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#### Anti-blackness is libidinal—so-called emancipatory movements rely on a position of coherence which desires the absolute dereliction of blackness

**Wilderson 02**

Frank Wilderson- The Prison Slave as Hegemony's (Silent) Scandal-Presented at imprisoned Intellectuals Conference Brown University, April 13th 2002

But this peculiar preoccupation is not Gramsci's bailiwick. His concern is with White folks; or with folks in a White(ned) enough subject position that they are confronted by, or threatened by the removal of, a wage -- be it monetary or social. But Black subjectivity itself disarticulates the Gramscian dream as a ubiquitous emancipatory strategy, because Gramsci, like most White activists, and radical American movements like the prison abolition movement, has no theory of the unwaged, no solidarity with the slave If we are to take Fanon at his word when he writes, Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder (37) then we must accept the fact that no other body functions in the Imaginary, the Symbolic, or the Real so completely as a repository of complete disorder as the Black body. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Real, for in its magnetizing of bullets the Black body functions as the map of gratuitous violence through which civil society is possible: namely, those other bodies for which violence is, or can be, contingent. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Symbolic, for Blackness in America generates no categories for the chromosome of History, no data for the categories of Immigration or Sovereignty; it is an experience without analog a past, without a heritage. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Imaginary for whoever says rape says Black, (Fanon), whoever says prison says Black, and whoever says AIDS says Black (Sexton) the Negro is a phobogenic object (Fanon). Indeed &a phobogenic object &a past without a heritage &the map of gratuitous violence &a program of complete disorder. But whereas this realization is, and should be cause for alarm, it should not be cause for lament, or worse, disavowal not at least, for a true revolutionary, or for a truly revolutionary movement such as prison abolition. 15 If a social movement is to be neither social democratic, nor Marxist, in terms of the structure of its political desire then it should grasp the invitation to assume the positionality of subjects of social death that present themselves; and, if we are to be honest with ourselves we must admit that the Negro has been inviting Whites, and as well as civil society s junior partners, to the dance of social death for hundreds of years, but few have wanted to learn the steps. They have been, and remain today even in the most anti-racist movements, like the prison abolition movement invested elsewhere. This is not to say that all oppositional political desire today is pro-White, but it is to say that it is almost always anti-Black which is to say it will not dance with death. Black liberation, as a prospect, makes radicalism more dangerous to the U.S. Not because it raises the specter of some alternative polity (like socialism, or community control of existing resources) but because its condition of possibility as well as its gesture of resistance functions as a negative dialectic: a politics of refusal and a refusal to affirm, a program of complete disorder. One must embrace its disorder, its incoherence and allow oneself to be elaborated by it, if indeed one s politics are to be underwritten by a desire to take this country down. If this is not the desire which underwrites one s politics then through what strategy of legitimation is the word prison being linked to the word abolition ? What are this movement s lines of political accountability? There s nothing foreign, frightening, or even unpracticed about the embrace of disorder and incoherence. The desire to be embraced, and elaborated, by disorder and incoherence is not anathema in and of itself: no one, for example, has ever been known to say gee-whiz, if only my orgasms would end a little sooner, or maybe not come at all. But few so-called radicals desire to be embraced, and elaborated, by the disorder and incoherence of Blackness and the state of political movements in America today is marked by this very Negrophobogenisis: gee-whiz, if only Black rage could be more coherent, or maybe not come at all. Perhaps there’s something more terrifying about the joy of Black, then there is about the joy of sex (unless one is talking sex with a Negro). Perhaps coalitions today prefer to remain in-orgasmic in the face of civil 16 society with hegemony as a handy prophylactic, just in case. But if, through this stasis, or paralysis, they try to do the work of prison abolition that work will fail; because it is always work from a position of coherence (i.e. the worker) on behalf of a position of incoherence, the Black subject, or prison slave. In this way, social formations on the Left remain blind to the contradictions of coalitions between workers and slaves. They remain coalitions operating within the logic of civil society; and function less as revolutionary promises and more as crowding out scenarios of Black antagonisms they simply feed our frustration. Whereas the positionality of the worker be s/he a factory worker demanding a monetary wage or an immigrant or White woman demanding a social wage gestures toward the reconfiguration of civil society, the positionality of the Black subject be s/he a prison-slave or a prison-slave-in-waiting gestures toward the disconfiguration of civil society: from the coherence of civil society, the Black subject beckons with the incoherence of civil war. A civil war which reclaims Blackness not as a positive value, but as a politically enabling site, to quote Fanon, of absolute dereliction : a scandal which rends civil society asunder. Civil war, then, becomes that unthought, but never forgotten understudy of hegemony. A Black specter waiting in the wings, an endless antagonism that cannot be satisfied (via reform or reparation) but must nonetheless be pursued to the death.

#### The aff is a superficial tweak to the criminal justice system that preserves its legitimacy and coopts the movement toward structural change.

Karakatsanis 19 – founder and Executive Director of Civil Rights Corps; former civil rights lawyer and public defender with the Special Litigation Division of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia; a federal public defender in Alabama, representing impoverished people accused of federal crimes; and co-founder of the non-profit organization Equal Justice Under Law

Alec, 3/28. “The Punishment Bureaucracy: How to Think About “Criminal Justice Reform”.” https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/the-punishment-bureaucracy

The emerging “criminal justice reform” consensus is superficial and deceptive. It is superficial because most proposed “reforms” would still leave the United States as the greatest incarcerator in the world. It is deceptive because those who want largely to preserve the current punishment bureaucracy—by making just enough tweaks to protect its perceived legitimacy—must obfuscate the difference between changes that will transform the system and tweaks that will curb only its most grotesque flourishes. Nearly every prominent national politician and the vast majority of state and local officials talking and tweeting about “criminal justice reform” are, with varying levels of awareness and sophistication, furthering this deception. These “reform”-advancing punishment bureaucrats are co-opting a movement toward profound change by convincing the public that the “law enforcement” system as we know it can operate in an objective, effective, and fair way based on “the rule of law.” These punishment bureaucrats are dangerous because, in order to preserve the human caging apparatus that they control, they must disguise at the deepest level its core functions. As a result, they focus public conversation on the margins of the problem without confronting the structural issues at its heart. Theirs is the language that drinks blood. In this Essay, I examine “criminal justice reform” by focusing on the concepts of “law enforcement” and the “rule of law.” Both are invoked as central features of the American criminal system. For many prominent people advocating “reform,” the punishment bureaucracy as we know it is the inevitable result of “law enforcement” responding to people “breaking the law.” To them, the human caging bureaucracy is consistent with, and even required by, the “rule of law.” This world view—that the punishment bureaucracy is an attempt to promote social well-being and human flourishing under a dispassionate system of laws—shapes their ideas about how to “fix” the system. But few ideas have caused more harm in our criminal system than the belief that America is governed by a neutral “rule of law.” The content of our criminal laws—discussed in Part V—and how those laws are carried out—addressed in Part VI—are choices that reflect power. The common understanding of the “rule of law” and the widely accepted use of the term “law enforcement” to describe the process by which those in power accomplish unprecedented human caging are both delusions critical to justifying the punishment bureaucracy. This is why it is important to understand how they distort the truth. I apply these arguments in Part VII, explaining why the current “criminal justice reform” discourse is so dangerous. I focus on several prominent national punishment bureaucrats and a new local wave of supposedly “progressive prosecutors.” Finally, in Part VIII, I discuss the new generation of directly impacted people, organizers, lawyers, faith leaders, and academics on the libertarian left and right who understand the punishment bureaucracy as a tool of power in service of white supremacy and profit. I explain why this growing movement must reject the “criminal justice reform” discourse of punishment bureaucrats and speak clearly about why the legal system looks the way that it does. I urge those interested in changing the punishment bureaucracy to ground every discussion that they have and every proposed reform that they evaluate in a set of guiding principles rooted in this movement’s vision. I sketch some of those principles for their consideration below.

#### To dismantle white supremacy and create real transformation, we must start from the position that the system cannot work just as it was designed to – that it can’t be reformed – in order to create meaningful transformation

Kaba, 2017 (Mariame Kaba – grassroots organizer and educator focused on dismantling the prison industrial complex, has founded/served on the advisory boards of countless of countless organizations combatting race and gender based violence; interviewed by John Duda, “Towards the horizon of abolition: A conversation with Mariame Kaba,” 9 Nov. 2017, <https://thenextsystem.org/learn/stories/towards-horizon-abolition-conversation-mariame-kaba>)

John Duda: I wanted to start by asking you about what it means to work for prison abolition with Trump in the White House. It’s very clear that anybody fighting for anything good is facing a much much harder battle now—certainly this would be true for work around ending mass incarceration and police violence. At the same time—you’ve been organizing for years against a carceral apparatus that was built under the watch of many ostensibly liberal democrats—Chicago hasn’t had a republican mayor since the New Deal. What are your thoughts about what’s changed and what will stay the same for the kind of organizing to abolish prisons and police you are engaged in? Mariame Kaba: I think that one thing that remains constant for me is that the system—the prison industrial complex—isn’t broken. The system of mass criminalization we have isn’t the result of failure. Thinking in this way allows me to look at what’s going on right now in a clear-eyed way. I understand that white supremacy is maintained and reproduced through the criminal punishment apparatus. That hasn’t changed with Trump coming to power. Sessions is recycling ‘law & order’ rhetoric and some policies. The Feds can set a tone but most of the substantive criminal punishment policy happens at the state and county level. That means that we have some potential openings. We’re seeing this currently in the re-invigorated struggle to end cash bail and pre-trial detention, for example. I don’t see what is currently happening as outside of the norm. It’s part of a continuum. I see it as another stop in the ongoing US white supremacist nation building project; and while we’re going to have different kinds of things to contend with, we’re still going to have to strategize, we’re still going to have to mobilize, we’re still going to have to organize, we’re still going to have to figure out how we win. That hasn’t changed. Those are still the things we have to do. Our context has shifted a little. We’ll have some different types of actors to deal with as we make our demands and as we’re trying to figure out how we’re going to push towards whatever the goal is for people. For some people the end goal is going to be reform, for some people it’s going to be abolition, others will have other kinds of goals. The system of mass criminalization we have isn’t the result of failure. Frankly, I really didn’t think that Donald Trump would win. I was sure that white people would vote for him, but I thought that the votes of people of color would offset this so that he wouldn’t actually be President. But I’m not surprised that white people voted for him across the board. I expected that. I just underestimated the numbers of votes by people of color which I believed would offset that the fact that white people wanted to elect him President. This election also destabilized some ideas I had about politics and electoral organizing because I did believe that mobilization would lose to organization. We’d been led to believe by the Democratic party that they had all these offices on the ground, all these volunteers, that they had the data analytics to identify who their voters were, and that they could turn them out. I understood, through my study and participation at some points in my life in electoral organizing, that organization trumps mobilization—and I thought the Dems had that down frankly, and they did not clearly. There were other things at play too that I didn’t perceive. I’m still trying to figure out what all of this means for anti-criminalization organizing. Some people are lamenting the fact that the DOJ is going to revert back to what it was before the Obama administration. I have actually been very upset over the past few years about the impulse people have to rely on law enforcement to police the police—also people saying they want to prosecute “killer cops,” all this stuff: the demand is always that the DOJ step in. I’ve always felt that was futile. The cops won’t police themselves and I’ve thought that the strategy of turning to the DOJ acted like a cooling saucer. It demobilizes action. Every time someone is murdered by police: “let the DOJ handle it, let the DOJ handle it!” It’s not an effective strategy and it sucks up so much activist energy. Now that people can’t say “let the DOJ handle it,” I wonder what openings there are for people to consider other things. John Duda: How do you see helping people hold on to the idea that we need to be fighting for systemic change rather than just pushing back against whatever egregious outrages the Trump administration is bringing this week? Mariame Kaba: Yes. Yes. Yes. So important, in fact one of my Facebook friends Kali Akuno posted something after the election that I thought was right on point and really spoke to this: he was basically telling everybody “listen, we’ve got to buckle up.” The moment that we have right now is one where we need to make cogent, expansive arguments—not arguments merely or simply about the Republican party and Donald Trump. He was saying: let’s not limit our focus. In order to intervene in this current moment his point was that we need to focus our resistance against the system, the entire system, the entire capitalist system. You know—against the settler colonial, patriarchal, and racist system that we have and not just against Donald Trump and the Republican party. Very difficult to do given the daily outrages and assaults by this administration but so important to do. John Duda: And this means that the answer isn’t just more and better liberalism? Mariame Kaba: He also made that point—the point that liberals and the liberal consensus actually had been enabling all different kinds of forms of human exploitation and oppression—and then that now that same apparatus is quickly telling people to join in for national unity and reconciliation with the forces that are basically hell bent on destroying millions of people. That is really something we can’t do. We have to really focus on mounting a resistance that develops and then fights for transformational demands. We can’t allow people to become solely fixated on Trump. We can’t get seduced by the idea that if only we just rebuild the DNC we’ll be fine. We really have to jump in now to shape the narrative. The starting point—and this is the gift that abolition as an ideology and a practice has given me—is the idea that the system isn’t actually broken. Right? Because then I’m not preoccupied with trying to fix it. That’s not my goal. All I want to do is abolish and end it, therefore the imperatives of what I’m trying to do—the training, the questions, the analysis—all have to be geared towards that, and then this doesn’t force me to run around in circles plugging my fingers in the dyke everywhere as the water is just threatening to overwhelm all of us. Also, this allows me to think of how we can crowd out the current system by building the things that we want to see in the world, that will promote our well-being. That’s a grounding thing—to have this understanding about the system—and to really be propelled by it. I also want to say that something I’ve been thinking about a lot. I’ve always been committed to political education both for myself and with others, and I’m even more committed to it now. It’s clear to me that a huge part of what we need right now is to sit with lots and lots of people to hash out, over a long period of time, our analysis around what is happening to us and why, and how we’re going to be able to overcome those things. John Duda: It seems to me that a part of this is that we can’t ignore the connection between the growth of the carceral state on the one hand and the withering of democracy on the other… Mariame Kaba: I read an article in the Miami Herald that said 23% of Florida’s voting age black men were barred from voting due to felony convictions. Obviously the numbers [nationwide] are like over 6 million people are disenfranchised from voting in elections due to felony convictions. When the people who say their main interest and focus and commitment to civic engagement is about voting, seem to have no answer for that, when these people haven’t activated and organized around that in any significant way, this is a microcosm for me of the problems that we’re facing, right? It’s that even those people who hold dear the idea that voting is the primary mechanism for social change and social justice don’t have an expansive view of how then to insure that every possible person votes, right? That tells you a lot. The VRA is gutted, people seem to be completely ineffectual in terms of how to address that. There’s voter suppression all over the place and yet what you find are the elites and the non-elites, people who say they believe in voting above all— yelling at third party voters. Third party voters are not your problem. Disengaged voters are. What’s your plan for engaging those folks? Over 6 million people are disenfranchised from voting in elections due to felony convictions. Again—what an incredibly shrunken set of ideas and analysis about the thing you say you care the most about, right? I’ve been thinking a lot about that, you can extrapolate that to other things, but that’s been really interesting to me. I don’t really see the U.S. as a democracy. I see it as something that is “so-called democracy,” as Malcolm X would say. The electoral college, voter suppression, the duopoly that has us choosing lesser evils, gerrymandering, the fact that you have to raise millions to run, etc.. etc… these are all constraints on democratic participation. PIC abolition also has something to teach us about democracy. It allows us to say and mean that if one of us is caged, then all of us are. That no one is free if some of us aren’t. Folks need to focus on this to achieve actual democracy. John Duda: That kind of shrunken imagination seems to really hold back a lot of people from thinking about a world without prisons. The modern prison—it’s a historically just not that old of a phenomenon, maybe a couple of hundred years, maximum. Mass incarceration on the scale that we know it now—is just a couple of decades old. Yet people seem to be unable to imagine or even think about a world without prisons. Do you have a sense of why? What’s the source of this blockage? Mariame Kaba: I heard Patrisse Cullors from the Black Lives Matter Global Network say a while ago that somebody had to actually first imagine prisons and the police themselves in order to create them. Everything you see in the world—somebody thought of it first. I think that’s true and I think that’s right. I also think that once things are actualized into the world and exist, you can’t imagine how the world functioned before it. It’s like we develop amnesia. You just assume things have always been as they are. I see this in myself—in just my lifetime where I went to college at a time when there were no computers—this is in the late 80’s. I brought a typewriter with me to college. That’s how I typed all my papers and did all my work. I struggle to remember how I did that now—and again that was just in the late 80’s-early 90’s. I can’t imagine it—I don’t even know how I operated in the world without a computer and the internet, right? It feels naturalized in that way even for somebody who in her own adult lifetime didn’t actually have it. That I can’t imagine a world without the technology I’m currently living with, says a lot. I can talk about it—but I don’t think I have a strong memory of that time. We abolitionists often say that—and it’s true—that prisons are relatively new inventions, they really are, worldwide even. But think of how normalized so many other technologies are in our lives—and they are so very recent compared to prisons.

#### The alternative is to reject the 1AC’s ethical distancing from the terror of anti-blackness and actively embrace the pathologized being of blackness – vote neg to *choose* blackness as *the* vessel for destroying civil society, rather than *a* problem framed by civil society

Jared Sexton 11 [University of California, Irvine (School of Humanities)], “The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism,” InTensions Journal Copyright ©2011 by York University (Toronto, Canada), Issue 5 (Fall/Winter 2011), ISSN# 1913-5874, ghs//BZ

Elsewhere, in a discussion of Du Bois on the study of black folk, Gordon restates an existential phenomenological conception of the antiblack world developed across his first several books: “Blacks here suffer the phobogenic reality posed by the spirit of racial seriousness. In effect, they more than symbolize or signify various social pathologies—they become them. In our antiblack world, blacks are pathology” (Gordon 2000: 87). This conception would seem to support Moten’s contention that even much radical black studies scholarship sustains the association of blackness with a certain sense of decay and thereby fortifies and extends the interlocutory life of widely accepted political common sense. In fact, it would seem that Gordon deepens the already problematic association to the level of identity. And yet, this is precisely what Gordon argues is the value and insight of Fanon: he fully accepts the definition of himself as pathological as it is imposed by a world that knows itself through that imposition, rather than remaining in a reactive stance that insists on the (temporal, moral, etc.) heterogeneity between a self and an imago originating in culture. Though it may appear counterintuitive, or rather because it is counterintuitive, this acceptance or affirmation is active; it is a willing or willingness, in other words, to pay whatever social costs accrue to being black, to inhabiting blackness, to living a black social life under the shadow of social death. This is not an accommodation to the dictates of the antiblack world. The affirmation of blackness, which is to say an affirmation of pathological being, is a refusal to distance oneself from blackness in a valorization of minor differences that bring one closer to health, to life, or to sociality. Fanon writes in the first chapter of Black Skin, White Masks, “The Black Man and Language”: “A Senegalese who learns Creole to pass for Antillean is a case of alienation. The Antilleans who make a mockery out of him are lacking in judgment” (Fanon 2008: 21). In a world structured by the twin axioms of white superiority and black inferiority, of white existence and black nonexistence, a world structured by a negative categorical imperative— “above all, don’t be black” (Gordon 1997: 63)—in this world, the zero degree of transformation is the turn toward blackness, a turn toward the shame, as it were, that “resides in the idea that ‘I am thought of as less than human’” (Nyong’o 2002: 389).xiv In this we might create a transvaluation of pathology itself, something like an embrace of pathology without pathos. [24] To speak of black social life and black social death, black social life against black social death, black social life as black social death, black social life in black social death—all of this is to find oneself in the midst of an argument that is also a profound agreement, an agreement that takes shape in (between) meconnaissance and (dis)belief. Black optimism is not the negation of the negation that is afro-pessimism, just as black social life does not negate black social death by inhabiting it and vitalizing it. A living death is as much a death as it is a living. Nothing in afro-pessimism suggests that there is no black (social) life, only that black life is not social life in the universe formed by the codes of state and civil society, of citizen and subject, of nation and culture, of people and place, of history and heritage, of all the things that colonial society has in common with the colonized, of all that capital has in common with labor—the modern world system. Black life is not lived in the world that the world lives in, but it is lived underground, in outer space. This is agreed. That is to say, what Moten asserts against afro- pessimism is a point already affirmed by afro-pessimism, is, in fact, one of the most polemical dimensions of afro-pessimism as a project: namely, that black life is not social, or rather that black life is lived in social death. Double emphasis, on lived and on death. That’s the whole point of the enterprise at some level. It is all about the implications of this agreed- upon point where arguments (should) begin, but they cannot (yet) proceed. III. Those of us writing in a critical vein in the human sciences often use the phrase “relations of power” and yet we just as often gloss over the complexity of the idea of relation itself, and especially so regarding the relation that relation has with power, or, rather, regarding the way in which power obtains in and as relation. We are not afraid to say, for instance, that relations of power are complex, but we have less to offer when faced with the stubborn fact that relation itself is complex, that is, does not simply suggest a linkage or interaction between one thing and another, between subjects, say, or between objects, or between subjects and objects, or persons and things. The attention to relation that Christina Sharpe (2010), for instance, sustains across her intellectual enterprise puts pressure on any static notion of each term. This is an interrogation of power in its most intimate dimension. We learn not just that power operates intimately (which it does) or that intimacy is inextricable from the question of power (which it is), but that the relation between the two—when it is brought into view, within earshot, when it enters language—deranges what we mean, or what we thought we understood, by the former and the latter. What is power? What is intimacy? How do we know this at all? How to communicate it? And where or when are these questions, and their relation, posed with greater force—political force, psychic force, historical force—than within the precincts of the New World slave estate, and within the time of New World slavery? We still must ask at this late stage, “What is slavery?” The answer, or the address, to this battery of questions, involves a strange and maddening itinerary that would circumnavigate the entire coastline or maritime borders of the Atlantic world, enabling the fabrication and conquest of every interior—bodily, territorial, and conceptual. To address all of this is to speak the name of race in the first place, to speak its first word. What is slavery? And what does it mean to us, and for us? What does slavery mean for the very conception of the objective pronoun “us”? [26] If the intimacy of power suggests the sheer difficulty of difference, the trouble endemic to determining where the white imagination ends and the black imagination begins, then the power of intimacy suggests, with no less tenacity and no less significance, that our grand involvement across the color line is structured like the figure of an envelope, folds folded within folds: a black letter law whose message is obscured, enveloped, turned about, reversed. Here a structure of violence is inscribed problematically in narrative, an inscription that can only struggle and fail to be something other than a writing-off, or a writing-over. The massive violence that founds and opens a structure of vulnerability, a world-making enjoyment of that violence of enjoyment disappears into the telos of resolution, the closure of family romance, the drive for kinship, where insistence replaces imposition. Black rage converts magically to black therapeutics, a white mythology that disavows its points of origin in the theft that creates the crime and its alibi at once. This illegible word, where affect drops away only to remain, is what Sharpe terms “monstrous intimacy,” “a memory for forgetting.”xv And what would we do without it? Indeed, what might we do? [27] What kind of politics might be possible across this gap, as wide as a river, as thin as a veil? It is a powerful misrecognition that enables an understanding of afro-pessimism as moving against black life, in other words, of pathologizing blackness. Blackness is not the pathogen in the afro- pessimist imagination and it is a wonder how one could read it so even as it is no wonder at all. No, blackness is not the pathogen in afro-pessimism, the world is. Not the earth, but the world, and maybe even the whole possibility of and desire for a world. This is not to say that blackness is the cure, either. It is and it isn’t. If, as Moten suggests, radicalism is the general critique of the proper and blackness is radicalism in the split difference between experience and fact; then afro-pessimism, in its general critique of the myriad recuperations of the proper at the singular expense of blackness (blackness in some ways as that expense of the proper) is, in fact, the celebration (of the experience) of blackness as (the) performance (of) study.

#### The 1AC and any perm forecloses the possibility of radical questioning about the ethicality of civil society by structurally adjusting the black body through the “political action” that ceases to be “inclusive” – the aff’s starting point places the black body upon a psychologically traumatic, dielectric state of abandonment that forecloses black liberation – if we win that their scholarship produces this structural violence that is an independent reason to vote negative

**Wilderson ‘10** (Frank B Wilderson III- Professor at UC irvine- Red, White and Black- p.  **8-10)**

I have little interest in assailing political conservatives. Nor is my ar- gument wedded to the disciplinary needs of political science, or even sociology, where injury must be established, first, as White supremacist event, from which one then embarks on a demonstration of intent, or racism; and, if one is lucky, or foolish, enough, a solution is proposed. If the position of the Black is, as I argue, a paradigmatic impossibility in the Western Hemisphere, indeed, in the world, in other words, if a Black is the very antithesis of a Human subject, as imagined by Marxism and psy- choanalysis, then his or her paradigmatic exile is not simply a function of repressive practices on the part of institutions (as political science and sociology would have it). This banishment from the Human fold is to be found most profoundly in the emancipatory meditations of Black people's staunchest "allies," and in some of the most "radical" films. Here—not in restrictive policy, unjust legislation, police brutality, or conservative scholarship—is where the Settler/Master's sinews are most resilient. The polemic animating this research stems from (1) my reading of Native and Black American meta-commentaries on Indian and Black subject positions written over the past twenty-three years and ( 2 ) a sense of how much that work appears out of joint with intellectual protocols and political ethics which underwrite political praxis and socially engaged popular cinema in this epoch of multiculturalism and globalization. The sense of abandonment I experience when I read the meta-commentaries on Red positionality (by theorists such as Leslie Silko, Ward Churchill, Taiaiake Alfred, Vine Deloria Jr., and Haunani-Kay Trask) and the meta-commentaries on Black positionality (by theorists such as David Marriott, Saidiya Hartman, Ronald Judy, Hortense Spillers, Orlando Patterson, and Achille Mbembe) against the deluge of multicultural positivity is overwhelming. One suddenly realizes that, though the semantic field on which subjec- tivity is imagined has expanded phenomenally through the protocols of multiculturalism and globalization theory, Blackness and an unflinching articulation of Redness are more unimaginable and illegible within this expanded semantic field than they were during the height of the F B I ' S repressive Counterintelligence Program ( C O I N T E L P R O ) . On the seman- tic field on which the new protocols are possible, Indigenism can indeed lO become partially legible through a programmatics of structural adjust- ment (as fits our globalized era). In other words, for the Indians' subject position to be legible, their positive registers of lost or threatened cultural identity must be foregrounded, when in point of fact the antagonistic register of dispossession that Indians "possess" is a position in relation to a socius structured by genocide. As Churchill points out, everyone from Armenians to Jews have been subjected to genocide, but the Indigenous position is one for which genocide is a constitutive element, not merely an historical event, without which Indians would not, paradoxically, "exist." 9 Regarding the Black position, some might ask why, after claims suc- cessfully made on the state by the Civil Rights Movement, do I insist on positing an operational analytic for cinema, film studies, and political theory that appears to be a dichotomous and essentialist pairing of Masters and Slaves? In other words, why should we think of today's Blacks in the United States as Slaves and everyone else (with the exception of Indians) as Masters? One could answer these questions by demonstrat- ing how nothing remotely approaching claims successfully made on the state has come to pass. In other words, the election of a Black president aside, police brutality, mass incarceration, segregated and substandard schools and housing, astronomical rates of H I V infection, and the threat of being turned away en masse at the polls still constitute the lived expe- rience of Black life. But such empirically based rejoinders would lead us in the wrong direction; we would find ourselves on "solid" ground, which would only mystify, rather than clarify, the question. We would be forced to appeal to "facts," the "historical record," and empirical markers of stasis and change, all of which could be turned on their head with more of the same. Underlying such a downward spiral into sociology, political sci- ence, history, and public policy debates would be the very rubric that I am calling into question: the grammar of suffering known as exploitation and alienation, the assumptive logic whereby subjective dispossession is arrived at in the calculations between those who sell labor power and those who acquire it. The Black qua the worker. Orlando Patterson has already dispelled this faulty ontological grammar in Slavery and Social Death, where he demonstrates how and why work, or forced labor, is not a constituent element of slavery. Once the "solid" plank of "work" is removed from slavery, then the conceptually coherent notion of "claims against the state"—the proposition that the state and civil society are elastic enough to even contemplate the possibility of an emancipatory project for the Black position—disintegrates into thin air. The imaginary of the state and civil society is parasitic on the Middle Passage. Put an- other way, No slave, no world. And, in addition, as Patterson argues, no slave is in the world. If, as an ontological position, that is, as a grammar of suffering, the Slave is not a laborer but an anti-Human, a position against which Hu- manity establishes, maintains, and renews its coherence, its corporeal in- tegrity; if the Slave is, to borrow from Patterson, generally dishonored, perpetually open to gratuitous violence, and void of kinship structure, that is, having no relations that need be recognized, a being outside of re- lationality, then our analysis cannot be approached through the rubric of gains or reversals in struggles with the state and civil society, not unless and until the interlocutor first explains how the Slave is of the world. The onus is not on one who posits the Master/Slave dichotomy but on the one who argues there is a distinction between Slaveness and Blackness. How, when, and where did such a split occur? The woman at the gates of Columbia University awaits an answer.

#### Thus, the role of the ballot is to vote for the person who best diagnoses the reality that produces the phenomenon of anti-blackness – if I win their starting point is flawed, they don’t get to weigh their affirmative.

## 2

### 1NC

#### Interp – Workers must get paid. The aff must defend a just government recognizes workers right to strike.

#### Workers get paid

Cambridge Dictionary

[https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/worker ghs-rodz]

workers

[ plural ] POLITICS specialized

members of the working class (= a social group that consists of people who own little or no property and who have to work, usually doing physical work, to get money):

#### Violation – incarcerated workers are not paid

**Texas Department of Criminal Justice, no date [**“Frequently Asked Questions,” Texas department of criminal justice - < <https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/faq/cid.html>> ghs-rodz]

The day starts with wake-up call at 3:30 a.m. and breakfast is served at 4:30 a.m. Inmates report to their work assignments at 6:00 a.m. Every inmate who is physically able has a job in the prison system. Inmates are not paid for their work, but they can earn privileges as a result of good work habits. Inmates also learn job skills that can help them find employment when released from prison.

**8 states – that’s 16^ of the aff – Texas + florida are two of the biggest states in the US**

**Kent State 8/27** ["How Much do Prisoners Make in Each State?," 8/27/2021 <https://onlinedegrees.kent.edu/sociology/criminal-justice/community/how-much-do-prisoners-make-in-each-state> ghs-rodz]

Eight States Pay Nothing to Inmates Unfortunately, **government-run facilities in some states don’t pay their inmates at all** for their prison labor. Those states include **Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas**.1 Despite not being paid for their labor, inmates may still want to work because it could help their chances of being released on parole.

#### That exempts this list of 95 types of workers and more

**IET 21,** ("19 Types of Industry Sectors," Indeed Career Guide, Indeed Editorial Team, https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/types-of-industry) KD

Types of industries There are many kinds of industries you can pursue based on your interests and preferred responsibilities. Here are some common types of industries to consider: Advertising and marketing Advertising and marketing industries typically focus on promoting products to audiences through paid and organic efforts. Employees understand how to attract audiences and publish campaigns using media and print outlets. Careers to consider include: **Creative director Copywriter Graphic designer Marketing coordinator Social media coordinator** Related: What Are Advertising Degrees? Aerospace In the aerospace industry, employees research, develop and manufacture flight vehicles. They aim to make flight—whether in helicopters, planes or rockets—safe for travelers and employees involved with aviation. Many elements go into this industry, like testing, selling, maintaining, repairing, building and designing various flight machines. Several small companies focus on making aircraft components and selling them to larger manufacturers. Careers to consider include: **Aeronautical engineer Aircraft designer Aircraft mechanic Aviation manager Pilot** Related: Aeronautics vs. Aerospace Engineering: Definitions and Differences Agriculture The agriculture industry typically focuses on cultivating plants, land and animals to make foods, drinks and other essential items. As technology grows, this industry continues to modernize, allowing farmers to naturally and safely grow more plants. Researchers and scientists within this industry regularly develop innovative ways to create a stronger ecosystem. Those who work in this industry usually produce, sell or export agricultural items and goods to various businesses. Careers to consider include: **Agronomist Farmer Food inspector Landscape designer Wildlife biologist** Related: How To Become an Agricultural Manager in 6 Steps Computer and technology The computer and technology industry typically focuses on fixing and repairing computer hardware systems, developing or updating new applications and enhancing business networking and software systems. The industry usually interacts with other industries to improve efficiency and productivity levels. For instance, the health care industry adapts many computer systems to store patient records and request medication orders from pharmacies. Careers to consider include: **Application developer Computer programmer Information security analyst Software engineer Web developer** Construction The construction industry consists of employees who build certain houses, buildings or other structures for residents, businesses or community members. It is regularly adapting to technology advancements to more efficiently build safe, quality structures. These advancements also help them complete more complex tasks like constructing skyscrapers or conducting inspections on areas of bridges or buildings that are difficult for construction workers to reach. There are different types of construction work that can fit into the construction industry sector. The three main categories include: General construction: Those who construct buildings, residential properties or houses are typically completing general construction projects. ​​ Specialized construction: This type of construction typically requires more expertise in a certain aspect of construction, such as woodworking, concrete or electrical construction. Heavy construction: Employees who build bridges or roads and construct other larger construction tasks typically fall into the heavy construction category. Careers to consider include: **Brickmason Concrete laborer Construction worker Electrician Equipment operator** Related: What Are the Different Types of Construction Jobs? Education Th education industry comprises all academic institutions including elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, colleges, universities, learning institutes and technical schools. It also includes both public and private institutions. Public institutes receive government funding while a single person or group of people run and fund private institutions. Careers to consider include: **Academic advisor Daycare teacher Professor Special education teacher Teacher** Related: Academic Curriculum Vitae (CV) Template (Plus Writing Tips) Energy The energy industry handles matters like renewable and nonrenewable energy to improve the environment and enhance the cost efficiencies of most businesses. Various operations within the energy field include manufacturing, refining and extraction. Other companies that may fall within the energy sector are nuclear power, coal energy and electric power, which are all an essential part of improving the environment. Extensive research is typically conducted by scientists within this industry to find innovative ways to conserve resources and use alternate energies, like wind, hydroelectric and solar energies. Careers to consider include: **Energy engineer Environmental technician Solar consultant Urban planner Wind turbine technician** Related: Careers in Electricity Entertainment The entertainment and music industry is one of the largest industries in the world. Different types of entertainment within this industry include sports, music, theater, movies, television and web series. This industry usually contains a mixture of performers, crew members and management working together to make the entire industry operate smoothly. Since there are so many employees in this industry, it can typically be more challenging to earn a job in this industry than others. Careers to consider include: **Actor Booking agent Film crew Photographer Theatre manager** Related: How To Work in the Entertainment Industry: Your Guide To Starting a Career Fashion Employees in the fashion industry focus on areas like marketing, supply chain, e-commerce, media and manufacturing clothing apparel, jewelry, accessories, cosmetics and footwear. They may sell products within the fashion industry to small business store owners, larger supply chains or popular department store locations. There are employees within this industry who may design these apparel and merchandise items while others focus on purchasing and reselling them. Careers to consider include: **Buyer Fashion designer Merchandiser Stylist Textile** designer Related: Courses To Pursue for Fashion Designing Finance and economic The finance and economic industries handle various aspects of money management and can include areas like banking, corporate finance, public finance, personal finance, investing and asset management. Some employees may work primarily in banks helping others responsibly handle their finances while others may focus solely on keeping businesses financially stable. Many employees in this industry must remain aware of economic conditions and trends to provide valuable financial advice to their clients. Careers to consider include: **Certified public accountant (CPA) Financial analyst Financial planner Investment banker Private equity associate** Related: 10 Jobs in Financial Securities (With Salaries and Duties Food and beverage The food and beverage industry involves preserving, processing and serving food items. This industry typically works with those in the agriculture industry to receive ingredients from them. They then use these ingredients to create different food and beverage items. Food and beverage employees may also take these food items and process them by adding chemicals and colors to preserve their taste. The food and beverage industry has significantly grown due to the high demand for quick and processed foods. Catering services, fine dining restaurants and bars also fall within the food and beverage industry. Careers to consider include: **Bartender Executive chef Line cook Restaurant manager Sommelier** Health care Employees who work in the health care industry focus on providing diagnostic, preventative, curative, therapeutic and rehabilitative care to patients to keep them in stable health conditions. The key objective of the health care industry is to prevent and treat any injuries, illnesses or sicknesses patients may have. Careers to consider include: **Biomedical engineer Dentist Physician Physician assistant Registered nurse** Related: 20 of the Fastest Growing Health Care Jobs Hospitality The hospitality industry works closely with customers to provide a satisfying and unique experience. Employees within this industry typically offer services to meet people's preferences rather than their needs like in the health care industry. The main categories within the hospitality industry are travel, tourism and food and beverage. Businesses like bed and breakfasts, hotels, motels, restaurants and travel agencies typically belong to the hospitality industry. Careers to consider include: **Event specialist Front-desk agent Hotel manager Spa manager Travel agent** Related: Hospitality Skills To Include on Your Resume by Job Type Manufacturing In the manufacturing industry, employees convert raw components and materials into final products which they sell to companies. Businesses will then take these products and market them to consumers for profits. There are several categories within the manufacturing sector, including wood, leather, paper, textile, transportation equipment and many other materials used to make products. Manufacturing employees usually work in plants, factories or mills. Careers to consider include: **Assembler Manufacturing technician Packaging engineer Welder Woodworker Media** and news The media and news industry aims to provide essential news to community members and individuals locally and worldwide. Employees typically publish these news stories in outlets like television, radio, online articles, websites, social media, newspapers or podcasts. As technology evolves, more forms of media will become available to consumers which means more jobs in this industry should continue to appear. Careers to consider include: **Broadcaster Journalist Producer Social media specialist Video editor** Mining The mining industry is an older industry that handles the location and extraction of metals and other natural resources from the earth's surface. This includes coal, oil and natural gas, rock, and other materials. Mining organizations operate all over the world to provide materials for jewelry and other commercial items. Careers to consider include: **Coal miner Geologist Mining engineer Petroleum engineer** Roustabout Pharmaceutical Pharmaceutical companies research, develop and sell medicine and other drugs to patients, physicians and insurance companies. This industry focuses heavily on research and development to create new and innovative medications to safely improve patients' health and well-being. Employees within this industry spend a significant amount of time researching, creating and selling drugs to cure diseases or treat symptoms for both people and animals. Those who create medical devices, like surgical equipment items, also work in the pharmaceutical industry. Careers to consider include: **Chemist Nuclear pharmacist Pharmaceutical manufacturer Pharmacist Pharmacologist** Related: Pharmacy Skills: What Are Employers Looking For? Telecommunication Companies in the telecommunications industry construct, install and repair common communication devices like cell phones, cable or internet. The telecommunication industry allows individuals to communicate with others and send information to and from several parts of the world using audio or visual devices. Many organizations within this industry are internet service providers, cable and satellite companies and wireless internet service providers. Careers to consider include: **Cable installer Data analyst Systems manager Telecommunications engineer Telecommunications operator** Related: Telecommunication: Definition, Types and Careers Transportation Transportation is a large industry handling the movement of people, items and animals using various modes of transportation like trains, trucks, planes and boats. The transportation industry continues to grow, and it includes a wide range of career opportunities for different skill levels, schedules, interests and abilities. Companies will always need to move goods and products and people will always have places they need to go. This makes the transportation industry a fairly secure industry to pursue a career in. Careers to consider include: **Distribution manager Supply chain specialist Traffic controller Transportation engineer Truck driver.**

#### Net Benefits –

#### [1] Limits – 95 workers plus limitless combinations and sub designations like workers makes negating impossible especially with no unifying disads against workers with entirety different negotiations – especially key for incarcerated workers which is not a designation for a worker but how they are – that’s a voting issue for extra-T since the aff can then solve every neg position – limits outweighs – aff gets infinite prep and sets terms for debate so DAs and PICs are inherently reactive and its absurd to say potential neg abuse justifies the aff being flat-out non-T

#### [2] Prefer terms of art grounded in the topic lit – they’re key to check arbitrary Frankenstein definitions and ensure that definitions are predictable and conducive to debates over the core controversies of the topic. That controls the internal link to any substantive education.

#### DTD on T – the debate shouldn’t have happened if they were abusive

#### Competing Interps on T since its binary and a question of models – Good enough isn’t good—there can be no reasonable interp of what the topic actually means

#### No RVIs on T – 1] Illogical—T is a gateway issue, winning T is meeting a baseline to have the debate to begin with 2] T is reactionary, they shouldn’t win for meeting their preround burden

## Case

#### All violence of American militarism is fundamentally grounded in racial slavery, which their theory can never account for – the affirmative’s struggle against elides the structural position of the slave, who is neither subject nor object of America’s empire – the very capacity for debate about sovereignty is itself vouchsafed by the absolute divestment of sovereignty at the site of the black body

Sexton 6 – prof @ UC Irvine

(Jared, Race, Nation, and Empire in a Blackened World, *Radical History Review*

Issue 95 (Spring 2006): 250–61)

This is why Anti-Americanism is and is not an impressive work. To the extent that it teases apart the intricacies of U.S. foreign policy in the regions under inves- tigation, it is remarkably successful, if admittedly limited, in its attempts (there is, recall, no treatment of sub-Saharan Africa, a region with which the United States established a most extensive foreign policy). One cannot read it without better understanding, for example, the prospects and prehistory of the National Security Strategy of the United States (i.e., the Bush Doctrine), the geopolitics of U.S. military intervention in the Middle East across the past half century (a sign, by the way, of the political weakness of the United States and not its strength, according to Mitchell, 95), the strained but inescapable diplomatic and commercial relations with the European Union (and the numerous conceits of its different anti-Americanisms), or the indefinite magnitude of the Korean peninsula to U.S. designs in Asia (for the containment of Japan, the halting “cold war” with China, the disruption of counter- vailing economic regionalism, and so on).¶ If, on the other hand, one looks to Anti-Americanism in order to better understand the linkages between U.S. empire and the fundament of antiblackness on which its state and civil society, its culture and economy, have been erected, or even to understand better the dimensions of global capitalism and post–Cold War militarism that are structured by specifically racial logics, then one will be left wanting. This is not to say that there is no discussion of white supremacy or racist nationalisms, the mythologies of Manifest Destiny and the white man’s burden, as integral parts of the history of U.S. imperialism across the nineteenth and twenti- eth centuries. However, there is little mention of how race operates differently in the different regional and national contexts at hand, including, most important, the effects of race within the United States. Or, to put it more precisely, race is rendered contingent to the formation of the United States; not simply its foreign policy, but the entirety of its institutional scaffolding, its discursive formations, and its social imaginary.¶ The basic failing of the constellation of questions that animates Anti-Americanism—questions about the policies of a political entity whose founding is dubious and whose legitimacy remains in unrelieved crisis—is brought into sharp relief by Ivan Eland’s The Empire Has No Clothes, a study that presents the truth, so to speak, of its more left-leaning and more scholarly counterpart. Pitched between an audi- ence of professional policy analysts and an educated lay readership, Eland’s conclu- sive exposé of the growing imperial object of U.S. foreign policy from the Spanish- American War to the second invasion of Iraq is as erudite and well-reasoned as his conviction about the essential integrity of the American nation is unsupported within his text. The patent divergence is revealed immediately in the definition of imperialism that Eland offers in order to set the parameters of his study. Here is the relevant qualification: ¶ Some analysts would say that U.S. imperial behavior began as America expanded westward, pushing out other powers and Native American populations, and that U.S. overseas imperialism started when that continental expansion was complete. . . . The westward expansion should be labeled as nation-building, not empire-building. That classification is in no way designed to develop a euphemism for the grabbing of what is now the southwestern United States by provoking a war against Mexico or for the ethnic cleansing and brutal treatment of Native Americans in the westward push by white settlers. In fact, nation-building can be more brutal than the quest for empire. (3)¶ Though the brutality of nation-building is noted—here the nation-building of what Orlando Patterson termed “a slave society”4—its continuing political urgency drops out of the picture in order to discuss the perils and pitfalls of U.S. imperialism, all other things remaining constant. And it is what must be held outside the critical frame, bracketed out so that the analysis may commence on its preferred terms, that undermines both the conceptual sophistication and the ethical charge of an otherwise compelling argument about the extreme imprudence of the present course.

#### No 1AC Solvency – The Affirmative’s legal approach to reformism is part of the political imaginary that works to regulate and control gendered and racialized bodies for the production of more sovereign will.

**Kandaswamy 12** (Priya Kandaswamy is the associate professor of Women’s Gender & Sexuality Studies, Race Gender & Sexuality Studies Department Head . Edward Hohfeld Professor of Social Sciences “The Obligations of Freedom and The Limits of Legal Equality,” Southwestern Law Review, Vol.41)//JP

Despite a vast array of critiques that have elucidated the ways in which the U.S. state is deeply invested in maintaining social relations of racism, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy, it is still quite commonplace to assume that to remedy social injustices one must turn first to the law. The pursuit of legal equality is frequently understood as the most pragmatic approach and a necessary first step to any kind of broad scale social change. In practice, however, legal equality struggles have failed to deliver substantive social justice for many groups. Frequently written off as a sign of the incompleteness of legal change, these failures are often invoked as evidence of the need for further legal reform rather than prompting the serious consideration of the law’s actual capacity to effect change that perhaps they should. Even those critical of legal strategies frequently fall back on them, citing legal reform as a necessary evil, the best that can be achieved in the current political context, or the first step toward broader changes. In this way, the law maintains a fierce hold on the political imagination. In this essay, I argue for the importance of severing that hold. The assumptions that legal reform is a pragmatic and necessary first step to social justice is a reflection of the boundaries that circumscribe what is imagined as politically possible within dominant discourse rather than the essential truths they are often taken to be. To the extent that legal interventions will always simultaneously reinforce the legal authority of the U.S. state, legal reform is bound to reiterate rather than transform unequal distributions of power. Pinning political possibilities to the law circumscribes the boundaries of change in very narrow ways. Instead, movements for social justice must seek to open up possibilities for transformation and evaluate their engagements with the law in terms of the future possibilities those engagements might open or foreclose. In other words, rather than presume legal equality is the answer, it is necessary to engage with the more complex questions about what freedom should and could look like and locate legal interventions in relation to this broader vision. In order to illustrate these points, I turn first to the historical example of emancipation and the consequent conferral of citizenship to formerly enslaved people, a quintessential moment in the expansion of legal rights in U.S. history. I look to Reconstruction Era struggles over the meaning of citizenship specifically because they mark a particularly defining moment in the reconfiguration of racial violence through the construct of the liberal subject. Given the ways that U.S. citizenship had been defined against blackness, the Fourteenth Amendment’s extension of citizenship rights to freed people forced the nation to grapple with what racially inclusive citizenship in a nation forged through racial violence would look like. Therefore, considering the legacies of this historical period raises crucial issues for contemporary struggles for inclusion, equality and the extension of legal rights, particularly given the role emancipation has played as an important historical reference point for these struggles. Emancipation marked a moment of great possibility, and freed people held broad and diverse visions of freedom that included reparations, land ownership, freedom of mobility, and other self-defined mechanisms of individual and collective self-determination.1 However, as Saidiya Hartman shows, legal recognition as citizens worked to constrain and curtail these more expansive possibilities of freedom by locking freedom for black people into an idiom defined by obligation, indebtedness, and responsibility.2 Rather than mitigate the significance of racial difference in the national imagination, the conferral of citizenship rights collaborated in “the persistent production of blackness as abject, threatening, servile, dangerous, dependent, irrational, and infectious”3 and obliged freed people to shoulder the responsibilities and burdens of perpetually having to demonstrate their preparedness for and deservingness of citizenship in a context where their blackness marked them as otherwise.4 This was evident in the ways that state institutions prioritized enforcing labor and sexual discipline amongst freed people.5 As the Virginia Freedmen’s Bureau’s Assistant Commissioner Orlando Brown wrote, if freed people were to be citizens, it was necessary “to make the Freedmen into a self-supporting class of free laborers, who shall understand the necessity of steady employment and the responsibility of providing for themselves and [their] families.”6 As Hartman shows, anti-black racism fundamentally shaped recognition as a liberal subject.7 While for white male citizens liberal individualism had afforded a kind of entitlement and self-determination, for freed people, recognition as a liberal subject rendered one responsible and therefore blameworthy.8 This was particularly evident in the workings of contract. A key distinction between the free person and the slave was selfownership signified primarily through the capacity to enter into contract.9 The understanding of legal freedom as self-possession meant that there was no inherent contradiction between subordination and freedom as long as subordination was secured through a freely entered into contract, a phenomenon most clearly illustrated by the labor and marriage contracts.10 For freed people who had both been structurally denied access to other material resources through slavery and who were subject to vagrancy laws that criminalized the refusal to enter into long-term labor contracts, contracts were very much coerced.11 However, despite the fact that they functioned to limit black people’s mobility, secure the hyper-exploitation of black labor, and provided the ground for the development of carceral institutions directed at the punishment of black people,12 entering into the labor contract became discursively understood as the quintessential sign of freedom.13 In fact, freed people were called upon to demonstrate their independence and deservingness of freedom by fulfilling the terms of the labor contract.14 In this way, contract provided a rubric for reinventing relations of subordination by obscuring national responsibility for the injustices of slavery and instead displacing this responsibility onto the shoulders of the formerly enslaved.15 Freedom was rewritten as obligation and independence manifested as a burden.16 Liberal concepts of freedom also functioned as a mechanism of regulating gender and sexuality through the marriage contract. While marriages and other kinship ties were not legally recognized under slavery, one of the first rights freed people gained was marriage recognition.17 However, as Katherine Franke points out, the extension of marriage rights was grounded in the belief that marriage as an institution would help civilize freed people by instilling heteropatriarchal gender norms.18 A key element of the rationalization of slavery was the construction of black inferiority as marked by a lack of the gender differentiation that was seen as characteristic of civilization.19 As Matt Richardson describes, “early attempts to congeal racist taxonomies of difference through anatomical investigation and ethnographic observation produced the Black body as always already variant and Black people as the essence of gender aberrance, thereby defining the norm by making the Black its opposite.”20 While marriage recognition did provide some tangible protections to married freed people, the belief in marriage as a civilizing institution simultaneously reiterated and valorized white supremacist beliefs that black people’s inferiority was evidenced in their lack of appropriate gender and sexuality.21 Additionally, the extension of marriage rights provided the ground upon which alternative sexual arrangements were criminalized and rationalized state austerity toward black people by constructing the self-sufficient household as the means to economic security.22 As a result of the legal recognition of black marriages, many freed people faced convictions for adultery, fornication, cohabitation, and the failure to provide for their legal dependents. 23 In this way, much like the labor contract, the extension of rights in fact created new obligations and new grounds upon which black people might be punished. Michel Foucault argues that one of the distinguishing features of the modern state is the emergence of biopower.24 Unlike sovereign power that is expressed in the capacity to take life, biopower is invested in the production of knowledge about and regulation of populations, processes of normalization and regularization, and ultimately the capacity to “make live” in particular ways.25 However, Foucault also notes that sovereign power does not simply disappear but rather that the state continues to exercise sovereign power alongside biopower.26 This process is delimited by state racism, which “introduc[es] a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die.”27 As biopower becomes concerned with regulating the life of the population, racism marks the bodies upon which sovereign power must still be exercised. 28 Killing the internal or external racial threat becomes understood as a necessary element to making the population stronger.29 Scholars such as Ann Stoler and Scott Morgensen have elaborated on Foucault’s rather scant discussion of racism showing the ways in which biopower in fact emerges in relation to and as a function of colonial violence.30 Hartman’s analysis of anti-black racism and the constitution of the liberal subject complicates Foucault’s analysis and adds to scholarship that highlights the central role of racial violence in the elaboration of state power.31 As Hartman shows, during Reconstruction, black people were simultaneously subject to the normalizing and violent powers of the state, or perhaps more accurately normalizing processes became yet another vehicle for state violence.32 On the one hand, freed people were subject to constant surveillance as their moral capacity for citizenship was always in question, and any failure to comply with labor or marriage contracts was read as evidence of this incapacity.33 On the other hand, contractual freedom provided a basis for the state’s total disinvestment in black life, thereby making it more or less impossible to live up to the ideals of citizenship.34 In this way, the seeming contradictions between racial inclusion and racial violence were effectively displaced by locating responsibility for state violence in those who suffered from its effects. The black subject was thus brought into the fold of citizenship but as a subject always in need of reform or punishment. This historical example powerfully illustrates the ways in which inclusion into citizenship rights can operate as a technique of domination and the role the construct of the liberal subject plays in maintaining state racism.35 Certainly, laws have changed a great deal since Reconstruction. However, the differentiated structure of citizenship grounded in anti-black racism that Hartman describes still operates.36 For example, contemporary political struggles over marriage reflect the processes by which marriage can secure entitlements for one social group while exacting social obligations from another. On the one hand, a mainstream, predominantly white gay and lesbian movement seeks access to a wide array of property and social rights through same-sex marriage recognition.37 On the other hand, marriage incentive programs and increasingly punitive welfare regulations cast marriage and the economic self-sufficiency that supposedly comes with it as an obligation for welfare recipients who are most frequently represented as black women.38 Another terrain upon which racially stratified constructions of citizenship are evident is in struggles for state protection from violence. Legislation that has increasingly criminalized violence against women and hate crimes against LGBT people holds out the promise of greater equality and freedom for some by expanding a system of mass incarceration that targets women of color and queer and transgender people of color.39 In fact, the increasingly punitive and austere orientation of the U.S. welfare state and the expansion of the prison industrial complex can be understood as the logical extension of the processes of liberal subjection that Hartman outlines.40 On the one hand, the state disinvests in black life.41 On the other hand, processes of criminalization hold individuals responsible for the effects of that disinvestment, displacing responsibility for state violence onto those who feel its effects most and punishing those bodies for their structural location.42

#### Counterhegemonic struggles signify work, progress, production and control which the black subject position scandalizes beyond coherence.

**Wilderson 10**

Frank Wilderson III (2010- republished online, 2003-original release) Gramsci's Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?, Social Identities, 9:2, 225-240, DOI: [10.1080/1350463032000101579](https://doi.org/10.1080/1350463032000101579)

A Decisive Antagonism Any serious consideration of the question of antagonistic identity formation — a formation, the mass mobilisation of which can precipitate a crisis in the institutions and assumptive logic which undergird the United States of America — must come to grips with the limitations of marxist discourse in the face of the black subject. This is because the United States is constructed at the intersection of both a capitalist and white supremacist matrix. And the privileged subject of marxist discourse is a subaltern who is approached by variable capital—awage. In other words, marxism assumes a subaltern structured by capital, not by white supremacy. In this scenario, racism is read off the base, as it were, as being derivative of political economy. This is not an adequate subalternity from which to think the elaboration of antagonistic identity formation; not if we are truly committed to elaborating a theory of crisis — crisis at the crux of America’s institutional and discursive strategies. **The scandal with which the black subject position threatens Gramscian discourse is manifest in the subject’s ontological disarticulation of Gramscian categories: work, progress, production, exploitation, hegemony, and historical self-awareness.** By examining the strategy and structure of the black subject’s absence in Antonio Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks and by contemplating the black subject’s incommensurability with the key categories of Gramscian theory, we come face to face with three unsettling consequences. Firstly, the black American subject imposes a radical incoherence upon the assumptive logic of Gramscian discourse. In other words, s/he implies a scandal. Secondly, the black subject reveals marxism’s inability to think white supremacy as the base and, in so doing, calls into question marxism’s claim to elaborate a comprehensive, or in the words of Antonio Gramsci, ‘decisive’ antagonism. Stated another way: **Gramscian marxism is able to imagine the subject which transforms her/himself into a mass of antagonistic identity formations, formations which can precipitate a crisis in wage slavery, exploitation, and/or hegemony, but it is asleep at the wheel when asked to provide enabling antagonisms toward unwaged slavery, despotism, and/or terror**. 1350-4630 Print/1363-0296 On-line/03/020225-16  2003 Taylor & Francis Ltd DOI: 10.1080/1350463032000101579 226 Frank Wilderson, III Finally, we begin to see how marxism suffers from a kind of conceptual anxiety: a desire for socialism on the other side of crisis—asociety which does away not with the category of worker, but with the imposition workers suffer under the approach of variable capital: in other words, the mark of its conceptual anxiety is in its desire to democratise work and thus help keep in place, ensure the coherence of, the Reformation and Enlightenment ‘foundational’ values of productivity and progress. This is a crowding-out scenario for other post-revolutionary possibilities, i.e. idleness. Why interrogate Gramsci with the political predicament and desire of the black(ened) subject position in the Western Hemisphere? Because the Prison Notebooks’ intentionality, and general reception, lay claim to universal applicability. **Neither Gramsci nor his spiritual progenitors in the form of scholars or activists say that the Gramscian project sows the seeds of freedom for whites only. Instead, they claim that deep within the organicity of the organic intellectual is the organic black intellectual, the organic Chinese intellectual, the organic South American intellectual and so on; that though there are historical and cultural variances, there is a structural consistency which elaborates all organic intellectuals and undergirds all resistance.** Through what strategies does the black subject destabilise — emerge as the unthought, and thus the scandal of — historical materialism? How does the black subject distort and expand marxist categories in ways that create, in the words of Hortense Spillers, ‘a distended organisational calculus’? (Spillers 1996, p.82). **We could put the question another way: How does the black subject function within the American desiring machine differently than the quintessential Gramscian subaltern, the worker?** Before going more deeply into how the black subject position destabilises or disarticulates the categories foundational to the assumptive logic of marixsm, it’s important to allow ourselves a digression that attempts to schematise the Gramscian project on its own terms. The Gramscian Dream Students of struggle return, doggedly, to the Prison Notebooks for insights regarding how to bring about a revolution in a society in which state/capital formations are in some way protected by the ‘trenches’ of civil society. It is this outer perimeter, this discursive ‘trench’, constructed by an ensemble of private initiatives, activities, and an ensemble of pose-able questions (hegemony), which must be reconﬁgured before a revolution can take the form of a frontal assault. But this trench called civil society is not, for Gramsci, in and of itself the bane of the working class. Instead it represents a terrain to be occupied, assumed, and appropriated in a pedagogic project of transforming ‘common sense’ into ‘good sense’. This notion of ‘destruction-construction’ is a War of Position which involves agitating within civil society in a ‘revolutionary movement’ that builds ‘qualitatively new social relationships’ (Sassoon, 1987, p.15): [A War of Position] is a struggle that engages on a wide range of fronts in which the state as normally deﬁned…is only one aspect. [For Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society? 227 Gramsci a War of Position is the most ‘decisive’ form of engagement] because it is the form in which bourgeois power is exercised [and victory on] these fronts makes possible or conclusive a frontal attack or War of Movement. (Sassoon, 1987, pp.15–17) In other words, for revolution to be feasible the proletariat must be ‘hailed’, in the Althusserian sense of the word, to a revolutionary position. And, for Gramsci, it is within this ‘trench’ between the economic structure and the state (with its legislation and its coercion), within civil society, that this hailing must take place. Again, for that to happen the trench, civil society, must be transformed. A War of Position can be summed up as a process by which workers struggling against capital and the state forge organs of working class civil society which in turn elaborate organic intellectuals capable of assimilating certain traditional intellectuals, and throughout the whole process all the struggle’s personnel, if you will, fashion a discourse on all of civil society’s fronts through which they eventually become hegemonic. In this way the ‘common sense’, the ‘spontaneous’ consent of the ruled toward the ideology of the rulers, ﬁnds its ‘good sense’, fragments of antagonistic sentiment transformed into an ensemble of questions which, prior to this process, could not be posed (i.e., What is to be done?). Common sense, by way of contrast, is an effect of ‘the prevailing forma mentis’. It involves the notion that the social order can be perfected through ‘fair and open’ competition…[and it] seeks to remedy problems and injustices through reforms fought for and negotiated among competing groups within the existing overall structure…thus leaving the juridical-administrative apparatus of the state more or less intact…It…makes the revolutionary idea of eliminating competitiveness (i.e., greed) as the primary motivating force in society seem unreasonable, unrealistic, or even dangerous. (Buttigieg. 1995, p.13) The pedagogical implications are self-evident. For Gramsci this is a process through which various strata of the class struggling for dominance achieve ‘historical self-awareness’ (Gramsci, 1971, pp.333–35). And for this reason civil society itself is not the bane of workers because its constituent elements (as opposed to the way those elements are combined) are not anti-worker.1 Therefore: [Gramsci’s] purpose is not to repress civil society or to restrict its space but rather to develop a revolutionary strategy (a ‘war of position’) that would be employed precisely in the arena of civil society, with the aim of disabling the coercive apparatus of the state, gaining access to political power, and creating the conditions that could give rise to a consensual society wherein no individual or group is reduced to a subaltern. (Buttigieg, 1995, p.7) At this moment (the end of subalternity by way of the destruction of the ruling class) the State becomes ‘ethical’. Gramsci writes: Every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions 228 Frank Wilderson, III is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. (1971, p.258) He suggests that schools and courts perform this function for the State, before describing the ‘so-called private initiatives and activities’ which form the hegemonic apparatuses of the ruling class. But these private initiatives (i.e., newspapers, cinema, guild associations) are not ‘ethical’ precisely because of their ability to exist in tandem with the State and/or due to their function as its outright handmaidens (i.e., lobbyists, PACs). [Therefore] only the social group [his code word for ‘class’, in an attempt to secure the Notebooks’ safe passage past Mussolini’s prison censors] that poses the end of the State and its own end as the target to be achieved can create an ethical State — i.e. one which tends to put an end to the internal divisions of the ruled…and to create a technically and morally unitary social organism. (p.259) In other words, ‘civil society can only be the site of universal freedom when it extends to the point of becoming the state, that is, when the need for political society is obviated’ (Buttigieg, 1995, p.30). ‘[T]he phenomenon of ‘subordination’…occurs without coercion; it is an instance of power that is exercised and extended in civil society, resulting in the hegemony of one class over others who, for their part, acquiesce to it willingly or, as Gramsci puts it, ‘spontaneously’. (Buttigieg, 1995, p.22) What appears to be spontaneous is a product of consent manufactured by intellectuals of the ruling class. Again, not only is consent manufactured but it is backed up by coercion-in-reserve, what Gramsci calls political society: the courts, the army, the police, and, for the past 57 years, the atomic bomb. It is true that Gramsci acknowledges no organic division between political society and civil society. He makes the division for methodological purposes. There is one organism, ‘the modern bourgeois-liberal state’ (Buttigieg, 1995, p.28), but there are two qualitatively different kinds of apparatuses: on the one hand, the ensemble of so-called private associations and ideological invitations to participate in a wide and varied play of consensus-making strategies (civil society), and on the other hand, a set of enforcement structures which kick in when that ensemble is regressive or can no longer lead (political society). But Gramsci would have us believe not that white positionality emerges and is elaborated on the terrain of civil society and encounters coercion when civil society is not expansive enough to embrace the idea of freedom for all, but that all positionalities emerge and are elaborated on the terrain of civil society. Gramsci does not racialise this birth, elaboration, and stunting, or re-emergence, of human subjectivity — because civil society, supposedly, elaborates all subjectivity and so there is no need for such speciﬁcity. **Anglo-American Gramscians, like Buttigieg and Sassoon, and US activists in** Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society? 229 **the anti-globalisation movement whose unspoken grammar is predicated on Gramsci’s assumptive logic, continue this tradition of unraced positionality which allows them to posit the valency of Wars of Position for blacks and whites alike. They assume that all subjects are positioned in such a way as to have their consent solicited and to be able to extend their consent ‘spontaneously’.** This is profoundly problematic if only — leaving revolution aside for the moment — at the level of analysis; for it assumes that hegemony with its three constituent elements (inﬂuence, leadership, consent) is the modality which must be either inculcated or breached, if one is to either avoid or incur, respectively, the violence of the state. However, one of the primary claims of this essay is that, whereas the consent of black people may seem to be called upon, its withdrawal does not precipitate a ‘crisis in authority’. Put another way, the transformation of black people’s acquiescent ‘common sense’ into revolutionary ‘good sense’ is an extenuating circumstance, but not the catalyst, of State violence against black people. State violence against the black body, as Martinot and Sexton suggest in their introduction, is not contingent, it is structural and, above all, gratuitous. Therefore, Gramscian wisdom cannot imagine the emergence, elaboration, and stunting of a subject by way, not of the contingency of violence resulting in a ‘crisis of authority’, but by way of direct relations of force. This is remarkable, and unfortunate, given the fact that the emergence of the slave, the subjecteffect of an ensemble of direct relations of force, marks the emergence of capitalism itself. Let us put a ﬁner point on it: violence towards the black body is the precondition for the existence of Gramsci’s single entity ‘the modern bourgeois-state’ with its divided apparatus, political society and civil society. This is to say violence against black people is ontological and gratuitous as opposed to merely ideological and contingent.2 Furthermore, no magical moment (i.e., 1865) transformed paradigmatically the black body’s relation to this entity.3 In this regard, the hegemonic advances within civil society by the Left hold out no more possibility for black life than the coercive backlash of political society. What many political theorists have either missed or ignored is that a crisis of authority that might take place by way of a Left expansion of civil society, further instantiates, rather than dismantles, the authority of whiteness. Black death is the modern bourgeois-state’s recreational pastime, but the hunting season is not conﬁned to the time (and place) of political society; blacks are fair game as a result of a progressively expanding civil society as well. Civil Death in Civil Society Capital was kick-started by the rape of the African continent. This phenomenon is central to neither Gramsci nor Marx. The theoretical importance of emphasising this in the early twenty-ﬁrst century is two-fold: ﬁrst, ‘the socio-political order of the New World’ (Spillers, 1987, p.67) was kick-started by approaching a particular body (a black body) with direct relations of force, not by approaching a white body with variable capital. Thus, one could say that slavery — the ‘accumulation’ of black bodies regardless of their utility as labourers (Hartman; 230 Frank Wilderson, III Johnson) through an idiom of despotic power (Patterson) — is closer to capital’s primal desire than is waged oppression — the ‘exploitation’ of unraced bodies (Marx, Lenin, Gramsci) that labour through an idiom of rational/symbolic (the wage) power: A relation of terror as opposed to a relation of hegemony.4 Secondly, today, late capital is imposing a renaissance of this original desire, direct relations of force (the prison industrial complex), the despotism of the unwaged relation: and this Renaissance of slavery has, once again, as its structuring image in libidinal economy, and its primary target in political economy, the black body. The value of reintroducing the unthought category of the slave, by way of noting the absence of the black subject, lies in the black subject’s potential for extending the demand placed on state/capital formations because its re-introduction into the discourse expands the intensity of the antagonism. In other words, the slave makes a demand, which is in excess of the demand made by the worker. The worker demands that productivity be fair and democratic (Gramsci’s new hegemony, Lenin’s dictatorship of the proletariat), the slave, on the other hand, demands that production stop; stop without recourse to its ultimate democratisation. Work is not an organic principle for the slave. The absence of black subjectivity from the crux of marxist discourse is symptomatic of the discourse’s inability to cope with the possibility that the generative subject of capitalism, the black body of the ﬁfteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the generative subject that resolves late-capital’s over-accumulation crisis, the black (incarcerated) body of the twentieth and twenty-ﬁrst centuries, do not reify the basic categories which structure marxist conﬂict: the categories of work, production, exploitation, historical self-awareness and, above all, hegemony. If, by way of the black subject, we consider the underlying grammar of the question ‘What does it mean to be free?’ that grammar being the question ‘What does it mean to suffer?’ then we come up against a grammar of suffering not only in excess of any semiotics of exploitation, but a grammar of suffering beyond signiﬁcation itself, a suffering that cannot be spoken because the gratuitous terror of white supremacy is as much contingent upon the irrationality of white fantasies and shared pleasures as it is upon a logic — the logic of capital. It extends beyond texualisation. When talking about this terror, Cornel West uses the term ‘black invisibility and namelessness’ to designate, at the level of ontology, what we are calling a scandal at the level of discourse. He writes: [America’s] unrelenting assault on black humanity produced the fundamental condition of black culture — that of black invisibility and namelessness. On the crucial existential level relating to black invisibility and namelessness, the ﬁrst difﬁcult challenge and demanding discipline is to ward off madness and discredit suicide as a desirable option. A central preoccupation of black culture is that of confronting candidly the ontological wounds, psychic scars, and existential bruises of black people while fending off insanity and self-annihilation. This is why the ‘ur-text’ of black culture is neither a word nor a book, not an architec Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society? 231 tural monument or a legal brief. Instead, it is a guttural cry and a wrenching moan—acry not so much for help as for home, a moan less out of complaint than for recognition. (1996, pp.80–81). Thus, the black subject position in America is an antagonism, a demand that can not be satisﬁed through a transfer of ownership/organisation of existing rubrics; whereas the Gramscian subject, the worker, represents a demand that can indeed be satisﬁed by way of a successful War of Position, which brings about the end of exploitation. The worker calls into question the legitimacy of productive practices, the slave calls into question the legitimacy of productivity itself. From the positionality of the worker the question, ‘What does it mean to be free?’ is raised. But the question hides the process by which the discourse assumes a hidden grammar which has already posed and answered the question, ‘What does it mean to suffer?’ And that grammar is organised around the categories of exploitation (unfair labour relations or wage slavery). Thus, exploitation (wage slavery) is the only category of oppression which concerns Gramsci: society, Western society, thrives on the exploitation of the Gramscian subject. Full stop. Again, this is inadequate, because it would call white supremacy ‘racism’ and articulate it as a derivative phenomenon of the capitalist matrix, rather than incorporating white supremacy as a matrix constituent to the base, if not the base itself. What I am saying is that the insatiability of the slave demand upon existing structures means that it cannot ﬁnd its articulation within the modality of hegemony (inﬂuence, leadership, consent) — the black body cannot give its consent because ‘generalised trust’, the precondition for the solicitation of consent, ‘equals racialised whiteness’ (Barrett). **Furthermore, as Patterson points out, slavery is natal alienation by way of social death, which is to say that a slave has no symbolic currency or material labour power to exchange: a slave does not enter into a transaction of value (however asymmetrical) but is subsumed by direct relations of force, which is to say that a slave is an articulation of a despotic irrationality whereas the worker is an articulation of a symbolic rationality. White supremacy’s despotic irrationality is as foundational to American institutionality as capitalism’s symbolic rationality because, as West writes, it dictates the limits of the operation of American democracy — with black folk the indispensable sacriﬁcial lamb vital to its sustenance.** Hence black subordination constitutes the necessary condition for the ﬂourishing of American democracy, the tragic prerequisite for America itself. This is, in part, what Richard Wright meant when he noted, ‘The Negro is America’s metaphor’. (1996, p.72) And it is well known that a metaphor comes into being through a violence that kills, rather than merely exploits, the object so that the concept might live. **West’s interventions help us see how marxism can only come to grips with America’s structuring rationality — what it calls capitalism, or political economy; but cannot come to grips with America’s structuring irrationality: the libidinal economy of white supremacy, and its hyper-discursive violence that** 232 Frank Wilderson, III **kills the black subject so that the concept, civil society, may live. In other words, from the incoherence of black death, America generates the coherence of white life. This is important when considering the Gramscian paradigm (and its progenitors in the world of US social movements today) which is so dependent on the empirical status of hegemony and civil society: struggles over hegemony are seldom, if ever, as signifying — at some point they require coherence, they require categories for the record — which means they contain the seeds of anti-blackness.**

#### The right to strike gets utilized against black laborers, forcing them to be strikebreakers marshalling white workers while workers unions remain exclusive to non-blacks

Arnesen 03 (Eric Arnesen is an American historian. He is currently the James R. Hoffa Professor of Modern American Labor History at George Washington University. He was a Fulbright Scholar, and is a member of the Organization of American Historians.), “Specter of the Black Strikebreaker: Race, Employment, and Labor Activism in the Industrial Era”, Labor History, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2003, pg. 320-322, <https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/swetsfulltext/18650602.pdf> NT

The image of the black male strikebreaker in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a powerful and broadly provocative one,4 arousing the concern, albeit in opposing ways, of white trade unionists and black elites alike. That image haunted organized white labor. The black strikebreaker appeared, alternately, ignorant and aggressive, manipulated and defiant, docile and violent. In both their reflections and their policies, **white trade unionists exaggerated black strikebreakers’ role and deemed them a greater threat to white labor’s interests than other groups of non-black strikebreakers.** But over the closing decades of the 19th century, many, perhaps most, whites would scarcely have questioned the characterization of African Americans as a “scab race.” After all, too many strikes in too many trades and industries—including mining, meat packing, longshoring, team driving, and even textile and iron and steel manufacturing—had been weakened, at times decisively, by employers’ deployment of black labor. Although in reality blacks constituted only a small if ultimately undeterminable percentage of strikebreakers in the history of American industrial relations—white native-born and immigrant workers constituted a clear majority—white trade unionists and, indeed, much of American society **would express little hesitation in hanging the charge, like a proverbial lynching rope, around the neck of the race**.5 If white workers perceived African Americans as a threat to their economic well being, they made little attempt to understand the motivations and goals of the black workers they confronted on the industrial battlefield. **Instead, they depicted black strikebreakers as depraved and dangerous threats to their livelihoods and collective power**. Viewing black workers as ignorant, depraved, largely unassimilable, and the dupes of capital, they drew the line at admitting blacks into membership in the labor movement with little apology. Black strikebreakers, AFL official John Roach insisted in 1904, were “huge strapping fellows, ignorant and vicious, whose predominating trait was animalism.”6 In response to the arrival of southern black strikebreakers during the 1894 Chicago packinghouse strike white stockyard workers even hung the effigy of a black roustabout from a telegraph pole. “A black false face of hideous expression had been fixed upon the head of straw,” a Chicago white daily paper reported, “and a placard pinned upon the breast of the figure bore the skull and cross-bones with the word ‘nigger scab’ above and below in bold letters.”7 A decade later, another influx of southern black laborers—perhaps as many as 5800—was met by outrage and widespread racial violence on the part of white workers and their sympathizers in the teamsters’ conflict. “It was the niggers that whipped you in line,” the rabidly anti-black southern politician Ben Tillman informed white Chicago stockyard workers after the collapse of their strike. “They were the club with which your brains were beaten out.”8 The number of examples could easily be expanded. Again and again, white workers drew similar connections between black strikebreakers and the failure of their strikes. At their most charitable, white workers tended to dismiss black strikebreakers as misguided, ill-informed pawns of capital. Had they inquired further into their opponents’ motives, many of their fears would have undoubtedly been confirmed. Certainly some **black strikebreakers were recruited under false pretenses or were honestly unaware that they were being used as weapons against white labor**, as whites occasionally claimed. “The reason I left the camp,” explained black strikebreaker Daniel Webster during the 1891 Washington state mining strike, “was that matters had been misrepresented to us. We were told there was no strike, but that we were going to a new mine.”9 But others knew exactly what they were doing: the Negro “fairly aches for the opportunity to scab against whites,” one white union journal insisted.10 Daniel Webster was only one of a small handful of defectors from the ranks of black strikebreakers brought to the mines of Franklin, Washington; the vast majority, numbering as many as 600, clung to their new jobs despite white harassment and racial violence. Given the racially exclusionary barriers erected by many white unions and the racial division of labor that confined blacks to inferior positions, strikebreaking by African Americans could naturally serve as the threat white unionists perceived it to be. It also represented something that most white workers, as well as black leaders, were scarcely prepared to comprehend: black strikebreaking was nothing less than a form of working-class activism designed to advance the interests of black workers and their families. In many instances a collective strategy as much as trade unionism, strikebreaking afforded black workers the means to enter realms of employment previously closed to them and to begin a long, slow climb up the economic ladder. As a strategy, of course, strikebreaking was not without its drawbacks, as many contemporaries, white and black, pointed out. The strikebreaking option was always a calculated risk. **Black workers’ value to white employers rested largely on their ability to check the power of white workers; they remained highly vulnerable in the labor market, often subject to the harsh—or even harsher—conditions that had prompted whites to organize in the first place**. They also exposed themselves to potential or real violence at the hands of strikers and their sympathizers, who bitterly resented their intrusion into local industrial conflicts. Many white workers rejected outright the legitimacy of black workers’ grievances about racial exclusion from unions and employment. Choosing instead to blame the victim, they not only refused to see strikebreaking as a form of working-class activism, but often proved resistant to recognizing or appreciating more familiar forms of activism—namely, labor organizing—in which black workers might engage.