subscribe to the more propagandistic, ideological, or self congratulatory viewpoints of the movements he is studying, which is a frequent issue

with insiders accounts. On several occasions the racism of early deep ecologists is called out in a manner I've seen ignored or downplayed elsewhere. He was able to secure interviews with figures in law enforcement and government that an actual participant could never have achieved, and one of those interviews produces the highlight of the book- a Eugene Police Department intelligence officer says that without the radical environmental movement that he helped to put behind bars Oregon would have no old growth forest remaining. I must also congratulate whomever designed the cover. It makes the title appear to be more of a foregone conclusion rather than the open question the author intends, and the pull quotes on the rear cover place Zerzan above McKibben, which gave me a smile.

Ultimately, what initially turned me away from participating in the book might be the main flaw. Zeitzoff sees the world through a lens meant to help statist makes sense of the social constructs of crime and whatever the power structure currently defines as terror. Just as the FBI is generally good at capturing bank robbers and bad at capturing people of conscience, Zeitzoff is good at capturing politicians- as he did in *Nasty Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2023)- but bad at capturing dedicated anarchists with little to lose and a world to save.