

The Right-Wing Hates Children

The Weaponization Of “Groomer”

Lee Shevek

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Anarchist Archive

anarchist-archive.org · anarchist-archive@riseup.net

I grew up in a right-wing household in a rural, predominantly right-wing, community. I was groomed and eventually sexually assaulted by my right-wing Christian father who was highly regarded by everyone in the community who knew him. I was taken to purity balls every year starting at five years old, in which young girls danced with our fathers and ritualistically promised ownership of our sexuality to them until the day that they would “give” us to our future husbands. I was raised to know exactly what was expected of me as a “good” daughter, and viciously punished and suppressed whenever I dared to question or appeared to act outside of my assigned role. What was good for me, for my sense of self or autonomy, was never part of anyone’s consideration in how I was raised. Foremost in adults’ minds was how I could best be molded and shaped into the exact person they thought I should be, regardless of how much pain that process caused. When I eventually broke their mold (and as a transgender butch anarchist, break it I most certainly did), those same adults immediately blamed “outside agitators” like liberal teachers and the mere existence of other queer people for my apparent “change.” My experience of this was not especially unique from the experience of my peers in other right-wing households. In fact, it was, and remains, the norm.

There is a myth that the right-wing has been pushing many fronts, from the criminalization of abortion, censorship of discussions of sexuality, race, and settler colonialism in schools, attacks on gender affirming care for youth, and the frequent use of the terms “groomer” and “predator” to refer to trans and queer adults: the supposed centrality of their concern for children. The predominance of their use of “groomer” seems to be intended to show a deep concern with child sexual abuse (CSA), and many liberals and leftists seem to take them on their word for this, and respond as if right-wingers’ concern for children’s safety is real and simply misdirected. This has resulted in a variety of discourses that each compound harm to varying degrees, and cede vitally important ground to the right-wing to the extreme detriment of vulnerable youth.

While more benign expressions of leftists’ misunderstanding of right-wing ideology in regards to youth and CSA (ex: responding to a reactionary’s use of “groomer” by pointing out the actual grooming that right-wingers regularly enact on children) are largely unhelpful, there is a much more concerning response taking hold on the left that needs to be challenged in-depth and in every instance that it can be seen. Namely, there is a growing pattern among leftists to be suspicious and even outright dismissive of anti-rape and anti-CSA politics in general. The apparent logic behind it, or at least the logic that is presented, seems to be along these lines: reactionaries call queer and trans people groomers and predators, which means that if we position ourselves against *actual* groomers and predators we will give right-wingers more ammunition against queer and trans people, so we must be suspicious of and even suppress any attempts at articulating militant anti-rape and anti-CSA politics on the left. There are more things wrong

