

Smack a White Boy Round Two

CrimethInc. Eviction

anarchist people of color

July 2009

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Dread locked white punks, crusties with their scabies friends, and traveling college bros swarmed a space on the dividing line of gentrification in the Bloomfield/Garfield/Friendship area late July 2009 in Pittsburgh for the annual CrimethInc convergence. Whereas previous CrimethInc convergences had been located deep in wooded areas, this particular one took place in a poor, black neighborhood that is being pushed to the borders by entering white progressive forces.

There were those that had experienced CrimethInc's oppressive culture and people for years and others who had experienced enough oppression after just a few days. Our goals were to stop CrimethInc, their gentrifying force, and to end the convergence right then and there for all that they had done.

Just a few blocks away, eight anarchist/autonomous/anti-authoritarian people of color* gathered to discuss a direct confrontation. We arrived from different parts of these stolen lands of the Turtle Island. Some came from the Midwest, some from the Northeast, some born and raised in Pittsburgh. Altogether we represented 7 different locations, half of us [assigned female at birth (AFAB),] a variety of sizes, skin color, with identities of queers, trans, gender-queers, gender variants, and womyn. With little time and a desire for full consensus, we quickly devised a plan. A local APOCista offered safer space housing for unarrestables, parents, and children of color, we planned to extend that offer to the best of our abilities. We departed toward the convergence from our local apoc Pittsburgh friends with complete support.

Upon entering the convergence space, we each immediately began to fulfill our roles. One APOCista's role was informing a mother of color and her child about the action and then offering safer space housing for the duration of their stay. This same APOCista also began informing other POC that were not already aware of our plan of what was about to take place and inviting them to join us or to remove themselves from the area if they chose. Some APOCista checked in with allies about our time schedule, also ensuring that there would be look outs for cops.

The majority of the CrimethInc kids were in the ballroom on the second floor watching and participating in a cabaret. A group of us began gathering attendees' packs, bags, shoes, banjos, and such from the other rooms on the second floor and moving it all down the hallway towards the stairs. We had gone pretty unnoticed, mostly due to lack of lighting.

Once those rooms had been emptied, it was time for the main event. We gathered at the ballroom's doorway furthest from the stairs following the final act of the cabaret.

"On the count of three. One, two, three!" one APOCista said.

"Get the fuck out!," we all shouted.

And the eviction began. One apocer began reading 'An Open Letter to White Radicals/Progressives', while the others began yelling at the attendees to gather their things and leave. Irritated by their continued inaction after about 10 minutes or so, one of the people involved in the action shouted,

"This is not an act! Get your shit, or we'll remove it for you!"

Some white people started grabbing their bags and heading towards the back, but most stayed and watched as we piled their possessions in the hallway. Of course, many of them stayed pulling back bags from our arms, physically restraining us, attacking us, creating blockades, and trying to engage in dialogue about what was happening. We were not open to negotiation and stated such. There is no negotiation for colonization. As we were approached with physical force one of us responded with,

"Don't try to fight us, we are not pacifists, we will defend ourselves!"

[a couple of hours of moving bags, being forcibly moved, blockaded, physically and verbally attacked, and yes defending ourselves]

One apocista was pushed down stairs

one was pulled out of the room

one was picked up and taken out of the room

[an AFAB] persyn was almost punched in the face by a white male when 2 others pulled them back

[AFAB] persyn grabbed by a tall white man while others yelled get her

a mother of color came in to defend us and pull a poc organizer off one of us

poc organizers forcibly closing door on us, crushing our bodies and heads.

One grabbed a big board that was used to push us out the door.

After quite a bit of time and effort used by folks to get us out of that space, we remained standing.

The cops had approached, a call was made to one of us upstairs to inform us that there was a policeman outside and they were being talked to by a police liaison and the situation was under control. We looked around to see other people of color and a medium sized group of mostly cis white males that were left. While at this point mostly engaging in discussion with other POC and POC organizers some people convinced the remaining stubborn white people to leave, after telling the last white persyn there that they were not welcome in this space, the doors were locked and caucusing began.

After 20 minutes or so, most everyone had expressed their opinion, people were emotional, tired and the discussion ended. We removed ourselves from the space. One APOCista involved in the eviction conferred with a medic to try to regain normal breathing due to an asthma attack that had been taking place over the last 3 hours of the eviction. We all exited, we were greeted by friends, allies, and others that had helped us by participating in the action.

We said our goodbyes, and departed towards a local's house to debrief and discuss the events that had just taken place.

Why was the CrimethInc. Convergence specifically targeted?

It had first been proposed by some Pittsburgh APOC that the convergence, its organizers, and its attendees be addressed initially by a boycott. There were APOCers from Pittsburgh who made a call for action and Smack a White Boy Round Two was proposed and some local APOCers gave 100% support for an action. This support for an action had much to do with the CrimethInc organizers' disregard for the role they and CrimethInc attendees could play in gentrifying the neighborhood in which it was held. In email correspondence with one apocer that attended the convergence for its entire duration, the CrimethInc. organizers refused to address that they were organizing a white event (an event that, despite the attendance of a small handful of POC, was structured for white people, largely by white people, and as a white space). The organizers did not obtain the consent of any of the relevant communities before arranging for a convergence and went so far as to attempt to buy a building in a poor black neighborhood. By the lead of the white man specifically, white people are still invading, stealing, and colonizing. Organizers also implied that simply because they were no longer buying a space for the convergence, concerns about its impact on surrounding communities were invalid.

There were also apocers from around the country that had come to the convergence with no knowledge of the previous conversations that had taken place, yet were still appalled and disgusted upon entering the space. There were people from other cities that were on call and ready to come help take action once people attending the convergence and locals decided what kind of confrontation was necessary.

Despite concerns, a large mass of white people were brought to a site of gentrification and contributed to it, setting up a white space along Penn Avenue. People of color both within that convergence and within the communities it was situated were alienated. Many people of color attending the convergence were regularly silenced and disrespected. One wonders also how all the bros, overt perpetrators of white male power, can call themselves anarchists. Similarly, those who spearheaded and those who participated in the inappropriate jokes workshop, self-labeled though they may be, are no anarchists in our eyes. To the contrary, within the “movement” these people are some of the most overt perpetrators of oppression. Setting up “safe space” for racist, sexist, homophobic, and transphobic jokes is not anarchism, it is the continued violence of white-led oppression verbally embodied.

To all those who hide your oppressiveness and your privilege behind “anarchism,” as you can see, your perpetuation of white supremacy and patriarchy have not gone unnoticed. Throughout the convergence, you disrespected peoples’ gender identities, and lied to and ignored neighbors of color. And many knew full well that there were at least two perpetrators of sexual assault present at the convergence (which went against the convergence’s own policy), yet nobody said or did anything.

Why CrimethInc.?

CrimethInc has been/is the breeding ground for white anarchists. They encourage the culture of dropping out of society, which makes the assumption that the reader/attendee has that privilege and therefore their words speak only to those that have it.

Refusing to try to create a culture of calling people out on their shit allows for people in privilege to remain stagnant and thus creating “safe spaces” for the oppressors.

CrimethInc organizers have on many occasions attempted to try to dominate and control mass actions.

The furthering of our (oppressed peoples) silencing to create harmony to just sit back and deal with the oppressive behavior that we face within the “movement” for any oppression of that beyond class. The attitude that these oppressions are either irrelevant or not as important

Having no effective or serious anti-oppressive analyses or stance shows us that combating oppression is not in their interest

Why the White “Anarchist” Movement?

All of us who have participated in this action have interacted with white anarchists for good amounts of time in our organizing and/or lives. Our relationships with these folks have varied. But let us tell you this, not one of us has been unaffected by the racism within the movement. Don’t think these are isolated instances. White supremacy plays a role in everything. The anarchist scene reproduces the same oppressive social relationships we face throughout society,

and furthers the notion that oppression does not exist within the movement. This silences many.
[Note: watch *Born In Flames*]

We see this blatant oppressive behavior and failure to address privilege and each individual's role in the furthering of oppression [see the Memorable Quotes section for: internalized fascism].

Most of us have to spend our lives in unsafe spaces, and it is worsened with white people's inability to help address oppression.

Euro-centric anarchism that also fetishizes people of color's struggles

Colorblind, Pretending we are all coming from an equal position

Failure to barely even question cultural appropriation.

Continuously fighting for the white issues in oppression, which has divided the feminist movement, gay rights movement and the anarchist movement in the US.

Failure to deconstruct white supremacy for what it truly is, meaning it's not just about nazis.

The white race continues to be a parasitic force through cultural appropriation, colonization (they call it gentrification these days). They brought and continue genocide, Disease, slavery, starvation, capitalism, patriarchy, Christianity. Each and every white person benefits from white supremacy and the oppression of people of color. Ultimately they will serve their own good. White anarchists tokenize/fetishize indigenous and other people of color. We are objectified and become something to be managed and be organized by whites, or educated by the white man. We are sexualized by the white queer anarchist movement. From the eco, feminist, unionist, student, communist, punk anarchists; in the end they show their white supremacy.

Things to address

APOC – the acronym stands for anarchist/anti-authoritarian/autonomous people of color. It is the name of different collectives and groups, it is also an individual identity, and a movement. Anyone who is such can claim the acronym APOC. For example, you don't have to go to Bash Back! meetings to be in Bash Back, you don't have to have an APOC group to be APOC.

Our autonomy – the different people who participated in the "eviction" came from all around the country to the CrimethInc convergence for their own reasons. Some were hoping to see some change in the role that white supremacy plays, some went to "educate" white folks, some went to see friends, and some for the sole purpose of taking action.

Race traitor – there are rumors afloat that the term "race traitor" was used towards mixed people and other who weren't participating. This is untrue. The word was used towards specific individuals and their personal history of posturing a role in upholding, defending, and ultimately furthering white supremacy. For instance, by the spreading the idea that it is because we are not doing enough, that it is our fault that we are oppressed.

Unarrestability of individuals – this convergence was filled with an absolute disrespect for the unarrestability of individual persons, even when it was brought up repeatedly by them. For unarrestable people of color, this is serious! It has nothing to do with not being anarchist or punk enough and shouldn't be thought of that way at all. Undocumented people especially shouldn't have to beg to be protected by the anarchist community and those they call "friends". Consideration of unarrestability is the MOST basic thing white anarchists need to think about to have a mindset conscious of undocumented people. Keep your fucking community safe. Until then, you aren't any kind of ally.

For the unarrestables that were “evicted” at this convergence, you spoke once and your voice was heard round the country, echoed throughout the community, people spoke in defense of you, and against this action for you. When we scream for support, we are not heard, and our struggles go unnoticed, because we are invisible from the get go.

displacement and oppression of white people... I won’t even give lip service this to this point tactics – This was a direct action, whether anyone likes it or not the purpose was to end the convergence, and the convergence was ended effectively and efficiently. Disgruntled attendees speculating on better tactics or a better message is fairly useless – the purpose has been fulfilled anarchist fox news, honestly, listen to yourself, can you not hear the white supremacy in your own voice?

Memorable Quotes

“While we were bein’ kicked out, I was looting the kitchen.” – white attendee

“This is the most racist thing ever”- white convergence attendee

“you’re taking advantage of anarchists because you know they wont call the cops” – organizer

“we don’t know that, answer me a question, how many snitches at snitch camp this year?”- APOCista

“race doesn’t matter” – white attendee

“we’re gonna have an orgy against this” – white attendees

“what are you still doing here, we’ve been doing the same thing before you came here, while you are here, and will continue after you’re gone” – a white convergence attendee

“we’re all from Africa” – white attendee

“you can’t smash patriarchy, you can’t destroy racism” – opposing POC

“what do you want me to do hate myself because I’m white” while crying {white guilt}

“look around almost all thats left is cis white guys”

in response to talk about genocide, rape,colonization, white people responded with “that wasn’t me”

“if you touch the puppets, I’ll fight you”

“j, I’m gonna be picking you up now, can somebody please help me pick j up {while trembling and screaming} I don’t want to drop them, people will think I’m racist” – white persyn

“somebody give me some mace, they need to get the fuck up outta here” – opposing POC in reference to apocista’s taking action

“we’re closing the door on you”, as they precede to crush our bodies between the door and door frame

“I live in this neighborhood!” – said by a few white people

“its a apoc black bloc performance about gentrification” after which many preceded to clap

“me? did I do these things, little Ian?” – little Ian

“but I gave you a ride” – white attendee

“lets organize a sit in against this!” – white attendees congratulating each other

“why are you oppressing us?” – said by white folks

“APOC owes me a week of my life and I’m gonna get it back” – organizer

“I have a crush on all of you poc, I like big booties” – read from the crush jar

“this temporary inconvenience is nothing compared to gentrification and its permanent displacement” – APOCista to the crowd

“wait, I worked with you in New Orleans!” – white attendee

“the neighbors liked our presence, and they are happy CrimethInc is here” – organizer

“you’re violating consent” – in response to taking action

“this is enough to call the cops” – said by multiple people at multiple times

“we’re all anarchists here we’re all fighting for the same thing” – white persyn

* “People of Color refers to those who self-identify as a persyn of color, whether it be yellow, red, brown, black or mixed skinned people. People of Color can include, but is not limited to African, South American, Central American, American Indian, Caribbean, Pacific Island, South-eastern Asian, Arab, South Asian, Pacific Islander, Mediterranean, Indigenous Turtle Island and Indigenous Australian descent.”

“We declare our right on this earth... to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary.” – Malcolm X

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This is a brief summary of the actions that took place, and in no way describes the situation in full

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