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Digest of the Anarchist Tubes, Volume 3, #10

ANEWS



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TOTW: Reading

It's safe to say that anarchists in general put a lot of value in reading. Some groups like Crimethinc invest a high amount of effort in producing slick, accessible reading material that helps to create baby anarchists. Some even requires potential members to read a curriculum of anarchist writings as a prerequisite for membership. From publishing projects and distros to bookfairs and zine swaps, writing is everywhere.

Yet there are also approaches to anarchy which emphasize action over words. The writings they tend to produce are handbooks and reportbacks, if they're writing at all. This was very much my experience in becoming an anarchist - I was much more inspired by seeing a Crimethinc sticker ridiculing the police than *Evasion*, (which I never read) or *The Conquest of Bread* (which I started and then quickly put down out of boredom). When I was reading, it was zines about organizing and privilege politics. While the passage of time and the shifting of my own thinking has broadened my interests in what anarchists are writing, my coming to think of myself as an anarchist was very much a social experience coming out of actions with little to do with books.

How integral was reading anarchist literature to your experience of becoming an anarchist? What kind of books/zines/articles were your reading, and what do you think about that material now?

Good question

by Korvin, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/243027#comment-243027>

And interesting that it is framed as what @ literature one has read to bring one to anarchism.

When it comes to reading, I'm a garbage-head. I'll read almost anything, or at least start reading almost anything.

What brought me to anarchism though? Science fiction got me interested in out-there ideas. Buddhism & Taoism as filtered through Alan Watts brought me to Robert Anton Wilson who brought me to anarchism proper. And I also got to RAW by way of SF, if you consider *Illuminatus!* SF. Somewhere along the way I picked up all 4 issues of "Anarchy" comics, which were full of short bits on all sorts of anarchists. The first AAJODA I saw was #17 and it is safe to say it has been all downhill from there.

Now, I still read Zen literature, I read about plants, the Dark Mountain project is full of juicy material, some philosophy is intriguing to me, as well as trying to keep up with the garbage fire that is the anarchist scene. I have found and still find reading on the widest possible number of subjects informs my attempts toward anarchy.

What do I think of what all I read in the past? Some of it was trash, some merely frivolous, other bits were foundational to me personally & even though I may not agree with all of it now, I find it hard to say it was useless to have read it. I find it hard to separate out what is specifically anarchist, meaning what others would recognize as anarchist, because past a point I am an anarchist reading, and so it all gets put through the lens of my anarchism. In that way I am an egoist, turning what is before me into something I can use.

Quinn and hooks

by anonymous, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/243043#comment-243043>

I read Daniel Quinn's *Ishmael* when I was 16 (2005-ish). The plot is that a burnt-out activist answers a newspaper advertisement about learning how to save the world. He arrives ready to chew-out the teacher only to greet a talking gorilla (*Ishmael*).

Ishmael teaches that agriculture is the cause of all domination and that man is NOT essentially a cursed or broken animal. Most of these lessons are taught through a biblical allegory. For example, the Cain and Abel story is that of the agriculturalists (Cain) warring against the pre-agriculturalists (Abel). Food-storage created specialization (armed guards). You get it.

TOTW: Reading

The "tree of knowledge" parable teaches to stop acting in the false belief that humans have knowledge of good and evil. This false belief has caused humans to believe that they are not-animals, that humans are both the superior species and essentially cursed/broken/bad.

I remember that the book was important to me, but I behaved in an erratic, liberal-activist-lifestyle manner for years. Quotes from my teenage self: "I'm just a general leftists helper-outer," and "I must work in service to deserve the resources that my body consumes." I exchanged my ambitions to join Doctors without Borders to fight for the working class. I guess.

Then I read bell hooks' *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*, which defines feminism as against all domination and authority. I remember being the same age as bell hooks when she wrote it. This is the reading that gave me the tools to find space away from the types of men that I let use me (not only in self-sacrifice for the revolution).

I made friends who danced and booked shows and whose art wasn't left-authoritarian propaganda. I found the house-show scene, wasn't sober much, shoplifted FOR DAYS. Self-identification as anarchist followed shortly. The end.

"I would have written a shorter letter, but I did not have the time."

by @muse, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/243044#comment-243044>

This is a favorite quote of mine by Blaise Pascal, a French mathematician, logician, and theologian from the 1600s. It's what I think about every time I try to read anarchist prose—it's too damn long.

Part of it is personal preference. Anarchist texts often discuss history which typically contain loads of details that I find uninteresting. Anarchist writing also tends to follow the traditions and conventions of Continental / post-modernist / post-structuralist thought, the methods and styles of which I just don't like. partly because the writing tends to be long, but mostly because these disciplines revel in eluding clear and concise exposition. Many of the thinkers I see crop up over and over in anarchist writing were part of the wave of "Obscurantism" which was basically a movement to taunt logical positivists by intentionally obscuring meaning.

I'm not a logical positivist, and not all writing needs to be sparse, but dammit, I don't want to slog through 157 pages of Debord's whimsical journey into the rabbit hole of meaning to glean that people are fixated on representations of our lives instead of our lives themselves and it's bad! (157 pages!)

But as I said, the above is mostly a personal preference, and I'm sure there are clear and concise anarchist writers that I'm just unaware of (I'd be happy to take your recommendations!).

I would say my understanding of anarchism has been shaped very little by things I've read, and much more by conversations I've had with people online and in person. I think part of the reason is that in conversation you can quickly calibrate each person's understanding and shape the discussion through that understanding.

But I think another reason might be that there's something more anarchist about interactions and conversations than all of the words ever written about it.

words and deeds

by @critic, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/243045#comment-243045>

I think the culture of reading has shifted a lot in the last ten years. Anarchists of the 1920s and 1970s read, and wrote, books, articles, newspapers - traditional media. Anarchists of the 1990s-2000s read shorter books, catchier magazines, and websites (such as Indymedia). Young people coming up don't invest the time and energy to read entire books (they have precarious lives, attentive stress, depression or ADHD). But they imbibe vast quantities of memes, social media posts, headlines of cross-posted news items and other high-speed, low-density content. A lot of this content involves images and video. When it's words, it's often soundbytes and slogans (some of them meaningless buzzwords). A lot of it is very personalised and self-referential, too. People look for images and slogans which insert their existing feelings and identities into the mediatised symbolic space. #metoo.

There's advantages and disadvantages to this. Images and soundbytes are often more deceptive than words. They create false simplifications more easily. They often involve a false appearance of naturalness, which conceals the ways they've framed something. A sustained argument in a book or article can be examined and taken apart logically and empirically. There's ways of checking it. And, if it's trying to change your beliefs or emotions (like Nietzsche or Stirner or Marx), it has time to do it. Images and soundbytes either don't have enough substance to be checked. They're more like adverts. So, political exchanges become competitions for the visibility and spread of your side's memes or slogans. Most stuff appeals to existing beliefs and emotions. And what's lost is dialogue, and reality-checking (or for the more constructivist-inclined, construction-checking). And we're seeing where this leads. Polarisation, clickbait, fake news, endless media wars for validation and visibility, hate campaigns... And, a lot is being lost, because so few people now understand Marx or Foucault, or because "indigenous activists" are reading idpol clickbait instead of anthropology or dependency theory. It entrenches the Spectacle's "media trance", the entrenched nature of common sense (which idpols, for instance, have to constantly throw themselves against).

The advantage, on the other hand, is that production of these kinds of media is democratised. Most people can create a meme or reapply a slogan in 120 characters. The power of gatekeepers and intellectual elites is undermined. Small, marginal outlets have the same hitting power as multimillion-dollar media conglomerates if they can catch the public imagination and "go viral". Anarchists have been slow to take advantage of this - largely because anarchists hate social media. Idpols, alt-right, certain brands of leftists, even Putin's spies have taken advantage. Anonymous are the closest we got. On the other hand, it might be more important to get people to the point where they can read and reconsider things again, than to learn to speak the language of memes. There are also certain kinds of authority which have been corroded by the decay in reading - scientific and interpretive authority, for example.

The relationship between anarchy and reading is complex. On the one hand, anarchist culture has always been performed more in action than in words. Eco-anarchist and DIY cultures have always valued doing more than thinking. And, I suspect anarchist groups are actually integrated more by action than by ideas. When a group is integrated by common ideas, it tends to become a rigid sect, like Leninists with their own exact doctrine, or religious fundamentalists. Anarchists tend to be integrated by action in common, by working together on something (whether it's a riot or a gardening project), and this creates a different kind of intimacy and affinity, a greater degree of inclusiveness towards difference (a kind of inclusiveness now being undermined by the doctrinal rigidity of the idpols).

On the other hand, anarchists tend to be college-educated people. Abby Peterson looked at statistics on people arrested for political offences in Sweden, and he found the anarchists and leftists were generally educated, whereas the far-right were not. I think there's a reason for this. First off, if you're not educated, you just want to "get shit done", and you're reacting mainly on immediate emotional responses, then things like racism, beating up moral deviants, and stamping out corruption are going to be very appealing. These are the surface appearances, the things which are there in the media and in everyday conversation. You need a bit of awareness, a bit of knowledge, for things like climate change and global capitalism and police brutality (unless you're black), to even register as issues. Second off, if there's nothing breaking into the hegemony of common sense and the Spectacle's images, chances are these images will continue to be the fallback ones, long after you've rejected the system. People will try to take control of their own lives - but in the terms set by the dominant discourse. So, it seems there needs to be a certain level of knowledge or intelligence before a focus on action leads to anarchism. But, then, the integrative force of anarchism comes from action, not words.

intellectual archaeology

by SUDS, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/243047#comment-243047>

I've always been political. I have my mom to thank for that, even if she didn't approve of the time I was spending online.

On No Platform and ITS

There were several distinct moments. One was discovering the infoshop youth section which no longer exists. Another was stumbling across crimethinc tabling at music shows which I'd later discover was a major entry point for lots of burgeoning anarchists.

I lived in NC which meant crimethinc was a sort of mainstay if you enjoyed events of a certain persuasion.

I moved around quite a bit, with NC as a sort of HQ, and the imagery and words of crimethinc seemed to move with me, but there were also bulletin boards echoing and critiquing their work. Moving beyond left anarchism was a constant theme, and one I'm glad to have experienced.

In moving frequently from location to location the written words of anarchism meant a great deal to me. While I might move to a new location there was always an understanding of anarchy that traveled with me. I didn't know any anarchists but I was very familiar with their works. I debated with Ian McKay, Bob Black, and Aragorn, and it was all very inspirational.

In practice, anarchism was always a foreign concept, because it seemed rooted in activism, which to me didn't seem to be a comfortable marriage at all. However, the essays cited and discussed were always welcomed. Especially when they critiqued even themselves.

I learned about anarchism in isolation. Its written words were all I had and so reading was a huge influence on my life. Later, when it came time to put theory to action, it always seemed out of step. Growing up between the micropower radio generation and the internet generation left many questions and projects unanswered and unfulfilled.

Writing is fine, but so often it is created from the perspective of looking back. In this case, it is hard to capture innovation in the works. However, if it weren't for those lit tables, and the anarchist library, I don't know if I'd be where I am today.

One thing can be said and that's if you're isolated, physically or intellectually, there is plenty of space in anarchism to explore multiple possibilities. The larger question, in my opinion, is if any of them are actually valuable.

One might long for anarchy, perhaps even experience a glimpse, but regardless of how eloquent the letter, or how many pages are written, can one really relate? If reading is only as good as imagining a Tolkien world of hobbits, can affinity make them exist?

Reading is a shared dream. The question, really, is what does life look like when the gap between theory and action has been destroyed?

On No Platform and ITS

by William Gillis, from humaniterations website

different approach por favor

by anonymous, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242711#comment-242711>

rather than condemning ITS, could you write an equally eloquent and thought-out essay looking at how they came about? that would be interesting to me. I'm not interested in this approach, period. And i don't support ITS in any way. If you think by reading atassa and posting on @news, that's supporting ITS, then away with you. And of course.....wait for it.....Everybody knows this!!!

I just spit coffee all over my monitor

by anonymous, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242713#comment-242713>

On No Platform and ITS

"It doesn't matter that Mao was once an anarchist or that Mussolini ran in anarchist circles — they were clearly at fundamental odds with the anarchist project. But even those genocidal ideologies pale before the mass murderous ideology of ITS..."

holy fucking shit I'm dead

Isn't all this blown way out

by anonymous, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242715#comment-242715>

Isn't all this blown way out of proportion? I mean one magazine which is not by ITS itself, which presumably tries to explore the ground around such a tactic as being employed by ITS (and perhaps the phenomenon itself) isn't all that controversial is it? Isn't it better that we critically engage with things? Especially if something starts out from something of an @ perspective, but end up where ITS did?

This is from LBC's description of Atassa: "Their anti-anarchism is an attempt to do what they did as anarchists better. Their anti-anarchism is similar to what post-left, second wave, and anti-state communists, are trying to say when they complain that anarchists often act as moralist, failure-as-a-form-of-life, close minded, parochial position. Often the position is the enemy of the goal and this is especially true as the failures of old strategies meet new (uncomfortable) approaches."

I don't see how LBC are platforming or anything, and the whole Neo-Nazi stuff is just dull. They seem to be furthering their post-left inquiry, or something to that effect. And doing so, they seem to also include stuff which they do not necessarily agree with, but which they think form a more or less important aspect of such an inquiry.

I've said my fair amount of shit to about ITS, but I actually appreciate that LBC sticks to their guns. If anything it has made me think, and instead of just condemning I've actually tried to approach the matter critically.

No Platform

by anonymous, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242725#comment-242725>

No Platform afaik originates in a 1972 issue of The Red Mole, the journal of the International Marxist Group (IMG). You can read a copy of that, Issue 51 here, <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/redmole/v03n51-sep-8-1972...>, conveniently hosted by the generous people at the Marxists Internet Archive.

Gillis' modus operandi is misrepresentation...

by BellamyOfFRR, <https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242766#comment-242766>

...as well as sneer quotes and sentence fragments, of course.

Gillis' media attacking his perceived enemies often contains few or no actual references or quotes of what they have said, but instead his tortured - if not outright false - presentation of their ideas. You can see this on display in his "A Quick and Dirty Critique of Primitivist and Anti-Civ Thought" as well as in "Nihilism: A Lie in Service to the Existing" (both on his website Human Iterations) where, in both cases, he quotes and references virtually nothing specific *and in fact* emphasizes that he does not think it is actually worth engaging in specific arguments made by these perceived enemies, despite the fact that it is apparently worth writing very vaguely about them at length.

In episode 4 of Horizontal Hostility, Gillis continues this pattern by attacking The Brilliant podcast at length, again with statements ranging from vague to false. When I responded on Episode 50 of The Brilliant by pointing out not only Gillis' falsehoods but also his self-contradictions within the space of one episode, there was no response by the hosts of HH.

Now, Gillis does me the service of quoting me (one sentence, at least), but immediately goes on to bizarrely compare me to the alt-right and to claim that I have "only now" criticized eco-extremism, when in fact I criticized

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them on Free Radical Radio, the Brilliant, and, finally - as he admits only with sneer quotes and misrepresentation - in writing in Black Seed.

Gillis' gish gallop ventures on to assertions about my rejecting all ethics and major projects. In fact, I have (nominalist, virtue-based, self-created) ethics - not the consequentialist ones that Gillis likes (e.g., I don't believe in the Good of sending fruit baskets to mosques, as he does - liberal multiculturalism is not quite my cup of tea, sorry Will), but ethics all the same. My writing and podcasting is absolutely full not only of value claims about mutualistic symbiosis and the like, but also the metaethical discussions that Gillis claims that my friends and I "don't want to get drawn into" - I have discussed, if anything, ad nauseam what I see as the importance of going through a process of critical self-theory in order to self-consciously dissolve reification in favor of self-created values. As far as projects, I have spoken in the strongest terms of the importance of living an anarchic life, of the worthiness of withdrawalist subsistence projects (one which now consumes the majority of my waking life), and engaged steadily in media projects for the past several years - I do and have encouraged others to do the same. Here, as elsewhere, Gillis employs a do-nothing "anti-civ nihilist" stereotype as a punching bag in order to evade actually engaging with specific things his opponents have said, a tactic that, as I noted above, he more or less admits to self-consciously doing in his previous writings.

What is Gillis' goal with such obvious and flagrant misrepresentation? What does it mean that Gillis produces a podcast spreading demonstrable falsehoods about perceived enemies, subsequently ignores entirely a response pointing out these falsehoods, and then denounces the same people with even more falsehoods and incomprehensible comparisons to the alt-right? Do those who talk the loudest about ethics in fact have the fewest?

On TOTW Colonialism

i'll bite!

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242024#comment-242024>

by shadowsmoke

I don't think a DESIRE for a homogenous definition of @ colonizes shit. In fact, "colonizes" is a frustrating word choice - a further stretch to an overused, margarine-word metaphor. And I suppose I could say some shit about "slavery" too, but I'll leave it.

Anarchy is not a home, it's a word. This totw essay plays at the emotions people have about history and what it means - arguably, following Perlman, already a dangerous activity, to be discouraged - and tries to elide this into a problem of political disagreement among people who associate positively with this word. It is a moral argument without ethical content, just a desired destination and an emotional strategy in play to convince a person like me to get there.

Obviously I'm being a hater. I think there is a problem with invisible dictatorship, and generally want to people liberal about what people do with their time. Go ahead, indulge in... Adam Lanza fandom? (Srsly the worst article in Black Seed #5.) But hmm, depending on what it us, I think it is entirely appropriate to say, Maybe go somewhere else with that shit? Like a scat play party taking place in the living room of a collective house, so too do people feel about Atassa at bookfairs. Perhaps they are just PRUDES though, lol.

There are some people who want to be real rude aboyt the definition of anarchy, also, to exclude (explicitly or not) anything they're not into, basically a "no true Scotsman" thing. But then there's also people striving to be accurate. It is a widespread fallacy to think words' semantic contents have fixed borders, but working within this fallacy, this is hardly morally objectionable. Personally speaking, it is very rare for me to say "you are not an anarchist", but I definitely raise my eyebrows when some people use that word for themselves, given what they're into (and this includes some crypto-Leninists fwiw, not just post-left types). It's like, you seem to be

using that word because you want to recruit or you want to belong. Understandable, but why the fuck should I feel duty-bound to accommodate you?

The answer to leadership

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242047#comment-242047>

by @critic (not verified)

The answer to leadership based on technical specialisms is skill-sharing.

The answer to covert intellectual leadership is for everyone to develop the ability to think critically and formulate their own ideas. I'd advise people trying to *theorise* anarchist thought to look at Freire on cultural submersion, and the last part of Gramsci's Selections from the Prison Notebooks on this kind of thing. Also "Critical Thinking as an Anarchist Weapon", "Strip the Experts", and "Revolutionary Pleasure of Thinking for Yourself". And if you can manage it, Deleuze/Guattari on problem-fields, concepts, and nomad/royal sciences, and Korzybski or Postman/Weingartner on the difference between what people perceive and what people think. Read Hakim Bey on the source of values in chaos, in desire, and in altered consciousness. Add in Bonanno on propulsive desire and Stirner on wheels in the head, and maybe Barthes on myths, Boal's cops in the head, Vaneigem, and you've pretty much got an anarchist theory of critical thought.

Quick summary: if you aren't thinking for yourself, you're probably being manipulated by someone else who is. Everyday common sense is confused, contradictory, responds to right-wing dog-whistles, and is easily channelled by the media and politicians. Your average right-wing press reader thinks they're thinking for themselves but they're just jumping to conclusions they've been primed to reach. Autonomy is useless if we don't have our own projects and an ability to reconceptualise the outer world through them.

Every anarchist needs to be able to spot a moral panic, a wheel in the head, an order not to think, or a standard COIN media strategy, as easily as they can spot a police line forming, an undercover infiltrator, an alt-right troll, or a political takeover attempt.

Every anarchist needs to be able to suspend judgement and consider whether the facts fit several possible narratives.

Every anarchist needs the Geertzian skill to interpret and understand other points of view on a deep level - even when one rejects them.

Every anarchist needs to be able to conceptualise and process sensory information *from multiple points of view at once*.

Every anarchist needs the ability to process, and change their mind based on, empirical evidence, without uncritically worshipping science. This means being able to tell the extent to which a particular belief is an effect of sensory evidence and the extent to which prior schemas, fantasy-frames, axioms shape the ways the evidence is selected, generated, or interpreted (every item of knowledge is *both* to some extent). It does not help us to say "it's science so it's true", or to say "all mainstream knowledge is statist, racist, authoritarian, patriarchal, and therefore useless". Either leaves us trapped in common sense.

Every anarchist needs to perfect the art of thinking structurally - instead of morally - about social problems and their causes (e.g. radical criminology).

Every anarchist needs to be able to tell the difference between a latent common sense belief they haven't questioned, and an idpol or other politician telling them what their "real motives" or "real significance" is. (People from oppressed backgrounds have naive common sense assumptions as much as, if not more than, people from so-called privileged backgrounds).

If people have these abilities - it doesn't matter if there's an intellectual hierarchy, because they won't have any power. If people don't have these abilities - they're probably being manipulated.

Anarchism is (tendentally at least) a "conception of the world" in Gramsci's sense. It's an entire other way of seeing, a different problem-field from the mainstream (and also from Marxism and idpol). Anarchism starts from desire, or will, or autonomous subjectivity as the driving force of its conception of the world. This requires

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relating to one another horizontally, as rhizomes. Once someone's thinking (and reacting unconsciously) in terms of desire and rhizomes, responses to particular issues come pretty naturally. It becomes possible to feel micro-fascism as and when it appears, to feel autonomy and act towards it. It doesn't need a lot of theory - just a consistent sense of the point of focus and the forces arrayed against it. To be absolutely outside, or to move absolutely outside, what and *how* the system wants us to think.

Generally, people become anarchists because an intense, powerful experience - of a riot, say, or a festival or party, or a particularly inspiring piece of direct action - overrides the attachments which tie them to the status quo and its ways of generating meaning. Alternatively, people who have no existing attachments, who can't plug into the mainstream, are drawn to the rhizomes of anarchism. This is the first step. People already begin to process things through this new source of meaning - not through the system's meanings. But it's hard to move beyond the processes of statist thought which are present in so much of social life. It isn't some sad, traumatic "learning through discomfort" like idpols propose - it's more a matter of following through one's own desires and beliefs more consistently. Clearing out cops in the head. Anarchism is a type of inner desire which disperses power, which breaks the hold of the state, capital, "society" on the individual, the unique one, or on the flow of desire. But thought needs to follow from this desire. Too often, the internal managers and survival parts of the unconscious kick back into superego, statist, moral reactions even after the break is made. And the entire apparatus of repression and recuperation is designed to encourage this process.

Anarchist thought is thought which disperses power. It is dispersed thought. It is not the imposition of a blueprint, a *different* concentrated power (as most radical politics is). And it is not self-disempowerment (as Buddhism and postmodernism often are). It is thought - and desire, feeling, fantasy - which disperses, diffuses, decentralises power - which infrapolitically, micropolitically balances against any concentration of power, sabotages, subverts, exoduses, rages against it - which in its very structure as well as its content, saps power from centralising signifiers and places power in the zone of desire itself.

Anarchist thought starts from desire, the ego, the will, and favours diffuse or dispersed power for this reason. Thinking in terms of general social and moral categories is not thinking from desire. If one hears a story about a fugitive, and one's first thought is "what an awful thing he did", one is thinking from a state point of view. If one is first thinking about the state's technologies of capture and the will to escape, one is thinking from an anarchist point of view. If there's a spectacular mediatised terror event, and your first thought is about bad guys and victims, you're thinking like a state. If your first thought is about civil liberties and the global context of civil war and how to fight back against lockdowns, you're thinking like an anarchist. If there's a noisy party in your neighbourhood, and your first thought is "fucking cunts, how inconsiderate", you're thinking like a state. If your thought is, "different people have different desires, and the system makes them so hard to reconcile", you're thinking like an anarchist. If a state plans a ban on far-right protests, and your first reaction is "good, racism disgusts me", you're thinking like a state. If your first reaction is, "this is dangerous, it will be used against us next", you're thinking like an anarchist.

I know people with no theoretical training whatsoever, who seem to naturally think like anarchists - often because they're traumatised by authority, or they've lived in autonomous zones for a lot of their life. There are indigenous groups who are not anarchists, do not call themselves anarchists, yet in many ways think like an anarchist. There are people who are not anarchist, who are anti-anarchist, who think like anarchists to the extent that their own communities or networks or movements are pitted against the state. And there are people who claim to be anarchists, who *are* anarchists in most of their macro-politics, who do *not* think like anarchists, but rather, think like the mainstream. These people are incapable of revolution because of the cops and wheels in their heads. Ultimately a clever media strategy or a social crisis rigged the right way would be enough to get them acting like just another curtain-twitching Fox-viewer. I'd count most left-anarchists and idpols in this category. They could have a revolution, create no-go zones, and all the state would have to do is encourage some drug dealing or petty crime and they'd start acting like pigs. Because they care about spooks and morality, in-group and out-group, more than they care about dispersing power.

On Black Rose Anarchist Federation txt from 2013

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<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242023#comment-242023>

by Suomynona (not verified)

1st paragraph: A lot of platitudes and some empty phrases. Ends up in the nonsensical conclusion: "Ultimately our demands will be too threatening to the elite classes for them to bear; and their resistance to our drive for freedom will be too much for us to tolerate any longer." Except that has never happened, it is not what is happening, and honestly it is not very likely to occur like that. 2. paragraph: Well, okay then. How you not gonna avoid ending up with nothing else than reform when you don't address the systemic problems other than a reiteration of marxist garbage (power and the allocation of it)?

3. paragraph: More platitudes. Capitalism is only a part of larger whole. To suggest, as Kropotkin did, that we basically can just replace the economical incentives of the present system might have made sense a 100 years ago. These days, not so much. And slavery and exploitation were and are not only a "factor", it is fucking it. So how you gonna run a system based on resource colonialism, slavery, exploitation, war, coercion? Just make sure it is worker managed?

4. paragraph: Well, yeah, it would be like celebrating pain to suggest otherwise? But then again, what is the function of reform? What is the power relation? Reform is also an effective way to recuperate and maintain the present system (look at the history of social democracy). It is an effective way to pacify and solidify the hegemony of the state and capital. As long as the state and capital are seen as the only logical solution to our material needs, then accordingly reform (and the support of) would mean that your notion that "our demands will be too threatening to the elite classes for them to bear" would not come to pass. Contrary to what you seem to think, being clear on the fact that I don't support reform does not mean "all or nothing", it just means that it is illogical and against my interests to support it.

5. paragraph: Good luck mate. Whatcha think, that the proles just need to read the fucking bread book? Perhaps it is cause they are clever enough to see through your little pantomime? Perhaps they have a point and instead of supposing that you need to raise their consciousness (that is some patronizing shit right there), perhaps they have something to teach you? Perhaps there is a reason as to why they act against their supposed self interest? Perhaps they don't want your revolution?

And now I actually can't be bothered anymore. Why don't you rather just go and do some shit instead of this paternal crap? Why argue for the right to self organize a corpse? I don't fucking know. If you actually speak to people, you'd perhaps be surprised to find out that they actually get that capitalism is a shit deal. And instead of this social insertion, and supposing that since you've read Kropotkin you can go and get them to organize better, be better and all such shit. Why don't you actually figure out what it is these people themselves want? And insofar as your interests meets theirs, then this would be where you organized?

As all the responses to this...

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/242048#comment-242048>

by El Errante (pzs) (not verified)

piece of shit article haven't engaged, at all, with its content; and as I can't fucking sleep, here goes. First, the idea that there is some fundamental real-world difference between advocating reform because it could build working class power and hence produce a social revolution sometime in the next 500 years or advocating reforms because one believes in the dominant system is bullshit. If you advocate reform, you are a reformist, period. And what if one should be so lucky as to actually effect reform, what then? Well you've painted a smiley face over the savage visage of a society based in exploitation, suffering, war and death. Good job, that really helped. Next is the simple empirical question of history...can anyone point to a single reform movement

On TOTW: What is anarchism in 2017?

that has spawned anything even remotely resembling a revolutionary organization or even better...a social revolution? Marx, of all people, got this right in his disdain for the Chartists, realizing that the more people were enfranchised to vote, the greater their reliance on and faith in the bourgeois state and by extension, Capital.

As Wilde in his scathing individualist anarchist essay, *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* says, "The majority of people spoil their lives by an unhealthy and exaggerated altruism... They find themselves surrounded by hideous poverty, by hideous ugliness, by hideous starvation. It is inevitable that they should be strongly moved by all this. The emotions of man are stirred more quickly than man's intelligence; and, as I pointed out some time ago in an article on the function of criticism, it is much more easy to have sympathy with suffering than it is to have sympathy with thought. Accordingly, with admirable, though misdirected intentions, they very seriously and very sentimentally set themselves to the task of remedying the evils that they see. But their remedies do not cure the disease: they merely prolong it. Indeed, their remedies are part of the disease."

Is there then a black anarchist/post-left response to the post-Christian ethics of our red comrades? Yes— sabotage, circumvent, nihilate, avoid and destroy those institutions and practices that one finds most egregious. Will this build power revolutionary consciousness for the working classes? Who cares. All I know is that individuals acting as agents of destruction are far more likely to realize an insurrectionary moment, and I would trust them for just that reason, as opposed to a gaggle of anti-reformism reformists whose skill set is limited to soliciting signatures for a petition or buttonholing elected officials.

On TOTW: What is anarchism in 2017?

From a strictly personal POV ...

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/241930#comment-241930>
by @F (not verified)

... based in Norway, The Old World, I can only add to this wonderful mess that anarchism in 2017 is of course still what it always was. Go figure. If you don't know what it is by now, I guess it's wasted time to try to explain, but you'll probably find out for yourselves sooner or later anyway. Nothing beats home grown conclusions.

So stop asking for my advice, take what you need but be fair, share with those of your kind and mind your own dirty business, right? And as if that wasn't a nice enough hint, I'll throw in another one for good measure, just to show what a generous sharer of ideas I actually am:

"Freedom" and "Responsibility" are one and the same. Not a duality, or a conceptual pair of terms, or mutually conditioned phenomena, or anything else that is less than 100% synonymous, but the exact same goddamned thing. Same thing, just considered from two different angles. The very moment you declare yourself a 100% free, autonomous entity, you are and will be held 100% responsible for your actions as well. He who is not free to chose cannot be held responsible for the outcome in any given case, and only he who takes responsibility upon himself has (confirmed) his freedom. Freedom is a word that says responsibility on the flip side and vica versa. Now, get a wrench and go subvert some authoritarian pig system, will you?! Jeez. ;)

On the Houston Book Fair

yes, it was a good thing that

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/241962#comment-241962>
by boles

yes, it was a good thing that the security folks were able to keep these asshats from invading the venue and so had to be satisfied with stomping around outside until they got bored and left. yes, it was a good thing that anarchist commerce went along smoothly so that the youngsters could get this year's t-shirts and patches

("oh, there were BOOKS with IDEAS in them? whatever.."). yes, it was a good thing that nobody on "our" side got hurt. but really, this report (like the others that immediately followed the event) is a sad continuation of alarmist antifascism. i say "alarmist" because ARR, like other professional antifas, exaggerates the danger posed by fascists and their enablers in the mainstream, and those anarchists (those who question the strategy of working with marxists and those who question the automatic requirement of being antifa) whose politics ARR doesn't like.

as is the case with many

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/241979#comment-241979>

by boles

as is the case with many discussions centered on anti-politics, my assumptions have a lot to do with scale and the differences between big ideas and the smaller face -to-face interactions. antifascists like ARR and Bray constantly take the macro view, positing an existential crisis for what they call "the radical left" if its partisans ignore the looming threat of fascism, cryptofascism, and anarchists (and other "radical leftists"?) who don't subscribe to their alarmist pronouncements. the threat those guys and their fans are worried about are large, connected to social institutions and the mainstream – hence their focus on "attempting to counter the misinformation" about antifa. my worries have to do with the more personal level of threats, like the ones implicit in the attempt of those asshats to invade the Houston Anarchist Book Fair. my antifascism is gut-based; i know quite well the threat those asshats pose to me and my friends, and it is on that level where i choose to respond (or not). that level of threat is real, and the threshold is mine; the threat ARR and Bray perceive is wider – and that's where they lose me. essentially what they (and other professional antifascists) are calling for is a broad Popular Front-type organizational coalition to combat all levels of fascism, regardless of the actual or perceived threats among specific individuals who may or may not be specifically targeted by the fash. their calls are for "the radical left" to set aside doctrinal – and even strategic – differences in the face of some "greater threat." that's alarmist bullshit, and brief surveys of radical history will show the self-defeating aspects of this kind of agree-to-disagree politeness. i'll never work with leftists, "radical" or not; they are not my allies in the long-term, so why would i expect them to decide to be allies in the short-term?

tl;dr version: alarmism requires that people dispense with their principles, leading to suicidal coalitions with anti-anarchists. no thanks.

if the only strategic value

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/241985#comment-241985>

by boles

if the only strategic value in what Bray were doing is countering mainstream information, that'd be fine; mainstream loathing of any kind of radical direct action is a no-brainer and there needs to be someone out there who can stand toe to toe with scumbags like Hedges and all those DSA clowns. but there's more to Bray's and ARR's project than that. if you can't see the strategic suicide in that, it may be a failure of understanding on your part. they are quite explicitly trying to engage "organizers" (Bray uses the term quite unselfconsciously, as if there hasn't been decades of discussion about anarchists and the organizational question) – that is, people who organize others, or who have a specific kind of organization on the agenda. you know, specialists in other people's struggles... that's where my hackles go up. that's why i don't call myself "antifascist" the same way i don't call myself "anti-imperialist": each term comes with a lot of historical baggage from leftist organizations, and they are not just analytical positions. when people call themselves antifascists, or anti-imperialists, or antiracists, they are also telling you the *right way* to organize to combat those things they're against. that's called ideology.

but you're right that it's not an either/or situation. i just don't have much patience for self-described anarchists who promote coalitions with tankies and other marxists (and don't get me started on the ones who promote electoralism or other aspects of liberalism)

On Kevin Tucker interview

Boring

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/241924#comment-241924>

by Sogna (not verified)

I find it interesting that despite critiques of science from AP and green anarchist thinking that people such as KT are still down to idealize anthropology and treat it as some sacred field of academic research which is laying waste to all the bad in the world. Sure, a few bad apples like Chagnon but the good guys like Ferguson will always prevail. This whole interview was based upon dropping timelines and science rather than anything to really sink my teeth into that can get me feeling like there is some relevancy to what you're saying. You criticize egoism, but at least I don't have to have an egoistic critique of civilization rooted in anybodys perspective but my own. Stick to the zanie rewilding stuff, at least I can agree with being in the woods feeling good and have a laugh at the more nonsensical stuff.

On a CrimethInc. txt

This is a classical example

<https://anarchistnews.org/comment/241850#comment-241850>

by disorder (not verified)

This is a classical example of Crimethinc. ambiguity that is especially manifest in their "international" reports.

There's one thing that runs through the whole article, though, which is rather specific to Catalan anarchism: the appreciation of all that is local ("our neighbourhoods", "local assemblies", etc) as opposed to big and evil State forces (ie. the Catalan proto-State). And that is even when the famous local assemblies struggle rather explicitly for the creation of a new State. I need not remind you that assemblies do not have to be "run" by anarchists to work on anti-authoritarian principles and have anti-authoritarian goals (contrary as to what is thought by Bonanno who would like to silently guide the masses). It is not a question of the assemblies being explicitly anarchists – an assembly waving a CNT flag and fighting for the creation of a new State is still an assembly that is fighting for the creation of a new State. Defending any manifestation of local initiative as contrary to the State (ie. beaten voters vs. evil Guardia Civil, which soon becomes Catalan cops vs. Spanish cops) is failing to understand how democracy has been functioning for the last thirty years – by encouraging active participation, formal or informal, in the institutional life.

Another thing that is rather troublesome in this article is the insult of "orthodoxy" and "dogmatism" thrown at those anarchists who are criticizing the pro-independantists. It suffices to look at any newly built State to see that the argument saying that the Catalan State is "smaller" (but how can a State be "small" in the times of global capital?) and thus easier to fight, is outright ridiculous. The sentiment of national cohesion which is exploding at this very moment of the referendum, is not something that is temporary for the next few months. Whoever will be willing to battle the newly formed social order in Catalonia will have to face the widespread sentiment of national belonging, which is always, with no exception, on the side of authorities. And it persists for decades. It is the same sentiment that is mobilized to promulgate faith in State institutions and, as a consequence, justify their repressive force.

On a CrimethInc. txt

It is extremely tiresome to constantly run into this stupid accusation of orthodoxy and dogmatism. It is not because one is "more" anarchist than another that nationalism is never on the side of those who don't want to be ruled neither rule. It is because nationalism is to be condemned on its own grounds – the "for" or "against" of some anarchists is of little importance.

May I remind you that just like we refuse to chose between the rope and guillotine, we also refuse to chose between one State and another – at war as at peace. This refusal is the only theoretical and practical position worthy of being developed on this question. The desire of some anarchists to join the ranks is no excuse.



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