

Revolution within Revolution

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When trying to define the term “revolution” one can look at the issue from several perspectives. I will attempt to define it by looking at the concepts of “revolutionary time”, the evolution of the “revolutionary movement”, and the “post-revolutionary society”. Clearly this is just one way to approach the issue and everything i say expresses only my personal (quite optimistic) views on the state of affairs.

So some people believe that revolutionary time is the single instant of the changes of ways in which the society is structured. This restructuring is usually performed in the arenas of social, political, and economic lives, but some do include the the personal lives and minds of individuals. This type of definition creates a problem of stageism, where it is not clear what is to come first; as with the question of chicken and the egg the revolutionary groups argue that what they are working on needs to happen before the progress in other areas can be made.

The concept of the constant revolution, proposed mostly by Maoists, attempts to resolve this inherent flaw in our definitions by defining the whole period as the revolutionary time. During that period it then becomes (at least theoretically) possible to work on different aspects of the social change. Also whilst Maoists will hide the fact, this constant revolution can never truly end, as there has never been even an attempt to define at which moment the constant revolution is complete and what kind of society will exist after this constant revolution.

As anarchists, we tend to be practical and not dwell on imagining how the world will look like in that far future. The almost universally accepted strategy of diversity of tactics also allows to escape the predicament of the stageism. But resolving these two issues comes at the price of difficulty of defining exactly what is the “revolutionary movement” that has different tactics, different aims, and often different labels all together.

It is at this point that i would like to introduce a concept of Revolution within Revolution. It is the idea that the revolution is not something that happens in the future and something which is being worked towards, it (hopefully) exists within the movements which see themselves as revolutionary and is a constant attempt to push the boundaries of freedom and liberation further. We all understand that the Anarchist Movement of the early 20th century was in many aspects more revolutionary that the radicals of today; but we do recognise

that some of the ideas (such as LGBTQ rights for example) had not yet been present, on any scale to speak of, within it. The revolution did in fact happen since then, and if not in society in general, within the revolutionary movement as a subset of that society.

But the revolution within revolution is not only about incorporating different issues and causes into the movement, that can be done within the current mindset. I am suggesting to look at each moment as the beginning and the end of the revolution, as Buddhists would put it the revolution is “in the constant state of becoming”, each revolutionary moment creates the new conditions which themselves need to be revolutionised. It differs from the constant revolution in the fact that each moment is unique; the direction of the revolutionary movement is not defined at some historical moment, but rather is created by those people who are part of the present.

Such an outlook can unite the sub-movements which otherwise seem to have some sort of unbridgeable chasm between them, since there is no need to create an agreement as to the final goal of the revolution, but rather only the instantaneous realisation that we are creating the world where all of us will inhabit in the next instant (which of course is still a problem, but at least one which we can relate to within the world that we live in and does not require us to venture into the realm of the philosophical constructs). Such outlook will also have to be one of the revolutions that happen within the revolutionary movement. And finally such outlook will allow for the revolution to not become a thing that the past generations have talked about, but rather a living organism of individuals.

So the term “Revolution” as defined by me would mean something along the lines of “a constantly changing culture or subculture, which intends to move itself closer to the ultimate freedom at every moment”.

Of course, this is just my definition.