

Pathological Socialising

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Pathological Socialising: lazy, self-obsessed hippies and their appropriation of radical thinking *by Ransu*

People Have Lives! This was what was screamed at me when I criticised peoples attitudes and commitment towards activism. It was revealed to me that there are excuses which are taboos — never talked about or challenged. These excuses include: girl/boy friends, parties, alcohol/drugs, children, jobs, etc. The painful truth is that as our movement lacks resources, manpower, support of all kinds and a good network, and the little hope that is left is wasted by people spending their time and energy on socialising with friends, going to parties and getting pissed.

Is it coincidence that any half successful movement or revolution was achieved only by certain rules which in most cases included limitations on alcohol and drug use? I'm not advocating a ban on alcohol or drugs — the will must come from inside.- just pointing out the irony of hippies idealising the Zapatistas while ignoring the fact that their heroes have one simple rule which extends on the whole of the occupied zone by Zapatistas: a total ban on alcohol and other drugs.

'Fascist' they call me when I mention the word 'self-discipline', yet what is wrong with someone restraining themselves for a cause because they respect their friends in the movement and would be ashamed to let them down?

Even the 'enlightened' individuals of our movement seem unconvinced by the current situation in the world. It seems that only in countries where peoples baby's are getting killed people finally realise what the cost of freedom is. It seems to me that it is not enough in this country for peoples babys' being killed by the government slowly with dioxin, fluoride, BSE, etc. — how can you convince these people? Do you have to have persons intruding into their apartments shooting the fuck out of their kids in front of them while wearing tshirts with "THE STATE" written on them before they SEE? Freedom is not a consumer item one can purchase from their local Bodyshop. It is the result of a struggle with commitment, sacrifice, respect and discipline.

Why am I angry? Because I have been pissed on and fucked up by people doing exactly the things I have described here – wasting my time and most importantly wasting the little effort I have tried to push toward saving this planet.

“People Have Lives!”. So I don’t have a life...? I have chosen not to have lots of friends to go to parties with, or to abuse myself with alcohol and drugs, or a full-time job, a car and other mod cons, useless hobbies etc. This is something I have chosen so I can fight for the destruction of civilisation. If these people’s ‘life’ requires such trivia to be worthwhile, I don’t see much to recommend it.

Some years ago I voiced these ideas to activists at the EF gathering. I said that I thought having entertainment, i.e. alcohol, loud music etc. at a gathering that should be primarily about serious issues isn’t acceptable. This is because only one thing can be a priority at one time.

The EF! gathering exhibited some of the most gruesome hypocrites I’ve seen for a long time. There were a lot of people there who’s priority wasn’t the serious issues at hand but having a good time generally and entertainment particularly. Because of these people the gathering was made into a festival, a ‘happening’, and the Earth was not first but last.

The entertainment thus became a priority and despite the limitations of time and space applied to as camouflage it by-passed the serious issues we should have been working on. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Earth Firsters and contributes greatly to the failure of environmental organizations and movements to bring about real, rather than superficial change. If we are serious about tackling civilisation we have to be utterly self-disciplined and focused. Alcohol, drugs, sex, socialising, etc distract us and re-deploy our energy, weakening our intent and dissipating our actions.

“My countrymen, shall the glittering trinkets of this rich man, his deceitful drink that overcomes our mind, shall these things tempt us to give up our homes, our hunting grounds, and the honorable teaching of our old men? Shall we permit ourselves to be driven to and fro – to be herded like the cattle of the white man?” – Oglala Red Cloud

Not only do sex, alcohol, drugs, computer games, tv, etc. sap energy and time which needs to be devoted to other more important things. But they make us self-indulgent and dependent on the thing we have to destroy. So why is there such a disappointing pattern of substitute activities among what’s classed as ‘activism’? And why are activists so self-indulgent and un-self-disciplined?

Jean Liedloff, in “The Continuum Concept” describes the differences between civilised children and the Indians she lived with in South America. She noted the following explanation for why the Indian children were so happy, self-motivated and confident compared to the unhappy, dependent, self-destructive civilised kids:

“Ironically, the reason it’s possible to make these profoundly social animals bad or anti-social is because we are so social. Our parents, our tribesman, our authority figures, clearly expect us to be bad or anti-social or greedy or selfish or dirty or destructive or self-destructive. Our social nature is such that we tend to meet the expectations of our elders.”

– Interview in ‘Touch The Future’ www.continuum-concept.org

Self-destructive, substitute activities are expected of us. And even activists find it hard to ignore Mother Culture, our modern elder. We scream for our ‘right’ to get drunk, socialise, etc as loudly as any pampered brat, truly not knowing how we could live without our substitutes.

“The world’s full of the walking undead and you want to party?”

– Buffy the Vampire Slayer

If activists were to expect their allies to be sober and self-disciplined, then we might have a good chance of eliminating our self-centred indulgent behaviour. If we were expected to act with determination and dedication then maybe we would start acting that way. I think a good way to start changing this is to completely eliminate unnecessaries like drugs, alcohol, parties, tv, etc and incorporate the idea of self-discipline into our lives. But as I said, the will has to come from inside, when we’ve decided we’re really serious about kicking civilisation.

GA Article Not Popular with Lifestyle Activists: Discussion of ‘Pathological Socialising’ from GA 71

The following is part of a discussion sparked by the “Pathological Socialising” article by Ransu in the last issue. See web board (www.greenanarchist.org/forum.html) for full discussion and to join in if you can bear it.

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The milieu that sets its agenda as one of serving a cause is lost from the start because they immediately prime themselves towards a goal of subservience to an abstraction. Sacrifice of ones life is therefore promoted as a good thing.

re-wild@mail.com:

If you look on it as ‘sacrifice’ then your priorities are seriously fucked up.

If a tiger’s cubs are being attacked, does she view it as a ‘sacrifice’ to fight back? Does she feel it’s a drag to have to forego hanging out at the watering hole, shagging more tigers? If so, her cubs won’t survive very long.

Of course, if you view the struggle for survival and liberation as being a ‘sacrifice’ then you should stick to hanging out with radical cliques, socialising, being cool, etc. But don’t pretend to yourself that that in itself is radical or liberating.

Self-discipline isn’t ‘subservience to an abstraction’ — it’s a practical way of living which doesn’t put short-term goals (like where the next joint is coming from, or what party is on at the weekend) ahead of doing something to make this world a better place for free people to really live in. If you think drugs and sex are necessary for happiness, then I feel sorry for you. Maybe you need to get out more. Out of your closed, civilised mentality that is.

Although I wish it were otherwise, the activist community is just as fucked in the head as the average consumer. Some are trying to do the right thing — but because their peer group is obsessed more with socialising than actually affecting change their efforts come to little. If our priorities were different this wouldn’t happen. The activist community would become a vibrant force to be reckoned with (like for example the black panthers who saw the destructive nature of alcohol and

banned it from their organisation) and individuals within the community would regain a lot of their personal power in the process.

With this personal power and vibrant community, this would be a completely different place. But of course, if you prefer to live in an alcoholic, drug infested pit of sexually dysfunctional, puerile, apathetic slaves...

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A call for people to sacrifice more is the call of religionists of all stripes ... Let us be done with all this self-righteousness and judeo-christian nonsense.

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Self-discipline is not exclusively a judeo-christian or even religious attribute. Martyrdom, hypocrisy and sacrifice are used by those institutions to keep people servile – the complete opposite of the aim of real self-discipline. Things like responsibility, selfdiscipline and commitment are not ‘religious’, they are necessary ways of dealing with the current mess we’re in. But of course, it doesn’t sound sexy, what a turn off maan...

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... breaking the multiplicity of chains that restrain the insurrectionary instinct, will mean abandoning the old tired concepts promoted by the rulers and would be rulers down through the years, many of them promoted as “revolutionary” despite them being the complete opposite.

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“As political and economic freedom diminishes, sexual freedom tends compensatingly to increase. In conjunction with the freedom to daydream under the influence of dope and movies and the radio, it will help to reconcile the subjects to the servitude which is their fate.” – Aldous Huxley, Forward to “Brave New World”, 1932, Harper Collins.

I’m sorry, maybe I missed something, but aren’t sex and drugs completely condoned by the rulers and the ruled, as long as they don’t interfere with production. The rulers and the ruled have a long tradition of believing they are free simply because they can indulge in whatever they’ve been told is fashionable at that time. Like a bit of activism at the weekend... As long as none of this interferes too much with the churning of civilisation it’s perfectly acceptable to the rulers and the ruled.

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The whole issue of imposing “good” and “bad” on people who are merely escaping the monotony of daily life is replicating civilisation, who decides who is a worthy activist and who isn’t? will there be written rules? what happens to trespassers of this new code of conduct?

re-wild@mail.com:

I agree that codes of conduct, issued diktat-like, would only enslave others even more. That’s why I haven’t advocated this. I am asking for people to be aware of

the detrimental effects of things like drink and drugs on their hearts, minds and willpower, and to ask themselves if this is what they really want. Of course this isn't effective unless it comes from the individual – something Ransu was at pains to point out in “Pathological Socialising”. In that article Ransu explicitly states that the will to be self-disciplined must of course come from the individual and not from any organisation. The more astute readers might have realised by now that this is actually the meaning of the term “self-disciplined”!

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For the re-wild poster to then use the example of the stalinist black panthers as something positive is strange to say the least. Sure we are up against it but will demanding more tight lipped, grim faced “determination” lead us anywhere?

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I used the Black Panthers as an example of a movement that recognised the destructiveness of certain activities and therefore eliminated them. I didn't say we should model our struggle on them, just that they had a certain amount of success due to their appraisal of the situation they were in at that particular time and place. Looking around us now, you can't help but be struck by how destructive many of our practices are and therefore should we not be looking for ways to end them? In order to make ourselves stronger and freer – not to strengthen a power base for any organisation.

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So you are seemingly very pissed off that the activist club does not do what you would like them to do, fuck 'em you are responsible for yourself [full stop!] organise outside the “cliques”, organise on your basis, from the point of your dreams, do what you want, if it is inspirational it will spark a fire, if not it won't, but at least try and enjoy doing it?

re-wild@mail.com:

I am not pissed off that activists don't do what I would like them to do. I am pissed off because they are doing exactly what their enemies want them to do. It is perfectly acceptable to civilisation for vast amounts of time, energy and passion to be squandered in pointless displacement activities. It would be nice if this didn't happen and that activists started prioritising their freedom. They would become, as the Panthers did in their time and place, a force to be reckoned with and some real change might come about. Until then we just keep on posturing, throwing dust in the face of a dragon...

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