

The Left Has A Misogynoir Problem

Anti-Blackness At the Midwest Leftist Assembly

Afrofuturist Abolitionists of the Americas

11th September 2019

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From an Anarkata-

I went to the Midwest Leftist Assembly to present a workshop with my homie — on Black Anarchisms, and to connect with other Black radicals working in different parts of the region. I came with a lot of excitement and hope that folks would engage with us and the material.

I wound up facing down an armed wh_te leftist who was visibly agitated that attention had been brought to the rampant anti Blackness of security, organizers, and other participants by my friend, a Black woman, who had been profiled and targeted for harassment throughout the weekend.

So when I tell you that the wh_te left has a problem with racism, I'm telling you so that other Black, Brown & Indigenous folx are not put into dangerous situations just by being near you people.

And when I say that we are not safe around you, I'm not being hyperbolic.

This was one group of incredibly unprepared, non trauma informed, wh_te "leftists" who did not give an ounce of f**k about unpacking their anti Blackness before urging Black folks to attend an event they bottom lined. But the screwed up thing is that many leftist orgs create and foster the same type of anti Blackness that allow for the safety of Black participants – like those who attended the MLA with me last weekend – to constantly be put in sketchy situations. We are constantly placed in settings where we are demanded to interact in good faith and agree to empty, formless non apologies for incredibly racist words and (in)actions by wh_te leftists – all the while being cast as "hostile", "criminal", and "threatening", even as our access to platforms and ability to participate in organizing spaces are routinely stripped away through procedural death... The leftist bureaucratization that allows the same fuckin discrimination we experience everywhere else to happen in supposedly radical spaces.

This is how the wh_te left polices Black bodies while maintaining the optics of equitable, revolutionary praxis, simultaneously upholding wh_te supremacy and the privileges it gives them.

MLA was fucked up. But IWW? Y'all better take the warning now.

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From an anonymous Black Anarchist Long post about the Midwest Left Assembly

I haven't really been posting a lot of positive stuff about Midwest Left Assembly the past few days. It's sad because this was an event that I had been promoting and supporting for the past months leading up to it. I've been a member of Horizontal Stateline since it began and helped set up the land trust prior to the even this year. Anyone can tell you my enthusiasm prior to the event. I invited a number of people from across the country including fellow black anarchists to facilitate a discussion about black anarchism with me. I drove and picked up black folks from around rockford, arranged travel, arranged housing so people could attend. I believed in this event. I'm saying all of this because I know how white leftists can come at people for attempting to "wreck" and I want to make it clear that my intentions were the best.

However, despite the positive experiences of the first day (I'll talk about in a later post), I'm writing this as a record for accountability. That's because I had to leave early because one of my friends (a black woman) was repeatedly harassed by the security because they "mistook" her

identity for someone else. That's racial fucking profiling. We were stopped twice at the gate even though security should have known that my friend was not banned from the assembly. She had been promoting it with me in the upcoming months. It was traumatizing to my friend who was confronted again by security about not belonging at the event (something about her driving a car around the land trust even though she drove to the trust with me both days) while myself and another homie were about to play a show. She grabbed the mic and began to address the assembly about what happened. Many white folks weren't taking what she was saying seriously and had to be silenced by other black attendees. (this isn't just coming from me and her by the way, there were a number of other black folks who saw this happen and left as a result) From what I understand, none of the organizers or security team has even offered her an apology. I wish they had taken her and my concerns more seriously. Furthermore, the event organizers should not have treated my friend like a situation to be handled. The only situation that should have been handled was the chauvinistic behavior of the security team. ——— should not have been the person yelling at the white folks after that happened, that should have been the organizers. White people need to keep other white people in line. I sincerely regret bringing her and inviting other black people into the space (despite all of the good connections that I made). Activist spaces are meant to be safe and they need to be safe for everyone, especially black women and black queer folks. I understand the need for security at events like this but the security apparatus must be horizontal and needs to be grounded in anti-oppressive politics. (repeatedly stopping a black woman is not a good look when ya'll radical white folks claiming to be somehow different from these killer cops). I don't know what accountability looks like at this point but I know it has to involve formal apologies from the security team, the organizers and I believe some sort of financial compensation for my friend to support her organizing work (been telling yall to pay reparations). Frankly, what is even more fucked up is that my identity as a fair skinned college educated biracial man makes yall take this more seriously while if she had posted this, ya'll wouldn't have given a flying fuck. Once again, the misogynoir in this situation is palpable. We can't claim to support black women and femmes in our rhetoric while not doing it in our actions. ——— is not a troublemaker, she is not lying about this to start drama, if yall even attempt to insinuate that bullshit, I am going to block you. She and I had been repeatedly talking over the past few months about how to bring black people out to the event and how to support it as a whole. Passing this repeated harassment off as a misunderstanding and not taking it seriously is deeply anti-black and racist. As the black anarchist Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin says

“I give white radicals the tools to work with, a theoretical framework, and some analysis of racial oppression. I cannot, however, make them take the steps to actually use in dismantling racism inside radical movements. I just tell them that their lip service and feeble attempts to this point are unacceptable, and one day it will all be taken out of their hands. So they had better act now, or they will find themselves on the wrong side, when these decisive battles take place.”

If you want to speak more to me about what happened in length, engage in some sort accountability, please send me a private message. More importantly, please apologize to the black women and femmes that were harmed. Also, please don't bother them needlessly, they are both very busy people with lots of important work to do. I don't believe in callout culture but I can't see explicit anti-blackness exist in so-called radical spaces and not call it out. It is completely

unacceptable that my friend felt like she didn't belong in that space which lead to her, myself and others to leave early. I'm not really going to be engaging with white comments (I'm actually going to delete them) on this post but if you're black, feel free to comment and ask any questions. White people should go read the progressive plantation right now. Our spaces must be informed by a committed intersectional politic. I hope white organizers take this lesson to grow and confront white supremacy within their own spaces.

“These people want to demand ideological conformity, to make those incoming people of color toe the line. I believe they are threatened by the idea of possibly large numbers of people of color joining the Anarchist movement and especially by the idea they might create autonomous tendencies that would challenge white hegemony of the overall movement. Predictably, there will those among them who will rise up in mock alarm at the very notion... “how dare you say this?” “See there, he’s making trouble again!” But I have seen it happen numerous times over the years and am frankly sick of it. There is no use pretending there is no racism in the Anarchist scene, or trying to discredit me for raising the issue. I have both seen and experienced it myself.”

Lorenzo Ervin

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