



# THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO LOOT

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# I

## Nothing to reclaim, nothing to lose

To paraphrase the Afropessimist philosopher Frank B. Wilderson, the dehumanization of blacks (and Arabs, in the French case) is necessary to the very existence of society. Being black and Arab is not an identity, it's a position "against which Humanity establishes itself", in opposition to which it maintains and renews its coherence. The violence we suffer is excessive and irrational: it is its own end. This is the morbid libidinal core of white supremacy that Idris Robinson evoked in "How it Might Should be Done": violence against non-white bodies in France is a matter of *jouissance*, and this *jouissance* of inflicting violence on exceptional bodies is what makes up the very fabric of social life. The individuals who make up (French) society recognize themselves as human (equal) through their opposition to those colonized from within, descendants of yesterday's slaves and colonized peoples. "Blacks" and "Arabs" are the names of two foreign entities: an exclusion from white society which proceeds through the destruction of all conditions of possibility for separation, understood in the sense of autonomy (i.e., of economic and political self-determination). The position to which state violence returns us—sometimes punctually, often systematically—exists exclusively in order to allow society to persist in its being, and in no way refers to any "prior moment": this is the basis of our pessimism. For being for the most part from here, and a minority, we are forced to count on the ability of whites to curb/control their racism—yet racist violence is constitutive of their society, every stratum of which is held together by the same opposition to the position we (must necessarily) occupy.

The liberation of post-colonial subjects cannot therefore be envisaged with the help of the left's grammar of emancipation (whether it be Marxist, feminist, or ecological): there is no [labor] time for us to reappropriate, no relationships for us to shit out that would restore to us our individuality, no land to reclaim. The only dignity to be regained will be by putting an end to the world of racism (anti-Blackness and Arabphobia). Glory to the insurgents who understood this perfectly: their aim was not to repair society and cure its pathological racism, but to attack its institutions, its logistics and symbols, to interrupt the circulation of its merchandise. The riot is the expression of a radical antagonism: it's them or us. The revolt of these young people cannot be translated into the language of the white, liberal public sphere: it unfolds in an outside that politics cannot capture. The riots may be multi-racial (and they have been, in part, depending on the city), but the commitment of the rioters is a commitment to the destruction of the world in which racial categories are meaningful—sweeping away, alongside them, the organization of metropolitan space and the division of labor it structures. Their fires consume spaces that don't belong to us anyway—we're not at home in these dilapidated low-income housing projects, these schools that serve only to exclude us, these public transport systems that symbolize only our exploitation and shattered dreams, these police stations that only function to inflict violence on our bodies.

## II

### Not allies

The left still doesn't seem to understand this. Unlike in 2005, the left initially seemed to appreciate the seriousness of the situation. Well, except for the left that called to shut down social networks in order to restore order. We can also exclude the one that called on Macron to send in the [special riot police forces of the] BRI/RAID to its town. We'll also have to exclude the one that took part in rallies in support of a far-right mayor, while children were being sentenced in summary judgments at their first appearance in court. The same one who calls for police "reforms," yet refuses any analysis of its role in the violence inflicted on the bodies of non-white men in France. The left who has nothing to offer a young person who's just seen a kid get shot in the head, and another locked up for

6 months for snatching a pair of Hugo Boss jeans, except an analysis of the “class violence” of the police and the justice system. The same left who explains that, “that’s not how you make revolution,” or that these kids are only driven “by a feeling of self-destruction.” Finally, we can exclude all the “elders,” “big brothers,” and other self-appointed representatives who call for calm because “obviously it’s a mistake to attack schools and libraries.” Oops, there’s not many people left.

What has changed since 2005 is that part of the left wants to “help,” but refuses to understand the situation. They gather “testimonies” and then analyze the situation in their own words, references, and police social sciences. The most foolish call for more investment in the police (supposedly to overhaul it from top to bottom), the most reckless build a “broad front” (including the traitors mentioned above, curiously enough) that would serve to transform this revolt into a movement “with clear demands,” while the most well-intentioned provide valuable solidarity in the streets and in the courts, but still struggle to formulate an analysis and discourse that would enable them to actually understand the materiality of racial categories and overcome the boundaries they establish (but that will come, perhaps).

### III

#### France has nothing to offer

The left sucks, but sometimes tries to suck less (and that’s a step in the right direction). The rest of the country, on the other hand, is thoroughgoing in its racism and indifference. There’s something disgusting and obscene about the unwavering support of almost the whole of public opinion for its “*forces de l’ordre*” [police], its “*petits commerçants*” [small businesses] and its “institutions.” France saw the horror of what the police were inflicting on a section of its youth, and took a stand...in favor of this violence. This country’s hatred of its non-white youth is unchanging, immovable—*necessary*. And the display of judicial police violence following the uprising is the perfect extension of the rhetoric of the government and the far-right: we saw children subdued and yoked with automatic weapons. We saw a man killed in French Guiana in the midst of general indifference. We’ve seen armored vehicles deployed in so-called “difficult” neighborhoods.

We've seen mayors (including left-wing mayors) introduce curfews for young people. We saw the Île-de-France region cut off public transport in the inner and outer suburbs after 9pm. We saw 3000 people arrested by the police in just 72 hours. We saw Nazis take the place of the police and arrest young people with the backing of law enforcement. We saw Nahel's murderer become a millionaire in just a few days, thanks to the solidarity of all those who hate us.

Judicial repression is perhaps even more disgusting: everything is an exception, an example. The aim is not so much to punish the rebels as to terrorize the group to which they are supposed to belong. To maintain at all costs the "hierarchy" (to quote a Marseilles prosecutor) between the State (embodied by its police force) and the "young people of the neighborhoods." Children are given suspended prison sentences merely for being present during the looting of a department store, teenagers are sentenced to prison for picking up a pair of Nike shoes from a store that had been gutted two hours earlier, young men are given heavy sentences because they were caught with fireworks in their hand, or because they dared to resist while being violently arrested. Blacks and Arabs exclusively, crushed into summary trials. And the repression is working, for good reason: the street movement is already over. Peaceful demonstrations calling for "truth and justice" or "an end to police killings" will resume, but it all seems too late. Mothers are afraid and march to call for calm, while no one dares go out at night.

But even sadder could be the reason for the movement's demise. A grown-up from Le Clos Français (a housing estate in upper Montreuil), and an esteemed comrade, told us at the AGM on Sunday July 2: "the unrest will likely end soon, because there's nothing left to loot." Where we grew up, there's already nothing left. Nothing connects us to this world, not even the circulation of goods. We already lack everything. And France has nothing to offer us but violence. All that's left is collective solidarity, shared with all those who wish to join us, and the fantasy of an organization endowed with a destructive force capable of resisting supremacist violence.

But let's be clear: this is a time for pessimism, even despair. There may never be life for us here. We repeat: it's always too late. It will always be too late to act as long as white people recognize each other as white. As



long as they approach the entire living order according to a hierarchical scheme, which *a priori* places “humans” at the top and has as its corollary the creation of a subordinate and antagonistic group of “almost-humans.” As long as they continue to derive pleasure and pride from their ability to freely dispose of our bodies. Our defeat seems to be contained in our action, for they will never respond to our cries for help in any other way than with acts of war. To enter the public arena as an anti-racist is to run straight into a wall. We stand at an impasse, alongside all those who have a vested interest in ensuring that the world in which some people profit from killing us, locking us up, over-exploiting us, and making a spectacle of our bodies is completely destroyed.





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