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## OFF

#### We begin with living in the wake.

**Sharpe 16** (Christina, Professor. Education Ph.D., Cornell University MA, Cornell University BA, University of Pennsylvania, “In the Wake: On Blackness and Being”, pgs. 29-36, [SG])

Sekula and Burch continue: “The cargo containers are everywhere, mobile and anonymous: ‘coffins of remote labour-power,’ carrying goods manufactured by invisible workers on the other side of the globe” (Sekula and Burch 2011). How are these containers that Sekula and Burch track connected with global warming and fights over water and other resources? How are they connected with the journeys that Africans make over the land, from, say, Somalia to Libya, and then across the Mediterranean Sea in an attempt to reach places like Lampedusa? How are they connected to the containerization of people prior to and during and then after that perilous sea voyage? These are questions that Sekula and Burch’s film does not attempt to address.

These are the asterisked histories of slavery, of property, of thingifcation, and their afterlives. I can’t help but see that word “risk” in “asterisk.” And to link that risk and those asterisked histories to the seas and to the beginnings of the insurance trade subtended by a trade in Africans.

The history of insurance begins with the sea. Three developments are central to the conceptual framework established by marine insurance: first, the “bottomry” agreement or “sea loan” in which money is loaned at a steep rate for a voyage, the risk falling to the lender. Second, the concept of “general average,” the idea that losses undertaken to save a boat (jettisoning or cutting down masts in a storm, for instance) represent a risk shared among those investing in a voyage—usually seen as the oldest form of joint-stock enterprise. And third, in the notion of “Perils of the Sea”—the earliest form of the concept of insurable risk. (Armstrong 2010, 168) One might say that Aereile Jackson is the film’s insurance—as she lends the film its vocabulary and her abjection underwrites its circulation.

*The risk in insurance: the asterisked human.*

So I’ve been thinking about shippability and containerization and what is in excess of those states. What I am therefore calling the Trans\*Atlantic is that s/place, condition, or process that appears alongside and in relation to the Black Atlantic but also in excess of its currents. I want to think Trans\* in a variety of ways that try to get at something about or toward the range of trans\*formations enacted on and by Black bodies. The asterisk after a word functions as the wildcard, and I am thinking the trans\* in that way; as a means to mark the ways the slave and the Black occupy what Saidiya Hartman calls the “position of the unthought” (Hartman and Wilderson 2003). The asterisk after the prefix “trans” holds the place open for thinking (from and into that position). It speaks, as well, to a range of embodied experiences called gender and to Euro-Western gender’s dismantling, its inability to hold in/on Black flesh. The asterisk speaks to a range of configurations of Black being that take the form of translation, transatlantic, transgression, transgender, transformation, transmogrifcation, transcontinental, transfixed, trans-Mediterranean, transubstantiation (by which process we might understand the making of bodies into flesh and then into fungible commodities while retaining the appearance of flesh and blood), transmigration, and more.

With the Trans\* I am not interested in genealogy; it is not my intention to recover transgender bodies in the archive. But when Omise’eke Tinsley writes in “Black Atlantic, Queier Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage” that “the Black Atlantic has always been the queer Atlantic” (Tinsley 2008, 191), we might add that the Black and queer Atlantic have always been the Trans\*Atlantic. Black has always been that excess.9 Indeed, blackness throws into crisis, whether in these places one can ever really think together, Black and (hetero)normative.

That is, Black life in and out of the “New World” is always queered and more. We might say that slavery trans\* all desire as it made some people into things, some into buyers, sellers, owners, fuckers, and breeders of that Black flesh. That excess is here writ large on Black bodies—as it is with the process of subjection. And it is that point, post the “rupture in the world,” at which, Dionne Brand tells us, we, whether we made that passage or not, are “transform[ed] into being. That one door [the door of no return] transformed us into bodies emptied of being, bodies emptied of self-interpretation, into which new interpretations could be placed” (Brand 2001, 25).10

As we hold on to the many meanings of Trans\* we can and must think and imagine laterally, across a series of relations in the ship, the hold, the wake, and the weather—in multiple Black everyday—to do what Hartman, in “Venus in Two Acts,” describes as “listening for the unsaid, translating misconstrued words, and refashioning disfigured lives” and to do what NourbeSe Philip calls the necessity of “telling the story that cannot be told.” “I think,” Philip says, “this is what Zong! is attempting: to find a form to bear this story which can’t be told, which must be told, but through not telling” (Saunders 2008a, 72).

#### The 1AC’s Abolitionist movements are rooted in by philanthropy that is wedded to piecemeal reform that sustains violent infrastructures. Wasting of time is one of the greatest technologies of fascist regimes.

**Rodriguez 22** [Dylan Rodriguez is Professor in the Department of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California, Riverside. Roberto Sirvent is editor of the Black Agenda Report Book Forum. “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: An Interview with Dylan Rodriguez” Black Agenda Report, https://www.blackagendareport.com/insurgency-and-counterinsurgency-interview-dylan-rodriguez] cmeow

To identify some choice examples, consider some of the recent initiatives of the **Mellon** and **Ford Foundations**, which have created entire academic funding streams branded as **“social justice”** and/or **“abolition”** grants. Some of these grants have advanced the careers of academics and professional researchers who have no substantial connection to existing or emerging **abolitionist** movements, **collectives, scholarly projects, organizations**, or **community-based initiatives**—the grant **recipients** are accountable to their **funders**, and **nothing else.** These foundation initiatives magnify the alienation between academic entrepreneurs and the state-targeted social movements that create the conditions of opportunity for their academic research agendas.

Even worse, these foundations have recently been attempting to assimilate abolitionist terms, ideas, and strategies into management strategies that demobilize, defuse, and domesticate the concept of abolition by dismembering it and funneling decontextualized pieces into **piecemeal policy reform** projects and **campaigns** for **whatever they define** as **social justice** and **“equity.”**

By way of example, a 2021 report from **the Ford Foundation**, Evaluating the Ford Foundation’s Strategy to End Mass Incarceration: Key Lessons and Insights, uses a conflict resolution approach to create a **false dichotomy** between **reformists** and **abolitionists.** The report depicts these as reconcilable positions, as if they are simply two analogous sides in a generic difference of opinion. Of course, they are not. Each side’s demands and premises actually require the **destruction** or **negation** of the **other’s.** As a result, the Ford Foundation frames itself as a managerial force that can **domesticate** the **irreconcilable** **antagonism** between **reformists** and **abolitionists** by **“leveraging”** their **“insights”** as **“different actors”** and funding new projects where they can **“coordinate or collaborate across differences.” It’s bullshit.**

Committed abolitionists with even modest on-the-ground experience will tell you that coordinating and collaborating with liberal/progressive reformists is almost always **a massive fucking waste of time.** And that, **right there**, is an **underappreciated technology** of **counterinsurgency**—convincing us to **waste our fucking time.**

**You think the Mellon, Ford, Rockefeller, MacArthur, and Soros** foundations (etc.) want to support abolitionist activities that would require a redistribution of capital including reparations, repatriations, and large-scale redress for their founders’ and major benefactors’ historical complicities in colonial and chattel violence? No, they want to create grants that will compartmentalize **abolition**, **Black liberation**, and **other movements** to **piecemeal**—though often high-profile—research projects, arts initiatives, and policy reform campaigns that provide “deliverables” compatible with liberal-progressive philanthropic definitions of social change and social justice.

I am sometimes invited to participate in activities funded by foundation grants and, within these activities, i—alongside any other committed radical intellectuals who happen to be involved—consistently try to intervene on liberal bullshit and advance shared commitments to liberationist and abolitionist practices. But in the end, these are highly limited tactical maneuvers and nothing more. **The problem remains the problem.**

#### Stop hustling Black death. The ballot will not save black life, it will only benefit them through the pornotroping of antiblack violence, which seeks validation from the same system responsible for violence in the first place.

Perry 21 (Imani Perry is an American interdisciplinary scholar of race, law, literature, and African-American culture. She is currently the Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University and a columnist for The Atlantic.), “Stop Hustling Black Death,” May 24 2021, https://www.thecut.com/article/samaria-rice-profile.html

On November 22, 2014, that new life was upended. Her 12-year-old son, Tamir, was playing with a toy gun, as so many boys do, at the Cudell Recreation Center across the street from their home. Someone reported Tamir to the police, though Rice reminds me that the caller had said the gun “was probably fake” and the person playing with it was a juvenile. Immediately upon arriving at the scene, Officer Timothy Loehmann shot at Tamir twice, without warning, while his patrol car was still rolling. The world saw the video of the sixth-grader, a child, shot dead. The police report noted that the cops were looking for a “guy with a pistol” who was menacing the neighborhood. “I do not know how I’m able to get out of my bed every day,” Rice tells me. We have grown clinical in our repetition of how all these incidents of police killings take place. The evidence is stated and lined up, the protests happen, the failure to prosecute or to convict is expected. But the way Rice describes the day her son was killed brings a fresh horror. She was sitting on the couch watching television. When the family was alerted that Tamir had been shot, her eldest jumped up and ran to the center. When Rice arrived, she says, “my 14-year-old daughter was screaming in the back of a police car and then they had my 16-year-old surrounded by eight police officers. And they told me to calm down or they was gon’ put me in the back of the police car,” she continues. “And they also gave me an ultimatum to stay at the scene of the crime or go with my 12-year-old son in the ambulance.” One child had been shot; the other two were under the control of the people who shot him. As a mother charged with protecting all three, she was at a terrible crossroads. She had to leave two behind to ride up front in the passenger seat of the ambulance, knowing Tamir was in the back surrounded by the people who had killed him. As the world responded in outrage, Rice grieved. What began as a makeshift memorial in Cudell Commons Park, filled with teddy bears, candles, and flowers, grew to frequent protests in Cleveland and in cities across the country. The national media chronicled this atrocity and the egregious failures of the Cleveland Police Department — that Loehmann had been declared unfit for duty in another Ohio city owing to emotional instability, that Cleveland police hadn’t reviewed his file when he was hired, and that neither officer at the scene performed first aid on Tamir in the minutes after he was shot — and Rice was drowning in her grief. By then, the Black Lives Matter movement had already blossomed. There was the formal, national Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, which had formed following the killing of another boy, Trayvon Martin, two years before, and the spontaneous protests that popped up across the country in response to a series of videos of police officers killing unarmed African Americans. Rice had been aware of all this but hadn’t gotten involved until her child was killed. Like many family members of those killed by police, she was naïve about how to navigate the sudden attention being trained on her in the midst of such emotional pain. “A lot of us parents don’t know what to say or how we should be acting,” she tells me. “There is a certain way you have to go in front of the media to let them know that you want justice for your baby.” In those early weeks after Tamir’s death, various organizers offered Rice guidance. She describes her relationship with her first two attorneys (the original one was a local litigator; the second was famous movement attorney Ben Crump) and how anxious she was about saying the wrong thing. “You can see I look like a deer in headlights,” she says of early interviews. She was angry, but she had been told she wasn’t supposed to show her rage. She felt constrained and underinformed, and she didn’t want the organizers and lawyers to “handle everything.” She wanted to be involved in strategy, court filings, and decision-making. Not every parent of a slain child shares this desire, Rice acknowledges. But she felt her intelligence was being insulted. At times, she lashed out; at other times, she retreated. “You can lose your mind in a situation like this,” she tells me. “Especially with my son being global.” Often, she worried about her other children and the families across the country who belong to a club no one wants to join: the surviving families of “police-involved killings.” She was frustrated that, while many people surrounded her, she didn’t know whom to trust or how to protect Tamir’s story. She asked people, including some artists and organizers, to stop using his face without permission. In a sense, Rice wanted to maintain her authority over both her own voice and her son’s legacy. To an extent, this was never possible. Although Tamir was her child, when we saw his sweet face emblazoned across our televisions, he became everyone’s. Eventually, Rice would take issue with the national leaders in the movement for Black Lives — from Black Lives Matter to Crump, the Reverend Al Sharpton, and the controversial activist Shaun King — as self-serving in the ways they dealt with her and with other families of people killed by police officers. Rather than helping family members develop a public voice, she says, many of the prominent organizers have become the only voices. “They should not be standing on the front line like this was they child,” she says. “You supposed to be uplifting the family, the community, teaching us how to love on each other, not bickering and fighting about who gon’ get the next case or who gon’ be on TV next. It’s a mess.” Rice’s frustration throughout our conversation was palpable. She became particularly animated as she described those who make a living “hustling Black death.” From where she sits, she sees “book deals, movie deals.” Cocking her head to the side, as if speaking directly to her adversaries, she adds, “What was you doing?” She pointed to one example from March of this year, when the rapper Lil Baby performed his song “The Bigger Picture” at the Grammy Awards. The performance included a reenactment of a police officer shooting a Black man, and Tamika Mallory, one of the leading organizers of the 2017 Women’s March and a lifelong affiliate of Sharpton’s National Action Network, delivered a spoken-word address about the nation’s “state of emergency” as part of the performance. Rice responded forcefully in a series of Facebook posts: “I’m tired of you black lives matters (Tamika Mallory and crew) bitches that’s riding theses family back and yall ambulance chasing Attorneys (Ben Crump) (Lee Merrick) too yall have fuck up our fight and yall can kiss my ass too … Yall might ass well be junior pigs cops.” Later, Rice, along with another mother whose son was killed by the police, issued a more formal statement (even when we spoke, Rice code-switched constantly; she is both deeply engaged and sometimes overflowing with emotion), in which she criticized those same activists and others, including Patrisse Cullors of Black Lives Matter; Melina Abdullah, a leader of the organization’s Los Angeles chapter; and King: Families of those who are killed by the police — and whose loved ones’ deaths spark mass movements — continue to navigate political misrepresentation, battle zones of police repression, homelessness, and poverty, while Black “leadership” that has not been selected by the masses flourishes through celebrity status. These families must be provided the resources to sustain themselves, their families, and their work dedicated to building community infrastructure … Stop celebrity activism; stop corporate investments that support lobbyists for this norm; put an end to the political-economy’s parasitism on Black death and poverty. The charge understandably offended those who faced it, and Mallory, King, and Abdullah all defended themselves publicly in one way or another. During a podcast recording in March, Mallory addressed the controversy by saying, “I would never be so disrespectful as to speak about her child or to have a campaign that addresses her child or uses her child’s name to uplift any cause.” Abdullah didn’t mention Rice by name, but on Instagram shortly after she said, “I’m not going home just cause somebody said ‘go home’ … I will not do that.” Cullors and Crump did not respond to requests for comment. Shaun King, Patrisse Cullors, and Tamika Mallory. Photo: Dave Kotinsky/Getty Images for Diamond Ball; Rich Fury/Getty Images for Teen Vogue; Arturo Holmes/Getty Images The Recording Acade. Anyone depicted as a savior eventually falls. Money overwhelms and distorts. King, in particular, is seen by many as a grifter and has been accused multiple times of fund-raising on behalf of the victims of police violence without permission or the disbursement of funds. (King denies this.) Cullors was recently called out by ten local Black Lives Matter groups for not paying out to local chapters the $90 million-plus the national organization received in donations in 2020. DeRay Mckesson, once the single most prominent face of the movement, is criticized by organizers for having politics that are too mainstream, as evidenced by his co-founding of the police-reform organization #CampaignZero. This fundamental tension undergirds all social movements and has for generations. Organizers need to solicit attention to bring people to their causes, but popular culture can’t help but fixate on the spectacle of charismatic leaders, rather than the larger landscape of political organizing. The belief that there must be a single leader or leading group pits organizers against one another. Likewise, this system often mutes those who do the most direct service work in favor of those with a national platform. Of Mallory, Rice says, “I heard her say this is a job. Who hired you? Who sent you? Are you showing up as an activist or an entertainer?” I have found myself wondering, even anguished, about this very question. I, too, have been called upon to offer insight about “the moment” and the movement. There are market exchanges happening; people are making money because news agencies, publishers, and civic and professional organizations need interpreters of this moment. We are expected to be Black, eloquent, and knowledgeable enough to enlighten their general white audiences. Little of the money circulating within this movement ends up with the families of the victims of police killings. The vast majority goes to a professional class of spokespeople: organizers, writers, and academics. And the killings continue. So whether we deliberately hustle Black death or not, it is without question a nefarious hustle. The evidence of this can be found in how much stays the same. We are still hashtagging names seven years after Tamir’s death, nine years after Trayvon Martin’s, one year after George Floyd’s. And there are literally thousands of names we will likely never learn. According to Rice, “All of the families should be getting therapy, and all of them should be getting the tools to speak for themselves, not have people speak for them.” She asked Black Lives Matter to stop using Tamir’s name, yet he kept coming up in its various satellite groups. This, she believed, was a way to hustle her son’s death for the organization’s gain. “I ain’t never talked to Shaun King a day in my life,” Rice goes on to say. “Shaun King raised all that money [for Tamir] and sent me a $60,000 check.” The money was put into Tamir’s estate. It made her sick to think that a stranger had used her son’s name without her consent. “I ain’t know Shaun King from a hole in the wall.” (When asked for a response, King said, “I have never, once in my life, raised funds for a single family without being asked to do so.”) These public figures have a right to object to how she criticized them. Where some have overstepped is in diminishing her perspective because she is not a polished, professional activist. Activists and organizers reject the concept of the “perfect victim” and the idea that someone’s struggles with addiction or brushes with the law ought to justify their killing. But the demand for perfect mothers hasn’t ceased. The mother figure in American culture, especially in Black communities, is expected to be self-effacing, long-suffering, enduring. To be good and dutiful mothers of the movement, they have been expected by the civil-rights Establishment to behave in ways that suppress the emotional turmoil that every mother of a murdered child experiences. Rice has no interest in playing that part. My son’s human rights were violated. Just like George Floyd. And that’s what America needs to make right. I asked Rice what she thought ought to be done now to course correct. “I think they can make things right with the community and try to show the community that they are working and not just talking … you got these corporate people listening to you like you doing the work, and you not doing the work if you not in these streets.” Rice also believes the Chauvin verdict was an important step. “We haven’t seen a conviction since the Walter Scott case,” she says, her voice rising. “And they better give him a real sentence — 25 years!” She is currently seeking to have Tamir’s case reopened. (This too places her at odds with some corners of the movement, as police abolition has grown in popularity.) Rice says a conviction would offer her family some healing. “My kids and I can have some bit of peace, peace of mind,” she says. “My son’s human rights were violated. Just like George Floyd as well as lots of other families. And that’s what America needs to make right, the human-rights aspect of this. The whole thing needs to be dismantled. Or they could split the country up and put us on half.” Rice believes in the radical transformation of society but also in the protection of Black and brown communities in the meantime. For her, the necessary response to police killings doesn’t end with responses to law enforcement and prisons. “Why don’t we have a people’s government or a Black government?” she says, ideas reminiscent of those proposed by Black radicals in the 1970s. My mother, herself an organizer since the ’70s, has often made the same point to me: that communities have to lobby to resist unjust power and also build themselves up. Rice talks both about the violence of policing and how the streets as she knew them, full of hustlers, gangsters, and pimps, “will eat your kids alive.” Rice and I cussed and discussed. We laughed and said prayers in call and response. Talking to Rice was a conversation of a sort that I usually have only with other Black mothers — about how to ensure the best outcomes for our children, their trajectories and their spirits, in a hostile world. Consider how Floyd called for his late mother as he was dying; how Daunte Wright called his mother upon being pulled over, right before he was killed; how Kenneth Walker, Breonna Taylor’s boyfriend, called his mother before dialing 911. “Mama” in Black life, in many ways, revolves around the protective, ever-present maternal force — no matter how vulnerable our mothers may be, they are the ones who know how to care for us the way we need. In telling the story of her life, Rice ignores the pressure to be respectable and the prospect that she may be judged harshly. She is transparent about the impact of Tamir’s loss on her children as well as herself. They struggle with depression. But they push forward, and she leads them. “I’m just trying to build up the legacy of the Rices,” she says. “It’s important that they know I haven’t given up. I can’t give up. I have three kids looking at me. I got grandbabies depending on me. Ain’t no giving up to me. “I’m a founder of the Tamir Rice Foundation and the Tamir Rice Afrocentric Cultural Center, where we have free after-school programming,” she continues. Rice was awarded $5.5 million in a civil suit filed against the City of Cleveland. The payout was not immediate, however, and not all of it went to her. With the settlement money she has received, she invested in the foundation. “I bought a whole building, and I’m just trying to get it renovated to put the children and the staff in there.” The center offers classes in civics, Black history, and economics and runs wellness programs. “You gotta plant the seed when they young,” Rice says; she thinks of her work as following a Montessori model of “letting kids develop their skills, and we support and invest in them.” Rice is studying for her GED and a real-estate license. Her life is busy. When I ask how she’s able to do it, she replies that it’s through the grace of God. It also seems clear to me that she refuses to allow Tamir’s death to have been in vain. “He had a lot of gifts,” she says. “He was shooting threes at 12. He was a great artist. He could make up beats.” He swam, biked, played soccer, and drummed. He sounded to me like my own sons, now 15 and 17. Tamir was 12 for only five months. “Who knows what he could have been?” Although she answers calls from other families of those who have been killed and tries to offer a willing ear and guidance when she can, she doesn’t speak for them. She acknowledges that the families are fractured, that she and the other mothers are not a monolith. That Taylor’s mother, Tamika Palmer, has defended Mallory against Rice’s criticism. Rice speaks delicately when talking about her relationships with the other mothers. “Each case is unique,” she says. She doesn’t name even those she speaks to regularly. Her sensitivity is twofold: She doesn’t want to overstep, and she knows the reality of their suffering. “Some of these families lose it.” She describes how tragedy can divide kin, how sometimes family members take the opportunity to exploit their relatives. When I ask about her own support system, she says, “It’s very small. I got a lot of support from around the world, but I gotta be careful about who I let around me and in my space.” She returns to her depression. “The mind is very delicate. It can be weak. You have to make sure you care for yourself.” I thought of Moody again and a passage in her memoir where she describes her anguish after yet another Mississippi murder. She writes, “His death brought back memories of all the other killings, beatings, and abuses inflicted upon Negroes by whites. I lay in bed for two days … I thought of waging a war in protest against the killings all by myself, if no one else would help. I wanted to take my savings, buy a machine gun, and walk down the main street in Centreville, cutting down every white person I saw. Then, realizing that I didn’t have it in me to kill, I slowly began to escape within myself again.” Rice never mentions any murderous fantasies, but I recognize in her the righteous rage and sadness, the insides of movement suffering. What we often remember of the 20th-century civil-rights movement are moments of mass mobilization like the March on Washington or Dr. King and John Lewis leading a group of organizers and community members who had been beaten on the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the journey from Selma to the Montgomery March. But the same old tensions existed in that realm as well. We have lost a great deal of history by relying upon a neat consensus narrative of nonviolent resistance and direct progress toward federal legislation. If we’re not careful, we run the risk of letting that become the story of today as well. Moody wasn’t the only person skeptical of that celebrity-filled day in Washington, especially after the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist church in Birmingham that followed a few weeks later. As Moody predicted, the star-studded event didn’t stop the violence. Today, annually, politicians descend on Selma, Alabama, to commemorate 1965’s Bloody Sunday by walking over the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The media often covers the event without a discussion of the conflict between the SNCC’s organizing strategy and the SCLC’s mobilization strategy in that city, or the extreme poverty and lack of social services that still affect Selma’s Black community. When King came to my birthplace of Birmingham, Alabama, local organizers made clear to him that he would not displace Fred Shuttlesworth, a Birmingham community leader who was fiery and confrontational in comparison. People describe the fundamental tension as one between King and Malcolm X but not the varying politics of Black revolutionary socialists, those who believed in armed self-defense and those who believed in nonviolence as a theology, often in the same organizations. We may increasingly talk about the organizer Ella Baker’s legacy but too rarely discuss her skepticism of charismatic leadership. (Interestingly, Black Lives Matter is the group that has introduced her notion of having a “leader-full” movement to a new generation.) Recently, politicians have reached out to Rice. As she puts it, “I’m coming straight out the hood, hanging around gangsters, players, and pimps and hoes. Now, I’m talking to people in the White House and Congress.” Several elected officials have assured her that they will support her efforts to seek justice for Tamir. It’s too soon to know whether Rice will get the remedy she seeks, and whether, if she does, it will change the tide. What I do know, however, is that the search is a refusal of bitterness. “I’m working,” she tells me, “because I’m a servant of the people. I’m a servant of God.”

#### Their form of debt strikes gives all the power to white people over Black people which isn’t debt return but a form of crowd control over radical movements that diminishes power.

**Yoes 17** (Sean Yoes is a prolific journalist whose insight on issues and events provide a deeper look into societal triumphs and ills, with an acute and humane approach) “Dismantling the Nonprofit Industrial Complex”, https://afro.com/dismantling-nonprofit-industrial-complex/?fbclid=IwY2xjawNCj-RleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHuCQg35VIpYmPy8ssufqVKKshpusHKS3sxN6PZueGQawC45q5O\_n-yADL3AY\_aem\_3ZwNYo-P2JaH2RhAriz0tA, DM

Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle **(LBS),** the grassroots think tank wants to change how **the non-profit money gets chopped up.**

**“For years we have critiqued the nonprofit industrial complex in Baltimore and how it undermines authentic Black empowerment,” wrote Dayvon Love**, director of Research and Public Policy, for LBS in an Op-Ed on the group’s website titled, “For Black People When White Saviors Aren’t Enough.” He went on.

“What we have argued is that **the notion of White supremacy in the nonprofit sector is manifested in three key ways.”**

Love makes his case by stating: the boards of many of the nonprofits that are supposed to serve Black people are in bed with the corporate sector and mostly White; the social networks deemed to be legitimate by the non-profit sector are mostly White; and the non-profit sector’s White dominated leadership is dismissive of community based, African/Black methodologies and considers them inferior.

**Love’s colleague, Adam Jackson, CEO of LBS, co-chaired the Children and Youth Fund Task Force, which began its work in Feb.** The group, made up of community leaders, youth program service providers and City government representatives, was established by Baltimore City Council President Bernard C. “Jack” Young, to make recommendations on the Youth Fund’s governance. The fu**nd has $12 million a year set aside from property tax revenue to aid youth programs in the city. The task force concluded its work in May and crafted a set of values that would radically change the way Baltimore funds youth programs, who makes the decisions within that funding apparatus and ultimately, which programs get funded.**

More broadly, if LBS has its way, the nonprofit funding infrastructure currently in place (which seems inherently inequitable and racist) in Baltimore will be dismantled and replaced with one authentically rooted in the city’s disenfranchised communities.

**“Black people are often relegated to a position of having to beg White people for acceptance and resources**. As a result of this dynamic **Black people who are advocating for resources often frame the solution to this problem in terms of pressuring White people and the government to do more for us,” wrote Love of LBS.**

The **Baltimore City Council is scheduled to review the recommendations of the Children and Youth Fund Task Force in September, and perhaps vote for their implementation**. If the group’s recommendations are fully established, it could redistribute funding of **Baltimore’s youth programs and dramatically shift the balance of the city’s nonprofit infrastructure.**

“This frame is **disempowering because it easily folds right into the notion of Black people as being dependent on White power,” Love wrote.**

“This **disempowerment has diminished the emphasis on building our own institutional wherewithal to solve our own problems and has allowed people outside of our community to make a living off of our suffering.”**

#### They’ve fungiblized black death – trading in black suffering for a tabroom dub is a replication of the structure of slavery in which non-black people exchange enslaved commodities for capital, creating a form of objectification that enables ontological violence, rendering blackness to the exterior of the human.

**Winnubst 21** (Shannon Winnubst is Chair and Professor of Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies at Ohio State University. She has written two books, Way Too Cool: Selling Out Race and Ethics (Columbia: 2015) and Queering Freedom (Indiana: 2006), as well as many articles and essays spanning feminist theory, queer studies, and philosophy. “The many lives of fungibility: anti-blackness in neoliberal times” pg 104-105) cmeow

Fungibility and blackness

**Fungibility** is the mechanism that writes **anti-blackness** in an **ontological register.** As Hortense Spillers and Saidiya Hartman have argued for some time, the **catastrophe** of the transatlantic ~~slave~~ [enslaved] trade is **singular in the systemic reduction of human lives to commodities and capital**. As Hartman writes directly in Lose Your Mother (Hartman, 2007): ‘Unlike the concentration camp, the gulag, and the killing field, which had as their intended end the extermination of a population, the Atlantic trade created **millions of corpses**, but as a corollary to the making of **commodities**’ (p. 31). This killing as a corollary to commodities and capital does not occur through an incipient taxonomy of racial differences; those don’t emerge fully until the nineteenth century. The mechanism that produces this ontological singularity is the systemic application of geometric, arithmetic, and economic calculations to the enslaved as cargo. Hortense Spillers describes this mechanism succinctly in her ground-shaking 1987 classic, ‘Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book’, wherein she relays the calculations found in a Captain’s ledgers for a slave ship: ‘every man slave is to be allowed six feet by one foot four inches for room, every woman five feet ten by one foot four, every boy five feet by one foot two, and every girl four feet six by one foot’ (Spillers, 2003, p. 214). Differentiated only geometrically and arithmetically, the bodies of the **enslaved** are abstracted into the metrics of **property** **and** **capital**. They are then fed as **measurable** units of **cargo** into the **economic machine of** **risk/profit calculation.** The bodies themselves and the differences between them are measured by a single metric: **fungibility.**

**To be fungible**, in both its economic and legal meanings, is to have all distinctive **characteristics** and **content hollowed-out**. It is a **relationship** of **equity that requires a purely formal semblance.** In economic terms, **fungibility refers to those goods and products on the market that are substitutable for one another:** a bushel of wheat from Kazakhstan is fungible with a bushel of wheat from Nebraska, assuming the quality and grade of wheat is the same. **Fungibility also underscores the monetary system, since it is the formal quality of banknotes that allows them to be fully substitu- table**: the 5 Euro bill in my pocket is the same as the one in your pocket. In legal terms, it is the fungibility of harm and compensation that enables the force of the contract (a dynamic Nietzsche explains exquisitely in The Genealogy of Morals). Spillers’ elaboration of this singular metric opens the way for contemporary theorizing of blackness and anti-blackness in an ontological register. By locating the transformation of bodies into objects precisely through this logic of fungibility, theorists begin reading blackness as a category that emerges out of the **economic ontology that trades in the exchange of commodities.** This world historic application of the logic of fungibility to human bodies expands the scope of that economic ontology beyond the non-human and the inanimate as viable objects of exchange. It is this precise abstraction of **living, human bodies into quantities of commerce** **that enacts an ontological transformation – namely, the transformation of human bodies into black cargo.** Through this shift in the mode of being, **fungibility defines blackness at its very birth.**

When Spillers locates the emergence of blackness as a social category in the abstraction of black bodies into fungible units, the singular criterion of formal semblance ontologically constrains black- ness from any entrance into the category of the human. **Fungibility** exerts an **ontological force** that, in its birthing of blackness as a category that wields extraordinary meaning and power in **global economies** and societies, renders **blackness** intransigently exterior to the category of the **human.** Evacuated of any mark of individuality or interiority, blackness-as-fungible challenges the dominant discourses about race that spring so easily from the assumptions of classical liberalism. Not only does it situate the emergence of blackness in its modern signifying force and function in the early fifteenth century of the nascent transatlantic slave trade, as Sylvia Wynter (2003) argues, but it also undercuts the ameliorating logics of classical liberalism that would posit the phenomenon of racism as an unfortunate ‘error’ to be corrected by the full triumph of reason, as Saidiya Hartman (1997) explains. Ontologically sealed in the space of the object, **black bodies** **cannot move**, cannot transform, **cannot be remedied** **and improved**: they are not and can never become human. As the work that has come to be known as ‘Afropessimist’ explores, especially that of Wilderson (2010), Sexton (2008), and Warren (2018), this ontology of object-hood incapacitates any possibility of black subjectivity. Always already dead, blackness never was and never shall signify subjectivity. From the perspective of strictly logical deduction that undergirds this ‘Afropessmist’ strain of scholarship, **the ontology of fungibility cannot be altered and must not, therefore, give way to any kind of ameliorating rhetoric, no matter how radical.**

In Spillers’ account of fungibility, however, the ontological force is not only negative, constraining, and destructive. It also carries a kind of fertility, **spreading its tentacles in many directions beyond the strictly logical deduction of blackness into objecthood.**

#### Their abolition is a form of secret fascist reformism that distorts the carceral state’s history under the assumption state mechanisms are a site of contingency and potential agency which submits itself to an oppressive contract for Black lives.

**Lang 24** (Justin A. Lang is a PhD candidate in the Africana Studies program at Brown University and a graduate research fellow at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice), “On Withdrawal (into Darkness): George Jackson and the Imperative to Abandon Reformism”, https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/50/article/959779/, 2024, DM

In our contemporary moment, **affirmationist abolition functions as one of many “~~mental~~ barricades” that preclude a generalization of Jackson’s dark acceptance** (Jackson [1970] 1994, 241). This abolitionism minimizes Jackson’s conception of the antagonism between the state and black people by insisting that the state is not the weapon of an unrelenting enemy but a site of struggle that can be reconfigured toward the flourishing of black life. **Affirmationist abolitionists thus strive for the creation of desirable forms of life outside and against the state’s regime of power rather than the destruction of the oppressive contract.** Affirmationism’s theoretical insistence on the inherent openness of the social field to fugitive possibility provides proponents with relief from accepting Jackson’s assertion that **the enemy’s totalized capture of black people** **is inescapable** and must be met with a counter-violence.

The problem of **affirmationist abolition is that it does not disrupt what Jackson describes as the state’s strategy of affective management**. Jackson argues that **the state strives to maintain psycho-social cohesiveness by manufacturing a false sense of security and concealing the nature of its antagonism from the populace.**12 Stabilizing the “social atmosphere” without using overtly repressive methods creates easier conditions for maintaining fascist order, as it suppresses the threat of unrest that emerges during moments of heightened affective responses to state violence (Wall 2022, 4). Jackson argues that the state is keenly aware of the black populace’s latent negativity and destructive potential, and thus aims to provide “pressure releases for desires that could become dangerous if allowed to progress” (Jackson [1972] 1990, 186). Reforms function as a key pressure release, as they have served to stabilize the atmosphere each time it “has trembled on the brink of disruption repeatedly over the last fifty years” (Jackson [1972] 1990, 118). **Jackson thus defines reform as the “true nature of fascism,” as reforms provide a sense of redress while keeping black people fundamentally in their place of enforced nothingness and increasing the state’s repressive capacities** (118). Reforms allow the state to obscure its fundamentally antagonistic function as a weapon to prevent the general populace from realizing the need for dark acceptance.

A 2023 American Quarterly forum on **Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s Abolition Geography demonstrates that affirmationist abolition is oriented by the disavowal of the state as an enemy weapon**. Forum contributors Alyosha **Goldstein**, Sarah **Haley**, and Robin **D. G. Kelley each reference Gilmore’s conception of the “anti-state state” from her co-authored essay with Craig Gilmore as one of her most impactful insights for abolitionism.**13 Fundamental to the concept is the assertion that “the state is not inherently an enemy” and it never fully overdetermines the social order (Kelley 2023, 386). Gilmore and Gilmore insist that the state is “in a few corners at least, [an] ally” to abolitionist aims (Gilmore 2022, 275). This **thrust to disavow conceptualizing the state “in one-dimensional terms” is evidence of an affirmationist drive to find room for reconfiguring the social order instead of accepting the existence of a totalized antagonism that closes off all options besides violent conflict with the social order itself** (Kelley 2023, 386).

In Gilmore’s account, the state is a historically contingent site of contestation, through which “people in various configurations of power (including from below)” attempt to use its infrastructures to enact visions of social reproduction and resource allocation (Gilmore 2018). **Exertions of state power are “partly realized and partly failed attempts to make general certain modes of social being whose underlying contradictions never fully disappear”** (Gilmore 2022, 266). From this view, guiding instructions orienting the state, such as what Jackson theorizes through the oppressive contract, are never fully totalized in their capacity to govern existence and change their dominant logics over time.

The concept of **the anti-state state aims to historicize the contemporary US state’s driving motivations as distinct from past historical periods. As Kelley explains, the anti-state state is a distinct configuration of power and bureaucratic capacities from arrangements of the state that prioritize the distribution of resources.** The contemporary state is framed as anti-state because “it has privatized or eliminated responsibility for social provisions. . .and instead invested in punitive/carceral capacities to manage social crises” (Kelley 2023, 386). **This implies that the state has not always been motivated by policing black existence and suggests that there is an accessible 65 originary proper state form dedicated to resource provision and mass social flourishing**. From the view of Jackson’s dark abolition, this is nothing but an affirmation, a disavowal of the antagonism between an unrelenting enemy and black people that exceeds any specific arrangement of state capacities. Through Jackson’s analysis, **black people have been the have-nots of any past state arrangement even if it prioritized social provisions, and the enemy class will never permit a reconfiguration of the state to a level that permits a flourishing black social life.**

However, **affirming that the state has capacity to function as “a formation that can promise. . .to decrease, to solve, to resolve, to redress, to protect, to stabilize and equalize, and on and on. . .” enables proponents of affirmationist abolition to posit the viability of the non-reformist reform and other forms of non-conflictual practice** (Haley 2023, 378). Celeste Winston demonstrates that this approach is framed by an affirmative drive through her proposal for using non-reformist reforms to proliferate, resource, and protect abolition geographies. Winston **“rejects existing oppressive state formations” but does not see any need to reject the state-form in toto as its bureaucratic capacities and infrastructure retain “supportive possibilities” for socializing wealth and power** (Winston 2023, 115). She admits that **“police are integral to the foundation and endurance of the carceral state,” but chooses to stop “short of the anarchist approach of completely denouncing the state form as inherently violent”** (115). Drawing on abolition democracy and abolition geography, Winston insists that there is inherent conceptual and political breathing space to “renovat[e] state capacities according to freedom’s terms” and use the state as a positive tool for protecting black social life (115).

**This analytical choice to stop short, to minimize the extent that carceral directives structure the social field, narrows the scope of what must be abolished and reconfigures abolition into a discourse about renovating institutions.** Police and prisons unquestionably remain targets for outright elimination, but disavowing the constitutive antagonism **that structures not just the carceral state but the state-form itself enables affirmationist abolition’s main discursive focus to center the creation of alternatives instead of the “absolute destruction” of the social landscape Jackson prescribes** (Jackson [1972] 1990, 102).

#### Their reading of debt strike requires the labor of black people as a form of political blackface that makes enslavement logics inevitable.

Grimes 2018 (Kate, is Assistant Professor of Theology at Villanova University. “LET BLACK PEOPLE BE: A Plea for Racial Specificity in the Afterlife of Africanized Slavery” JRE 46.3:497–520. © 2018 Journal of Religious Ethics)

Despite errors in execution, the underlying drive to position non-black people of color and white Hispanics as like African Americans may appear noble and ordered towards the end of inter-racial solidarity. But in truth it replicates the parasitic relation that has animated both slavery and its ongoing afterlife. As Orlando Patterson summarizes, slavery comprises the ultimate form of human parasitism (Patterson 1982, 14, 206 and Hartman 2007, 6). And in the afterlife of slavery, antiblackness supremacy aims to preserve this parasitic relation. Africanized slavery and its ongoing afterlife shape more than just the material and economic realm; they continue to structure this country’s collective imagination (Hartman 2007, 6). In this way, political and ethical discourse and power rely heavily upon and often operate as a form of parasitic consumption of the histories, experiences, and resistance movements of black people. How so? Just as white slave owning British colonists declared themselves “slaves of king George,” so “the women’s movement, the Chicano liberation movement, queer movements, and many more have adopted the strategies, tactics, and theory of the Black liberation movement” (Wilderson 2010, 21; Black Lives Matter Movement 2016). More conservative political movements do so as well. Expressing a widely held tenet of libertarian ideology, Kentucky Senator Rand Paul decries government taxation as a form of enslavement, arguing that “if [the government] taxes you at 100% then you’ve got zero percent liberty,” but, “if [it] taxes you at 50% you are half slave, half free” (Kaczynski 2015). In a similar way, the firmly held belief that “the moral dimension of the case for life are similar to the moral dimension of the case against slavery” represents “an entirely mainstream, pro-life view” (French 2015).6 Almost without exception, all political movements depict themselves as the new abolitionists and the victims whose cause they champion as the new black slaves. In a sense, all Americans wear political blackface. This occurs un-coincidentally. The analogy of slavery does to blackness in the symbolic realm what the practice of slavery did to enslaved people over the course of their lives: it reduces it to an infinitely fungible instrument. When deployed analogically, blackness takes whatever shape nonblack people assign it. Just as enslaved people served as chefs, agricultural experts, concubines, gestational surrogates, musicians, farmworkers, blacksmiths, drivers, wet nurses, among other positions, so black history and suffering serve the ends of non-black political movements. Antiblackness supremacy aims to deny to both blackness and to black people lives of their own; it prefers that they live primarily in, through, and for the sake of those who enlist them in their service.7 While enslavement strived simultaneously to strip enslaved people of their individuality and exploit it, the analogy of blackness exploits and obfuscates the uniqueness of antiblackness supremacy. Just as slavery comprises the ultimate form of human parasitism, slavery and antiblackness have served as the ultimate political and moral analogy. Why does this analogy enact a parasitical antiblackness? First, this rhetorical trope falsely positions antiblackness supremacy as a relic of the past, an evil we have overcome. In this way, the LGBT rights movement compares itself to not the fight against the war on drugs, but the civil rights movement.8 Anti-abortion activists, for example, similarly compare the fetus not to black victims of extrajudicial murder like Mike Brown, but to the black slave. Second, in positing an analogy between the way the United States treated black people in the past and the way it currently treats, for example, LGBT people, fetuses, or the coercively taxed, those who deploy this trope accuse their opponents of caring more about black people than they do other groups. Even though non-black people both benefit from and perpetuate antiblackness supremacy, the analogy of slavery misrepresents black people as possessing rights and freedom that other groups are denied. As a result, black people appear uniquely favored and protected. Third, this rhetorical move takes black people’s suffering and struggles and expropriates it on behalf of another group. In so doing, the analogy of slavery and/or antiblackness supremacy ultimately renders contemporary black demands for freedom and justice less coherent. Indeed, if everyone is a slave, then no one is a slave. The universalization of the struggle against slavery makes everyone simultaneously deserving of and deprived of freedom except for actual slaves. Since black people already have freedom, they are not entitled to more of it. This background helps to explain why racial concepts and terminologies that fail to distinguish antiblack racism from other forms of injustice risk recapitulating the symbolic underpinnings of slavery’s afterlife. The injustices inflicted upon non-black people of color differ from those endured by black people much more than they resemble them. This holds even more true with respect to people of Latin American descent who are classified as white. Since antiblackness supremacy shapes our collective moral, political, and theological imaginations, we non-black theologians invariably struggle to denounce racism without relying upon antiblack tropes and analogies. In this way, for example, Cassidy and Mikulich proclaim, “the fact that whites do not think of themselves as living in a white ghetto is an integral problem of hyper-incarceration today” (Cassidy and Mikulich 2007, 82). In truth, they continue, “whites tend to not be aware of the fact that as of the 2010 census of 16 major metropolises, whites are more self-segregated than any other racial or ethnic group” (Cassidy and Mikulich 2007, 19). Even while explicitly condemning the white supremacist prison and ghetto, these scholars portray the ghetto as a choice ignorant people make rather than a uniquely stigmatizing form of spatial violence society imposes upon a select group of people. Ironically, Cassidy and Mikulich make an anti-black argument against anti-blackness: according to the implicit logic of this rhetorical appeal, white people who enact antiblack forms of racial segregation are the real blacks.9

#### This debate is not about the hypothetical implementation of the plan, but rather about the AFF’s relationship to the hold. Vote negative for Wake Work – a practice that challenges the logics of slavery and colonialism inside and outside of debate.

Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley 21, Co-director of Forensics and Assistant Professor of Race and Rhetoric in the Human Communication Studies Department at The California State University, Fullerton. She is the former Director of the William Pitt Debating Union and Assistant Professor of Public Address and Advocacy at the University of Pittsburgh, THE FUTURE IS BLACK: Afropessimism, Fugitivity, and Radical Hope in Education, Chapter 12: “DEBATING WHILE BLACK: Wake Work in Black Youth Politics”, Taylor & Francis – rehighlighted] cmeow

In the spring of 2017, Rutgers University’s Nick Nave and Devane Murphy, a team of two Black students won the two national policy debate champion- ships (CEDA Nationals and the National Debate Tournament), uniting the crowns for only the second time in policy debate’s history. The historic win is the second time, in just four years, that a Black team has achieved a feat that no other team has in the White-dominated activity of competitive policy debate. Policy debate is a tournament style co-curricular activity, where students role-play as agents of the government requiring them to engage in the cost-benefit analysis frame of political decision-making. Black debaters, like the Rutgers’ students, are engaged in a direct action protest to contest State role-playing and cost-benefit analysis as inherently anti-Black. Rutgers’ achievement is a result of the acceleration of Black presence, Black thought, and Black radical confrontation in competitive college debate, a marriage of theories of anti-blackness and revolutionary activism. This chapter argues that Afropessimism has radical liberatory potential as a heuristic for engaging in political and social activism for Black youths and young adults. Afropessimism’s utility in framing anti-blackness as the context from which students emerge into the world need not destroy the beauty of youthful hope, it can instead galvanize a different kind of hope that is generative and sustaining toward dreaming of new futures. In conversation with Christina Sharpe’s concept of “wake work” I suggest that Black debaters are developing rhetorical and argumentative strategies to engage anti-blackness and build new relationships to futurity. Using the final round of the 2017 National Debate Tournament as a case study, I demonstrate an example of the timely and productive relationship between Afropessimism and youth activism. In thefollowing section, I discuss Christina Sharpe’s theory of “wake work” as a heuristic for engaging in Black political action.

You talk about violence—but when you walk by us in the hallway you literally have nothing to fucking say to us, but you say that we are part of the fucking community. (Murphy, 2017)

Afropessimism, Wake Work and Black Political Strategy

Black debaters radically engage the debate community’s exclusion of Black students from successful participation, of Black scholarship and of Black political concerns from competition. The strategies of Black Debate practice focus on the political and educational spaces, like competitive debate, that are constituted by Black death. It is **an example of**, to use Christina Sharpe’s terminology, “bringing out the dead,” or **“wake work”** (Sharpe, 2016). Utilizing Saidiya Hartman’s discussion of the “afterlife of slavery” (Hartman, 2008, p. 6), Sharpe offers the metaphor of the “wake” as an analytic for thinking about Black life in relation to the structuring relationship of the Black as property. As Sharpe argues, slavery continues and “the holds multiply” (2016, p. 504). Sharpe uses three senses of “in the wake”: 1) the disturbance of water during the passage of a ship, 2) a remembrance and honoring of the dead, 3) a bringing to consciousness (2016, pp. 145–146). Using this interpretation of “in the wake” Sharpe explains that wake work is “... interested in plotting, mapping, and collecting the archives of the everyday of Black immanent and imminent death, and in tracking the ways we resist, rupture, and disrupt that immanence and imminence aesthetically and materially” (2016, p. 102). The students are engaged in political wake work seeking to re-conceptualize Black politics against the backdrop of anti-blackness. For Black debaters, there is no form of reparative justice that accounts for anti-blackness as structural antagonism. In this manner, Black Debate as a practice can be characterized by Calvin Warren’s notion of “political apostasy,” a method of “renouncing” anti-blackness while rejecting the notion that such can resolve the structural antagonism (2015, p. 233). The Black nihilist perspective Warren offers requires a radical spiritual hope unencumbered by political hope. The onset of Black Debate practice theorizes from within the hold, producing a “form of consciousness” toward the political that offers new paths of strategic engagement without any commitment to maintaining civil society (Sharpe, 2016, p. 104). Such an orientation frees Black students to imagine radical practices of confrontation and dreams of Black futurity. What lies “in the wake” of competitive policy debate? How are Black debaters doing wake work? In the following section I take two examples from the National Debate Tournament Final Round to demonstrate wake work in competitive debate. Next, I analyze the central argument in the final round characterizing the current clash of civilizations in debate and the ramifications of building community in debate.

Framework/Black Framework

The final round of the 2017 National Debate Tournament was not just a competition, it was a referendum on the notion of a universal community and the structural exclusions and fairness issues that characterize the traditions and norms of competitive practice. Georgetown is affirmative in the debate and of- fer a federal policy toward Alaska as an example of a specific proposal to combat catastrophic climate change. Based on the norms of competition, Georgetown presents a coherent affirmative argument providing an effective stasis point for fair deliberation of the climate change resolution. After the affirmative’s speech Rutgers is allowed to cross-examine the speaker. **Devane Murphy** asks, “When is the first life saved as a result of the aff[irmative]?” (2017). While Georgetown admits that a debate round cannot save lives directly, they argue that discussing climate change policy is a valuable academic conversation. Rutgers then asks a series of questions about Georgetown’s relationship as individuals to the people and places targeted by the federal policy they suggest: **“Do you know any people in the arctic? Do you know any communities in the arctic? Can you name a family in the arctic?”** (Murphy, 2017). While Georgetown answers no to these questions, they argue that a focus on debaters as individuals rather than the policy option they have presented is a distraction from the stasis point they have set for the debate.

Using Afropessimism as a heuristic for engaging the resolution, debaters like Rutgers, reject any affirmation of the United States Federal Government. For these students, the federal government is always an unethical actor. In as much as the resolutional statement requires the affirmative to posit federal govern- ment action as an ethical response to public need, the vast majority of Black debaters refuse to take such a position. To combat this refusal to follow com- petitive norms, the Framework argument developed to confront the disruption of the normative form and content of policy debate competition. Framework debaters (mostly White and non-Black POCs) argue that if a team violates the norms of common practice they reject the normative stasis points for deliberation destroying the educational benefits of policy debate.

Framework has operated as a strategic tool of capture and exclusion of Black thought in competitive debate. However, as “the holds multiply” so too does Black innovation. Rutgers’ strategy in the final round took the form of the traditional Framework argument, but using Black thought to revise the content and turn it against the norms of traditional debate. Black Framework, Rutgers’ strategy, argued that **the aff**irmative **must embody their politics** and demonstrate how **they** directly engage in efforts to reduce climate change. Rutgers’ argues that Georgetown **is disconnected from their politics which is why they can advocate a policy that may affect the people of the Arctic** while having little knowledge of those people or their lives**. This** kind of orientation toward policy action is dangerous, encouraging what Rutgers refers to as **“ascetic tourism”** by which debaters role-playing policy advocates “tour [the] trauma of various populations without ever acting to alleviate the harm” (Murphy, 2017).

When Georgetown seeks further clarification of Black Framework, Rutgers’ responds: “We provided an interpretation of what we think debate should look like, the same way in which when you’re negative and you read my affirmative and you say we should not be able to do what we do. Very simple” (Murphy, 2017). Georgetown often runs the traditional Framework argument against Black Debate teams who fall outside their interpretation of a fair stasis point for debate about the resolution. Rutgers’ turns the tables on Georgetown arguing that the traditional form of policy debate produces poor policy advocates and that Black Debate practice which centers embodied political practice is a superior method of training political advocates. Black Framework is an example of political theorizing from the hold. It operates from the perspective that anti-blackness is the stage upon which all political deliberation is played and then strategically identifies a tactic and an exigency for disruption. Rutgers capitalizes on the growing middle majority of judges who agree that Black Debate practice is an effective training tool for political advocacy. The use of Black Framework flips the script; it is a jarring (re)performance of the acts of exclusion that Black debaters have faced for decades. It took the form of Framework, paired with Black content, to argue that the neo-liberal norms of civil society would no longer get a free pass as the base frame for political negotiation. Rutgers turned a mirror on debate and offered a reflection of itself haunted by the specter of Black death. Arguing Black Framework was an act of bringing out the dead.

Who Gets to Define Community?

You don’t want community, you don’t want us here, you have never wanted niggaz here. But guess what, we are here and we are going to unite the motherfucking crowns, we’re going to take all your shit and we are going to laugh at you while we fucking do it. (Nave, 2017)

Communal acceptance in policy debate depends on the willingness of the ‘other’ to share the values, practices, and traditions of the community. Black Framework is the technical argument that Rutgers uses to win the debate, but the debate is really about the “aesthetic” and “material” forms of anti- blackness that constitute community relations (Sharpe, 2016). Rutgers spent the first seven minutes of their initial speech “roasting” the opposing team, the White judges, and the White debate community members in the audience. The Rutgers debaters consulted with other members of the Black community before the debate and came up with a list of jokes to tell during the speech. While Rutgers delivers one-line zingers targeted at the White people in the audience, they also pass the microphone to members of the Black community in the audience so that they can participate in the roast. They offer the opposing team the opportunity to participate, but they refuse the offer.

Georgetown counters that the tactic of the first speech is divisive and potentially violent for those who are made uncomfortable being the target of such jokes. During an exchange one of the Georgetown debaters admits they are uncomfortable. Rutgers responds that they are glad Georgetown is uncomfortable and that White discomfort is a good thing. They argue further that there is no “litmus test” for discomfort given that Black people are persistently made to feel uncomfortable in the debate community (Nave, 2017). Rutgers argues that Georgetown’s framing of them as violent is “a tactic of whiteness” by which Georgetown “criminalize[s] the flesh of black bodies by identifying that we are the violent ones, but then they get to be the ones that exact violence on the surface of the debate space” (Murphy, 2017). The violence that Rutgers alludes to are the repetitive micro-aggressions and competitive tactics of exclusion. As Rutgers notes, “the community is divided” (Murphy, 2017), and the traditionalists must take responsibility for “your ability to produce violence” (Nave, 2017). Nick Nave goes on to argue that White people feel “so fucking authoritative up in here ... Because you get to do what you fucking want, say what you fucking want ... Now it’s time for Niggaz to do what we want” (2017).

Georgetown fails to grapple with the possibility that not everyone feels a part of the community and that Black people, in particular, are made to feel like they are a threat that must be contained. Traditionalists are unable to understand that when they use Framework to exclude Black argumentation it translates as “Niggers Go Home.” Racial micro-aggressions like a refusal to socially engage Black students and coaches or persistent reminders that Black lives do not matter destroys any attempt at community building.

Before the tournament began, a young Black debater from the University of Louisville, Savannah Walker, was tragically killed. The Louisville team was informed of her death during the first national tournament that directly precedes the National Debate Tournament. The Black Debate community was shocked, grieving along with her coaches and team members. During the opening ceremony of the National Debate Tournament, just days later, Savannah was left out of the commemoration of the loss of former or current members. Over the next few days there was an uproar amongst the Black community. After being informed of the “oversight” tournament officials allowed a member of the Black community to honor Savannah during the awards ceremony. During the finals Rutgers’ highlights Savannah’s absence in the original ceremony, Nick Nave argues:

“This space is parasitic to Black people, especially Black women. In a world where you don’t even fucking remember us at your ... awards ceremony, yet you want to ... claim community. You can’t fucking say our name ... You will say Savannah’s ... name at the end of this shit!” (Nave, 2017)

The Black community in the audience claps furiously during this part of the speech, together with Rutgers, they mourn Savannah’s loss and refuse to allow the community to make her death invisible; a bringing out the dead.

Conclusion

What is happening on the college debate circuit is replicating itself at the high school level as Black Debate practice has spread like wildfire amongst Black and Brown youth. More than fifteen years after this movement began in policy debate, its alumni have gone on to run their own non-profits and political action committees, they are young academics and teachers, they are community activists and entrepreneurs. As it has grown it has fostered the development of a community grounded in networks of support and intellectual and artistic creativity. The traditional, majority-white and cis-heteronormative debate community may act to exclude **Black presence**, if not Black people, but in doing so it has ushered in a critical mass of Black thinkers, teachers and students. Black Debate is a bringing out of the politically, socially and literally dead; it is wake work in the afterlife of slavery; it is a battle cry of the young to STAY WOKE. It is important as academics and educators that we listen and pay attention.

#### Fiat trains worst activists, while distorting radical advocacies. CX Proves!

**Traber 18** (Becca, NSD Staff Writer, http://nsdupdate.com/2018/fiat-and-radical-politics-by-becca-traber/ shree) recut cmeow

This trend in debate has ignored, however, what I see as the most pertinent question. Namely, **what sort of skills are actually conducive to radical political action?** We might think that we need to engage in the state as activists, but what does state engagement as activists look like? There has been a systematic failure of imagination in terms of thinking through what politics looks like when it is done by marginalized people and in favor of radical causes. My argument is that the idea of **fiat is uniquely bad training for activist, leftist, or radical politics. Fiat fundamentally distorts radical advocacies.** This article does not argue that we should care about how debate trains us for activism–I take as given that we should be concerned with the sort of education that we are getting and we should tailor our education toward developing students capable of engaging in radical politics. By radical politics, I mean politics that aims to intervene on the status quo predominately by asking for a substantial shift in favor of marginalized positions, people, or perspectives. This is obviously not a formal definition and is not intended to be. I’m aiming to talk about a group of political perspectives with a family resemblance that characterizes them oppositionally to mainstream party politics. This includes both “pragmatic” leftist framing as well as what is known as “high theory” kritiks. The definition of fiat that I’m relying on that it is the act of imagination that allows us to avoid the contradiction between solvency and inherency, typically through the assumption of the passage of a state-based policy option without consideration of the political likelihood of that passage. **Fiat is structured** such that the **neg**ative debater is **unable to question** the likelihood of something happening as long as the aff debater defends the normal means of that thing happening. This is a way of thinking that only makes sense if the only thing we are able to fiat is state legislative action. For all other forms of political action, there is no real way to separate normal means, passage of the “policy,” and effects of the “policy.” **The ideal of state politics is such that we imagine congress passes a bill and does so in a way that the content of the bill is separable from the wheeling and dealing that allowed for it to be created.** This is problematic as an assumption on its face— implementation through the rest of the government is undeniably affected by the way the bill was argued and, indeed, the judicial branch often considers congressional intent when evaluating a bill. Additionally, bills passed through congress typically are too vague to actually implement on their own and need a significant amount of bureaucratic interpretation and adjustment through the executive branch in order to be implemented. But all that aside, there is at least a sensical way of separating the literal bill from the vote that got it passed. If you are not advocating for the state, the separation between a policy and the means by which it is passed necessitated by fiat is impossible. What policy was passed by the feminist movement? The movement was the advocacy and the actions taken by the feminist movement was the advocacy. The “solvency” of collective action cannot be separated from the things that are done in the collective action. This is true for all non-state actors who don’t have a formal parliamentary procedure. A community creating institutions for itself typically doesn’t have strict bylaws which outline what normal means for change would be. This puts the **kritikal debater** in **an impossible dilemma** when they are asked to **fiat** or **implemen**t some sort of policy. People who run these types of implementation arguments should stop pretending that the kritik they are arguing against would be possible at all, in any meaningful way, if it were to fiat. There is no fair version of the kritik that is at all meaningfully similar to the kritik and there is no topical version of critical affs. The way we construct implementation and **fiat in debate** can only be thought as a **state action**. Insisting on fiat in all cases functionally means that we cannot run arguments about politics outside the state without radically distorting the nature of that politics. Many debaters assume that the only **“practical”** or **“pragmatic”** politics occur **through the state.** However, **this is not the case.** Things like the **feminist movements** intervention on norms **of sexual harassment** are examples of politics outside the state. Collapsing the recent backlash to sexual harassment precipitated by Harvey Weinstein and others to possible state action ignores that the state could not possibly intervene in an adequate way to change those norms. The norms about **sexual behavior** in the workplace must change, but they can only reasonably change through **politics engaged outside the state.** Thinking of it in terms of **state politics** conceals the necessity of non-state politics. This is uniquely bad because the reality of the situation is that the percentage of debaters who will have a chance to be internal to the **state is minuscule**, but all debaters could plausibly engage in non-state movement politics. All the evidence that **people read in favor of fiat and state-based implementation makes education claims that assume the necessary training one needs to engage in politics involves thinking about the state, but fiat is not the tool to do that. Fiat doesn’t ask us to think about how to engage in politics as citizens who live under a state, it asks us to pretend that we are the state.** In a real way, it is also inadequate as a way of roleplaying a policy-maker, because the reality of politics as a legislature is significantly more complicated than being able to wave a magic wand and implement whatever policy is wanted. Fiat is a construction where we don’t even roleplaying as a human, much less as plausibly political actors. Pretending that radical non-status quo politics are something that could be implemented by the state fundamentally distorts how we think about those politics. One popular option to deal with the above dilemma is to import radical politics into the state and imagine policies that would result from particular radical political ideologies. This is what happens when someone advocates, for instance, that the USFG gives back the land to indigenous people as a fiated affirmative plan. There is a range of ways this is executed. On one end of this spectrum, you have policies which are barely different from what is advocated by mainstream politicians. On the other extreme, you have policies which are explicitly intended to serve as the downfall of the USFG in their passage or intend to provoke uprisings from parts of the population. The reality is that while radical and leftist politics occasional results in policy action, conceiving of it in terms of policy action distorts the nature of that politics. If one were to set about with the goal of **combating anti-blackness**, as history has demonstrated, **the first step cannot be to try to be a policy maker.** A politician with a radical advocacy cannot get elected until that advocacy has enough support that people will vote for her. For instance, a politician who ran on dismantling the United States or erasing all distinctions between animals and people to solve anthro would not have a constituency without a substantial social movement to develop that constituency. This problem is inherent to any advocacy which significantly challenges status quo ideals. Things in the status quo are in the status quo because a lot of people and powerful people agree with them. Before that can change more than incrementally, a lot of people have to change their mind. If you were to seriously consider how to implement a strategy of radical politics, it would make no sense to have the first step be electoral. **None of the major social movements were driven by policy action— policies are driven by social movements. Fiating radical politics hides the radical politics entirely.** Focusing on policy actions, in this context, actively distorts how we should consider radical politics. Even if it were the case that we would eventually need policy actions to finally solve issues of marginalization, that does not mean that we should start off with a question of fiat. Fiat erases the work necessary to allow for policy changes. It does not help us think about the movements we will have to create and the ways we will have to persuade. This means that claims about the necessity of state action are besides the point– **state action is only caused by a lot of non-state action** that we have to think about first and that fiat erases. The conceptual work that debaters often want to exclude by insisting of fiating policy is exactly the type of thing that radical politics does. Radical politics needs to persuade and imagine new possibilities, first and foremost.

## ON

### 1NC---DSA Turn

#### 1] Their evidence says Debt collective organizers have brought collective power and tools and collaborate with groups like the DSA across the country. CSULB = Blue. Card is long asf so I just put the paragraph.

Hannah 1AC Appel et al. 19, Appel is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at University of California Los Angeles, founding member of the Debt Collective, research supported by National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, and Mellon Foundation; Sa Whitley is PhD Candidate in Gender Studies at University of California Los Angeles, Part-Time Faculty at Maryland Institute College of Art, Visiting Grad Scholar in Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, research supported by UC Consortium for Black Studies and Center for the Study of Women; Caitlin Kline is advisor to Securities and Exchange Commission on derivatives enforcement issues, Policy Advisor at Better Markets and Americans for Financial Reform, Graduate Student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in City University New York, "The Power of Debt: Identity and Collective Action in the Age of Finance," UCLA Publications, 2019, ISBN 978-1-7347497-5-5, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2hc1r7fx

Since late 2018, **Debt Collective organizers have brought these online tools into commu- nity organizing spaces, including One D.C. (Washington DC), Homeboy Industries, Community Action Network, Youth Justice Coalition, and Community Coalition in Los Angeles, Ujima in Boston, and various Democratic Socialists of America groups in New York, California, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee, Texas, and Nevada.** The idea is to put these tools in the hands of organizers with large existing bases, first to enable their membership to dispute individual debts, and then to coordinate the use of these dispute tools collectively to prospectively make demands for the kind of society we want to see: one where you don’t have to go into debilitating debt for your own incarceration, healthcare, education, or utilities

#### 2] The DSA strengthens imperialism, capitalism, and war-mongering that fractures the working-class escalating mass violence and throwing the working-class under the bus which turns the aff.

**Crosse 24** (Jacob Crosse, Freelance Writer at World Socialist Web Site) “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at the DNC: The pro-imperialist politics of the DSA”, https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2024/08/23/vlyh-a23.html, DM

On Monday, **DSA-backed Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the most prominent member of the DSA in Congress, both delivered speeches in support of leading Democratic politicians, including President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz.**

Johnson, a former Cook County Commissioner and legal representative for the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), was the first major politician to speak at the convention, **while Ocasio-Cortez was afforded a coveted prime-time slot. The New York Congressperson spoke after UAW President Shawn Fain and before war criminal and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivered her remarks. Like Johnson and Ocasio-Cortez,**[**Fain**](https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2024/08/21/auto-a21.html)**has been supported and endorsed by the DSA.**

The prominence of DSA-backed politicians and bureaucrats at the convention is of objective significance. Under conditions of **escalating global war, including the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and the genocide in Gaza, the DSA and its members are being used to provide a “left” cover for the warmongering policies of the ruling class. In a comment on Ocasio-Cortez’s prominent role at the DNC, the *New York Times*wrote that she is “the future” of the Democratic Party.**

Prior to endorsing Harris Monday night, **Ocasio-Cortez was one of “Genocide Joe” Biden’s most ardent defenders and campaign surrogates. Beginning in January, she**[**demanded her supporters**](https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2024/01/24/lgmk-j24.html)**, many outraged over the mass murder in Palestine, to “be adults about the situation” and vote for Biden.**

Eight months later, with the **death toll officially over 40,000—although the British-peer-reviewed medical journal the*Lancet*estimated in July the real figure could be 186,000 or more—Ocasio-Cortez delivered her fulsome support for Harris, Biden’s partner-in-crime, Monday night.**

In a blatant lie, Ocasio-Cortez declared that Harris, “is working tirelessly to secure a ceasefire in Gaza and bringing hostages home.” In reality, the **Biden-Harris administration has worked “tirelessly” to provide Israel with all the weapons it needs to not only annihilate Gaza, but go to war against Iran as part of a broader US military campaign targeting Russia, and soon North Korea and China.**

**AOC’s lying statement was met with thunderous applause by those in attendance. The Harris campaign quickly clipped Ocasio-Cortez’s comments and shared them across social media platforms.**

**Ocasio-Cortez’s ever more open role as an apologist for imperialism has prompted DSA members to try to distance themselves from her. This, however, is completely fraudulent. The current role of Ocasio-Cortez expresses the politics of the DSA itself.**

When Ocasio-Cortez defeated incumbent New York Rep. Joseph Crowley on her way to Congress six years ago, the DSA hailed her ascension as proof that the Democratic Party was capable of being “pushed” to “the left.” **The election of Ocasio-Cortez was presented not only as a major historical event, but the spearhead of a “democratic socialist” takeover of the Democratic Party.**

[In statement](https://www.dsausa.org/democratic-left/npc_statement_ocasio-cortez/) **headlined “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, The Political Revolution Continues!” dated June 27, 2018, the DSA National Political Committee declared the soon-to-be legislator “will continue the political revolution” by becoming a “champion for the abolition of ICE, Medicare for All, a federal jobs guarantee, tuition-free public colleges and universities, and equal rights and freedoms for all Americans.”**

The **WSWS explained at the time that this was an exercise in political falsification. In a**[**Perspective**](https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/06/28/pers-j28.html)**published on June 28, 2018, Patrick Martin wrote:**

the politics of **Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA offer no way forward for the working class.** There is not a hint of socialism in her program (the word itself does not appear on her web site), **and both the candidate and the DSA have sought to downplay their connection. Anyone who suggests that her victory marks a shift to the left by the Democratic Party should be told, in no uncertain terms: Curb your enthusiasm!**

The article added, in words that apply fully to Ocasio-Cortez’s role at the DNC:

The **DSA is not fighting for socialism, but to strengthen the Democratic Party, one of the two main capitalist parties in the United States, which shares responsibility with the Republican Party for all the crimes committed by American imperialism around the world and against the working class at home.**

This **diagnosis was confirmed** repeatedly in the further evolution of Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA.

Upon being sworn in to Congress, Ocasio-Cortez used her background to posture as a defender of immigrants, even performatively weeping at a border detention facility during the Trump presidency. However, **once the Biden-Harris administration came to power Ocasio-Cortez dropped her insincere call to “Abolish ICE” and attacked the socialist analysis presented on the WSWS for being “**[**privileged**](https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2021/03/26/aoc-m26.html)**” when we correctly pointed out that the Biden administration was continuing many of the same anti-human and anti-immigrant policies deployed under Trump.**

#### 3] The DSA is anti-Black and let’s in cops, that also creates internal disputes that make Black people leave their movements, zero’s solvency and turns case.

**Cozzarelli 20** (Tatiana is a former middle school teacher and current Urban Education PhD student at CUNY, “Class Reductionism Is Real, and It’s Coming from the Jacobin Wing of the DSA”, https://www.leftvoice.org/class-reductionism-is-real-and-its-coming-from-the-jacobin-wing-of-the-dsa/, June 16, 2020, DM)

As a result, **the DSA Afro-Socialist Caucus issued a statement asking the DSA to hold off endorsement until Sanders changed his position on reparations. The statement reads:**

Should the organization move forward with an endorsement of the Sanders campaign, despite **his failure to adopt specific policy stances to address matters of persisting racial injustice and despite his unwillingness to champion reparations to specifically address the experience of the descendants of African slaves, it will risk alienating not just members of color within the organization, but people of color in the communities in which the DSA works.**

This demand was ignored and likely had **the very effect that people in the Afro-Socialist Caucus claimed it would.**

In the midst of the **reparations discussion, editor-in-chief of Jacobin and DSA member, Bashkar Sunkara, took a reprehensible approach in an article in The Guardian entitled “To fight racism, we need to think beyond reparations” in which he argues against reparations and for Sanders’ “universal programs.” Sunkara’s politics specifically geared towards Black community stop at affirmative action and a “cultural reckoning,” not any material compensation. Sunkara misses a critical opportunity to talk about the connection between capitalist wealth and the legacy of slavery. And more importantly, Sunkara’s article implicitly denies the possibility that “the many” could be united against the minority of capitalists with a demand around Black rights. Reality is proving Sunkara wrong.**

Now, **the DSA’s campaign for Sanders is particularly shameful as he is currently campaigning for the openly racist Joe Biden, positions himself against police abolition, and worse still, wants to increase police pay.** It is particularly problematic at a moment when the Democratic Party, for whom DSA members register voters, is tear gassing protesters — and as always, running the racist and exploitative system of the United States alongside the Republican Party.

Bad on Black Lives Matter

Furthermore, **the DSA has a poor record on the issue of the police and Black struggle. A cop organizer was unknowingly voted into national leadership in 2017. He had not disclosed to DSA that he had worked for the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT), Texas’s largest police union, which represents 21,000 cops. The DSA membership was correctly incensed.** Although some members threatened a dues strike and labor activists put out a dissenting statement, the DSA National Political committee did not kick out the former cop organizer. The members of the NPC who were specifically associated with Jacobin’s slate, Momentum, voted to keep the cop organizer in leadership.

What message did that send to **the DSA’s Black members and to people who took the streets during the Black Lives Matter movement only a few years before? In the current Black Lives Matter uprising, Jacobin is similarly problematic.**

#### 4] Severing out it is a form of making their ethical commitments conditional to black people which a voting issue, because it shows you gamify people’s lives, energy, and movement building, and proves they are not performatively committed to repaying debt that is owed to Black people which strengthens our link arguments.

### 1NC Solvency

#### 1] Presumption: 1AC Happening now and already read and no reparations were given proves the aff fails.

#### 2] Strikes fail. It’s unsustainable and replacement workers delete employer incentives.

**Harris 23** (Seth D. Harris is a Distinguished Professor of Practice at Northeastern University and Affiliated Faculty and a Senior Fellow at the Burnes Center for Social Change (and its partner project The GovLab) where he runs the Initiative on Labor and Economic Justice. Prior to joining Northeastern University, Professor Harris was the Deputy Assistant to the President for Labor and the Economy and Deputy Director of the Biden White House’s National Economic Council) “Strikes Are a Tactic, Not a Goal”, https://poweratwork.us/strikes-are-a-tactic, June 22, 2023, DM

**Strikes** can create lasting schisms **in communities**. While they may **garner public support**, they can also **create tensions** between **workers and community members** who rely on the services or products provided by the **striking employees**, or simply do not like conflict in their home towns. Strikes often have broader economic implications, affecting the employees of the struck employer’s suppliers and other local businesses, as well as the local economy. The **ripple effects of a strike** can **result in job losses**, decreased consumer spending, and **overall economic instability** in a community.

Another grave risk hovers above many strikes in the U.S.. While it is an **unfair labor practice** for **employers to fire their employees** solely for participating in a strike, **employers can hire “permanent replacement workers” to striking employees’ jobs.** The technical legal distinction between “permanent replacement” and “firing” is that the permanently replaced striking worker, if they have not found an equivalent job elsewhere, can reclaim their job should the replacement worker ever vacate the position. Of course, most workers cannot wait weeks, months, or years hoping a worker who took their job will find yet another job. Practically, **this is a distinction without a difference: permanent replacement is tantamount to firing --- a devastating result for striking workers**. Of course, not all employers want to or can permanently **replace their striking workers**. Nonetheless, the **threat is omnipresent**, and a real **assault on strikes, strikers, and collective bargaining.**

#### 3] Strikes historically fail and are a ruse of choice that coerces the most marginalized to die over and over again without progression.

**Frank 25** (Dana Frank is professor emerita of history at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is the author of multiple books, most recently What Can We Learn from the Great Depression? Stories of Ordinary People & Collective Action in Hard Times) “The National Guard’s History of Violent Labor Repression”, https://jacobin.com/2025/06/national-guard-history-labor-repression/, June 30, 2025, //Foo //re-cut DM

Ludlow, Colorado, **1914:** eleven thousand mine **workers had been on strike** for seven months against John D. Rockefeller’s Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, protesting low pay and dangerous conditions. They were overwhelmingly **immigrants, from Greece, Italy, Mexico, Croatia, Austria, Montenegro, and elsewhere, speaking at least twenty-two different languages.** The company had evicted them from their homes, so they were camped out in the snow in **a tent colony, frozen and starving.**

The morning of April 20, the **Colorado National Guard**, called in at Rockefeller’s behest, **opened fire from a machine gun set up on a hill** above the strikers’ homes, then rushed in to burn down the whole colony. **“The soldiers and mine guards tried to kill everybody, anything they saw move, even a dog, they shot at,”** one witness reported. The Guard killed three unarmed strikers who were holding aloft white flags, including their Greek leader, Louis Tikas, among others. It used fuel oil to incinerate three women and eleven children huddling in cellars.

What became known as the **Ludlow Massacre** offers a sharp reminder of the long and vicious history of superrich **employers using the National Guard to break strikes**, especially between 1877 and World War I. As we recoil with horror at President Donald **Trump sending the National Guard** and the Marines **into Los Angeles to repress pro-immigrant demonstrations**, discussions of the National Guard’s history have focused either on the authority of a president to deploy it against the will of the governor or its role during the civil rights era.

The Guard itself is often talked about as a neutral or even benevolent force. But for fifty years from the onset of large-scale industrialization in the 1870s, the **National Guard** was funded, launched, and celebrated by elites as **a strike-breaking force**, and its use against the labor movement continued well into the late twentieth century, often in tandem with federal forces. It’s important that we remember the **full class and racial politics of the National Guard’s history**, which often involved hostility to working-class immigrants and overlapped with the use of **federal troops to suppress domestic dissent and anti-racist protests.**

Anti-Labor Shock Troops

The National Guard evolved out of state and local militias during the colonial period. In the South, militias served as organized vigilantes, who **rode on horseback with whips to hunt down enslaved people, enforcing a captive labor force.** After the Civil War though, militias declined in popularity; by 1870 most states had no militias at all.

But as industrialization took off in the late nineteenth century, drawing in tens of millions of immigrants from Europe and elsewhere, and generating horrific working conditions, working people began to protest and strike by the tens of thousands. Business interests and their allies in **government promoted militias** — renamed **the National Guard in 1903** — to repress popular protest and, most centrally, **to break strikes**. Elites worked with the mainstream media **to fuse immigrants, left-wing radicals, and unions into a single, violent threat to the nation, embodied in the racialized image of the black-mustached, bomb-throwing anarchist.**

The turning point was the **Great Railroad Strike of 1877**. Four years into a deep economic depression, a cabal of four major railroads announced they were cutting wages an additional 10 percent. In response, **workers in Martinsburg, West Virginia, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, began uncoupling rail cars and blocking tracks**. Working-class members of the Pittsburgh militia refused to attack their fellow workers; so the **companies sent in the Philadelphia militia, which attacked a crowd with bayonets and opened fire. Twenty people died.**

The class politics were raw: “My troops will see the trains pass,” declared Tom Scott, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad. In response, rage spread like wildfire along the nation’s railway lines, producing strikes, track blockages, and riots by desperate workers, largely without unions at this point, and stretching all the way to Galveston, Texas, and San Francisco. **General strikes shut down large swaths of St Louis and Chicago. President Rutherford B. Hayes then sent in 3,700 federal troops, who joined local militias, police, and private forces to viciously and successfully repress the rebellion.**

After that, business interests poured private funds and political power into the development of state Guard units. Their efforts paid off most famously during the next recession. When workers struck steel mills in Homestead, Pennsylvania, and private Pinkerton forces engaged in a pitched battle with strikers, the state militia escorted strikebreakers into the plants, breaking the strike.

Two years later, **over 260,000 workers in Chicago** and elsewhere, many of them now unionized, refused to move railroad cars of the Pullman Company in protest against wage cuts ranging from 25 to **40 percent, and shut down most rail traffic nationwide**. So President Grover Cleveland sent in **8,500 National Guard troops, who joined militias from six states to break the strike and destroy the union.** “There is ample proof sufficient to make it clear . . . that the United States government was at the beck and call of the railroad corporations,” declared Eugene V. Debs, the union’s president.

By the first two decades of the twentieth century, overt government hostility to working-class immigrants and leftists had elicited the repeated use of federal and Guard forces to break strikes against miners in Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Nevada as well as Colorado, and against labor opponents to World War I in Montana, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma.

The tide turned during the Great Depression though, as the labor movement exploded in popular legitimacy and power. When the new United Auto Workers occupied a General Motors plant in the audacious Flint, Michigan, sit-down strike of 1936–37, President Franklin D. Roosevelt refused to send in federal troops, and progressive governor Frank Murphy deployed the National Guard not to break to strike but to protect the strikers inside the plant, while deescalating hostilities outside it, promoting negotiations that led to a spectacular victory by the union.

During the civil rights era, the National Guard turned out repeatedly — sometimes on the side of the Freedom Struggle, sometimes against it. When nine courageous African American students tried to desegregate a Little Rock, Arkansas, high school in 1957, the governor sent in the Guard to block them; President Dwight D. Eisenhower then took over the Guard and sent it, along with federal troops, to protect the students. **Meanwhile, governors continued to deploy the Guard against strikes — including the Memphis Sanitation Strike of 1968, in which African American workers famously carried pickets reading “I Am a Man,” and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated**.

In 1970, President Richard Nixon sent in federal troops to break a national strike by a union of 200,000 multiracial postal workers. This time, though, the strike wasn’t broken, and postal workers won an unprecedented contract.

In other cases, **the Guard’s work was brutal**: African American hospital workers in Charleston, South Carolina, striking against racial discrimination at work and supported by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (**SCLC),** faced vicious violence from one thousand National Guard and state troopers. In Arizona, in 1983, a Democratic governor sent in 325 members of **the National Guard to help break a strike of Mexican American and white copper workers at Phelp** Dodge. And of course, at Kent State in 1970, the National Guard infamously shot and killed four white students protesting the Vietnam War, wounding nine others; eleven days later, at Jackson State College in Mississippi, police and state troopers killed two African American students and injured twelve.

**Trump’s recent deployment of both the National Guard and the Marines in Los Angeles not only violates the Posse Comitatus Act and the authority of governors to decide how to use the National Guard but also displays his willingness to use federal and federalized troops as part of a larger program of terrorizing and repressing immigrants.**

We can put that together with his **increasingly overt hostility to the labor movement: he has revoked collective bargaining rights for federal workers and gutted the National Labor Relations Board and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service; most recently, the Veterans Administration declared that its medical practitioners can discriminate against union members, Democrats, and unmarried people. The historical record warns us: it is far from unthinkable that Trump could launch the National Guard or other troops to repress and even kill people once again for striking, as part of a larger project of closing off all spaces for peaceful protest.**