

The New Revolution

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An anarchist with an iPhone is the new revolutionary. Gone are the days of bushy beards and well-groomed moustaches and enter the flannel-wearing, soymilk-drinking iPhone user. While this is meant mostly in jest, this example illustrates the great oxymoron of modern anarchist, and for that matter leftist, life: we as anarchists strive to work against the capitalist system and overthrow the tyranny of the spectacle, but we can be beholden to it in our daily lives. What we preach and how we act are contradictory. Karl Marx, the father of leftist philosophy, would be utterly appalled at how far we have come from his vision. There is no possible way to achieve class consciousness when we are beholden to the sole identity granted by our Twitter handles and our Instagram likes.

At least in the United States, daily work and experience is so dependent upon cellphones, television, and other forms of placating media where no work is necessary to understand. Books, poems, art. Three mediums which have slipped into the avant-garde of daily living. These events and experiences require a significant amount of critical thought to relate to, more so than would be required while vegetating in front of television. Even “educational” channels and shows suffer from the inherent vapidness of the viewer; they operate under the delusion that they teach when they merely give. There is no questioning of the facts, no interpretation of the data, no drawing from your own experiences of the world when you suffer through the tedium of viewing television. Books, poems, art, and other methods unmentioned, of course, all require comparison of ideas, interpretation of literary meaning, and simply work done by you, the viewer. It is easier to succumb to the spectacle, to allow oneself to be overtaken by the products of capitalism, simply because that is the purpose of these devices: to addict.

It is for this reason that the oxymoron raised earlier is invalid. While in the better future these capitalist constructions that seek to enslave the masses to the opiate of the new release would be meaningless and disappear, that is not intended to fault those who have succumbed to the spectacle. School children cannot be blamed for boredom, classrooms are inefficient and unexciting. Those under the effects of their environment must be removed from said environment when possible, and when separation is impossible, then mitigation must occur. The work towards minimizing the placating effects of the spectacle and maximizing the elating effects of your true passions is the new revolution.

Within a society that does not value the human and only values the corporate, just societies do not exist on a large scale, but a small one. Only within these microcosms can we attempt this

revolution by acting right, speaking right, and defending what is right. By these fairly vague terms I simply mean that we, as anarchists, have the duty to act in such a way as to best enable our victory over the spectacle, even if that means reading a book for half an hour a day instead of watching TV or working on some other productive task as opposed to consuming what is provided; to speak out about the perils of this current society to those within our circle of influence, though of course with tact and respect; and by using whatever free time we might have to fight this system. The monotony of the 9-5 is monotony that exhausts and depraves those that in order to survive, must produce to enrich someone else. Whatever dignity that can be recovered is dignity that must be retained as closely as possible.

The retention comes from the continual drive, even if it must be conscious, to produce for you and you alone. Consumption is meaningless in the capitalist world; the spectacle has degraded television and everyday entertainment to mindless drivel. Production for the sake of consumption by yourself and those within your circle is meaningful production because it comes out of desire for the human connection. The interpersonal relationships, complete with both positive and negative emotions, are relationships that are simply more powerful and important to the human condition than the one-side relationship consisting solely of admiration that consists the spectacle.

Lives within these private societies, where production occurs for the sake of the interpersonal, is the only way to combat the spectacle and eventually topple the capitalist regime. People producing for the human connection is the very antithesis to the capitalist model of producing for the sake of profit. Yes, an anarchist with an iPhone is ironic, but only if they allow the spectacle to overtake their rationality. If they are true anarchists, their internal battle with the spectacle is ongoing and raging. This is a battle that, if planned carefully and executed thoughtfully, can be won: they are the vanguard of the new revolution.

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