We are living through times of emboldened reaction, where far-right politics gain ground in European Parliaments and on European streets, where the mainstream right increasingly overlaps with the KKK and white supremacy shows itself more unabashedly. As people who seek the abolition of capital, the state, and class, we also seek the abolition of “race” – the ongoing/adaptive process of ascription and domination – not merely the squelching of wage differentials, policing and penal reform, state recognition, cultural representation, and national state integration of some racialised people.

In recent months, there have been increasingly visible attempts to challenge the failure of the left to address white supremacy within its structures. Whilst the necessity of these interventions has been recognised by many, the defensive reactions from some has only further demonstrated how foundational these issues are. We saw environmentalist NGOs and campaigners physically tangling with the “Wretched of the Earth” bloc, who had sought to bring representation of colonised and Indigenous people to the forefront of a recent national Climate March. This action of foregrounding was deemed divisive by organisers, among others. Elsewhere, various struggles for liberation on university campuses, from a desire to hold productive and safer meetings, to the demands of BlackOutMustFall, have been derided as racialist and revisionist or patronisingly held up as debate colonised and Indigenous people to the front of a recent national Climate March. With the “Wretched of the Earth” bloc, who had sought to bring representation of colonised and Indigenous people to the forefront of a recent national Climate March.

To say those things entirely at the feet of the authoritarian left would be wrong. Grassroots and “horizontal” movements have also long been complicit with a failure to challenge the longstanding erasure of black and non-white experience. Even here, those who refuse to discuss anything which doesn’t fit within preconceived notions of “class struggle” are familiar – where exposition on any issue that decentres the concerns of whiteness will be met by calls for “unity”. Border violence, racist policing, sex work and other issues are of course entirely bound up with, and often inseparable from, relations of class.

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) have long guarded a conception of the working class that excludes migrants. This year sees the 40th anniversary of the Grunwick strike, where a predominantly East African Asian female workforce was forced to strike to secure union recognition. A 2008 dispute saw widespread use of the slogan “British Jobs for British Workers” by strikers in an oil refinery. Cries of “solidarity” have too often excluded those being exploited in European colonies, and the work done – largely by women – to reproduce the working class. The inability of the union movement to address the wage relation as a violent mechanism of separation – between those who are valued and those who are not – was most striking in the “I am an Immigrant” campaign, which sought to confront xenophobia by highlighting the stories of migrants who work and are therefore valuable, merely reaffirming an economic relationship that demarcates the valuable from the object, underscoring a culture complicit in racist othering. Today, complicity with racist structures is evident in job centres and housing offices, where workers, often unionised, will castigate and racially abuse black and migrant women, fulfilling racist and racist state policies, whilst simultaneously calling for solidarity and “unity” in their own political struggles.

It’s not surprising that the “Wretched of the Earth” bloc were met with such hostility. We have spent weeks of our lives trying to convince the left to confront these issues, to engage in this political terrain, should recognise the expanse of this struggle and act within this space. The grassroots left continues to uphold, even internally police, the boundaries of what constitutes “legitimate” political practice. When left-liberal speakers and activists complain of “excessive” police force in response to direct action, they are effectively demanding that police (and border police) remain their intended social function – to stop harassing activists and get on with their real job. But what is the substance of this political demand, if everyday policing consists of the brutalisation of black and non-white bodies elsewhere and out of sight?

This distance, between majority white, left-liberal activist campaigning and the conflict zones of the racist state, is maintained in struggles around migration. The response to the suffering caused by borders has been acutely lacking – both for those currently within and without “Fortress Europe”. Conceptions of support for migrants have tended to rely on notions of charity, rather than solidarity – those who migrate must be “saved”, even if this is predicated on erasing their demands or personhood. Those currently obliged to live in grossly inadequate conditions in Calais have marched again and again, as their homes are torn down around them, holding placards for all to see: “Freedom of movement for all” “No More Wall”. These are demands, and they are expressed in Calais as they are in the people being displaced by the housing crisis in London.

The racist violence of the state is part of the daily struggle for survival that dominates so many people’s lives. And the places where this daily violence occurs are the imminent sites of struggle and potential solidarity, whatever their formation: gathering, skirmish or riot. Those wishing to demonstrate solidarity, or engage in this political terrain, should recognise the expanses of this struggle and act within this space.

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OT
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This publication has been around since 2011, in one form or another. For the past three years we have been propped up financially by a few large donations that have allowed us to print the past several issues. The printing costs for this current issue will take us to the very bottom of our piggy-bank, putting us in a situation in which we’ll need to find new funds if we’re to continue publishing.

We also haven’t failed to notice the growing intervals between each issue we publish - an observation indicative of nothing as mundane as laziness (of which we boast only an average amount) but more as evidence of the increasing precarity and struggles that mark our lives and the context in which we’re living them. This, together with the fact that we’re happy to break a print cycle determined by routine or regulation in favour of a timeframe more in tune with the articles we seek to publish. As individuals, collectively, we’re experiencing the continual redistribution of time and energy, swallowed up in childcare, labour, uncertainty, the constant struggle for well-being and nominal safety, and political activities that feel ever more urgent and necessary. These constraints on our time have also led us to examine what is urgent and necessary about the publication in the hope that, going forwards, it can even better compliment and work with local political activities and organising on a day-to-day basis.

With the ebbs and flows in time and energy we can dedicate to this project, but with the resolute desire to develop our production, our small collective has been thinking about ways we can sustain the quality of the publication whilst increasing the frequency of information and analysis we feel compelled to circulate. As with other gradual reconfigurations the OT has undergone over time, in what we produce and how we produce - whether it be content, design, method, etc. - we are keen to further experiment with the form our production takes. Our hope is that by experimenting with changes in format, style, and our digital output, along with the impetus of new print funding, this will allow us to continue to share stories, experiences and inquiry through the OT. In practical terms, this will likely lead to an increasing flexibility and tighter focus on the kinds of physical media we produce and a less rigid production model.

The kind and encouraging donations we receive from people, and hope to continue to receive, will allow us to make this happen and continue with the project. All the money we collect goes towards producing the OT. Our only costs are: the printing of the physical publication, web hosting, the taxi fare from Aldgate Press to take the printed issue down the road to fold and store at the London Action Resource Centre (LARC) and a regular donation towards the upkeep of LARC. This will not change. It costs around £600 for a 2,000-copies print run of a 20-page issue, and although we are exploring different ways of sharing information across our platforms, we would still very much like to continue to print the OT, in whatever form it takes, as many readers have expressed their enjoyment of having the paper copy to read, share and archive.

We are therefore asking for donations to keep the OT in print, with a rough ballpark figure of £2,500 that should keep us going for the foreseeable future.

HOW TO MAKE A DONATION

- Paypal / Card payment online: bit.ly/OTDonate
- Cash/Cheque: The Occupied Times c/o 56a Infoshop 56 Crampton Street London SE17 3AE

A big thank you to everyone who has read and contributed to the publication over its first five years. We hope it continues to provoke thought, discussion and action, and to be of use to the wider movement.

With love & solidarity, from the OT Collective!
CRITIQUING CORBYN: CAPITALISM ISN’T ABOUT SHARING

There was much hype over Jeremy Corbyn’s successful campaign to lead the Labour Party. What has been largely absent from the debate is an evaluation of Corbyn’s economic ideas and assumptions. In The Economy in 2020, Corbyn sets out what his economic policies will be, if he becomes Prime Minister. A lot can be learned from this about how he understands the economy and the State.

A NECESSARY MISTAKE?

At the outset of the piece, Corbyn claims he wants “to have a serious debate about how wealth is created”. He says that “in reality wealth creation is a collective process between workers, public investment and services, and, yes, often innovative and creative individuals”. But Corbyn has a problem with how this system of collective wealth production works out in practice: workers and the State do not receive enough of the wealth they help to create. That is why he wants to “create a balanced economy that ensures workers and government share fairly in [a] wealth creation process […] that is more […] equal”.

There are two problems here. First, Corbyn wanted a debate about how wealth is created. But all he has done is given us a list of the things that are necessary under present social conditions for wealth creation. Yet, knowing the ingredients for a cake is something very different from understanding how a cake is made. Secondly, Corbyn moves from asserting that certain things are necessary for wealth to be created to the proposition that this means each of these necessary elements must receive its fair share. This is moralism, not economics: there isn’t an economic reason why if something is necessary it therefore deserves to be rewarded. The fact that workers or entrepreneurs are necessary for capitalist production does not lead to any conclusion that they therefore deserve a share of what is produced. If workers are necessary, then the question that has to be asked is what wages do they need to receive to ensure that they turn up to work: that is a different matter to what they ‘deserve’.

HOW DO THESE NECESSARY THINGS COMBINED CREATE CAPITALIST WEALTH – AND POVERTY?

Let’s look at how the ingredients in Corbyn’s list of necessities actually combine to produce wealth. What sort of “collective process” do workers and companies engage in?

In this society, the workers are the ones who do the work which is needed to make the useful stuff they never get enough of (for themselves). This is the role that the workers play in the economy. In capitalist society, the State is subordinated to this purpose of profit-making. The fact that useful stuff that people need is made at all under this system is a necessary condition for overcoming generalised poverty is the aim. Instead, Corbyn argues that certain things are necessary for wealth creation in this society and therefore they should receive a fair share. This is just the flip side of the coin of the type of wealth that he wants to grow. For that, the State uses its power and simply dictates the amount by which it shares in the economic success of its subjects. Corbyn knows this as he promises to wield this power more effectively – however, he is committed to using it for the purposes of profit-making.

And indeed, the State must provide sufficient health and safety rules, minimum standards for pay, welfare support, subsidised housing, education and so on, as self-united capitalists destroy the workers on which it depends. The State goes beyond merely maintaining the system but actually seeks its growth (something Corbyn also wants) – through investments that aim at increasing the opportunities for profit-making. For the State to be able to invest, it too needs money – it receives that through taxation. For that, the State uses its power and simply dictates the amount by which it shares in the economic success of its subjects. Corbyn knows this as he promises to wield this power more effectively – however, he is committed to using it for the purposes of profit-making.

But Corbyn paints the State as an equal victim of business alongside the workers. In doing so he denies its role as the enforcer of the conditions which guarantee useful poverty and recasts its role in ensuring workers exist to serve capital as a beneficent service to them. CRITICISTS.org
Introduction
We are all familiar with the ongoing planetary bioassays. Global temperatures are predicted to rise by 4°C by 2100, with recent research warning of a 6°C rise by 2100. A few are convinced that the world’s fossil fuel companies continue to increase their fuel reserves, edging dangerously close to safe emission limits.

One proposed solution to prevent dangerous climate change is the carbon market, a “market created from the trading of carbon emission allowances.” Can the trading of emission permits help pave the way to a low-carbon future? Could the pricing of carbon aid in a global effort to avoid the climate disaster? Is there a market for carbon? Can carbon be sold and traded?

The Origins of Carbon Markets
One of the first markets in emissions trading was the Acid Rain Program in the US in the 1990s. This was introduced in a market-friendly attempt to reduce the emissions from coal-fired power stations and prevent occurrences of acid rain after previous government legislation had failed to address the problem. The successful reduction of sulphur dioxide emissions between 1995 and 2003 seemed to vindicate the idea of market environmentalism, and encouraged an insistence on market mechanisms in future climate negotiations.

Despite Nicholas Stern’s assertion that climate change is the most serious threat to global development and progressivism whilst furthering inequitable development, new markets constantly emerging.

The Failure of Atmospheric Commodification
The logic is that a carbon price, controlled by supply and demand, will provide an incentive for market actors to reduce emissions as efficiently as possible.

One recent economic study found that, factoring in climate tipping points, the cost of carbon should be 200% higher than it is today. The EU ETS is plagued by oversupply problems. Countries still have no economic incentive to switch to cleaner energy supplies, and other studies prove that carbon pricing mechanisms are not enough to avert climate change.

Due to the inequalities of purchasing power and wealth transpose, the idea of markets ushering us into a low-carbon future seems impossible. The control of our atmospheric commons will remain out of our hands, and the state will stop in when resistance emerges. Neoliberalism has always made use of state violence to secure property rights, enforce stability, and push dissent. Carbon markets are no different. An immaterial commodity like carbon requires state intervention for a market to be enforced and regulated.

Carbon markets have been weaponised with increasing frequency in recent years. A self-regulation has encouraged “climate fraud.” INTERPOL in 2013 released the “Guide to Carbon Trading Crimes”, detailing carbon market-associated money laundering, insider trading, and cybercrime, and explaining how the capacity to falsify information or create carbon credits has been found in regulatory institutions of all kinds.

Carbon markets have even failed to reduce emissions. The trading processes do not reduce greenhouse gas emissions and offsetting can increase emissions. An economic structure has emerged that relies on maintaining emissions to make money. There have been regional emissions reductions but only as a result of short-term fuel switching. Global emissions can be confirmed through the online measurements of the Mauna Loa Observatory.

These failures would suggest that, regardless of design, carbon markets cannot reduce emissions. As Max Koch comes to a similar conclusion, with the City of London has become the focal point for carbon trading, with institutions opening carbon market trading desks or acquiring “carbon companies”. Recent efforts have focused on attempting to link up existing markets, with the EU and California looking to connect their regional markets, and California assisting China with carbon market design. Canadian provinces are preparing to link cap and trade systems, and carbon markets are predicted to expand. “The logic is that a carbon price, controlled by supply and demand, will provide an incentive for market actors to reduce emissions as efficiently as possible.” Indeed, the ETS has been criticised for being in direct competition with renewable energy, and has had “a very limited impact” on boosting renewable technologies.

Carbon markets are thus the “trading” aspect of the “buying and selling” aspect of carbon credits. Carbon markets are not advancing homogeneously however – efforts to fix the flaws in the EU ETS continue, and Australia is the only country to repeal a carbon price.

A Mistaken Enemy: Capitalism, not Carbon
There is a need to address the heart of the capitalist system, the “green or die” imperative that has created carbon markets. Through “Accumulation by Decarbonisation”, capitalism has created a smokerscreen of environmental protection and progressivism whilst furthering inequitable wealth redistribution. There is “no equitable technological solution to climate change”, and a green capitalism would still be “characterised by the unequal distribution of economic, social and environmental risks”. The anti-ecological character of capitalism should be accepted. Existing wealth inequalities are only exacerbated within emissions trading, and carbon markets offer “wealth creating opportunities” to polluters.

Carbon markets also preserve the divisions of North and South. As Howard Zinn said, “globalisation is in fact imperialism”.

A renewed powerful capitalist economy would still view the natural world as a resource to be managed and plundered. The future is anti-capitalist.

As the bourgeois ruin our world in the name of profit, we have to steel ourselves for the struggles ahead and ask ourselves – who’s afraid of ruins?”

But a solution cannot be a simple product of technique. Our society and its view of the environment has to change. “Renewable energy is a necessity for a sustainable and equitable society, but no guarantee of one”. We must remember that “every society extends its own perception of itself into nature”. A renewed powerful capitalist economy would still view the natural world as a resource to be managed and plundered. The future is anti-capitalist.

The Failures of Atmospheric Commodification
“Creating markets where there have been none...”

Climate Change
Developing countries see the “ecological concern of industrialised countries” merely as a threat to their agriculture. The future is anti-capitalist.

It is clear then that carbon markets are another weapon in capitalism’s toolkit of domination and assimilation. They present the image that climate change does not contradict capitalism and help stifle resistance by absorbing and commodifying environmental concerns. Following Naomi Klein’s concept of disaster capitalism, “the energy and desire to act on climate change” has been redirected into a “marketing opportunity.” Capitalism has proven how quickly it can shift from sensing “a business opportunity” in disaster.

“Ultimately, carbon markets are designed to continue capitalist development and expansion.” Environnement et société states, “In short, carbon detention is a lever to the profit motive. Carbon trading is a form of “praxe commodification”, turning environmental degradation into a tradable commodity. Even if the global economy were to be “decarbonised” it would still be capitalist in nature, merely “increasingly authoritarian.” Capitalism will maintain the status quo at all costs, and carbon markets allow business as usual as we purchase “green credentials” and personal offsets.

As Murray Bookchin said, capitalism “will not decay.” It is constantly expanding, and attempts to “green” capitalism are destined to fail. “One might more easily persuade a green plant to desist from photosynthesis than to ask that the global economy to desist from capital accumulation.”

The World Bank, despite its rhetoric of sustainability, “continues to subsidise and support fossil fuel extraction on a scale 17 times larger than it supports clean energy initiatives. We have seen that market mechanisms cannot prevent climate change. Faith in their power is dangerous. A new approach is required.

Are Markets Necessary?
Capitalism is a dead end. It cannot solve the biocides it created, but there are glimmers of hope. The global economy now produces renewable energy at an “industrial scale” and our global energy infrastructure can be replaced with renewables in the coming decades. These developments leading any need for carbon markets and it is only political will that is required to realise them, something we must spearhead. As Bruce Paschkink said in 2010: “The natural world is very clearly that changes in energy industries require the mobilization of mass social movements. We cannot wait for voluntary solutions to forge the way.”

But a solution cannot be a simple product of technique. Our society and its view of the environment has to change. “Renewable energy is the necessity for a sustainable and equitable society, but no guarantee of one”. We must remember that “every society extends its own perception of itself into nature”. A renewed powerful capitalist economy would still view the natural world as a resource to be managed and plundered. The future is anti-capitalist.
In August 2015, National Public Radio (NPR) - a partially state-funded national American broadcaster - anointed a handful of activists to speak as leaders of #BlackLivesMatter, and offered them a platform to release a set of policy recommendations that claim to address the issue of police violence. The stated goals of this campaign, named Campaign Zero, are to “live in a world where the police don’t kill people by limiting police interventions, improving community interactions and ensuring accountability.” What Campaign Zero actually proposes is a reactionary political formation built on a mixture of liberal compromise, neoliberal opportunism and reactionary conservatism.

First and foremost, those who spoke on NPR have no claim to a position of leadership in a diffuse and networked movement like #BlackLivesMatter, such a thing being a logistical impossibility with such a broad and dynamic organisation. Though presented by people in power as “radical”, the three specific goals quoted above are based on the liberal assumption that the police need to be trained, tweaked and reformed, rather than abolished entirely. Not only are these proposals inadequate, the methods by which Campaign Zero would achieve them - by lobbying existing power structures for piecemeal reforms - are sorely lacking.

The single potentially redeemable policy recommendation - their call to establish “community oversight” - nonetheless completely fails to contend with the fact that the police still murder with impunity even in cities which currently have such “review boards”. There is also no mention of the serious political influence the police have over many local governments, governments which would fear retribution if they ruled against officers. Most importantly, there is no mention of democratic control over the police - probably because democratic, community control over the police would effectively eliminate police altogether. But that is clearly not the goal of Campaign Zero.

From there, things just get worse. Implementation of body cameras is named as a top demand, even though we’ve seen body cameras which are pointed away at the key moment. We know police tamper with and turn off videos, or just say “fuck it” and murder people in cold blood while being filmed.

Community representation is another top demand, even though cities like Los Angeles and New York do this already, with little or no change to the levels of police violence. Folks of colour are actually represented at nearly every level of government in this country. Yet in places like Washington D.C., members of the black Congressional corporate class sit high and mighty while young people are shot and killed without a peep from those in power. Even our first black President, along with our second black Attorney General, can’t seem to muster even a sliver of political courage or ethical conviction to hold a single police officer accountable. Clearly black faces in high places cannot address these problems.

Ending for-profit policing is another demand. The campaign’s website cites examples from New Mexico, Illinois and Ferguson, Missouri as evidence that this demand can be met. However, this demand does not call for the abolition of the function of policing itself, only for a change from how it is done. The same can be said for the for-profit prisons that are never mentioned. Not once. Demands on companies like the GEO Group and the CCA, both of which base their long term profits on keeping prisons full, are nowhere to be found. These companies, whose increase in market share is literally based on the philosophy of “lockin’ niggas up and creating new slaves,” are essentially let off the hook and tacitly encouraged to continue doing their work. Which ultimately begs the question: What’s so much better about having the state carry out racist policing or mass incarceration anyway?

The most reactionary set of demands made by Campaign Zero is their call to establish “fair police union contracts.” These demands range from removing provisions in the contract that allow officers to “expunge or destroy records of past misconduct (both sustained and unsustained)” from their disciplinary file to “receive paid leave or remain on desk-duty during an investigation following a police shooting or other use of deadly force.” The main problem with these sets of demands is that they give too much ground to the legitimacy of police unions. Fighting for “fairer” police union contracts is quixotic at best and reactionary at worst. Police unions should not determine how they implement these policy changes; the people should. Police unions just last year marshaled opposition to and ultimately defeated a weak federal attempt to hold them somewhat more accountable. Can we really expect police unions to exercise restraint when it comes to the implementation of their contracts, especially when hundreds of people have lost their lives just this year? The existence of these kinds of protections for officers, giving them a tacit license to kill, are not incidental. State executions of Black people in America are part of a historical continuum and are central to a fundamentally racialised order.

If attempting to find a middle ground with obvious white supremacist police unions seems bizarre to you, take some comfort in the fact that the more radical elements of the movement are organising for actual change. The hashtag and movement calling on the world to recognise that #BlackTransLivesMatter has elevated and centred the marginalized stories and voices - at a time when the life expectancy of a Black Trans woman is 35 years. #BYP100 led a nationwide resistance demanding accountability for the Black women and girls whose lives have been cut short. And in Chicago, radical Black activists over many years led to landmark reparations for survivors of police torture.

Campaign Zero aims to achieve nothing close to any of this. That’s because the actual goal is to simply soften the contradictions of capitalism and pacify folks in destitute economic positions. But hey, what could one reasonably expect from liberal activists if not semi-consistent rhetorical lip service to equality and freedom while actually continuing to prop up and support the war on working class communities, whose support they also so desperately need come election time?

If Campaign Zero truly wants to establish a world where police don’t kill people, it would make plain the fact that the police on the block in the U.S. today are historically linked with the overseer on the 19th century plantation. It would make clear that policing becomes unnecessary when people determine for themselves what is best for their communities. However, Campaign Zero does none of this, and I am wholly unconvinced that this campaign is a serious attempt to end black lynchings at the hands of the Mass Incarceration Complex. Campaign Zero aims to change just that: zero.

#BlackLivesMatter, such a thing...
New duties, flawed concepts

On 1 July 2015, a new legal duty was placed on schools and early years and childcare providers to have “due regard to the need to prevent pupils from being drawn into terrorism”. The revised statutory guidance stipulates that “being drawn into terrorism includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit.”

Schools and early years providers are now assessed by Ofsted to check that they are implementing Prevent. You will also be aware that Prevent has been through different phases since its inception but currently its most important dimension is Channel, a referral, multi-agency assessment and intervention process meant to prevent people at risk of ‘radicalisation’. Channel is driven by multi-agency panels in which the police play a leading role.

I want to identify some of the key concerns about the Prevent duty, as well as suggest some positive alternative approaches, and discuss some of the challenges we face in organising against Prevent in partnership with teachers as well as the pupils, parents and communities that Prevent is impacting on.

Firstly, the model that underpins the government’s concept of ‘radicalisation’, and which is central to Prevent, is informed by a notion of ‘psychological vulnerability’ that individuals must have certain vulnerabilities that make them more likely to engage in terrorism.

This means schools would be identifying signs of such vulnerabilities to be able to halt the process of ‘radicalisation’. It is interesting that leaked guidance provided to the Cabinet’s Home Affairs Committee stated that it was wrong ‘to regard radicalisation as a linear “convert belt” moving frightened, vulnerable young people towards terrorism, to violence.”

Secondly, the Prevent strategy and the new duty are foisted on ‘extremist ideology’, the view that people are drawn into terrorism almost exclusively through ideology. Yet research suggests that social, economic and political factors, as well as social exclusion, play a more central role in driving political violence than ideology. In the UK therefore, but also in the USA and Australia, training for teachers, often delivered by police officers, urges teachers to report signs of radicalisation among their pupils, despite there being simply no empirical evidence at all to support the idea that terrorism can be correlated with factors to do with family, identity and emotional wellbeing.

One writer described this as ‘orientalist pseudoscience’. Beneath the jargon on ‘risks’, ‘vulnerabilities’, ‘engagement factors’ and ‘psychological hooks’, is an invitation to limitless racial and religious profiling in which normal teen-age behaviours, or a young person’s beliefs, can be seen as indicators of being on a pathway to violent extremism.

In fact, again, studies show that there is no direct link at all between religious observation, radical ideas, emotional wellbeing and violent acts.

But this is how Prevent operates in schools: identifying threats before they emerge in the classroom. You might remember that a senior British police officer, Scotland Yard commander Mark Clithero, recently called for a move into the ‘private space of Muslims’ and offered specific advice: if a teenager stops shopping at Marks and Spencer, it could be because they had been radicalized. He also suggested watching for subtle unplanned changes such as sudden negative attitudes towards alcohol and Western clothing.

A huge concern, therefore, is the tremendous risk of abuses and mistakes in any approach that tries to predict future terrorist activity.

By requiring schools and teachers to put pupils under surveillance, casting particular suspicion on Muslim pupils, and profiling them for behaviours that have no real connection to criminal behaviour, Prevent conjures up the different professional roles of teacher and police officer, and draws educational practitioners into becoming the eyes and ears of the counter-terrorism system.

An example of this is that there are now several private companies selling “anti-radicalisation” software to schools. If pupils search for words such as “caliphate” or “jihad”, or the names of Muslim political activists on classroom computers they risk being flagged as potential supporters of terrorism. A really sinister feature of the software being marketed by a company called InQube, is a “confidential button” allowing pupils to report on fellow classmates anonymously.

Here are some examples:

- A fifteen-year-old was questioned by police at home about his views on Syria and Daeche because he was a ‘Free Palestine’ badge to school and handed out some leaflets promoting their “Freedom, Divestment and Sanctions” movement. Al Jazeera subsequently reported the conversation between the student and a police officer: ‘I explained to him my views about freedom and justice and that I supported Palestine. I said I think the government should have tough sanctions put upon it and he said these could be radical beliefs,’ the boy said. ‘He said these are terrorist-like beliefs that he has. He explicitly said you cannot speak about this conflict at school with your friends,’ the boy said.
- In another case, a fourteen-year-old life was referred to Prevent without his parents’ consent for not engaging in a music lesson.
- A schoolchild mentioned the ‘history of the Caliphate’ in a piece of homework about British foreign policy and was referred to social services for signs of radicalisation.

A teacher decided to call in the parents of a student after they used the Arabic term for ‘praise be to God’. A Muslim schoolboy was questioned about Islamic State after a classroom discussion about environmental activism. He was left ‘scared and nervous’ by his experience, and afterwards was reluctant to join in discussions.

One may agree or disagree with the government’s anti-Islamic ‘vulnnerability’ to then be able to halt the process of ‘radicalisation’. Prevent is a huge concern, therefore, is the tremendous risk of abuses and mistakes in any approach that tries to predict future terrorist activity.

Prevent is making discussion of sensitive and controversial issues much more difficult in schools. Pupils with political opinions or who take part in protests are also coming under increasing surveillance.

The Prevent duty is institutionalising anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia in schools while also undermining the duties of the schools under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that direct and indirect unlawful discrimination is taken seriously, and that individuals or groups of students should not be treated unfairly or put at a disadvantage.

Prevent is making discussion of sensitive and controversial issues much more difficult in schools. Pupils with political opinions or who take part in protests are also coming under increasing surveillance.

Prevent duty presents a number of specific threats to the children and young people. It is not only difficult for them to talk about the issues they feel strongly about, including sensitive and controversial ones, without fear that they will be profiled or put under suspicion. It is perfectly legitimate, for example, for young people to criticise government foreign policy; to oppose the wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan; to express support for Palestinian liberation and to express the ‘call’ for support for or opposition to the Israeli government. One may agree or disagree with such views, however they form part of legitimate discussion and debate.

Undermining the Children’s Convention

The Prevent duty presents a number of specific threats to the rights of children and young people. Despite the UK government being a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a legally binding international agreement, there appears to have been no consideration at all given to the Convention as the Prevent duty was drafted. Apart from the key articles that ensure rights apply to all children without discrimination (Article 2), and the principle that governments must act in children’s best interests (Article 3), there are very specific concerns in relation to Article 3 which outlines how every child has the right to freedom of expression and ideas.

As Anas Kemdou recently commented: “The great risk is creating an atmosphere of self-censorship... where young people don’t feel free to express themselves in schools, or youth clubs or at the mosque. If they feel angry or have a sense of injustice but then feel unable to engage in a democratic process in a way they feel safe, then that’s the worst outcome to create for terrorist recruitment.”

Schooers are now required to actively promote ‘fundamental British values’, including ‘democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

By positioning opposition to British values as ‘extremist’ the government are engaging in a similar process as can be seen in France: a crude attempt to create a forced consensus, in the same way the French secular principle of laicite has become a tool to reinforce narrow judgments about French identity and discriminate against minorities.

The challenges ahead

Some key questions and challenges should be considered:

- What will the cost of Prevent be for the dignity, confidence, and wellbeing of Muslim children?

In a powerful piece earlier this year, “Safeguarding little Abdul, Prevent Muslim schoolchildren and the lack of parent consent”, Yaffah Bit asked her readers to imagine Abdul, a 12-year-old pupil.

Abdul deserves a better future. One in which he is treated as a citizen rather than as a suspect. Where he can disagree, sometimes even be bold and radical in disagreeing if he chooses to do so, without being labelled an extremist. Where he can play football rather than be ashamed of playing a Muslim. Where he deserves to be inspired at school, opened up to new possibilities, for his autonomy to be nurtured and respected. This is the kind of schooling and the kind of country that we need to fight for.

What were the ‘risk factors’ and long-term impact of Prevent on schools and teachers?

Already, in many schools, Prevent is causing significant nervousness and confusion among teachers. There is increasing evidence that teachers identity it as counter-productive.

A teacher, who did not want to be identified, told a Guardian journalist that her Muslim pupils had become more careful about what they talked about for fear of being referred in Prevent. She added that assessment by Ofsted on how schools were protecting children from radicalization added an extra pressure on teachers.

What do we need to do to challenge Prevent and the thinking behind it, and work towards its repeal?

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) union moved a motion, unanimously passed at September’s TUC Congress in Brighton, urging the government to “reevaluate Prevent being promoted as a deliberate and explicit attempt to create a forced consensus on a narrow notion of British values and identity.” They also wanted teachers to be given a greater role in the development of the Prevent curriculum.

We must work towards repeal of the Prevent duty on schools, but we need more discussion on what we need to do to achieve that. I suggest that this must involve engagement with school leaders, teachers and governing bodies, as well as working with the NUT, NASUWT and other professional associations.

We also need to develop close partnerships with the communities, pupils and families who Prevent is targeting, and ensure that as well as playing a leading role in campaigning through expert advice, support and advocacy. Research and analysis is also required to explore what is happening locally and nationally. There is a key role here for committed journalists, academics and human rights organisations. In particular, the way that Prevent is being driven forward is such that it needs to be more thoroughly analysed and critiqued so that teachers, school leaders and others have the confidence, the evidence and the arguments they need.

Bill is a teacher and independent education consultant who works with schools, school governors and children’s services on equality and diversity.

This article is an edited version of a speech at the joint IRR/CCIF seminar ‘Securitisation, Schools and Preventing Extremism’.
All expressions of gender non-conformity are antagonistic, especially trans femininity.

Gender antagonisms aren’t always brushed. It’s defiant to take up physical space as a woman or a femme; it’s confrontational to wear nail polish as a man or a masc.

Daily antagonisms are both empowering and tend to increase vulnerability. There is a cost-benefit analysis of expressing your gender without apology and feeling safe on the streets, which almost always results in a compromise. Your safety is conditional.

Being trans is London is to exist as both invisible and hyper-visible. If your genderqueerness is evident, passersby will stop, point, and loudly express, “Is that a boy or a girl?”. They are always groups of men. Other people will start, trying to figure out if there should be more uncomfortable with your androgyny or your potentially homo-affection in holding someone’s hand. None of them know you’re trans, none of them know your name or pronouns, none of them witness your gender identity; you are invisible and yet exposed.

Masculinity is perceived as ‘neutral’ or ‘androgyneous’ while femininity is objectified and severely scrutinised.

Smash the expectation that marginalised people are responsible for ending their oppressions, that they are required to educate their oppressors, or that they must loudly politicise their marginalised identity. There is value in assimilation for survival - without survival there is no liberation. Worse still is the idea that we are obligated to assimilate.

I am staunch against “against apolitical” marginalised identities. Gender non-conformity is inherently political - stop putting it on marginalised people to be explicitly political (that’s the work of allies who are less vulnerable to violence and less exhausted through constant combatting transphobia). If one of people misperceive you, you perform normative gender expressions because it helps them pass, and passing can be extremely empowering (never mind mind safe). Trans people don’t need to be explicitly political in their gender expression because simply existing as trans is revolutionary. Being trans in a society so invested in a static gender binary is inherently antagonistic and radical.

Fuck respectability politics. Trans people don’t need to conform to cisnormative standards of beauty to be worthy, to be sexy, to be human. This only serves to create a hierarchy of “acceptable” gender expressions and modes of transness — ones which fit the gender binary.

Make-up is both patriarchal shackles and liberation. Embrace the complexity, and get used to it. Trans can contain contradiction. It’s about erasing gender policing, it’s about dismantling the binary spaces. There is a common fallacy that men need to “get in touch with their feelings” - men need to become sensitive to the feelings of everyone else and stop throwing tantrums whenever their collective masculinity is called out for being oppressive (“Not all men!” Bro, enough men). It would be so cool to have a conversation about gender which doesn’t constantly reference men and marginalise us as the focal point.

You develop a hyper-awareness of how other people perceive your gender. As someone who gets gendered differently on different occasions, it’s impossible not to note the differences: when I’m gendered as a man, I’m allowed more physical and figurative violence, more sexualised; I’m obviously non-binary, when I’m gendered as a woman, passersby consume my outfit body, and men mansplain basic shit. The worst is when I’m trying to convey a certain gender expression—a normative one, even—and people misgender me. Sometimes it’s obvious (street harassment makes sense because it allows for ambiguity and flux). Transition is constant, like coming out. Gender isn’t binary for most of us. We don’t wake up suddenly eschewing masculinity or femininity, we want our identities to stop being pathologised, and we want to change our names and gender markers without a diagnosis. We want an end to the implicit idea that cis and heteronormative white masculinity is default. We want housing and healthcare and jobs (at least until capitalism crumbles). We want our identities to stop being pathological and we want to change our names and gender markers without a diagnosis. We want an end to the implicit idea that cis and heteronormative white masculinity is default.

Smash the expectation that marginalised people are responsible for ending their oppressions, that they are required to educate their oppressors, or that they must loudly politicise their marginalised identity. There is a common fallacy that men need to “get in touch with their feelings” - men need to become sensitive to the feelings of everyone else and stop throwing tantrums whenever their collective masculinity is called out for being oppressive (“Not all men!” Bro, enough men). It would be so cool to have a conversation about gender which doesn’t constantly reference men and marginalise us as the focal point.

Last week I went to a feminist punk show wearing black jeans, a polo t-shirt, and black lipstick. I looked like a boy, sort of. A cute girl started a conversation with me: “It’s great to see so many girls at a punk gig!” “I think so too! But, I’m not a girl. Er, I’m trans.” “That’s so brave, I’ve never met a trans person before. Are you going from female to male?” “Um... sort of. No, I’m like a boy, but not just a boy.” This is the most forward I’ve ever been about my non-binary identity with a stranger.

Gender is dynamic. Sometimes “queer” is the only word which makes sense because it allows for ambiguity and flux. Privilege is not only produced, it is reproduced. The fragility of masculinity is incredible. Men feel so entitled to physical space and media representation, that as soon as anyone else speaks they feel silenced. Men are apparently terrified at being excluded from dialogue; it would be laughable if not demonstrated by violently invading femme and non-binary spaces. There is a common fallacy that men need to “get in touch with their feelings” - men need to become sensitive to the feelings of everyone else and stop throwing tantrums whenever their collective masculinity is called out for being oppressive (“Not all men!” Bro, enough men). It would be so cool to have a conversation about gender which doesn’t constantly reference men and marginalise us as the focal point.

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You develop a hyper-awareness of how other people perceive your gender. As someone who gets gendered differently on different occasions, it’s impossible not to note the differences: when I’m gendered as a man, I’m allowed more physical and figurative violence, more sexualised; I’m obviously non-binary, when I’m gendered as a woman, passersby consume my outfit body, and men mansplain basic shit. The worst is when I’m trying to convey a certain gender expression—a normative one, even—and people misgender me. Sometimes it’s obvious (street harassment makes sense because it allows for ambiguity and flux). Transition is constant, like coming out. Gender isn’t binary for most of us. We don’t wake up suddenly eschewing masculinity or femininity, we want our identities to stop being pathologised, and we want to change our names and gender markers without a diagnosis. We want an end to the implicit idea that cis and heteronormative white masculinity is default. We want housing and healthcare and jobs (at least until capitalism crumbles). We want our identities to stop being pathological and we want to change our names and gender markers without a diagnosis. We want an end to the implicit idea that cis and heteronormative white masculinity is default.
The Lure of ‘Frozen’ Racism

Alana Lentin

One of the most deeply problematic facts facing students of race and racism is one of definition. Racism is currently viewed as an historical phenomenon (although the impact of psychology has led to its face identification as a problematic facet of human behaviour). However, the tendency to historicize race and racism is often accompanied by a partial reading of that history. This is particularly the case in Europe where the dominant focus has been on a version of the history of race that, as Banu Menkiti has pointed out, begins in the 18th century with the advent of racist pseudo-science, and ends with the culmination of the Second World War. World War II is thus retold as a fight primarily against racism and fascism. I have written extensively about the efforts to ignore race following 1945 as an outdated and discredited concept, making way for ideas about difference, such as culture and ethnicity, that rejected the naturalisation of a hierarchy of race as genetics. What this underestimated rejection of race left Europe with, politically, was the tendency to seek to define race and racism according to a singular, teleological process that ignored their racial and racialist trajectories. In other words, the longer history of race as a political project, beginning with the invasion of the Americas through the spread of European colonialism, the appropriation of lands and resources and the genocidal murder of indigenous peoples, the institution of slavery and later indentured servitude, became severed from the telling of the story of race, leaving just the specific moment of Nazism. Even in relation to the Holocaust, the racialised annexation of millions of Jews, the Holocaust is only seen in terms of the Holocaust itself, it is far from orthodox to point out the colonial antecedents of the concentration and death camps as instituted by the Germans in, for example, Namibia, not to mention their use by the British during the Boer war, or the very similar treatment of Aboriginals in what was to become Australia.

Racism becomes ‘frozen’ in relation to past events that have been sanctioned for the purpose of identification as racism. In part this is to do with the problematic genealogy of the term ‘racism’ itself. First coined to describe the spread of racist ideas by Eurocentric early empiricists in the 19th and 20th centuries. As Hesse argues, these defenders of European democracy against fascism were not as concerned with the co-temporality of colonial rule in most of the world. In Australia, which fought on the side of the Allies to defeat Hitler. Aboriginal people were considered flora and fauna until the change in the constitution as late as 1967. This inconsistency did not affect the liberal European orientation that gave rise to the concept of racism. Hesse’s conclusion is that when racism, devised Eurocentrically, is applied to the call for equality and justice for colonised people or, for example, black people in the USA, it is deemed to fail, for it was not originally concerned to encapsulate their experiences and ingrate for their full autonomy. Be that as it may, and there are good arguments with hindsight that bear this observation out, the problem of defining the origin of race, and consequently racism, must be scrutinised. In part, the problem is methodological. As David Goldberg shows in his chapter in Karim Murji and John Solomos’ edited volume, Theories of Race and Ethnicity, most studies that seek to examine racism beyond the confines of one society, have tended to draw together almost exclusively those races considered to exhibit the most extreme and extremely different routes of state racism. Those dominant exemplars of compared racisms are taken either to indicate that their differences are not as extreme as at first thought or to reveal that, at least tentatively, there are a limited number of models for state-based racisms.

He concludes that in contrast to this potentially reducible and comparative frame, what is needed to fully conceptualise ‘racial conception and racist practice’ is a relational and interactive framework. This would reveal both their local specificities and their ‘trans-territorial conceptions and expressions’. In other words, it is not that there is a confounded number of prototypes that explain racial structures and racism expression that can be compared among them with the consequence that any rationalising process or racist practice that does not measure up to these exemplars becomes ‘rarest’. Rather, to quote Goldberg again, ‘terms circulate, practices are shaped and fail, only to be taken up and refined in environments that prove to be more conducive to their articulation’. Race, as John Solomos and Les Back have argued, is a scavenger idea that feeds off seeds in one location, pollinating there in a sometimes entirely different context. It may not always be clear to us how and why that process took place, tracing the relational aspects that Goldberg talks about requires an intimate knowledge of the mechanisms through which race is not only reproduced but mutates, shaping itself to the context and time. Gwen Tilly and I charted this out in our 2011 book, The Circuits of Multiculturalism, when we described how the idea of multiculturalism became a ‘reified truth’ that is translated between societies with vastly different migration histories, ideological standpoints, and policy approaches. Thus, the direct – and correct – comparison of David Cameron’s pronouncements on a ‘bunch of migrants’ and the Danish government’s new policy on asylum seekers’ valuables with the Holocaust – the racial exemplar par excellence – may obscure more than it reveals. The first thing that struck me on reading these two developments in the rapidly deteriorating state of European asylum politics was their predictability. As Joseph Harker reminds us, Cameron has form having already described asylum seekers as ‘swarms’ and barely raising the asylum seeker intake in the wake of Aylan Kurdi’s horrific death. But the Danish decision to reduce their assets seemed to be of a different order, beyond words. In reality, however, Germany and Switzerland have already instituted similar policies.

The reason why these asset seizures shocked was not because the appropriation of valuable resources (including the majority of the world by Europeans hasn’t been central to the race project since its inception, but because it reminded us of the macabre-nose of Jewish gold filings. What ‘frozen’ racism has done so successfully is to encapsulate race in its spectacularity while playing down, not only its banality (it has become commonplace to talk about racism as ‘everyday’), but also its more intricate and complex machinations, which have become more or less dismissed. So much of what is needed to understand the operations of race in its entirety can be found in dry, bureaucratic documents such as those so well described by Ann Stoler in her writing on Dutch and French colonialists in Race and the Education of Desire. These descriptions of the minutiae that govern the possibilities of colonised populations are mirrored in policies such as that recently enacted by the Danish government, only a small part of which pertained to asylum seekers’ valuables. The three-year waiting period in the future: you lose your family, for example, can be re-written as commonsensical from the perspective that one can see migration as a drain on resources understood as key to the subjective definition of racism but prevents us from getting ‘deep inside’ in the detail of race in practice.

If we seek to understand the functioning of racism at a time that is deemed post-racial, it is imperative to understand that it is indeed this that has been racism’s ‘frozen’ racism. But the question of race post-race is the perfecting of racism’s messiness and complexity, with all its unpredictable and unmanageable potential. The violence of race is not only in the materiality of its effects, but in the denial of its presence as an unarticulated factor in decisions about human life.
NN, born 1980, District Silkot, Pakistan

Having problems with mafia groups in Pakistan. Shot by neighbour. Paid $600 to be transferred from Pakistan to Greece.

Istanbul
3-5 days

26 people in inflatable boat

In village close to forest trafficker called 3 taxis, 9 people in each taxi.

From Greece to Macedonia, over the mountains, very difficult.

Belgrade
4 months in camp. (Open camp, like Bogovad.) Trying to go to operation, to get documents. No operation in documents.

Bosnian Interrogation

Serbia

Bosnian War

It was hell. They say to do to Bosnia war, then 2 years in camp.

Macedonia

Serbia

From relatives from Pakistan, once got 4000 E25 from relatives.
ALEPPO, SYRIA

- Destroyed house
- Catania street all destroyed, shut down
- Sold house to finance trip
- About 8,000 € for trip
- 50 people sleep in one house in Aleppo because town burned
- 13 people in one room

- 4 days walking, without food, only 1 red bull and chocolate bars
- 200 people in group
- Mafia didn't attack us

- Police didn't give us any paper: just sent us to Bogovada

ATHENS, 3 DAYS

- Thessaloniki: met people from Afghanistan, Sudan, Libya, Algeria: then walking together
- Walking 5 hours
- Relax 30 min, police comes, then stay hidden, waiting police to leave, then go again walking few hours
- Police comes... hide... like that until crossing to Macedonia

MACEDONIA

- 4 days walking
- To much mafia in Macedonia: mafia takes our money and mobile phones

SOFIA

- 200 people were in group
-ΰ Mafia didn't attack us

RED GRAD

- Police didn't give us any paper: just sent us to Bogovada

Greece

- 2 days in Athens
- 2 days in Thessaloniki
- Police sent us to other island where is camp
- 4 months to leave Greece
- If you don't leave in a month, police catch you
- 40 to prison for 48 months

900€

- 60,000 €
- People in group international, solidarity
- There were babies
- People were from: Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Syria
- There were women pregnant with children

ATHENS, 2 DAYS

- 2 days in camp
- Police of Athens gave us money
- 4 months to leave Greece
- If you don't leave in a month, police catch you
- 40 to prison for 48 months

Greece

- Camp
- Some island
- 2 days in Thessaloniki
- Police sent us to other island where is camp
- Home for camp

MOROCCO

- 3 days
- Police from Athens
- Field
- 200 people in group
- Police send us to Morocco

TURKEY

- 3rd time
- November 2014
- We left Istanbul, paid 500 € to buy coast, we paid 600 € to smugglers to get us to Greece
- Price is 1,000 - 1,500 €
- Until we succeeded
- Boat was like this

Istanbul

- 1 year and 2 months
- Morocco
- 1 was collecting calls and selling them using WhatsApp
- Some room was 30 - 30 € monthly
- Feet were boys
- Feets were dangerous
- They are unqualified security boys and local mafia and they were robbing us.

And we were 52 people in the boat
- We spent 6 hours on the sea and only on 3rd time succeeded to enter Greece in some island

- It was difficult crossing borders

- We were followed by mafia on road
- 800 people in group international, solidarity
- There were babies
- People were from: Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Syria
- There were women pregnant with children

- We knew where the crossing point is then we go around it.
- 3 people died during journey through Macedonia

Macedonia

- Lojane
- 60,000 €
- People in group international, solidarity
- There were babies
- People were from: Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Syria
- There were women pregnant with children

- Mafia was intercepting us
- 9 days we were walking through Macedonia

- Through jungle: very difficult in Macedonia
- Locals, mafia and robbing us

- We knew where the crossing point is then we go around it.
- 3 people died during journey through Macedonia

Serbia

- Miratovac
- 1st attempt to Serbia and we suggested either: we didn't have cash on us: it is stacked in a plastic bag

- We were followed by mafia on road

- We were followed by mafia on road
Resisting an eviction is a last resort, not a long term solution, giving you time to organise alternative accommodation.

If facing eviction, other pressure needs to be applied to keep people in their homes or find new ones, including entering homeless applications with your local council.

**Eviction Order**

- Can only be given once a possession order granted by a court has expired.
- Your landlord cannot evict you themselves.

**Bailiffs**

- Can legally break in and evict people (it is debt bailiffs who cannot enter premises unless you let them!)
- Bailiffs can use "reasonable force" to enter and evict.

**Process**

- Once a possession order has been granted by a court, the owner has 3 months to get writ/warrant. They are valid for 1 year.

**County Court Bailiffs**

- Almost always give notice of Date & Time of Eviction
- Can arrive 1-2 hours after this time
- Often 1-2 attend eviction
- Used more commonly

**High Court Enforcement Officers**

- Often don't give notice of Date & Time of Eviction (they should!)
- Cost the landlord more
- You won't always be told warrant for possession has been sent to High Court Enforcement Officers

- Evictions by High court enforcement officers are very rare. They are more likely if you've resisted a previous eviction attempt or the landlord expects resistance.

**How to Resist an Eviction**

- Resisting an eviction can give you time to organise alternative accommodation, and possibly demonstrate/galvanise collective strength and community solidarity.
- But an eviction resistance is a last resort, not a long-term solution nor the basis for an entire strategy.

**Callout**

- Give people as much notice as possible.
- Many resistances involve an early start!

**Arrive & Assess**

- Establish the easiest way to block access to the property.
- Find a good place for spotters who confirm arrival/departure of bailiffs/police.

**Patience**

- Resisting Evictions can take a few hours.
- Bring refreshments to share if you can.

**Enjoy**

- Resisting evictions can be joyful.
- Chants and banners help neighbours see what's happening (and get involved!)

**Calm**

- When bailiffs arrive, don't rush towards them - Continue to block access as a group.

**Block**

- Deny bailiffs access to the property as a group.
- Point out you won't be moving.

**Wait**

- The bailiffs should walk away - they often have another appointment lined up.

**Threats Police Might Make**

- As long as no-one assaults bailiffs/police it's very unlikely you'll be arrested. There have been many successful eviction resistances without arrests. Here are some threats police might make. An awareness of these beforehand lets you know your rights and possibly diffuse situations with police.

  - "Resisting an eviction is contempt of court"  
    The specific person or people being evicted could be threatened with contempt of court. It is not contempt of court to resist your own eviction unless you have been served with a court order with an attached penal notice - this is very rare and it will be clear in the paper work!

  - "This is a breach of the peace"
    Police can make arrests or use reasonable force to prevent crime or a 'breach of the peace' (where violence is used or threatened towards a person or their property in their presence). A crowd of people outside a home facing eviction does not itself constitute a breach of the peace. However, police have used this excuse to break up eviction resistances in the past. As ‘breach of the peace’ is not a criminal offence people detained should be released a small distance from the location of the eviction.

  - "You're obstructing court officers"
    When resisting tenant evictions, ‘obstructing court officers’ (s10 of 1977 Criminal Law Act) doesn’t apply as tenants aren’t trespassers. With squat evictions this offence does apply but is rarely used.

*See advice on making a homeless application at bit.ly/HASLHomeless

Thanks to: Advisory Service for Squatters | squatter.org.uk / Legal Defence and Monitoring Group | ldmg.org.uk

Text by: Housing Action Southwark & Lambeth | HousingActionSL.org
Rosa Gilbert

**FIGHTING FASCISM IN FLORENCE**

"Right now, it seems to me there is less need for such a vertically-structured organisation thanks to the recent technological advancements. Nowadays, we can communicate faster, the nodes of the organisation, the local branch of the organisation, of a potential revolutionary organisation, can be much more autonomous, because at the same time, they can be much more related to each other. You move much faster around, you can communicate and exchange material and whatever else in a much easier manner." 

In the past, pre-packaged discourse could be sold to people because of historical examples, whereas now there is no clear example or well-defined strategy. "We should not fear to question our organisation as a whole. A serious radical organisation cannot come about if it isn't fundamentally part of a process of radicalisation. Even if at some point you manage to get a leading position in a movement, if you then pretend to make the movement become the organisation, you are failing." 

This is a criticism levelled in equal measure at the likes of the Socialist Workers' Party in the UK and Podemos in Spain.

Despite the relative low-mobilisation of the 2003-2005 period, a trend that was emerging that affected the ideas of radical political activity now being built upon. Whereas a general big movement was missing, activists went back to the local struggle, the radicalism, "to be rooted in the place where we live, in a way to find our liberation path in our daily life. Obviously then if we are good enough in linking the local to the global, and linking the particular, in Marxist terms, the particular contradiction to the broader, general contradiction, we manage to be effective, to get people mobilised for a radical general social change."

The archipelago local struggle that has instigated the radical movement during the fallow periods of the 1st Vato campaign, the campaign against the high-speed train network around Northern Italy and into neighbouring countries. Although it

In Italy, political activism starts at a young age. Just before Christmas, there was an energetic wave of high school occupations springing up against the government’s school reforms (Riforma Scuola). Not only do schools have reputations for radicalisation or compartmentalisation, but there are even left factions present in many. In Italy's heterogeneous context, in fact, the effect that the 1970s split in the anti-Mafia movement are still felt in the two main squatted social centres that high school students gather around, with the more reformist elements forming the disabili-dent in contrast to the revolutionary communists who remained faithful to the Macedonian-Leninist position of the early autonomist movement. Just as the current Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, in his critique of his political predecessors, has observed, "You have a duty to occupy and resist, in the early years of the millennium military involvement in Afghanistan and then Iraq led to a wave of occupations. Relatively speaking, this was a period of low mobilisation following the Goma G8 summit protests, the zealousness of which was more evident from the protests in Beijing, which for the first time, saw a city in China mobilised against the occupation of Tibet. The class war is a war for the liberation of the poor from the so-called social movements of the past, which are more evident. Not to try to rush to the most radical solution because it's sure to1 be much more difficult, but among people who are seriously committed in thinking how to achieve radical social change, there is a general understanding that ‘let’s run the next election is failing.’

In December 2004, a fascist movement called Forza Nuova tried on the wave of a racist backlash against gypsies in Rome, to organise a demonstration in Florence against migrants and what they called ‘degraders’. Local autonomists organised a counter-protest, the demonstration which SYRIZA and Podemos originated have presented real challenges (although how to be involved in a social movement, how to not undermine the social movement, discarding vertical for horizontal organisation, “how to build a social movement, autonomists and Mario takes a traditional Marxist-Leninist position in his critique of contemporary Afghans and Iraqis, which forced the fascists to relocate their protest to a peripheral part of the neighbourhood. When the police tried to stop the autonomists marching, they resorted to mass arrests of protesters and attempted arrests. No one was arrested, but in October this year Mario was informed, along with nine other activists, that they'd be found in the formation of the Italian republic, which emerged from an armed struggle against the previous regime. On Monday 12th February 2007, that protest of 100,000 people in this small town, on Monday 12th February 2007, that protest brought together people from all over Italy and internationally. I asked Mario whether he was surprised by his arrest. ‘It was a case of terrorist activity through environmental evidence, in one case bugging coffee shops where political meetings were being held by telling the owners of the café, shamingly, that they were tracking panhardhoo exchanging material. Although their arrest was timed ahead of this huge demonstration, it was not specifically linked to their activism in the anti-war movement – the group had been monitored by the police from about 2001.'

For months after arrest Mario was held in solitary confinement for almost five months – 23 hours a day in a cell, I hear outside in a slightly bigger cell. At the age of 25, Mario was considered the most dangerous prisoner on his wing of a high-security prison. After almost a year of this, he was placed under house arrest – still at this point, the case was in pre-trial phase. Two things seem to have happened, a psychological and technological stage. In terms of personal health, Mario's imprisonment in prison caused him to closely follow the news and issues that he had been involved in before his arrest. This ‘dissimulation’ became a part of his identity, a way of living, a way of thinking, a way of behaving. ‘What is the root of this? If I won't be able to live that way, I won't be able to think like a Marxist activist, not a human being. When I asked him if this was a by-product of the judicial system, to impose a form of self-discipline, he reminded me that his self-preservation was in order to be a better revolutionary afterwards – ‘that’s not the aim of the judicial system, to break the law. So I think that every revolutionary activist, every radical activist, has to be able to break the law. But among people who are seriously committed in thinking how to achieve radical social change, there is a general understanding that ‘let’s run the next election is failing.’

Anarchists are learning from responses to the economic crisis and crisis of social democracy in the rest of Europe. Where does all this leave the movements today? Mario's impression is that...
PARCDE is a grassroots alliance working in Europe to amplify the voices of African Communities of Reparations interest all over the world. For us in PARCDE, there are spatial dimensions to reparatory justice for people of African heritage. According to political geographer Edward Sjaak, “spatial justice refers to an intentional and focused emphasis on the spatial or geographical aspects of justice and injustice. As a starting point, this involves the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them.”

It follows that spatial justice has to do with geopolitics and how the European ruling classes have gentrified the world. This has been done by way of imposing enclosures here in Europe and taking land from the commons into private ownership, but also going around the world dispossessing other people and land, space and resources, and expropriating them to become their own private property and impose their rule on other peoples. Hence the domains of European imperialism in the colonies were part of a grand gentrification process by the ruling classes of Europe.

This has impacted on their power in the metropolises as much as in the peripheries. In the colonised periphery, the ruling classes of Europe established a power which created global apartheid. There were enclaves of colonial settlers who willed power and took resources at will, not heeding to apply the most violent forms of exploitation, oppression and dispossession to serve their purposes, resulting in genocide and ecocide. Then they came back to Europe with the gains of these crimes in order to covet and appropriate more space in the metropolises, contribute to industrialisation and build all kinds of grand mansions in the process of appropriating more and more common land and space. Ecocide is being caused by gentrification of spaces in the neo-colonies today, such as more land grabs for extractivism. Not to mention the destruction of social housing, and the arreting of luxury apartments and corporate buildings that occurs in parts of the metropolises.

Now you find that the peoples who have been displaced from the neo-colonies, following the stolen wealth back to Europe, end up being removed violently any time the ruling classes find them in the way of expanding neoliberal capital. For example, the attack on social housing - being replaced wholesale by unaffordable private housing - is a continuation of the crimes of chattel colonial and neo-colonial enslavement being brought into the communities of the still colonised peoples now living in the metropolises.

That is why the 1st August African Emancipation Day Reparations March, marching from Windrush Square in Brixton to the Houses of Parliament and 10 Downing Street, highlights this process as part of the continuing Maangamizi (Afrikan hellacaust and continuum of chattel, colonial and neo-colonial forms of enslavement), for which African people demand reparatory justice. Not only in terms of compensation, but more fundamentally, in terms of systemic change globally to ensure the expropriation and redistribution of wealth worldwide.

The reparations march amplifies the voices of African heritage communities of resistance and activists advocating these points. The march first took place in 2014 and was significantly improved and internationalised in 2015. Once again on 1st August 2016, thousands of people will be on the streets in Europe’s biggest African Reparations March ever! However, in this the third year of the march taking place, we aim for there to be numerous simultaneous marches and/or other reparations actions in various countries in Africa, the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe.

The African Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee (AEDRMC) adopted the following aims for the March in 2015:

1. To draw attention to African peoples’ global determination not to let the British State and other perpetrators get away with the crimes of the Maangamizi (Afrikan hellacaust of chattel, colonial and neo-colonial enslavement).
2. To raise consciousness about the fact that all the attacks on us, in both individual and collective instances, amount to genocide/ecocide in Maangamizi continuity, necessitating reparatory justice.
3. To raise awareness of the necessity to ‘Stop the Maangamizi’ and its current manifestations such as austerity, attempts to recolonise Afrika, mentacide and deaths in police, psychiatric and prison custody.
4. To demonstrate African peoples’ strength, capacity and determination to speak to and challenge establishment power with our growing grassroots power to effect and secure reparations (reparatory justice) on our own terms.
5. To showcase African people’s grassroots initiatives for reparations.

The 1st of August has been chosen as the day of the reparations march because it is the officially recognised ‘Emancipation Day’, marking the passing of The Slave Law Abolition Act in the British Empire, on 1 August 1833. Further, the significance of 1st August 1833 is that it is the date that after all the years of resistance by enslaved Afrikans, torn away from the Motherland, Britain and its fellow European enslavers of Afrikan people were compelled to recognise that they could no longer continue to enslave us without severe consequences. It therefore represents a symbolic day recognising our refusal to accept enslavement, in every manner, including its present day manifestations.

For the 2016 march the AEDRMC will be continuing with the theme ‘Education is Part of Preparation for Reparations’ as part of the mobilisation and consciousness-raising of our people towards playing our part in enforcing the end of the Maangamizi and secure reparatory justice. This year we will be organising blocs as part of the march. There will be the Ubuntu bloc where we invite allies to attend and participate in the march in solidarity with the cause of reparations, Stop the Maangamizi and the aims of the reparations march.

A practical tool that PARCDE reparationsists have developed to raise awareness of the current Maangamizi is the Stop the Maangamizi: We Charge Genocide/Ecocide Petition (SMWCGE).

The SMWCGE petition forms a companion project with the 1st August Emancipation Day African Reparations March and is therefore a positive action step of African reparatory justice campaigning which seeks to:

1. raise consciousness, increase awareness and recommend actions to redress the fact that all the attacks on us, in both individual and collective instances, amount to genocide/ecocide in Maangamizi continuity, necessitating reparatory justice.
2. highlight the need to ‘Stop the Maangamizi’ before we can truly repair the harm;
3. be a practical and participatory action for enabling the mass adjudication of African and other oppressed indigenous peoples’ cases for reparations, and eventually put a full stop, by way of holistic and transformative reparations, to all acts of genocide/ecocide against African and other oppressed indigenous peoples.
The SMWCDE petition calls on the UK government to establish an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth & Reparatory Justice to: acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of the imposition of the Maangamizi (African Hellacauset of chattel, colonial and neocolonial enslavement) within and beyond the British Empire; examine subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against Afrikan and people of Afrikan descent; examine the impact of these forces on living Africans and Afrikan descendant communities, as well as all other peoples; make recommendations to Parliament and similar bodies at local, national and international levels, including the European Parliament, and; determine reparations and that reparatory justice can only be achieved globally before it was a problem for the world.

For us in PARCOE, this means highlighting as we did in participating in the World'sth of the Earth BLOC of the Peoples March for Climate Justice and Jobs, the still colonising essence of the coloniality of power as it is exercised in the UK, Europe and other parts of the world. For us in PARCOE this is important because it has been our organising experience thus far that very often progressive forces on what is often called the “White Left” refuse to see the nature of the power being exercised by the ruling classes of Europe within and outside the countries of Europe as an expression of the coloniality of power rather than just the bourgeoisie power of working people. It has been our people’s experience that the intersectionality of this coloniality of power is often not recognised, or minimised, particularly its essentially white supremacist and racist character.

In furtherance of these objectives, PARCOE, as a constituent founder and organisational member of the Global Afrikan People’s Parliament, is involved in building the UK-based Afrikan Heritage Community for National Self-Determination (AHC-NSD). The AHC-NSD is focused on the holistic regeneration of Afrikan communities; mindful of the fact that, at present, such Afrikan communities exist within and beyond the UK as a multiplity of different and even conflicting national, ethnic, racial, class, gender, age and other socio-cultural configurations brought from all over the world. Therefore, regeneration of Afrikan communities is being done in a radical and intersectional way, for example, through innovative Eco-Justice Village building projects such as SERUJAMAA, which serves as a living prototype of a future MAATUBUNTUSITAWI which is a Pan-African Union of communities throughout the continent and diaspora of Africa.

How you can show solidarity
You can do your bit to compel accountability for genocide against Afrikan and people of African heritage by sending a signed copy of the wording on this postcard to your MP. #StopTheMaangamizi stopthemaangamizi.com/2016/01/11/stop-the-maangamizi-postcard-campaign.

If you would like to participate in the Ubuntu Reparations Solidarity BLOC of the 1st August African Emancipation Day Reparations March please email: themarchuk@hotmail.com.

To keep abreast of developments on reparations see: www.stopthemaangamizi.com

Esther Stanford-Xosei serves as the Co-Chair of PARCOE, the Pan-African Reparations Coalition in Europe. PARCOE is a grassroots alliance working in Europe to amplify the voices of African Communities of Reparations Interest all over the World as a matter of Global Justice for all. Esther is also a founder-member of the Leadership Facilitation Team of the Global Afrikan Peoples Parliament (GAPP) and Vice Chair of the African Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee. Esther is also co-founder of ARTiCO, the African Reparations Transnational Community of. She is currently completing PhD research at the University of Chichester on the history of the UK contingent of the International Social Movement for African Reparations.
AFRO-PESSIMISM AND THE END OF REDEMPTION

Frank Wilderson

The expanding field of Afro-pessimism theorises the structural relation between Blackness and Humanity as an irreconcilable encounter, an antagonism. One cannot know Blackness as distinct from slavery, for there is no Black temporality which is antecedent to the temporality of the Black slave. Civil society has a perversive and parasitic relation to the workings of anti-Black violence; it does not want Black land (as it does from Native Americans), or Black consent (as it does from workers), it wants something more fundamental: the confirmation of human existence.

Afro-pessimism argues that the regime of violence that subsumes Black bodies is different from the regime of violence that subsumes hyper-exploited colonial subalterns, exploited workers and other oppressed peoples. To illustrate what this means, I offer an excerpt from Simon Ortiz’s epic poem, Sand Creek, followed by my poem Law Abiding, written in the wake of Oscar Grant’s assassination. Juxtaposing these two poems will help to clarify how the regime of violence that saturates Blacks is structurally incompatible with a regime of violence where contingency, as opposed to saturation, is the operative modality; and how only one regime of violence comes with touchstones of cohesion necessary for redemption.

Sand Creek

There should be moments of true terror that would make men think and that would cause women to grab hold of children, loving them, and saving them for the generations who would enjoy the rain. Who are these farmers, who are these welders, who are these scientists, who are those soldiers with cold flashing brilliance and knives. Who struck aside the sacred dawn and was not ashamed before the natural sun and dew Artistically, they splattered blood along their mad progress; they claimed the earth and stole hearts and tongues from buffalo and men, the skilled butchers, aerospace engineers, physicists they became. The future should hold them secret, hidden and profound.

Law Abiding

for Oscar Grant (February 27, 1986—January 1, 2009)

Don’t slant the story to fit your needs. Bullets been catching hell from niggers long as I been born
Like apples ok you got your few bad bullets But most work hard and vote yes they vote and Got wives and sweet kids in the clip Who cradles them when a nigger vamps who says What to them Mrs. Bullet I have some bad news Then what It’s about your husband Mr. John Fredrick Bullet Or May I call you Frieda Frieda John Fredrick passed this evening Now Frieda be strong for unsavoury Are the details He died in a nigger’s spine Crushed on impact now Frieda don’t cry The D.A.’s on it The judge has been briefed And your husband’s friends are In the streets

At first blush an exegesis might be seduced into emphasising what the poems have in common—the ravages of structural violence on two oppressed populations of colour. But another look reveals that the two poems are actually symptomatic of the fact that violence against Native Americans is not analogous to the violence by which Blacks are elaborated and positioned. The violence of ‘social death’ (that is, the violence which saturates Blackness: the violence of slavery, an ongoing pre-historical relation of violence) is fundamentally different from the violence which usurps Native American land and attempts to destroy the Indian’s cultural and territorial sovereignty. The imaginative labour of these poems is symptomatic of this difference.

In the first section of Sand Creek, the poem establishes the filial integrity of the people who are being massacred (“men [who] think…[and] women who grab hold of children, loving them, and saving them for the generations who would enjoy the rain…”) So, what we have is an intuition on the part of the poet that even though the people being killed are seen as a degraded form of humanity, their humanity is fundamentally acknowledged; and, in addition, there is a symbiosis, a kind-of cruel interdependence, between the genocided victims in the opening part of the poem and the descendants of those committing the genocide (“skilled butchers, aerospace engineers, physicists…”). In other words, the relational status of both the Indian victims and the White oppressors is established—a reciprocal dynamic is acknowledged (between degraded humanity, Indians, and exalted humanity, White settlers).

This reciprocal dynamic is based on the fact that even though one group is massacring the other, both exist within the same paradigm of recognition and incorporation. Their relation is based on a mutual recognition of sovereignty. At every scale of abstraction, body, family, community, cosmology, physical terrain, Native American sovereignty is recognised and incorporated into the consciousness of both Indians and settlers who destroyed them. The poem’s coherence is sustained by structural capacity for reciprocity between the genociders and the genocided. This structural reciprocity gives the poem a vision of hope amid the violence, manifested in a sense of spatial preservation (images of land and weather) and in Ortiz’s sense that for both groups a future is possible. This means the violence the Indians suffer has a utility (confiscation and occupation of land) that makes it legitimate and coherent.

Law Abiding is predicated on the absence of reciprocity, utility, and contingency that Simon Ortiz’s poem takes for granted. Absence of humanity. In fact, the poem suggests that a family of murdering, inanimate bullets could have its grief and loss processed as grief and loss more readily than the family of a Black murder victim. Law Abiding doesn’t assume that the touchstones of cohesion which make filiation legible will or can be extended to Blacks. There is—in this poem—no mutual futurity into which Blacks and others will find themselves. The future belongs to the bullet. Filiation belongs to the bullet. Our caring energies will be reserved not for the Black but for the bullet. Reciprocity is not a constituent element of the struggle between beings who are socially dead and those who are socially alive—the struggle between Blacks and the world.
We need to apprehend the profound and irreconcilable difference between White supremacy (the colonial utility of the Sand Creek massacre) and anti-Blackness (the human race's necessity for violence against Black people). The antagonism between the post-colonial subject and the settler (the Sand Creek massacre, or the Palestinian Nakba) cannot—and should not be—analysed with the violence of social death: that is the violence of slavery, which did not end in 1865. Slavery is a relational dynamic—not an event and certainly not a place in space like the South; just as colonialism is a relational dynamic—and that relational dynamic can continue to exist once the settler has left or ceded governmental power. And these two relations are secured by radically different structures of violence. Afro-pessimism offers an analytic lens that labour as a corrective to Humanist assumption—theoretical apparatus which allows Black people to not have to be burdened by the ruse of analogy—because analogy mystifies, rather than clarifies, Black suffering. Analogy mystifies Black peoples relationship to other people of colour. Afro-pessimism labour to throw this mystification into relief—and fear of the faults and fissures that are revealed in the process.

Let me state the proposition differently: Human Life is dependent on Black death for its existence and for its conceptual coherence. There is no World without Blacks, yet there are no Blacks who are in the World. The Black is indeed a sentient being, but the construction of Humanist thought is a constitutive disavowal of Blackness as social death; a disavowal that theories of the Black as degraded human entity: i.e., as an oppressed worker, a vanquished postcolonial subaltern, or a non-Black woman suffering under the disciplinary regime of patriarchy. The Black is not a sentient being whose narrative progression has been circumscribed by racism, colonialism, or even slavery for that matter. Blackness and Slaverness are inextricably bound in such a way that whereas Slaverness can be disincarnated from Blackness, Blackness cannot exist as other than Slaverness.

There is a compulsive and repetitive “failure” in the poem titled Low Abiding: as though, in writing the poem, I unconsciously realised the futility of asserting something within Blackness that is prior to the devastation that defines Blackness; and the force of the repetition compulsion with which the poem has within this devastation is vertiginous: “The D.A.’s on it/The judge has been briefed/And your husband’s friends are/In the streets.”

The poem contains no lines, no fragments which can be cobbled together with enough muscle to check this devastation, to act on it in a contrapuntal way: this is not a case of the “compulsion to repeat,” which Freud describes in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, whereby the repetition is “something that seems [...] more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it overrides.” Low Abiding contains no political strategy or therapeutic agency through which the violence which engulfs Black flesh can be separated from the poem’s compulsion to repeat that violence.

In a ‘normal’ situation—that is to say, if Low Abiding was a poem about Human trauma and genocide—therapeutic and/or political intervention could be made to, in the case of therapy, help the poet become aware of a distinction between the violence he may indeed encounter from the state and a range of psychic alternatives to letting that violence consume his unconscious; and, in the case of politics, the vision elaborated by a movement could help the poet imagine a new day, and thus imbue state violence with a temporal finitude (‘our day will come,’ as the IRA used to say, and, so it did; or the Native American dream of Turtle Island restored), even if the poet didn’t live to experience that finitude. But recourse to political and therapeutic resources presumes a potential for separating skeins of unconscious compulsion (the poem’s repetitive compulsion) from the violence whose incursions are being compulsively repeated. This presumption only works for Human subjects, subjects whose relationship to violence is contingent upon their transgressions. The Slave’s relationship to violence is not contingent, it is gratuitous—it bleeds out beyond the grasp of narration.

Neither filial conflict (to be resolved, for example, through therapy), nor affiliative conflict (to be resolved through politics and insurgent resistance) has purchase in a struggle for Black redemption (Edward Said offers a helpful description of filial and affiliative forms of relationships in The World, the Text, and the Critic). Within the lines, “Mrs. Bullet I have some bad news... It’s about your husband Mr. John Fredrick Bullet/Or/May I call you Frieda,” the poem seems to realise that the integrity of gender is more properly the possession of an inanimate bullet than of a sentient Black being. The violence against Black people which we are witnessing on YouTube, Instagram, and TV news is conveniently gendered as violence against Black men. But there is a problem here, and it is twofold: we tend to lose sight of the fact Black women, children and LGBT people are losing their breath through the technologies of social death, just as Black hetero men are, albeit in less visible and less mediated ways; we also get drawn into responding to the phobic anxieties of White and non-Black civil society, the threat of the Black man; and as such we offer sustenance to that juggernaut of civil society even as we try to dismantle it.

We enhance the pleasurable circulation of the modern Lynch photograph (e.g., the cover of Time magazine with a still image from the video taken April 4, 2015 showing North Charles lynching photograph (e.g., the cover of Time, the book’s compulsion to repeat that violence). We might also consider whether the wanton and indiscriminate uses of the captive body can be made sense of within the heteronormative framing of sexual violation as rape. By parceling rape out to women, castration or murder for men (disenfranchisement), and this turn of events is the essence of agency, through which redemption in the form of justice or healing (equilibrium-restored) completes the arc. But “if the definition of the crime of rape,” as Saidiya Hartman argues: “relies upon the capacity to give consent or exercise will, then how does one make legible the sexual violation of the enslaved when that which would constitute evidence of intentionality, and thus evidence of the crime—the state of consent or willingness of the assailed—opens up a Pandora’s box in which the subject formation and object constitution of the enslaved female are no less ponderous than the crime itself or when the legal definition of the enslaved negates the very idea of ‘reasonable resistance’?”

It is as though by cataloguing horrific acts of violence in a manner which is properly gendered, one which relegates castration and police assassination to Black men (the cul-de-sac Low Abiding’s dedication to Oscar Grant could lead to), and rape to Black women, our political discourse can offer us the protection of a sanctuary that we otherwise might not have. It is not, of course, sanctuary from actual rapes, castration or murder but the sanctuary of gendered recognition and incorporation which employment in a normal political discourse, a normal poem, provides. The tripartite narrative arc of events for such sanctuary would look like this: the event of gender (equilibrium) is being violated by the event of rape, for women, or castration or police murder for men (disenfranchisement), and this turn of events is the essence of agency, through which redemption in the form of justice or healing (equilibrium-restored) completes the arc. But “if the definition of the crime of rape,” as Saidiya Hartman argues: “relies upon the capacity to give consent or exercise will, then how does one make legible the sexual violation of the enslaved when that which would constitute evidence of intentionality, and thus evidence of the crime—the state of consent or willingness of the assailed—opens up a Pandora’s box in which the subject formation and object constitution of the enslaved female are no less ponderous than the crime itself or when the legal definition of the enslaved negates the very idea of ‘reasonable resistance’?”

We might also consider whether the wanton and indiscriminate uses of the captive body can be made sense of within the heteronormative framing of sexual violation as rape. By parceling rape out to women, castration or murder for men (disenfranchisement), the Black Humanist scholars, Black radical insurgents, as well as the Black masses a sense that our political agency is something more than mere “borrowed institutionality” (a term borrowed in private conversation with Jared Sexton). And it “saves” the Black Humanist from a realisation that the dust-up is not between the workers and the bosses, not between settler and native, not between the queer and the straight, but between the living and the dead. If we look closely we also see that gender itself cannot be reconciled with a slave’s genealogical isolation; that for the Slave there is no surplus value to be restored to the time of labour; that no treaties between Blacks and Humans are in Washington waiting to be signed and ratified; and, that, unlike the settler in the Native American political imagination, there is no place like Europe to which Slaves can return Human beings. Only when this happens will we be able to speak of redemption and Blackness in the same breath—only then will redemption be redeemed.
The OT: Part of what lay behind the Black Panther Party’s (BPP) growth and influence was their ability to form alliances and coalitions. How difficult was it to maintain and balance such alliances? What, if any, prospects do you see for any similar alliances being formed for a contemporary revolutionary politics in urban America?

Joshua Bloom: The alliances formed were very much on the basis of what the Party was actually doing. So neither were those alliances simply organisational alliances. There were definitely organisational and interpersonal relations between members and leaders of the group and other organisations and those relationships were important, and those organisational ties were important, but they weren’t sufficient to either generate or sustain those relationships. On the other side, neither were the ideas sufficient to generate or sustain those relationships; the ideas were also important. So the Party very much emphasised an anti-imperialist politics which contrast black freedom struggle in the black community and the black community’s effort to represent itself. And it saw that struggle for self-representation - or sovereignty, if you will - and, in contrast, in the context of empire and imperialism, as part and parcel of a global struggle of people to try to represent themselves [...] So what the Panthers really did on the ground that drove the growth of the Party was they made customary containment policing impossible, they made the municipal response of “we’re gonna have ‘Black Power’ and this with anti-totalitarianism and urban poverty by basically beating the hell out of black folks and keeping them in their place” really difficult to maintain. And they did so in a way that drew a lot of armed confrontation eventually with the state and the way that those ideas became important and the way that they facilitated the building of relationships was very much around the dynamic of challenging and responding to repression. So the Party put itself at the centre of those issues in the black community and for Black America. But also internationally by developing a set of practices that was completely disruptive - especially of containment policing - and was very hard to repress because the repression of it, in that context, was threatening of all these allies. That was really the source and the capacity to disrupt. I think one of the things was that they were doing something that could not be ignored, that made “business as usual” impossible, and yet the repression of which was broadly threatening to many many other constituencies.

The OT: And internally, within the Party, some of the strategic alliances that the leadership wanted to have with maybe some more moderate political forces - trying to appeal to certain liberal elements of the student movement or more Civil Rights-oriented black organisations - was that difficult?

JB: The Party didn’t kowtow to anybody and at the same time it was very ecumenical. So if you think about moderate black political leaders, think about the kinds of people that supported the Panthers in San Francisco like Willie Brown, who was an assemblyman in California, or Cecil Williams who had a big black church, or think about people like... even Whitney Young, the head of the Urban League, these were the people who led the charge against the most vicious repression of the Party. You know, the book that was done that led to the Senate investigations into the killing of Fred Hampton, who pushed that? In part, the Urban League was very involved in that. How did the Party support the Urban League? Was the Party friendly with the Urban League? Not! I mean they had this column in their paper that they published regularly called “Chairman” and they said “these kind of folks are just all about kissing the capitalist power holder’s ass, the white man’s ass, they’re not about the real deal, they’re not real leaders, they’re not representing black peoples’ interest.” But these were the same people who, when push came to shove, felt like the Party was representing at least whatever effort there was on the part of young black people. The Willie Browns, the Whitney Youngs didn’t agree with anything the Party was doing or saying but they thought that given there was no political representation, very little, right? I think there had been, at the most, six (black) representatives nationally in Congress before the Party amalgamated. There was very little representation in police departments or fire departments or municipal hiring of any form. The Democratic Party machines basically excluded black people even though theoretically black people could run - but if they weren’t part of the party machines how were they gonna get represented, right? And they couldn’t get into higher education, there was a miniscule black middle class, so these issues were very real for black moderates as well as this point and so long as that was the case they didn’t want to have any role in this development. So the OT: You see potential for similar alliances to be made today for a contemporary revolutionary politics?

JB: If you think of #BlackLivesMatter, there’s this incredible opportunity at this moment. There’s been a rupture, or a crack, or an opening in the veil. - (WBE) Du Bois talks about the veil that separates white America from black America. The character of that is a little different now that you do have a large black middle class ... but you have half of Black America that continues to live in this militarised, greatly impoverished, basically at war with the state, it has very little access and faces heavy repression day-to-day as just a part of daily life. Most people in the United States and the world don’t see that world most of the time. Michelle Alexander talks eloquently about the “New Jim Crow” and what that means and how it exists in the context of the “War on Drugs” and the mythology of “colourblindness”, whereas race race very much continues to play, in some ways, an even more salient role in structuring social relations. But most people don’t see what happens on that side. And what’s happened with this video technology on everybody’s smartphones is that the veil has been opened a crack where people are seeing these killings; these brutal killings by police and security officers and vigilantes of unarmed black people are not new, they have been going on for decades. What is new is that people who didn’t know that was going on are now seeing it. Black people knew it was going on, people who have worked and lived in black communities knew it was going on, but now the world cannot ignore that this is going on. The question is: what happens? If you destabilise customary brutality policing of black communities and the way that it’s been done by opening that veil technologically, what happens? How does it transform? And in some ways that is like what happened with Jim Crow, right? You had an exposure of the contradictions and the irony of Jim Crow, not only just a conscious exposure of it but an unveiling of some of the economic basis of it with the decline of the cotton economy. [...] So what’s possible today? It all depends on the practices. If people can find ways of making “business as usual” impossible such that when they get repressed that repression is broadly threatening then they’ll be able to do what the Panthers did for several years and what the Civil Rights Movement did on a much greater scale which is that they’ll be able to drive the transformation that happens through the opening of that veil. Conversely, if people don’t develop practices that are able to destabilise the “New Jim Crow” and force repression in a way that brings other people into the fray and can sort of sustain that disruption as a source of power, if people don’t develop those kinds of practices then unfortunately it seems like the trajectory is a series of relatively modest state concessions that sort of beauty and [sic] some kind of accountability that is basically is able to make enough change in a surface way that seeing beyond that veil is not destabilising the way things have been. In other words, not much. Not much is really going to happen unless people figure out how to make “business as usual” impossible.

Interview

The OT spoke with Joshua Bloom, co-author of the 2013 book ‘Black Against Empire’, about the history, politics and thought of the Black Panther Party. What follows is an abridged version of this discussion. The full interview can be found online at bit.ly/JoshuaBloom.
thats stopped being viable in May of 1967! Before the Party even became that influential. The Party got its first influence by armed patrols of the police but as soon as there were hundreds of black people who weren't Panthers coming out to Panther rallies in North Richmond, bringing their own guns, the State of California very quickly changed the law to make those patrols illegal. So the Party got to start, built its initial momentum with those early legally armed patrols of the police but by 1968, by the time the Party is really growing, it's no longer legal to do armed patrols - they had to reinvent themselves and at that point it's a suggested advocacy of insurrectionary violence. So the Party never directs in any overt or explicit way any kind of armed confrontations with the state but what they say is: "The racist dog policeman must withdraw immediately from our communities, cease their wanton murder and brutality and torture of black people, or face the wrath of the armed people." And Huey (Newton) says, in Executive Mandate #3, every Panther has to have a gun in their home and if the police come with a warrant take the arrest, if they illegally invade your home and start shooting: shoot back. So the conditions are created, without any directive action on the part of the Party, for all these armed confrontations between Panthers and police all over the country. That's where "business as usual" becomes impossible.

"Business as usual" is impossible with the Panthers around because people are shooting it out with the police, challenging state power in this very direct way. Is the Party directing that? No. Is the Party instigating that? Absolutely not. Would advocacy of armed insurrection work today? Absolutely not. Who's going to support them? Today those would be "terrorists". I am a firm disbeliever in the power of the fixed ideology of revolution. I don't think the reason why the Party is able to build those broader alliances and articulate a broader movement and move towards a greater challenge to state power, I don't think that's because they got the analysis "right" in some fixed way. I think it's because what they did on the ground tapped into broader interests. And specifically, it leveraged broader political cleavages. Those political cleavages, those kinds of political cleavages, are everywhere today! And they're always everywhere. So it's not like because the politics of the Party can't sustain those broader challenges that there's no way to sustain broader challenges today. I think, in fact, it's entirely possible. But I think that's what it takes. It takes figuring out how to make "business as usual" impossible in such a way that it leverages the broader political cleavages as they are in this moment. That's what the challenge is and that's what people have to figure out.

The OT: And what about the Panther theorisation of these uprisings?

JB: Huey was very explicit and direct about it. He said, these reveal the political capacity of Black America. He said, if you cannot deliver consequences you're insignificant, all these "black leaders" who supposedly represent something but can't deliver consequences, they don't mean anything if you can't deliver economic consequences, if you can't deliver military consequences. He said, look at Black America, Black America is willing to stand up and get killed to stand up against this injustice. So he saw these spontaneous rebellions, and in particular the Watts rebellion, as indicative of the capacity that needed to be channelled and organised. He did not see it as a revolutionary process in and of itself but he saw it as indicative of where the source of power was, where the source of consequences were. If people were ready to rebel then they were ready to do the kinds of things that the Panthers were advocating and this proved to be completely true. His analysis proved spot on. That if you could organise the "brother on the block", who was already going head-to-head with the police anyway, and get that energy and that willingness to resist organised then you could deliver consequences and you could move mountains.

JB: The social programs were crucial. They embodied this idea of local self-governance, they were very appealing to allies, they gave the constituencies a core daily activity from '69 [when they really started] and onward through 1970 and certainly after the Party falls apart and the little remaining thing in Oakland and a few other places. They're the key day-to-day activity, they build, people can send their kids somewhere and they appreciate that, so they build support from the community and the constituency and all these things. But they never build the Party.

Those are institutional and developmental processes and the problem is that the Party doesn't have any access to resources to do that kind of thing any more than anybody else without the revolutionary ideology and any of those other things. The only way that they can drive that dynamic is because they have the power of disruption, from the insurrectionary armed self-defence. So it's because they're at the centre stage - and they've got all kinds of attention and all kinds of political support and all kinds of money and all kinds of lawyers and all kinds of power that's coming from making "business as usual" impossible and being emblematic of what Black Power means and being the revolutionariness reference point for so many black and non-black activists nationally and internationally - that they're able to draw the kinds of resources to even be able to do these programs on any significant scale.

Once you separate the two and you say "Survival Pending Revolution" and "we've gonna put down our guns and we're gonna do social democracy" they're no more influential than any other community group except that there's some sort of residual momentum and resources and fame and connections and those kinds of things. And conversely, shooting it out and saying "we're gonna have guerrilla warfare now", that was just suicidal and just completely unrealistic to the moment. So once those two politics are no longer...once it's no longer possible to sustain that marriage between an appeal to allies and a politics that can draw much broader support - especially organised around those community programs - once that can no longer be wedded to what's called 'the politics of armed self-defence' and the creation of all these armed confrontations across the country, once those two cannot be kept together anymore because the political context has gotten so much harder to sustain that you know with all those concessions, neither is viable. So are social programs a panacea for movements? No, they're not. Are they a wise and important piece of constituency-building and of alliance-building and of community service and a basis for some kind of proto-local governance when combined with some kind of real insurgent power? They certainly were in the Party's case and I don't see why they couldn't be in another. But I don't think that, in isolation, they're anything different than your average non-profit organisation.
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