

Against friendship

Aragorn!

Herein we will begin to argue against the revolutionary importance of friendship. Will not argue that friendship isn't a fine and wonderful thing for daily life, for the eating of brunch, or the consumption of beverages. This is all well and good, do what one will, live your life.

What we will argue against is the way in which the affinity group model that has been abandoned generally (although not universally) in anarchist circles has instead migrated into an unconscious way of life. This migration has caused the conflation of social circles (aka groups of friends) with sharing political values (aka the party) with the result that anarchists (and the ASC who predate on our energy) have become countercultural against their better instincts.

To put this into different terms, the conflation of friendship with politics, if it is caused by conscious agency, is done so either by those who prefer to "just hang out" but also want to believe that they and their friends are conscious social agents OR by those who have a specific political project and want to keep it relevant by having it also be a place where social needs can be met.

If the conflation is not conscious, as in, it merely reflects the spectating nature that radicals have over their own lives, then it goes a long way towards explaining the increasing isolation of radical groupuscles. Our lifeways cannot be attractive outside our capacity to grow our social cliques beyond themselves. It is not that we are not desirable, it is that we are choosing the wrong way to communicate that desirability. Being sexy rebels isn't nearly enough to affect the kind of attraction we would need to confound even the MSM view of us as dangerous outsiders.

Of course this is not some backhanded way to form or reform some type of anarchist political party. I am asking a question I don't have the answer to.

Indeed I am suspicious about the way in which this friend-comrade indistinction has occurred. Sure, I can point to a reaction against the new left or organizationalism or the desirability of true affinity or the writing of Tiquun, but the lack of experimentation after Occupy is suspicious. This is the time to change up, not fall back to pattern. Relying on the cool kids to decide what comes next has obviously had limited returns (unless you're a cool kid and your goals are limited to, by definition, individual social rewards). Perhaps it is time to stop being coy and declare a goal or two.

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