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The Vampires Of Romania

From Transmetropolitan Review

When most people think of Romania, they imagine vampires. I'm not a vampire, but when a stranger finds out I'm Romanian, they say the word vampire. Always. Sometimes I'm the first to bring it up. It's easier. Better to get it over with rather than wait, sort of like I've done here, in this first paragraph of this stupid article. Just so you know, I'm not going to be mentioning vampires after this. I want you to have a different perspective on Romania, so instead of seeing me as a vampire, think of me as a potato, a Moldovan potato, a barabule. That's my first name. And if you want to know what my last name means, I'll just tell you it's such-and-such. That's the truth.

It's not that easy being called a vampire. It's so insidious, I'm already breaking my rule. Years ago, when I was living in Basque country, my squat-mates and I were busy stealing electricity from the municipal grid when they started saying the word vampiro. At the time, my Spanish wasn't so good, but I definitely understood vampiro. They said it over and over, as if I couldn't hear them, so I climbed off the electrical pole, threw down my tools, then told them to go fuck themselves. Neither of them knew why I was so angry, they tried to calm me down, and in my broken Spanish, I told them to stop calling me a vampire. Imagine how I felt when they laughed in my face. I was on the verge of exploding when one of them

took a small white cylinder out of his pocket and told me this was the vampiro. An electrical socket, or some shit like that. I guess some people call this racial paranoia.

A vampiro, Santurtzi, Basque Country

Here's where it gets strange. If you went for a walk in Iași, a city in eastern Romania, you'd probably think most of the people passed for white. If a Romanian went for a walk in Paris, they'd probably pass for white, at least until they opened their mouths. Once that thick accent comes out, that random white person is suddenly a fucking vampire Romanian, ready to pick your pockets and steal your job. In France, in the UK, I know dozens of Romanians have been beaten, stabbed, worse. Why? I'm not really sure, but I think it has something to do with racism and the fact that stupid-ass white people think Roma and Romanian are the same thing. Since they can't tell the difference, they hate us equally, although lately the British press seems to think Romanians have a good work ethic even though we're not white and steal everyone's job. Also, before I forget, most Romanians hate the Roma people inside Romania and are also racist pieces of shit. In Romania, a Romanian can be racist to a Roma. Outside of Romania, a Romanian can be savagely beaten by racists for not being white. You see how confusing this is? It gets worse. I'm about to tell you about my childhood.

Roma in Romania

I, the Moldovan potato, Barabule Cutarecu, was born in a small village

within 90 km of Iași. I will tell you almost nothing about my childhood. My village was like all the others, part of the endless expanse of peasants that still stretches all the way east into Moldova, Ukraine, and Russia. In the warm months, I slept in a small house with walls made from straw, mud, and shit. You think I'm joking, or maybe this method of construction disgusts you, but in both cases you're wrong. It's basically free, so if you like going to Home Depot to buy your stupid kitchen lights, I leave you to go fuck yourself. This is all of my childhood you deserve to know. There were chickens, grapes, a lot of hills, snow, the Church, a radio, a well, horses, wagons. And communism. There was that, too. I was born into communism.

Not me, etc.

My mother and father still think communism was a better system, especially in the village. Everyone had food, everyone was housed, and corruption was out in the open. Back then, corruption was just called the state. The transition to capitalism wasn't this orgy of freedom and democracy you might imagine, at least not in the village. We might have lost some communist propaganda from our walls, but the Church still stood in the same place and its bells still tolled every Sunday. This might not vibe with your DSA pseudo-communism, but you should know the truth about the Romanian Orthodox Church: it was backed by the communist government as an effective way of keeping us in line. Straight up. It's still keeping us in line, apparently...

How To Live Like The World Is Ending

From Birds Before The Storm

...The world is ending.

It's always ending, but it's ending a lot right now. For me and the people I'm close to, it's ending more dramatically than it was when I was born thirty-seven years ago.

That's fucking paralyzing.

The news is full of extinction and fascism and death and death and death.

And we're expected to get up in the morning and go to work.

For awhile, I coped by means of a cycle of denial and panic. The potential apocalypse was, basically, too-much-problem. I couldn't wrap my head around it or its ramifications, so I acted like it wasn't happening. Until, of course, some horrible event or reminder of the apocalypse broke over a certain threshold and sent me spiraling into despair. Then numbness took over once more and the cycle began again.

That didn't do me much good.

About a year ago, I decided to embrace four different, often contradictory, priorities for my life. I run my decisions past all of them and try to keep them in balance.

Act like we're about to die. Act like we might not die right away. Act like we might have a chance to stop this. Act like everything will be okay.
Act like we're about to die

Every breath we take is the last breath we take. You Only Live Once. Smoke em if you got em. Do As Thou Wilt. Memento Mori. Our culture is full of euphemisms and clever sayings that fo-

cus around one simple idea: we're mortal, so we might as well try to make the most of the time we have.

Embracing hedonism has a lot to recommend it these days. It's completely possible that the majority of us won't be alive ten or twenty years from now. It's completely possible, although a lot less likely, that a lot of us won't be alive in a year.

I used to think, when I was younger, that I was a terrible hedonist. As a survivor of sexual and psychological assault and abuse, I've never had much luck with drug use or casual sex. But fucking and getting wasted, while perfectly worthwhile pastimes, aren't the only ways to live in the moment. Hedonism is about the pursuit of pleasure and joy. The trick is to find out what gives you pleasure and joy.

For myself, this has meant giving myself permission to pursue music, to sing even though I'm not trained, to play piano and harp. To travel, to wander. To seek beautiful moments and accept that they might be fleeting. I'll rudely paraphrase the host of the rather wholesome podcast *Ologies*, Alie Ward, and say "we might die so cut your bangs and tell your crush you like them."

My hedonism is a cautious one. I'm not looking to take up smoking or other addictions. I'm not trying to live like there's a guarantee of no tomorrow, just a solid chance of no tomorrow. Frankly, this would be true regardless of the current crisis, but it feels especially important to me just now.

Act like we might not die right away

Preppers have a bad reputation for a good reason. The people stockpiling ammunition and food in doomsday bunkers by-and-large don't have anyone else's best interests at heart. Still, being prepared for a slow apocalypse, or dramatic interruptions in the status quo, makes more and more sense to

more and more of us.

Preparing for the apocalypse is going to look different to every person and every community. For some people it will mean stockpiling necessities. For other people, securing the means to grow food.

One thing I've learned from my friends who study community resilience and disaster relief, however, is that the most important resource to shore up on isn't a tangible one. It's not bullets, it's not rice, it's not even land or water. It's connections with other people. The most effective means of survival in crisis to create community disaster plans. To practice mutual aid. To build networks of resilience.

Every apocalypse movie has it all backwards when the plucky gang of survivors holes up in a cabin and fends off the ravaging chaotic hordes. The movies have it backwards because the ravaging hordes are, in the roughest possible sense, the ones doing survival right. They're doing it collectively. Obviously, I'm not advocating we wear the skulls of our enemies and cower at the feet of warlords (though wearing the skulls of would-be warlords has its appeal). I'm advocating staying open to opportunity and building collective power.

There are infinite reasons not to count on holing up in a cabin with your six friends as an apocalypse plan, but I'll give you two of them. First, because living a worthwhile and long life as a human animal requires connections with a diverse collection of people with diverse collections of skills, ideas, and backgrounds. It's all fun and games in your cabin until your appendix bursts and none of you are surgeons—or you're the only surgeon. Likewise, small groups of people who tend to agree with one another are subject to the dangers of groupthink and the echo chamber effect, which will limit your ability to intelligently meet challenges that face you...

Old Habits Die Hard

From Anonymous

In habit, daily routine thinks in place of us.

From work to 'free time,' everything comes about within the continuity of survival.

We always have something to cling to. The most stupefying characteristic of today's society is the ability for 'comfort' to exist a hair's breadth from catastrophe. The mass is usually fond of the mediocre, the immobility of habit, the rigidity of prudence and afraid of the new, the radical, the unknown of insurrection. Old habits die hard.

In a website smeared in washed-out shades of nauseating orange which are the visual equivalent of an air raid siren coupled with the sound of retching, "Inhabit" prophesizes parochial dreams of bucolic vigor. As you scroll down, a demanding cadre sets about an interminable list of impossible tasks, the reader thus incurs in a great debt from the outset. Their 1-short-of-10 commandments begin with "Find each other". This is because they begin their journey as shepherds without a sheeple.

If it was just a matter of disagreeing with the order of steps, then one could propose an easy fix as simple as changing the order of their 9-step program. But each step merely serves to give a sense of urgency to the act of delaying becoming ungovernable. It's the path to anarchy, by way of Zenon's paradox. Not content with delaying the immediate ninefold, they delay the delay by prefacing it with 5 headers we'll deface as follows:

The beginning of the text

While de jure governments fail, the autonomous territories emplace a de

facto government with a new sense that to be free, we must be bound to this society and its management of life. Enclaves of techno-feudalism are diligently tilled for their resources by its peons who are increasingly under the delusion that they're getting the upper hand by putting in the work in all these crowdsourced and "free" schemes in which they themselves are the product. They fall into the gambit of counter-revolution with the option: to hell or utopia? Either answer satisfies them, so naturally they retroactively fashion a utopia out of the living hell they resign to endure. They embrace the banality of impoverishment and precarity and bolster it as a revolutionary alternative, or envision it as latent or emergent insurrection.

Time is a lesion

Here, as in many of the subsections, they present a mishmash of strained causal links between events and places far apart. A remnant of discredited progressivist narratives. They mention Twitter, which explains the speed and duration their attention spans. Attention deficit manifest in their incapacity to be present in the moment. Which leads to a fetishization of dwelling as a concept, but they eviscerate it by elementary Cartesian divisions of space and time.

"Time" is a lesion on your brain, a scar on your soul.

Perception is muddled by the teleology of time's arrow.

If the concept of time inhabits your mind, you'll suffer life mutilated as self-management.

You become hostage to future.

Nowhere but here

Lost in a topology of nihilism, their notions of truth and space prove to be Kantian and Euclidian.

They seek escape, running laps around a Mobius strip, ignoring the void in the middle. They go deeper into

Klein bottle of their misconceptions.

"Space" is a gaping wound, bleeding the living world in the form of resources. "Inhabit" delineates a project of civilizing the remaining, re-emerging (due to catastrophes), or imagined pockets of "wilderness" in a contrived pseudo-periphery; "uninhabited land" ripe for the taking. So much "empty space" to carry out activities in your "free time".

Power breaks us irreversibly

They see society as a broken machine, running on the power of the people's labor.

They spring from a habit of digital cybernetic politics and crave a low-tech analog cybernetic politics.

They think that the machine can be fixed, running on the power of people's labor.

This plentiful renewable resource is a dirty fuel and highly unsustainable.

People farming for a new tomorrow. Time severed from place. There is not a new world to replace this one. Our Earth is dying from life extracted into power; biofuels and biopolitics. Power breaks us irreversibly. The seduction towards shared power is the death drive.

Nothing is missing

Everything is encumbered by sites of assembly and disassembly of new and old Leviathans.

Calls to inhabit the vacant husks of mega-machines, populating its fuel tanks, charging its energy cells.

Compulsive jittering actions to fill each void, instead of widening them. Quickly spackling over every crack that opens, snuffing out every flame that spontaneously ignites.

Nothing is missing. Let's make room for it...

Angry Whores Anarcho Brigade Action

From Anarchists Worldwide

To mark International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, on 17 December, 2019, anarchist sex workers in so-called Melbourne, Australia visited the inner-city offices of a bourgeois SWERF/ TERF organisation to redecorate their offices and express our perspective on their whore-saviourism. Project Respect, a state and federally funded organisation which claims to represent the interests of sex workers has a long history of proving they are anything but an ally to sex workers. The patronising and prudish attitudes of Project (dis) Respect towards sex workers is exemplified in one of their previous campaigns encouraging (ostensibly small-l liberal inner city Greens voting feminist) women to donate their unwanted make up to sex workers in need- never mind the 100s of 1000s of dollars Project (dis)Respect receives in project funding.

Project (dis)Respect are a clique of radical feminist academics, whose anti trafficking campaigns are deemed by migrant workers as “white saviourism”, “fetishisation”, and “creepily vicarious” (particularly in discussion of violence against migrant workers of prominently Asian background). Their programs, supported by fundamentalist Xtian allies, to assist sex workers to exit the sex industry are nothing but a farce. Like many NGO’s they exist to raise massive sums of money while ignoring the voices (and in effect harming) the people they claim to represent. We express our disgust at these scam artists, purveyors of stigma and prudish frauds.

We undertook this action as we recognise that stigma towards sex workers is in itself a form of violence. Stigma and whorephobia perpetrated by rad fems such as Project (dis)Respect is why we are subject to shitty policies sur-

rounding the ways we can legitly work without further criminalisation; why we are relegated to being viewed as either hapless victims in need of saving, brainless sluts who operate exclusively as wet holes, or conniving gold diggers; and why systemic violence against us is both under reported by our community and normalised within mainstream society. These narratives leave no space for the our voices and the nuances of our vastly disparate experiences as sex workers of all genders.

Since discovering our redecoration of their offices, (which were painted with ‘pedlers of prudishness’, ‘fuck with our work and we’ll fuck with you- angry whores Anarcho brigade’, and an all gender inclusive anarchist liberation symbol), project dis respect have appealed to public sentiment with an outraged social media post claiming “violence” against them, and that we are ‘perpetrating violence against sex workers of our own community’. (Laughably we have also been accused of being part of a pimp lobby by project disrespect supporters.) Never mind the lateral violence we are continually subject to as a result of project disrespect’s ‘advocacy’ which only involves the experiences and voices of sex workers who view themselves as “prostituted women”.

It is for these reasons, and many more, that anarchist sex workers, through marking International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers with a visit to Project (dis)Respect, also encourage the sex worker community to take our rage to the streets! Out of the air conditioned brothels/ workspaces (apartments/hotel rooms/ cars etc) and onto the streets whore comrades! Not just today, but everyday – Lets make this sweltering summer uncomfortable for rad fems, fundamentalist xtians, prudish politicians, ugly mugs, and all those who actively profit from the stale nar-

ratives surrounding the sex industry!

– Angry Whores Anarcho Brigade.

PS: we dedicate this action to the sex worker community in the so-called Northern Territory, whose relentless campaign over many years has resulted in recent policy change, ending the criminalisation of sex work, including draconian laws requiring sex workers to “register” with police in order to operate.

About ATUBES

ATUBES is a sporadically produced digest of some of the articles and commentary featured on anarchistnews.org, illustrating some of the breadth of anarchist thinking

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