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The Indiana Jones memes have spoken: the Nazis are back, and archaeologists need to start punching heads. The current resurgence of the political far-right across many parts of the world presents a distinctive set of challenges and threats. Within archaeology some have responded with outrage, activism, and acts of resistance. Others remain uncertain how to respond: whether as citizens, professionals, intellectuals, or activists? How can we organise to amplify our messages and strengthen our efforts? Where should these efforts be targeted?

Recent scholarly interventions have focused on specific events such as Donald Trump's election and the Brexit vote (see, for example, Gardner 2017; Muckle 2017; Bonacchi et al. 2018). In a lively debate in *Antiquity*, Alfredo González-Ruibal et al. (2018a) decried the weaknesses of liberal-minded social archaeologists and critical heritage scholars, calling for an interventionist public archaeology that can confront the rising tides of reactionary populism. Nor can we pretend that the enemy is solely outside the ivory tower: a few years ago I watched a distinguished colleague speak on ancient DNA to an overwhelmingly white bourgeois public audience, outlining the triumphant rise of "we, the Europeans".

These concerns are not new, and any discussion of resurgent reaction is haunted by spectres of 1930s Europe. The autobiography of the philosopher-archaeologist Robin G. Collingwood offers an insight into the mindset of scholars in this period. Written in 1938 in the shadow of the rise of Nazism and the Spanish Civil War, Collingwood reflected on his struggles for a *rapprochement* between theory and practice, both intellectual and political. Collingwood was a leading British intellectual of his time, an important figure in Roman archaeology and in the philosophy of history. An instinctive liberal with a powerful faith in democracy and a high-handed disdain for Marxism, socialism, and fascism, Collingwood wrote with a searing anger of the appeasement of Hitler and the betrayal of Spain by the European democracies: "The Spanish civil war was a straight fight between Fascist dictatorship and parliamentary democracy. The British government, behind all its disguises, had declared itself a partisan of Fascist dictatorship" (1939: 166–167). The newly-radicalised Collingwood reflected that his earlier pose as a "detached professional thinker" had kept him away from what he described as "a gloves-off philosophy … a philosophy that should be a weapon" and from the fight against fascism: "I know that all my life I have been engaged unawares in a political struggle, fighting against these things in the dark. Henceforth I shall fight in the daylight." (1939: 167, 153).

To fight effectively, we must understand our adversary. Two things struck me about González-Ruibal et al.'s characterisation of the problematic publics and non-publics of archaeology. First is their identification of "the supporters of reactionary populism" as coming from "(t)he American Rust Belt or the impoverished European working classes" (González-Ruibal et al. 2018b: 525). Second is their identification of the populations that leftist, activist public archaeologists have hitherto overlooked: those deemed too "greedy, patriarchal, xenophobic or uninterested in the past" (González-Ruibal et al. 2018a: 508). I am interested in these characterisations because they are directly contradicted by my own understandings and experiences of radical populism and of the publics for archaeology. This divergence has significance for an activist archaeology.

In the first case, there is strong evidence that the core support for reactionary populism in many countries comes not from the unemployed or impoverished, but from the middle class:

> "About two-thirds of Trump voters in 2016 had household incomes above $50,000 (then about the US average), according to the American National Election Study. Most British Leave voters lived in the south of England, and 59 per cent were middle class (social classes A, B or C1), writes Danny Dorling, geographer at Oxford University. In the Netherlands, two-thirds of supporters of far-right Thierry Baudet are moderately or highly educated, say pollsters Ipsos." (Kuper 2020).

A growing number of studies are highlighting the heterogeneity of support for reactionary populism, bringing together "radical conservative elites, anti-redistributionist small owners, and rural economic middle-class fractions, as well as declassed segments of the working class" (Westheuser 2020; and see also Evans and Mellon 2016; Oesch and Rennwald 2018; Damhuis 2020). González-Ruibal et al.'s mischaracterisation of the people of reactionary populism is itself part of a widespread trend: "most journalists and academics still overlook the provincial middle class. The socialist-realist figure of the laid-off factory worker remains more compelling." (Kuper 2020).

In the second case, the idea that public archaeologists have neglected those inconvenient "greedy, patriarchal, xenophobic or uninterested in the past" is again directly contradicted by the evidence. As Bruce G. Trigger and others have pointed out, for centuries archaeology has been the preserve of the middle classes (Trigger 1989; McGuire and Walker 1999). Numerically speaking, we professional and academic archaeologists are vastly outnumbered by heritage tourists, antiquity collectors, local history society members, genealogists, metal detectorists, and amateur archaeologists – most of them comfortably (or at least petit) bourgeois. In Britain the beating heart of public archaeology is the great body of local and regional amateur archaeological societies, some of them more than two centuries old. Like many academics I have worked with and alongside these groups, given guest lectures at their meetings, and remain a member of several.

As a cosmopolitan communist intellectual, I have noticed that virtually all of my thankfully limited encounters with right-wing populist beliefs have come from these middle-class British amateur archaeologists. These have ranged from support for Brexit and UKIP, to admiration of Trump, outspoken homophobia, and violent anti-immigrant rhetoric. This is by no means universal – there is a wide spectrum of ideologies within amateur archaeology, from far left to far right – but the size of this reactionary community and their outspoken confidence in sharing their views surprised me and troubled me. The problem here, contra González-Ruibal et al., is an archaeological public "greedy, patriarchal, xenophobic *and interested in the past*".

An activist public archaeology must ask: why are these awful people attracted to archaeology? Why is it a fertile ground for their ideologies? And how can we drive them out? How can we forge within archaeology our version of Collingwood's "philosophy that should be a weapon"? I don't have a whole, neat answer (structural problems rarely have individual solutions), but when I look around I see sparks and embers of activism, fragments of a larger radical upsurge in archaeology. I see efforts to identify and call out the right-wing extremism and white supremacist myth that thrives in pseudoarchaeology, such as the work of Stephanie Halmhofer and others (e.g., Halmhofer 2021). I see the Black Trowel Collective's resources for debunking gender and sex binaries, standing against the misuse of archaeology in transphobic bigotry that rests upon the same fallacious biological essentialism as white supremacism (Black Trowel Collective 2021). I see radical ideas about the human past sneaking into the sphere of "popular" prehistory – traditionally the reserve of reactionary oversimplifications (Graeber and Wengrow 2021). I see a growing reaction to the incautiousness and poor public communication of aDNA work (e.g., Frieman and Hofmann 2019). I see efforts to remake archaeological thought and practice around principles of care, connection, and love (Supernant et al. 2020). In all of these fragments I see a will and a means to shape a disciplinary future where new fascisms will find fewer footholds. But here I am falling into the error I have criticised above, of highlighting external threats and overlooking the internal ones. This has its own risks for a growing activist sphere.

The most significant aspect of Collingwood's writing for my purposes is its description of the radicalisation of a political moderate: what we might now call a "centrist". Much of the success of an activist archaeology will lie in its ability to convince, welcome, and mobilise this large and generally liberal-minded demographic. What spurs the moderate archaeologist to action? For those not steeped in radical ideologies the most common form of activism is "reactivism". For some, like Collingwood, this is sparked by perceived threats to orderly, liberal society: Brexit, Trump, and the rise of reactionary populism worldwide. For others, activism comes in response to specific events, like the widespread archaeological outrage that led to the cancellation of National Geographic Channel's deeply

unethical *Nazi War Diggers* (Thomas 2015), or the (current at time of writing) reaction to Graham Hancock's ridiculous Netflix series *Ancient Apocalypse*.

As every successful fascist knows, it is easy to mobilise people against perceived external threats. Criticising bad television archaeology also appeals to the intellectual snob, and vocal opposition to pseudoarchaeology remains popular amongst unreconstructed positivists. Opposition to reactionary populism, as we have seen, can also draw on bourgeois disdain for the working classes.

In contrast, the identification of internal threats can be seen as divisive and threatening to the status quo (the merits of the status quo being a fundamental point of disagreements for liberal and more radical activists). It is hard to confront the aDNA enthusiasts who slide towards white supremacism while they remain insulated by grants and prestige. To challenge bigotry in colleagues and institutional partners risks real professional harm. The same mechanisms that protect bullies and abusers in academia and professional environments also stifle activist impulses. One important principle of organising for activism is giving people some control over their exposure to risk: who can take on the very real repurcussions of arrest, discomfort, or violence, and who cannot. If we are going to clean house, the challenge for Collingwood-esque liberals is to demonstrate that their principled commitment extends beyond their comfort zones.

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