

AAS21

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It is bitter and traumatic to remember governance in black life/death triads of racism>resistance>repression. Racism logically points to some form of genocidal expression. Resistance thus becomes conditioned by fear even while it organizes against it. Repression counters through policing and governance; and then offers an open invitation to join its loyal opposition or be marginalized or silenced.

Our discussions of BLM/SayHerName, are complicated: by empire and global anti-racist solidarity; terror and the infantilized, and the “unspeakable” levels of repression and denial about the violence and fear that we (especially the children) face.

Charlene reminds us of the importance of youth activists, Chicagoan namesakes of the 1951 “We Charge Genocide” formation, who addressed the 2014 UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) in Geneva. <<http://www.newsweek.com/us-defends-alleged-abuses-torture-treaty-un-body-284355>> CAT grilled the US delegation on: torture at Guantanamo Bay; the militarization of police (Ferguson); police torture for false confessions (Chicago); and rape in US prisons. The president’s press conference offered assurances that the US respects human rights as highlighted by CAT while media coverage deflected from black radicalism in Geneva. Michael Brown’s parents Leslie McSpadden and Michael Brown, Sr., and the Black Women’s Blueprint (hosting a 2016 UN tribunal on sexual violence) also testified before CAT. That UN gathering on torture was not about genocide; thus the context and content for political analyses produces a different critique.

Official memory masks repression as structural rather than aberrational; we become more familiar with racism and anti-racist resistance movements, governmental repression remains a bit vague (but nonetheless frightening). We seem to lack a consensus or clarity about who/what we are fighting in our movements for change. In the documentary, *Eyes on the Prize, Part II: A Nation of Law?*, the late Frank “Big Black” Smith recounts, as a leader in the 1971 Attica prison rebellion for human rights, the retaking of the prison in which he witnessed friends and white guards held as hostages killed by white guardsmen shooting several thousand of rounds of ammunition into the men gathered on the catwalk. Describing his later torture and rape (using current DOJ definitions) by state employees, Smith weeps reflecting they anticipated violent repression as retaliation but failed to realize that barbarism would be the norm.

Governance-as-repression, without carnage, is an expression of racism; it is also embedded into resistance. Local and global liberation movements are under surveillance, infiltrated, targeted, disrupted, intimidated or coopted. At times, activists (mostly outside the US) are imprisoned, tortured or executed. US training or funding for global policing and militarizing promotes the repression of pro-democracy dissent. Black governance

seeks a “civil rights” pass because it represents black authority (through empire) and is targeted by the white racism, which it is not. Yet nor is it black liberation; so its acknowledgments of anti-racist movements is a bit complicated.

Che noted earlier that criticism is life enhancing. Our movements and leaders’ engagements in self-critiques are a corrective for fear; and balance the desire to preserve or expand existing (social status) and life that acquired under empire. Governance manipulates as it instills fear; manages as it creates grief; cultivates institutional loyalty while it punishes dissent. Our movements are contradictory. Activist-intellectuals, such as former BPP political prisoner Dhoruba bin Wahad, publicly question how agencies such as the NSA disrupt our social justice movements. Yet this is not representative of the black progressive mainstream; and speaking the “unspeakable” is a punishable offense (although not as severely punished as leaking classified materials that reveal state criminality and anti-civilian violence).

I want to be mindful by citing 4 examples of comingling racism>resistance>repression in the complex political battles we consciously or unconsciously wage: 1) paternal governance’s desire to control change and infantilize citizenry; 2) the objectified quality of black life in the marketplace of foreign policy; 3) the ignored terrors against children in the consolidation of US empire; 4) texts “power mapping” strategic and spiritual responses.

#1. Obama’s signing statements (fewer than but still as intentional as those of George W. Bush) expand police powers of the executive branch and diminish protections for whistle blowers. http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-circumvents-laws-with-signing-statements-a-tool-he-promised-to-use-lightly/2014/06/02/9d76d46a-ea73-11e3-9f5c-9075d5508f0a_story.html

#2. The value of black lives determined by commerce. The US “greenlighted” the genocide of Tutsis by Hutus when Clinton’s 1994 National Security Council (its then director on African affairs is now Obama’s presidential advisor on National Security) allegedly prioritized governance and finance (in arrears to the UN, the US shied away from peace-keeping debt) over human life. The UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda was gutted; and the use of the term “genocide” to describe the blood bath that followed was discouraged by governance. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/16/genocide-under-our-watch-rwanda-susan-rice-richard-clarke/>

#3. UN peacekeeping troops from France systematically raping starving African boys in exchange for food (the UN whistleblower who alerted the media was fired from his post). While on US military compounds, Afghan military officers rape boys and chain them to beds; Pentagon officials, pursuing elusive military victories, instruct soldiers to ignore the children’s screams out of respect for local customs (US soldiers who intervened against US allies are punished, one allegedly becomes a fatality from Afghani retaliation). http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/world/asia/us-soldiers-told-to-ignore-afghan-allies-abuse-of-boys.html?_r=0

#4. Swallowing the pill offered by Morpheus, we can answer the query “Do you want to know what it is?” by pointing to writings in resistance, such as: Vincent Woodard’s *The Delectable Negro: Human Consumption and Homoeroticism within US Slave Culture*; Glenn Greenwald’s *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the US Surveillance State*; and Octavia Butler’s *Mind of My Mind*.