Who's Afraid of Left Populism?

written by Cedric G. Johnson | January 23, 2019

My 2017 *Catalyst* article, "The Panthers Can't Save Us Now," was addressed to a specific conundrum within contemporary left politics and anti-policing struggles in particular: that is, the strategic problem of building a counterpower capable of winning in the context of renascent black-nationalist thinking, sheepishness on the left about class analysis, and a pervasive reluctance to think about black political life with much sophistication. In a sense, the article was less about the historical Black Panther Party for Self Defense than the dangers of sixties nostalgia that afflict contemporary struggles, namely the revival of the racial essentialism, the colonial analogy, and black vanguardist posturing. Such notions were limited as a means of advancing black political life during the sixties, and inasmuch as they preserve the fiction that societywide, revolutionary changes can be won either by the actions of numerical minorities or sectarian tendencies, they are ill-suited to the challenges we face today.

My argument then and now is that Black Lives Matter, and cognate notions such as the New Jim Crow, have been useful in galvanizing popular outrage over policing and mass incarceration, but these same banners have simultaneously enshrouded the very social relations they claim to describe and led away from the kind of politics, one predicated on building broad, popular power, that is necessary to roll back the carceral state. That 2017 article was conceived as an historical materialist antidote to racially reductionist thinking and attempted to excavate the origins of black ethnic politics as we know it. A key conceptual distinction here is between *black ethnic politics*, that mode of ethnic representational and electoral practices that was expanded and institutionalized nationally through the confluence of civil rights reform and Black Power mobilizations, and *black political life*, the heterogeneous, complex totality of shifting positions, competing interests, contradictory actions and behaviors that constitute black political engagement historically. That 2017 article was written as a plea for a more mature view of black political life, and a left politics that proceeded from careful analysis of society *as it exists* toward building popular constituencies around a more just vision of what society might be.

In what follows, I expand the arguments of my *Catalyst* article in three ways. First, this essay addresses the prevailing hesitation to engage in class analysis of black life. Many left activists and academics continue to abide the notion of black exceptionalism, that there is something unique and incommensurable about the experiences of blacks that prohibits any substantive discussion of class position and interests whenever the black population is concerned. This posture is wrong and dangerous. It is not grounded in any close empirical sense of actually existing black life, but retreats toward the most unidimensional sense of the black population as noble, long-suffering victims of oppression and the moral conscience of a white-dominated nation, rather than a people possessing all the social contradictions, ideological diversity, foibles, heroism, and frailties found throughout the American populace. This failure to understand the complexities of black political life leaves intellectuals and activists unable to see the ways that particular segments of the black population, both elites and popular constituencies, have historically supported the carceral expansion and continue to play a crucial role in the reproduction of the highly unequal, unjust neoliberal urban order. Genuflecting before identitarian politics, whether under the guise of Black Power nostalgia or Black Lives Matter sloganeering, does little to help us understand and contest these power alignments. The second part of this essay offers a brief overview of these concomitant processes of black governance, central-city revanchism, and mass incarceration.

This essay concludes by addressing the Trump phenomenon and the clear problems his ascendancy

poses for anti-policing struggles going forward. Trump is a dangerous figure, and his first term has put his oafishness, sexism, racism, and incivility on full display, but as some have noted, Trump's Tweets and antics are a distraction. He is no doubt a powerful booster for authoritarian policing and securitization, but even if he were removed from office before the end of his first term, the carceral state, which has been built up through local and state-level legislation over the course of decades, would remain; its legitimacy is anchored much deeper within American life and institutions. Moreover, the myth that Trump rode into office on a wave of resurgent white supremacy has only entrenched liberal anti-racist posturing, overgeneralizations about and demonization of white workers, and a prevailing sense that popular left politics are not only out of reach, but not even worth pursuing.

Class and Actually Existing Black Life

The last few years have seen the resurgence of racially reductionist thinking about black political life and a corresponding political defeatism regarding class solidarity. Such thinking is sedimented and reproduced through social media discussions, which are at best proto-political but often anti-political, precluding public-spirited conversation and the possibility of communion and action in face-to-face contexts. The explosive popularity of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, as well as the expansion of blogging and podcast platforms, has not only displaced the centrality of corporate news sources in the lives of many Americans, but these media have also produced an artificial leveling in terms of public debate. In this new landscape, access is more universal but expertise and rigorous investigation are devalued in spaces where sensationalism, conspiracy, and dilettantism breed and flourish underneath ebullient travel photos, cat memes, fish-kiss selfies, and cute toddler videos.[1]

The revival of race-centric approaches to thinking about inequality did not begin with Black Lives Matter. For decades, liberal think tanks, civil rights organizations, and academics working in area studies have promoted various strands of liberal anti-racism. But we might trace the more recent origins of the Black Lives Matter/New Jim Crow frame to the optics of the 2005 Katrina disaster and the subsequent ways both academics and activists came to understand the 2008 foreclosure crisis.[2] Rapper Kanye West may have offered the most memorable statement of this sensibility when he went off-script during a live telethon for Katrina survivors. "America is set up to help the poor, the black people, the less well-off, as slow as possible," West said, before punctuating his impromptu speech with the charge that "George Bush doesn't care about black people." His conviction, that racism was the primary motive for the death and misery in New Orleans, has been rearticulated and expanded in a small library of books and essays over the past decade.[3] The *Nation* columnist Mychal Denzel Smith claims that for his cohort of black millennials, West's words were "our first relatable expression of black rage on a national stage," and that expression has since inspired resurgent waves of black political activity, from the election of Barack Obama to the anti-police brutality protests in Ferguson and Baltimore. Given the media optics of the Katrina crisis, where thousands of black residents crowded the Superdome in search of relief, it is not surprising that so many concluded the disaster was caused by structural racism.

The focus on racial disparity gets much of the Katrina story wrong, however, because it substitutes metanarratives of racial oppression for a more critical and rigorous analysis of the city as a totality, the place-specific institutional and social roots of the disaster, the balance of class forces on the ground, and the power of actual constituencies in shaping disaster preparation and recovery policies in New Orleans, none of which is simply reducible to the legacies of Jim Crow segregation or the hubris of the Bush administration alone. A more critical post-Katrina literature and cinema has situated the governmental failures of disaster evacuation and relief, and the highly uneven politics of

reconstruction, within the volatile and crisis-laden processes of urban neoliberalization.[4] The racial-justice frame does not discern class contradictions within the black population and the variegated experiences of recovery. This framing fails to capture how the contraflow evacuation process worked effectively for middle-class blacks with access to cars, as it had for whites of similar means. The property owner-centered reconstruction programs supported by city, state, and federal governments also helped middle-class homeowners, black and white, to restore their property and lives, while the same governing coalition pushed a wave of evictions and public housing demolitions that created hardship for black working-class residents and made it more difficult for them to return.

In the wake of the "race-class" debates that accompanied the 2016 Democratic Presidential primary challenge of democratic socialist and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, many within academe and activist circles have sought to defend the virtues of identity-based appeals and organizing strategies. The defenses often begin from an interpretation of U.S. history that sees popular, cosmopolitan forms of left alliance as anomalous and too often doomed by the reactionary behaviors and interests of whites, sometimes with the most venom reserved for the "white working class," often portrayed as though it constitutes a self-conscious and unified social category in utero.[5] Such anti-left populist arguments are often guided by an odd view of history, devoid of any useful sense of conjuncture, and positing wrongly that what did not work in the past clearly will not work now, so why bother. This posture not only sweeps aside meaningful and plentiful examples of cross-racial class solidarity in the U.S. past, but it also amounts to a loser's view of political life, lacking imagination and courage. The Trump phenomenon, and the prevailing myth that his presidency was the result of resurgent white supremacy and not the reverse, has only further intensified hyperbolic racialist arguments and antipathy toward class analysis and working-class solidarity in some corners.

Asad Haider's *Mistaken Identity* is addressed to this new context of Trumpism and attempts to recuperate what he sees as the more radical, progressive origins of identity politics in the nexus of the black political struggles and second-wave feminism of the seventies.[6] Haider reminds us that the phrase "identity politics" was coined by black lesbian feminist activists who formed the Combahee River Collective (CRC), but their initial formulation, which sought to bring anti-racist and anti-sexist sensibilities in as correctives to the limitations of revolutionary socialism as they saw it, was ultimately appropriated and corrupted by liberal elites. Although he makes numerous references to the CRC's participation in strike actions, and reproductive rights and domestic violence activism, Haider does not pause to evaluate the relative political impact and utility of the CRC vis à vis other organizations that actually made life demonstrably better for the greatest number of African Americans. That is to say, we know that the group is significant in the genealogy of black feminism and women's studies as that scholarly discipline evolved out of the sixties and seventies migration of activists into academe, but what political victories can we point to that make CRC an indispensable vein for the contemporary left to mine, especially for strategic lessons concerning building powerful left opposition? Why should we focus on the CRC and not the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Montgomery Improvement Association, the various grassroots organizations and networks that elected Harold Washington to the Chicago mayoralty in 1983, or for that matter, The Links, Incorporated? Let us be clear. The CRC emerged during a period of pervasive demobilization, amid the jetsam of Black Power, women's liberation, and the New Left, literally on the eve of the Reagan revolution, and despite whatever interpretative value we might wring from their critique of U.S. society, there is no practical reason to afford the CRC with a privileged place in contemporary left strategic and tactical thinking. Haider is not alone here, but rather he indulges a common practice of many academics: confusing the scholarly subject that piques one's curiosity and may be interesting within the novelty-driven dynamics of academic credentialing, conferencing, and publishing, with those historical phenomena that are politically impactful and resonant.

Setting aside this problem of the CRC's historical amplitude and relevance to contemporary efforts

to revitalize the left, a bigger problem with Haider's analysis is his neglect of how the empowerment discourse of new social movements emerges from a peculiar deployment of standpoint epistemology, the view descendant from Hegel and Marx that those who endure similar social conditions possess common ways of knowing the world. For Marx, the common predicament of the proletariat alone did not generate solidarity; rather, such was clearly the outcome of political organizing and social struggle. Sixties appropriations of standpoint epistemology, however, often falsely equated common predicament, the experience of the black ghetto or of patriarchal order, with shared political sympathy and interests. Haider is well-aware of the ways that identity politics and intersectionality have become corrupted and misused in the time of Black Lives Matter, too often deployed as a means of making territorial-knowledge claims, staking out authority based on relative disadvantage (epistemic deference), and undermining the prospects of open democratic engagement and the possibility of solidarity. We agree on these latter-day problems. Haider sees some value, however, in the prelapsarian version of identity politics first articulated by the CRC, but his historical account forgets how sixties and seventies black radical and feminist politics also abided problematic notions of standpoint epistemology that conflated identity with political constituency.

Standpoint epistemology forms the foundation of identity politics whether articulated in Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's 1967 manifesto, *Black Power*, which was heavily informed by the ethnic pluralist claims of Cold War American political science; in the Panthers' desire to liberate the "black colony" within American inner-cities, which was in practice ethnic pluralism with anti-colonial patina; in Amiri Baraka's work to forge an institutional mechanism for national black political unity; or even in the CRC's efforts to infuse socialism with analyses of interlocking oppressions. In the classic CRC statement that Haider celebrates, the territoriality he rightly condemns in latter-day movement circles was already gestating: "This focusing on our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics. We believe the most profound and potentially most radical politics came directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else's oppression."[7] The tendency to equate racial and ethnic identity with political constituency did not first emerge within African American political life during the sixties, but was already hegemonic, a consequence of the exclusion of the black masses from civic life for the first half of the twentieth century, the prevalence of Jim Crow racism beyond the Mason-Dixon line, and the ethnic patron-clientelist practices that dominated most urban governing regimes during the Fordist era. The view of sacrosanct racial constituency, however, is tough to abide when we take a closer look at black political life during the sixties, which was rife with public debate and political rivalry, teeming with different agendas, priorities, and class interests despite the prevailing popular expressions of black unity and soul power.

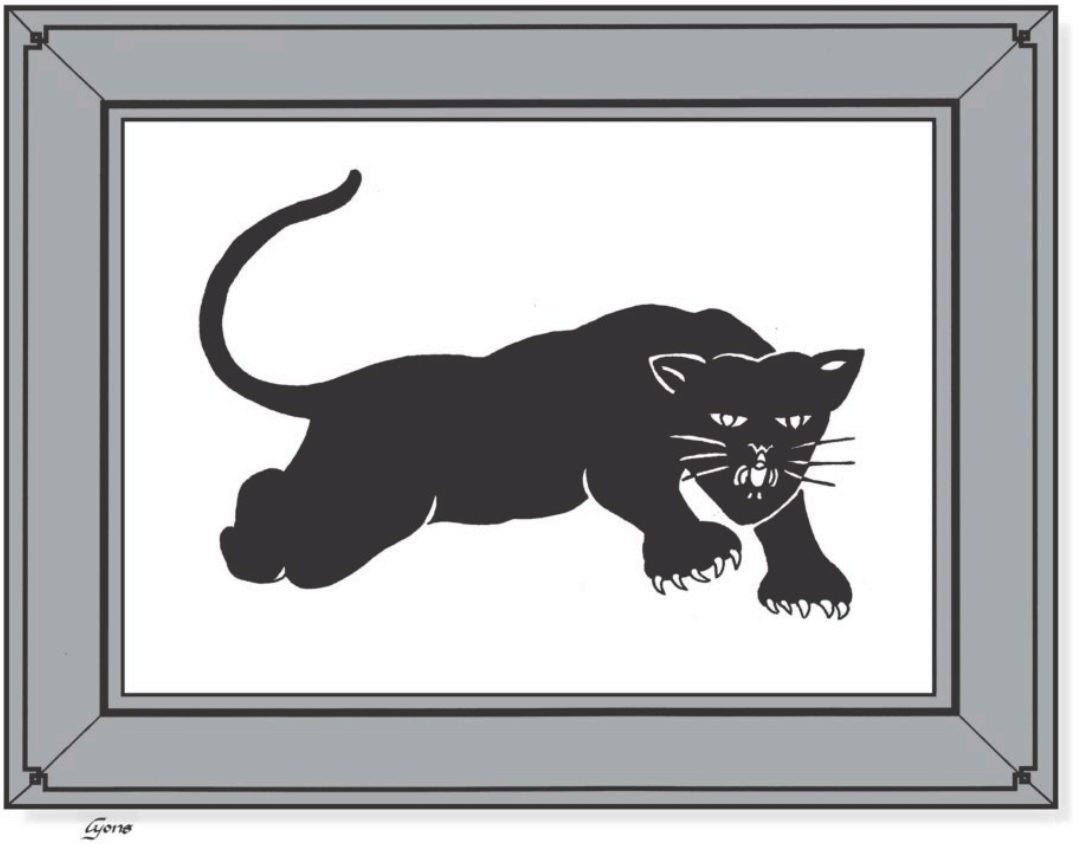
Haider's critical claim that liberal identity politics is the "neutralization of movements against racial oppression," is an earnest restatement of the familiar cooptation thesis that falls flat when the internal contradictions and limitations of those movements are subjected to rigorous analysis and scrutiny. These black movements were not simply neutralized by the machinations of elites, but rather, as many historians and social scientists have illustrated, sixties black political tendencies abided the same flawed logic of racial constituency that Haider sees as emerging at a later point in history.[8] Black Power was not some grassroots phenomenon that sprung up organically only to be quelled by agents of the state. Black Power took shape within a context of omnibus civil rights reforms; the on-going evolution and internal debates of interracial organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Congress of Racial Equality who helped secure such reforms; the work of sympathetic national politicians and liberal benefactors who sincerely wanted to improve the lives of black Americans, albeit under the terms of the postwar consumer society; the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty, which provided federal block grants to develop anti-poverty programs at the local level; and the growing sense in black neighborhoods and communities nationwide that shifting demographic and political conditions made increased black control of

governing institutions a real possibility. What the calls for black power and self-determination came to mean in operational terms cannot be separated out from the broader urban and national political processes that shaped black life during the last days of Jim Crow segregation. There is more to African American political development than the heroic political tendencies that leftists fetishize.

Against left critics of identity politics, Haider claims that there is a "materiality of race" as a social relation. This is the formulation du jour for some on the left, but when applied to black social life beyond the originary context of antebellum slavery, it is a conceptual evasion that evokes material conditions only to make a racially reductionist point about some common predicament of blacks (or whites) regardless of class position. If the notion were to have any integrity as an analytic frame, then Haider and others would need to actually explore in greater depth the historically specific material conditions, the situated-class experiences of blacks under capitalism. Such analyses would include not only the sharecroppers union, the Scottsboro boys' legal defense campaign, or the League of Revolutionary Black Workers—favorite topics of the academic left that Haider evokes in a Verso blog defense of his book.[9] Any helpful discussion of the "materiality of race" would also need to take seriously those manifestations of bourgeois class position, aspiration, and ideology that contend for influence within black political life at every historical juncture and often secure legitimacy and devotion among layers of the black working class, for instance the reign of Tuskegee Machine; the role of the Afro-American Realty Company in the making of Harlem; the Geddes Willis Funeral Home and scores of others in every major city and small town with a sizable black population; the business ventures of black entrepreneurs such as Jesse Binga, Madame C.J. Walker, A.G. Gaston, and legions of other race women and men; the black professional organizations that were also born out of Black Power; the anti-public housing stances of black New Democrats; the expansion of black tourist-entertainment niches such as the annual Essence Fest; and on and on. "A materialist mode of investigation," Haider contends, "has to go from the abstract to the concrete—it has to bring this abstraction back to earth by moving through all the historical specificities and material relations that have put it in our heads."[10] This particular outing for Haider, however, falls short of making good on that methodological commitment.

Throughout the text, Haider offers pithy statements about the centrality of race and anti-racism to revitalizing the left. "As long as racial solidarity among whites is more powerful than class solidarity across races," he writes, "both capitalism and whiteness will continue to exist."[11] "In the context of American history," Haider continues, "the rhetoric of the 'white working class' and positivist arguments that class matters more than race reinforce one of the main obstacles to building socialism." Of course, it is quite possible for capitalism to exist without white racial domination in the United States, as it does in other parts of the world—think Lagos. Also, we have already witnessed in many American cities how heritage tourism; ethnic cultural markers such as Mexican murals, blues music trails, immigrant commercial thoroughfares, and so on; and multiracial coalitions have been central to place-branding, real-estate valuation, and neighborhood revitalization in ways that facilitate capital accumulation and the empowerment of some people of color alongside the massive displacement of others. As well, despite Haider's historicist point about the "main obstacles to building socialism," there are powerful examples of biracial and interracial unionism, where anti-black racism among workers was clearly an impediment to organizing but ultimately did not prevent striking dockworkers and teamsters in post-bellum New Orleans, or miners in the West Virginia Coal Wars, from achieving meaningful solidarity and collective advance. Such ambitious statements may score points in the seminar room or basement study group, but this rhetoric, however well-intentioned, has little to do with the internal workings of political life, how people perceive their immediate interests and priorities in real time and space, and the ways that union drives, city council campaigns, class-action lawsuits against polluters, parent-teacher meetings about pending state tests, and the like—contexts where race and class are not always the chief preoccupation or animating logics among citizens that left activists and academics suppose them to

be. The underlying claim in *Mistaken Identity* that foregrounding anti-racism might secure more extensive commitments of people of color to the nominal left is shop worn, unproven, and descendant from the recruitment strategies of the Socialist Workers Party during the sixties and still prevalent among elements of the International Socialist Organization and the revived Democratic Socialists of America. This strategic posture, which reduces the expressed needs and diverse interests of blacks, Latinx, and other people of color to the "struggle against racial oppression," is at best misguided, at worst patronizing, and will continue to lead us toward a dead-end.



To his credit, Haider does allude to the sharpening of class conflict within post-segregation black political life, especially in a chapter dedicated to the life and serial ideological conversions of the late poet and activist Amiri Baraka.[12] This discussion of class and black politics, however, is rather perfunctory, derivative, and at a level of theoretical abstraction that dances above the moil of black political life as it is experienced in everyday social relations, grounded organizational contexts, and historical class interests in motion. It would seem that a focus on these quotidian matters would be central in a book that hopes to rescue some radical kernel of sixties and seventies identity politics from latter-day appropriations and use whatever lessons gained to build left opposition in the present. I am not suggesting that Haider needed to address the full spectrum of black political tendencies and personalities in this particular book, which is clearly intended as a provocation and work of theory rather than accurate interpretation grounded in a deep reading of historiography and primary sources. It would seem, however, that the most useful normative political theory, especially one that evokes Lenin's "concrete analysis of concrete conditions," would be informed by a more critical-empirical understanding of black life as it exists, especially when twentieth-century black political developments and the "black radical tradition," which is essentially an exercise in canon formation, are used to underwrite his claims. Put another way, if black political life has become more complicated over the last half century by the extensive integration of the black population into the

consumer society, the expansion of the black middle class, the process of black political incorporation, and the worsening conditions of the most submerged segments of the black working class, why should we recuperate racial identity politics, however refined, as a framework for understanding our times and as a basis for political organizing?

In line with Haider, political scientist Joe Lowndes casts doubt on left analyses that criticize the limits of racial identity politics in favor of class solidarity. In a recent *Baffler* essay assessing the perils of left- and right-wing populism, Lowndes laments, "Populism is as populism does," before concluding that "just as right-wing populism draws on democratic and egalitarian desires, left-wing variants can have a cramped notion of the people that alienates the politically vulnerable and marginal."[13] To illustrate the historical problems of populism, Lowndes rehearses an all-too-familiar "constraint of race" narrative, an interpretation of American political development where socialist and progressive left politics are undermined as white workers are time and again seduced by the siren song of reactionary politics, siding with the power of capital and against people of color, from Jacksonianism through the rise of the New Right. It is difficult to dispute the broad outlines of this account. The United States is a nation founded on African chattel slavery, indentured servitude, the conquest and removal of indigenous peoples, the disenfranchisement of the unpropertied, and the domestication and exclusion of women from full civic life, a condition that would last for over half of the nation's history. The devil does not live in the granular details of history, but rather he sets up his workshop in the generalities and occlusions of such "constraint of race" narratives. As with Haider's *Mistaken Identity*, the level of abstraction in Lowndes's account actually leads away from the kind of critical historical analysis that might reveal the rich and contradictory archive of working-class struggles, the specific conjunctural challenges we face now, and those quotidian concerns that may form the basis for building viable left opposition.

As is common nowadays, Lowndes offers the obligatory criticism of the New Deal. Franklin D. Roosevelt's "vision shored up producerist ideology," Lowndes writes, "a strictly gendered division of labor, and, through the distinction between 'entitlements' and 'relief,' a sharp divide between the deserving and undeserving poor."[14] This is certainly true, but there is more to the story. The New Deal coalition under Roosevelt's leadership shored up a consumerist ideology as well. Indeed, he saw raising the vast consumer capacity of Americans as a remedy for the problems of overproduction that in part precipitated the Great Depression. Likewise, as a consequence of labor shortages and mass activist pressure during World War II, Roosevelt's administration was compelled to momentarily break down racial and gendered divisions of labor through integration of the defense industries.[15] This historical development is significant and prefigures the postwar civil rights movement and the birth of second-wave feminism, but such facts get in the way of the kind of criticism of left populism Lowndes wants to craft. We should be fully aware of the patent limitations of midcentury American liberalism and the inequalities produced by the New Deal coalition, especially the real-estate driven growth trajectory established after World War II, but Lowndes's accounting, like so many others, leaves out the ways that the expansion of the social wage and labor protections, and the institution of national public works initiatives like the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, benefited African Americans in unprecedented ways.[16] Lowndes's summary thesis, which repeats claims that have become conventional wisdom in some corners of the left, does damage to the complex legacy of the New Deal, and underwrites a left cynicism we cannot afford.

Oddly enough, Lowndes's account of the misadventures of populism does not mention the pervasive power of Cold War red-baiting and witch hunts against Communists and leftist trade unionists. This domestic trench warfare against the left played out in the televised hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee, FBI interrogation rooms, police raids, death threats, imprisonment, the financial ruin of accused reds, and disappearances and assassinations, and it would have a

lasting impact on the American left, dividing the laboring classes against themselves and defeating more progressive-to-radical left political possibilities. It would seem that this grim episode would be central to any intellectual appreciation of the difficulty of building a viable left populism.

Lowndes insists, "We need a left-wing populism that puts anti-racism, immigrant rights, and refugee solidarity at the center of its politics." If Lowndes's point here is simply that progressive left and socialist organizations must confront reactionary thinking and behaviors—anti-black racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia, and so on—whenever they arise in the actual context of organizing and building solidarity, then there is little here that anyone with progressive left or socialist commitments should find disagreeable. In the particular context of policing and prison reforms, activists must, for instance, contest and overturn hegemonic underclass narratives that treat poverty as a consequence of the alleged cultural failings and behaviors of the poor and that justify mass incarceration and punitive social policy. The problem with such declarations that we centralize anti-racism, however, is that in many local political battles and campaigns, race and racism are not always a central concern.

Moreover, the liberal anti-racist frame reduces what are in fact common class conditions felt more widely across racial and ethnic populations to matters of racism and racial disparity. To emphasize the need to centralize anti-racism, Lowndes closes out by praising the militant protests that erupted in the Bay Area following the killing of Oscar Grant by transit police, the battles against ICE deportations, and other struggles he sees as "opening out onto broader vistas with populist dimensions." Those vistas could be broader still, especially when we take seriously the actual patterns of police abuse, which defy liberal anti-racist canards. Of the ten cities with the highest per capita fatal police shootings of civilians, only one approaches a majority-black population, Baton Rouge (50.4 percent black), followed closely by St. Louis (49.2 percent) with Las Vegas trailing well behind (11.1 percent). Of the remaining cities, the black population constituted less than 3 percent: Kingman, Arizona (.04 percent black); Las Cruces, New Mexico (2.4 percent); Billings, Montana (.08 percent); Pueblo, Colorado (2.4 percent); Rapid City, South Dakota (1.1 percent); Westminster, Colorado (1.23 percent); and Casper, Wyoming (1 percent).[17] Black Lives Matter protests have galvanized opposition to police abuse, but clearly, there are neighborhoods and communities in the U.S. hinterlands that some on the left have written off, that endure over-policing, violence, and precarity but fall out of the race-centric, metropolitan framing of these problems favored by activist and academics.

Evocations of the "materiality of race," or "confronting the meanings of race," especially as prerequisites for building a majoritarian left politics, are a ruse. These are more sophisticated statements of Black Lives Matter sloganeering; they are valuable as a means of signaling one's ethico-political commitments in academe and within majority-white left sectarian circles and social media networks. Race is not always the central axis of conflict, nor the primary organizing impediment in local contexts, not in the dominant sense that Haider or Lowndes might have us believe—not even among black people. We should certainly condemn and fight racism in all its manifestations. However, in political life, we should also proceed from a careful investigation of the felt needs, shifting political positions, and expressed interests of blacks and all other Americans, rather than assuming black exceptionalism—that African Americans constitute a discrete political constituency who can never find common cause with nonblacks. This is simply not true. The irrationality and falsehood of such thinking becomes especially clear when we rehearse the historical evolution of the carceral state, which was made possible through a circuitous and tragic combination of a social forces that were not limited to the Reagan-Bush rendition of the War on Drugs, white suburban voter anxieties, and myths of black criminality alone. The path toward building the popular opposition that is needed to produce substantial criminal justice reforms does not begin with "confronting the meanings of race" as a therapeutic or proselytory stance, but rather with a clear

sense of the peculiar political alliances that have produced our current order and the difficult work of changing public perceptions and securing support for more just forms of public safety.

Policing the Revanchist City

The expansion of the carceral state and more aggressive policing of urban minority communities coincided with the rollback of the welfare state at the national level, and the almost universal pursuit of urban downtown redevelopment as an antidote to the loss of manufacturing jobs in many U.S. cities. As others have noted, the carceral build-up of the late War on Drugs era was not merely the handiwork of conservative Republicans. Rather, mass incarceration was the creation of various constituencies—black and white; urban, suburban, and rural; liberal and conservative; New Democrats, black nationalists, victims' families, drug rehabilitation clinicians, social workers, and community activists—who supported expanded police protection, more punitive sentencing laws, increased funding for prisons, and the like. Some supported these policies for staunchly ideological reasons, while others did so out of desperation, seeing punishment as the only plausible cure for worsening crime and social disorder, especially as the tangible benefits of social democracy were no longer part of the lived experiences and popular memory of millions of Americans. The roots of this dilemma lie in the Cold War liberal turn away from public works and redistributive public policy and toward civil society and cultural solutions to urban poverty. Moreover, the ramping up of the War on Drugs during the Reagan-Bush years coincided with an intensifying class war and the aggressive removal of the poor from the urban center where the policing strategy of pacification was central to the postindustrial growth model driven by the financial, insurance, and real-estate industry and the tourism-entertainment sector. The late geographer Neil Smith characterized this process in terms of the *revanchist city*.

While the postwar transformation of the urban landscape created physical distance between the new suburban middle class and those left ghettoized in the inner-city core, the taking back of the city through gentrification and real-estate valorization beginning in the eighties brought these disparate classes into direct confrontation—with middle-class urban pioneers, the investor class, and tourists on one side and minority communities, the unemployed, the itinerant poor, and countercultural enclaves on the other. "This revanchist anti-urbanism," Smith holds,

> represents a reaction against the supposed 'theft' of the city, a desperate defense of a challenged phalanx of privileges, cloaked in the populist language of civic morality, family values, and neighborhood security.
>
> … More than anything the revanchist city expresses a race/class/gender terror felt by middle- and ruling-class whites who are suddenly stuck in place by a ravaged property market, the threat and reality of unemployment, the decimation of social services, and the emergence of minority and immigrant groups, as well as women, as powerful urban actors.

Smith continues, "It portends a vicious reaction against minorities, the working class, homeless people, the unemployed, women, gays and lesbians, immigrants."[18] These processes of revanchism have occurred in fits and starts, more successful in some cities than others, but securitization has been at the heart of this phenomenon, making the city safe for more upwardly mobile residents and visitors. Pacification and removal of the poor, architectural innovation, and new forms of enclosure have produced a new central-city landscape, one where class contradictions are managed through manifold technologies of policing, surveillance, and certification that permit ease of movement across urban space for those of economic means while regulating and constricting the poor. This is a new metropolitan landscape defined by Airbnb, Uber, helipads for the nouveau rich, artisanal grocers, novelty fitness clubs, private roads, and relentless condo tower construction, and equally by bum-proof benches and ankle monitors, pretext police stops, the demolition of public housing,

ubiquitous closed-circuit cameras, a criminalized and informal economy, predatory lenders, and check-cashing centers.

One immediate casualty of this new urban warfare, as Mike Davis reported some time ago, was the elimination of the very notion of the public. "The universal consequence of the crusade to secure the city is the destruction of any truly democratic urban space," Davis wrote. "The American city is being systematically turned inward. The 'public' spaces of the new megastructures and supermalls have supplanted traditional streets and disciplined spontaneity."[19] This war on the public has created new opportunities for profit-making and philanthropy for the investor class, and made already vulnerable segments of the working class even more desperate, insuring a ready and cheap reservoir of servant labor.[20] These processes of urban fortressing were further entrenched in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which precipitated a wave of federal and state spending on policing and surveillance programs under the pretext of national security. At the center of these processes of urban neoliberalization and revanchism was the liberal black political elite who governed many American cities through a period of manufacturing decline and postindustrial renaissance. Their complex role is neglected in most accounts of the carceral build-up, yet the fact of multiracial support for policing and incarceration remains a formidable barrier to the kinds of reforms promoted through Black Lives Matter protests.

In the decades after demands for black power, black political incorporation became a reality, with most major American cities electing black mayors and often majority-black city councils. These black-led cities, however would inherit a number of well-known constraints on their capacity to govern, such as declining tax bases, population loss, capital flight, the drought in federal investment, the expanded power of bond-rating agencies and international financiers, antiquated infrastructure, and deteriorating social conditions.[21] Likewise, the class-diverse black ghettoes of the mid-twentieth century, which provided the spatial-demographic basis for black power demands for indigenous control, would undergo dramatic transformation, producing the hyper-segregation of the black poor. Within this dire context, citizens and civic leaders made even more difficult policy choices, with some blacks supporting anti-crime measures because of idiosyncratic political beliefs and others because of their specific constituent interests as homeowners, shopkeepers, or victims' families.

Some common maneuvers whenever the subject of black class politics is broached are to emphasize the relative precariousness of the black professional-managerial class when compared to whites or to downplay the relative power of black political elites in public affairs. The first move is usually intended to shore up the view that race remains the primary social determinant in American life, which is not a difficult argument to make given the many documented disparities in wealth and income even between blacks and whites of similar levels of educational attainment. The second move is pitched for much the same reasons, to emphasize that even blacks who occupy positions of institutional authority will likely be constrained by the power of reactionary, superordinate whites, a claim that seems infallible during the reign of the New Right and the New Democrats. Class is not fundamentally a matter of gradations of income, but rather a matter of relative power within the social relations of production. The black middling and elite classes have certainly been historically smaller and generally more vulnerable than similarly situated whites. Despite its relative size and precarity, however, the black professional-managerial class often plays a role in society, especially during the post-segregation era, that many whites cannot fulfill: the role of legitimating and advancing Democratic Party politics and neoliberal privatization agendas at the local level. This is a social role that whites cannot play effectively given prevailing notions of black racial constituency, cementing black public consent and mediating the demands of popular and working-class constituencies, whose interests are often at odds with the dictates of city hall and the Washington Beltway. That said, conservative, pro-policing attitudes and interests are not strictly limited to African American elites, but at various moments specific local black constituencies have embraced

tough-on-crime measures, especially during the epoch of neoliberalization when the expansion of progressive social spending became increasingly difficult to pursue.

Yale law professor James Forman Jr. offers a highly textured account of how and why some residents, politicians, and activists in Washington DC supported a politics of incarceration during an era of black political control.[22] In his study, we find historically discrete motives for black support of various anti-crime and pro-policing policies. Black civil rights activists in Atlanta during the 1940s and in the District of Columbia in the 1960s demanded the hiring of more black officers as a remedy to police brutality. During the seventies, black nationalists opposed marijuana legalization in the District because they viewed it as a "gateway" drug to more debilitating addictions. Some black judges insisted on harsh punishment for black violent offenders out of a moral obligation to black victims, who for too long were denied adequate police protection or court justice under Jim Crow. These decisions were made with an eye toward what might be done to reduce addiction, theft, and violence in black communities within a context of limited choices. The stories Forman presents contradict contemporary anti-racist sloganeering and analyses that portray the problems of policing and mass incarceration in stark black-and-white terms. Instead, he gives a more nuanced historical account of why certain urban black constituencies supported policies that would eventually have disastrous effects on black incarceration rates. He also illustrates, through a close analysis of attitudes toward policing in black professional and working-class neighborhoods, that there are distinct class experiences of policing, with working-class blacks more likely to be subjected to intensive and routine police surveillance and arrests.[23]

Forman's work presents us with a political paradox that remains instructive in this era of resurgent liberal identity politics, that is, the fact of black political control did not protect black District residents from the escalating problems of crime and policing. Rather, within the all-black context of the District, different constituencies combined to produce measures, like mandatory minimum sentencing laws, that had unintended consequences, contributing to the problem of mass incarceration. Racial affinity and ascriptive status should not be mistaken for political constituency, and an understanding of the discrete interests constituting black life will be crucial to any success that police-reform forces hope to achieve going forward. Former New Democratic black mayors like Adrian Fenty in Washington DC, C. Ray Nagin in New Orleans, and Stephanie Rawlings-Blake in Baltimore presided over a period of urban revanchism where the interests of capital were prioritized over the education, security, and livelihoods of black working-class neighborhoods, and, alongside black contractors and school-privatization advocates, such black leadership has played a crucial role in legitimating neoliberalization by providing it with a multiracial countenance.

In cities like Baltimore and Chicago, which possess integrated police forces and city administrations, massive anti-policing protests have been defused and placated through legal prosecution of police, suspensions, and token firings. Street demonstrations against police abuse have also been met with the mobilization of more centrist black political elements, who have called for modest technical reforms to correct police abuse, such as standard-issue body cameras, and who have advanced private-charitable projects and volunteer mentoring as solutions to poverty.[24] Moreover, electoral pressures and activist demands have produced a generation of public-relations-savvy black police chiefs, such as Charles Ramsey, former commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department and before that, head of the District of Columbia's metropolitan police department, and Chicago superintendent Eddie Johnson, who have perfected skilled messaging and crisis management. This is not to say that black top-cops do not endorse the same pretext stops, profiling, and aggressive tactics as their white counterparts. Ramsey presided over the mass arrest of protestors and preemptive raids of activist staging areas during the 2000 demonstrations against the World Bank in Washington DC. Unlike whites, however, they are able to emote effectively with some black audiences, marshal authenticity claims to gain trust from some of the most heavily policed

neighborhoods, and deflect charges of racism. In large and complex urban areas, where black power has long been institutionalized and entrenched, analyses that ignore the actually existing class relations and interests shaping incarceration and the political arena will do little to advance the kind of substantive reforms touted by the most progressive elements of anti-policing protests. The combination of these local challenges produced by multiracial, neoliberal governing coalitions, and the ascension of Donald J. Trump to the presidency, should encourage activists now more than ever to work toward building broad popular consent for concrete alternatives to the current accumulation regime and its attendant modes of policing.

The Blue Lives Matter Presidency

Securitization and policing, racist exclusion, and repression were central features of Trump's ascension to the presidency. During the summer of 2016, when his election still seemed like a long shot to many, Trump was emphatic in his support for police. He seized upon two separate incidents where police were assaulted by black gunmen, saying, "We must stand in solidarity with law enforcement, which we must remember is the force between civilization and total chaos," echoing the core logic of the "thin blue line" that has animated U.S. law enforcement since the Cold War. Trump led a chorus of conservative voices who claimed that the Obama administration and Black Lives Matter protests had created dangerous conditions for police officers. Former New York City mayor and later Trump's attorney Rudolph Giuliani was quick to attack activists, claiming that Black Lives Matter is "inherently racist because, number one, it divides us."[25]

Contrary to the overheated rhetoric of Trump, Giuliani, and others**,** policing is not the most hazardous occupation in the United States. In fact, it is not even in the top ten, with on-the-job police fatalities ranking well behind those of construction workers, groundskeepers, fishermen and women, garbage collectors, and loggers, among others. And contrary to the claim that the Obama administration enabled anti-police sentiment, violence against police officers actually decreased during Obama's tenure, especially when compared to the George W. Bush years. Moreover, conservative attacks on Black Lives Matter are simply unfounded. White men were responsible for 70 percent of the violence against law enforcement that occurred during the 2016 election year.[26] The mass shootings of police during the 2016 July Fourth week were tragic, but equally so is the fact of police suicide, which in recent years dwarfs the numbers of police officer fatalities by shootings and traffic accidents combined.[27] Yet improving working conditions and mental health care of officers is not at the forefront of the "Blue Lives Matter" chest thumping of Trump, Giuliani, and their ilk.

Since taking office, Trump has continued to deride any dissent against police violence and abuse. He infamously demanded that the National Football League's team owners fire any player who joined San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick's national anthem protests. Trump also openly joked about police violence during a 2017 address to law enforcement at Suffolk County Community College in Long Island. He went so far as to encourage rough treatment of suspects during arrests and minimized their right to due process.[28]

Following the weathered playbook of GOP strategists, Trump's approach to campaigning and governing pits the deserving American middle class against the *relative surplus population* of welfare dependents, the unemployed and unemployables, undocumented migrant workers, and low-wage workers in China and other countries. Surplus population, or the industrial reserve army, is understood here as those persons not currently employed who might be pressed into service to the advantage of capital.[29] Relative surplus population in any given historical context exerts downward pressure on wages. As a reservoir of low-wage, fragmented, and disempowered labor, they are employed as competitors to the relatively more secure segments of the workforce and as such can be used to foment division within the working class. Since the dismantling of the social wage and the

rise of the New Right, the surplus population in the United States has been routinely evoked in campaign rhetoric that places the blame for the general social morass and public finance woes on the continued costs of welfare assistance programs, public support for noncitizens, Medicaid, anti-discrimination regulation in college admissions and private sector hiring, funding for public education, and the pensions of public sector employees. These underserving segments, we are told in every election cycle, do not pay their fair share of taxes and do not contribute much to the economic and social health of the nation.

Blaming the most vulnerable among the working class, however, merely absolves corporate elites of their culpability in producing wage stagnancy and worsening living conditions through their decisions, such as union-busting, off-shoring, the replacement of living labor with automation, and massive reductions in the taxation of the investor class. Blame-labeling the black urban poor and immigrants further distracts an already anxious middle class and secures their interests as consumer-citizens to the reproduction of the capitalist order. Trumpism appeals to the real economic anxieties of those Americans who can recall the last days of a vibrant manufacturing-based economy. His protectionist ideas as well as his xenophobia beckon many Americans, not just whites, back to a nostalgic ideal of unending compound growth and middle-class consumption. This is where the legitimacy of the current carceral order resides, and it is unlikely that progressive left forces can create a more just alternative without engaging broad swaths of the population, wrestling with real and imagined anxieties, fears, and felt needs. Indeed, that is the only way to turn the tide against Trump's authoritarian populism and produce a more just, egalitarian society.

Notes

1. Tom Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters* (Oxford, 2017).
2. Both Smith and Ta-Nehisi Coates provide autoethnographic accounts of the origins of renewed liberal anti-racist politics during the Obama years. Coates's book, *We Were Eight Years in Power,* is a compendium of his writings during the tenure of Barack Obama. When he says "we" in the book's title, on one level he's referring to those liberal commentators who were given an enlarged platform by major news magazines, cable television networks, and other media because of the election of the nation's first black president. Coates is honest and self-effacing about how he and many others were made by that historical moment. They gained a wider audience than they might have previously imagined. Melissa Harris-Perry was catapulted into national celebrity as the host of her own MSNBC program, which drew extensively on progressive left academics, often people of color, for weekly commentary. There are other liberal black journalists who gained more notoriety during this period as well, such Joy Reid of MSNBC, Charles Blow of the *New York Times*, writers like Vann Newkirk of *The Atlantic*, and so forth. Various bloggers, independent filmmakers, musicians, and creative writers also found greater opportunity and financial support during the Obama years. This is nothing new. The personnel and content of news agencies often shifts with the new mood created by presidential administrations. The election of Obama, as well as the re-emergence of anti-racist struggles, helped to lay the foundation for the ascendancy of a black liberal commentariat. Mychal Denzel Smith, "The Rebirth of Black Rage: From Kanye to Obama and Back Again," *Nation*, Aug. 31, 2015, www.thenation.com/article/the-rebirth-of-black-rage/; Ta-Nehisi Coates, *We Were Eight Years in Power* (One World, 2017).
3. For a sampling of writings that rely on the racial frame to understand the Katrina crisis, see Michael Eric Dyson, *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster* (Basic Civitas, 2005); South End Press Collective, ed., *What Lies Beneath: Katrina, Race, and the State of the Nation* (South End Press, 2007); Hillary Potter, ed., *Racing the Storm: Racial*

Implications and Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina (Lexington, 2007); Kristen Lavelle and Joe Feagin, "Hurricane Katrina: The Race and Class Debate," *Monthly Review* (Vol. 58, No. 3, Aug.-July 2006).

4. Following are some of the critical works that discuss the Katrina crisis and its aftermath in terms of neoliberalization: Adolph Reed Jr., "Undone by Neoliberalism," *Nation*, Sept. 18, 2006; Adolph Reed Jr., "Three Tremés" *Nonsite*, July 4, 2011, nonsite.org/editorial/three-tremes; John Arena, *Driven from New Orleans: How Nonprofits Betray Public Housing and Promote Privatization* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Vincanne Adams, *Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith: New Orleans in the Wake of Katrina* (Duke, 2013); Megan French-Marcelin, "Gentrification's Ground Zero" *Jacobin*, Aug. 28, 2015; Thomas Jessen Adams, "How the Ruling Class Remade New Orleans," *Jacobin*, Aug. 29, 2015; Cedric Johnson, ed., *The Neoliberal Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, Late Capitalism, and the Remaking of New Orleans* (University of Minnesota, 2011); Aaron Schneider, *Renew Orleans? Globalized Development and Worker Resistance After Katrina* (University of Minnesota Press, 2018); Kevin Fox Gotham and Miriam Greenberg, *Crisis Cities: Disaster and Redevelopment in New York and New Orleans* (Oxford, 2014); Anna Hartnell, *After Katrina: Race, Neoliberalism and the End of the American Century* (SUNY Press, 2017); Thomas J. Adams, Suzanne-Juliette Mobley, and Matt Sakakeeny, eds. *Remaking New Orleans: Beyond Exceptionalism and Authenticity* (Duke, 2019).
5. The economic appeal of the Trump campaign, and his success in parts of the midwestern industrial heartland, has provoked a rash of pop cultural explanations and social media invective centered on the "white working class." J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* shot up the *New York Times* bestsellers list, and as Chris Maisano writes in an excellent review of the new literature on the white working class, the book helped Vance "become the punditocracy's go-to native informant on all things white trash." ("The New Culture of Poverty," *Catalyst* (Vol. 1, No. 4, Summer 2017).) This contemporary focus on the white working class is a variation of the "white backlash" argument, a now commonsensical explanation of the social origins of the New Right, which depicts anti-civil rights sentiment as central to the Republican Party's courtship of a new southern white base and to shaping its market-libertarian and states-rights policy stances. In its scholarly and pedestrian forms, however, that argument centers race and in particular, white working-class racism, rather than the interests of powerful blocs of capital as the primary drivers of the New Right ascendancy.

The view that Trump was elected because of angry white working-class voters applies to some who supported him, but as an explanation of why he won, white racial anxiety has been greatly exaggerated and misdiagnosed. The median income of Trump's white supporters was higher than the median for whites overall, and as Michael A. McCarthy details ("The Revenge of Joe the Plumber," *Jacobin*, Oct. 26, 2016), there is reason to believe that Trump's protectionist, anti-tax, and xenophobic platform resonated most loudly with small business owners, more "Joe the Plumber" than the blue collar, Archie Bunker archetype. "Trumpism is no oddity," McCarthy writes. "It's the expression of the anxieties of the petit bourgeoisie and a result of a break between two wings of the capitalist class in the Republican Party that began with the emergence of the Tea Party." But the "angry white worker" line misses too much. Trump did not grow the GOP base substantially, though he outperformed McCain in 2008 and Romney in 2012 by over two million votes. More importantly, Trump did not secure a larger share of the white vote than Romney did. Trump performed well among blue-collar voters, former Obama voters, wealthy whites, nonunionized workers in coal country, the steel-producing belt and Right-to-Work states, building trades and contractors, proto-entrepreneurs, *and* minorities. One-third of Latino voters supported Trump, as did 13 percent of African American men.

Trump's campaign mobilized racist, xenophobic sentiment and created a platform for fringe

right-wing elements, within the White House and throughout the country. His response to the Charlottesville march led by white supremacists and neo-Nazis, which ended in the death of Heather Heyer and injury of dozens of other counter-protestors, was craven and reprehensible. His election, however, is not evidence that right-wing ideas have triumphed, but instead proof that contemporary Democratic Party liberalism has lost nearly all popular legitimacy—alienating many of its former beneficiaries and supporters.

If Trump's election was evidence of resurgent white supremacy then we should have expected to see some electoral coattail effects to that end. Perhaps the most graphic evidence against this line of reasoning can be found in David Duke's failed 2016 bid to become senator from Louisiana, where he polled less than 3 percent. Keep in mind that Duke was a serious contender in the 1990 race for the same congressional seat, garnering over 600,000 votes, some 43.5 percent of the statewide total votes cast. And again, in 1991, he came close to seizing Louisiana's governorship, winning over 670,000 votes and 38.8 percent of the total. In both of those earlier contests, he was defeated by a coalition of liberal and Democratic whites and high black voter turnout. If white supremacy is on the rise, why was Duke's performance so abysmal in the very state where he had so much support in the past? The answer to why Trump was elected lies in the ideological crisis of the Democratic party, and more specifically in the implosion of Hillary Clinton's campaign, both problems having their root in the New Democrats' neoliberal political agenda and pro-corporate strategic and governing priorities. See Connor Kilpatrick, "Burying the White Working Class," *Jacobin*, May 13, 2016.

6. Asad Haider, *Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump* (Verso, 2018), 7-9.
7. Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 8. See Keeanga-Yahmatta Taylor, ed., *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Haymarket, 2017), 17.
8. See William P. Jones, *The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights* (W. W. Norton, 2013); Robert Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (Anchor, 1969); Dean Robinson, *Black Nationalism in American Politics and Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); Adolph Reed, Jr. "The Black Urban Regime: Structural Origins and Constraints," in *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Postsegregation Era* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 97; Kent B. Germany, *New Orleans After the Promises: Poverty, Citizenship, and the Search for the Great Society* (University of Georgia Press, 1996).
9. Melissa Naschek, "The Identity Mistake," *Jacobin*, Aug. 28, 2018. Asad Haider, "Zombie Manifesto," *Verso Blog*, Sept. 1, 2018.
10. Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 11.
11. Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 51.
12. Haider, *Mistaken Identity*, 67-82.
13. Lowndes, "Populist Persuasions."
14. Lowndes, "Populist Persuasions."
15. See Rhonda F. Levine, *Class Struggle and the New Deal: Industrial Labor, Industrial Capital and the State* (University of Kansas Press, 1988); Meg Jacobs, "'Democracy's Third Estate': New Deal Politics and the Construction of a 'Consuming Public,'" *International Labor and Working-Class History* (No. 55, Spring 1999), 27-51.
16. Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold Story of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America* (W.W. Norton, 2005); Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore, "The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History," *International Labor and Working-Class History* (Vol. 74, Fall 2008), 1-32.
17. Matt Hudson, "Billings has one of the highest rates in the nation for fatal officer-involved shootings," *Billings Gazette*, Apr. 13, 2018.
18. Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (Routledge,

1996), 211; Neil Smith, "Revanchist Planet: Regeneration and the Axis of Co-Evilism," *Urban Reinventors* (No. 3, Nov. 2009), 1-18.

19. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los* Angeles (Vintage, 1992), 226.
20. Cedric Johnson, "Working the Reserve Army: Proletarianization in Revanchist New Orleans," *Nonsite*, Sept. 4, 2015.
21. Reed, "Black Urban Regime"; John Arena, "Bringing in the Black Working Class: The Black Urban Regime Strategy," *Science & Society* (Vol. 75, No. 2, 2011) 153-179; Cedric Johnson, "The Half-Life of the Black Urban Regime: Adolph Reed Jr. on Race, Capitalism, and Urban Governance," *Labor Studies* (Vol. 41, No. 3, 2016) 248-255.
22. James Forman Jr., *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2017). For other nuanced treatments of black politics and the expansion of the carceral state, see Michael Javen Fortner, *Black Silent Majority: The Rockefeller Drug Laws and the Politics of Punishment* (Harvard University Press, 2015); Donna Murch, "Crack in Los Angeles: Crisis, Militarization, and Black Response to the Late Twentieth-Century War on Drugs," *Journal of American History* (Vol. 102, No. 1, June 2015), 162-173.
23. See Nathaniel Lewis, "Mass Incarceration: New Jim Crow, Class War or Both?" People's Policy Project, 2018, (accessed 2/6/18); Lester Spence, "Policing Class," *Jacobin,* Aug. 16, 2016 (accessed 10/7/16); Adolph Reed Jr., "How Racial Disparity Does Not Help Make Sense of Patterns of Police Violence," *Nonsite,* Sept. 16, 2016, (accessed 10/7/16).
24. Cedric Johnson, "Afterword: Baltimore, the Policing Crisis, and the End of the Obama Era," in James DeFilippis, ed., *Urban Policy in the Time of Obama* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016).
25. Sarah Larimer, "Rudy Giuliani: Black Fathers Need to Teach Kids 'the Real Danger to Them Is Not the Police'" *Washington Post*, July 11, 2016; Lydia O'Connor, "Rudy Giuliani Says Black Parents Need to Teach Their Children to Respect Police," *Huffington Post*, July 10, 2016.
26. Shaun King, "White Men Killed More Police Than Any Other Group This Year, But Conservatives Won't Address the Facts," *New York Daily News*, May 11, 2016.
27. Andy O'Hara, "It's Time We Talk About Police Suicide," *Marshall Project*, Oct. 3, 2017; Peter Nikeas, "Chicago Officer Kills Himself in Police Station Parking Lot, Officials Say," *Chicago Tribune*, July 10, 2018; Rosemary Sobol and Zak Koeske, "Days After Cop Committed Suicide at South Side Station, Another Officer Collapses and Dies There," *Chicago Tribune,* July 11, 2018; Marla Donato, "Pulling Back the Curtain on Police Officers' Suicides," *CityLab*, May 22, 2017.
28. "Police Brutality Is No Joke, Mr. President," *Washington Post*, July 31, 2017.
29. Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume I* (Penguin, 1990), 783, 794-797; Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013 [1978]); Loïc Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Duke University, 2009); Loïc Wacquant, "Class, Race, and Hyperincarceration in Revanchist America," *Daedalus* (Summer 2010), 74-90; Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (University of California Press, 2007); Theodore G. Chiricos and Miriam A. Delone, "Labor Surplus and Punishment: A Review and Assessment of Theory and Evidence," *Social Problems* (Vol. 39, No. 4, Nov. 1992), 421-446.