

Your Politics Are Boring As Fuck

Nadia C.

1997/04/11

Face it, your politics are boring as fuck. You know it's true. Otherwise, why does everyone cringe when you say the word? Why has attendance at your anarcho-communist theory discussion group meetings fallen to an all-time low? Why has the oppressed proletariat not come to its senses and joined you in your fight for world liberation?

Perhaps, after years of struggling to educate them about their victimhood, you have come to blame them for their condition. They must want to be ground under the heel of capitalist imperialism; otherwise, why do they show no interest in your political causes? Why haven't they joined you yet in chaining yourself to mahogany furniture, chanting slogans at carefully planned and orchestrated protests, and frequenting anarchist bookshops? Why haven't they sat down and learned all the terminology necessary for a genuine understanding of the complexities of Marxist economic theory?

The truth is, your politics are boring to them because they really are irrelevant. They know that your antiquated styles of protest—your marches, hand held signs, and gatherings—are now powerless to effect real change because they have become such a predictable part of the status quo. They know that your post-Marxist jargon is off-putting because it really is a language of mere academic dispute, not a weapon capable of undermining systems of control. They know that your infighting, your splinter groups and endless quarrels over ephemeral theories can never effect any real change in the world they experience from day to day. They know that no matter who is in office, what laws are on the books, what "ism"s the intellectuals march under, the content of their lives will remain the same. They—we—know that our boredom is proof that these "politics" are not the key to any real transformation of life. For our lives are boring enough already!

And you know it too. For how many of you is politics a responsibility? Something you engage in because you feel you should, when in your heart of hearts there are a million things you would rather be doing? Your volunteer work—is it your most favorite pastime, or do you do it out of a sense of obligation? Why do you think it is so hard to motivate others to volunteer as you do? Could it be that it is, above all, a feeling of guilt that drives you to fulfill your "duty" to be politically active? Perhaps you spice up your "work" by trying (consciously or not) to get in trouble with the authorities, to get arrested: not because it will practically serve your cause, but to make things more exciting, to recapture a little of the romance of turbulent times now long past. Have you ever felt that you were participating in a ritual, a long-established tradition of fringe

protest, that really serves only to strengthen the position of the mainstream? Have you ever secretly longed to escape from the stagnation and boredom of your political "responsibilities"?

It's no wonder that no one has joined you in your political endeavors. Perhaps you tell yourself that it's tough, thankless work, but somebody's got to do it. The answer is, well, NO.

You actually do us all a real disservice with your tiresome, tedious politics. For in fact, there is nothing more important than politics. NOT the politics of American "democracy" and law, of who is elected state legislator to sign the same bills and perpetuate the same system. Not the politics of the "I got involved with the radical left because I enjoy quibbling over trivial details and writing rhetorically about an unreachable utopia" anarchist. Not the politics of any leader or ideology that demands that you make sacrifices for "the cause." But the politics of our everyday lives. When you separate politics from the immediate, everyday experiences of individual men and women, it becomes completely irrelevant. Indeed, it becomes the private domain of wealthy, comfortable intellectuals, who can trouble themselves with such dreary, theoretical things. When you involve yourself in politics out of a sense of obligation, and make political action into a dull responsibility rather than an exciting game that is worthwhile for its own sake, you scare away people whose lives are already far too dull for any more tedium. When you make politics into a lifeless thing, a joyless thing, a dreadful responsibility, it becomes just another weight upon people, rather than a means to lift weight from people. And thus you ruin the idea of politics for the people to whom it should be most important. For everyone has a stake in considering their lives, in asking themselves what they want out of life and how they can get it. But you make politics look to them like a miserable, self-referential, pointless middle class/bohemian game, a game with no relevance to the real lives they are living out.

What should be political? Whether we enjoy what we do to get food and shelter. Whether we feel like our daily interactions with our friends, neighbors, and coworkers are fulfilling. Whether we have the opportunity to live each day the way we desire to. And "politics" should consist not of merely discussing these questions, but of acting directly to improve our lives in the immediate present. Acting in a way that is itself entertaining, exciting, joyous—because political action that is tedious, tiresome, and oppressive can only perpetuate tedium, fatigue, and oppression in our lives. No more time should be wasted debating over issues that will be irrelevant when we must go to work again the next day. No more predictable ritual protests that the authorities know all too well how to deal with; no more boring ritual protests which will not sound like a thrilling way to spend a Saturday afternoon to potential volunteers—clearly, those won't get us anywhere. Never again shall we "sacrifice ourselves for the cause." For we ourselves, happiness in our own lives and the lives of our fellows, must be our cause!

After we make politics relevant and exciting, the rest will follow. But from a dreary, merely theoretical and/or ritualized politics, nothing valuable can follow. This is not to say that we should show no interest in the welfare of humans, animals, or ecosystems that do not contact us directly in our day to day existence. But the foundation of our politics must be concrete: it must be immediate, it must be obvious to everyone why it is worth the effort, it must be fun in itself. How can we do positive things for others if we ourselves do not enjoy our own lives?

To make this concrete for a moment: an afternoon of collecting food from businesses that would have thrown it away and serving it to hungry people and people who are tired of working to pay for food—that is good political action, but only if you enjoy it. If you do it with your friends, if you meet new friends while you're doing it, if you fall in love or trade funny stories or just feel proud to have helped a woman by easing her financial needs, that's good political action.

On the other hand, if you spend the afternoon typing an angry letter to an obscure leftist tabloid objecting to a columnist's use of the term "anarcho-syndicalist," that's not going to accomplish shit, and you know it.

Perhaps it is time for a new word for "politics," since you have made such a swear word out of the old one. For no one should be put off when we talk about acting together to improve our lives. And so we present to you our demands, which are non-negotiable, and must be met as soon as possible—because we're not going to live forever, are we?

1. Make politics relevant to our everyday experience of life again. The farther away the object of our political concern, the less it will mean to us, the less real and pressing it will seem to us, and the more wearisome politics will be.
2. All political activity must be joyous and exciting in itself. You cannot escape from dreariness with more dreariness.
3. To accomplish those first two steps, entirely new political approaches and methods must be created. The old ones are outdated, outmoded. Perhaps they were NEVER any good, and that's why our world is the way it is now.
4. Enjoy yourselves! There is never any excuse for being bored . . . or boring!

Join us in making the "revolution" a game; a game played for the highest stakes of all, but a joyous, carefree game nonetheless!

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)
Anti-Copyright



Nadia C.
Your Politics Are Boring As Fuck
1997/04/11

Retrieved on 2 November 2014 from <http://www.crimethinc.com/texts/selected/asfuck.php>

usa.anarchistlibraries.net