

The Intersections Between Anti-Speciesism, Anti-Civilization, & Individualist Anarchy

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i. Insurrection of the Self

*“... Egoism is the chief fact of organic existence - its universal characteristic.” - James L. Walker, **The Philosophy of Egoism***

”I believe that the vegetarians, with their prescription to eat less and more simply, are of more use than all the new moral systems taken together...” - Friedrich Nietzsche

Egoism is what lives in every individual, every being, whether one wants to admit or not. Every single being, whether consciously or unconsciously, is driven by her desires, wants, passion, drives, etc. No two individuals are the same, which makes every single individual unique.

For me, my egoism brought to its fullest conclusion is the rebellion of individualist anarchy. (The active negation of all social and cultural constructs of society and civilization through a conscious inward and outward insurrection.) Egoism is the fuel that ignites the rebellious passions, desires, creativity of the self. Egoism is the heart that pumps the blood through the veins of the insurrectionary I.

Through my own egoist/individualist evolution, I have created my own ethics as I break away from the values, social norms, herd mentalities, and moral systems pressed onto me the second I was born. I am against all oppressions and authorities that impede on the individual on how they want to live their life. I believe every living being has the full and unrestricted right to live the life she wants, chooses, and which is in accordance with her own desires.

My self-created individualist ethics are not some kind of dogmatic religious principles. My values weren't forced on me. I am motivated by my own self-interests, past and present experiences. I believe the primary cause of oppression stems from civilization and the cultural and social constructs it produces.¹

Civilizations human-centered cultures of anthropocentrism and speciesism makes animals' and earth's exploitation morally 'right', transforming animals and the natural world into mere commodities for "us" to use as we please. This human supremacy is on par with the cultures of racism, patriarchy, gender binaries, classism, white supremacy, etc. Every single institution and system of civilization is anti-individual with the core aim of creating and empowering a collective obedient mass, through manipulation and force when necessary.

Not only is civilization totally oppressive to the individual, but it is bringing total destruction to the biosphere. Consumerism plays a major role in fueling and expanding the systemized exploitation and incarceration of animals. Consumerism is directly linked to the deforestation of jungles and forests for both animal and plant agriculture, the destruction of the organic world generally through mining for minerals, metals, and other so-called "natural resources", and disposing the produced rubbish and waste into the rivers, oceans and the earth.

It is my desire and self-interest to resist speciesism, anthropocentrism, and civilization and the cruelty it forces onto many individuals, human and non-human animals alike. I came to anti-speciesism from life experiences in the same way I came to anti-racism. The more I lived and learned, the more I began to hate the constructs that are forced on all individuals that create divides by collectivist ideologues, religions, and other tyrants for social control, and will highly likely kill all life on the planet.

¹ Civilization didn't give birth to speciesism, but it enhanced and magnified it to levels that would not have been possible. And similarly I'm sure there were other forms of oppression, but likewise, brought to a whole new different levels

To be against anthropocentrism is to be against civilization, to be against the destruction of the natural world. Veganism brought to its furthest conclusion brings one to the critique of civilization.

And likewise, the anti-authoritarian individualism of individualist anarchy brought to its furthest conclusion brings one to veganism as part of the evolutionary process of self-liberation. Veganism, like anarchy, isn't a system; it's an individual praxis of abstention and individual resistance against consumerist violence and civilization-induced destruction. Veganism is the individual anti-speciesist refusal to take part in all forms of exploitation and systematic extermination.

For me, vegetarianism is part of my path towards this. A transitional stage. Not wanting to be a perpetrator of violence and a beneficiary of other oppressed and captive beings.

ii. Cruelty

"SHAME, shame, shame - that is the history of man" -Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra

"Animals are not just living things; they are beings with lives. Next time you are outside, notice the first bird you see. You are beholding a unique individual with personality traits, an emotional profile, and library of knowledge built on experiences. What you are witnessing is not just biology... but a biography." - Jonathan Balcombe.

The earliest memory I have of animal cruelty was when I was around 10 or 11. At the top of my street there was a green area and on the other side of it was a small patch of trees. On the other side of the trees was an old cottage which dated back to when the area was total farmland. When I was a kid playing on the green we often found dead chickens hanging from tree branches, dangling from strings tied around their necks. It scared us. We always ran off when we saw them. I never understood why someone would do that. All the kids assumed it was the person that lived in the cottage wanting to warn us off or something.

A couple of years later, one night another kid in our estate, drunk and out of it, tied a husky dog - who must have escaped from a back garden - to a goal post and set the creature on fire. The dog survived, somehow. The next day I saw the dog running around the estate, its hair charred and singed off exposing pink, burned flesh. I didn't know what happened to the dog but when I got to the shop-front where everyone hung around, kids were talking about it; some were laughing.

Years later in jail, bored mindless, one day when slopping out the previous night's waste from my piss pot, I saw a small bird sitting on the windowsill. I walked over slowly and scooped them up in my hands and brought her back to the landing. I made a cage from tying two plastic crates together. Preferring death to captivity, the poor thing starved itself to death within a few days. Before she died - not realizing that's what she was doing - I thought she would start eating, but she died.

I found a book on Irish wildlife. I searched what type of bird she was: a pied wagtail.

About a year later, I caught a pigeon in the yard. The pigeons lived in the empty cells in the basement that they could enter through the broken grills in the air vents. The jail laid poison for them in attempts to keep them away. Dead birds could always be found in the yard.

I brought the bird back to the block and made another cage. Later that day, I saw she wasn't eating, just like the pied wagtail, so I brought her back outside to the yard and let her go.

From that moment, I knew I should give up on trying to catch animals for pets. It wasn't right. The contradiction and irony of me in a cage, catching other animals to put in a cage for my own enjoyment.

A few weeks later, I came across a baby crow that was hopping around the yard. They must have fallen from a nest or were learning to fly and couldn't take off from the ground. They kept trying to hop while flapping her wings, As I picked her up, three or four bigger crows started flying down at me like dive bombers. I held out my open hands and the baby jumped out of my palms and flapped her wings and took off into the sky.

Birds have intelligence, like all animals. They know what's going on around them, and know how to communicate. Totally conscious beings. One would automatically assume that people would know this, but most either don't know or don't care.

Sitting around playing cards or monopoly during lock-up, two fellas were sharing stories of being in the Dublin/Wicklow mountains hunting and trapping. One was telling stories of how he and his friends would trap baby foxes and take part in badger beating.²

Another fella described how one time he was in the mountains test firing a short (pistol). While letting off shots, a deer appeared, jumping from nowhere, so he started firing at it. All the while he was reminiscing, he laughed his head off, and so did everyone sitting at the table.

"I whipped out the .38," - while mimicking holding a pistol with his fingers - "bang, bang,... then this fuckin' yoke runs out of nowhere... so I let a few off at it... bang, bang, bang!" - with eruptions of laughter from everyone sitting around the table.

iii. Platformists, Leftists, and Milk Wars: Memoir of an Individualist

"The anarchist individualists do not present themselves as proletarians, absorbed only in the search for material amelioration, tied to a class determined to transform the world and to substitute a new society for the actual one. They place themselves in the present; they disdain to orient the coming generations towards a form of society allegedly destined to assure their happiness, for the simple reason that from the individualist point of view happiness is a conquest, an individuals internal realization." - **Emile Armand, Individualist Perspectives**

² Badger beating is a blood sport where hunters bring dogs, usually bull staff or pit bulls, find the entrance to a badger set and send the dogs down to attack the badgers. If a badger manages to get away from the dogs, the badger will be beaten to death with clubs if unfortunate enough to try to get out where the hunters are waiting.

About 7 years ago, I had become inspired by anarchist ideas after becoming disillusioned with Irish Republicanism after spending nearly 5 years in jail. From my involvement in and disillusionment with republicanism, I developed a critique of authoritarianism and hierarchical organization. When in jail I learned about anarchism through reading the likes of Bakunin, Bonanno, and Peter Gelderloos. When I got out, I heard about a platformist group: the Workers Solidarity Movement (WSM). I didn't know what platformism was at the time. I got involved anyway - it was the only anarchist project that I could find.

A few months in, the possibility for a social center project arose. Three of us from the WSM and a bunch of anarcho-squatters created it. We squatted in a derelict hotel in Dublin's city center. The space got named "The Barricade Inn". We occupied the building for almost a year.

A couple of weeks after opening the social center, a vegan cafe was created in the space. It brought a lot of people to the social center that wouldn't have been there otherwise. I learned a good bit about veganism and speciesism through the people there. The cruelty to animals, benefits to individual health, and the environmental benefits. I ate vegan food and saw that it wasn't just "rabbit food" as the assumption generally is (and I previously assumed). It planted a seed in my brain about animal exploitation and wanting to change my diet and consumption.

One of the original organizers of the social center was away traveling. While she was away, the vegan cafe had been set up and established. When she came back, she was majorly pissed about it and started a big row because she 'wants to drink milk' and because the cafe didn't serve cow milk, was 'denying her that right'. The row spread to all of the organizers of the space. It was the start of a split. A bunch of people opposed veganism generally, while some others that weren't vegans saw no problem with the vegan cafe not serving milk. In the end, the cafe stayed.

From this point on, other unrelated petty disputes arose among the organizers of the space for the few months of the remainder of the occupation. Lines were drawn, sides were picked. At the start of the project, everyone involved was talking about sticking it out till the very end and resisting when the state tried to evict us. By the time it came to resisting, there was so much internal fighting and arguments, everyone had fallen out. Although there was one last push to pull people together, everyone was so demoralized that resistance wasn't possible or even wanted.

The night before the eviction date, I went back to visit the social center one last time. The door was wide open - someone had removed the locks. The power was cut and the building was in total darkness. I walked up the creaky stairs and found a few hipsters carrying furniture down. I didn't recognise any of these looters, but I could tell they were posh lefty liberal student types. Their only contribution to the space was to snatch what they could.

Out of all the different groups and individuals that had no problem using the space - hipster drama classes, hippy experimental music sessions, activist groups, etc - only one individual and one group (that I know of) offered support to resist the occupation. They weren't even anarchists or leftists. Where was the mutual aid? It was a sad ending to a sad state of affairs. A round the same time as the Barricade Inn eviction, the WSM held its annual yearly meeting to discuss plans for the coming year and for motions to be put forward towards organizational planning and activism.

During the meeting, a vegan member proposed a motion to add speciesism to the group's list of oppressions in the organizational program and constitution. The elders of the group, who were members of it since the 90s, dismissed speciesism and animal liberation in general as being

something people (the working class) don't relate to, and having no revolutionary value towards creating anarchist communism or sparking a workers revolution.³

The vegan took their criticism and didn't push it any further. After the meeting I asked him why he didn't push it. He told me he felt they'd never go for it, so he gave up, not wanting to cause division. I suspect why he didn't push for it was because he was younger and hadn't been involved with politics for long and didn't have the confidence in himself to push it more.

I was by no means a vegan, but the thing that got me was how the group brushed it off as if it was something that didn't really matter. How could they not at the very least think animal agriculture was fucked up and cruel? Even I knew that and could agree (yes, I soon realized my internal contradiction).

It was around this time I made my first attempt at not eating meat. By this stage, I was a member of the group for about a year and at a point of further developing my critique of organizations - questioning the use and value of such groups and organizations generally - from what I was experiencing from my involvement in various leftist projects during this period (and for about a year after), and the previous 8 years I spent in the Republican movement. It was a continuing developing critique of hierarchy, authoritarianism, and organization which started back in Portlaoise prison.

The WSM itself was small enough; there were only 3 branches in Ireland with probably 20 members in all. And it operated virtually the same, but on a much smaller level, to the above ground Republican organizations - regular branch meetings, democratic voting system for making decisions, elected organizational positions, yearly all organization meetings to put forward proposals and to plan and organize for the year to come.

I came to the conclusion that if by some crazy chance the group actually grew in numbers it would take the form of a Leninist style organization -like all political parties do. The insurrectionist writer Alfredo Bonanno describes such organizations as formal or permanent organizations. The bigger an organization grows, the more a bureaucracy and hierarchy develops, and the more monolithic it becomes. In theory, an organization is a means to an end but what happens is the maintenance, growth, and continuance of the organization becomes the main priority and objective. Any strategy or tactic used or developed are all based around these motives and take precedence. I believe this is the same outcome for all such organizations, whether they label themselves as "non-hierarchical" or not.

To counter this, Bonanno proposed the informal organization and affinity group. These forms of organizing share very similar characteristics to what Max Stirner proposed as the "union of egoists". The informal shared affinity of the union of egoists is created primarily for the direct needs, self-interests, wants, and specific purposes of all the individuals involved. The aim is not to grow in numbers or the continuance of the union, but to achieve the relative goal/action of the individuals who created the union. As soon as the goal, proposals, project is complete or ceases, the union dissolves.

The platformist organization was nothing in comparison to the republican movement, which is highly authoritarian unashamedly - particularly the underground organizations. But I believe it had the makings for it. All permanent/formal organizations should be viewed as mini states or states in waiting. All carry the embryo of totalitarianism. My disillusionment brought me to

³ I have seen similar events happen in the republican movement. A motion put forward, and then thrown to the side because an elder with influence disagreed and spoke out against it.

a critique of collectivism, which at its core is authoritarian, hierarchical,⁴ and ultimately won't accommodate for individual autonomy and initiative. Instead of the individual using the organization for self liberation, the organization absorbs her into the group using the individual for the organization's own means and benefit.

Just because a majority or a collective agrees on a point or vote, does not make it a universal virtue. Or just because an older person, who was experienced and involved for a while, says something does not make it gospel truth.

And likewise the leftist proposal for a workers revolution placing "the working class" above non-human animals because of their relationship to the *sacred revolution*, placing more worth and value on one set of individuals over another, is the epitome of collectivism, human supremacy, and all politics generally.

This leftists' sacred revolution will be built off the backs and exploitation of beings who, along with the organic world, are viewed only as commodities and nothing more. All for the continuance of the hierarchical, authoritarian, and collectivist mega-murder machine that is civilization. A revolution which will perpetuate the destruction of the natural world and the further domestication of the individual. No thanks, that's not something I want to be behind. Every individual has her own worth and right to life. The majority never has more value above a minority.

"If I am thoroughly an egoist, then I recognize the ego of others and the desire of that ego to not be controlled or dominated. I own nobody, and nobody owns me. This social relationship does not constitute a form of politics. Politics implies social governance guided by an external authority. My lifestyle is an anti-politics - rejecting all anthropocentric power and authority constructed to govern my social interactions with other animals. My refusal to view non-human animals as "food" for consumption can easily be understood as a primal expression of this anti-authoritarian lifestyle." - Flower Bomb - Egoist Vegan: Some Thoughts on an Individualist Animal Liberation

⁴ I've seen a lot of anarchists, particularly ones not from Ireland, fetishize the IRA because of the armed struggle. The IRA as an organization is green fascism, totally opposed to individual freedom. It's easy to see what you want to see in books, documentaries, or online. However, reality tells a different story. Anywhere Republicans have got a foothold they present themselves as the police force. They hang labels such as "anti-community" or "anti-social" on individuals that don't fit into their image/narrative, or use opportunities to gain support, attempting to prove themselves "protectors of the community". The anti-community and anti-social elements are usually typically young disenfranchised teenagers. For their "crimes", many end up kneecapped (shot in the legs), brutally beaten with anything from hammers to baseball bats, and/or left with broken bones. In one area in Belfast in the 2000s, there was a suicide epidemic among teenagers that was directly linked to punishment beatings dished out by republicans in the area. One teenage victim was put down a manhole and a car parked on the lid to prevent escape. The Republicans as judge, jury, and settling scores.

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