

The Revolution Is What We Are to Each Other

Resistance is persistence. It's solidarity. It's being there for each other. It's fighting, but it's also dancing.

Revoluciana

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Access

Yesterday, a friend gave me a variety of wonderful typewriter papers.

Obviously I'd been discussing mimeographs again.

This friend has never used the internet. On the whole, they are content with this decision, but they admit to being bothered that it's meant that they've been left behind in so many ways.

Newspapers have been going paperless for some time, so where are they supposed to get the news? They also listen to the radio, but it's easy to miss things and not enough is reported. They're especially upset that they want to go to protests but they never actually know when and where the protests are because everything is organized online now.

It wasn't always like this. Obviously.

I mentioned the contrast between those who are motivated but have no access vs. those who seemingly have access but no motivation.

We discussed the loss of access both online and offline, not only as a result of censorship and manufactured consent, but also as a result of the chilling effect of the increase of fascism in our world, and how easily speech is policed and what the consequences might be for someone to speak.

I think I'll do my best to let them know about protests in the future. I wonder how I could find or print some paper sources for the type of news they're looking to follow. In the meantime, talking over drinks works great.

Third Spaces

I was reading an op-ed published today by an undergrad on the Harvard Crimson this morning called *Where Did All the Radicals Go?* The author discusses a familiar topic: the loss of *third spaces*. If you're not familiar with the concept, think of it this way— you have your home (your first space) and you have school or work (your second space). However, where else do you go? Where is community? Where do you connect, talk, and even whisper to conspire for your collective liberation?

Where is your *third space*?

In this context, the author talks about Boston, the Square, a place where radicals from the US Revolutionary War through the Civil Rights era found space to talk, to sing, to protest, but is now devoid of little but commerce.

Capitalism takes our places, our communities, our connection, our voices, and even our whispers.

How are we supposed to keep up, to learn, to meet, to speak when we are increasingly isolated?

How are we supposed to build and maintain community?

The author reminds us that coffee houses were once criminalized as bastions of revolutionary talk and organizing and that Hitler cracked down on informal gathering for fear that people would conspire and organize in opposition.

Many people in the US are living in areas essentially devoid of *third spaces* entirely.

Community

I was responding to one of my readers today who brought up the difficulty of finding the right communities. A common refrain. As a radical queer neurosparkly trans girl living in a rural area, I agree. It's not easy to find your people. It's not easy to find other radical leftists— though this seems to get a little easier day by day, and not just because I advertise myself as one. How does one *not* become radicalized under threat of the current regime in the US and in a world affected by it?

It's difficult to find queer and trans community, especially outside of the cities— though this seems to get a little easier day by day as the world gets more queer. How does one *not*... wink

Then, when you do finally find what seemingly *should* be your community, at least in name and organizational mission statement or whatever, it doesn't quite fit. Or maybe you don't fit. Someone or something doesn't fit.

It's so difficult to make friends as an adult, let alone *community*.

- Home
- Work

What community can there be when there is no *third space*?

People organize around a particular thing, a hobby, a cause, a demographic, a mutual love of tentacles, but then it doesn't seem to quite match up. Maybe you find a leftist group and it's filled with in-fighting and drama. You find a queer advocacy group that suspiciously lacks any BIPOC representation. You find a knitting group that will tear down any member who uses acrylic yarn and you don't want to be involved in yet another knitting scandal.

Everywhere you try to find *community*, you just find more *hierarchy*. A familiar *Tears for Fears* song echoes through your mind. You sigh and mumble, *everybody wants to rule the world*.

It's more than that, though, because some groups really are great. It's not about the group, it's about the *community*. It's about connection and shared humanity.

People become so focused on the thing, they forget it's about the people.

Action

I have a dear friend who mentioned that they feel somewhat disconnected from all that's going on. I think that was the word they used. Disconnected in the sense that they feel somewhat insulated from the direct harm of what is currently happening. Not unaffected and not uninformed, just not currently a direct target. I think they worry if they're doing *enough*. I worry whether or not I am, too.

Meanwhile, I think of this friend with the reflection of stars in my eyes. The amount of love and joy they put into the world and their communities, the effort they go through to support others who *are* directly affected, the time and thought they give to discuss and inform people on their level by meeting people where they're at, and the space they give to connecting people to resources and ideas, but more importantly, connecting people to each other.

This is the definition of *mutual aid*, and *mutual aid*, for that matter, is the foundation of *anarchism*.

This friend is the absolute spirit of the revolution.
This friend builds the world we dream.

The world after

I have yet another friend who messaged me a couple days ago wondering if it's *weird* that they're feeling so *hopeful* about the world after and the world we might all be able to build—as long as we're able to survive what comes next. I need to message them back. I'm so slow at replying sometimes.

Is it *weird*?

Don't threaten me with a good time.

Doing the dishes

I'm often reminded of the phrase, "Everyone wants a revolution. No one wants to do the dishes." I have seen it attributed to a number of sources, and I'm not actually certain where it originated, and furthermore I'm not actually certain I'd like the answer. It also seems to hold different meaning for different people. Nonetheless, it floats around in my skull.

When it comes to *revolution* or *resistance*, or even just life, there's all sorts of work that needs to be done. We should all be doing our part, and we should all be chipping in to do the dishes.

However, I have friends who hate to cook, but enjoy doing the dishes. I truly enjoy cooking, but I'm not so enthusiastic about doing the dishes.

We all have different skills, we have different sources of joy and fulfillment, we all have different capacities.

What we are to each other

I think of my polyamorous friends, my queerplatonic friends, my relationship anarchy friends. Better than anyone, they recognize that one person can't be everything for someone, and certainly no one *should* bear that type of responsibility, either. Different people fill different capacities for each of us, emotionally and practically.

Likewise, we are different things to different people, and we don't bear the responsibility of unity of thought or action, much less duplication.

Community isn't just a matter of finding people that are like you, it's a matter of finding an ecosystem where you fit, and also finding people who fit within your ecosystem.

It's not about democracy or building consensus, it's about recognizing and meeting each others' needs.

Doing something

I spend a lot of effort telling y'all you have a responsibility to do something. You *specifically*.

I do think that you, all of us, and you *specifically*, need to be ready and willing to break the rules. However, I can't tell you when or what. I'm not your mom. Unless I am your mom, in which case, it's your turn to do the dishes, kid.

Likewise, when I urge you to do something, I can't tell you what, even if I am your mom. Except if it's the dishes. It's still your turn, and it's almost time for me to cook supper.

The point of all of this is to say that resistance isn't only protests and sabotage, and the revolution is definitely not a vanguard.

Resistance is persistence. It's solidarity. It's being there for each other. It's allowing for joy in the face of oppression. It's fighting, but it's also dancing. It's not just pain, but also being a shoulder to cry on. It's not just dismantling, its rebuilding. It's not just demanding your fair share, it's also sharing a meal. It's offering shelter and sanctuary. It's showing up for others, *especially* when the system is targeting them or dragging them down.

Resistance isn't just writing the words, it's sourcing the paper, it's printing, it's finding people to distribute it. It's organizing the protest, making the posters, advertising it, connecting with speakers. These are all different skills.

One of the biggest things that we can do for each other is to make space, both emotional and geospacial. We need *third spaces*, both geo-spacial and emotional. We need *third spaces*— we need community.

Resistance is listening to the needs of others and doing what you can to fill those needs, when you can, where you have the capacity— no more, no less.

It's all, at its very core, simply and profoundly, *mutual-aid*.

The revolution is us. It's community. It's *humanity*.

The revolution is you.

If you choose it.

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