

NOBODY OWNS LAND



Issue #5:
Where we've
been,
and where
we're going

May 16th, 2026

60th Anniversary of the Cultural Revolution!

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Revolution in Culture: Editor's Introduction

From the Maoist Internationalist Movement
MIM Theory Journal #13

Note from Nobody Owns Land: We are reprinting this work from MIM at the beginning of this issue, celebrating the 60th Anniversary of China's Cultural Revolution, because we see our mission as being fundamentally the same as what is outlined here. In this Issue, we challenge how we view our history and invite oppressed Louisville workers to take an active, revolutionary role in shaping our culture, our thinking, and our City. Build the culture, build the movement. Organize, cut and smash capitalism! Here's to another strong year of the People's Zine!

Maoists understand that China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was the furthest advance of communist theory and practice yet. Marxist-Leninists before the GPCR knew the importance of culture, but it was only during the development of socialism — and contradictions within that development - that culture took on a principal role. The Chinese experience therefore teaches us not only of the fundamental importance of culture, but also of culture's role in different historical circumstances. We cannot mechanically or uncritically apply the policies or theories of diverse times and places — which would be to abandon the method of dialectical materialism.

A revolutionary movement is itself a feature of the superstructure. Revolutionaries organize by taking advantage of the old and weakening economic and political structures and win the masses' allegiance away from these crumbling institutions. Thus, for example, in the GPCR the principal task of the revolution was the transformation of the superstructure — ideology, religion, art and state power. Our principal task right now in the imperialist countries — building public opinion for revolution — is ideological, or cultural broadly speaking. Nevertheless, MIM would be foolish to think we could win the aptly-titled “culture wars” without state power.

Take a recent example. The quote from a Yiddish scholar — made with reference to Ebonics or Black English — is well put: “A language is a dialect with an army and a navy.”¹ Languages such as Black English are “minority dialects” while the people who make and speak them are subjects of domination. They are liberated as languages only when their people are free. So it is with culture in general.

So we must guard against the error — an error of left opportunism — of thinking that we can successfully advance beyond the current stage in cultural struggles. Our cultural struggle is extremely important, and must be waged relentlessly. But although it prepares the ground for the inevitable military struggle for power, it is not a replacement for seizing power through war, and then for transforming a capitalist economy into a socialist economy, and so on. The cultural victories of the oppressed will always be constrained by the dominance of imperialism and patriarchy as long as they retain power.

Consider this passage from China’s People’s Daily, a Communist Party organ, on June 1, 1966, at the start of the GPCR: “In every revolution the basic question is that of state power. In all branches of the superstructure — ideology, religion, art, law, state power — the central issue is state power. State power means everything. Without it, all will be lost.”² For socialist societies, the formerly-dominant ideology of the exploiters is a time-bomb set to go off after a revolution. Without state power, the revolutionaries can’t protect against its resurgence and fight for a new, communist dominant ideology. At the same time, once state power is won, without cultural struggle there is no way to prevent the reactionaries from returning to power.

In 1923 in the Soviet Union, V. I. Lenin criticized a movement that sought to declare the establishment of a “proletarian culture” in a clean break from the existing or past dominant culture. Lenin said he would rather consider it progress to even emerge from pre-bourgeois culture into a “real” bourgeois culture.³ That does not mean that there was not a proletarian approach to culture, or proletarian cultural products, because there were. But proletarian culture was not yet dominant. So we take from this the importance of the stage we are in. In the imperialist countries today bourgeois culture dominates, but its purveyors

still do use pre-bourgeois motifs when it serves their purposes: in the form of religious mysticism and postmodern idealism, for example.

MIM recognizes the importance of revolutionary cultural work in three important ways: studying old and existing culture, actively criticizing the dominant cultures of the systems we oppose, and creating new revolutionary cultural expressions.

Study

First, we study culture. The development of dominant and resistant languages over time, Hollywood movies, the literature of the oppressors' culture, and preserved art from regimes of the past — all these are windows into society that revolutionaries ultimately must understand if we are to grasp the essence of today: the revolutionary imperatives we face, the obstacles in our path, and so on.

One myth about Maoists is that we are opposed to cultural expression in general, and seek to wantonly destroy the artifacts of the oppressor culture, as if to remove their every trace. In this view, communists fear culture because culture is assumed to be opposed to communism: culture represents “freedom,” and communism represents “totalitarianism.” They think culture represents freedom because they think “pure” culture is devoid of politics, and communists seek to impose politics onto culture, thus ruining culture. Through the many layers of myth, obfuscation and hypocrisy prevalent in bourgeois ideology, the political contentlessness of “pure” art or culture is one of the most pernicious. We return to this below.

Although there is no reason to waste the people's resources preserving every piece of reactionary culture, Maoists also oppose their immediate obliteration. In the conversation between Mao Zedong and his niece Wang Hai-jung, published in 1970, she complained about a student who reads reactionary old literature, but Mao replied that they should read it: “not for its story but as history,” to learn about feudalism.

Then, when he further suggested a poem for her to read, she asked, “What precaution should I take against its influence?” And he answered: “You are always metaphysical. Why should you take precaution? No. You should receive some influence.

You should go deep in it and then emerge from it.” He went on to tell her to read the Bible and Buddhist sutras, so she might learn translation and foreign affairs. He told her there were kind-hearted characters in another classical story, that it was “well-written” and “worth reading.”⁴ Mao did not fear exposure to the old culture but instead demanded that it be taken seriously — and then overcome.

As for integrating Western and past cultures, Mao used the metaphor of eating that we can apply to our own consumption of imperialist culture:

“We must treat these foreign [cultural] materials as we do our food, which should be chewed in the mouth, submitted to the workings of the stomach and intestines, mixed with saliva, gastric juice, and intestinal secretions, and then separated into essence to be absorbed and waste matter to be discarded. Only thus can food benefit our body; we should never swallow anything raw or absorb uncritically.”⁵

As with any study, however, Mao and all Maoists are careful not to divorce study from struggle and practice. Mao did say people should not read too many books, because they would become bookworms and dogmatists.

If we are to study old and existing dominant cultures, we will do so with new methods that serve the interests of the people’s revolution, however. Thus, Mao said exam grading should stress creative thinking rather than rote memorization. How else could the people critically learn without merely following the ideologies of the oppressors? He also said exams should be open-book and without surprises — to treat students as friends instead of as enemies.⁶

Lenin agreed that studying culture and preparing for a new culture does not mean obliterating past culture. Quite the contrary, Lenin said in 1920:

“the teaching, training and education of the new generations that will create communist society must proceed from the material that has been left to us by the old society. We can build communism only on the basis of the totality of knowledge, organisations and institutions, only by using the stock of human forces and means that have been left to us by the

old society.”⁷

In Lenin’s view, this was necessary before proletarian culture could take hold:

“We shall be unable to solve this problem [of proletarian culture] unless we clearly realise that only a precise knowledge and transformation of the culture created by the whole development of mankind will enable us to create a proletarian culture. The latter is not clutched out of thin air; it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the logical development of the story of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, land-owner and bureaucratic society. All these roads have been leading, and will continue to lead up to proletarian culture, in the same way as political economy, as reshaped by Marx, has shown us what human society must arrive at, shown us the passage to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution.”⁸

The old schools still had to be abolished and destroyed, but in the process communists would have to decide what in them was necessary for capitalism, and what was necessary for communism.

Criticize

Second, we criticize the dominant culture through artistic as well as other political means. We review and criticize the cultural products of the system we seek to destroy in ways that build public opinion for revolution, socialism and communism. The cultural products of our enemies offer the ideological justifications for their crimes against humanity, even though they do so with forked tongues: the ideology is often concealed, and always distorted. Most pernicious of all is the hegemonic art that is of high artistic quality yet reactionary political content — including the art that pretends to have no political content at all.

MIM’s criticism of culture materials includes both outright reactionary products of the dominant culture such as Hollywood movies, as well as progressive products such as radical bands like

Rage Against the Machine or Paris.

Also in this category are MIM's distortions of oppressor-culture language and terms: our use of United \$tates, calling police "pigs," and the gender terms womyn and wimmin, for example. These are not comprehensive attempts to create new language, but rather efforts to undermine existing dominant culture and show the way toward a people's liberation language in the future. In the case of Black English, a so-called "minority dialect," we uphold this as the language of an oppressed nation that is underdeveloped because of the constraints put on it by imperialism. We lead by example in this area, as the pages of our publications are open to linguistic subversion and creation of all kinds.

Create

Finally, cultural creations — art, literature (including language), music — are expressions of class, nation and gender ideology. Maoists therefore attempt to create cultural expressions that speak for and to the oppressed, that help to unify the allies of revolution, and that expose the horrors and hypocrisies imperialism and patriarchy. The culture of revolution is about tearing down the old and creating a vision of the new society that is to come.

Mao saw artists and writers as teachers or political leaders — people who gave the masses the culture that met their immediate needs, which feudal culture had not. "Only by speaking for the masses can he [every artist or writer] educate them, and only by becoming their pupil can he become their teacher."⁹

MIM is itself undeveloped in this regard. Besides the black-and-white-on-newsprint artwork of our major publications — often cartoons or representations of article content, we write and publish some poetry, and make banners and posters. One goal of this issue of MIM Theory is to stimulate more revolutionary cultural expression in MIM circles, to encourage submissions of artistic work, and find new ways of getting this stuff out.

Mao insisted that actors and writers live and work in the countryside instead of sitting in offices separate from the toiling people. Learning to be a "great" artist in isolation from the masses produces art that appears "empty" but is in fact supportive of the oppressive status quo or idealized utopias. In this issue we review the movie *Shine*, which (perhaps inadvertently) shows the

true emptiness of “greatness” in artistry — or virtuosity — when it is removed from meaningful social life.

In the original artwork of the revolution that we hope to produce, we will have to practice the balance of what Mao called the “political criterion and the artistic criterion.” We quote him at some length from the Yen-an forum on literature and art in May 1942:

”There is the political criterion and there is the artistic criterion; what is the relationship between the two?... We deny not only that there is an abstract and absolutely unchangeable political criterion, but also that there is an abstract and absolutely unchangeable artistic criterion; each class in every class society has its own political and artistic criteria. [This implies that there is “proletarian culture” in once sense, but not in the hegemonic sense. -MC12] But all classes in all class societies invariably put the political criterion first and the artistic criterion second. The bourgeoisie always shuts out proletarian literature and art, however great their artistic merit. The proletariat must similarly distinguish among the literary and art works of past ages and determine its attitude towards them only after examining their attitude to the people and whether or not they had a progressive significance historically. Some works which politically are downright reactionary may have a certain artistic quality. The more reactionary their content and the higher their artistic quality, the more poisonous they are to the people, and the more necessary it is to reject them. A common characteristic of the literature and art of all exploiting classes in their period of decline is the contradiction between their reactionary political content and their artistic form. What we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic form. Works of art which lack artistic quality have no force, however progressive they are politically. Therefore, we oppose both works of art with a wrong political viewpoint and the tendency towards the ‘poster and slogan style’ which is correct in political viewpoint but lacking in artistic power.”¹⁰

While it is important to raise artistic standards, which are often neglected, Mao added, “the political side is more of a problem at present.” So it may be one or the other, depending on conditions. Again the question of the stage of struggle is crucial. In the present in imperialist society, it is the content that is principal, precisely because of the worship of contentless art that dominates in the bourgeois culture. In fact, if we go up against the imperialists on the artistic quality criterion, we will surely lose at present, if only because they have the better computers, the years of exclusive training with the right materials, and endless study and practice subsidized by imperialist exploitation. So, while we appreciate artistic quality, content comes decisively first for us. MIM will not restrict art work we publish or distribute on the basis of its artistic quality. We will work to improve artistic quality to enhance the impact of our work when possible, but ahead of doing this we place encouraging young cadres to engage in revolutionary culture production, distributing our materials to the greatest numbers of people.

Just as analyzing the content of reactionary art is a great way for us to reach people and argue with them about “experiences” we have in common — Was it “the right thing” for Spike Lee’s character to throw that garbage can, Why are the aliens in *Independence Day* bad? And so on. Anyone who saw these movies can answer like we were there — so it is with revolutionary culture also, only more. We can create situations and scenes, pictures and music, to instruct upon or raise questions from a revolutionary perspective, and these will stimulate public opinion, inspire, and lead the masses into revolutionary work.

—MC12

Notes:

¹ Washington Post, 7 January 1996.

² People's China, David Milton, Nancy Milton, and Franz Schurman, eds. Vintage: New York, 1974. p. 253.

³ "Better Fewer, But Better," V. I. Lenin, Selected Words in One Volume. International Publishers: New York, 1971. p. 700.

⁴ People's China, pp. 243-44.

⁵ The Political Thought of Mao Tse Tung, by Stuart Schram. Praeger: New York, 1971. p. 357.

⁶ People's China, pp. 246-248.

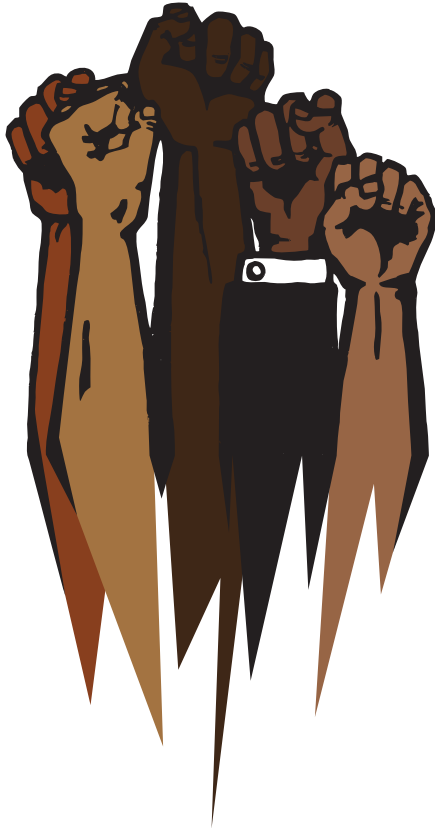
⁷ Lenin, p. 607.

⁸ Lenin, p. 610.

⁹ Schram, p. 362.

¹⁰ Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung. Foreign Languages Press: Peking, 1971. pp. 275-276.

Where we're been,
Where we're going.



Embroidered Poppy Patch

By Afnan

the water rises over the concrete
it can't go anywhere else
so it keeps on rising
the bombs keep on dropping
 and you've become accustomed to guessing the age of children
 being held up as bodies
 without heads
 maybe 8? maybe 3?

your own child swept away by the floods
your grandfather drowned in that car
not enough water there
 too much water here

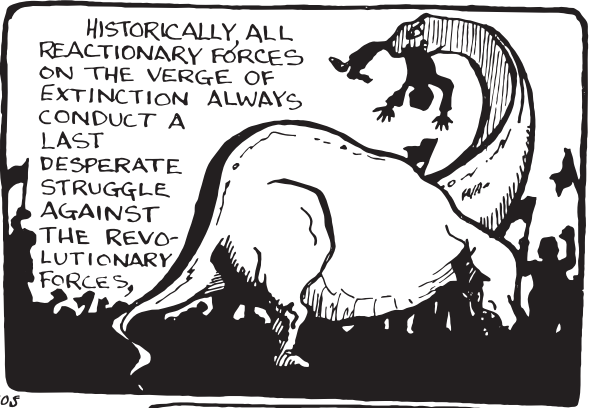
buttressed out of safety
 a chess board
 pawns and all that

I never can find an analogy that humanizes
 they don't just wait for death
 comes to them easier, is all

blame it on the pavement taking the place of flowers
 and the bombs taking the place of rain



**WILL THE
FASCISTS
WIN?**
LE-VEUKERE.MOS



HISTORICALLY, ALL
REACTIONARY FORCES
ON THE VERGE OF
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LAST
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TIONARY
FORCES.



SOME REVOLU-
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ESSENTIAL FACT:



THE ENEMY IS NEARING
EXTINCTION, WHILE THE PEOPLE
ARE APPROACHING VICTORY.

Historically, all reactionary forces on the verge of extinction invariably conduct a last desperate struggle against the revolutionary forces, and some revolutionaries are apt to be deluded for a time by this phenomenon of outward strength but inner weakness failing to grasp the essential fact that the enemy is nearing extinction while they themselves are approaching victory.

"The Turning Point in World War II" (October 12, 1942), *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 103.

History on Our Terms

By Moïse Hyacinthe

“The debate within ideological camps or between them is sometimes about “facts” or the validity of sources. But all serious studies on the writing of history concur in stressing what the historian brings to his sources: the prejudices and biases that reflect an individual’s distinctive social group and particular historical epoch in which she/he lives. To categorize a view as either Marxist or bourgeois — materialist or idealist — is to identify its most important bias. Furthermore, the differences between the materialist and idealist modes of perception emerge more strongly in some kinds of discussions than in others.”

— Walter Rodney

Dismantle Settler-Colonial “Mis-History” and Build a Revolutionary Grounding in Proletarian History!

One of the realest guerilla intellectuals to ever live, Walter Rodney devoted a sizeable part of his life to the decolonization and revolutionizing of history. Rodney fundamentally broke with the “dispassionate” and “unbiased” view of history peddled by imperialist historians, re-asserting the truth that all retellings and investigations of history come stamped with the brand of a particular class and historical context. **The important question when engaging with this or that historical investigation isn’t whether or not it’s biased, but from what class, national, and historical perspective is this history being told.**

An important directive naturally arises from this reality: Those who seek to revolutionize society in the interests of any class must independently analyze and re-analyze all history from the perspective of the class which is fighting to take power. As a Revolutionary Communist (Maoist) I believe that class is the Working Class — particularly those Workers who are nationally oppressed in the world imperialist system. Nationally-oppressed Workers are doubly mis-lead in how history is taught to them. Discussing education in colonial and neo-colonial Africa, Rodney summed it up as “‘A’ was interpreting his enemy, ‘B,’ to a

third party, ‘C’”. The same is true of Black and Indigenous nations here.

As Settlers puts it in its introduction: “The key to the puzzle is that Theirstory (imperialist Euro-American mis-history) is not incomplete; it isn’t true at all.” What is true for the dominant white supremacist state and settler-society (and all class strata within that white nation) is one deadly lie after another for them that serves to fuel complacency and self-destruction in service to the continuation of Euro-American imperialism. The area that is now Louisville has a rich history that was and is being suppressed and rewritten to suit the interests of parasite classes and their imperialist project. For them, it’s vital that the living descendants of that genuine history and those whose interests might be enabled through the spread of that history remain ignorant of Louisville’s historical place within the struggles of the oppressed, displaced, and enslaved.

For colonizers and enslavers, history must be constantly rewritten to ensure that we nationally oppressed workers take the legitimacy of Louisville and the United States as political entities for granted, forcing us to start from a position of conceding to the enemy. Our enemies are very aware that history is more than a series of events, it gives us directives on how we need to move in the present. It’s crucial that we match our enemies’ every step with our own investigations and construct our own independent understanding rooted in the interests of the global majority so we can move in the most principled way possible. As a first step, let’s build up the toolkit which Rodney used to investigate history, use it to investigate what this area was before whites came here, and uncover some of what transpired when they did:

History as Science

All of us are trained from a young age to engage with history as a series of key events in which a few great people do a few great actions in order to make the modern day we’re supposed to all be grateful for. History in this framework is mostly an unknowable dead thing to be studied, like a corpse being autopsied in order to determine cause-of-death. Maybe its guts can be “interpreted” in different ways based on the individual expert doing

the investigation, but a dead thing will not spring back to life to tell us what it was doing and its cause of death must only be interpreted to us by a select few experts who alone hold the esoteric skills to determine what “really” happened in a “neutral” way. The history we’re trained to accept doesn’t tolerate the “unruly mob” and their “radical” interpretations.

Real history works differently. **History is the living context of our collective lives, with the events of the past constantly reinterpreted by each class and recontextualized by the present.** History can and must be investigated by all of us by observing the material world we live in. When workers are allowed to investigate history for ourselves (we generally aren’t) we view the same events very differently from a business owner or a landlord. Same goes for the perspectives of dominant and oppressed nations in a multinational state (like the U\$). Black/New Afrikan folks and Indigenous nations have a very different view of the colonization of the Americas than the white settler nation. This isn’t to say everything is relative — history is knowable in a concrete way and operates according to material laws that we can discover in a scientific way — but what events represent (victory, defeat, progress, oppression, etc.) can be wildly different depending on who is doing the investigating.

Take, as a simple example, a tick that’s just latched onto a hiker’s ankle and begun sucking their blood. The tick will view this act as good, or at least necessary, and not think twice about continuing to suck blood until it’s drunk several times its body weight. The hiker, on the other hand, will view the tick as nothing more than a pest and potential source of disease. It’s in the hiker’s interest to get the tick off as soon as possible, by any means necessary. But what’s the truth? It’s true that sucking blood is a necessary part of survival for the tick, and getting it off ensures the health of the hiker, but does this make both perspectives equally valid? Should the tick consider the hiker’s health, and should the hiker consider the tick’s needs? Is resolving their conflict a matter of understanding one another? Of course not. Looking at the material facts, the tick is objectively in a parasitic relationship with the hiker, an antagonistic contradiction. **Their interests are mutually opposed, and the contradiction can only be resolved by one or the other’s interests being asserted**

over the other. The question then becomes whose interests are more valid from the perspective of the investigator.

In this way, we can view the investigation of history as an inherently political act, one where a “dispassionate” or “neutral” attitude isn’t dispassionate or neutral at all. Rather, even “neutrality” carries the stamp of a particular class in every instance. So I want to stress that this piece will not be “neutral”. I’m speaking from a Working Class perspective with the aim of serving the interests of those workers who have a genuine interest in building a revolutionary socialist society. This piece will be critical of colonizers and parasites, primarily the large business stakeholders, landlords, and small business owners. It will also be critical of some segments of workers, particularly white workers, who have historically had their material interests aligned with white supremacy, settlement, and genocide.

While we dispense with the idea of “neutral” history, we must also dispose of old and misleading ideas of how history moves. Human history in our classrooms is oftentimes framed as a continuous clash of ideas and natural forces, directed by “great men”. While ideas have absolutely clashed throughout history, and nature has a constant effect on our lives, none of this is really getting to the bottom of how history moves. **History moves through the clash of material, class forces and is directed by the actions of the masses of humanity in their totality. Ideas, and how nature conflicts or aligns with human interests comes from the material interests of classes and their struggle against each other.**

For example, the uprisings in 2020 here in Louisville weren’t first and foremost an intellectual clash of ideology or directed by a few great leaders. 2020 was a class struggle, and became a prairie fire sweeping across the US thanks to the infuriated masses of the Black nation unambiguously declaring that their lives matter, and for a short time enforcing that with anti-state and anti-institutional violence. The clash of ideologies that did exist during that time was based on that material action and interests, not the other way around. Eventually the massive reaction of both the police/military and the reformist political apparatus (white and Black) beat, arrested, and placated us back into line, driven by the economic reality that in the United Settler \$tates, Black lives

can't matter. Cash has to flow, business has to grow, and none of that can happen when we're throwing molotovs. Both the action and reaction are mass human actions based in material self-interests, and those self-interests are principally dictated by class.

So to wrap this up, we can condense these principles of history into 3 basic rules:

- 1. History is knowable, meaning that it operates through mechanisms we can investigate and understand with the right tools and training.**
- 2. History is driven by all people acting on their collective material interests. Not all people experience the same collective interests, and these interests are sometimes mutually incompatible and opposite to each another. The clash of these irreconcilable interests in the current historical epoch is known as class struggle.**
- 3. Political, cultural, and economic institutions and ideologies emerge from these collective interests, and therefore history can't be investigated in a truly "neutral" way.**

In The Beginning...

What became Louisville was historically occupied by multiple nations of people over tens of thousands of years. In relatively modern times (1400-1900) this includes but isn't limited to the Osage, Cherokee, Kispoko, and Shawnee nations along with several civilizations whose names have been lost to genocide, known as the Fort Ancient and Mississippian Cultures, living in a closely connected network of permanent villages, towns, and stone-walled fortresses where different peoples traded various goods as they needed them. And goods they had. Modern North American Maize was first grown here by the Fort Ancient Culture, and it quickly became widely traded and cultivated across the continent. Cultures which settled here would also trade in manufactured goods like clay containers, stone tools, and various kinds of jewelery. What's now Louisville, and Kentucky in general, was a hub for trade all across North America thanks to its proximity to the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Dozens of villages and towns have been uncovered across what's now Jefferson County and

Kentucky. Far from the remote, isolated existence that Indigenous people in the Americas are stereotyped as living, what's now Louisville would have been a densely populated urban area containing a variety of people cooperating and competing according to their interests.

Like with all other human civilizations, trade fostered massive growth and power among the people who took part in it. What is now Louisville was particularly valuable territory in this way, as the Falls of the Ohio made a natural stopping point for traders going east or west along the Ohio. While this pre-capitalist trade is often characterized as a bartering system by white scholars, or "primitive mercantilism" if they're feeling charitable, that's not entirely accurate. The exchange of goods oftentimes happened without one side necessarily having a good the other needed. Instead, trade and exchange had a deeply social aspect, and served to build social and political bonds between people, not profit. Of course, this was no utopia and war and hardship still very much existed, but it's important to emphasize in our present European-dominated capitalist context that economic and social systems in what's now Louisville didn't fit the mold that white historians and anthropologists often assign to pre-capitalist societies.

In fact, there's a lot to these societies that don't fit the stereotypes and molds that settler society set for them. Dense forests and easily-worked limestone enabled the construction of impressive towns utilizing planning to create efficient, easily navigable layouts. Oftentimes massive earthworks were constructed and important religious/political buildings were built on top. Houses would be arranged around a central plaza serving important social and economic functions. By 1400 CE the average village of the Fort Ancient civilization contained dozens of houses with hundreds of people living within them. Some could be much larger. Especially by the 1600s villages would oftentimes house thousands of people.

With large villages and towns, agriculture and trade, also came social and economic classes. These classes arose from the relationship between the people who worked the fields and gathered food, and those who protected and distributed the products of that labor. It must be stressed that these classes are not analogous to our current Working (Proletarian) and owning/ruling

(bourgeois) classes within capitalism. Private property and commodity production (making items mainly to sell them for profit) simply didn't exist in these societies. The leader of a village didn't wield control over the people because of her/his ownership of the fields or tools. Nobody owned land and tools were made and used for the benefit of the community. The leadership of these societies maintained power over productive forces through a complex blend of pragmatism (central planning was more efficient), social alliances among the people (skillfully navigating the interests of various classes), and ideology (religious and political structures made to maintain their class society). Likewise, what we might assume to be the "lower" classes of people weren't necessarily impoverished and exploited in the ways that our modern workers and lumpenproletariat (workers forced into criminal enterprises to survive) are. In these societies, if someone was starving it generally meant the whole society was starving. Because it wasn't a commodity in the modern sense, food wasn't something to be hoarded or kept away from those who hadn't "earned" it. Likewise, everyone contributed according to their ability, and those who had difficulty doing so either due to age or disability were cared for. Many of us today would view this society and similar societies around the world as quite egalitarian. Still, even the most egalitarian class society can't exist without class struggle — the farmers, gatherers, and craftspeople of society weren't equal and could come into conflict with both each other and the political/religious elite. Though much of the details have long been erased, revolutions occurred across the Americas just as surely as they burned the old despots of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

The End of their World

I wish I could give more specifics on the lives of the people who lived here, who their names were, the wars they fought, the heroes they praised, the revolutions they led, and elaborate on their class struggles further, but colonizers just as genocidal as today's Zionists decided long before we were born that Indigenous history must be erased. White settlers have long promoted (and still do) the myth that Kentucky was never permanently inhabited by Indigenous nations. According to them, this was simply an

empty “Indian hunting ground” when Europeans came along. Of course, white Settlers at the time knew better, and the extensive evidence of old towns and stone fortifications occupied by Natives was (and still is) systematically torn down to make way for European settlement, and ensure that no evidence could exist to contest their claim. The Fort Ancient peoples weren’t ancient at all, they existed well into recorded history and are probably (this is uncertain) the Shawnee. Who the Mississippian civilization was has been entirely lost, with their society collapsing in the late 1400s in what appears to be a revolutionary war. If these people are “ancient” or “prehistoric”, then we must also consider the French Revolution “ancient history” and Hegel, the European progenitor to Karl Marx, as a “prehistoric philosopher”. Obviously this is absurd, so we must struggle against genocidal historical revisionism to recognize these Indigenous civilizations as part of modernity, not “ancient” history.

The genocidal revision of history was helped in large part by how rapidly these societies were wiped off the face of the Earth. Alongside their guns and enslavement, Europeans also brought diseases the Americas had never seen, and a lack of hygiene that ensured that these diseases would spread to Indigenous peoples quickly. Smallpox especially swept the land and left nothing but the rotting ruins of villages (called “old fields” by settlers) and mass graves long before Europeans physically arrived in many areas. The appearance of European-made glass beads correlates exactly with the appearance of mass graves, strongly suggesting that the busy trade routes which once helped Indigenous peoples prosper here were intentionally and unintentionally turned into death routes. Just how many people died isn’t known, but consider that this was a densely populated area and smallpox was known to kill between 50-90% of Indigenous people it infected. You do the math. Whole villages would be wiped out, particularly the young and the old. Robbed of their next generation and the collective knowledge of their ancestors, life would be impossibly difficult for the survivors, and they too either died or left. By the time large numbers of Europeans arrived in what’s now Kentucky in the mid-1700s, less than a century after the first European artifacts appear in the archaeological record, one large

permanent village remained: Eskippakithiki, also known as Kentake, occupied by the Shawnee. Settlers would later use this name to refer to their newly “purchased” territory: Kentucky.

These Shawnee in Eskippakithiki would eke out a living trading with settlers and nomadic peoples for a few decades more, and would even see their population increase as other Shawnee fled what became Pennsylvania as refugees and moved west. However the wanton destruction the Pennsylvania Shawnee fled wouldn't spare Eskippakithiki either. Conflicts, slaughters, and lynchings became more and more common across the region until the “French and Indian War”, where the pragmatic alliance of the Shawnee with the French gave British settlers in the region free license to kill any Native on sight (regardless of what nation they were part of). The Shawnee were forced out, and their town too became just another “old field”, literally. Today it's known as Indian Old Fields, Kentucky.

It's important to note, though, that like today's Palestinian resistance against Israel, AIM's resistance against the US, Kanaky resistance against French settlers in “New Caledonia”, etc. this isn't simply a case of hopeless slaughter. The Shawnee fought for decades to stay in their homes against white invasion. In fact, in a 1932 paper the Filson Historical Society states that:

“the Shawnees were not nerveless cowards... from 1755 to the end of the War of 1812, for sixty years, they were the backbone of the opposition to the white advance, which was a longer time than the opposition of any other Indian people except the Iroquois.”

The Shawnee not being “nerveless cowards” would be an understatement. They fiercely defended their land against invasion and were conscious of the existential threat that European settlement posed. They established international relationships along these lines in order to defend that claim. When early American capitalists and plantation aristocrats became fed up with the British crown curtailing their genocidal tendencies and economic independence, and allied to form the first independent settler-state, the Shawnee and British made a formal alliance to expel the settlers from all territory west of the Appalachians. They would continue to fight valiantly even after the defeat of the British, with

the “last battle of the revolutionary war” taking place at Blue Licks, Kentucky. The Shawnee in alliance with other nations descended on the Kentucky militia and defeated them utterly.

Today, that battlefield is a resort. When Americans and Zionists propose turning Gaza into a beach resort, they’re speaking from experience.

History’s Marching Orders

So, what directives does this history leave us with? It’s vital that we understand this historic process of erasure and genocide to be an ongoing, current process. **Settler-colonialism isn’t something the United States has left behind nor can it be reformed out of the system. This forms the bedrock of American property and class relations.** The Louisville International Airport sits on top of several cultural sites, as does Zorn Avenue, McNeely Lake Park, and the University of Louisville. Each building and slab of concrete on top of an Indigenous site is an act of erasure, socially justified by excavation by archaeologists who get to base their careers and income off these “discoveries” and the token inclusion of this or that neo-colonial Indigenous group. This is a process echoed in every single settler-colony on Earth, from the U\$ to South Africa to Australia. It’s also not a process limited to the Indigenous nations. How many highways, shopping districts, and stadiums are built over the bulldozed ruins of Black neighborhoods?

It’s vital that we continue to struggle to uncover and preserve indigenous history in a revolutionary way, in particular with the aim of establishing a right to return for all peoples who once called this place home. A “Right to return” refers to the UN-recognized right of all nations to return and live prosperous lives on their homeland after being displaced. An example of this in practice includes the “Right of Abode” program in Ghana, which offers all members of the African diaspora worldwide, particularly those whose ancestors were enslaved, the opportunity to return to Africa and start new lives in Ghana. The right to return is also a fundamental demand of the Palestinian national liberation struggle.

Likewise, we need to examine within ourselves and reject our own liberal tendency to assume the legitimacy of what’s here

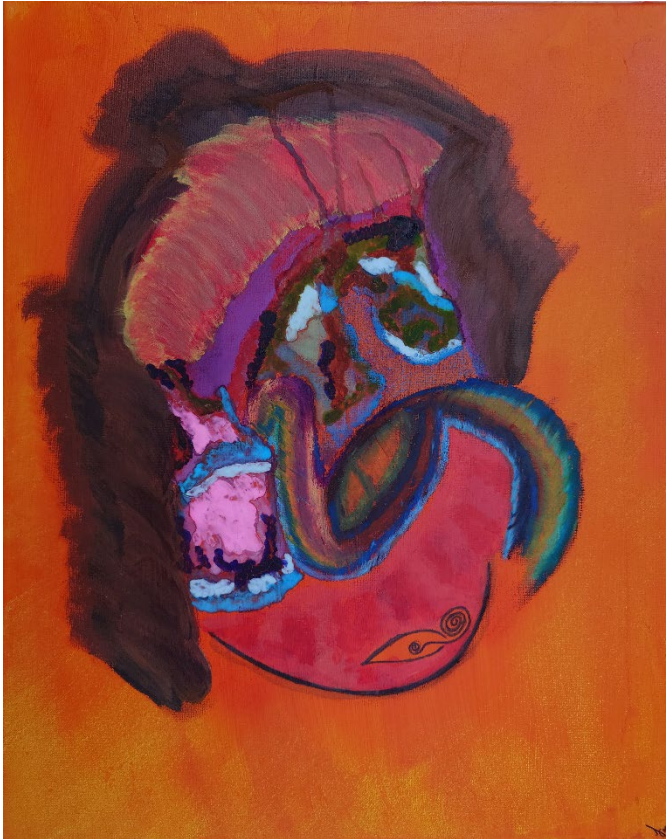
now. **We can't undo the wounds of the past, and the future will inevitably bear its scars, but we can dismantle the genocidal present to make sure the future is one utterly unrecognizable and completely hostile to every exploiter, parasite, and colonizer — and anyone who would be one if they could!** Every step we take towards that socialist future will make the North Star to liberation shine that much brighter.

When The Mask Slips

By Lynn Lashawn

Youtube & Etsy Shop: orwhtever

Youtube & Substack: fthesnoozebutton



*”When The
Mask Slips”
self-portrait
by Lynn
Lashawn*

It challenges the status quo

but it’s not dismantling the system.

That is how I differentiate between what is revolutionary

and what is resistance.

You do one to do the other.

Don’t turn them into a binary.

Harmony,

is the antidote to white supremacy.

The buy low sell high boys are
Having a field day watching
Their androids manipulate the
Markets no intelligence needed

Only greed and grift and cash
Begets cash begets influence

Peddling all the way to the bank
While defying physics with their
Rockets and feathers gouging
The populace is deaf and dumb

Also becoming automatons in
Real time has become artificial

Isolation tanks can't harm us
In our gated communities we
Increase our commutes with
The predictable white flight

Just one more lane for SUVs
I can't afford gas to drive to

The nearest grocery.

Claude les Champs

I Want an Enemy

By A. Zapato

I want an enemy.

I want you to hate me.

I want rage to be the only thing you can see.

And I want you to fear my victory.

For you're the ruling class after all,

the blue-eyed and blonde-haired.

You better fucking think you belong there.

I don't want an enemy afraid of the heights of his ivory tower.

You better want to hold on for dear life to your power,
because when I see one of you wretched ones say that the
money can't make you whole,

I hope that you just go ahead and dig yourself one.

I don't want the tyrannical kings to have anxiety.

I did not ask for a coward.

I want an enemy.

I don't want my oppressor to have a low self-esteem.

I don't want the oligarch to have stress

coursing through their bloodstream.

I don't want the despot to have regrets over his routine.

I don't even want the supremacist

to think he might not be supreme.

Because I want my enemies to have bones, meat, spirit,
a spine to hold them up,
so it can be snapped.

A heart that's beating so I can feel when you're trapped.

I want for them to have something that I can break.

I want for you to have riches,

plenty of them even!
So the have-nots can have plenty to take.

I want an enemy.
I want a role stated.
I want to be your most hated.
Because when we the barbarians are at your gate,
I don't want to see you hiding,
avoiding your fate.

I want to see some energy,
put in some heart,
I want to see you ready to play your God damn part!

I don't want you to think you might be an impostor.
That your mind is too busy to enjoy the steak and lobster.
Eat it and drink your wines.
You're not even drunk and you're forgetting your lines.

I don't want a dork that can't handle eye contact.
I don't want to have to lose my tact
and grab your shitty toupee
and make you see me
as I whisper through gritted teeth:
I. WANT. AN. ENEMY.

For when we come out with the falling blades,
I don't want to hear the futile speeches:
"Killing me will only make you as bad as me!"
Y'know, words only spoken by vile leeches.

I don't want to hear any begging for more time,
for mercy.

Where was that for the rest of us, the bodies,
the ones piling in rotten seas?

I want to look up to the new world with a cracked,
bloody smile that was worth a fight.

I want to know this darkness could only be brought down with
an even stronger light.

And I want to know,

with our righteous anger,

that we can rip apart the night.



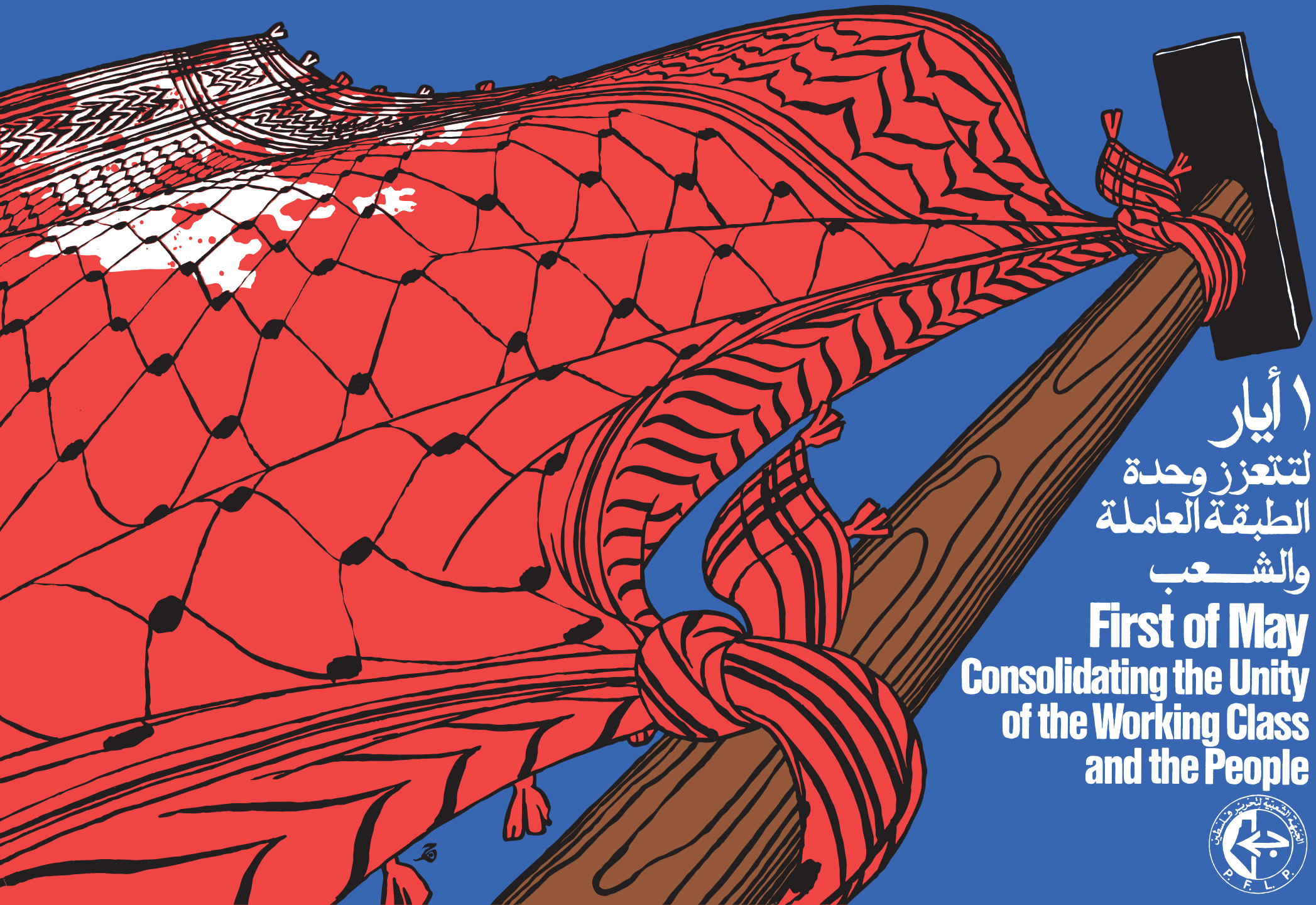
WHAT IS THE
TRUE BASTION
OF IRON?

LE.
WANGERER:405



What is a true bastion of iron? It is the masses, the millions upon millions of people who genuinely and sincerely support the revolution. That is the real iron bastion, which it is impossible, and impossible, for any force on earth to smash. The counter-revolution cannot smash us; on the contrary, we shall smash it. Rallying millions upon millions of people round the revolutionary government and expanding our revolutionary war, we shall wipe out all counter-revolution and take over the whole of China.

"Be Concerned with the Well-Being of the Masses, Pay Attention to Methods of Work" (January 27, 1934), *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 150.*



أيار

لتتعزيز وحدة
الطبقة العاملة
والشعب

First of May
Consolidating the Unity
of the Working Class
and the People



Archival Inscriptions to Build the Future

By Afnan

we write if only to preserve ourselves on paper
as a love letter to the culture
a bus ticket to the future
the pen is, of course, mightier than the sword
and we have no enemy
that cannot be slain by one

we have to write reality
into existence
but what words suffice?
what words work?
what words make this better?
make this good?
Ya Allah! Ya Lateef! Ya Jabbar!
nothing else makes sense
I can't even call out to my mother
the sight would make her knees buckle
and my arms have gone too weak
to hold her up

Oh God!

what words can create?
what words can build?
what words can stitch that young boy's arms back to his body
when his hands dangle
from a long and skinny strip of skin
what words gave his father the strength
to help him into the hospital
the one lacking equipment and antiseptic and anesthesia and staff
the one of many
that had to amputate this photographer's arms
this boy who used his hands to capture beauty

with this stone and this next one
We'll rebuild your home
with this stone
We hit your tank
with these stones
We pave the road they tore up and reconnect
my city, my village
to yours
with these words
I write a story about how we all live
on the other side of this—
if we get to live
full of the sun and tea and mint

Pick Up My Face

By Lynn Lashawn

Youtube & Etsy Shop: orwhatever

Youtube & Substack: fthesnoozebutton



Ik you mean well, but wellness is an understatement.
Every person in America should live like the richest person here.
No questioning.
You doing what's right and keep feeling worse.

Three.

Bc the country so big, one place,
don't make people scared for all of the place.

Two.

Scared for their own race.

One.

It's just another day.

Toward a Positive Socialization — The Influence of Black History on Black Youth in Kentucky

By Dr. Deonte Hollowell

*Director of African American Studies
Spalding University*

Author’s Note: I stand in solidarity with all Black Studies programs and practitioners undergoing structural and personnel changes due to anti-DEI, anti-Black Studies, and anti-Black people sentiments, led by the U.S. federal government.

When I mention “toward a positive socialization” in the title of this piece — what I am recognizing is that in recent years, the Black Studies perspective has become less integral in providing guidance to Black youth, en masse. At least, this has been my experience. I will acknowledge that we, as a field of study, have always striven *toward* this goal — but many factors have proven to be overwhelming. My goal in this brief query is to unpack the rationale of this reality and offer some solutions, particularly as it involves my home state of Kentucky. The term “Black Studies” is used to describe the collective academic disciplines such as Pan African Studies, African American Studies, African Studies, Africology, etc.

In Kentucky, the state’s Black folk are concentrated in about 5 counties which are spread out, distance-wise. My hometown of Hopkinsville (Christian County) in southwestern Kentucky generally leads the state with nearly 30% of its residents being Black. In north-central Kentucky, there is Jefferson County, comprised mostly of Louisville with about 23% Blacks. Paducah (McCracken County), also located in southwestern Kentucky is home to approximately 21% Blacks while the northcentral city of Lexington (Fayette County) rovers around 15% Blacks. Bowling Green (Warren County), in the southcentral part of the state, has also has about 15% Blacks. What this results in is Blacks in Kentucky having little to no collective identity, nor much comradery or kinship across the state. As the trickle-down effect takes place,

our politics are scattered, our youth have little to no contact with each other, and the practice of Black Studies is done in silos.

To gain a greater sense of the issue at hand, it is important to understand the nature the educational institutions that help socialize our youth. The Father of Black History, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who spent time in the state of Kentucky as a student at Berea College in the early 1900s — I have also heard that he traveled in and out of the Paducah area (where I was born and lived briefly before my family moved to Hopkinsville, also known as “Hoptown”). In his 1933 book *The Miseducation of the Negro*, Woodson says “when you control a person’s thinking, you do not have to worry about their actions. They will find their place and stay in it. You do not need to send them to the back door, they will go without being told” (Woodson, 1933). In fact, if there is no back door, many of us will [make] one for our own benefit, according to Woodson. What does that mean to us in this context? In Kentucky, there are limitations on where youth can formally engage in Black Studies. In Louisville, a student can attend the University of Louisville or Spalding University to earn a Black Studies degree (major). They could also minor in Black Studies at Bellarmine University and Jefferson Community and Technical College. Berea College (in northcentral Kentucky) in and University of Kentucky (Lexington) have Black Studies majors, as well as Northern Kentucky University (Highland Heights, northern Kentucky), Eastern Kentucky University (Richmond, northcentral Kentucky), and Western Kentucky University (Bowling Green). The 2 Kentucky HBCUs must also be mentioned; in Frankfort there is Kentucky State University and in Louisville, there is Simmons College. Few High and even fewer Middle schools have access to substantial Black Studies programs. All institutions of Black Studies are created under circumstances of struggle by people who sacrifice immensely. Acknowledgement of this sacrifice leads me to ask “have the very institutions of higher education that our elders and ancestors fought against to establish opportunities in the field of Black Studies become the back door?” In other words, have we created a system that *miseductates* our young people? If not, why are so many of our programs struggling and so many of our youth disinterested in our field of study?

In another quote, Dr. Woodson says that “if Black people in the ghetto must eternally be fed by the hand that pushed them into the ghetto, they will never become strong enough to get out of the ghetto” (Woodson, 1933). Here, Woodson is warning us about the notion of exactly who we are trusting in our process toward full liberation. Of course, this is reminiscent of the Malcolm X quote about not letting our oppressors educate our youth. How can we ever really trust these colleges or universities to operate in our best interest. Did they not show their true colors as soon as Trump led a led the resurgence of a campaign against us? Finally, Woodson says that “if a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.” Exterminated...?? Is this not what the current political climate is attempting to do? Exterminate our history, our tradition, and our culture! This reminds me of Garvey’s quote about a race with no history or 2Pac saying that “those that possess steal from the ones without possessions” and turn around to “punish people who ask questions” (Shakur, 1995). This is my fear for young people, especially in Kentucky.

At any time when scholars complain about existing conditions, we are obligated (especially in Black Studies) to get to the root of the problem to go about solving it. The attacks on Black Studies aren’t a new thing. We should recognize that the attempt began on the African continent as Europeans tried to kidnap and separate the best and brightest of our ancestors. We also know that they dispersed our ancestors across the so-called New World, and we now celebrate the diversity of our African Diaspora. After enslavement, when Black men and women sought education, barriers were in place to limit these experiences. Think about the unorthodox path that Woodson took to earn his PhD — racist institutions in place during that time couldn’t hold him back from essentially setting the stage for Black Studies scholarship. Once the 1960s emerged and Black students demanded more Black History and Black Studies, they were consistently told no, and we must appreciate them for continuing to struggle versus these nos. What’s important for us to recognize is that efforts to be a Bonafide presence in Black communities always

shaped the approach taken on college campuses. In fact, the process of establishing Black Studies in communities is the greatest accomplishment of our discipline, but likely the greatest disappointment currently. What happened?

I remember reading W.E.B. DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folk* and encountering the term "vulgar careerism" and DuBois' warning about the implications for Black people. What did he mean by this? Did we, in Black Studies, prioritize funding, institutional positions, faculty lines, and big, beautiful Conferences over the immediate needs of Black youth? Not to mention the competition between various factions of our Discipline. I think that it's time that more of us re-invest in what got us here in the first place — socialization of Black youth; support of their movements. To do that, we have to find ways to create and support community initiatives led by trustworthy individuals. We may have to sacrifice funding and position titles.

One thing that I have noticed about this generation of young people is that they seem tired of the way that Black History has been taught to them. When we operate outside of the consciousness of victory, we scar our children's psyche and hinder their sense of self-worth. Many psychological studies have been conducted to prove this. Of course, it is very important to teach our young people Black History by letting them know where, when, and how it began. When we speak about ancient Africa and our place in the world from its inception, it breeds the type of confidence that they need to rationally deal with the horrors of the Middle Passage, enslavement, segregation, and racial discrimination.

Dr. Nathan Hare of San Francisco State College in 1968, could certainly be yielded as the "father of Black Studies," like how we view Woodson as the "father of Black History." It is understood that these distinctions do not highlight the community support that these brothers had, especially from Black women. We know the struggles that Black women had to endure which often left little room for their early leadership — not to mention the sexism that they faced from Black men. Without that support, men like Woodson, DuBois, and Hare would not have been as successful. Dr. Hare let us know that the purpose of our Discipline is to 1) Rewrite History and 2) Provide a safe intellectual

space for Blacks' story to be told. Under these purposes, many of the Black Studies programs represented today have continued to thrive. This thriving, I believe, influenced the federal government into the legal stances they are now taking — not for the first time though.

One thing that is important for us to think about when considering Hare's perspective on our purpose is the task of increasing the overall quality of life for all Black people. When we add this to our purpose, we can commit to what we call "Applied Black Studies" or the work of scholar-activism that reaches segments or our communities to produce change. When I was at the plenary session last night, I was proud to notice that this is a current focus of NCBS's* leadership. I'm not saying that we haven't focused on this, I'm just saying we need to make sure it's the top priority. When we place Applied Black Studies in proper context, I believe everything else falls into place.

Mary McLeod Bethune once said that "we have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends" (Bethune, 1904). This quote from Bethune, who was one of the greatest Black educators we have ever seen, remains true to this day! Our youth do not have any type of deficiency! I refuse to believe that. If anything, their biggest deficiency, outside of systemic racism, is uncaring adults.

So, in the great state of Kentucky, I am a man of many different hats. Sometimes I probably spread myself too thin, but whatever — I plan to continue to fight the machine until one of us crashes. I like to categorize these so-called "hats" so that people (including myself) can understand what it is I do and how to support me. All three of these categories allow me to take a Black Studies approach and they are all interconnected. As far as *policy and legislation* are concerned, I did a brief stint as Louisville's first Independent city councilperson (I doubt if I take that route again but never say never). More recently, I started volunteering for the Department of *Juvenile* Justice. I only like that J word in reference to one of the baddest rappers to come out of New Orleans. I agreed to take a position (unpaid) as the state's Chair of

* Editor's Note — The National Council for Black Studies

the Subcommittee for Equity and Justice for All Youth (SEJAY). I consider myself the DJJ mole. In other words, I am there to watch what they do with their federal Title II Funds — making sure that money gets in the hands of the people doing the work. I also helped write the Racial and Ethnic Disparities plan for the next three years. In this plan, it is written that youth who are incarcerated should have programming in Black History. My focus is on 3 Kentucky Counties: Jefferson — which is Louisville, Fayette — which is Lexington, and Christian. These are the 3 counties with the highest racial and ethnic disparities for youth.

As far as my work in *education and socialization of youth*, I serve as the Advisor for the Black Student Alliance at Spalding (which was created by myself and a student). We are in the process of starting a city-wide BSA. In Hopkinsville, I am a Board Member for an awesome group of young men called the Men 2 Be program. I am also on the Board of West Louisville Math and Science. This organization was formed due to the lack of history, science, and math education available to Black youth. We just put on the 8th Annual Elmer Lucille Allen Conference on African American Studies, which I created at Spalding University. The University came to me this year and told me that they could no longer have the conference on their campus due to the anti-DEI threats made by the federal government. Rather than wait for the institution to have a change of heart, I transferred the hosting responsibilities to West Louisville Math and Science Project. At the West End Baptist church, in my role as Minister of Education, you can find me teaching Sunday School and Children's Church, as well as raising funds for the Lincoln N. Bingham Scholarship and community engagement with the Citizens Coalition for Change.

I also work with the Louisville Urban League teaching Black History courses as well as the Sowing Seeds with Faith program, which was started by a former student of mine, DaMarrion Fleming. I am also on the Board for The People's University which provides online and in-person courses in Black Studies, these free, 8-week courses mirror the courses I teach for Spalding. When the Liberation bowl (aka the "Lib Bowl") – returned from a hiatus (shout out to Mr. Ricardo X), I coached a team and was a sponsor for the event.

As far as the *violence prevention* work, I had been working with a group called Pivot to Peace (let me say Rest in Peace to Ms. Deborah Barnes-Byers who helped start this program — she died earlier this year). The Mayor of Louisville killed this program last year, sadly, but we were going into the trauma hospital to work with victims of shootings and stabbings, along with their families. There is also the Parents Against Violence Engagement — also created by one of my former students, Kenny Boyd, which is an organization dedicated to helping parents who have been victimized by violence.

Importantly, to directly address these issues in having Black Studies (and Black History) be a bigger part of our Kentucky youths' socialization, I have created a brief survey that I ask youth to fill out as a pre-and-post test to gain a better understanding of how they feel about being taught Black Studies and Black History. That survey is below. It is my hope that his survey helps me to do a greater job teaching Black Studies and Black History while also allowing me to create more mechanisms to expose with to the wealth of knowledge.

Where do you get most of your Black History information?

- A. School
- B. Community Programs
- C. Church
- D. Home
- E. Other

Which environment do you think is best for you to learn Black History?

- A. School
- B. Community Programs
- C. Church
- D. Home
- E. Other

How do you usually feel when learning Black History?

- A. Anger/Upset
- B. Sad/Tired
- C. Neutral/No feelings
- D. Proud/Happy

How important is it for you to learn Black History?

- A. Not important
- B. Neutral
- C. Very Important

How would you feel if your right to learn Black History was taken away?

- A. Anger/Upset
- B. Sad
- C. Neutral
- D. Happy

Who needs to learn Black History?

- A. No one
- B. Black people
- C. All people

Where should Black History be taught?

- A. School
- B. Community Programs
- C. Church
- D. Home
- E. Other

How can learning Black History help keep you out of trouble?

How can learning Black History help you understand yourself better?

How can learning Black History help Black people as a community?

How can learning Black History help you in other subjects at school?

How would you respond to incorrect information about Black History?

If you are a Black youth interested in making a change, please answer this survey and send your responses to:

dhollowell@spalding.edu

Those Who Remain Unmoving

By Afnan

they're the monotone sort
the type to stand and stare
but not take a single thing in

do americans realize they've been trained
to believe that it's only righteous
when they fight back

and yet, they're always on the offense
you've been allowed your aesthetic violence and
We've been denied ours
if I could scream louder

I would

if I could only bind your hands
those that sign papers
send bombs
press all the red buttons

those that shoot straight into children's hearts
and their heads
state mandated kid killing kill-shots
accepted globally as a tactic of war

even though this is not that
that child's brain matter
normalized outside of their head
that one too
the global hegemonic monotony
so easily bored
the wrong hands in pockets
self-binded

Digital Social Ecology

By ★

Take a few minutes out of your very busy lives to ground in the moment, and begin considering your own internal ecology. You are invited to settle into a good position, and to shift your focus inward, beginning with a breath and a visualization exercise:

WANTED: CRAIG GREENBERG



FOR SELLING YOUR HOME TO DATA CENTERS

- **Breath in & hold the
breath -**

Imagine the world
from space slowly be-
coming more detailed

- **Breath out -**

Now, zooming in a bit

- **Breath in & hold -**

Imagine the world at
plane level, with its in-
ner layers becoming
clearer

- **Breath out -**

Please continue breathing at your own pace while you focus on the expanse of forests and seas before you. The altitude drops further as the forests begin to brush the tips of your toes on the way down over them, and the passage of a kestrel on an updraft signals your arrival at Louisville Kentucky.

For us, spring has returned as a reminder that change and growth are always constant, beneath the surface like an independent root system. That change takes the form of many relationship types; ranging from mutually beneficial to entirely parasitic. One of the most common parasites in our local area, are

Deer ticks - these parasites can leave you with a nasty case of Lyme disease should they get ahold of you. With the beginning of summer rapidly approaching, the deer ticks' return is sure to follow.

The relationship of parasitism between me & a deer tick is not just one of being bothered by a pest, alongside a potential source of disease. It is a relationship in which a Unequal Exchange of resources occur, solely to the benefit of the tick, and solely to my detriment.

This relationship of unequal exchange exists at each of the levels of class society we viewed from afar during our mediation. On a societal level workers have our rent extracted, on a global level, capitalistic parasites invade to war monger, extract and accumulate resources.

War is forced on the working class, and the imperial periphery disproportionately. We watch as war is being waged. War against the Iranian people - Genocidal war against the Palestinian people - waged for treat hungry Amerikkkan greed. The mood of the movement is harrowing among revolutionary forces inside the empire. Our revolutionary potential is being extracted like a deer tick takes blood.

The invasion of Venezuela and the kidnapping of Maduro at the beginning of this year marked a new strategic approach of this parasitic capitalist expansion and aggression, better called Imperialism. Iran correctly recognizes this strategy is underpinned by data centers, and sees them as the infrastructure of war they are. Promptly, Iran has also demonstrated that in the face of U\$ imperialism, seeds planted strategically sweep away the old growth and "shape the field" of growth to come.

"Everything under heaven is in utter chaos; the situation is perfect"

How do we stop the U\$ from destroying the world? We start here in Louisville, by stopping a data center. The chaos of the moment makes it necessary for us to move. Hyperscale data centers are the new fad in economic "development", but they're also just another example of the long history of land theft and imperialism. When military companies like Palantir say "the question is not whether A.I. weapons will be built; it is who will build them" they are giving the game away. These data centers aren't about

WANTED: STEVE POE



FOR FORCING DATA CENTERS ONTO YOU & YOUR FAMILY

women, children, and men in just the past year? Hell, how do you think Black folks all around the country, but especially in the South, will feel about these AIs intensifying racial profiling and its “development” paving over their neighborhoods? This country represents an endless machine of human suffering for billions of people around the world, and it has to be stopped NOW! If we say and do nothing, if we limit ourselves to asking politely, then just like the “good” people who said little or nothing during enslavement, or those who did nothing as Indigenous nations were slaughtered, WE BECOME COMPLICIT!

Right now, our own local parasites are following the lead of many others by getting in on the data center scheme. I’m talking about Steve Poe. Yes, that same Steve Poe mentioned alongside Palantir. He’s a local developer who’s time and again through his company, Poe Companies, employed all the most popular strategies of the modern parasite class - building slums on the government dollar, laundering tax money through publicly-funded development schemes, astroturfing gentrification efforts so he can turn more and more of the West End into a flippable asset. This

development for a better future for the global majority, but perpetual war to ensure low gas prices and cheap T-shirts. Steve Poe, Palantir, and the US Government are building weapons of war! But this time they’re miles of servers, instead of the old cannons, bombs, and missiles. How do you think the people of Gaza will look at us when the AI that murdered their families is based out of our neighborhoods? How do you think the people of Haiti feel now that AI-powered American drones have killed 1,243 of their

is the kind of monster who got Breonna Taylor killed, the kind that won't be satisfied 'til every inch of every street in Louisville is a highly bankable asset for him to borrow against, free of any distasteful human presence that could get in the way of his super profits.

Steve thinks he's found the latest and greatest expression of his ambitions in this data center project of his. He thinks he can slide into Southwest Louisville, grab up a whole bunch of land, and trade locals' sanity and wellbeing for another revenue stream. But this time, the contradictions are too sharp, the people too stretched thin to turn away from this kind of disrespect. This data center takes everything, and returns nothing to Southwest Louisville, and is the next step of the plantation class's parasitic plan. Let's act now and pluck this parasite before it gorges itself on us.

As we close, let's return to our meditation from earlier. Closing our eyes or lowering our gaze, picture yourself in Cherokee park.

STEVE POE'S



DATA CENTER

- **Breath in & hold the breath** -

Alone, you can remove the Deer tick - together, we can check
for disease

- **Breath out** -

Shift your view to where you call home

- **Breath in & hold** -

Alone, you are isolated into an apartment - together, we take
private property from the landlord and make it public

- **Breath out** -

Widen your view to Southwest Louisville

- **Breath in & hold** -

Alone, we can rage at dismissive commissioners - Together, we
build community and shut a data center down

- **Breath out** -

Expand all the way to a global view

- **Breath in & hold** -

Alone, U\$ empire destroys the world - Together, we destroy
the U\$ empire

- **Breath out** -

NO DATA CENTER 502



GENERAL MEETING

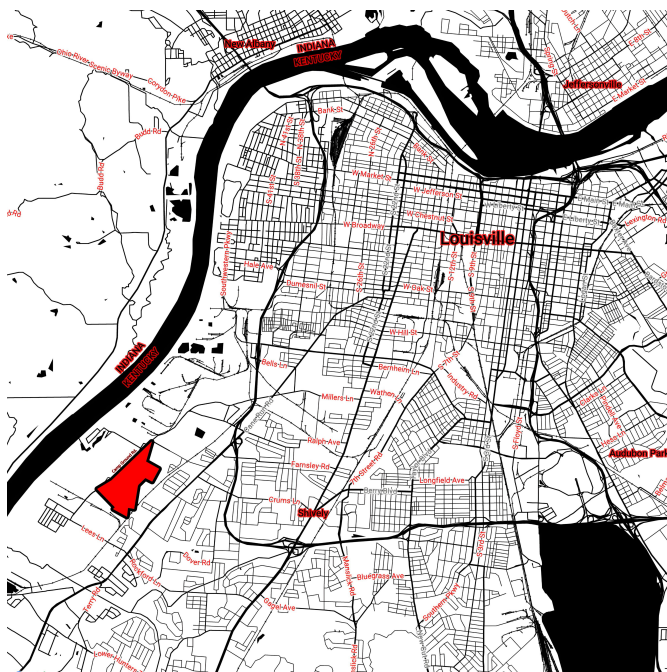
**SAY NO TO
STEVE POE'S
DATA CENTER!**



SAT. JUNE 6 | 2PM-4PM

**📍 ST GEORGE'S COMMUNITY CENTER
2512 W OAK ST**

STEVE POE'S DATA CENTER IN SOUTHWEST LOUISVILLE



THE FRONT LINE OF CLASS WARFARE

Thinking one owns
stolen land,
or land at all,
is the folly of the
imperialist



We must liberate
ourselves, as people
before us and those
before them, for
all those to come

Lines & Fragments Taken From “*I Happen to be a Skeptic About Schizophrenia: Reading Metzl Against Hacking*”

By Steve Muir

Instagram: autuamandflowers

Schizophrenia “appears at a time, in a place, and later fades away” (Hacking 2002, 1);

Clearly responsive to political upheaval.

A Foucauldian method to trace the history of race, gender, and schizophrenia -

a type of madness that exists only in certain times and places - white women’s place in the household, Black men’s place in society at large, but especially the workplace.

The rebellious and therefore mad version: a release not available outside of madness.

“Living a life of political schizophrenia” (Metzl 2009, 116) This is how the FBI came to diagnose.

It would be far too simple to resolve this history.

Have we given up on treatment

and resorted to containment?

A type of individual constructed by and caught between the medical and legal systems.

Bodies as sites of shame.

The joints at which it cuts those power structures shift

Being marginalized constitutes a way of being mad.

Mobility for The People

By Abi

Just months after a fare hike, the Transit Authority of River City (TARC) is preparing to slash even more service. Yet only last year, the city Metro Council decided against increased funding and instead advised TARC to pull itself up by its bootstraps. Democrat Markus Winkler told the Courier Journal around the time of this decision that: *“I tend to agree with this: if you want to ask for a tax increase, you first have to earn the right to ask for it, and you earn the right by doing a good job and providing good service.”*

The primary contradiction here is that Winkler and other neoliberals see transit as a profit-making business, not as the public good it is. But these decision-makers aren't clueless. **The truth is that TARC is no longer being squeezed; it's being wrung out.** Why is this happening? In an earlier era, the bourgeoisie needed public transit. A reliable bus was the conveyor belt that moved workers from their segregated neighborhoods to the factory floor. The bourgeoisie had a direct, material interest in its existence. But under neoliberalism, as capital restructured the economy away from centralized manufacturing and towards fragmented, just-in-time service and logistics, transit stopped serving their needs. A system built for the 9-to-5 worker is useless for the flexible, precarious labor force of today's gig economy and warehouse shift. In fact, a functional transit system now poses a threat: it would give workers mobility, independence, and the power to refuse the most degrading jobs. The bourgeoisie no longer needs to move workers; it needs to discipline them.

We should understand that capitalism has a need for a permanently available, desperate, and immobile pool of workers who can be called upon at low wages and dismissed at will. This is referred to as the *reserve army of labor*. Transit apartheid and intentional disinvestment are the mechanisms that create and contain this labor reserve. When a worker in West Louisville can't get to a warehouse in the East End, they are effectively imprisoned in low-wage, exploitative work. They become docile, because there is no other option.

Thus, the current crisis isn't incompetence or irrationality; **it is a politically rational strategy of capitalist sabotage.** And the reward is even greater than a docile labor force, as it includes valuable assets that can be stripped from a dying agency.

Laying the groundwork for this exploitation to occur is the violent reality of *transit apartheid*. This is the systematic, structural separation of communities by race and class through the deliberate underfunding, dismantling, and uneven distribution of public transportation. As transit justice advocates have long argued, "Transportation apartheid will only end when transportation itself is recognized as a right that allows people access to other social goods—such as, education, economic opportunity, and housing." We refuse the neoliberal mentality that public transit is a business; it is a key component of a thriving city.

Then: A Legacy of Sabotage



Decades of intentional ruin created the transit apartheid that plagues cities all across Amerika, Louisville being a prime example. Our transit history is tangled up in historic segregation, white flight, and the building of highways through Black neighborhoods, creating an infrastructural landscape of separation. This is because transit apartheid is not merely a class issue, but a sharp expression of *national oppression* within the belly of U\$ imperialism. The super-exploitation of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other oppressed nationalities takes concrete form in segregated, underfunded, and punitive transit systems. For this reason, transportation was a primary battleground for civil rights throughout the U\$, from the Dred Scott decision to

the Plessy v. Ferguson “separate but equal” ruling, which originated from segregated rail cars. Today’s transit apartheid is the direct heir to that legacy: a separate and unequal system where rail and highway expansion for the suburban few is prioritized over bus service for the urban many.

Settler impulses led to disinvestment and outright destruction of majority Black neighborhoods in Louisville and many other cities. This disinvestment, a classic example of racist self-sabotage, created the material conditions for transit apartheid. The destruction—forcing people out of their homes, destroying businesses and community hubs to level them and pave over the stolen land with concrete—was a profoundly violent injustice that echoes the actions of their ancestors. When I-64 construction destroyed the Black business district in Louisville 1940s, creating the 9th street divide, that was internal colonialism in action. Oppressed nations within the US, who possess the right to self-determination, have transit apartheid weaponized against them as a form of assimilation and spatial control, forcing the colonized to either pay the empire for mobility or remain immobile. Capitalists built a dam diverting the public money flow from communal

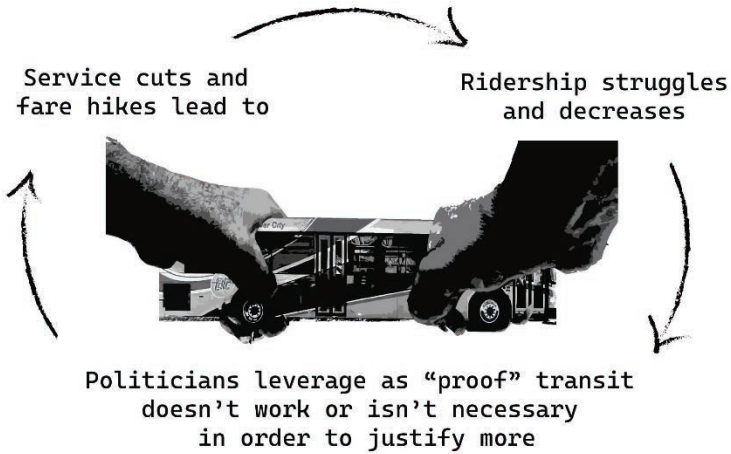
goods towards building suburbs and roads for those who could flee city centers, enriching themselves and their bourgeois friends. The rest of us could only watch on the sidelines as connections to opportunity dried up.

This is not mere neglect; it is the active construction of a two-tiered mobility system.

There is only one small group that benefits when public transit is depleted while the government hands blank checks to the bourgeoisie. These capitalists perpetuate the myth that if a bus line isn’t profitable, it’s a failure. This logic has guided TARC for years,



trapping it in a vicious cycle of receiving a service cut or fare hike, causing ridership to struggle and leave, which politicians like Winkler point to as “proof” transit doesn’t work to justify further cuts. **It’s not an inefficient model — it is the deliberate maintenance of transit apartheid.**



Now: Pay More, Get Less

Today, that cycle is spinning faster than ever with TARC in a financial crisis and, unsurprisingly, receiving no support from local or state governments. The current plan to address this issue involves cutting bus services by 12% in places like Middletown, Jeffersontown, and parts of the South and Southwest of Louisville. For us riders, that could look like job loss due to route elimination,

waiting longer in extreme weather due to increased wait times on low frequency routes, or longer walks to stops, decreasing mobility options for lesser abled folks. Overall, the number of



residents who live near transit will decrease by 20% (90,600 people) under the new network, per the Courier Journal. At the very same time, TARC has raised fares, making transit here less financially accessible to those who rely on it most.

This is the nature of transit apartheid: those with means (predominantly white, car-owning suburbanites) see their infrastructure maintained and expanded, while those without (predominantly working-class people of color) see their lifelines severed. Per TARC's 2025 survey, the median household income for a TARC rider is \$25,000, nearly half are low-income, and over half are "extremely or highly reliant" on the bus. *Settler violence lives on here* as POC make up 85% of current riders. These riders are forced to choose between paying more or losing their lifeline to jobs, groceries, and doctors. A 2023 study by Kentuckiana-Works found that 25% of low-wage job seekers (who make up about half of TARC riders) in Louisville had to turn down work due to a lack of transportation. **A cut route or an expensive ticket is a chance for a better life ripped away, and it's no accident that Black lives are so disproportionately stolen. That is transit apartheid in action.**

The irony is that while raising fares will damage the lives of riders, a fare hike won't put a dent in TARC's money problems. Fares make up about 6% of TARC's funding now. Even with this significant increase for riders, fares would still make up less than 8% of the total budget (assuming ridership is maintained). So what is actually happening here? The insidious answer is that **the bourgeoisie no longer needs TARC to function — it needs TARC to die in a specific way.** The tiny fare increase isn't about revenue; it's about pretext. It's about manufacturing a ridership decline that politicians will continue to cite as "proof" transit doesn't work. The service cuts aren't about balancing a budget; they are about breaking the habit of collective mobility.

Where does the money go? Follow the guts of a dying agency. The assets—the NIA Center, the maintenance yards, the real estate—become available for private purchase. The operating contracts become ripe for privatization giants like Transdev or First-Group. The labor force, demoralized and underpaid, becomes easier to break. This is asset stripping, not austerity. And beneath it all, the real prize is a permanently immobile reserve army

of Black and brown workers, forced to accept any wage because there is literally no other option. The plan is not to squeeze the poorest for a tiny bump in revenue; the plan is to wring out TARC's corpse and to discipline a workforce in the process.

The Future: A Choice



Moving forward, we *could* stay on the current path. Fares go up as service goes down, more people are stranded causing ridership to fall, and politicians use this as justification for further sabotage. Meanwhile, our air gets dirtier, traffic worsens, and the gap between those who can move freely and those who can't continues to widen.

But we must take a moment to name another lie at the heart of the current system. In the U\$, we are

told we have “freedom of choice” when it comes to transportation. We are convinced that riding the open road, isolated in our private vehicles, is liberation – this is a lie. The so-called freedom to choose which car you drive is not freedom at all; **it is the freedom to consume within a cage.** True freedom is not the privilege of purchasing a car loan, it is the ability to move across the entire city without barriers, without a monthly payment, without the threat of repossession or repair bills. It is the capacity to go from West Louisville to the East End, from a job to a doctor's appointment, from a school to a grocery store, all without selling a portion of your paycheck to the auto industry. The capitalist class knows this, and it is precisely why they sabotage transit. **The freedom to move is the freedom to refuse.** To refuse the third shift, the poverty wage, the unsafe workplace. When we accept car ownership as the only legitimate form of mobility, we accept a world where the poor are stranded, the elderly are trapped, and the young are dependent. That is not freedom; that is a prison with a steering wheel.

Alternatively, *we could decide as a city that mobility is a right.* We identify the way transit apartheid reflects the inherent class contradictions, where mobility is commodified and denied to the working class and oppressed nationalities. For us to assert that mobility is a right is to recognize it as a basic material condition for the people's livelihood, one that cannot be left to the profit-driven logic of the bourgeois state. Therefore, we must wage a people's war against this system: not only demanding that transit be treated as essential public infrastructure, but also **exposing the entire U\$ imperial apparatus as the root of such oppression.** True liberation requires smashing the bourgeois state machinery that enforces transit apartheid, and in its place, building dual power rooted in the masses.

In recent history and through today, an important example of parallel power around transit can be seen in the LA Bus Riders Union (BRU), a multiracial, multilingual, working-class base of bus riders formed in 1992. In 1994, the BRU filed a landmark class-action lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), charging that its policies created a "separate and unequal" transit system in violation of the Civil Rights Act. The evidence was starkly in the people's favor: the MTA was spending 70% of its transit dollars on rail projects that served only 6% of riders (predominantly white suburbanites), while the bus system, carrying 94% of all riders (predominantly Black, Latino, and poor), received just 30%. The BRU's organizing won a historic consent decree in 1996 which included lower fares, increased access and long-term structural changes to the LA transit system.

The Los Angeles model has inspired a wave of modern transit justice movements. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, a community organizing group led by and for young people of color, Together for Brothers, began with a single question from a high school student: "Why don't we just make public transportation free?". After a successful pilot that saw ridership jump nearly 50%, their coalition won a permanent zero-fare transit policy in 2023, making Albuquerque the largest U.S. city to implement fare-free transit. In Kansas City, Missouri, when the city made buses fare-free, studies found that it attracted new riders and had particularly strong equity benefits for people without access to a vehicle,

who made nearly five more trips per week as a result. In Richmond, Virginia, the bus system went fare-free, and the city has fought to secure millions in state funding to keep it that way, explicitly naming it as a tool for equity, opportunity, and reduced carbon emissions.

These victories were not handed down from above; they were seized by organized, militant riders and their allies. They didn't ask the current power structure for permission—they built parallel power through dues-paying unions, litigation, direct action, and a relentless refusal to accept the premise that transit must be a profit-making enterprise. The LA BRU organized fare strikes, occupied board meetings, and blockaded intersections. Together for Brothers didn't just lobby the city council; they mobilized a coalition that made free transit a political necessity.

These models are built through struggle and organization alongside the demolition of current structures that do not serve us. Although it will take decades of dedicated work to dismantle transit apartheid, we can look towards decades past – at the Freedom Riders and the Montgomery Bus Boycott – and the very recent past – at LA BRU, Together for Brothers – to see how collective action is the most powerful tool to make tangible change.

But we must remain ruthlessly honest: **no permanent victory is possible within the existing framework of the U\$.** The LA Bus Riders Union won a consent decree, then watched the MTA slowly chip away at it. Albuquerque made transit free, while the state legislature continues to underfund public goods. Kansas City eliminated fares, while police budgets bloom. These are not failures of organizing; they are the ceiling of reform under a *settler-colonial, capitalist state* whose very DNA is built on enclosure, extraction, and racial hierarchy. We must remember that the U\$ is a machine designed to produce exactly these outcomes: immobile labor reserves, segregated geographies, and a carceral logic applied to movement itself. Mobility as a right cannot be realized without the right of oppressed nations to govern their own infrastructure, and ultimately, the right to separate from the U\$ entirely. **You cannot have transit justice and keep the nation-state that depends on transit apartheid. The one must be abolished for the other to live.**



The fight against transit apartheid is the fight to break the reserve army. It is the fight to declare that mobility is not a privilege to be revoked at the whim of capital, but **a right that makes all other rights possible**. When we demand free, frequent, public transit, we are not asking for a nicer bus. We are demanding the end of a system that strands Black workers in low-wage traps, that disciplines immigrant labor through isolation, and turns our own neighbors into a desperate, docile pool of cheap hands. The capitalist class wants you to believe that freedom means choosing between a red SUV or a black pickup. But that is a consumer's freedom, not a human's freedom. True freedom is the ability to move, to see loved ones, to seek opportunity, all without asking permission from a bank or car dealership. We refuse the confinements of Amerikan "freedom", the freedom to be trapped in traffic, debt, and isolation. **Instead, we ride together, all on the same line, towards a liberated, collective future.**

“The Old World is dying and the New World struggles to be born. Now is the time of Monsters.”

- **Antonio Gramsci**

There was never a monster under my bed. The monster was in my closet but it couldn't open the door. The monster was outside but with closed windows and locked doors I was safe. But this doesn't stop the monsters anymore. The monsters aren't just waiting anymore, they're hunting. A door doesn't stop them. And a window is as solid as a soap bubble to them. They look straight through you. They kill. They maim. And it's not for food. They have food. It's not or sport even. It's just what they do.

I never opened the closet door or looked out the dark window. I was too scared of seeing their sunken eyes and clawed hands. But it was worse. Every monster looked exactly like me. Every monster had cutout their humanity bit by bit. They look just like me. They ate and breathed hate. But we were identical. I'm more scared of this monster. The animal that chose hate and violence over their brothers, their sisters, their twins. A monster that revels in its inhumanity. An inextricable part of them. The only part of them left. You can't cut out the monster. You have to put them down.

—*Anonymous*

