



THE OCCUPIED TIMES OF LONDON

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Editorial

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 equalising 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 just how foundational these issues are. We saw environmentalist NGOs and campaigners physically tussling with the 'Wretched of the Earth' bloc, who had sought to bring representation of colonised and Indigenous people to the front 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 #RhodesMustFall, have been decried as censorial and revisionist or patronisingly held up as debate points for liberal commentary.

The Trades 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 2009 dispute saw wide-

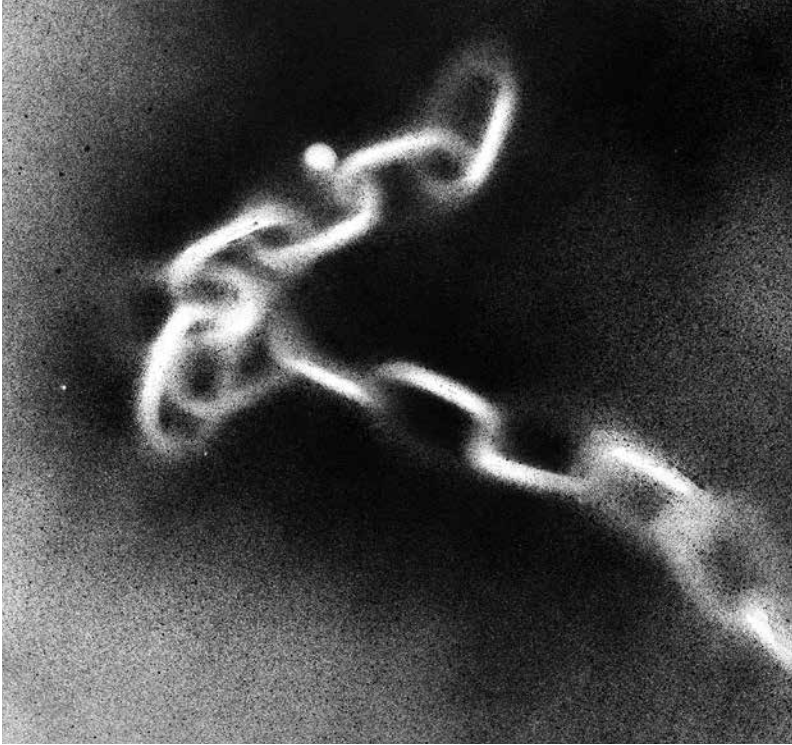
spread use of the slogan "British Jobs for British Workers" by strikers in an oil refinery. Cries of "solidarity" have too often excluded those being exploited in European colonies, and the work done - largely by women - to reproduce the working class. The inability of the union movement to address the 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 abject, 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 violent state policies, whilst simultaneously calling for solidarity and 'unity' in their own political struggles.

To lay these 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 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) resume 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" "Everyone deserves a safe home" "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 expanse of this struggle and act within this space.



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FUNDRAISING

NEW DIRECTIONS

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**
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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!

We Don't Share Anything

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 set 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 (a result Corbyn regards as a problem). On the other hand, it is the companies who own the necessary tools and the raw materials. In this sense, it looks like the creation of wealth is indeed a collaboration: both workers and companies have a bit of what is needed for production.

However, the decision to make some new useful stuff is not a question of collaboration in this way. Useful things are only created if a company has decided profits are to be made in doing so. In deciding to produce something, a company calculates that hiring workers, buying materials and setting the workers to work to make stuff, which can then be sold, will make a profit. If successful, then more wealth has been created: whether this has happened is measured by whether the money made from selling the products is more than the total expended to make them. This is the dominant form of wealth in our society: wealth measured in money, especially money that can be spent in order to increase its quantity, i.e.

capital. The fact that useful stuff that people need is made at all under this system is subordinated to this purpose of profit-making.

Workers, who Corbyn invites to share his ideas about wealth creation, are in a difficult position when it comes to engaging in this peculiar collective process. Firstly, the purpose for which the process of wealth creation is undertaken is one which does not care about their need for a wage. What that means for workers is that whether there is work for them to do is not something which they can determine. Being dependent on such calculations is a pretty difficult position given that most workers have no other way of earning a living than by agreeing to work for a wage. That leads on to the second difficulty. Profit-making isn't just indifferent to workers' need for a wage, but is hostile to the wage as a source of income – and therefore to workers. That is because the magnitude of capitalists' profits depends on the excess in price of their products over their expenses. The wages of workers are an expense (albeit a necessary expense). Paying less in wages and getting workers to work harder increases profits.

Given that the wage is subject to such calculations, it is no surprise that the size of the wage is so often insufficient to meet the needs of the workers. Being dependent on a wage is therefore a particularly rubbish way of having to survive and not one we might think people are likely to willingly choose. However, companies can usually find as many willing workers in the marketplace as they can profitably make use of. To ensure that the condition of having no alternative but to work is widespread and persistent, it is necessary that the wage is not generally sufficient to enable an individual worker to obtain resources to prevent herself from having to continue in such a miserable state. The permanent poverty of the mass of people, in the sense that there must always exist a class who has

failing to explain that the purpose of production is for the increase of the wealth they control – capital – and not the satisfaction of everyone's needs, encourages workers, who as a class have an antagonistic relationship to capital, to seek compromise with it, rather than the abolition of classes through the abolition of capital. That can be seen in the timidity of his policies (maybe a minimum wage of £10 an hour – so long as profits can still be made).

MISTAKING THE ROLE OF THE STATE – A NECESSARY STEP FOR ANY DECENT LEADER OF THE STATE

Additionally, Corbyn argues that "public investment and services" also participate in the "collective process" of wealth creation. Public investment and services are not the form of wealth which counts in the society ruled over by the State which provides them. They do not directly lead to an increase in wealth measured in money which increases itself. But Corbyn isn't completely wrong to think that the State plays a role – it provides a lot of "public services" to enable this form of wealth creation to exist and thrive.

Firstly, it guarantees private property. This is the basic condition for the existence of the wealth creation which leads to the permanent generalised exclusion from wealth described above. These rights are the only reason why companies own the wealth that workers are compelled to create through their own lack of access to property. The State does not therefore simply encounter a world of competing workers and companies which it must then intervene in. Rather it provides the basic and necessary conditions for this world.

The mistake is an easy one to make in a world where it is the employer who does not pay enough without the State imposing a minimum wage, or where employers would force workers to work much longer hours without rules about working time.

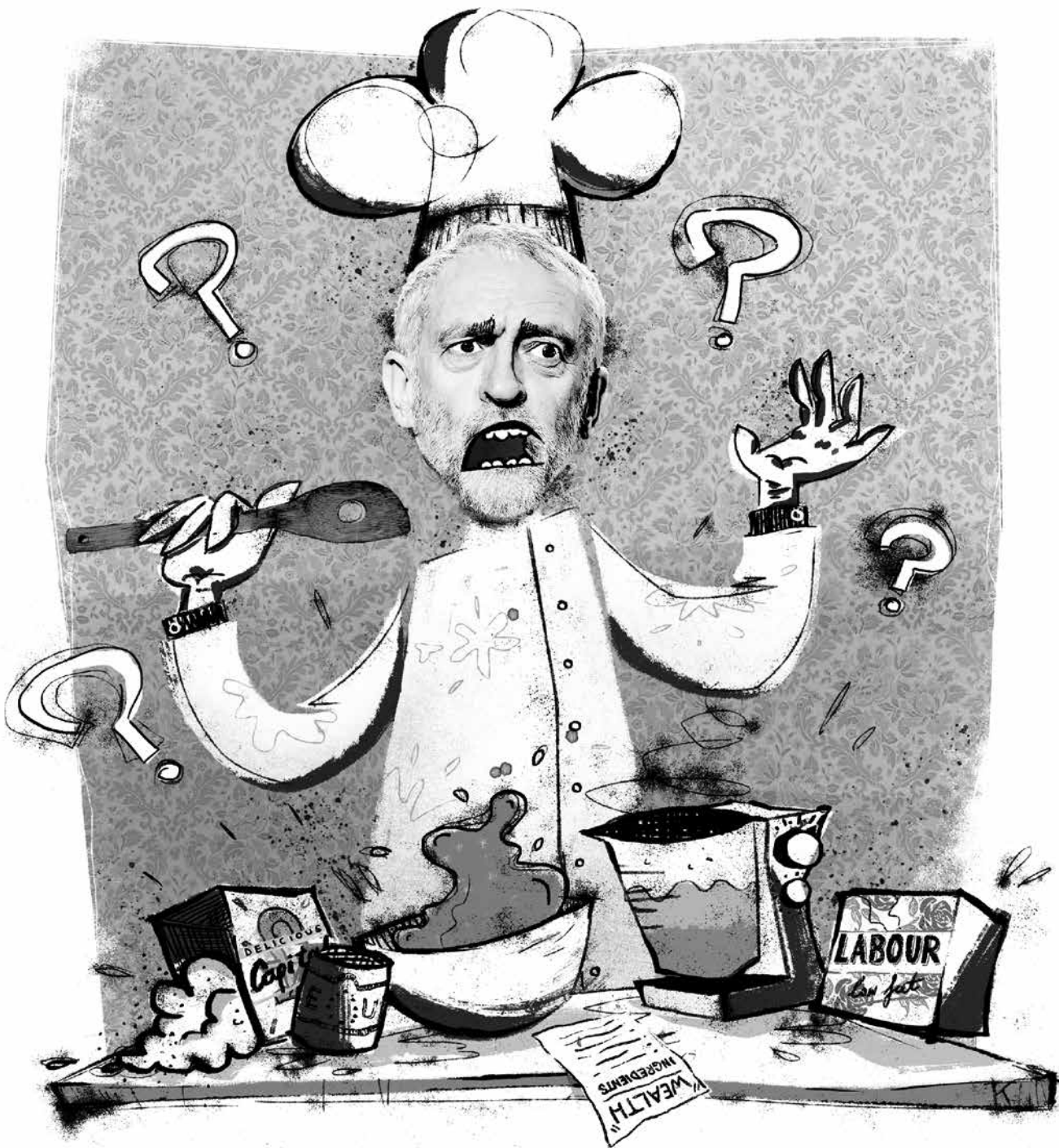


Illustration by Kostas K. Inka and Destroy.com

no choice but to sell their time, is therefore a necessary feature of the creation of wealth under this system. The problem of poverty, which exists because of the exclusion of workers from access to most of the wealth, and to which Corbyn reacts, is just the flip side of the coin of the type of wealth that he wants to grow.

PUSHING WRONG IDEAS ABOUT WEALTH CAN'T HELP THOSE EXCLUDED FROM IT

When Corbyn agitates his supporters on the basis that as workers they are necessary for wealth creation in this society and therefore they should receive a fair share, he does not contribute to a proper critique of the capitalist production process that is needed if overcoming generalised poverty is the aim. Instead, he stands in the way of correctly understanding how this form of wealth creation relies upon and produces poverty. Failing to explain the relationship between work and wealth does not contribute to people's ability to destroy that relationship. Corbyn's acceptance that companies are necessary to wealth creation, whilst

And indeed, the State must provide sufficient health and safety rules, minimum standards for pay, welfare support, subsidised housing, education and so on, as left untended capitalism destroys 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 same purposes: growth of private wealth.

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 service capital as a benevolent service to them. criticsticuffs.org

The Failures of Atmospheric Commodification

"The rush to make profits out of carbon-fixing engenders another kind of colonialism."

Introduction

We're all familiar with the ongoing planetary biocrisis. Global temperatures are predicted to rise by 4°C by 2100, with recent research warning of a 6°C rise by 2100, a far cry from the 2°C target deemed safe. The integrity of our energy systems and agriculture are threatened, the world's oceans slowly acidify, forest ecosystems are collapsing and, amidst the ecocide, 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 a global transition to renewables? Or is the concept of a carbon market another example of neoliberal hegemony, a capitalist attempt to profit from disaster?

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 10% 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.

The US delegation and the 1,500 lobbyists from the International Emissions Trading Association helped cement the use of market instruments in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. US Vice President Al Gore advised that the US would only agree to the Protocol if the trading of pollution rights was implemented. Even though the US eventually refused to adopt the Protocol anyway" it strengthened the concept of market environmentalism. Since then the design and development of carbon markets has predominantly fallen into the hands of financial market architects, with emissions trading becoming "almost unstoppable".

Through the prism of capitalist accumulation we can see carbon markets as a case of state enclosure of the commons (the atmosphere) in order to forcefully create a new market, attempting to reduce something complex (climate) into something quantifiable (a carbon price). "Creating markets where there have been none before is one of the ways in which, historically, capital has expanded".

Today, emissions trading is a key part of capitalist logic. Scientists frequently endorse the idea of putting a price on carbon to help tackle global warming. Corporations experiment with internal carbon pricing in attempts to reduce emissions. The World Bank estimates that 12% of annual greenhouse gas emissions are now covered under carbon pricing systems. Carbon markets now form an integral part of an "emerging global policy framework" to tackle climate change.

Contemporary Developments

Despite Nicholas Stern's assertion that climate change "is the greatest market failure the world has ever seen" and carbon markets have quickly proliferated across the world. From California to South Africa to Japan, emissions trading is popular

globally, with new markets constantly emerging. Emanuele Leonardi references this proliferation as the "carbon trading dogma"; the ideological assumption that only pollution markets can effectively solve climate change.

Carbon markets come in many forms. The largest scheme in existence is the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), established in 2005, and is a prime example of a "cap and trade" system. There are also project-based carbon offsets, where instead of cutting local emissions entities can finance "carbon-saving" projects elsewhere. Under the Kyoto Protocol there are also "flexibility mechanisms" such as the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation.

In 2009 Richard Sandor of the Chicago Climate Exchange, stated "We're going to see a worldwide market, and carbon will unambiguously be the largest non-financial commodity in the world". As predicted, the global carbon market has doubled in size every year since 2005 and is expected to have a market value of \$3.1 trillion in 2020. In 2009 carbon markets traded over \$100 billion a year and were worth €64 billion in 2014. The EU ETS alone had a turnover of €90 billion in 2010.

Carbon markets enjoy widespread support. 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 attempts 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 across North America. Carbon markets are not advancing homogeneously however - efforts to fix the flaws in the EU ETS continue, and Australia is the first country to repeal a carbon price.

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 invest in cleaner methods of energy generation in order to save money. "In generating a price for carbon an incentive is created to reduce emissions as efficiently as possible".

A recent economic study found that, factoring in climatic 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 transfer, 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 step in when resistance emerges. Neoliberalism has always made use of state violence to secure property rights, enforce stability, and quash 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 also been wracked with crime. A reliance on corporate self-regulation has encouraged "climate fraud". INTERPOL in 2013 released the "Guide to Carbon Trading Crime", detailing carbon market-associated money

laundering, insider trading, and cybercrime, and explaining how the capacity to falsify information or receive bribes 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 seen increasing through the online measurements of the Mauna Loa Observatory.

These failures would suggest that, regardless of design, carbon markets cannot reduce emissions. As Mike Childs describes:

"The global carbon budget to avoid dangerous climate change is too small to allow trading. If a temperature target of 1.5 degrees is chosen with a reasonable to high chance of avoiding it, then the global carbon budget will be tiny. Carbon trading relies on countries having 'spare' carbon emissions ... Under a tiny carbon budget it is almost certain that no country will have any spare emissions to sell."

Carbon trading also ignores fossil fuel consumers that cannot be subsumed under markets – the US military for example, potentially the world's largest consumer of petroleum, would hardly accept a carbon price as it released almost 60 million metric tons of CO₂ in 2011.

The hoped-for renewable transition is also an abject failure. Larry Lohmann provides evidence that in the EU ETS renewable energy "gains no demonstrable benefits." 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. Max Koch comes to a similar conclusion, with carbon prices never being high enough to trigger technological change. Carbon markets are thus able to trigger short-term changes for immediate profit but are incapable of long-term planning.

A Mistaken Enemy: Capitalism, not Carbon

There is a need to address the heart of the capitalist system, the "grow or die" imperative that has created carbon markets. Through "Accumulation by Decarbonisation", capitalism has created a smokescreen 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". Areas of the earth that can absorb excess carbon are becoming commodified as part of carbon offset schemes, enclosing the commons further. The South is effectively becoming a carbon dump for the industrialised nations, seizing land from indigenous communities to be "managed" per climate agreements. It is no surprise that

developing countries see the "ecological concern of industrialised countries [as] merely to a latest chapter in a long history of imperialism".

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 after sensing "a business opportunity" in disaster.

"Ultimately carbon markets are designed to continue capitalist development and expansion." Environmental protection is secondary to the profit motive. Carbon trading is a form of "proxy 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 the bourgeois 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 biocrisis 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 leapfrog any need for carbon markets and it is only political will that is required to realise them, something we must spearhead. As Bruce Podobnik said in 2010: "The historical record shows very clearly that...changes in energy industries require the mobilization of mass social movements. We cannot wait for visionary politicians to forge the way."

But a solution cannot be a simple product of technics. Our society and its view of the environment has to change. "Renewable energy is a necessity for a sustainable and equitable society, but not a guarantee of one". We must remember that "every society extends its own perception of itself into nature". A renewably powered capitalist economy would still view the natural world as a resource to be managed and plundered. The future is anti-capitalist.

As the bourgeoisie 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?

This essay is a shortened version. The original essay and accompanying references can be found at Fighting the Biocrisis. Written by probablyasocialecologist (@SocialEcologist).

ON CAMPAIGN ZERO

Aaron Bryant

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 obviously 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 most marginalised 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 organising 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.

ablackunbound.wordpress.com

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 people 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 protect 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 should be identifying signs of such vulnerabilities to then 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 "conveyor belt" moving from grievance, through radicalisation, to violence'.

Secondly, the Prevent strategy and the new duty are fixated 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 teenage behaviours, or a young person's beliefs, can be seen as indicators of being on the pathway to violent extremism. In fact, again, studies show that there is no direct link at all between religious observance, radical ideas, emotional wellbeing and violent acts.

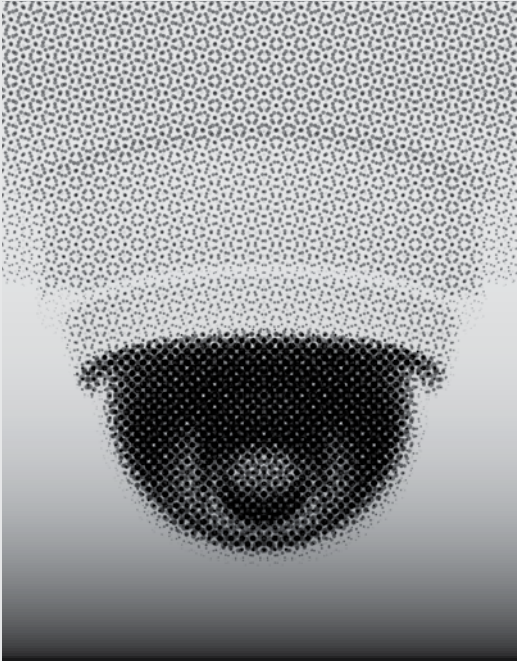
But this is how Prevent operates in schools: identifying threats before they emerge in the so-called 'pre-crime space'.

You might remember that a senior British police officer, Scotland Yard commander Mak Chishty, 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 radicalised. He also suggested watching for subtle unexplained 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 criminal activity, including terrorism.

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 confuses the different professional roles of teachers and the police, 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 Impero, is a 'confide button' allowing pupils to report on fellow classmates anonymously.



Destroying trust, fostering discrimination

Expecting teachers and childcare professionals to identify potential extremists undermines trust and positive relationships. We argue that mutual respect and trust between teachers and pupils is essential for learning environments where everyone feels safe and valued. The constant monitoring of Muslim students will destroy trust and encourage discrimination against them.

How much confidence can Muslim communities have in Prevent in schools when many serious abuses are being reported already?

A series of case studies put together by the Muslim Council of Britain on terrorism legislation confirms the worst fears we had about the statutory Prevent duty; we are seeing the duty being implemented naïvely in some schools, but also in crude, damaging and discriminatory ways in others. These are often schools where teachers have attended the 'official' Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training.

Bill Bolloten

EDUCATION NOT SURVEILLANCE

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

- **A fifteen-year-old was questioned by police at home about his views on Syria and Daesh because he wore a 'Free Palestine' badge to school and handed out some leaflets promoting the "Boycott, 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 thought Israel 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 you have. He explicitly said you cannot speak about this conflict at school with your friends,' the boy said.**
- **In another case, a fourteen-year-old 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 class discussions for fear of being suspected of extremism.**

Prevent is clearly leading to negative stereotyping of Muslim children and young people, and racial and religious profiling.

As Muslim pupils are now monitored and scrutinised through a securitised lens there is now little doubt that those who fit the profile set out in the Channel "Vulnerability Assessment Framework" will increasingly find themselves unfairly targeted.

We argue then that 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.

Making schools less safe

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.

Children and young people need to be able to speak openly with teachers about the issues they feel strongly about, including sensitive and controversial ones, without the 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 rights or to express either 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), I think there are very specific concerns in relation to Article 13 which outlines how every child has the right to freedom of expression and ideas.

As Arun Kundnani 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 nowhere to engage in a democratic process and in a peaceful way, then that's the worst climate to create for terrorist recruitment.'

Schools 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 engaged 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 *laïcité* has become a tool to reinforce narrow judgements about French identity and discriminate against minorities.

The challenges ahead

Some key questions and challenges should be considered:

1. What will the cost of Prevent be for the dignity, confidence and sense of belonging of Muslim children?
In a powerful piece earlier this year, "Safeguarding little Abdul, Prevent Muslim schoolchildren and the lack of parental consent", Yahya Birt asked his 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 be proud rather than be ashamed of being a Muslim. 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.'
2. What will be the short 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 identify it as counter-productive and dangerous.

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 through Prevent. She added that assessment by Ofsted on how schools were protecting children from radicalisation added an extra pressure on teachers.

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

The National Union of Teachers statement on the Prevent duty was welcome and encouraging:

'Teachers need opportunities to work together, and with local schools, to develop proportionate and sensible ways for schools to respond to the different risks young people face – one of which, for a comparatively small number of young people, might be exposure to individuals advocating violence.'

The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) union moved a motion, unanimously passed at September's TUC Congress in Brighton, arguing that Prevent 'could destroy relationships between teachers and learners'. Requiring teachers to spy on and report pupils would 'close down space for open discussion in a safe and secure environment and smother the legitimate expression of political opinion.'

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, they can also access 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 into schools as part of 'safeguarding' 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'

GENDERED ANTAGONISMS

Morgan Potts

All expressions of gender non-conformity are antagonistic, especially trans femininity.

Gender antagonisms aren't always brash. 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 about 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 exclaim, "Is that a boy or a girl?!" They are always groups of men. Other people will stare, trying to figure out if they 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 "androgynous" 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 deserving of their oppression for daring to be visible, that we are obligated to assimilate.

I am staunchly 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 violences and less exhausted through constantly combating transphobia). Trans people might perform normative gender expressions because it helps them pass, and passing can be extremely empowering (never mind safer). 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.

Two people walk down the street wearing the same dress: both are non-binary demi-boys. One is a dfab (designated female at birth) sex worker, pressured to be femme his whole life; he resents the street harassment when people perceive him as a woman; he is thrilled when he gets stares as they clock him as "a man in a dress" because that's closer than street harassers have ever gotten to being right about him, and it's perversely validating. The other boy is dmab (designated male at birth) and was never allowed to express femininity; the empowerment he felt at home when he got dressed dissipates as lads shout at him. They witness his gender nonconformity and undermine his feminine expression. The experience of wearing the same dress, having the same gender identity, and being perceived as the same gender is extremely different for these two people.

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.

"Transition". Transition is constant, like coming out. Gender is not binary for most of us. We don't wake up suddenly eschewing yesterday's gender and confidently claim its "opposite". Gender is a non-linear process; there is no clear "before" and "after".

Privilege is not only produced, it is reproduced.

The fragility of masculinity is incredible. Men feel so entitled to physical and conversational space, and media representation, that as soon as anyone else speaks they feel silenced. Men are apparently 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 masculinity 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 space, people take me more seriously, and I'm allowed anonymity; 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 as I'm mistaken for a woman), but a lot of the time it's subtle and it takes all of my focus to concentrate on the interaction instead of wondering how I'm being gendered.

Assimilation is not liberation. Trans queers don't want marriage (monogamous state-sanctioned intimacy and consolidated wealth) nor to serve openly in the military ("your feminism will be anti-imperialist or it will be bullshit"). We want systemic power imbalances levelled. We want housing and healthcare and jobs (at least until capitalism crumbles). 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.

Trans politics isn't about conforming to respectability or professionalism or "you wouldn't dress that way if you didn't want attention" victim-blaming crap, and it's not about ending gender or erasing femininity so we can all be "neutral" (read: masculine). It's about erasing gender policing, it's about dismantling the binary so everyone can rid themselves of patriarchal prescribed gender roles, it's about allowing fluidity of identity and expression. There is no trans liberation without black and brown liberation from white supremacy and colonialism, queer liberation from heteronormativity, women's liberation from patriarchy, crip and mad liberation from ableism, and worker's liberation from capitalism.

The Lure of ‘Frozen’ Racism

Alana Lentin

One of the most dogged problems facing students of race and racism is one of definition. Racism is correctly viewed as an historical phenomenon [although the impact of psychology has led to its facile identification as a perennial facet of human behaviour]. However, the tendency to historicise 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 Barnor Hesse has pointed out, begins in the 18th century with the advent of racial 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 expunge race following 1945 as an outdated and discredited concept, making way for ideas about difference, such as culture and ethnicity, that rejected the naturalised inevitability of race as genetics. What this undigested 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 rather more messy 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 expropriation of lands and resources and the genocides 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 Nazi 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 identification as racist. In part this is to do with the problematic genealogy of the term ‘racism’ itself, first coined to describe the spread of fascistic ideas by Eurocentric early opponents of fascism in the 1930s. 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 a 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 doomed to fail for it was not originally conceived to encapsulate their experiences and agitate for their full autonomy. Be that as it may, and there are good arguments with hindsight that bear this observation out, the problem of fixing the definition 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 states considered to exhibit the most extreme and extremely different modes of state racism. These dominant examples of compared racisms are taken either to indicate that their differences are not as extreme as 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 reductive and comparativist 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 confined number of prototypes that explain racial structures and racist expression that can be compared among them with the consequence that any racialising process or racist practice that does not measure up to these exemplars becomes ‘not racism’. 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 sown in one location, pollinating them 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.

Gavan Titley and I pointed this out in our 2011 book, *The Crises of Multiculturalism*, when we described how the idea of multicultural failure becomes a ‘recited 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 twin 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 horrible death. But the Danish decision to seize 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 expropriation of valuables (resources) of 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-ness of Jewish gold fillings. 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 intangible and complex machinations, which have become more or less obscured.

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 colonialism 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 to apply for family reunification, for example, can be re-written as commonsensical from the perspective that can only see migration as a drain on resources understood as exclusively ‘national’ (the most common defence of the Danish asylum policy is that the gold standard Danish social welfare system must be preserved for Danish citizens). However, it is important to understand race as having the function, not only of condemning other human beings to a life separated from their family, for example, but as placing more or less arbitrarily designated non-white, non-European, non-Christian populations (yesterday Jews, today Syrians) in the position of ‘being done to’, and not as agents of their autonomous will.

The way in which that is achieved is through the connection of racialised discourse – “crime” and “terrorism”, “economic drain”, “cultural incompatibility” – to banalised bureaucratisation. As Sanmati Verma et al point out, a good example is the ‘Code of Behaviour’ for asylum seekers living in the “Australian community” on so-called “bridging” temporary protection visas. They are threatened with return to detention centres should they violate the code, much of which pertains to the

intangible perception of anti-social behaviour, from the most ordinary (spitting, bad language) to the more disruptive, including protest. This potentially leaves the arbitration of the fate of temporarily protected asylum seekers (who in any case have not been offered refugee status and permanent settlement) to any individual who deems them to have breached the code and reports them to the Australian Border Force.

Race has been, and continues to be, about the delineation of proximity and distance and the ever-changing parameters of where one fits in. What defines cultural compatibility? Where are the boundaries of ‘national values’ drawn? And what measures are used to assess the individual according to them? Who arbitrates? What arguments are used to legitimate applying these measures? Who, beyond the bureaucrats, even knows about the myriad constraints on those non-citizens in limbo outside of a news or social media ‘event’? It is relevant here to consider how the issue of detention was brought home when a US-American PhD student was put in a detention centre after being refused leave to remain in the UK.

Indeed, the multiplicity, intangibility and seeming arbitrariness of these judgments

of ‘competence’ or ‘compatibility’ play into the distance that is put between the purportedly ‘real’ – frozen – racism of the past, and the commonsense approaches to the ‘management’ of migration flows and the assurance of integration today. With the supposedly post-racial hindsight afforded by a partial reading of the history of racism that freezes it in narrowly defined regimes, events, and practices, the messiness and complexity of race as it appears to us today is easily dismissed as ‘not racist’. In essence, as has long been pointed out by Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, the success with which racism has been hegemonically defined from a white standpoint, not only denies experience as key to the subjective definition of racism but refuses to get ‘bogged down’ in the detail of race in practice.

If we seek to understand the functioning of race at a time that is deemed post-racial, it is imperative to understand that it is indeed this that keeps race alive: a defining feature of race post-race is the perfecting of racism’s deniability. The violence of race is not only in the materiality of its effects, but in the denial of its presence as an arbitrating factor in decisions about human life.



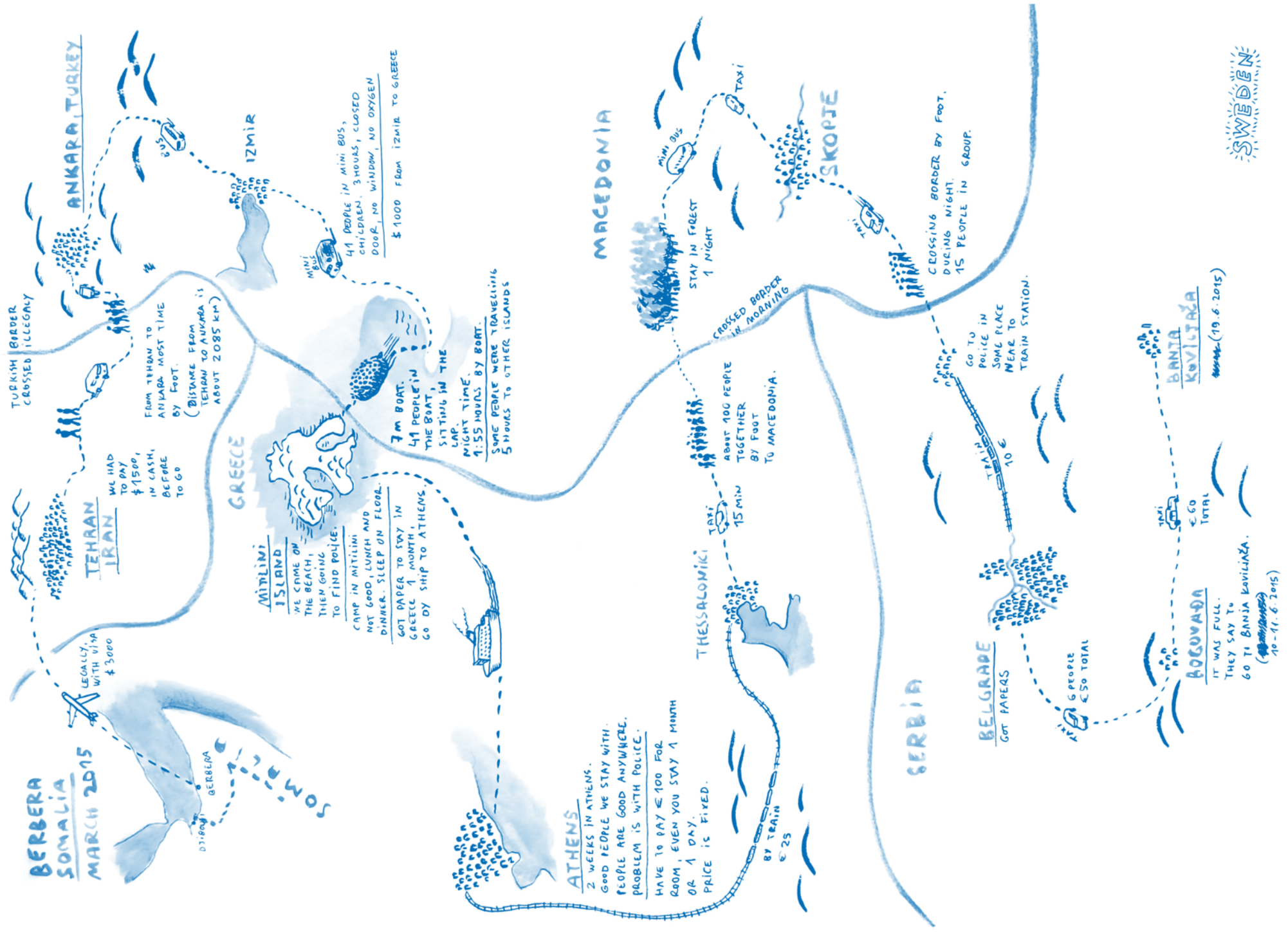
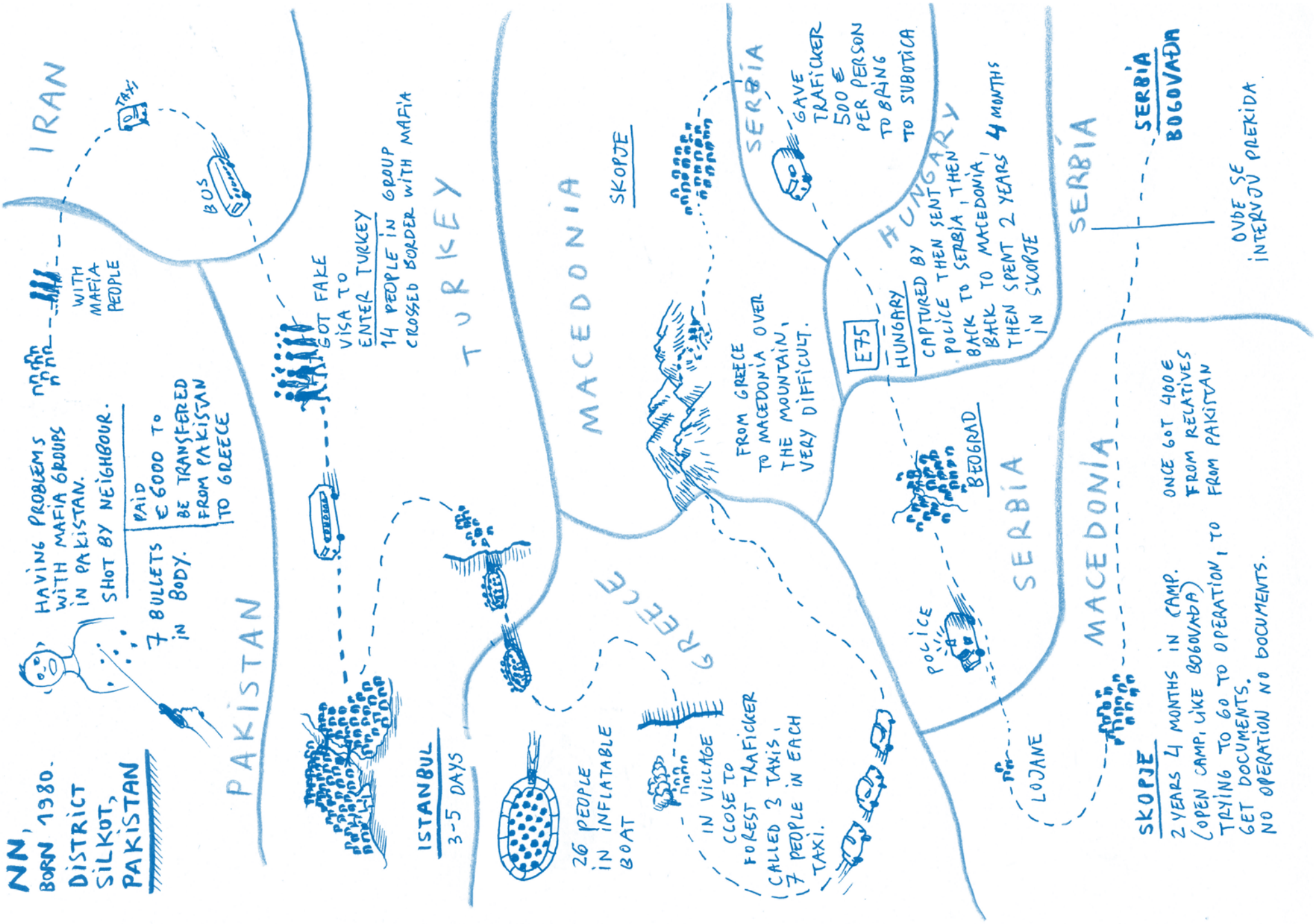
MIGRATION MAPS

In 2013, Group 484 invited several artists to work with asylum seekers in an asylum centre near the village of Bogovadja, near Valjevo. At that time, the number of migrants in Serbia was not nearly as large as it is today. The issue of migration, except in the narrow circles of activists and individual organisations, was neither visible nor topical. In Bogovadja we met people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Eritrea, Guinea, Senegal, Syria while they were spending days in the centre, reporting to the police station upon entering Serbia illegally and expressing their intention to seek asylum.

We did not want to frame people as victims, avoiding the prism of humanitarian paternalism which is often the basis of art projects, but as courageous people who, by the very fact that they had decided to set out on such a journey, made a radical change in their life - fleeing war, conflicts and poverty. We were interested when, how and where they had been travelling before we met them. We asked why they had embarked on such a journey, what troubles they had survived, how they had crossed borders, what their experiences were with police and people in the countries they had passed through.

Together we sketched maps, piecing together their routes, which in some cases had taken up to 7 years. Sometimes the maps lack detail or are unclear, and sometimes they would skip parts of the journey. We wanted to show their routes factually, and thus draw attention to Europe’s inhumane asylum policy.

Djordje Balmazovic / Škart





JUNE 2015

BANDA KOVILJACA

WE EITHER WE DON'T HAVE CASH OR IF HAVE IT IS STACHED IN A PLASTIC BAG

LOCAL MAFIA WAS ROBBING US.

IN MACEDONIA, VERY DIFFICULT THROUGH JUNGLE.

MACEDONIA, THERE WERE WOMEN PREGNANT WITH CHILDREN.

ETHIOPIA, SYRIA, GHANA, NIGERIA.

PEOPLE WERE FROM THERE WERE BABIES.

SOLIDAR. GROUP, INTERNATIONAL, PEOPLE IN

60 DAYS 65 PEOPLE IN

9 DAYS WALKING.

IT WAS DIFFICULT CROSSING BORDERS

AND WE WERE 52 PEOPLE IN THE BOAT

WE SPENT 6 HOURS ON THE SEA AND ONLY ON 3RD TIME SUCCEEDED TO ENTER GRECE, TO SOME ISLAND

BOAT WAS LIKE THIS

UNTIL WE SUCCED.

PRICE IS €1200-1500

GET US TO GRECE.

WE PAID \$1200 TO SMUGGLERS TO

REACH COAST.

PAID \$50 TO

WE LEFT ISTANBUL.

1 YEAR AND 2 MONTHS

AGABA

I WAS COLLECTING CALLS AND SELLING THEM USING WHEELBARS.

SINGLE ROOM WAS 10-20 \$ MONTHLY.

PECI PEI BOYZ (PEY PEY BOYZ) WERE DANGEROUS.

THEY ARE UNQUILIFIED SECURITY BOYZ AND LOCAL MAFIA AND THEY WERE ROBBING US.

EVICCTIONS & BAILIFFS

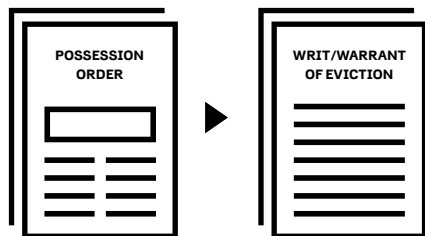
Resisting an eviction is a last resort, not a long term solution, giving you time to organise alternative accommodation.
If facing eviction, other pressure needs to be applied to keep people in their homes or find new ones,
including entering homeless applications with your local council

BAILIFFS MUST PROVIDE

Eviction order can only be given once a possession order granted by a court has expired.
Your landlord cannot evict you yourselves.

EVICITION 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



EVICCTIONS CAN ONLY BE CARRIED OUT BY:

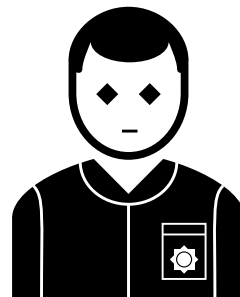
County Court Bailiffs

- 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

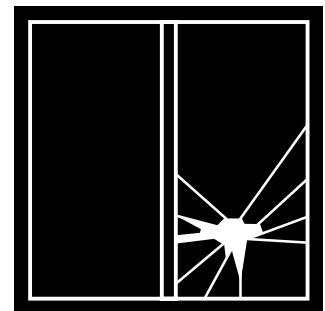
Evictions by High court enforcement officer are very rare. They are more likely if you've resisted a previous eviction attempt or the landlord expects resistance.



USE OF FORCE

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



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.

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

"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!

"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.



"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.

FIGHTING FASCISM IN FLORENCE

The radical left in Italy is currently finding its feet after waves of mobilisation followed by harsh police and judicial repression. Having given birth after fascism to the largest Communist Party in postwar Western Europe, and in parallel the greatest repression of communists during the so-called *strategia della tensione* (strategy of tension), Italy has a legacy of strong antagonism between state-promoted fascism and antifascist resistance. The explanation for this can be found in the formation of the Italian republic, which emerged from an armed struggle led by communists against fascists. With this in mind, I spoke to Mario Rossi (an alias), a communist ex-prisoner who is now facing new police charges, about the contemporary communist and antifascist movements, prison, and what Italian leftists are learning from responses to the economic crisis and crisis of social democracy in the rest of Europe.

In December 2014, a fascist group 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 *degrado*. Local antifascists organised a counter-demonstration through the network *Firenze Antifascista*, which forced the fascists to relocate their protest to a peripheral part of the neighbourhood. When the police tried to stop the antifascists marching, they resisted and the police chased groups of protestors and attempted arrests. No one was arrested, but in October this year Mario was informed, along with nine other activists, that they'd been charged with using violence against the police during the attempted arrests. When I asked Mario why they waited almost a year to address charges to the nine activists, he told me that it was not by chance: "By now we have understood quite well why they do that. They do that because it's the beginning of the school academic year, because in this way they try to prevent and undermine any kind of political activity or political momentum that at the beginning of the academic year the movement tries to join. Every year the cops try to undermine this potentially positive moment for actions and struggles, by releasing charges, by arresting, by charging people with freedom restrictive measures." Mario currently has to sign in at the local police station every morning at 9am, meaning he cannot leave town for longer than a day. Whilst draconian, he is lucky – he could have been arrested and placed in prison, house arrest, or even banished from the city. The charges are for fairly serious crimes given the nature of what took place – violence against police, resistance to police actions, marching without authorisation, covering your face (which is a crime in Italy) and, chillingly, a crime that remains on the statute books from the fascist penal code called *adunata sediziosa*, which means 'gathering with bad intentions'.

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 (*Buona Scuola*). Not only do schools have reputations for radicalism or conservatism, but there are even left factions present. In Mario's hometown of Padova, for instance, the effects of the 1970s splits in the *autonomia* movement are still felt in the two main squatted social centres that high school students gather around, with the more reformist elements forming the *disobbedienti* in contrast to the revolutionary communists who remained faithful to the Marxist-Leninist tenets of the early autonomist movement. Just as the current Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's school reforms are inspiring a new generation 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 G8 summit protests, the zenith of the *disobbedienti* movement which struggled to reinvent itself after the murder of Carlo Giuliani by riot police at the demonstrations. This wave of anti-war mobilisation was a 'last gasp' of the No Global movement rather than something new. At the same time, it inspired many into radical politics.

At university, Mario joined a collective called Valle Giulia (named after historically significant clashes between students and police in Rome in 1968) before moving to Milan, after the huge student mobilisation of 2005. Whilst this mobilisation did not produce anything concrete, nor was it as large as the *Onda* (Wave) of a few years later, it was a base on which to build. "History is always a never-ending process, there are not such clear-cut lines, disruptions, clear fractures... these moments shouldn't be taken as the final struggle against the system, obviously these are just moments of struggle against which you have to, in a way, to achieve something in terms of concrete goals, but at the same time you have to accumulate forces. These are moments in which a lot of people get mobilised, get radicalised, and as a political project or organisation you have to be able to accumulate forces, in a Gramscian sense, to form political activists, to educate political activists and to develop your political organisation, your capacity of being effective in a political sense."

This gets to the core of the fractures in the 1970s *autonomia* movement. Mario takes a traditional Marxist-Leninist position in his critique of contemporary autonomists and *dissobbedienti* whom he says mobilise for the sake of mobilisation rather than building a long-term strategy. At the same time he recognises the elements of this movement from which communists must learn, in particular discarding vertical for horizontal organisation, "how to build a social movement, how to be involved in a social movement, how to not undermine the social movement". The way in which the Occupy movement unfolded as well as the ways in which SYRIZA and Podemos originated have presented real challenges (although ultimately failing ones) to the vertically-organised Leninist groups.

"Right now, it seems to me there is less need of such a vertically-structured organisation thanks to the recent technological advances. 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 well. A serious radical organisation cannot come about if it's not intimately 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 2003-2008 period, a trend was emerging that affected the ideas of radical political activity now being built upon. Whilst a general big movement was missing, activists went back to the local struggles, a rediscovery: "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 archetypal local struggle that has invigorated the radical movement during fallow periods is the No TAV campaign, the campaign against the high-speed train network around Northern Italy and into neighbouring countries. Although it



started in the mid-1990s, in the mid-2000s it became more structured; now a wider struggle, back then it was based more in Val di Susa, a valley in the very North West of Italy where the initial line was being constructed, and there were activists who moved there in order to fully commit to the struggle. Mario first visited the valley around this time, and the reasoning he gives for it keeping the movement not just alive but lively is "it showed that it was still possible to resist a counter-narrative, to be hegemonic... they manage with a really widespread militancy and mobilisation, to be hegemonic." Moreover it provided direction. "Let's move back to our territory, let's see from our daily life what's wrong and let's get people mobilised to struggle against what's wrong in our territory, in our everyday life, and then from a revolutionary perspective let's link those problems to a broader problem that is capitalism in general."

Another local struggle that had a huge mobilising effect during this period was that against the building of the Dal Molin US military base in Vicenza, a small town in Veneto. Like the No TAV movement, and in some ways the Greenham Common campaign in the 1980s, it was politicising in that it fostered an anti-imperialist, anti-militarist logic from what was a local struggle based on a 'not in my back yard' sentiment, a sentiment which is strengthened by the regionalism that Italians tend to prioritise over nationalist identity. It was a week before a massive protest of 100,000 people in this small town, on Monday 12th February 2007, that ten police smashed into the home Mario shared with his then-partner at dawn to arrest them both and charge them for membership of a clandestine organisation (*Partito Comunista Politico-Militare* who were linked by the police to the New Red Brigades) under article 270b, international terrorism. Amongst other things, the police accused the arrestees of trying to infiltrate the anti-war movement, building a case of terrorist activity through environmental evidence, in one case bugging coffee shops where political meetings were held by telling the owners of the café, shamefully, that they were tracking paedophiles 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 the arrests, there was a great deal of media coverage in Italy and internationally. I asked Mario whether he was surprised by his arrest. "It wasn't a complete surprise because I'm a communist. I try to act coherently and I know that by acting coherently to my political commitment I might break the law. So I think that every revolutionary activist, every radical activist, should be aware that at some point they could get in trouble with the law." At the same time, he had no idea who most of the people he was arrested with were, nor anything about most of the accusations made against him. In court, Mario and his comrades took the Jacques Vergès position of 'offensive connivance', accepting the legitimacy of the court and participating in the trial to a point, but refusing to respond to questions or give authorisation to their lawyers to undermine their political identity in order to get any sort of benefit, instead challenging the prosecutor to prove their guilt.

Immediately after arrest Mario was held in solitary confinement for almost five months – 23 hours a day in a cell, 1 hour outdoor in a slightly bigger cell. At the age of 21, 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 maintained his psychological health during this period: his feeling of being part of a collective struggle, having to maintain his health in order to be in good shape for the movement ("I don't have the responsibility to take care of me just because of me, but because my welfare is important also for a collective project and for other people"), and his strict daily routine. He woke early, trained hard, read widely, gave up alcohol, meat, television. Rarely did he have days filled with nothing; after spending a day lying on the sofa, he got the sofa removed from his room to prevent it happening again. His routine during house arrest was so rigid that, upon being called to the police station for release, he immediately returned to complete his gym workout before properly leaving the house for the first time in almost four years. Although it kept him sane, it also made him feel like a machine, 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!" Although fostering this level of discipline enabled him to study hard for his degree and improve his physical fitness, it did instil certain character traits that he struggles with: pride in facing difficulties, becoming easily irritated by others. Psychologically, house arrest was much more challenging than prison, a form of limbo where the outside world was just outside the front door. At one point, awaiting conviction, he felt that he would be held under house arrest indefinitely.

This reminded me of Assata Shakur, in particular the comparison she makes in her book between imprisonment and freedom, stating that it isn't really such a sharp dichotomy, that as a black woman on the streets of white America, she was never free. Mario's experience in prison strengthened his position on this: "What we call freedom is not just a physical state, it's a mental state as well. I never felt unfree mentally. I'm much less unfree now, mentally, I'm conditioned, I'm affected by the idea of going back to prison and so I shape my behaviour, or to be badly affected in my job for my political position. I was much more open, I didn't have anything to lose. When you have nothing to lose you are free, in a way, you are much freer than if you have a lot to lose."

The repression of Florence's antifascist movement is just one contemporary example of attacks on the radical movement. There have been scores of arrests following the No Expo protests in Milan on 1st May 2015, including the first ever use of the European Arrest Warrant against five Greek students using the Italian law of *saccheggio e devastazione* (devastation and pillage), and in Bologna the local authorities have evicted a number of high-profile squats and have even placed medieval-sounding exclusion orders on leading activists, banning them from the city. The current centre-left government is to blame for the repression of the radical left – it has also been successful in preventing the emergence of an electoral group to its left as in Greece and Spain. For Mario, this is a blessing, and an indication of strength of the antagonist movement in Italy, a legacy of the 1970s and 1980s which saw the biggest revolutionary wave to ever happen in a Western country in modern history.

Where does all this leave the movements today? Mario's impression is that forces are accumulating. "Right now I think that what has to be done is to be in the street, to be where the contradictions of this system, which are everywhere, are mostly evident. Not to try to rush to the most radical solution because it's good to be radical, but to build real radicalism day-by-day along with people, otherwise it becomes just a self-satisfying process that would satisfy us for a short period and then just collapse in on itself... It's striking that in countries like the UK and Ireland in which the capitalism discourse, that discourse that had been hegemonic for more than twenty years, just collapsed in a really short period of time. I'm not saying right now the majority of the population is deeply convinced that capitalism is not the solution but is the problem. But since I see what seems to be real social forces that were in motion years before Corbyn's election, I see them in motion in Italy, I don't want to see those forces wasted in institutional para-electoral projects which will inevitably crash against the structural constraints which the liberal-democratic system and the current capitalist setting impose, but among people who are seriously committed in thinking how to achieve a radical social change, there is a general understanding that 'let's run the next election' is failing."

PARCOE is a grassroots alliance working in Europe to amplify the voices of Afrikan Communities of Reparations Interest all over the world. For us in PARCOE, there are spatial dimensions to reparatory justice for people of Afrikan heritage. According to political geographer Edward Soja, 'spatial (in)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 wielded power and took resources at will, not hesitating 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 expropriate 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 erecting of luxury apartments and corporate buildings that occurs in parts of the metropolis.

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 metropolis.

That is why the 1st August Afrikan 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 Afrikan 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 Afrikan 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 Afrikan 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 Afrika, the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe.

Reparatory Justice

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 Slavery 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 their part in efforts to enforce 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 PARCOE reparationists 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 Afrikan Reparations March and is therefore a positive action step of Afrikan 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 Afrikan 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 Afrikan and other oppressed indigenous peoples.



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

1. To draw attention to Afrikan 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 reparations.
3. To increase 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 Afrikan 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 Afrikan people's grassroots initiatives for reparations.





The SMWCGE 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 (Afrikan Hellacaust of chattel, colonial and neocolonial enslavement) within and beyond the British Empire; examine subsequent de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against Afrikans and people of Afrikan descent; examine the impact of these forces on living Afrikans 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 appropriate methods of dissemination of findings to the public within and beyond Britain for consultation about proposals for redress, repairs and for other purposes. The SMWCGE is also galvanising grassroots work towards establishing glocal sittings of the Ubuntu^{kgotla}*, Peoples International Tribunal for Global Justice (PITGJ).

**The Ubuntu^{kgotla} is a Pan-Afrikan conceptualisation of a court of peoples humanity interconnectedness.*

SMWCGE builds on the historic 1951 *We Charge Genocide* Petition that was initiated by Afrikan American and Communist lawyer, William L. Patterson, noted Afrikan-American singer and human rights activist, Paul Robeson, and others on behalf of the former Civil Rights Congress of the United States. The petition outlined both the historic and modern oppression of people of Afrikan descent in America, from murders by lynching to police brutality and systematic inequalities in quality of life and health care, arguing that this collective experience of subjugation amounted to genocide according to the 1948 Genocide Convention. *We Charge Genocide* called on the United Nations to 'act and to call the Government of the United States to account'. Genocide, it contended, could not be covered up as an internal affair of the United States, but was a problem for the world.

The vanguard of the International Social Movement for Afrikan Reparations (ISMAR) recognises that local issues have global dimensions and that reparatory justice can only be achieved globally before it can be secured for people of Afrikan heritage in the UK. It is essentially a decolonising process which has to first of all muster the people power, strength and capacity to delink the colonies and neo-colonies from the still colonising metropolis of the British State and the European Union. An essential part of that is the role of the decolonising contingents of the ISMAR inside the belly of the beast, the metropolis, Europe.

For us in PARCQE, this means highlighting as we did in participating in the Wretched 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 west as well as the domains of European imperialism in other parts of the world. For us in PARCQE 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.

That is the reason why Black Power remains a valid aspect of Afrikan people's reparatory justice goals because we can only effectively counter the violent racist white power with truly revolutionary Black Power in order to compel genuine participatory democratisation

towards multicultural pluriversality within and beyond Europe. For many people of Afrikan descent, restoration of the cultures of the colonised is an essential part of our national and social liberation struggles. Accordingly, these calls for justice imply some form of "spatial justice" as they invariably entail claims not only for the return of land in the neo-colonies but also rights to utilise space, land, properties, as well as some forms of political and/or non-territorial autonomy and other possibilities for self-determination within sites of the metropolis where people of Afrikan heritage live and work.

In furtherance of these objectives, PARCQE, 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 multiplicity of different and even conflicting nation-state, 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 MAATUBUNTUMAN which is a Pan-Afrikan Union of communities throughout the continent and diaspora of Afrika.

In this regard, we highlight MAATUBUNTUSITAWI, our Pan-Afrikan Reparatory Justice equivalent of 'Sumak Kawsay', an Andean indigenous approach. MAATUBUNTUSITAWI is our Afrikan contribution to the global search to replace Eurocentric models of imperialism. In essence, what we are saying is that part of effecting reparatory justice includes regenerating Afrikan heritage communities so that we can repair the harms of the Maangamizi in self-determined ways. We will need to have our own spaces, buildings, estates, parks, the preservation of places of historical interest to people of Afrikan heritage as well as the visible presence of our heritage in the open.

How you can show solidarity

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

House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

**MAKING THE CASE FOR EXAMINING
THE LEGACIES OF ENSLAVEMENT
ON AFRIKAN HERITAGE COMMUNITIES**

Dear _____

I am one of your constituents. I would like you to:

1. Initiate a lobby in Parliament on Afrikan Heritage Communities Legacies of Enslavement.
2. Support the call to establish an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Afrikan Heritage Communities Legacies of Enslavement.
3. Support the Afrikan Heritage Community (AHC) demand for the establishment of UK and EU All-Party Parliamentary Commissions of Inquiry for Truth \$ Reparatory Justice.

Yours sincerely,

Name _____

Address _____

_____ (required)

If you would like to participate in the Ubuntu Reparations Solidarity Bloc of the 1st August Afrikan 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-Vice Chair of PARCQE, the Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe. PARCQE is a grassroots alliance working in Europe to amplify the voices of Afrikan 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 Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee. Esther is also co-founder of ARTCoP, the Afrikan 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 Afrikan Reparations.

AFRO- PESSIMISM *AND* THE END OF REDEMPTION



Photography by Wasi Danju

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 perverse 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 presence (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 legible and coherent.

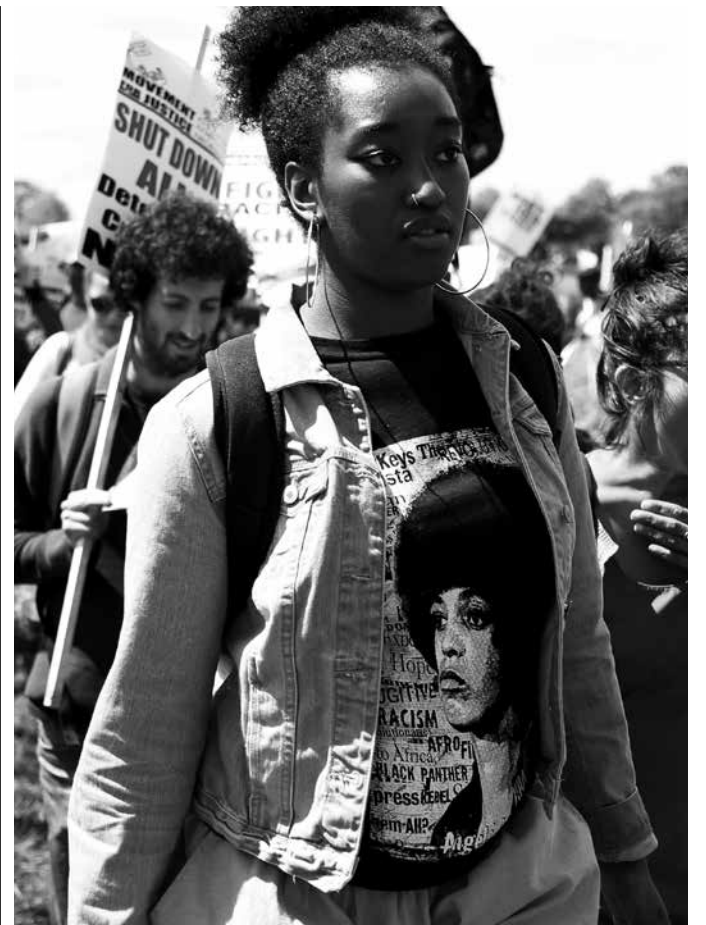
Law Abiding is predicated on the absence of reciprocity, utility, and contingency that Simon Ortiz's poem takes for granted. Absence of humanity. In fact, the poem suggests that a family of murdering, inanimate bullets could have its grief and loss processed as grief and loss more readily than the family 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—analagised with the violence of social death: that is the violence of slavery, which did not end in 1865, for the simple reason that slavery 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 assumptive logic. It provides a 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—without 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 constriction of Humanist thought is a constitutive disavowal of Blackness as social death; a disavowal that theorises

In a 'normal' situation—that is to say, if *Law 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 affilial 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 affilial 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



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 *Law 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 emplotment 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 (disequilibrium), 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 parcelling rape out to women, castration to men, our political language offers 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 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 Slaveness are inextricably bound in such a way that whereas Slaveness can be disimbricated from Blackness, Blackness cannot exist as other than Slaveness.

There is a compulsive and repetitive “failure” in the poem titled *Law 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 roils 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.” *Law 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.



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 lynching photograph (e.g., the cover of *Time* magazine with a still image from the video taken April 4, 2015 showing North Charleston, South Carolina policeman shooting Walter Scott in the back as he runs away) and the snuff videos (of, for example, Sandra Bland's and Eric Garner's police encounters) which we as Black activists have come to depend upon to *show* the world police violence in an effort to, ironically, redress that violence. And, since these images are almost always of Black males, they shape our (Black Humanist) agenda in profoundly gendered ways. But there is something even more problematic: we come to think of our oppression as being *essentially* gendered, as opposed to being gendered in important ways. This, I believe, gives us a false sense of agency; a sense that we can redress the violence of social death in ways which are analogous to the tactics of our so-called allies of colour. We *want* the violence against us to have a gendered integrity, in the way that it does when it is levied against the subaltern.

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 centred 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 - against, and 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 deal with 'White Flight' and ghettoisation 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 build and to sustain and extend those relationships 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. Now did the Party support the Urban League? Was the Party friendly with the Urban League? No! I mean they had this column in their paper that they published regularly called the "Bootlicker" column and they said "these Uncle Toms 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 emerged. 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 at this point and so long as that was the case then killing successful young activists in their beds was a threat.

The OT: Do 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 - [WEB] 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

The OT: The rise of the Black Panther Party coincided with some of the largest urban uprisings in US history: Watts in 1965 and Detroit, Newark, etc. in 1967. In the last two years we have seen similar rebellions in Ferguson, Baltimore and elsewhere. In many cases in both the 60s and today, the spark has been a police murder or assault on a black person. What parallels do you see between these periods? Would the BPP tactic of armed monitoring of police in the community be viable today? What was the Panthers' take on spontaneous uprisings - were they seen as potential moments of revolution or situations that called for more organisation?

JB: The lived experience of police brutality and containment policing that really fuelled the rebellions in many ways is very similar, it hasn't changed a lot for the people who live in those conditions. What has changed tremendously is how that dynamic fits into a global political context - first, in terms of Black America and the bifurcation of Black America that we've talked about. Shortly after the Party's heyday or through the years of the Party's influence and during the years subsequent, congressional representation grew into the thirties and I think even the forties at some points, just as an example. The black middle class, access to higher education, police departments were integrated, municipal hiring was integrated - by all those kinds of indicators, black people got access. Not all black people but significant segments of black America got access in ways they hadn't. [...]

What's different is not just in terms of domestic Black America but in terms of the international context of anti-imperialism. There is no draft but also there's no international anti-colonial movement in many parts of the world that really has a similar kind of political dynamic that the Party can situate itself in that way. Now that takes me to the second part of your question about the tactic of armed monitoring of police -

JOSHUA BLOOM

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.

impoverished, basically at war with the state, 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 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 that 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 brutal 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 unraveling 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 beautify and feign some kind of accountability that 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.



that 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 its 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 [...] So would armed patrols of the police work today? 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 eminently 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 channeled 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.

The OT: Some of the BPP's great successes were its social programs. Local community organising to provide free food, clothes and other basic needs. Can you tell us a bit more about how these worked on a local and national level? For example, how did the BPP manage to grow and sustain this organising, how did they get people involved, and how was the BPP able to cultivate the powerful idea that people were part of the movement and had a stake in it?



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 these 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 revolutionary 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're 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 these 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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