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ISSUE 19

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ISSUE 19

Bullying Health

Elena Hagopyan

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(I)An-ok

Unlearn. Resist. Escape. Imagine.

walkouts or skip days. Do phone/fax jams to the administration office. Just be aware of who you are affecting and play safe!

What are our options? What would we do without schools?!? Look around, kids everywhere are leaving the school institution and taking education back into their own hands. There are tons of home school groups around. Many are conservative, but often they have tools and resources that may help you start a more radical unschooling support group. If it is the question of pleasing the parents, check out the GED option, or a structured mail-in homeschool course. If they won't be satisfied with your decision then maybe you should look into legal emancipation. Parents abuse their authority, it is what they've learned to do all their lives. They need some unlearning of their own, but in the meantime don't endure any sort of abuse. We have to find ways out of these self-perpetuating cycles.

Imagine what the world would be like if kids were free to pursue their own interests, instead of being locked up in a school all day, for 12 years, and force fed 'knowledge.' School doesn't only affect youth, it affects anyone who has hope for the future. School is the breeding ground for the domination, competition, and violence in society. Getting out of school and fighting it is a big step in the direction of freedom and equality. We need to challenge authority and social privilege wherever it is found. Youth have a strong tradition of igniting movements. The potential for a new world lives inside you...

Bullying Health

Elena Hagopyan

As soon as you got any "bigger" health problem, you're basically in trouble, not only by the things you're facing by your condition, but actually the opinion is far harder. Today it is better to be some picture perfect child, young person or adult, as otherwise, you will be looked down upon by others. The silly of it is the fact no one is picture perfect, everyone who seems this way, it is just an act.

Myself, I have epilepsy, it always has been a problem, basically because I have to hide it every single day. If you have epilepsy, you better have the version of seizures most know, tonic-clonic seizures, even while it probably is horrible to have them, people at least understand it. I don't, I have 2 types of seizures, ones most ever will rarely notice, atypical absence seizures, and much more obvious ones, atonic seizures. Most around me will know, friends and family, and yet, I am in actual fact not open about it at all. Yes, very often it is better to not tell people than to actually tell people there is something "wrong" with you, as while it is not really wrong, people will see you as actual wrong.

And in too many ways that is stupid, fact is that I should be open about it, as otherwise bad things could in fact happen, and yet by the stigma people create, I wouldn't even want to do so. Yet, that is not even all, as I have to take medication because of my condition, and the only thing you will think of when doing so, is how people will react, as too often it is not nice. Still, it actually gets worse by the fact adults should protect children and youth who are in these situations, yet most often they will just join in the bullying that happens if you have any health problem.

It is an obvious problem, adults bullying children and youth over health problems, and it happens very often. The silly fact is that it happens even at schools, teachers who will bully or just treat children and youth differently because they don't are the same according to the teacher's eyes. Ending up in many children and youth getting into depression and even committing suicide, with the actual cause being teachers. As if the life isn't hard enough if you have any health problem, if you are a child or youth, you will get the added horror called school. While school should be the place of education, and getting to a bright and happy future, it is in many ways an hell on earth, and to a huge amount of children and youth, the most dreaded thing of the day.

It is actually also one of the biggest reasons of children and youth dropping out of schools, being bullied at school. While most parents try to look at the reasons and quite often get blamed when a child drops out of school, it is almost always the school that is the actual problem. And that is problematic, yet, far too often still ignored, and you can get this happening even without any health condition. The crazy thing is that children and youth are far too often already in very troubled situations, we get thrown the troubles of school on top of it, and if you got a health problem, it only gets unbearable. And eventually, it never actually stops, instead of searching for solutions, it all gets stigmata dropped upon it, it is a disgrace to ever openly talk about these problems. No, instead the problems continue and continue, and as noted for far too long

Unlearn. Resist. Escape. Imagine.

School teaches us a lot of crap. Not just in boring textbook lessons, but in its day to day activities. It teaches obedience and submission to authority. It teaches that academic intelligence is more important than our passion in life, that getting a job and having an income is more important than building and nurturing a healthy community. Difference in economic class is also a large factor in the quality of a learning environment. But regardless of wealth or poverty, mass education based on compulsion and competition will never result in self-empowered, and cooperative people. We need to get the schoolin' mentality outta our heads!

Challenging authority can be very empowering. In a society where alienation and frustration often lead people to find release in drug abuse or misdirected aggression, we need to seek ways to channel our rage and attack the root causes of our problems. Rebellion is healthy, now let's make it strategic, too. Get with a group of trusted friends or work alone. Make an underground newsletter. Write inspiring graffiti. Play pranks. Hand out flyers. Make posters. Plan

now, suicide ratings at children and youth are only increasing and increasing, and adults basically keep searching for the problem, while it always has been right in front of them.

All children and youth are stigmatized in ways, we are all an disgrace to a part of the adult society, and as the years go on, it seems to only get worse and worse. Instead of us being seen for who we are, which always is different, we are rather seen as ways of campaigns to help adults, while all this time, our problems, the things we really would like to be solved, they are overlooked, not important enough, as basically, we are not important enough to adults, even while they think they are showing this by certain statements.

major failings of TCS is that it has had the exact opposite problem. An example of this problem is the fact that TCS considers parental authority to be something which could be eliminated by the parent simply thinking and behaving differently. This outlook pays no attention to the fact that parental authority is also an institutional creation. With the State using laws that force every child to live under the dictates of a legal guardian, a police force that will find and bring back every “runaway” child, and an economic system that forces every child to be materially dependent upon a parent, a parent will have authority over their child regardless of what parenting style they practice. With this being the case, a child can not genuinely trust a parent to be non-authoritarian with them, for at any time and for any reason the parent could impose rules upon them and have the full force of the State to back them up. To truly abolish authority, it needs to be simultaneously eliminated at an institutional and social level as well as at an inter-personal and psychological level.

Another example of TCS’ lack of social consciousness, is that it pays no attention to how race, class, patriarchy and other forms of social oppression coerce and dominate children. If one truly wants to eliminate coercion from children’s lives, and from the practice of parenting, one needs to have a clear analysis of how all the various spheres of life effect and relate to the lives of children and parents. Taking this into account, it could be said that race, class and patriarchy coerce children just as much as the State and schools do, and that parents actions are just as guided by considerations of race, class and patriarchy as they are by the dictates of the State.

“guide” or set an example, but instead should be a supplier of good ideas, useful information, resources, and materials. Parents should also actively work to make sure that their child does not become trapped in a coercive situation that they do not want to be in and to make sure that their children are well-informed of any potentially coercive situation that they could become involved with, so that the child does not stumble onto a coercive situation without warning. Parents are not necessarily “protectors” of their children, but rather people who use their special advantages of being a parent to help their children live in as open and free an environment as possible. This will probably mean that the parent may end up playing the role of the “protector”, but it would only be done so at the expressed (verbally or otherwise) desire of the child for protection.

Now, some people may look at this and think that TCS asks for the parent to be an amazing, always-working, self-sacrificing saint. TCS is actually very much against that idea. TCS is opposed to parents sacrificing themselves for their children, and sees the desires and preferences of both the parent and the child as being of equal importance. TCS instead posits that great effort should be made to find mutually preferred solutions to problems and disagreements. With authority damaging a lot of our current abilities for independent and creative thought, the potential for common preference finding may seem small to none. However TCS contends that with lots of practice and discovering what practical and self-imposed barriers exist within ourselves, we can eventually discover how to be creative and be more effective at finding common preferences. The trick is to always honestly strive to find common preferences between parents and children, and not give into the authority-based myths that it is “impossible”.

One of the major failings of anarchism is that it has so far overwhelmingly examined and analyzed big picture things like institutions, class, civilization, and society, and has paid next to no attention to smaller scale things, like psychology, epistemology, inter-personal relations and face-to-face interactions. One of the

Independence *or* Respect for Elders

One of the reasons that Donald Trump has flummoxed pollsters and political analysts is that his supporters seem to have nothing in common. He appeals to evangelical and secular voters, conservative and moderate Republicans, independents and even some Democrats. Many of his supporters are white and don’t have a college degree, but he also does well with some highly educated voters, too.

What’s bringing all these different people together, new research shows, is a shared type of personality — a personality that in many ways has nothing to do with politics. Indeed, it turns out that your views on raising children better predict whether you support Trump than just about anything else about you.

Matthew MacWilliams, a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, conducted a poll in which Republicans were asked four questions about child-rearing. With each question, respondents were asked which of two traits were more important in children:

- independence or respect for their elders
- curiosity or good manners
- self-reliance or obedience
- being considerate or being well-behaved

Psychologists use these questions to identify people who are disposed to favor hierarchy, loyalty and strong leadership — those who picked the second trait in each set — what experts call “authoritarianism.” That many of Trump’s supporters share this trait helps explain the success of his unconventional candidacy and suggests that his rivals will have a hard time winning over his adherents. When it comes to politics, authoritarians tend to prefer clarity and unity to ambiguity and difference. They’re amenable to restricting the rights of foreigners, members of a political party in the minority and anyone whose culture or lifestyle deviates from their own community’s.

“For authoritarians, things are black and white,” MacWilliams said. “Authoritarians obey.” While some scholars have argued that authoritarianism is associated with conservatism, there are certainly authoritarians in both parties. And MacWilliams found that the likelihood that participants in his poll supported Trump had little to do with how conservative they were — no surprise, as Trump’s positions on many issues are relatively moderate. Trump also appealed more or less equally to the likely Republican primary voters in MacWilliams’s sample regardless of their age or sex, income and level of education. Regular churchgoers and evangelicals were no more or less likely to support Trump, either.

Those with authoritarian views on raising children were, however. Among Republicans who are otherwise similar, authoritarians — those who chose the second option in each of the four questions above — have nearly 50-50 odds of supporting Trump. The odds are much lower for those who chose the first option on all four questions: Assuming they were similar in other respects to the authoritarians, the chance that Republicans in this group supported

children comes about from a lack of faith in the abilities of children to use reason or make their own decisions. Instead of this, the TCS approach contends that every action that one does comes from an individual choice, either explicitly or implicitly. The choice one chooses may or may not be the right one, but it is through the use of one’s abilities to reason that one is able to eventually find the choice that works best for them at the moment, and as a result create or grow their own knowledge.

TCS says that children can and should live outside the factory/product paradigm of childhood. TCS sees authority of any kind as being detrimental to the growth of knowledge by discouraging one to think for themselves, since such activity is futile under authority. With no certain or secure environment through which one could put one’s thoughts into practice and test out the validity of one’s ideas, one has no safe grounds on which to grow one’s knowledge. Furthermore, any “education” or “advice” given by an authority figure to a child has no deep value for the child, other than that of being a tool through which the child can appease the authority or use to score points to gain some reward (psychological or tangible) which is offered as an “incentive” by the authority. Outside of the social construct of the parent/child or school relationships, the “knowledge” or behaviors one is supposed to carry out no longer has any apparent use-value to the child, and therefore can be forgotten without any negative consequences. These behaviors or “knowledge” were never something which the child used to satisfy their own curiosities or interests, and therefore have no personal significance to them.

TCS’ conception of the ideal role that a parent should play is in many ways similar to that of many anarchists’ conceptions of the role that anarchists should play in society. TCS believes that parental advice can still be very useful to children and that parents should offer their advice and useful information to the child whenever the child is willing to receive it. TCS sees the role of parents as being that of a “helper” for the child. The parent is not supposed to be a

TCS takes parenting, a subject which is hardly ever discussed or thought about in anarchist circles, and provides an approach to it which is consistent with anarchist principles that oppose hierarchy and domination. TCS also lends a sharply critical eye towards contemporary authoritarian parenting philosophies and practices. The lack of such a critical approach to parenting, as well as the lack of an alternative parenting methodology consistent with anarchist principles, creates one of the most discouraging situations within the anarchist movement. Namely, anarchists end up inexplicably conveying messages to their children of acceptance of the “necessity” of relationships of domination.

TCS combines educational philosophy, epistemology and parenting and transforms them into a unified and inter-dependent system. This is of great value to anarchists, since most anarchists strive for a holistic outlook and approach towards people and society, and tend to shun laundry lists of forms of oppression and anarchist principles. Along with providing a holistic approach to child-raising, TCS provides a rational approach, as well as an emphasis on peoples innate fallibility. Given the fact that many defenders of authority often use the inequality of knowledge as a justification for those with the greater knowledge to assume positions of authority, TCS sees the explicit recognition of ones own fallibility as being essential for preventing one from becoming an authority over children. TCS also sees this as vital for the growth of knowledge, since if one realizes that one may be making a mistake, one is left more open to new and better ideas which can be of more use for both parent and child alike.

Most people, anarchists included, unconsciously view children as being products in the process of being assembled. Schooling, parental advice, life experience and sometimes religious indoctrination are supposed to supply the product with the appropriate software necessary for functioning, while parental control and “discipline” are supposed to ensure that the product does not damage itself or leave the factory during the assembly process. This view of

Trump were just 1 in 6. By contrast, how respondents answered the questions about child-rearing had little or nothing to do with their likelihood of supporting one of Trump’s rivals. The authoritarians were somewhat more likely to support Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) but not by much.

Now, you might think that how a parent raises a child has little to do with how they vote. After all, roughly half of the people with authoritarian views on all four questions did not support Trump. So MacWilliams checked to make sure that his questions about child-rearing were in fact predictive of authoritarian political attitudes. In the poll, respondents were also asked whether they thought that it is sometimes necessary to keep other groups in their place, whether opposition from the political minority sometimes needs to be circumscribed, and whether they think the minority’s rights must be protected from the majority’s power. Trump’s supporters were much more likely to oppose protections for the minority, while the other candidates’ supporters didn’t have strong opinions one way or another. For example, the chance that a Republican who agreed that other groups sometimes need to be put in place also supported Trump was about 3 in 5.

MacWilliams also found that respondents who said they felt threatened by terrorism were also significantly more likely to support Trump, and polling by The Washington Post has found that opposition to immigration is something else that unites many of his supporters. Authoritarians, given their aversion to outsiders, are more likely both to perceive threats from terrorism and to oppose immigration. That Trump’s support is based partly on personality rather than policy helps explain why his supporters are so enthusiastic about some of his most widely mocked ideas — such as banning all Muslims from entering the country, a proposal that his opponent Jeb Bush called “unhinged.” “This is in people’s guts, not their brains,” said Marc Hetherington, a political scientist and an expert on authoritarianism at Vanderbilt University. “This is much more primal.”

And the findings are bad news for the other contenders in the GOP primary, since authoritarians tend to be set in their ways. What they have in common is an aversion to new kinds of experiences. “Some people eat at Thai and Indian restaurants, and some people eat at steak houses,” Hetherington said. That aversion could also extend to politicians they don’t know as well as Trump. “It’s not worth it to attack him,” said MacWilliams, who spent many years as a progressive political consultant before going to graduate school. “A large segment of his base is like ‘granite,’” MacWilliams added, quoting an anonymous adviser to Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) who was interviewed by Jeremy W. Peters of the New York Times. Analysts have conventionally divided the Republican primary race into “lanes” — candidates who appeal to evangelicals run in the “evangelical lane,” for example. There might also be an “establishment lane” and a “libertarian lane.” Some have argued that Trump is taking up all of the lanes at once.

“Maybe the future of the GOP is this one wide, luxurious lane, allowing the Trump steamroller easy passage,” wrote The Washington Post’s Philip Bump. Another interpretation is just that Trump has discovered a new lane — the authoritarian lane — that other candidates might seek to exploit in the future. “Does that become an activated part of the party moving forward or not?” MacWilliams asked. “I think that is a key question. Is it specific to his ability to speak to them and activate them, or not?” Authoritarianism isn’t always a negative trait, noted Vanderbilt’s Hetherington. Authoritarians can be more direct and decisive when the situation calls for it. “There’s this notion that all the nuanced navel gazing that liberals do is superior,” he said. “Not always.” Nonetheless, research on authoritarianism is extremely sensitive, since it began after World War II, when psychologists and social scientists wanted to understand how so many people could support repressive, homicidal dictatorships in Europe and elsewhere. “I’m not saying they’re fascists,” MacWilliams said of Trump’s supporters, “but authoritarians obey.”

Taking Anarchism Seriously

(I)An-ok

One of the greatest breakthroughs in anarchist theory and practice first appeared six years ago, and hardly any anarchists even know of its existence. Not only that, but most of the anarchists who do know of its existence either disregard it or dismiss it with comments containing hierarchical and authoritarian language. I am referring to the philosophy and practice known as Taking Children Seriously or TCS.

Taking Children Seriously is an educational and parenting philosophy which uses Karl Popper’s views on epistemology, critical rationalism and a belief in fallibilism to reach a conclusion that coercion of any form is bad for the growth of knowledge and psychologically damaging to people, especially children. From this conclusion, Taking Children Seriously creates the framework for a methodology through which parents can cooperate with their children to find mutually preferable solutions to problems and disagreements that arise between them. The TCS movement has over a thousand participants all over the world, has produced two books and maintains a journal and a number of active e-mail discussion lists.