

The Incomprehensible Black Anarchist Position

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Black brothers, Black sisters, i want you to know that i love you and i hope that somewhere in your hearts you have love for me. My name is Assata Shakur (slave name joanne chesimard), and i am a revolutionary. A Black revolutionary. By that i mean that i have declared war on all forces that have raped our women, castrated our men, and kept our babies empty-bellied. I have declared war on the rich who prosper on our poverty, the politicians who lie to us with smiling faces, and all the mindless, heart-less robots that protect them and their property. –Assata Shakur

I was born into the flames of slave insurrection. My first recorded ancestor was a runaway slave named Felix. In between him and me have been several butchered half lives. My grandfather, the oldest ancestor I've had the pleasure and privilege to interact with, was, as a young man, captured and tortured with "electro-shock therapy" for months on end as a consequence of his very material defiance and resistance to this "constitutional violence" that Wilderson describes in "the vengeance of vertigo". As a result he was introduced to this "performative contingent violence" forever carving into our family tree the scars of his/our subjugation. In the same way that many families pass down the stories of how grandparents met and the idiosyncrasies of ancestors long past, I was passed a narrative, a framework for my own identity, of pure unflinching antagonism. I can only imagine this is part and parcel of the reason Michigan pigs pumped 40 bullets into my cousin's chest a few months ago or why my other cousin is serving a life sentence. It's difficult to make distinctions between Oakland and Monroe, between prison and plantation when past and present meet in these spaces and moments. What joins us, stronger than our own blood even, are the subjective and objective vertigos.

A lot happened in 1986, some fascist doctor plucked me from my mother and introduced me to violence at the same time my lungs introduced me to air. He told my mother he wanted to break my collarbone to get me out because I was too big and healthy. Assata Shakur was settling into her new home, in exile, Cuba. Mutulu Shakur had been captured and charged with helping her escape from a maximum security men's prison. A month and a half before I was born Winnie Mandela gave a historical speech endorsing the political nature and necessity of mass guerilla resistance to the apartheid state in South Africa. "We will dismantle the apartheid state even if we only have rocks and boxes of matches". A month after I was born, the apartheid state declared a state of emergency. In 1985, cocaine-related hospital emergencies in the US rose by 12 percent, from 23,500 to 26,300. In 1986 that figure then increased 210 percent, from 26,300 to 55,200, as the crack solution to the "panther problem" unfolded in communities that were the direct site of insurrection, like Watts and Oakland specifically, and all black neighborhoods in general. Sadly, my namesake, Kuwasi Balagoon died in December of 86 in a torture camp. His cause of death: the state... biological warfare. In Richmond, CA unguarded trains full of US military firearms and explosives were routinely left in the back of the North side neighborhood. I dodged my first bullet likely from one of those guns in 89 when I was three but that would not be the last. That was constitutional violence. When the state decides they want to assassinate or grand jury summon me for what comes next that will be contingent violence. –Hannibal Balagoon Shakur

If we are to survive this wave of repression, if Anarchy is to become a vehicle of the people, we must direct our energy to the new infrastructure. Programs that meet essential needs of the people must meet them with the explanation of why they are necessary. Programs that perpetually treat the symptoms of capitalism without feeding the mental struggle of the people must be replaced by comrades who pull no punches. We must show our friends and our neighbors that nothing can do more for them than they can do for themselves through Anarchism. We must show that “non-profits”, and NGO’s whose politics consist of liberal obscurities and multicultural tokenism, will not put more food on their table, put more homeless families in clean homes, will not put more police terrorists to an end than Anarchism.

It is beside the point whether Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Chicano-Mexicano people endorse nationalism as a vehicle for self-determination or agree with anarchism as being the only road to self-determination. As revolutionaries we must support the will of the masses. It is not only racism but compliance with the enemy to stand outside of the social arena and permit America to continue to practice genocide against the third world captive colonies because although they resist, they don’t agree with us. If we truly know that Anarchy is the best way of life for all people, we must promote it, defend it and know that the people who are as smart as we are will accept it. To expect people to accept this, while they are being wiped out as a nation without allies ready to put out on the line what they already have on the line is crazy. –Kuwasi Balagoon

It’s a shame that now the false media image of the white Anarchists is going unchecked. It’s a shame that white “radicals” can think of only themselves when they say the word Anarchist. New Afrikans are not free. Our majorities lie within the pelican bay plantations and secret torture camps that exist throughout America. Yesterday we were slaves and today we are slaves. In the same vein that slave owners outlawed and prevented slaves of the past from written communication, slaves today find their correspondences disrupted and destroyed. As New Afrikans our political formations are completely repressed. What is popular among New Afrikan Anarchists will never find the same platform or footing as what is popular among negro capitalists and negro reformists. What we have to say, the voices that spring forth from the underworld of the plantation, will not find the same attention among white radicals as nihilist voices will. We will not find the same attention among the broader movement to end capitalism. We are written out of existence by negro nationalists who speak for “the black community” and white radicals who speak of themselves as “the Anarchists”. This dichotomy has done nothing to increase support from either side. White Anarchists want to speak for all poor people and negro nationalists want to speak for all black people. Neither formation wants to hear what we have to say. Comrades have been dealing with these contradictions for some time. Sometimes I fear those of us with our ears to the plantation are too few and far between to influence the broader, “free”, population. This is in fact the impetus for this communiqué. You say working class and think of what you perceive to be the bottom, people working all day at minimum wage to feed and house their families. This is working class but this is not the bottom.

“Elsewhere I have argued that the Black is a sentient being though not a Human being. The Black’s and the Human’s disparate relationship to violence is at the heart

of this failure of incorporation and analogy. The Human suffers contingent violence, violence that kicks in when s/he resists (or is perceived to resist) the disciplinary discourse of capital and/or Oedipus. But Black peoples' subsumption by violence is a paradigmatic necessity, not just a performative contingency. To be constituted by and disciplined by violence, to be gripped simultaneously by subjective and objective vertigo, is indicative of a political ontology which is radically different from the political ontology of a sentient being who is constituted by discourse and disciplined by violence when s/he breaks with the ruling discursive codes. When we begin to assess revolutionary armed struggle in this comparative context, we find that Human revolutionaries (workers, women, gays and lesbians, post-colonial subjects) suffer subjective vertigo when they meet the state's disciplinary violence with the revolutionary violence of the subaltern; but they are spared objective vertigo. This is because the most disorienting aspects of their lives are induced by the struggles that arise from intra-Human conflicts over competing conceptual frameworks and disputed cognitive maps, such as the American Indian Movement's demand for the return of Turtle Island vs. the U.S.'s desire to maintain territorial integrity, or the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional's (FALN) demand for Puerto Rican independence vs. the U.S.'s desire to maintain Puerto Rico as a territory. But for the Black, as for the slave, there are no cognitive maps, no conceptual frameworks of suffering and dispossession which are analogic with the myriad maps and frameworks which explain the dispossession of Human subalterns." -Frank B wilderson III

We must put into context comrades who have already lost their children to the plantation state's foster care system. These comrades, who are subject to sensory deprivation, beatings and electrocution torture, work for a measly few cents an hour. Not because they want to but because they will be further isolated and punished if they do not comply with the production demands of the plantation. These comrades, many of whom have taken up arms against the banks and the slave catchers, are largely invisible to us simply because we don't see them at any events and we don't drink with them after the demo and they don't come to dance parties. What's more is we have allowed, through sheer neglect, the prison to become a factory that produces sociopaths who snitch on our comrades to get freedom and then come and wreak havoc on our communities. We have allowed that by our inaction. We have allowed rape to become just another gadget on the pig's utility belt. The brothers know this intimately. Every time we see a pig we see ourselves being raped. Current plantation trends are going largely unnoticed.

"Prison has always been the final gate in the repressive apparatus of a state. It serves the purpose of social and political control, although it manifests itself differently in different nation-states and in different political periods. Nevertheless, the prisoner is, with few exceptions, always a scapegoat and considered a deviant. Prison is not only a class weapon; it is also an instrument to control "alien" populations. In the United States, these "alien" populations are formerly colonized peoples — former slaves, Native Americans, Latin Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders — and they have all too often been considered the internal enemy. They are the people most needing control and are therefore the majority of those locked down in U.S. prisons. The United States is the world's primary example of a country that deals with its social, economic, and cultural problems by incarceration. But this is its history. Prisons

are the logical outcome of the country's foundation on the genocide of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, and the "manifest destiny" of imperial settlerism — from sea to shining sea." —Marilyn Buck

Do we still have the will of John Brown? Or that of Nat Turner and Harriet Tubman? Are we still committed to abolishing prisons? Where are our ties with slaves? Not individual ties but collective ties. Fundamental ties. So long as the prison exists it's inhabitants will inevitably find themselves in a struggle to destroy it. That struggle must not be isolated from that of the outside. It must not be isolated from populist efforts. Critical infrastructure must be organized to expedite the flow of information through the walls. Collectives must be on standby to strike with direct action in retaliation for acts of repression against prisoners. Prisoners must provide networks of protection and support for anti-state guerillas that are captured. All comrades must orient themselves to the eventuality of their capture. It must be clearly understood that the struggle in no way ends when you "get caught". It only intensifies. In the same way comrades oriented themselves to the infrastructural needs of the camp when we took Oscar Grant plaza, things like food security and medical needs, we must orient ourselves to the material needs of the broader community and prisoners as integral members of that community. A genuine effort to keep prisoners, individually and the prison population in general, up to date on all current events is required here. I've heard comrades speaking of the "patriarchal nature" of prisoner formations, how these things preclude radical engagement of anarchism. This, coupled with the fact that there's no anarchist "set" at any level comparable to "nationalist sets" within the prison system, has led me in search of a clearer analysis, or at least one that fits my intended narrative that of the seldom heard often felt incomprehensible black anarchist. Anarchism like anything else finds a radical new meaning when it meets blackness. While anarchists have an endless list of critiques directed at the culture that permeates prisons, little is articulated in the way of actually changing these cultures, as if these were inherent character traits impervious to stimulation and engagement. There exists a fear even, of prisoners, of the calcifying nature of their abject conditions.

"Well, we're all familiar with the function of the prison as an institution serving the needs of the totalitarian state. We've got to destroy that function; the function has to be no longer viable, in the end. It's one of the strongest institutions supporting the totalitarian state. We have to destroy its effectiveness, and that's what the prison movement is all about. What I'm saying is that they put us in these concentration camps here the same as they put people in tiger cages or "strategic hamlets" in Vietnam. The idea is to isolate, eliminate, and liquidate the dynamic sections of the overall movement, the protagonists of the movement. What we've got to do is prove this won't work. We've got to organize our resistance once we're inside, give them no peace, turn the prison into just another front of the struggle, and tear it down from the inside. Understand? A good deal of this has to do with our ability to communicate to the people on the street. The nature of the function of the prison within the police state has to be continuously explained, elucidated to the people on the street because we can't fight alone in here. Oh Yeah, we can fight, but if we're isolated, if the state is successful in accomplishing that, the results are usually not constructive in terms of proving our point. We fight and we die, but that's not the point, although it may be admirable from some sort of purely moral point of view.

The point is, however, in the face of what we confront, to fight and win. That's the real objective: not just to make statements, no matter how noble, but to destroy the system that oppresses us. By any means available to us. And to do this, we must be connected, in contact and communication with those in the struggle on the outside. We must be mutually supporting because we're all in this together. It's one struggle at base." -George Jackson

If we really mean class war, we need all the warrior elements of our class to be actively engaged. With the new developments of the Pelican Bay Short Corridor Collective, we are witnessing a moment that possesses great potential for the unification of our struggles. When people are subjugated and oppressed at the level we see today, psychologically and materially, we must orient ourselves to the undoing of that hegemonic hold. We must orient ourselves not to weeding out people but to weeding out of people injustice and oppression. We are, myself my close comrades and hopefully you too, endeavoring here to transform the criminal consciousness into a revolutionary consciousness and there already exists a principle basis established by comrades like George Jackson and Kuwasi Balagoon. Now is the time for us to aggressively push forward and show the world we aren't afraid to fight the fascist, to show them we are prepared to make the same sacrifices that they already have.

It's gonna be kill me if you can not kill me if you please!!!!

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