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Ιστορικό σημείωμα

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Περιεχόμενο

Why it's probably not my place to try to radicalise the Cypriot LGBT+ community

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I have had trouble working within the Cypriot LGBT+ community for a long time. Often that becomes a source of great frustration and disappointment to me, and I would assume of similar negative feelings to those on the opposing side of the disagreement. With May being Pride Month, I am forced to do some self-contemplation about this, again.

An account of how I came to withdraw from the mainstream part of it was published last year on the website of the anti-authoritarian political group I participate in. I warned my comrades back then though that the text is not representative of what my current views are. I don't think I disagree with anything I wrote back then, but I did feel that at the time of publication and I am more sure about it now: I have drifted further away from that abstraction we call the LGBT+ or Queer community (whether there's one community, many, or none at all is another, unanswered question).

I'm not going to surprise you and spew some anti-identity politics brocialist and class-reductionist bullshit. Identity politics are a necessary (but not sufficient) precondition for personal and social liberation, and class-reductionism is a political position comparable in stupidity with "anarcho"-capitalism. I'm not even going to present a critique of the LGBT+ and/or Queer community on the grounds of intersectionality. For the purposes of this discussion, the intersectionality aspect is not a concern.

The text is —perhaps egoistically— about me and how I'm probably not entitled to have any demands about how those communities should act, and what their priorities should be.

I believe that identities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, are political labels. They have some tenuous relation to observations about one's body and brain, but they are primarily ways to define and position one's self in the societal battleground (quite uncontroversially, I assume, I am adopting a conflict-based approach to sociology, because that's the sociological model that best captures reality).

The question then is, other than the fact that in the periods of my life that I am dating, I mostly date people of more-or-less similar gender to me (that is, “male but not really enthusiastic about it”), do I find myself in a similar societal position in society as other people using a label from the LGBT+ Extended Universe, or from the Queer vocabulary?

After some discussions recently, I realised that I am probably not any more. I was definitely in that position 6–7 years ago. I experienced homophobia, in some cases expressed violently. I had shared interests and demands as other people under the same labels. I participated in similar types of relationships as other people in this spectrum of social identities. That’s not the case any more though.

I don’t feel I have, in recent times, experienced any form of homophobia (on a personal level) severe enough for me to register it consciously. And that’s not because I take any measures to hide my identity. But in the last several years, I find myself in spaces where homophobia is atypically absent, and I have been very comfortable burning bridges and cutting off the people who are homophobia carriers from my social sphere. So for a long time now, in my private reality, homophobia and having to be careful about revealing aspects of your identity were not a concern.

Because of my private reality, I don’t have any intuitive sense about social rights I could be denied access to. I feel safe and comfortable. I haven’t received any behaviours that affected me negatively for a very long time. On the political/legal rights, the state doesn’t currently restrict my own freedoms on basis of my sexuality. “Sodomy” has been decriminalised a more than a decade before I began engaging in it. Because I don’t have a uterus, the state doesn’t really try to control my reproductive choices. I don’t plan to marry, or to adopt children. I don’t have substantial property or a medical insurance to share with a partner, and with social mobility like it is now, I will probably never will. And the state doesn’t misgender me on official documents. There isn’t any medical treatment I am denied access to on the basis of my sexuality and gender expression. I don’t seek the enactment or the enforcement of state censorship of publications under the guise of “combating hate speech” (not because that speech deserves to be protected, but because my idea of combating hate speech doesn’t involve the state).

I am also no longer in types of relationships readily recognisable to either the LGBT culture, or the more diverse queer one. Both cultures misinterpret and mis-categorise my approach in one of their many boxes, which is perhaps the only time I feel some negative disposition towards my sexuality, and ironically it comes from what until a few days ago I would certainly call “the inside” (but not so sure now).

On all three levels then, it feels like I am not at the same place as the people with whom I am often conflicting on political and organisational aspects of the LGBT+ and Queer liberation struggle. Due to circumstances, choices, and privilege on some aspects, I found myself in a post-homophobia private reality of some sort. Having spent so many years in it, I am beginning to suspect that my perception is skewed. It might very well be the case that I actually don’t belong to those communities, and I was just imposing my presence there, just because I used to be a part of them a decade go.

Because of this suspicion I have, I’m wondering if it is really my place to tell the LGBT+ and/or Queer movement that their priorities or their rhetoric and praxis are wrong or ineffective. My brand of social anarchism doesn’t really like armchair activism and vanguards. If I am really not part of the same social position as the people who are fighting for their liberation, what right do I have to tell them that this should be their demand, and such and such should be their tactics? It wouldn’t make me any better than those sad cases who, from the comfort of their houses, issue decrees on what Zapatistas or the Kurds should do to obtain superior strategic advantages in battle, and chastise them every time real world circumstances deviate from the holy scriptures of communists and anarchists from the

late 1800s.

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