

No Compromise, No Retreat: Defeat the War Against the African/Black People in the U.S. and Abroad

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The justice for George Floyd mobilizations today reflected the state's worst nightmare – a multi-national and multi-racial action initiated by Black people with Black leadership.

So, we say: Justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland; for our political prisoners; for the super-exploited Black and Brown working class; for oppressed Indigenous nations; and for the millions subjected to U.S. warmongering, sanctions and criminality. We say this to shift the focus from the individualization of this week's rebellion back to the objective structures of white supremacist, global colonial/capitalist domination. ([BAP Newsletter](#))

The ruling class is befuddled and confused about how to respond to the ongoing street demonstrations sparked by the murder of George Floyd. The mobilizations clearly disrupted their plans for “normalcy” with the forced opening of the economy. The ferocity of the demonstrations that had not been seen since the brief uprising in 92 in response to the Rodney King verdict seems to have caught the authorities completely by surprise.

In the 1992 street actions in Los Angeles the nation and the world saw the first multi-racial, multi-national street action that was very different from the Black rebellions that rocked the U.S. in the 1960s. The racial configuration of the participants captured the range of non-European national minority communities and migrant peoples from across the Americas' region.

But even in a departure from what occurred in 92, the justice for George Floyd mobilizations today reflected the state's worst nightmare – a multi-national and multi-racial action of whites, Latinx, LGBTQ, immigrant and migrant workers and Black youth, initiated by Black people with Black leadership. The response from the rulers was predictable but unsurprising in its ideological and strategic coherence to break that emerging coalition of social forces.

I posted a comment on Facebook in response to what I saw as the counter-moves being made by the state. I was asked by several people to elaborate on those points, which I offer here.

In my original Facebook post I said:

“The enemy knows how to quickly adapt in the ideological struggle: 1) undermine the emerging unity with white agitator propaganda, 2) follow up with declaration against something called Antifa as a terrorist group, 3) instruct the police to join demos and express solidarity, 4) release statements from police chiefs and others pushing the bad apples theme, and most important, 5)

keep the focus on the individual and call for “justice” for that individual to avoid attention on the systemic and enduring elements of Black and Brown colonized oppression.”

The white outside agitator trope. If it wasn’t frightening enough to see images of young white kids marching shoulder to shoulder with African and other colonized peoples, seeing white kids actually engaged in militant engagement with police authorities, which went beyond the approved forms of resistance, triggered a cognitive dilemma almost as serious as when they tried to comprehend and explain how China could escape the COVID-19 with five thousand deaths while the virus was killing tens of thousands in the U.S.

That cognitive dissonance could only be achieved by resurrecting the outside agitator notion that emerged in the 30s and was directed at organizers from the Communist Party and militant union organizers who were working in the U.S. South. But that trope was given its fullest form in the Civil rights struggles in the 50s and 60s.

It’s redeployment today is geared to 1) delegitimizing Black agency by implying that resistance of this sort had to be directed by white folks, and, 2) generating suspicion and even hostility toward white participants. Granted, issues of counter-productive tactics and police infiltration are real issues. But the state saw a vulnerability in evoking the white agitator trope that the black petit-bourgeois administrators in various cities enthusiastically embraced.

Antifa as a terrorist group: With the ideological foundation of the white outside agitator, the next step was creating a more understandable target by inventing an organizational form in order to give the threat a more serious and ominous character. The problem should have been, though, that Antifa is not really an organization but an idea with a loose network of some organizations and mostly individuals, many of whom are anarchists with many other political orientations, who believe that the U.S. is facing a neofascist threat that should not be ignored.

But the fact that Antifa is a mirage is secondary when the objective is to drive an ideological agenda. The success of this, however, is yet to be determined.

Instruct/encourage police to engage in public relations shunts like taking a knee or even walking with the demonstrators in some locations. Shrinking the distance between the police and the demonstrators is easy when the issue is being framed as “justice” for George Floyd, and by implication the idea that his killers were “bad apples.”

Those kinds of political stunts are not even inconsistent with a simultaneous display of military prowess and heavy-handed treatment of demonstrators, especially if the idea is taking hold that it is the “bad apples” among the demonstrators that are deserving of policing.

The bad apple trope plays right into the monumental political error being made by resisters by keeping focus on George Floyd as an individual, even if by extension the critique extends to the police and policing as a whole. The bad apple notion exempts a condemnation of the institution as a whole and diverts attention away from a deeper understanding of the role of the police as the leading edge of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state.

Hundreds of Black and Latinx people are dying every day from what the [Black is Back Coalition](#) calls the colonial virus known as COVID-19. Yet because we are not watching grandma take her last breath on the ventilator after having been laying around the hospital for days, her unnecessary death and the literal deaths of thousands of our people did not bring the people out of their houses during lockdown and into the streets.

Those deaths will continue long after the other cops are charged, and the military secures the cities and people go home, because those deaths are generated by the contradictions of capitalism. They are produced by the structural violence that is inherent in a system that devalues all life but especially the life of non-European workers and the poor.

So, the state has responded. The challenge for us is how do we counter the state's attempt to pre-empt the development of a new movement.

The definition of the "people" is an historic one that emerges out of concrete struggle with specific historical conditions. The deep structural crisis of the system of national and global capital are creating the conditions for neofascism as a capitalist reform strategy. Therefore, we must not allow the state to undermine the basis for building new forms of solidarity among people who are finding their voice.

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And while Trump may be the face of this movement and the public attention fixed on his most bombastic statements and the spectacle of armed citizen groups showing up at various state capitals, he does not have complete power over the real rulers of capital. Trump barely controls the Executive branch and has had his program of radical nationalist economic reform, including gutting Obamacare, curtailed. Instead, he has become an administrator of the neoliberal agenda like the last five presidents before him.

It is those ruling class forces who fear the masses and will give Trump or even Biden, if he is elected, free reign to continue to jettison the last vestiges of liberal democracy in order to maintain the rule of capital. When it was clear to the Obama Administration that he was not going to be able to co-opt the occupy movement, he moved with decisive action to shut it down across the country.

Trump will move just as decisively and with same level of ruling class support to shut down the protests when he sees it politically advantageous to do so.

Two things must happen fairly quickly. On the ideological level, a shift must occur away from the focus on individual justice for Floyd back to a critique and opposition to the ongoing structural violence of the system. It is clear that the state is unwilling and unable to protect the fundamental human rights of the people. The demand for People(s)-centered human rights provides a broad, radical framework for advancing concrete demands that can unite broad sectors of the population.

And secondly, and most importantly, the theme and message around the importance of organization must be aggressively advanced. Mass mobilizations have a place but developing the organizational forms that will build and sustain the power necessary to bring about radical fundamental change is the primary challenge and historic task.

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