

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN:

ENEMY SOIL

I've always kept ENEMY SOIL in mind when I think about what band to choose for the next "Gone But Not Forgotten." Well, since i've been listening to, almost exclusively, ENEMY SOIL records for the past month, I figured now is as good a time as any.



The ENEMY SOIL story is a strange one. They have been through a ton of members & sometimes have even been down to one person playing & recording all instruments. They have played live shows with only a vocalist & guitarist, accompanied by a drum machine & bass recorded on a backing tape. They have accepted invites to play shows all over N. America & release records when they couldn't find stable members, let alone, time to have proper practices. Through all of this & many more unexpected circumstances, when most people would have just thrown in the towel, ENEMY SOIL always managed to release awesome records & play an interesting style of grind that defies all notions of what grind should sound like & how a traditional band should operate.

At the heart of it all is Richard Johnson. In 1991 after receiving a letter from other founding member, Mason, the two started working on songs & playing with various people. Only a short time later & things had already fallen apart. The band had broken up, which is what led Richard to buying a drum machine. Realizing how hard it is to find members, especially capable drummers, "Dr. Rhythm" (The drum machine's name) became a staple in ENEMY SOIL for their first four releases.

This earned them a bunch of notoriety in the noisecore/extreme grind/death metal scene. So much so that after a split demo & split 7", Relapse Records asked them to do a 7". Putting out a record on Relapse got them a lot of criticism. This was only the first bit of criticism the band would receive, but this, much like all the rest, didn't seem to phase them one bit.

All of this & they haven't even played a show yet! Their first 2 shows happened in Canada (which is weird, because they are from Virginia) in 1995. At this time ES only had two actual members. The other spots were filled with a pre-taped bass track & the notorious "Dr. Rhythm."

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In 1996, the drum machine was finally laid to rest & ES recorded their most powerful & best record, "The Ruins Of Eden" 10" (later released as a CD). This record relentlessly punishes your speakers & ear drums. All the songs KILL! The guitar sounds like it's being played so hard that it is amazing that it stayed in tune! The drumming keeps up with the unorthodox riffs with equally as weird timing & crazy fills/cymbal hits. And the vocals done by Richard & fairly stable vocalist, Doshu, are urgent & sick at the same time. Plus, their trademark "UUGGGGCCCKKK!" saturates this album and makes me lose my shit everytime i hear it!

In 1997 ENEMY SOIL were asked to play the Huge grind/HC spectacular, Fiesta Grande #5. This led to a live flexi which contained songs from that set. Even then, they had to teach their brand new bass player the songs in a hotel room before the show...and they still managed to sound great!

After that, a split with CORRUPTED happened by chance after a ton of crazy set backs & then opportunities. (it's so confusing that without completely plagiarizing the story from the discography liner notes, would not make any sense). Next was a 3" CD for the Asain label, P.E. Far East called, "Fractured

Theology." This is blown-out-as-fuck grind & essential to any ES collection. The sleeve of the CD states that it is recorded live in Japan, when in actuality it was recorded in a basement in Virginia. These pranksters just added some live noise from one of their shows at the end.

1998 also brought an east coast tour with PG.99, who they would later share a 7" with. (I was fortunate enough to attend the show they played in Naples, FL...but was too young to stay to the end to see them; Damn curfew!) The Majority of the split 7"s ended up getting destroyed in a car crash. The two songs on this record were originally intended for another split & are the last thing ENEMY SOIL recorded before breaking up for good.



ENEMY SOIL, much like many of the other grind/powerviolence bands from this time period, really captured their respective genre. They are honestly weird, off-putting & best of all disgusted & angry. Their music, lyrics & imagery really reflect that. And that makes it interesting, not to mention believable. With a lot of (but not all, by any means) of newer bands that claim these aforementioned genres, it's just not there. They have the formulas down, but that's it. I'm still pretty young, so it's not like i'm trying to argue for the "good ol' days." Just pure, unadulterated disgust can't be faked. ENEMY SOIL understood that & whatever changes they went through, & got criticized for, be it musically, lyrically or ideologically, they did it all honestly.

Fortunately, ENEMY SOIL info & releases are pretty easy to find. The only problem being that some of the bands they did splits with fetch a pretty penny amongst record collectors. Also, a discography with most of their stuff as well as hilariously random liner notes is available & still in print. There is also a website still up with info, pictures & some great interviews that actually ask some pretty damn good questions. Check it out: <http://members.tripod.com/~enemygrind>, and if you're really interested, you know i'll make you a tape!

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