

# Marching for the Democrats: Another Farce on Washington?

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*"They called in [Roy] Wilkins; they called in [A. Philip] Randolph; they called in these national Negro leaders that you respect and told them, 'Call it off.' Kennedy said, 'Look, you all are letting this thing go too far.' And Old Tom said, 'Boss, I can't stop it, because I didn't start it.'... And that old shrewd fox, he said, 'If you all aren't in it, I'll put you in it. I'll put you at the head of it.'... (Malcolm X on the 1963 "Farce on Washington")*

Liberals and Democrat party connected organizations and networks have been quite adept at getting out in front of movements to pre-empt their radical potential and steer them back into the safe arms of liberal conformism. Before resistance to the election of Donald Trump could be developed into a radical rejection of the neoliberal order, the new alignment of ruling class forces that coalesced around the candidacy of Hilary Clinton launched a pre-emptive strike against Trump with the two-fold objective of preventing him from governing and ensuring that opposition to Trump did not take on an anti-system character.

A similar thing happened after the 2006 massive marches of undocumented migrant workers that had a militant anti-capitalist component. It was quickly marginalized and transformed into something called "immigrant rights" with the highest demand being a demand to become legalized settlers. Then, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic 1963 March on Washington when Black people were still experiencing the devastating and disproportionate impact of the capitalist crisis of 2007-08, members of the Black Misleadership class warmly welcomed the first Black president to join in the day's festivities ensuring that the gathering would be devoid of any meaningful politics.

Unfortunately, for the young people who sincerely want to understand and confront gun violence, the opportunism of the democrats made these students and their pain easy targets to advance the agenda of the democrat party that sees this issue as one that will advance their electoral agenda.

While the democrat party and liberals pretend to respect and celebrate the young people, they know that the narrow focus on largely irrelevant gun control reforms like more background checks, banning certain ammunition clips, and sale of assault weapons will do nothing to confront what Dr. King referred to as the deep malady at the heart of U.S. culture that makes it so fundamentally violent.

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, points out in lavish detail on the subject in her new book [Loaded: A Disarming History of the Second Amendment.](#) She reminds the reader of the central role of violence and the reason why the second amendment was seen by the ruling elite of the U.S. settler state as a fundamental right, second only to freedom of speech. She argues that the gun control and the normalization of violence was essential to how white nationalism,

racialized dominance, and social control through systematic violence operated in the U.S. It was the method in which white settlers appropriated Native land and controlled their massive enslaved population.

So the young people will need to understand that this normalization of violence is reflected in the social institutions, values, and ethical framework of their society. The violent, white male shooters that are now turning their guns on the society at large are not an aberration but a logical, almost inevitable consequence of a culture in which people are degraded and de-humanized as instruments for others pleasure and exploitation, made into things, through what Dr. King called the process of “thingification.”

A respectful engagement with these young people is one in which you struggle with their understanding of the terms of their culture, its history and reality. We must be honest with them and help them to understand the role of violence not only as a cultural product but as the main instrument that created their nation. That violence is systemic to the system and history of their settler-colonial nation and for the maintenance of the U.S. empire.

Judging from some of the statements, many of these young people are close to making the right connections. That it is the “thingification” of the racialized “other” that more people cannot see the moral contradiction between the concern for gun violence in the U.S. and their continued support for U.S. militarism abroad.

Radical politicization means that they and the public at large come to terms with the fact that the arms industry and the proliferation of arms/weapons is not just a problem domestically but that it is a billion-dollar industry in which representatives from both parties are implicated. And if the NRA is a terrorist organization, what does that make the arms industries and the U.S. state?

However, as long as those young people are ensnared by the morally challenged liberal democrats, their ideological development will be arrested, and a few will emerge as “new leaders” given salaries, awards for being in the struggle for two weeks and will become weapons used to block authentic radicalization among their constituency. That is how hegemony works.

Fredrick Jameson reminds us of the lesson that these young people will have to learn that they will not learn from their liberal benefactors: “The lesson is this, and it is a lesson about systems: one cannot change anything without changing everything.”

So, it was a good week for both bourgeois parties. The democrats didn’t get called out for their collaboration with Trump and the republicans on the budget. The Trump folks have more ammunition to use to mobilize their supporters in opposition to what they will frame as efforts to violate the constitution and take away their guns and give more power to a repressive government. Even the intelligence agencies benefited from the week’s events with attention being shifted away from the FBI scandal that is threatening to blow the cover off of official criminal activity to undermine the electoral process, not by the Russians, but unelected forces in the U.S. state.

But for those of us from the colonized Black and Brown zones of non-being, we can never allow ourselves to be distracted by the diversionary and accommodationist politics of the latest carefully crafted spectacle, especially one that proports to be advancing a superior moral politics.

We must always remind ourselves that some can march with the confidence that “their” government might be trusted with regulating weapons and protecting their lives but that the protection of our fundamental human rights rest with our ability to defend our collective rights, and no one else.

Through our painful lived experiences, we understand and must live by the insight provided by our dear brother, James Baldwin, who counseled us that we must be vigilant when our oppressors speak of morality and the sanctity of life:

“The “civilized” have created the wretched, quite coldly and deliberately, and do not intend to change the status quo; are responsible for their slaughter and enslavement; rain down bombs on defenseless children whenever and wherever they decide that their “vital interests” are menaced, and think nothing of torturing a man to death; these people are not to be taken seriously when they speak of the “sanctity” of human life, or the conscience of civilized world.”

Distraction can be deadly, let’s us get and stay woke!

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