

FREE POLITICAL PRISONER JEFF 'FREE' LUERS



The Problem with Anarchist Ego by Jeffrey Luers

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It seems that more and more anarchist publications are becoming breeding grounds for self-promoting pompous drivel. Perpetuating a cycle of discord not only among fellow anarchists, but others who could be our allies if only our heads weren't stuck so far up our arses.

The problem is not so much a lack of ideas as it is a superiority complex. It is so easy to turn on those we disagree with because their view of a utopian society isn't like ours whereas it is much harder to actually challenge the state.

Anarchists, leftists and activists of various sorts all seem to have one thing in common these days: the ability to direct their energy at one another rather than focus their collective energy on the source of all our misery.

How easily do we forget? This is exactly what the state wants us to do-fight amongst ourselves. All the bickering has made us a stagnant and ineffective farce. We are so busy criticizing each other that we fail to challenge the state or even attempt to create an alternative, relegating ourselves to obscure political theory and unintelligible banter. Perhaps, most shameful of all: we fail to criticize ourselves.

I was very disappointed to read an article recently printed in *Green Anarchy* called *The left-handed path of repression*. It was a case in point of how easy it is to completely dismiss others, and fail to even address an important issue-likely, because (gasp!) they were critical of anarchists, perhaps even the author of said article.

I happened to live in Eugene at the time the author refers to as when the "leftist emotional plague swept through the Eugene anarchist milieu..." "I had a unique privilege to be accepted by all the different factions and circles of the Eugene activist scene. Thus, being able to drink beer and have discussions with the group of women and men that challenged the rhetoric and sexism inherent in the Eugene anarchist scene at the time and then going off to party with the 'hardcore' anarchist element-which I'm sure still includes some members of the GA collective. The ability to not be labeled by either side as "the enemy" gave me a unique perspective on the situation and also forced me into the mediator role on occasion.

There are 3 sides to every story-A, B and the truth.

Without getting into names or details, I was very involved with various elements of resistance in Eugene. Most organizing was done by a handful of white men with some rare exception. These men were outspoken and had a very dominant presence-which I don't necessarily believe is a bad trait.

On the other side, there was a group of women and men who were tired of the one-way slant of these men. They sought to focus attentions on issues of sexism, racism and other community issues. Let's be realistic-in a predominately white college town with a large activist community centered in the heart of the poor district and largely organized by a small handful of white men, the conditions are ripe for sexism, racism and elitism.

The issues these women and men raised were legitimate issues, echoed by me on more than one occasion. But, of course, there was bullshit coming from both sides, which created a dramatic season of Eugene 90210. But, progress was made, a

For more information, write:
Free's Defense Fund POB 3, Eugene, OR 97440 or freefreenow@mutualaid.org
Jeffrey Luers, #13797671, Oregon State Penitentiary, 2605 State Street, Salem, OR 97310
www.freefreenow.org

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couple of worthless pricks were run out of town, people grew and suddenly a community was trying to evolve. Women were empowered, men were frightened and nothing would ever be the same.

The allegations flew with cries of sexism from one side and allegations of infiltrator and provocateur from the other. Then, BAM, heads collided and we were left with an ineffective bunch of disorganized, disunified factions, Once again, the state is left standing.

I'm still in contact with both sides of this feud. Not a lot has changed over the years. It is disheartening and sad for such an advanced and amazing group of people to be disabled by in fighting. Sometimes, I think I'd rather live in prison than go back to Eugene.

Unfortunately, the problem is not limited to this one instance. It continues to play itself out in all of our politics. Green vs. Red. Anarchism vs. Leftism. So, I'm going to point out what I thought was obvious: It's a big world. So big, that not one of our political leanings has the solution for everyone, everywhere. At some point, if we actually succeed in our goal of smashing the state, each of us are going to have to decide how we want to recreate our communities. I'm sure that with a world as diverse as ours, each of our communities will be different.

However, there is something standing in the way of all this, and it isn't some red commie, lefty liberal or green caveman. It is a big, well armed, well organized, powerful and deadly state. I hope that faced with this reality, we will find better uses of our time. We are going to have to learn to agree to disagree because it is going to take all our collective efforts to stop this machine and bring down the beast.

We have a long way to go with so much at stake. If our publications actually focused on tactics, alternatives, what works, what doesn't... If we worked on building bridges instead of burning them... ?

I suppose this articles, like so many dreams will simply become another "what if... ". That's too bad because I'd really like to see us accomplish change and not just dream, about it.

I'm not sure what the future hold. I don't even know when I'm getting gout of prison. My sentence, much like our collective future, depends on what you do. It gets said over and over again, but we seem to all have thick heads. Only you can change tings. Every single one of us has the power and ability to bring change but too often, we don't recognize our own power or we allow it to be misdirected.

We have to start in our own communities and build from there. It isn't going to work from the top down. We have to learn to work together as a diverse community and build from the bottom up. How can we hope to smash the World Bank and bring the G8 to their knees if we can't get along long enough to do it?

If we are not willing to fight together, if we are not willing to fight for each other because she's not an anarchist or because his god is different or simply because we disagree about something, then we don't have anything worth fighting for. Our revolution can't be about politics anymore. It has to be about life. It has to be about living to the fullest, sharing joy, about building and bring together sustainable communities founded on equality, freedom and respect. If that talks doesn't start with you, who's it going to start with?

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