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Anarchism / Intersectionality / Decolonization

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Afrofuturist Abolitionists of the Americas

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“Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it focuses on And fundamentally alters being and transforms the spectator crushed to a nonessential state into a privileged actor, captured tn a virtually grandiose fashion by The spotlight of history. It infuses a new rhythm, specific to a new generation of (human), with a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is truly the creation of new (humans).

But such a creation cannot be attributed to a supernatural power: The “thing” colonized becomes a (human) Through the very process of liberation

— Frantz Fanon

For Anarkatas, Black Intersectional Feminism and Decolonization aren’t optional ideological stances. Together they are instrumental in addressing the complexities of systemic ableism, cis hetero patriarchy, transmisogynoir, Racism, anti-indigeneity, imperialism, colonialism, poverty, class, land, property, prison abolition, cultural theft, exploitation and capitalism, providing a map to areas of need and a course of action respectively. Informing and informed broadly by the principles of Anarchism and guided more specifically by our own Black anarchic traditions, the centering of these struggles and analyses in tangible ways should form the core of our focus and efforts.

1. Anarchism

This is the first filter we will apply to a set of conditions in order to arrive at a course of action. Anarchism is now understood to encompass all anti-racist, anti-authoritarian, anti-state, anti oppression etc struggles but the core tenets of anarchism (anti authoritarianism, anti statism, horizontalism, decentralization, mutual aid) are routinely idealized and presented in a uniformly colorblind, universalist manner. Universalism as conceived by those locked within the white identity construct can never truly be universal, and it could be argued that the urge to universalize phenomena is itself a protective mechanism of the white identity construct. In any event, anarchism gives us the rough blueprint for the outcome we want and pitfalls to steer clear of. Anarchism in this sense is an ideal. But it can’t be one size fits all. Next, we have to compare the ideal to what we actually see. To do this we need a tool with which to analyze the material conditions. That tool is Intersectionality.

2. Intersectionality

Our second filter is intersectional analysis. Intersectionality, coined and illumined by Kimberle Crenshaw and particularly the Black feminist identity politics of the Combahee River Collective grew out of a desire to reconcile Marxism with the unique experiences of Black women. Like old school anarchism, Marxism provided a rough blueprint for the structures of class struggle under simpler conditions; the most oppressed were in the position to see that it needed a serious upgrade.

Intersectionality is a microscope.

It allows us to analyze any given situation on a structural, multidimensional level and steer to the locus of the most compounded oppressions. In this way, we can attack the monster closer to the source, and through the perspectives and leadership of the intersectionally oppressed, especially Black women, provide adequate aid to the largest swath of people, starting with those who need it most. Intersectional analysis is indispensable in conflict resolution, resource allocation, navigating interpersonal relationships, and representation to name just a few areas of applicability. It should be apparent that while intersectional analysis certainly chips away at the universalized flatness of barebones anarchist and Marxist doctrine, anarchist and Marxist analysis are better for it; in fact, intersectional analysis strengthens both Marxism and Anarchism.

Now that we've analyzed the conditions through an intersectional lens, we must decide on a course of action. That course of action is the path of Decolonization. Decolonization is central to Anarkata praxis.

3. Decolonization

Decolonization is our third analytical filter, our praxis, and our immediate material goal all in one.

Through analysis of the material conditions, we have seen that the only remedy is complete abolition of the existing structures of oppression. We have seen that the relationship between oppressor and oppressed and the planet is intolerable, untenable, irreconcilable, and unreformable and to make room for the world we want to see, the dream of a world which isn't built on our oppression, we have to sweep away the old one. This is the meaning of decolonization. Decolonization isn't a return; we can never return. What's left is to take what is ours now and build the world we want to live in now. We do this by any means necessary. By ceasing to perform for the gaze of whites or provide more free labor to oppressors. By learning our radical history. The validity of the white cis hetero patriarchal identity construct (the "norm") is called into question, ridiculed and mocked. Our own identities are celebrated in their multiplicity. All accepted norms are questioned and placed in a decolonization context. These are decolonizing imperatives that arise from the ontological needs of the oppressed and can in no way be encroached upon or dictated by colonizers. Decolonization isn't a polite or abstract process; to the oppressor, it's rude, inopportune, adversarial, contrary, mean, emotional, unintelligible, etc. To the oppressed every drop of scorn heaped on the oppressor in our name is a show of love. Decolonization demands fearlessness beneath the white supremacist gaze. Decolonization is a constant practice, requiring a radical posture. Full Decolonization is militant, often bloody.

By now, our filters have skewed the picture of our anarchist city on the hill. The edges are blurrier, the walls have revealed some cracks. The world we wish existed is far in the distance. The real world has thrown us a few curveballs (racism, sexism, ableism, racial power dynamics etc) to contend with, things we have to attack structurally as well before we can begin to have the world we want. Different times, places, and populations have different material conditions and we need to meet people who want to build where they are and work with the tools that are at our disposal.