

“Black Lives Matter” Anti-Racist Movement Threatened by US Intelligence, Media and Police Agencies

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Black Lives Matter falsely linked with 9-11 anniversary 14 years later

Intelligence agencies and law-enforcement departments made announcements last week saying that the Black Lives Matter movement was under surveillance for possible “terrorist” activity coinciding with the 14th anniversary of the 9-11 attacks.

An article published by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) on September 14 pointed out that “Conservative American politicians and television pundits have increased their attacks on the Black Lives Matter movement. In the aftermath of the killing of police officers, the movement’s name has been mentioned as a contributing factor.”

Bill O’Reilly of Fox News said he was going to put Black Lives Matter out of business because they were a hate group. The news segment featured a clip of a demonstration in Minnesota where participants chanted slogans that O’Reilly interrupted to his viewing audience as a call to shoot police officers.

However, the Black Lives Matter movement is not a centralized organization. There is an “official website” but many groups and demonstrations utilize the name which has a variety of meaning to different people. Many white activists have also joined Black Lives Matter demonstrations whereas some actions such as a recent national conference in Cleveland were restricted to African Americans.

This attempted criminalization of the youth-directed efforts aimed at seeking justice for victims of police and other forms of racist violence against African Americans is a legitimate and rational response to state terror which appears to be intensifying. The history of the African American people and other oppressed nations in North America and around world confirms the strategies aimed at national liberation by forging tactics which uphold the right to civil disobedience, mass rebellion and self-determination.

Since the death of Trayvon Martin in Florida at the hands of a vigilante George Zimmerman in 2012, the anti-racist movement has grown considerably. A burgeoning sensitivity and intolerance to police violence against African-Americans has swept cities and towns throughout the United States.

When Zimmerman was acquitted in 2013, demonstrations sprang up from New York City to the Bay Area in California. The Black Lives Matter movement began as a hashtag and slogan during this period gaining more credence with the police killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown

in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, 2014.

The response of the people of Ferguson to the killing of Brown by white police officer Darren Wilson was swift and multi-dimensional. A rebellion erupted soon afterwards along with daily and nightly mass demonstrations demanding the arrest and prosecution of Wilson among other issues.

In solidarity with Ferguson, more protests were organized around the U.S. and Canada supported by solidarity actions in Britain. The events in Ferguson and the mass activity taking place nationally further exposed the U.S. as still being a racist state.

Despite the election of an African American president, the structures of racial capitalism served as the major impediment to the realization of justice. Even though the Department of Justice launched an investigation into the killing of Brown and the activities of the local police departments and courts in St. Louis County, prompting a scathing attack on the actions of these entities, no civil rights charges were filed against either Wilson or the key players in law-enforcement, municipal governance and the judicial system.

Linking So-Called “Islamic Extremism” and BLM

There is no connection between the burgeoning struggle against racism and police brutality and the targeted groups said to be responsible for the events of September 11, 2001. This would hold true of other such activities domestically and internationally that are conveniently labeled as “Islamic Extremist”.

These false allegations are taking place while elements within the corporate media are accusing the BLM of fueling unrest and prompting the killing of police officers in several regions of the country. These assertions are being rejected by anti-racist and progressive organizations nationwide.

Even the New York Times, which is a corporate publication, recently wrote an editorial defending BLM from such egregious accusations. These spurious claims are designed nonetheless as a means of creating an atmosphere where anti-racist activities can be criminalized and attacked politically.

The New York Times editorial read in part saying “They are not asserting that black lives are more precious than white lives. They are underlining an indisputable fact – that the lives of black citizens in this country historically have not mattered, and have been discounted and devalued.”

A History of Political Repression to Suppress Burgeoning Movements

The development of the U.S. as a political system and state was born in violence against the indigenous Native Americans who were forcefully removed from the land in North America and the enslavement of Africans brought from their continent to work in the sugar, tobacco and cotton fields of the slave masters. Africans were subjected to “legalized” bondage and exploitation between 1619 and 1865.

Even after the Civil War and the ostensible abolition of slavery, the failure of Reconstruction portended much for the future status of African people. Lynching, Jim Crow, forced penal labor, disenfranchisement and social segregation became the order of the U.S. system well

into the 1960s.

It would take mass demonstrations, court challenges and urban rebellions to overturn U.S. apartheid which is once again raising its head across the country through the escalation of killings by law-enforcement and the failure of the legal system to hold police officers and racist vigilantes accountable. During the 1960s various African American organizations arose which advocated the taking up of arms to defend the community against the racist violence of the state and economic system.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during its latter years and the outgrowth of the Black Panther Party sent shockwaves through the ruling class. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under J. Edgar Hoover spent millions of dollars disrupting and neutralizing African American liberation organizations and fighters.

A similar scenario is developing today however under somewhat different circumstances. During the counter-intelligence operations (cointelpro) against the African American movement from the 1950s through the 1970s, there was a broader mass movement among the youth, workers and farmers which encompassed elements within the education, religious, industrial, agricultural and prison sectors of the population.

Other nationally oppressed groups inspired by the African American struggle developed their own organizations such as the Young Lords (Puerto Rico), Brown Berets (Chicano), the American Indian Movement (Native People), the LGBTQ communities, women, environmental, people with disabilities, students, seniors, etc. These organizations would form alliances to fight for common objectives such as the struggle for self-determination and full equality.

In 1968, the Peace and Freedom Party formed an alliance with the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense running Eldridge Cleaver, then Minister of Information of the BPP, for president. The following year in July 1969, a National Conference for a United Front Against Fascism was convened in Oakland, California where a coalition against repression was further advanced.

1970 witnessed the May Day actions at Yale University in New Haven where the president of the elite university shutdown the campus saying it was impossible for Black revolutionaries to receive a fair trial in the U.S. BPP leaders Bobby Seale and Erica Huggins were on trial for murder and faced the possibility of being sentenced to the electric chair.

Later in 1970, the Panthers initiated the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention (RPCC) designed to build a broad front of progressive and anti-capitalist forces to transform the racist system.

However, the role of the intelligence forces, local law-enforcement and the corporate press created the conditions for the targeting of the movement for criminalization and disruption. Scores of activist were killed, railroaded into prison, driven into exile and underground.

Such a fate could await the new upsurge in antiracist activism if people do not get organized and build strategic and tactical alliances. The U.S. and world capitalist system is more unstable and fragile than it ever was during the immediate decades of the post-World War II period and therefore a mass movement seeking fundamental change could shake the system at its foundations.

These recent emergent movements such as Immigrant Rights, Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter are a reflection of the failure of the world system to provide a stable future for the majority of people within the U.S. and internationally. This decayed system will do whatever it can to retain its capacity to exploit, oppress and repress the majority of people in this country and around the globe.

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