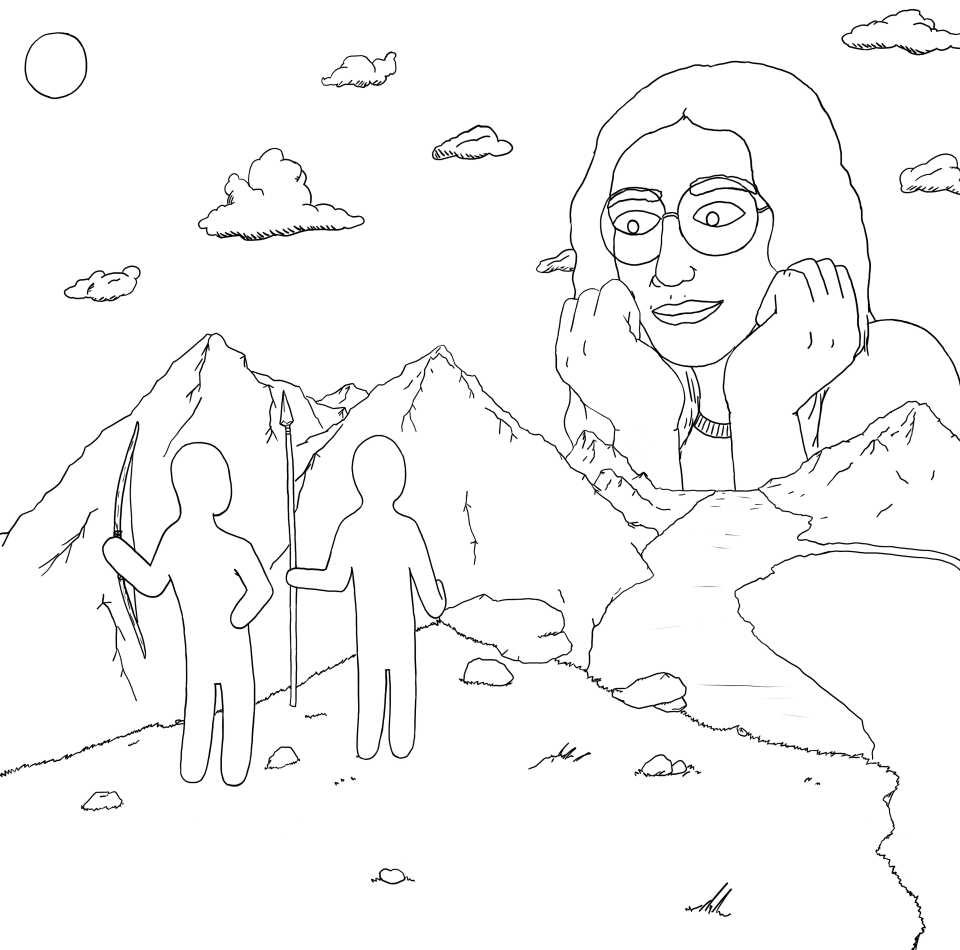


Lewaniaan

Anarchy as Rupture



This issue is the first of *Lewaniaan*, a project I have been meaning to put together for some time.

I would prefer to let the contents speak for themselves, though a very brief description may be useful nonetheless. In the following pages, you will find a critique of Marxist methodology, a critical analysis of contemporary Pashtun identity with an appeal towards endless creation in its place, and a case against what is often termed “left unity” in current anti-fascist work. Alongside these are two excellent pieces by Dabtara — the first, an evaluation of the opportunities that anti-globalization movements may present for national anarchists (“national” understood here in the local sense rather than fascist), and the second, an analysis of the Platypus Society and its approaches based on firsthand experience.

The idea behind this project is to express somewhat marginalized anarchist views, within the context of a small, semi-regular, and relatively low-tech publication. The hope is that continuing to publish will foster dialogue among whoever reads this, encourage a more creative anarchist thought, and allow me to discover new accomplices in our shared struggles (where you may reach me has been listed on the back).

Isa Marjan
March 2020

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A Note on Marxist Approaches

Whether anarchists would like to admit it or not, Marxism has become fashionable once more. A real alarm at the global rise of the far-right, skepticism towards more “democratic” organizing after the fall of the Occupy Wall Street and alter-globalization movements, and a general need to contextualize the abject misery of everyday life have caused many to turn yet again to the Moor.

To be clear from the start (and avoid the inevitable accusations of dogmatism), it is possible as an anarchist to freely loot and employ creatively concepts from Marx’s analysis such as the theory of crisis, value theory, and even a kind of materialist approach to history (though it is important to remember that Marx certainly had no monopoly over the ideas; Bakunin, Stirner, and other anarchist contemporaries investigated many of the same problems in very similar ways). It should also be noted that Marx himself was far more radical than many of his followers, be they the regimes that ruled in his name, professional activists that pretend to read him, or

those in the academy who have found a post-recession audience for half-digested pop Marxism.

At the same time there are elements of Marx's work itself that any consistent anarchist simply cannot accept and in fact must strongly oppose. Concepts such as species-being—*gattungswesen*, also translated as genus-being— in particular present us with profound problems. Even with liberatory goals in mind, one risks alienating themselves and others when attempting to determine a totalizing nature. The project of reifying this or that as the “essence” of a certain “group” also serves to limit our struggles in the most insidious of ways: it offers the hope of a freer society whilst continuing to constrain us through the hard boundaries of the present.

The simplistic, almost teleological historical views adopted by Marx raise other questions still. Again, perhaps the biggest dangers here are practical; progressive metanarratives dividing historical development into neat stages are not only reductive, they have been used to justify among the most hideous examples of counterrevolutionary repression. After all it was this mechanistic view of human development that inspired the Bolsheviks' inexorable march towards capitalism— building a brutal security apparatus, crushing workers' uprisings, and dismantling both the *soviets* and the institution of the Russian commune (which Marx himself would see major revolutionary potentialities in).

No less questionable is the mythology of the dictatorship of the proletariat, perhaps the most well-known source of discord between anarchists and followers of Marx historically. The experience of Soviet Russia and even CNT-controlled

Catalonia have decisively laid to rest the curious idea that further centralization of the state will lead to its eventual abolition. In his remarkably prophetic description of the state under socialist high modernity (almost a century before work in the post-structuralist arena), Bakunin writes:

“That would be the rule of scientific intellect, the most autocratic, the most despotic, the most arrogant, and the most insolent of all regimes. There will be a new class, a new hierarchy of genuine or sham savants, and the world will be divided into a dominant minority in the name of science, and an immense ignorant majority.”

These are, however, theoretical problems that can be rejected by anyone who approaches Marx and his thought in a vagabond fashion – and therein lies a much greater methodological strain between anarchy and Marxism. If we understand Marxism to mean some unified body of theories developed by one man, it is impossible not to find a tension there with any worthwhile anarchist approach.

More specifically, the problem lies in an orientation that would have someone call themselves a “Marxist” and thus have these ideas rule over them. Anyone who believes that they have nothing to learn from anarchist or other approaches, that the fundamental problems of our time were addressed by someone 150 years ago, ascribes an almost mystical value to concepts like “material conditions” or “the dialectic,” and in debates dutifully refers back to what Marx or Engels wrote instead of what they themselves believe to be correct, is a rather miserable individual and probably not all that interested in the ruthless criticism of all that exists. In fact it is not difficult to see how such a rigid adherence to ideology could lead to support for new and highly

sophisticated forms of domination, what dissidents in the tradition like Karl Korsch would accurately describe as “reactionary utopias.”

Winston Churchill’s wife complained about his drinking, to which he famously replied that he had taken more out of alcohol than alcohol had ever taken out of him. As individuals who wish to wield our critique as a weapon against the dominant culture, we must take more from Marx, all other theorists, and anarchism itself than they take out of us.

Towards a Decolonial Critical Self-Theory

I am a Pashtun of the Yousafzai tribe, part of the larger Sarbani confederacy. Our roots are in the former Tribal Areas of the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderlands, which is where I was born, though there is memory in the tribe of migration (some would say invasion) several centuries ago from our ancestral homelands around Kandahar. I have also been an anarchist in North America for many years now, active in earth liberation actions, explorations in rewilding, and other work. Against my protests, I have therefore been submerged within two distinct cultural milieus and identified in specific ways for much of my life. Here, in a part historical review, part critique, and part memoir, I hope to untangle some of these knots, to critically examine the phenomenon of Pashtun essentialization, as well as briefly discuss avenues for an anarchist approach to issues in the borderlands today.

Two Strong Men

Indigenous to present-day Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan (a continuous, cross-border geographic region), Pashtuns are a tribal, Eastern Iranian population numbering some 50 million people. Situated in a truly strategic space throughout history, the community sits at the crossroads between Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. Important trade routes between empires and later states dot the region, large mineral reserves lie in the mountains, and although landlocked, warm waters in the Arabian Sea can be easily accessed in neighboring Balochistan. This rich geographic context has more often been a curse than a

blessing, however, with various empires from the Greeks to the Mongols historically laying claim to the region.

In keeping with tradition, in the 19th and early 20th century, British imperial power in India engaged in a series of conflicts with Pashtun populations on its northwestern borders, invading and occupying the borderlands intermittently. Critical to British ambitions in the region was the development of a view of indigenous communities that was steeped within the ideology of colonialism and 19th century European racism.

In most of these accounts, the supposed violence and treachery of the tribes was emphasized. Reproduced here is a passage from a popular historical account on British campaigns in the Khyber region:

“Between a dust-layered blue turban and a shaggy, scrofulous black beard (usually dyed when it began to whiten) were fixed the eyes of a hawk, the beak of a vulture and the mouth of a shark. The owner of these features, as a rule, stood slightly taller than a jump center and moved with the silent grace of a tiger on a stalk... In addition to the sidearms, there was a long-barrelled jezail, held casually over the shoulder or cradled in the crook of the arm—always loaded and ready to fire. Roses, worn behind the ears, often rounded off the getup. They did nothing to dispel the notion that here was a creature whose sole purpose and pleasure in life was the inflicting of a death as uncomfortable and prolonged as it might be possible to arrange” (Miller, jacket copy).

Such wonderfully orientalist depictions were the norm. Crucial to these representations was the invention in the British imagination of the “Martial Race,” communities in the region that were described as inherently tougher and thus better suited for fighting. Pashtun populations (along with

Baloch and Nepalese Gurkhas, among others) were inducted into this dubious list (Bonarjee IX). Regional Pashtun tribes were also compared to one another in terms of their supposed propensity for violence and criminal offenses. Through these classifications, Pashtun life was conceptualized as synonymous with violence, banditry, and an undying greed. Members of the Afridi tribe in particular suffered the worst in these early, crude ethnographies. The famed Anglo-Indian Colonel Warburton described them as “a most avaricious race, desperately fond of money.” Indeed, for the Afridi, “cold blooded treacherous murder” was “the salt of life,” and thus “nothing can ever change him” (Warburton 348).

British narratives also framed tribal communities as a particularly barbaric danger to colonial modernity. As raiding bands living outside of formal state structures, Pashtuns have indeed posed a threat to states and sedentary communities historically (Scott 222). In the minds of British writers and officers, however, this tension posed an existential threat to civilization itself – a view expressed in poetic and sometimes even admirable terms. As an early British colonial administrator writes (using the historically incorrect and now outdated term “Pathan), “The true Pathan is perhaps the most barbaric of all the races with which we are brought into contact... For centuries he has been, on our frontier at least, subject to no man. He leads a wild, fee active life in the rugged fastness of his mountains.” Comparing Pashtuns to the empire's Indian subjects, he continues, “There is an air of masculine independence about him which is refreshing” (Ibbetson 58). Winston Churchill as a young officer touches on this distinction even more vividly in his account of entering the frontier: “A cooler breeze is blowing. A single

step has led from peace to war; from civilization to savagery; from India to the mountains.” (Churchill 17).

A far more lasting development in British views, however, was a later mythologization of the Pashtun condition, occurring during the height of Anglo-Afghan conflict and a following period of indirect imperial rule over the tribes (Lindholm 357). Most colonial views here are expressed in the context of a more favorable rehashing of Martial Race theory. As a British military manual states, “[The Pashtun] takes a just and manly pride in himself, and his resolute look, upright gait, tall and muscular frame, and firm step, betoken many of the qualities of the genuine man.” The text continues: although “bloodthirsty,” there were also redeeming qualities to the tribesman, as his “grit and nerve are things to be proud of” and “he is generally as reckless of his own life [as he is of others]” (Bonarjee 10). Though still rooted in older ideas of violence, these accounts are far removed from earlier writings that depicted violence on the frontier as a purely alien and vindictive force.

“Positive” colonial mythologies also emphasized a supposed affinity between the European and Pashtun. An Anglo-Indian writer muses, “There was among the Pathans something that called to the Englishman or the Scotsman... When we crossed the bridge at Attock [the last settled district before the frontier] we felt we'd come home” (Allen 164). Similarly, the early English general Elphinstone gushes over the tribesmen's “strong and active forms, their fair complexions and European features” and the “independence and energy of their character” (150).

The greatest example of this view is perhaps expressed in “The Ballad of East and West,” Rudyard Kipling's classic poem set in the frontier. The poem recounts the showdown between the son of a British colonel and Kamal, a tribal chieftain who has stolen the colonel's finest horse. After a long chase makes clear to both figures that they stand locked in a stalemate, a peaceful resolution is finally achieved by the men. The poem joyously concludes with the almost humanist declaration:

But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
though they come from the ends of the earth! (Ahmed 168).

Such tropes were partly rooted in changes in the composition of colonial personnel. As the British presence shifted from a private enterprise under the East India Tea Company to a project that employed the armies of the Crown itself, empire changed face. The new officer class consisted of young men from middle and upper class backgrounds, boys who had escaped the stifling atmosphere of English boarding schools and military colleges and were thirsty for adventure – and what could be more adventurous than the frontier and its legendary inhabitants, forever immortalized in the work of Kipling and Elphinstone? A classically English understanding of “sportsmanship,” “game,” and “honor” thus featured prominently in colonial accounts of engagement with tribal communities (Ahmed 171). A famous story goes, after a skirmish between a local militia and British forces, the lone British official in the region (known as a Political Agent), commended the performance of his “side,” referring to the tribesmen rather than his own countrymen (Marsh 8). War and diplomacy in the frontier thus constituted a game, all part, of course, of the Great(er) Game for control over the region.

As one would expect, these views were not shared by Pashtuns, for whom contact with Western civilization represented a catastrophic development, the effects of which have never truly been undone.

The larger shift in views from optimistic to hostile and lastly to a peculiarly Eurocentric admiration was shaped by the contours of colonial policy through the ages. British figures initially approached the region with the aim of allying with the Kingdom of Afghanistan, thus viewing local populations with a guarded sense of openness. As prospects of a stable alliance dwindled and conflict broke out, a particularly bitter conception of the Pashtun was born, emphasizing the reputed violence, treachery, and barbarity of the tribes. Finally, as a buffer zone was established in the tribal areas and a semblance of peace was achieved between the empire and Afghanistan, the modern popularization of the Pashtun as a noble savage at worst, and the embodiment of supposed British values at best, was born (Lindholm 357). These views served to justify colonial repression, draped always in the language of progress and humanitarianism.

If these depictions corresponded to actual shifts in Pashtun behavior, they did so only to the extent that they reflected how Pashtuns, as individuals dealing with the reality of the world around them, responded to different situations. Needless to say, a tribesman dealing with the young Elphinstone as explorer and guest would be far more welcoming than Pashtuns in revolt under British rule just decades later. Colonial anthropology therefore reified the everyday behaviors of these tribes as their essence, portraying them as innate qualities fixed through space and time. The

hospitality of these tribes, their absolute refusal to bend to colonial power, and actions such as raiding colonial convoys were raised to the status of eternal truths.

Detournement?

These views survived through Pakistani state ideology. After independence and the partition of India, tribal territory under British control was inherited by the nascent Pakistani state. Much has been written about the survival of the colonial state machinery in Pakistan, but nowhere is this phenomenon more clear than in Pakistan's policy towards the tribal areas. Until 2018, colonial-era laws were still in place in the frontier, which authorize collective punishments such as home demolitions and the arrest of offender's family members. Similarly, state structures were absent in the region, with historically British appointed chiefs known as *maliks* ruling within the context of the *jirga*, tribal councils that exclude large sections of the population. Even the office of Political Agent, that peculiarly English representative of civilization in the borderlands, has survived. Alongside this political system have remained colonial views regarding the Pashtun minority in Pakistan, still seen as a population on the (both real and imagined) periphery of the state.

Much more curiously, however, aspects of these perceptions have been appropriated by Pashtun nationalists as well. Opposed to British colonialism historically and Pakistani state policy in the present-day, Pashtun nationalists and separatists have long integrated colonial views into their own narratives. The most famous of these figures was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, an anti-colonial leader and later critic of Pakistan, who

campaigns for the creation of an independent Pashtun state. Important to Khan's analysis was a vision of early tribal society, unravaged by outsiders. In his autobiography, Khan writes, "Food used to be simple and because of that peoples health was good, they were not as weak as they are today." He continues, "There was no moral bankruptcy like in today's world... Moral standards were very high" (A. Khan 10). This romanticized view strongly echoes the accounts of Elphinstone, steeped in utopianism and a longing for an idealized past.

Khan's political project relied heavily on the idea of the Pashtun as warrior as well. In the anti-colonial phase of Khan's movement, the *Khudai Khidmatgar* (the servants of God), the myth of Pashtuns as unbeatable fighters was espoused (Paracha). Though strictly non-violent in the Tolstoyan tradition, the movement nevertheless upheld an imagery and rhetoric that hearkened back to dominant English tropes. In a famous poem, for instance, Khan writes:

If I die, and lie not bathed in martyr's blood,
None should this [Pashtun] tongue pollute,
Offering prayers for me.
Oh mother, why should you mourn for me,
If I am not torn to pieces by British guns? (Lieven 301-302)

An important element to pacifist practice here is therefore a desire for self-sacrifice, based on a warrior's code of honor.

Khan's son, the famed nationalist political prisoner and Pashto poet Ghani Khan, went further still. In a classic portrait of Pashtun society, Khan writes extensively about what he deems to be the Pashtun "character." It is a moving and

heartfelt portrait by one of the greatest figures in Pashto literature, and yet it represents an excellent example of the internalization of colonial ideas. He comments on Pashtuns' "murders and cruelty, ignorance and hunger" (G. Khan 56). The violence of the Pashtun is explained by the fact that the tribesman "lives a straight and primitive life in a lonely valley or a small village, and is too busy worrying about the next thing to shoot, to find time to be civilised" (Ibid 6). In other passages, Khan discusses banditry among Pashtuns, classifying the practice as a trait inherent to populations outside of state control.

A wild sort of nobility of the savage is noted in this work as well. The bravest among the Pashtun "never takes cover in a fight and always laughs and sings when he is frightened." Unfortunately this specimen does not live long: "He will soon die fighting, a man as brave and strong and handsome as he, for he only knows how to love and laugh and fight and nothing else" (Ibid 6-7). His criminal tendencies are excused because "he is a man and not a worm," and one who would "rather look into the frightened eyes of a kidnapped merchant than the sad accusing eyes of his ill-fed wife" (Ibid 47). In another classically colonial analysis, Khan conceptualizes the Pashtun condition as a universal expression of wildness and passion, writing, "Pashtun is not merely a race but, in fact, a state of mind; there is a Pashtun lying inside every man, who at times wakes up and overpowers him" (Abbas 11-12).

Contemporary Pashtun accounts also rely on a historical narrative of constant victory in the face of empire. Ustad Rafeh, a professor of Pashtun history at Kabul University, states proudly:

“Two thousand five hundred years ago, Darius the Great came here from Iran. The Pashtuns resisted and never surrendered. Then Alexander the Great arrived from Macedonia. His advance from the west was like the wind—until he got to Afghanistan. He was stuck here for many years. Then fifteen hundred years ago, the Arabs came. We accepted their religion, but not their traditions, and we refused to be colonized. Nine hundred years ago, it was Genghis Khan. We killed his grandson. Then you British came, 150 years ago. You had 60,000 troops and the best artillery, but it was Pashtuns who surrounded Kabul and killed 17,000 of you as you tried to escape. The rulers of your empire thought this was an accident: they couldn’t accept such a defeat, so they attacked again, in 1880. We killed 12,000 of you that time, at Maiwand. The same with the Soviets in 1979: most of their original army was destroyed. What makes you think that it will be any different for America this time?” (Fergusson).

Although communities in the region have indeed resisted foreign domination for centuries, such accounts ignore periods during which outside powers not only invaded but ruled successfully. Both the Greek and Mongolian invasions met resistance, though they ultimately crossed the region and continued to expand further. Similarly, British forces quickly recouped from earlier losses in the first Anglo-Afghan war and subsequently ruled the tribes in the frontier region, as well as established a border dividing tribal populations in half. Russian forces, on the other hand, retreated due to larger economic problems within the Soviet Union, with planners in fact predicting a sustainable occupation for several more years (Steele). Thus the mythology of the “Graveyard of the Empires” obscures important phases in Afghan history in favor of simplistic narratives, bestowing upon local populations an almost mystical reputation as undefeated warriors.

Other expressions of self-exoticization can be found in more ephemeral but organic sources, in the sphere of popular

sayings, social media, and urban legends. Some common expressions among Pashtuns on the internet in the past several years include, “We are Pashtuns... we break bones, not hearts,” “With love, you can take a Pashtun to hell, but with force you cannot take him even to heaven,” and “The Pashtun likes four Gs in his life: God, Guns, and Girls.” A popular story transmitted through email in the early 2000s and now found on Facebook and other platforms recounts tall-tales of a Pashtun strongman who performs extraordinary feats, impressing both British and Indian bystanders. Another favorite meme is a viral video featuring a dubbed scene from the film *300*: King Leonidas, an Afghan in this re-imagining, gives a speech in Pashto about the glory and strength of his nation before kicking a Persian messenger, here an Urdu-speaking Pakistani, into a pit.

These modern expressions of Pashtun identity rooted in colonial ideas may be argued to be acts of detournement, understood more broadly here as a process whereby oppressed groups hijack concepts from the dominant culture to use as tools for liberation. If we were to see this sentiment expressed in a sort of discourse popular today, perhaps it would read, “The Pashtun is violent, bloodthirsty, and savage – and that's a good thing.”

Indeed, a self-image as an unconquered, majestic, and strong community can feel empowering in the face of immense repression. Nonetheless, such an orientation stands at odds with any truly radical project. Besides being rooted in orientalist biases that Othered Pashtuns in order to justify colonial policies, Pashtun essentialism also polices communities in the borderlands today, placing upon them the

burden of acting in certain, prescribed ways. The everyday behavior of Pashtuns in specific historical circumstances has been reified, exaggerated, and raised to the status of fixed laws that now function as the criteria for Pashtun-ness for future generations.

Dualistic categories (violent and non-violent, tribal and settled, honorable and shameful) are reproduced in full here. Thus, instead of viewing Pashtun (and non-Pashtun) individuals as unique, irreducible, and fundamentally incomprehensible, entire populations are grouped and bound by social categories. This is the approach to culture that would have a man who does not conform to a certain virile ideal labeled a *kuni* (faggot), that promotes an alienating work ethic, and requires individuals to provide sanctuary (*nanawatai*) to their oppressors (as exemplified in the case of Muhammad Gulab, an Afghan villager who felt compelled to protect members of an American unit during an insurgent ambush – actions he later came to have deeply mixed feelings about).

In place of this, a project of starting from the self, as individuals in a process of perpetual creation, grants one a different kind of power. If one acts as warrior one day, they can also seek friendship and intimacy among those who they love the next. If they are hospitable, they may also choose to reject their enemies and others they wish to have nothing to do with, in the spirit of free association. Being recognized through identity categories always carries the risk of being constrained in one's actions, whereas indeterminacy grants one a kind of unpredictability in the face of systems of power

as well. Needless to say, a flexibility of this sort can carry major practical uses for any struggle.

Invention as Existence

Not too long ago, I spoke with a friend from the Wazir tribe, who had recently been to a protest in Peshawar against the Pakistani army's incursions in the tribal areas. The demonstration featured a scattered grouping of disparate forces: separatists, members of the nationalist parties, university students, and leftist political workers. My friend, a Marxist herself, recounted how she clashed not only with the riot police but with some of the other demonstrators. As the police finished their half-hearted kettling maneuver, a contingent of younger protesters from the Pashtun Students Federation chanted verses from the warrior poet Khushal Khan Khattak: "In the sword alone lies our salvation / The sword is our inclination."

"And what has the sword won us so far? Can you face the army or drones with it?" my friend asked them. They were quiet, until one of them started to curse at her. The others laughed and they all continued their chant.

"What if I understand that I need to fight, but also want to play and sing and read? These guys just want to pretend they're Khushal Baba," she told me. I agreed with her and we laughed, but she stayed mostly silent for the rest of the evening. What had happened that day set her distinctly apart from her own comrades, in a way neither of us has known was possible.

But I understand the limits of what we are proposing. I am not so disconnected as to believe that simply refusing to entertain the identities imposed upon us will destroy the systems of repression we face. The material reality around us continues to colonize, dispossess, police, disappear, murder, torture, ghettoize, and fetishize us. Escaping the confines of the dominant culture's categories and embracing invention and indeterminacy is therefore only the first step. And yet, it is perhaps the most difficult step, one that requires the complete rediscovery of our relation with ourselves, one another, and the problem of existence itself. This is a project I wish to undertake, and I would like for you to join me if you wish.

If I am being honest, however, I am also not sure what a critical self-theory of the Pashtun would look like, or lead to. These are issues that have to be worked out, and I have no program for What Is To Be Done, only a practice that can best be described as existing in a constant tension against the world currently around me. I do, however, know that such work probably would not result in punk houses, typical anti-fascist actions, or other expressions of European and North American anarchist culture. These are arrangements that developed in specific circumstances and in response to similar but ultimately separate problems. For those in the egoist and insurrectionary milieus in the West to propose such avenues today would put them in the same category as the most miserable and out of touch leftist managers they decry.

There seem to be hints indigenous to us that point toward possible ways forward. The distortions of colonial ethnographies aside, anti-authoritarian elements of tribal life and the continued lack of formal state structures in large

swathes of Pashtun land make aspects of the task ahead easier in some ways. Current trends in Pashtun resistance such as the recent struggles against racism and police brutality in Pakistan offer exciting opportunities as well. The uprising, though steeped in the language of mass movements and reformism, has rejected parliamentary politics and is thus far more subversive than the nationalist parties could ever be, and has the potential to lead to something greater. Broader networks such as the recently formed Anarchist Union of Iran and Afghanistan signal other promising opportunities yet. The affinities fostered here cross social boundaries, rejecting the confines of left ethnonationalism as much as Western colonialism and state repression.

It is in these steps that my accomplices and I can hear songs from another world. A faint song—sometimes drowned out completely by the other noises—but it is there and deserves to be listened to.



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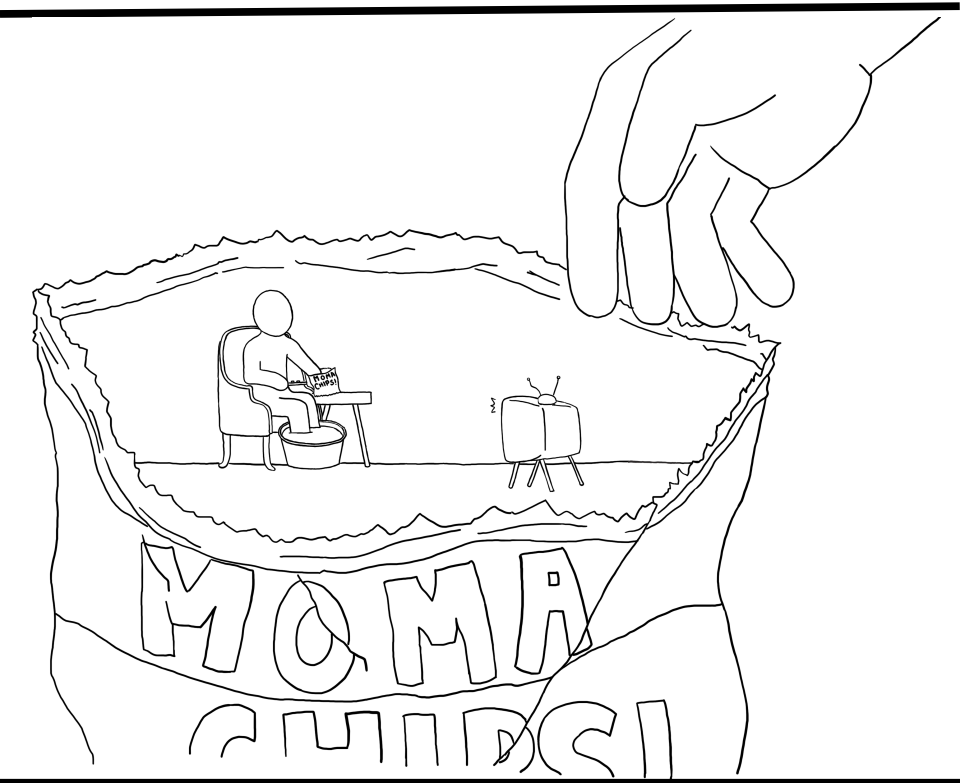
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The Bitter Victory of National Anarchism

by Dabtara

We are living in a time of fragmentation. The two great hegemonic blocs of the United States and Europe have been cheering since the fall of the Soviet system, but are now feeling the delirium tremens of acute social tension once again. Gaunt and sunken-eyed from the threefold death of military overextension, economic crisis, and a completely ineffectual ruling class, the most optimistic diagnosis of the present moment probably would call it “stagnation.”

This fragmentation takes different forms. The United States—the imperial and economic core of the postwar consensus—now has to come to terms with an increasingly uncertain future in which it can no longer maintain a watchful eye on the cantankerous *hoi polloi* of the so-called “developing world” and that they may, God forbid, drift outside of the American economic sphere. An increasingly incompetent intelligence community keeps tripping over its own shoes in an attempt to put out fires with kerosene – they can’t even pull off a Latin American coup any more!

But something strikes an even more visceral terror than Bolivarito socialism or Islamists playing Caliphate: a star is rising in the East (and a nominally communist one, no less). Of course, there’s the predictable reaction of rationalization, sinophobia, and frothing rage – what stage of grief are we even at at this point? China, strangely, doesn’t seem to care. Content to engage in domestic development and soft imperialism, American saber-rattling begins to look even more like a desperate attempt to relive the good old Cold War

days – I mean, we know who comes out on top in that one, right?

Europe, spared from carrying the main weight of post-Fordist capitalism and content to play second fiddle, is perhaps facing an even worse fate as a result. Sullen-faced and lugubrious Brussels bureaucrats warn us about “insurgent populism” and the looming collapse of the European *Pax Americana*, but their groaning falls like pearls before swine on a population equal parts apathetic and discontent. Liberal politics, if not dead, can see the dam buckling (despite every inch of the technocratic duct-tape on its concrete facade).

If American fragmentation is primarily external, the European strain is definitively subcutaneous. The European Union’s “grand cultural and political achievements” present themselves now as little more than a mask of naive upper class moralism on top of nakedly capitalist economic policy. Brexit is little more than the Brits “saying the quiet part loud” as everyone starts to ask, union for what, exactly? And the whispers of “dropping out” are starting to spread to the continent.

The clock’s ticking, sure. But as anarchists we have to be cautious. Yes, the old order seems to be falling apart but we’re presented with a paradox. On one hand, the state is weaker than ever before: its political institutions are less and less capable of managing crisis, militaries are simultaneously bloated and overextended, and even at the most basic level there’s a complete lack of faith in the system. The eternal loyalists – upper class managerial types and people within the cultural elite orbit – are still praying for a messianic

restoration of the pre-08 crisis, but the average person can palpably sense the ways in which the edifice is crumbling.

Yet while the state is scrambling to even function on the day-to-day and avert meltdown, we're also seeing an explosion of the old, brutal modes of social control that we thought were over and done with. The collapse of the European Order means countries are more and more concerned with staking out their territory: here is the line which you will not cross, this is Our Land™. Borders both internal and external need to be fortified with guns and police, biometrics and mass surveillance, travel restrictions and mega-prisons.

“Build the wall” here, but on both sides is a suffocating labyrinth of state control and domination.

As the liberal democratic state withers, it also grows stronger. Maybe this is just the mask falling off, the present crisis revealing the violence that was always there under the covers. Or maybe this is the impotent rage of a world in collective dementia, lashing out at anything and anyone it can to try and regain a mythic past. What should scare us is that this shift in the state – from nurturing mother to abusive father – *might actually work*; the quixotic soft-facism of today is the capitalist state's way of pulling itself out of the mud by its bootstraps. China, Singapore, Vietnam, etc. have shown that it can work – or at least appear to – so might as well just give up on that nice liberal dream and just focus on that age old conservative bugbear, “social stability.”

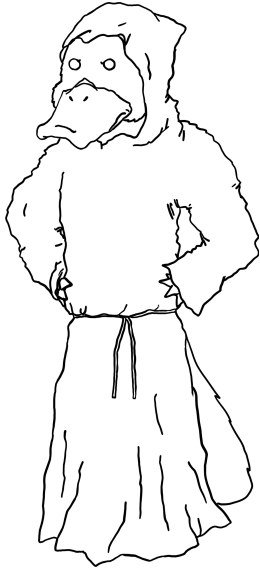
This is the bitter victory of national anarchism: *liberty from here to here*. Freedom and citizenship are no longer two

separate questions, and as each of our states devolve into little ethno-national enclaves, one can only wonder how much more the state can shrink without the military-police-surveillance complex going anywhere.

I'm no good at divination and I can't tell where things are going with any certainty. What we as anarchists need now is some soul searching and a serious reckoning with how things are. The future is not yet written, but we know the story will be a tragedy if we don't get serious. In class society it's always the best of times and the worst of times, but if we're smart, now may be the best of times *for us*.

Encounters with the Platypus Affiliated Society

by Dabbara



Moving to a new city, I was surprised that the first semi-formal Left group I came across was the Platypus Affiliated Society (from here on out, “the Plats”). For those who don’t know, the Plats are essentially a mix of post-Trotskyism, critical theory, and Moishe Postone, all filtered through a somewhat awkward lens of classical political theory and academic insularity. Talking to them is often not too jarring, especially at first blush, but after spending even as little as a few weeks in their general orbit, you’ll begin to notice a variety

of extremely off-putting things about them and their organization.

Here are five main points I want to touch on based on general trends that I have noticed from my experience with members of Platypus:

- 1) Reading groups at the maximum extent of political engagement
- 2) Fixation on liberalism and early modern political theory
- 3) Utterly bizarre theories of capitalism, the state, and its relation to the economy
- 4) Mantric repetition of “the death of the left”

5) General narrow-mindedness and cultish behavior

Of course, there are caveats that I will try to get out of the way before I get into the weeds here. It is absolutely true that not every member is like this. I get it. Every organization has internal variety; though this one less than most I've come across. In this, just try to remember that I'm only talking about my perspective developed from looking in from the outside; I'm not trying to describe Platypus's ideology as it sees itself or its most developed intellectual form.

Just to be clear, many of these people are quite nice and often quite normal when they step outside of "teaching mode" and act like normal people. And, to their credit, they've been pretty patient with most voiced criticism of them or their org; they're not going to ostracize you for speaking up and giving a different take. That said, I doubt they'd take kindly to this essay. Anyway, on with the show.

I - Those God-Forsaken Reading Groups

The Plats love their reading groups. At first it seems harmless enough – after all, more people should probably be reading Marx and G. M. Tamas. But then you start to get the creeping realization that it isn't so much about reading and discussing texts as it is learning the official line about them. It's not even remotely democratic. A normal reading group tends to be flexible about the reading list, adding and dropping things depending on the interest level of the members and trying to make sure people enjoy what they're reading so they get the most out of it. And discussions usually are supposed to be

about seeing different perspectives on a text, trying to get something interesting out of it or learn something, whatever.

Not the case here. You're not reading Smith or Adorno or Lenin in order to actually get to know the text you're being assigned, or understand the text better through discussion, or even something as basic as expanding your repertoire. No, the point is to read these texts, come to the reading group, and have the Plat member leading things tell you how you're supposed to think and interpret the text. It's never a back and forth between equals, at best you're a good student getting patted on the head for absorbing as much of the line as possible. And at worst you're an insolent child whose worldview is full of all sorts of misconceptions – so keep coming to the reading group until you get that all sorted out.

Don't go to the reading group. Do the readings (maybe skip the ones by “pedagogue in chief Chris Cutrone” though) because you *will learn something* – and maybe not what they want you to. They want you to get a good education, and half of that infrastructure is there. It's just not exactly genuine.

That lack of genuineness starts to come through when you realize where these reading groups take place and who they're aimed at: they're not trying to court any working class people or people looking to learn something outside of an academic setting (so much for “dual power,” huh?). Rather, the reading group is basically aimed at three main demographics: activist types, already committed leftists from different sects, and, most important of all, curious but unsuspecting college undergrads at elite universities.

They want activists and leftists to come to these reading groups because they're convinced that the Plat line is so strong that they'll basically be able to pull them over from the DSA/PSL/APL/etc. And in typical Trot fashion, they mostly only know how to talk to other Trots. They know how to argue with Cliffites and Shachtmanites; present them with an anarchist or even alternative Marxist view and you can feel how quickly they get out of their comfort zone once they go off script.

The college student aspect is especially pernicious and in some ways almost disgusting. Without mincing words here, it feels predatory to structure your recruiting structure around basically tricking open-minded and curious young people into attending a reading group, only for the ultimate end goal to basically be to bombard them with the party line until they either leave from burnout or get sucked in to the org itself. And since its presence is strongest in Ivies and top colleges, the people you're sucking in are almost always upper class, politically confused undergrads who are the ideal candidate for a completely cynical political project. Take their dues, churn them out, and that's it.

So if you're reading this and you're mid to late-20s, working class, and looking to learn something because you're trying to better understand politics, again, don't go. *They want nothing to do with you.* I'm sorry, but you're just not vanguard material. Come back once you'll be able to be sucked dry from monthly dues and conference fees, kicked out because you're too tired from working a job to go to a reading group in some Ivy's library 45 minutes away by train on your day off.

II - Will You Please Shut up About Liberalism?

So, I hear some of you say, what is this “Plat line” I keep harping about? What’s so bad about it? After all, every good revolutionary org needs its propaganda etc. etc.

Well, here we can move to the other side of the coin. The next two sections focus on just what I take to be some of the main issues I take with them on a theoretical level. If this is what passes for Marxism these days, *je ne suis pas marxiste*.

To begin, Platypus is genuinely obsessed with liberalism to the point where you start to ask yourself if these people are actually capable of talking about politics in terms of something else. Marxism/socialism/communism (always used interchangeably, of course) are the full culmination of liberalism. All good things in the present seem to stem from liberalism; if you’re against liberalism you’re against freedom, the left, even humanity itself.

For the Plats, liberalism becomes valorized to the point of being beyond criticism. Any critique is “undialectical” and “resembles radlib identity politics” because you’re clearly just being spiteful. Liberalism has brought so much good to the world, they say. That’s a fact that no one but them, apparently, has been able to reckon with. Even if you make a critique of liberalism at them *where the entire sentence is just quoting from Marx* they’ll look you dead in the eyes and tell you you’re being unfair, ideological, and undialectical (and probably misreading Marx too at that – come to the reading group in a couple weeks and we’ll show you the right way to read that text).

This tends to come up quite often in the reading group. You would be forgiven for thinking that you'd be critically engaging with someone like Adam Smith in an allegedly Marxist reading group, but no, Smith is basically beyond criticism because any criticism of him is an implicit critique of Marx. No, they don't differ, Marx took all of Smith's framework on board in his analysis, stop asking questions. It's even worse with Rousseau, who apparently is the originator of everything from The Dialectic™ to historical materialism. Enjoy having Rousseau hamfistedly inserted into every conversation you have with this group and being told, with a perfectly straight face, that Marx takes over all his political and conceptual categories from Rousseau without any modifications worth paying attention to.

Coincidentally, this also means that Platypus absolutely adores talking about things in terms familiar to academic political scientists and no one else. God forbid you mix up private reason and the private will unless you want a 30 minute lecture on why you need to read Rousseau and Kant, and don't even ask them if their definition of civil society differs from Hegel's. Content to never reinvent the wheel – at least in terms of their general vocabulary – Platypus members love to spout off jargon to deflect questions and more often than not sound like mid-century Straussians rather than the Marxists they claim to be. I can't blame them too much: this is what happens to your org when everyone in it is either in the academy or wishes they could be.

If Liberalism is sacred, I'd rather be profane.

The Plats seem to genuinely love liberalism, which is definitely something that strikes leftists as strange. To be fair to them, it paints a somewhat decent historical narrative: the intellectual trailblazers of the bourgeoisie (Rousseau, Smith, Sieyes, Kant, etc.) are all representing a proto-leftist ground that is taken up and realized by Marx. Marx, therefore, is the inheritor of a promethean liberalism and it is up to him to “fulfill” its promise. You can only get to communism through liberal democracy, you silly anarchist. There’s no tiger’s leap into history, no other path to take.

Anyone with a little bit of creativity can see where this position can lead you. But what’s probably more telling is the way they absolutely fail to adequately respond when presented with texts by Marx that directly contradict their account. Even completely bracketing Marx’s relation to his predecessors – which is assuredly more critical than they’d ever admit – they still can’t explain, at all, Marx’s letters to Vera Zasulich or Engels’s *Peasant War in Germany*. There’s enough material in both Marx and Engels, published and unpublished, to make the case that they certainly thought that pre-capitalist societies were fully capable of communism *without a capitalist transition as an intervening step*.

Presented with this, I have seen a mix of responses. One is to basically deny my ability to read or interpret – I’m completely wrong, misunderstanding Marx, there’s no way he means that when he says it, etc. Why am I wrong, exactly? I have to be wrong axiomatically, there’s just *no way Marx could say that*. This is what happens when you let Cutrone do your thinking for you. Another response is to write off Marx as incomplete; oh he just doesn’t have a fleshed out view of this, you should

read Lenin (or Trotsky, or Horkheimer, or *Cutrone*). Finally, you have probably the only intellectually honest answer: Marx is wrong here, here he falls short of his own conclusions, so we have to be selective in what we take as authoritative in Marx. That's fair, but ultimately leads to the same issue where Plats end up just picking and choosing to support the narrative, rather than the other way around. A whole organization dedicated to putting the cart before the horse, basically.

III - The Weird and Wild World of Plat Capitalism

The Plats have a dirty little secret: they actually have a real soft spot for the bourgeoisie. Really keen to talk about the sections of the Manifesto where the bourgeoisie occupy a radical and transformative role, they seem to relish in the stories and images of the French and American revolutions – to the point where I have even had people defending the Founding Fathers for owning slaves. We get it, you want to push back against the “capitalism can do no good” camp, but if you care more about the Glorious Revolution than the Diggers or Levelers, then aren't you ultimately missing the point?

For Plats, capitalism is (get this) just the crisis of bourgeois society. You can have the bourgeoisie without capitalism, but not the other way around. Capitalism is when bourgeois society *isn't working right* and it's up to communists to right the ship. If anything, the problem seems to be that we have the wrong people at the helm.

You'll quickly notice the underlying tone of most Plat theory. Absolutely econophobic, everything from Stalinism (oops, I

mean “bonapartism as manifested in Russia”) to the Revolutions of 1848 is described in pretty much solely political terms. I don’t think I’ve heard any member say the phrase “mode of production” once; it’s all political. Capitalism is the (political) crisis of bourgeois society, Stalinism is a political crisis in the Soviet Union, the French Revolution collapsed into terror for political reasons, etc. Despite their hatred for left-liberal sociology, they share in common the conviction that everything is political, even if they understand things totally differently when they say it.

Ironically, their theory of the state is absolutely skeletal and hodgepodge. As good leftists they have to realize that politics isn’t just the field of political contestation that the state sets out for them, but if you ask them about the state they’d rather change the subject. “Let’s talk about power,” they say, or, “let’s go back to the question of bourgeois society.” Like nailing water to a board, they shift and shimmy on this question. If you ask them about economic principles beyond their vague handwavings about the “labor theory of value,” good luck even getting an answer, let alone a straight one.

For Plats, everything has to be explained as a political shift or transformation because they’re desperate to avoid the charge of “economism” that has plagued other left camps, though I’m sure that their social base of humanities student PhD candidates does them no favors when trying to make sense of *Capital*.

IV - “Death of the Left,” or the Dangers of Letting Slogans do the Thinking for You

The left is dead. Okay, so what does that mean exactly?

From what I can tell, the phrase is a true titan, holding up a whole universe of meanings that shift and slide between is and ought more often than a freshman ethics paper. When it's useful for them, the phrase is purely descriptive. The left is dead because there are no viable left-wing political parties able to contest elections or vie for power. But wait, I thought politics was more than just trying to seize state power? Oh, well "the left" in "the left is dead" also means things like unions, dual power, even class struggle itself, depending on who you ask and why you're asking.

But it's not just a fact, apparently. It also is a good thing! Or it's also a bad thing! Just ask and you'll get both answers. It's bad because we're so far away from 1917, the left has been on a linear decline since its glory days, weren't things just so much *better* back then? But it's also good too, apparently, because now Platypus can swoop in, dust off the defibrillator and zap the left back to life. Though if anything, Platypus fashions itself more as the Maharal, building up a golem out of the inert material of "the dead left" and putting it's own voice (as a kind of divine name) in the beast to bring it to life.

"The left" part of "the left is dead" is even more ambiguous, however, not in the least because of how Platypus talks about their own relation to it. One thing is for sure, "the left" is always talked about as a monolithic bloc, which makes no sense given how absolutely variable and inconsistent their inclusion criteria is. So, talking about the left can mean "anyone left of, say Hillary Clinton" (including everything from "left liberals" to New Agers to internet Hoxahists), but it

can also mean “the political left” (mainly Trot and Stalinist parties, but if they’re kind, possibly also anarchists), or even “the actually existing left” (which I guess is the only one of the three that is actually “dead”).

Very strange that they talk like this when *even in Marx’s day* “the left” was constantly split, infighting, and divided. They seem to forget that there never was a “the left” so much as there were just various factions vying for control and power and status as “the left.” When your project is basically left unity, it might seem nice to have a broad conception of what “the left” is, but good luck getting all these people to sign on to your view, party, or even tolerate you at a conference. Plat left unity isn’t even the more conventionally liberal idea of putting aside our differences and working together, it’s left unity — unity because we’re all in agreement with Platypus.

For me, this is the problem with how often this phrase is invoked. For one, it’s said so often as to become completely meaningless, a shibboleth used to show how smart and above it all you are. Platypus wants to be in the left but not of the left, a sort of outside intervention to help set it back on its feet. But if anything, Platypus is not only totally of the left, but far more necrotic than its counterparts. At least the DSA tries out activism or contesting elections, I can’t tell what Plats do aside run reading groups and write for their weekly paper.

V - More Opus Dei Than Heaven’s Gate, but Far More Boring Than Either

To address the elephant in the room, is Platypus a cult? The short answer: probably. But let me lay out the general case on both sides and let you form your own opinion.

On one hand, there really is not a lot of ideological variance among people in Platypus. All Plats I've met have the exact same line on most political and social questions, they have the same readings of Marx and Rousseau, and so on. Conversations you have with one of them can easily be continued with another and you won't feel like you're being unfair to either. It's not a hive mind but they all definitely believe they've found the decoder ring to solve the mystery of the death of the left.

On that same token, it's also why they're so fundamentally evangelical about it. They're out to win converts to the cause – so long as they're the kind of people who'd already be in a leftist party in the first place. In fact, their main goal really is heresiological, not even evangelical. They're not out to broaden the leftist base or form alternative political arrangements, they're out there making people read Rousseau because they're trying to make other leftists (you know, the dead ones) get on board and give up their delusions. The left is dead in their eyes not because of any change in the economy, hostility of the state, or actions done by the left; no, the left is dead because it picked up all sorts of illiberal and wrong ideas in the 60s with the New Left and lost all sense of real strategy. Unlike Platypus, which has a totally bulletproof political praxis.

More evidence for the cult accusations is, at least personally, the shocking lack of any intellectual curiosity from the Plats

I've encountered. Book recommendations are met with glazed over eyes and "that doesn't sound interesting to me." Why read *The Origin of Capitalism* or Endnotes when you can just read everything on the syllabus again? I can't even explain this in terms of being ideologically committed because even the most hardline Wahhabist could read Suhrawardi to point out its utter destitution and deviance from the True Path. They're always in teaching mode, they're here to win converts, not really to learn something. It's the worst mix of activism brain and academic smug.

Conversely, and here's probably the real silver lining in all of this, they're at least open to debate (in the proper settings) and aren't the kind of people to try and ruin your life because they don't like your reading of the Gotha Program or something. Most members have their own hobbies and do things in their spare time, and if it's clear you're not interested in joining up with them, they will leave you alone. I can't guarantee this but it has been pretty consistent from what I've seen. I mean, they're willing to put up with *me* so that says a lot about them in some regard.

The difference between a True Believer and a cultist depends on your sympathies more than anything, and Plats are refreshingly quick to admit that they others see them as a cult. But more often than not this is taken by them as a sign that they're in the right ("oh, the left reviles me, that means I have to be on to something!"). So even if they're not a cult, don't let yourself get sucked in. It's just not worth your time.

Where do we go from here? Platypus is definitely not something that needs to be fought or combatted, mostly

because they're just not that relevant. Despite their puffed up self-presentation, all in all they maybe have a core cadre of a couple dozen members, maxing out at probably no more than 100 and change. Their presence in huge swaths of the country is next to zero, and outside of urban areas and college campuses you'll never see them (perhaps this gives away how I came across them, but so be it).

Let Platypus keep up with the Sisyphean task of endlessly holding reading groups in an increasingly ineffectual attempt to jumpstart the burnt out husk of the left. Blinded by a mix of Leninist *ostalgia* and their own self-importance, they will probably never let the dead bury the dead. The future doesn't lie in necromancy and even if it did, Cutrone is no John Dee.

I don't care about "the left," I care about communism. For diehard Trots and Stalinists, this sentence means nothing because they cannot conceive of communism as anything other than the actualization of their own political alignments in their particular party form. If there's a way out of the present, it certainly isn't going to come from this tepid Lenin-Rousseau hybrid, and it certainly isn't going to grow out of proselytizing to other leftists. Communism, as *the real movement* that Marx talked about, isn't dead, but it is up to us *as communists* to recognize the immanent possibility for liberation in our time. Stop playing vanguard – seize capital by the horns.



ANYTHING
CAN
HAPPEN

Anarchy Against Unity: Five Theses on Anti-fascist Left Unity Today

1. The left-wing of ideology obfuscates as much as its right-wing counterpart.

The left operates according to a calcified logic that veils the nature of the social order around us. Regarding anti-fascism, this confusion manifests within the context of a false dichotomy imagined between fascism and democracy. The master plan is that anti-fascism must function immediately as a means of restoring capitalism to its more “human” state, demonstrable trajectories of fascism as an outgrowth of liberalism be damned. Other instances of muddled theory include reductive frameworks that posit class as the sole site of struggle, the obsession with consciousness raising, and an unyielding faith in the democratic principle.

2a. Leftist mystification is reflected concretely in its organizational efforts.

In the real world, leftist organizations approach anti-fascism through certain avenues. The theoretical defense of democracy for instance means many leftists stand readily available to fight alongside the bourgeois state. The poverty of the struggle when conceived in such ways has been noted by those on the margins of both anarchist and Marxist groupings. Such figures rightly saw this anti-fascism as simply being the politics of the Popular Front, and all the failures associated with it: class collaboration, betrayal, and defeat (often in this order).

At the same time, the emphasis on consciousness has leftists squander valuable time, energies, and material resources attempting to convert reactionaries to their “side.” Never is it asked if those from the far-right have anything to offer in the first place, as converted leftists or otherwise.

More generally, the naked opportunism of viewing struggles against fascism as part of a battle for followers is worth considering as well. Taken to its logical conclusions, one finds a practice that is as amusing as it is repulsive. Next to anarchist efforts to arm Black individuals against racist militias in the disaster zone of post-Katrina Louisiana, members of the now-defunct International Socialist Organization attempted to sell their newspapers. The anarchists forced them to leave at gunpoint.

2b. Perhaps more crucially, sections of the left uphold a politics that is functionally indistinguishable from fascism itself.

If fascism is understood as a specific historical phase of capitalist development, then nothing, excluding a handful of European societies during the early to mid-twentieth century, can be classified as such. If fascism is, however, conceptualized as a broader category of setups where a modern capitalist state attempts to establish control over a disintegrating order, in the process creating a highly regimented society, fostering a militant nationalism and cult of personality, eliminating segments of the population, and destroying space for even a farcical opposition, then certainly many leftist programs were fascist.

Any differences would have seemed largely academic to the millions of proletarians worked to death, minorities dispossessed and subjected to genocide, and queers brutalized in the gulags.

3. Appeals to expedience are discredited by the near-zero influence the left wields as a political force.

Many who would like to disregard the divisions outlined above hold there to be an urgent need for leftist contributions in the fight against fascism. Such an appeal to realism ignores the very real fact that politically and in terms of combat capabilities, the left forms an utterly insignificant configuration today. Though scattered groups of Marxist-Leninists, Trotskyists, and anarcho-syndicalists in the milieu feature prominently in “radical spaces” and the academy, it remains that in terms of boots on the ground, they are at best useless and at worst a hindrance due to their active alienation of everyone who is not already a committed believer.

Distant are the days when the unions and communist parties were at the very least a disruptive force to be dealt with, mobilizing millions of working class within their social terrain. Left unity today is therefore less an expression of pragmatism than it is an idealist effort at resurrecting long-dead beasts.

4. An alliance with the entirety of the left opens a Pandora's box of collaboration.

Given leftist theoretical shortcomings, record of repression, and impotence as a force on the streets, it is always worth

asking advocates of left unity, “Where are these lines drawn?” Would it also be useful to work with White nationalists against globalization, right-libertarians against certain functions of the state, or Salafi-Jihadis against Western policy in the Middle-East?

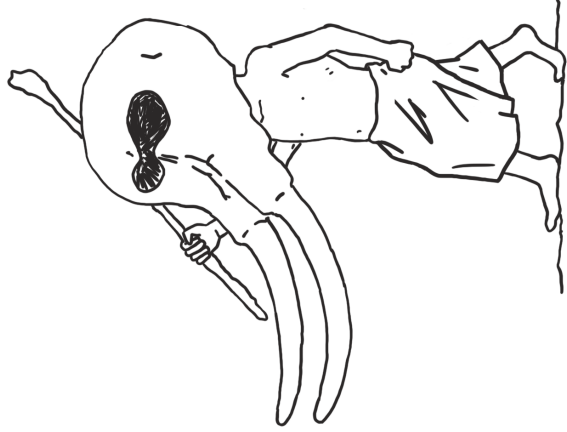
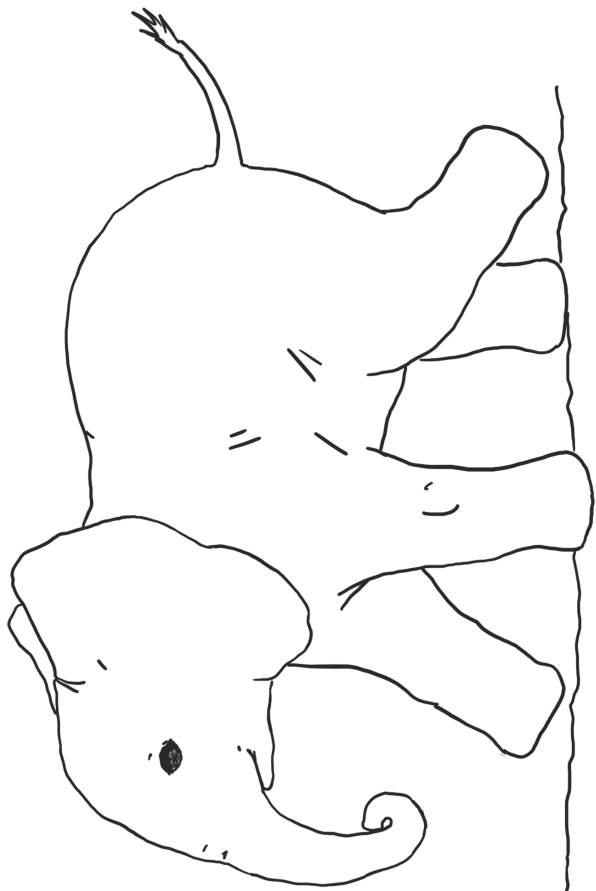
As offensive as the above suggestions may seem, such esoteric games make perfect sense within the logic of dominant anti-fascist discourse. Beyond the endless hair-splitting at conferences, beyond the posturing at demonstrations, beyond platitudes one may hear in a more polite reading group, it remains that leftist opposition to fascism is as superficial as the above groups' positions—and all would like to see anarchists done away with the moment these very specific battles are won.

5. Programs based on unity can only exist alongside an utter lack of anarchist imagination.

Focusing primarily on fascism as the enemy to be defeated at all costs forms part of a maddeningly narrow worldview. Instead of analyzing the struggle against fascism as only one step along the way to the world one wishes to inhabit, many on the left consider fascism and anti-fascist efforts to be the principal contradiction today.

The divide between these orientations cannot be overstated. Whereas the former position approaches the social relations of capital and the state (both in their fascist and democratic forms) as obstacles that must be removed *in the process of creating anarchy*, the latter presents grappling with these systems as the social struggle in its totality. There exists no

observable desire for a freer existence beyond the experience of a miserable struggle. It is not difficult to see how such a perspective can leave one open to allying with those diametrically opposed to one's beliefs.





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