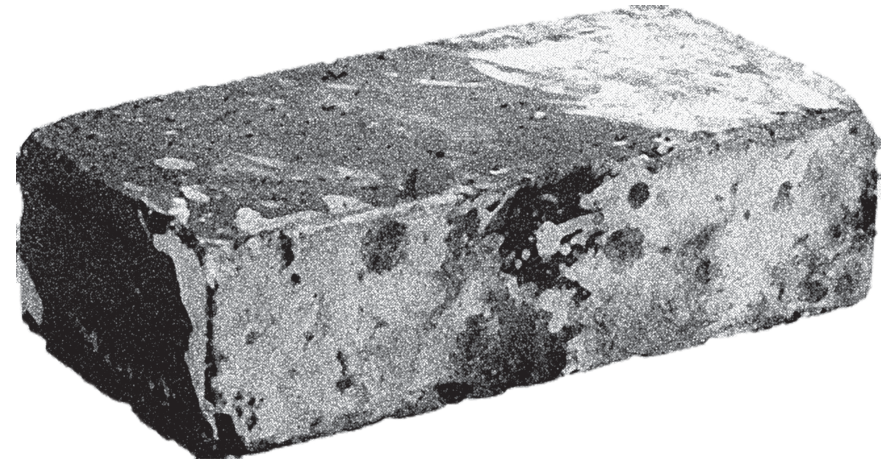


It's not that either we (black people) or the forest should have an inalienable right to an unimpeded existence but that the movement should refuse the assertion of rights in all contexts. Not only do they require a conversation with political and civil societies thus legitimizing them, they call for us to continuously assess who and what is to remain outside of sanctity and thus denied any sovereignty. We have to abandon such ethereal claims of bestowment, especially ones constructed within the boundaries of a Humanity with its own outside.

This is the point where we must name our stakes and accept their grim reality. To truly stop cop city, that is to say, to truly destroy the ever-expansive world of police, we must confront our own capacity for violence and its implementation. We have to face down fear, talk of ~~cease~~ ~~fire~~ ~~caution~~, and the outward denial of ceaseless conflict. The world has to come to a halt and we have to refuse all calls for normalcy, lest we resign ourselves to small victories and the inevitable further entrenchment of the police into daily life. That is the war in front of us. The words rang out through city hall and they must not be rendered hollow threats.

So can we recalibrate the struggle against not just Cop City but against the world of police as one where black struggle sits irreducibly at its core, refusing dilution and eventual omission? Is it possible for us to embrace the negativity of the task at hand? To fully contend with death, not as a punishment meted out by the state and its lap-dogs, but as the starting point of our struggle against the police and their false social peace? For what is the potential threat of death if not the same carrot we've been strung along by during "peace time" especially? Is this really living? Are we not already at death's door?



THE WAR IN FRONT OF US

***An anonymous, afro-pessimist militant's
challenge to the Stop Cop City movement***

This text was anonymously submitted to scenes.noblogs.org and published on June 10, 2023. Retrieved and put on paper by some unaffiliated admirers.

There is a tension stewing right now, not simply between differing tactics but with the outright acceptance of the position we are currently in, that of a social war. The third day-long descent on the Atlanta City Council has again hammered home that legalistic attacks and appeals to the political machine are going to keep failing. Despite that being so overwhelmingly evident, the more progressive-inclined elements of the struggle continue to insist upon a peaceful endurance, one that refuses escalation and actual conflict for their safe, faux-radical abolitionism. We have been locked in this social war since the rebellion and the terrain needs to be read as such.

It's a war that has to be fought on multiple fronts, but this current front, this specific front against the world of police, is in danger of becoming reserved and immobilizing itself, terrified of even approaching lines let alone crossing them. To be clear: **We are in a war against the police.** They are more than just a political entity with weaponry we can't imagine, they are a cruel element as deeply embedded in daily life as capital itself. Now with the effort to converge popular momentum toward the voting booth in November, there must be a concentrated antagonism within the movement against political bargaining as an option.

There's no negotiating with what kills you, there's only the fight for your life, and the abolitionists are still trying to negotiate. Invoking the riot but afraid to set it off. Toeing the line between caution and cowardice while dressed up in revolutionary's clothes. None of that was ever going to be sufficient and now it's time to legitimately ponder the brick.

Additionally, there's been a troubling emergence among parts of the anarchist and autonomist blocs in the movement that I wish to highlight and halt: one that omits the pertinence of black struggle. This has to do with the language used, attention paid, and efforts boosted, namely a pure defense of the forest and its representations. Proponents of a diversity of tactics and multipolarity would push back against this charge but with my own eyes and ears have I had to witness a dual name-checking of dead black people backed by incessant praise of multiracial formations and the self-proclaimed protagonism

of the white anarchist and the white communist. While this piece isn't a polemic against whiteness (or the forest defenders, green anarchists, ZAD fetishists, et al), I must reawaken the fact of anti-blackness among those who refuse to confront themselves behind silly declarations of self-abolition and race betrayal.

Considering black reaction to the death of Rayshard Brooks and the George Floyd Rebellion in general being the springboard for the facility's construction, it should be imperative that, through this struggle, we make possible (and facilitate the assurance of) another black revolt.

Communiques, flyers, signs, and banners, have all displayed a deep reverence for the forest: natural, wild, a site of future possibility endangered by the encroachment of civilization and its death drive called progress. A world worth protecting behind the shields of sovereignty and sanctity. But to problematize orienting the forest defense behind a moral veneer of environmentalism is to critique its representations, for within the language of sovereignty and sanctity is what is then activated by its adherents: the simultaneous creation of an outside, a place of captivity and profanity, one essentially constituted of blood and bones. That outside, which would materialize in this instance in the successful construction of Cop City and the direct, trifold revitalization, militarization, and expansion of plantation society, is a place of horrific familiarity for black people. It's where violence is a common non-occurrence, beyond the reach of logic, reason, or explanation ("*when something happens in South Central Los Angeles, nothing happens, it's just another nigga dead*"). Fanon called it a zone of non-being; Wilderson short handed it to social death.

This is not to pit black people against the forest but to recalibrate the struggle as one against a society that even allows for there to be an outside. Sanctity as rights, whether of property or to existence, demands the acknowledgment of that dialectical relationship. On a metaphysical level it reaffirms the criterion of the human/non-human, which provides the context of what doesn't receive the protections of the sovereign and sacred and why. On a material level it is represented by law and gratuitous violence, both legal and extralegal.