

Bob Black

Imputationism

1993

THE ANARCHIST LIBRARY

Dear Politically Challenged,

Getting three issues at once, as I just did, impresses on me the enormity of your output — that anthology you’ve considered will have to be huge to be at all representative. I am not going to try to make up for lost time, just lash out a little here and there. Imagine my delight at a Russian anarchist invoking my name as the epitome of intra-anarchist critique! “I seem to be a verb,” as the futurist idiot Buckminster Fuller once senascently mused.

Max Anger is up to the same old scam the situationists and many others (myself included) have too often pulled, it needs a name: imputationism. Imputationism is wishful thinking dressed up as critical theory, an esoteric variant on what the psychoanalysts call “projection.” Max Anger, like the S.I. before him, wants the Los Angeles riots (1965, 1992, same difference) to be revolutionary, therefore, inspection discloses they were exactly that.

Of course, this calls for some serious spin control. There is, for instance, the targeting of Korean-owned shops by black looters and arsonists. Class war was “subsumed, unfortunately, under the rubric of race.” Evidently the rubric of race trumped the imputation of class war since, as Anger sorrowfully acknowledges, many businesses owned by or employing blacks were spared. Like many white men before him, Anger knows what black folk are up to better than they do themselves. Words — his words — speak louder than actions — their actions.

“Fifty years of totalitarian disinformation” is to blame for this unfortunate misunderstanding on the part of rioters who just “happened” to be black regarding small businessmen who just “happened” to be Korean. Now maybe I don’t watch enough TV or something but I am entirely unaware of any media efforts in my less than 50 years (and Anger is younger still) to incite blacks to hate Koreans. Indeed the only media treatment of black/Korean relations I’ve ever seen, pre-riot, was *Do the Right Thing* by black filmmaker Spike Lee which I didn’t understand to be at all anti-Korean, and if it were, a black would be to blame. Anger is just making this stuff up. Too many blacks figured out how to hate Koreans all by themselves. Give them that much credit; if their anger was misdirected it was, at least, theirs. Anger’s anger is abstract and bookish.

Anger also has to explain away the brutal beating of white truck driver Reginald Denney by black thugs. Denney had nothing to do with the acquittal of Rodney King’s police assailants. Anger opines this episode was not “typical,” but first repeats an unconfirmed and self-serving allegation by the accused that Denney “taunted” them about the verdict in the King case. This is blatantly improbable — a white guy drives into a black ghetto to taunt the locals about the King verdict? — but even if it happened, does this justify beating him half to death? Whatever happened to free speech?

When Anger says “typical,” what does he refer to? Black-on-white street crime is much more “typical” than white-on-black street crime. Maybe he wasn’t thinking along these lines. Maybe he wasn’t doing much thinking at all. Rodney King wasn’t beaten by a random sample of whites. He was beaten by police. In this he has a lot of white, black, Asian and Hispanic company. Anger says we should “support” the black goons. Why? Why not support the white goons who beat up Rodney King? They’re not “typical” either.

What else? Why is everybody freaking out over Molly Gill’s white nationalist infiltration of anarchdom, although she has never concealed her opinions or claimed to be an anarchist, whereas nobody but Lawrence and I have noticed the red nationalist infiltration of anarchdom by Professor Ward Churchill and

his partner Dr. M. Annette Jaimes? This pair is to indigenism what Dworkin and MacKinnon are to feminism. Churchill, formerly of Weatherman SDS, is that only too ubiquitous figure, the Marxist-turned-nationalist. He and his girl friend play good cop/bad cop, Churchill serving his racism straight up, Jaimes watering her drinks.

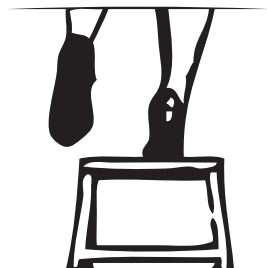
Jaimes' article was, in *Anarchy*, a waste of space, although it might have been enlightening for its original leftist readership. It said nothing that has not been as well or better said in publications like *Anarchy* and the *Fifth Estate* for ten to twenty years now. Even some of her phraseology sounded like it was taken from people like John Zerzan and myself, both conspicuous by our absence from her footnotes. I'm not affronted by these omissions — the more this information gets around, the better I like it — but I wonder what they mean.

Zerzan was too gentle with Dr. Jaimes, intimidated, perhaps, by her privileged position as a woman and a Native American. She openly celebrates Amerindian civilizations like the Aztecs and Incas for their independent invention of the state, imperialism, slavery, priestly religion, human sacrifice and other Old World accomplishments. Euro- and Afro-Americans need no lessons from Indians in these activities, we need lessons in living in entirely different ways. What matters is not, as for Jaimes and Churchill, who, what matters is how. The thousands of Europeans who went native ("gone to Croatan") in colonial America learned such lessons from their Indian hosts. So should Churchill and Jaimes. What they're teaching we already know only too well.

(Wish I Were)
Gone to Croatan,
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section, part five