



THE FOGHORN NEWS

CUTTING THROUGH THE FOG OF WAR * VETERANS FOR PEACE HUMBOLDT BAY * CHAPTER 56



ONLINE CONVENTION

AUGUST 2ND-9TH, 2020



The Arcata Lantern Floating Ceremony commemorates victims of US Nuclear Attack on Japan August 6th and 9th 75 years ago. (Photo from City of Arcata)

JULY-AUGUST 2020

What the Flag Means To Me

by Brian Willson

I was probably seven years old before it really sunk in that everybody in my town was not celebrating my birthday on July 4. It was an exciting day with parades, picnics, fireworks and, in my case, special birthday parties and gifts. I lived much of my young life with the extra boost of having been born on the day that our earliest political framers signed the Declaration of Independence, an historical act of defiance against monarchical colonial rule from distant England. I remember proudly carrying the U.S. American flag in one of the July 4th parades in my small, agricultural town in upstate New York. And for years I felt goosebumps looking at Old Glory waving in the breeze during the playing

See page 5: ["The Flag"](#)

Race, Class & Protest in the US Today

by Ajamu Baraka

(British English spelling retained)

I made a pledge that in all of my public presentations that I will acknowledge the existence of political prisoners in the US. We just had Delbert Africa—who had been incarcerated for 42 years—up until January when he was released. He passed the day before yesterday. We believe it is important that people in the US—but even more importantly that people outside of the US—be made aware that inside the US

See page 3: ["Protest In US"](#)

Humboldt Honors Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Blast Victims

by Event Organizers

This year we will *not* be holding an Arcata Lantern Floating Ceremony at the Arcata Marsh. This is due to an abundance of caution

in wanting to encourage social distancing and staying home instead of gathering in large numbers, to stay safe during the Corona Virus pandemic.

This year we are offering alternative ways to offer intentions, hopes and remembrance in lieu of lantern floating. We plan to co-

create this year's ceremony
See page 11: ["Bomb Victims"](#)

War is a Racket

by Smedley Butler

Below is an excerpt from War is a Racket, in honor of the author, Marine Corps Major General and whistleblower Smedley Butler, born this month, July 30, 1881, in West Chester, PA.

Butler documented with the help of journalist Paul French of the Philadelphia Record that a fascist backed coup plot worked to recruit him to overthrow President Franklin D. Roosevelt and become a dictator.

I spent thirty-three years and four months in active military service as a mem-

ber of this country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from Second Lieutenant to Major-General. And during that period, I spent most of my time being a high class muscle-man for Big Business, for Wall Street and

See page 10: ["War Racket"](#)

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- ◆ ONLINE CONVENTION
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The opinions expressed in The Foghorn News are those of the author(s) and may not reflect the opinions of the Editor or the Humboldt Bay Chapter of Veterans For Peace.

Veterans For Peace Invites You to Join

Veterans For Peace, Inc., (VFP) is an international organization of men and women veterans of all eras, many of whom served in Viet Nam, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and other military conflicts.

VFP was founded in 1985 as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational and humanitarian organization. Since then it has become an international organization with members in all 50 states as well as chapters in Ireland, London, Mexico, Okinawa (Japan) and Viet Nam. VFP is the only veteran organization to hold a permanent Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) seat at the United Nations and it is

the first military veterans' organization invited to be a member of the International Peace Bureau based in Geneva, Switzerland. National conventions are held annually and members communicate through quarterly newsletters as well as daily list-serve news and alerts, online discussion groups, and the national and many chapter web sites.

Veterans For Peace Statement of Purpose

We, as military veterans, do hereby affirm our greater responsibility to serve the cause of world peace. To this end we will work, with others both nationally and internationally:

- To increase public awareness of the causes and costs of war

- To restrain our government from intervening, overtly or covertly, in the internal affairs of other nations

- To end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons

- To seek justice for veterans and victims of war

- To abolish war as an instrument of national policy

To achieve these goals, members of Veterans For Peace pledge to use non-violent means and to maintain an organization that is both democratic and open with the understanding that all members are trusted to act in the best interests of the group for the larger purpose of world peace.

Veterans For Peace Objective:

We draw on our personal experiences and perspectives gained as veterans to raise public awareness of the true costs and consequences of [militarism](#) and war - and to seek peaceful, effective alternatives.

Join Us:

We encourage all veterans, family members and supporters to join us in creating a global culture of peace and non-violence. [For the national VFP Newsletter](#) go to: veteransforpeace.org



Veterans for Peace Online Convention 2020 August 2nd-9th

by Event Organizers

We are excited to announce Veterans For Peace's first Online Convention! We know that many of us will miss being able to greet each other in person but we also know that each and every one of us wants to make sure all of our members are safe and healthy. The convention will take place from August 2nd-9th, with the theme "Human Rights over Nuclear Might." Since our founding, Veterans For Peace [VFP] has had it in our goals "to end the arms race and to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons" and the week will mark the

75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (This year also marks the 75th anniversary of the first nuclear explosion of all time at the Trinity Site, New Mexico, which occurred on July 16, 1945) ...

This year's online convention will also include our annual Business Meeting! As this will be our first on-line business meeting, we are working hard to develop a process that works best keeping in mind our desires for openness, transparency, and democracy.

VFP's Board of Directors has drafted an agenda and a guideline for this year's Business Meet-

ing. ([Posted on our website](#)) Please keep in mind that all of the previous guidelines were written to guide the process of in-person meetings. We are trying our best to accommodate these guidelines for an on-line meeting. There will be a learning curve, and this experience will inform our policies and procedures for future business meetings.

All members are encouraged to register for this year's business meeting, which is separate from our [online convention](#). Registration for the business meeting is FREE...

If you are a current member and have not re-

See Page 4: [Convention](#)



THE FOGHORN NEWS CALENDAR



WEEKLY EVENTS:

Tuesday and Thursday 11am (PST) Veterans For Peace Social Hour!:

To join go to [Zoom](#) and click join meeting and enter in Meeting ID: 324 812 650

Every Wednesday at 3pm (WST) #StandDown For Black Lives Livestream

An important veteran panel discussion on national and global protest.

#VetsForBlackLives

You can either join us on FB Live or the Veterans For Peace YouTube channel.

www.facebook.com/veteransforpeace/

See past episodes of #StandDownLive on our YouTube Channel

Friday from 5—6pm: VFP Chapter 56 members stand silently for an hour-long Peace Vigil: on the southwest corner of the Arcata Plaza (8th & H Streets) and in front of the Humboldt County Courthouse (5th & I Streets) in Eureka.
Women in Black at the same time: stand on the southeast corner of the Arcata Plaza.

Women's Peace Vigil, Saturdays 12-1pm: Humboldt County Courthouse, 825 Fifth St. Eureka.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

August 2—9: Veterans For Peace Virtual Convention. See our front page story, or go to: veteransforpeace.org

August 8: Virtual Arcata Floating Lantern Ceremony at 7:30pm on Access Humboldt by Buddhist Peace Fellowship, broadcast from Arcata Marsh.

September 7: 12—3pm Labor Unions Picnic, Sequoia Park, If you attend, “wear the colors” (VFP t-shirt or hat). Bring a food donation (canned or packaged goods), Eureka.

September 19—October 4: Veterans For Peace Tour to Viet Nam
For more info go to: veteransforpeace.org/pressroom/news

Or contact:
U.S. Tour Coordinator
Paul Cox, Board Member,
VFP Chapter 160
510-418-3436 (leave message)
paulcox890@comcast.net

September 27—October 3: Anti-Drone Resistance, Creech AFB Las Vegas, Nv., [shut down creech](#) (website under development) Camping at the Goddess Temple.

October 2—5: Nevada Desert Experience: [codeGreen](#), Join us for Interfaith Resistance to Weaponized Drones, Militarism and Nuclearism, info@NevadaDesertExperience.org 702-646-4814

CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE:

Chapter Meetings are on the First Thursday of each month, 7—9pm, at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Bayside.

Protest In US: (From page 1)

we have the longest serving political prisoners on the planet. People who are approaching their fifth decade in prison. Men—and, up until recently, women—who have been in the dungeons of the US for decades.

The Black Alliance of Peace

The motivation for launching the Alliance was based on the fact that on April 4th, 1967 Dr Martin Luther King reconnected with the radical black tradition by adding his voice of opposition to the murderous US war machine unleashed on the people of Vietnam. For Dr

King his silence on the war in Vietnam had become an irreconcilable moral contradiction.

He declared that it was hypocritical for him to proclaim the superiority of values of nonviolence as a life principle while the US remained the greatest purveyor of violence on the planet. He thought it was a contradiction for him to remain silent as the US government engaged in genocidal violence against the people of Vietnam. We say Dr King reconciled and reconnected with the black radical tradition because, in fact, Dr King was late.

In 1967, when he embraced an oppositional position on Vietnam, it was years after other formations—including the Revolutionary Action Movement, Malcolm X, SNCC (the Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee), and the Black Panthers—had taken a resolute stance against the war in Vietnam.

The Black liberation movement that those organisations represented are worker based. They are anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and international. On April 4th, 2017, 50 years after that very famous speech in which Dr King broke with the

US government, we launched the Black Alliance for Peace.

We saw that after more than three decades of pro-war commissioning by both corporate parties and the corporate media, coupled with cultural desensitisation from almost decades of unrelenting war, opposition to militarism and war was something that had almost disappeared in the US among the general population. The black public was not immune to those cultural and political changes. And with the ascendance of the

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Convention: (From page 2)

ceived an email with an invitation to register for the Business Meeting, please email convention@veteransforpeace.org...

VFP is committed to making it possible for veterans to attend the 2020 VFP virtual convention. We understand that many of our members have experienced financial hardship in these times. If the reduced rate of \$75 is out of your reach, VFP is waiving the convention fee for a limited number of VFP members who request assistance...

Key Note Speakers Dahr Jamail and Jane Fonda



In late 2003, weary of the overall failure of the US media to accurately report on the realities of the war in Iraq for the Iraqi people, Dahr Jamail went to the Middle East to report on the war himself, where he has spent more than one year in Iraq as one of only a few independent US journalists in the country. Dahr has also reported from Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. He has also reported extensively on veterans' resistance against US foreign policy, and is now

focusing on anthropogenic climate disruption and the environment.

Dahr's stories have been published with Truthout, Inter Press Service, Tom Dispatch, The Sunday Herald in Scotland, The Guardian, Foreign Policy in Focus, Le Monde, Le Monde Diplomatique, The Huffington Post, The Nation, The Independent, and Al Jazeera, among others. Dahr is currently and has been a feature writer for Truthout.org for five years, and his climate feature page there is titled 'Climate Disruption Dispatches'. His writing has been translated into French, Polish, German, Dutch, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic and Turkish. On radio as well as television, Dahr has reported for Democracy Now! and Al-Jazeera, and has appeared on the BBC, NPR, and numerous other stations around the globe.

Dahr's reporting has earned him numerous awards, including the 2008 Martha Gellhorn Award for Journalism, The Lannan Foundation Writing Residency Fellowship, the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism, the Joe A. Callaway Award for Civic Courage, and five Project Censored awards. Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Issy Award, in 2018 the Park Center for Independent Media (PCIM) at Ithaca College awarded Dahr an Izzy for his "path-breaking and in-depth reporting in 2017" exposing "environmental hazards and militarism."

The Izzy Award, presented for outstanding

achievement in independent media, is named in memory of I.F. "Izzy" Stone, the dissident journalist who launched I.F. Stone's Weekly in 1953 and challenged McCarthyism, racism, war and government deceit.



Jane Fonda is a two-time Academy Award-winning actress (Best Actress in 1971 for Klute and in 1978 for Coming Home), author, activist, and fitness guru. Her career has spanned over 50 years, accumulating a body of film work that includes over 45 films and crucial work on behalf of political causes such as women's rights, Native Americans, and the environment. She is a three-time Golden Globe (R) winner, Honorary Palme d'Or honoree, 2014 AFI Life Achievement Award winner, and the 2019 recipient of the Stanley Kubrick Excellence in Film Award as part of BAFTA's Britannia Awards. Fonda is currently in production for the seventh and final season of Grace & Frankie, which will be Netflix's longest running original series. It is for her work on the series that she received an Emmy nomination for

Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series in 2017.

She was last seen on the big screen in Paramount's comedy, Book Club in which she starred alongside Diane Keaton, Mary Steenburgen, and Candice Bergen. Fonda also premiered Jane Fonda in Five Acts, a documentary for HBO chronicling her life and activism, at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. The documentary received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Documentary or Nonfiction Special in 2019. Jane celebrated her 80th birthday by raising \$1 million for each of her nonprofits, Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential and The Women's Media Center. Currently, Jane is leading the charge on Fire Drill Fridays, a national movement to protest government inaction on climate change.

Her latest book, "What Can I Do? My Path From Climate Despair To Action" details her personal journey and provides solutions for communities to combat the climate crisis, will be released on September 8 via Penguin Press. ■

These excerpts are from the Veterans For Peace "2020 Annual Convention" webpages:

veteransforpeace.org/2020-annual-convention
and
vfp2020.attendease.com



Photo: Essay author S. Brian Willson

The Flag: (From page 1)

of the national anthem or as it passed by in a parade. How lucky I was to have been born in the greatest country in the history of the world, and blessed by God to boot. Such a blessing, such a deal!

It wasn't until many years later, while reading an issue of the armed forces newspaper Stars and Stripes in Vietnam, that I began thinking and feeling differently about the flag and what it represents. There was a story about an arrest for flag burning somewhere in the United States. I had recently experienced the horror of seeing numerous bodies of young women and children that were burned alive in a small Delta village devastated by napalm. I imagined that since the pilots had "successfully" hit their targets, they were feeling good and probably had received glowing reports that would bode well in their military record for promotions. I wondered why it was okay to burn innocent human beings 10,000 miles from my home town, but not okay to burn a piece of cloth that was symbolic of the

country that had horribly napalmed those villagers. Something was terribly wrong with the Cold War rhetoric of fighting communism that made me question what our nation stood for. There was a grand lie, an American myth, that was being fraudulently preserved under the cloak of our flag.

It took me years to process this clear cognitive dissonance between the rhetoric of my cultural teachings and the reality of my own personal experiences. I had to accept that, either there was serious distortion in how I was interpreting my personal realities, or the cultural rhetoric was terribly distorted. Hmm. A dilemma! If I accepted the former, I could relax and feel good about being an "American." If I accepted the latter, I would experience a serious identity crisis, perhaps a nervous breakdown. But no matter how hard I tried, I could not ignore what my own conscience was continually telling me.

I began a serious reflection that included careful study of U.S. and world history. When I was a teenager living near Seneca Indian reservations in western New York State I occasionally heard Seneca acquaintances utter "jokes" about how the "White man speaks with forked tongue." We thought it funny at the time. But then I discovered how my country really was founded. There were hundreds of nations comprised of millions of human beings—yes, human beings—living throughout the land before our Euro-

pean ancestors arrived here in the 1600s. The U.S. government signed over 400 treaties with various Indigenous nations and violated every one of them. And over time these original peoples were systematically eliminated in what amounted to the first genuine American holocaust.

When I reread the Declaration of Independence I noted words I hadn't been aware of before: "He [the King of Great Britain] has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." Honest history reveals that the very land upon which our founding fathers began this new experiment in freedom had been taken by violence and deceit, ironically using the same diabolical methods the framers accused of those already living here. It became obvious after extensive reading that my European ancestors did not believe that Indigenous Americans were human beings worthy of respect, but despicable, non-human creatures, worthy only of extermination. The pre-Columbus population of Indigenous in the Western Hemisphere is estimated to have been at least 100 million (8-12 million north of the Rio Grande). By 1900 this population had been reduced to about 5 percent of its former size. An Indigenous friend of mine, a Seneca man who had served the U.S.

military in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, and then after retiring, discovered his ancestral roots as a native American, once remarked to me: "I call the American flag 'Old Gory,' the red representing the blood, and the white, the bones, of my murdered ancestors."

When adding to our first holocaust the damage done to African cultures through forcefully seizing human beings to be slaves in order to build our early agricultural and industrial base, and the carnage from nearly 300 U.S. overt military and thousands of covert interventions in the Twentieth Century to acquire access to markets and resources on our selfish terms, we see there are actually three holocausts that have enabled the "glorious American civilization" to be what it is today. It is now estimated that Africa lost 50 million of its population to the slave trade, at least two-thirds of whom were killed resisting capture or died during the horrors of transit; an estimated 20 to 30 million people in the Third World have been killed as a result of U.S. interventions. Note that when other peoples all over the globe have attempted to emulate the spirit of our Declaration of Independence (a proclamation of self-determination), such as Vietnam explicitly did in 1945, our government not only has turned a deaf ear, but has done everything in its power short of dropping Atomic bombs to destroy their efforts to obtain

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independence. This is the foundation upon which we have built "America." Quite the karma!

The founding of our Republic was conducted in secrecy by an upper class who insisted on a strong national government that could assure a successful but forceful clearing of western lands, enabling the safe settlement and economic development of previously inhabited Indigenous territory. Our Founding Fathers did not represent the common people. Some historians believe that if the Constitution itself had been subjected to a genuine vote of all the people it would have been resoundingly defeated. Subsequently, what evolved is a political system run by plutocrats who perpetuate an economic system that protects the interests of those who finance their campaigns (a form of bribery). The U.S. government is a democracy in name only. Never have we had a government that seriously addresses the plight of the people, whether it be workers, minorities, women, the poor, etc. Whatever has been achieved in terms of rights and benefits for these constituencies, i.e., the people, has been struggled for against substantial repression, and the constant threat the gains will be subsequently lost. Intense pressures are applied by the selfish oligarchy which seeks ever increased profits, rarely, if ever, considering the expense to the health of the majority of people, their local cultures, and the

ecology.

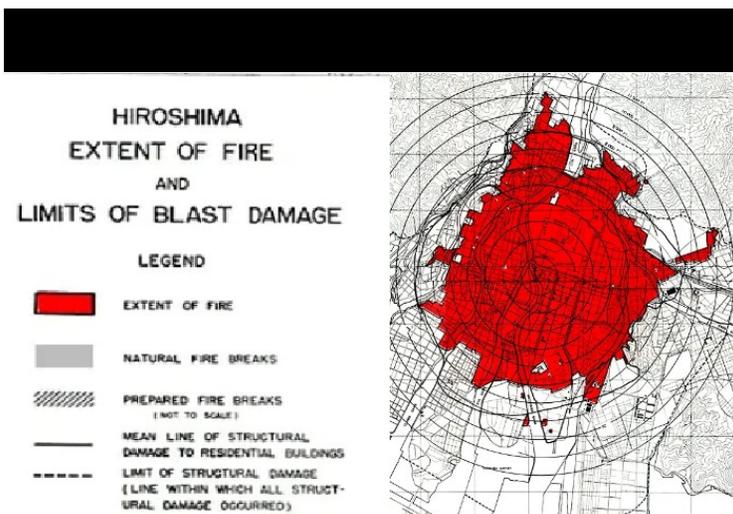
What the West calls capitalism is nothing like what Adam Smith had in mind with his views of decentralized networks of small entrepreneurs working in harmony with the needs and forces of others in their own communities. What we have is a savage system of centrally institutionalized greed that is unable to generalize an equitable way of life for the majority of people here in the U.S., or in the rest of the world. It requires incredible exploitation of human and other natural resources all over the globe with the forcible protection of military and paramilitary forces financed or sanctioned by governments. It thrives on its own sinister version of welfare where the public financially guarantees—through tax loopholes, subsidies, contracts, and outright bailouts—the profitable success of the major corporations and financial institutions, especially, but not exclusively, in the military-industrial complex.

Additionally, our monopoly capitalism defines efficiency by totally ignoring the true costs of its production and distribution. It conveniently forgets the huge ecological and human exhaustion costs (both being our true wealth). If these costs were included, the system would be finished in a second. The reality, upon honest examination, is that the economic system we call capitalism, now neoliberal, global capitalism, is cruelly based on a very fraudulent set of assumptions that justify massive exploitation. The reality, upon honest examination, is that our political system was founded, and has been maintained to this very day by substantive plutocracy, not democracy.

So when I see the flag and think of the Declaration of Independence, instead of the United States of America, I see the United Corporations of America; I see the blood and bones of people all over the globe who have been dehumanized, then exter-

minated by its imperialism; and I see a symbol that represents a monstrous lie maintained by excessive, deadly force. It makes me feel sick, and ashamed. And I know that my opinions being expressed here will not be popular, even among some of my closest friends. But I cannot ignore the reality as I now understand it. I believe we are living one of the most incredible lies in history, covered over by one of the most successful campaigns of public rhetoric, ignoring empirical reality. It is truly amazing! I hope that one day we will end our willful ignorance and be able to see our transgressions, and beg, on our knees, for forgiveness, and then wail as we begin to feel the incredible pain and anguish we have caused the world as well as our own bodies, minds, souls, and culture. ■

This article was published July 1st, 2001 on the blog of Brian Willson. **S. Brian Willson** is a Viet Nam veteran and trained lawyer. He has visited a number of countries examining the effects of U.S. policy. He wrote a psychohistorical memoir, *Blood on the Tracks: The Life and Times of S. Brian Willson* (PM Press, 2011), and in 2018 wrote *Don't Thank Me for my Service: My Viet Nam Awakening to the Long History of U.S. Lies* (Clarity Press). His web essays can be found at: brianwillson.com. His email is: postmaster@brianwillson.com



Hiroshima blast and fire damage, US Strategic Bombing Survey map. Public domain. (From Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, thebulletin.org)

corporatist President Barack Obama—during whose tenure the US continued on a militaristic bent unabated and, in fact, ratcheted up—that lack of opposition to and awareness of US militarism deepened even more.

What we saw was an absolute necessity for us to attempt to recapture anti-war and anti-imperialist traditions. The black community, the black people, the black working class have been consistently—up until recently—the most anti-war and anti-imperialist communities in the US. And so the Black Alliance for Peace was launched to try to revive that spirit of opposition. But we have to make sure that people understand that the Black Alliance for Peace is a fighting organisation. We are clear. We say: no justice; no peace.

The Alliance is what we call a people-centred human rights project against war, repression and imperialism that, again, seeks to recapture, seeks to redevelop the anti-war, anti-imperialist spirit.

We see our work as part of a broader effort. A broader effort to not only revive our antiwar traditions but to revive a broader anti-war, anti imperialist, pro-peace movement in the United States. We make the connections between domestic violence and repression and the global war machine.

We see, for example, the pivot to Asia. NATO and the rotating of NATO troops on the borders of Russia. The expansion of the US Africa command.

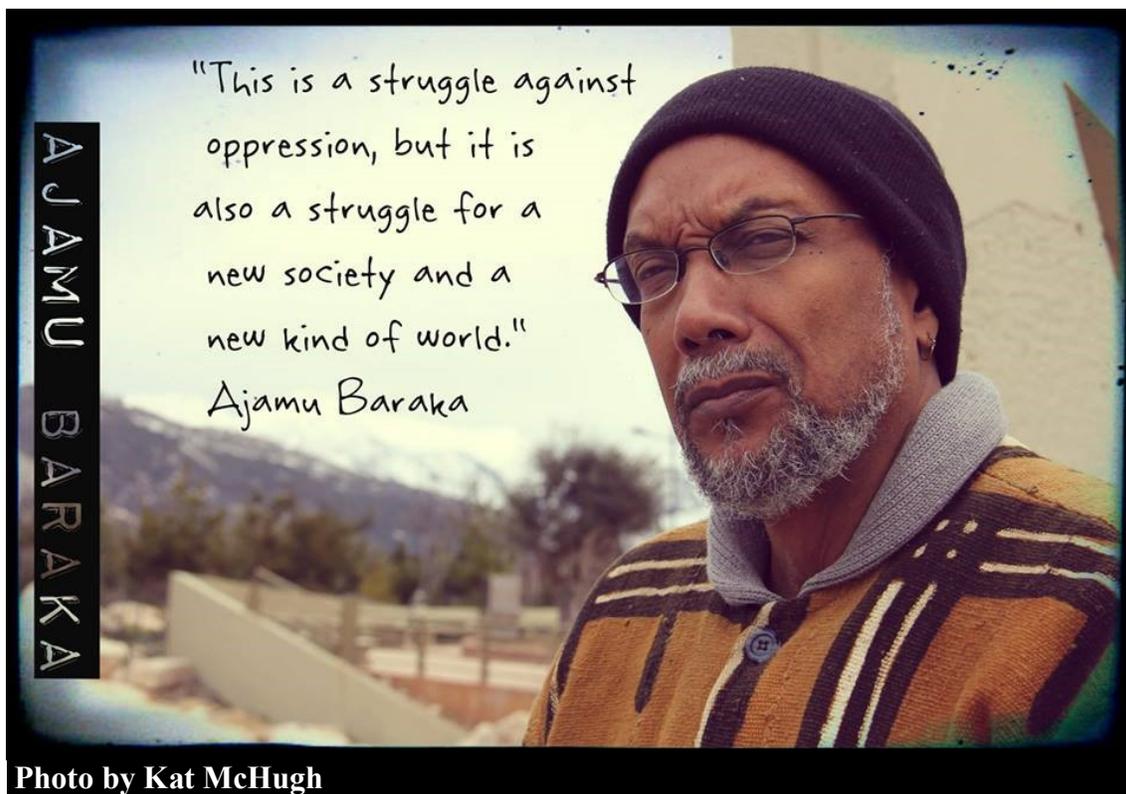


Photo by Kat McHugh

Continued support for apartheid Israel. Police executions and impunity in the US. The carceral state with the mass incarceration of black and other colonised workers and poor people are elements and policies of one oppressive global system of colonial, capitalist, white supremacist power. So the context of struggle in the US must begin with a structural analysis.

The Current Crisis

The current ongoing capitalist crisis has created the most serious crisis of legitimacy since the collapse of the capitalist economy during the years referred to as the Great Depression. The economic collapse comes on the heels of a deep crisis of the economy that occurred in 2007, 2008. With economic instability and the increasing competition between capitalist states, divisions have emerged among the nations that those of us in the Black

Alliance for Peace refer to as the US/EU/NATO axis of domination.

The US has responded by moving toward a more confrontational posture, not only with its allies in Europe, but it has also elevated China and Russia as national security risks. Domestically, the black working class has never recovered from the collapse of 2007, 2008. The continual restructuring of the US economy to a low wage economy has resulted in the black working class being relegated to the lower rungs of the labour force, joining undocumented migrants, immigrants and other colonised workers.

We are now seeing, within the economy, the genocidal implications of economic conditions in which young black workers have more value as human generators of profit locked up in prisons than as participants in the economy as low wage workers.

This reality is one of the factors driving the obscene phenomenon of black and brown incarceration in the largest prison system on the planet. Astronomical youth employment. Millions of African-Americans and white people without health care. Poisoned environments and crumbling schools make for conditions that, with Covid-19, are ravaging the black communities. This is the reality of the colonial, capitalist system in its neoliberal stage. The Corona pandemic has pulled the ideological curtain away from the system and has exposed the brutal realities of a rapacious system of greed, human exploitation and degradation, social insecurity, corruption, and the normalisation of coercive state violence.

Bipartisan support for neoliberal capitalist poli-

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cies over the last four decades has had a devastating impact. The closing of public health care facilities. Turning hospitals into giant for-profit hospital chains. Millions of people—disproportionately black people—living precarious lives at the bottom of the labour market as gig workers with no benefits, no sick leave, no vacation, no security—ordered to shutter in place as a consequence of Covid-19.

Hundreds of black people are dying unnecessarily from the virus because of conditions of colonial oppression. Which we say amounts to a situation of state sanctioned murder.

So the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor—who was murdered by police in her bed—and Ahmaud Arbery who was murdered in Brunswick, Georgia, by non-state actors; white vigilantes... The whole phenomenon of vicious killer cops is just the tip of the iceberg.

This is the context we have to bring to understand what is happening in the US. Connecting the pandemic and the ongoing structural contradictions of capitalism. The impact of the pandemic, not only on black people, on black workers, but on everyone, particularly the working class in the United States of America.

In some ways George Floyd and the resistance is almost a metaphor for what is unfolding in the US. It's a consequence of this pandemic. It's a consequence of the disproportionate impact of this pandemic on the black work-

ing class. It's a consequence of the clear message to workers from racial and ethnic backgrounds that their lives mean very little when it comes to the objective interests of capital.

There has been a process of radicalisation among the people, particularly among the working class. The clear message from the rulers is that humanity and the safety and the health of workers mean almost nothing in comparison to the needs of capital.

The knee on the neck of George Floyd that we saw became almost a metaphor for what millions of people are experiencing. They are experiencing the knee on their neck from capital.

So while the cry was for justice for George Floyd and so called police reform, what some of us see is an unarticulated—unarticulated until this point—rebellion against the dehumanisation and degradation of late stage capitalism, known as neoliberalism. And that is responsible for bringing people to the streets. There is no other way that one can understand the breadth and intensity of the mobilisations we are seeing. LGBTQ. The unemployed youth from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Downsized petit bourgeois elements. Suburbanites. All sectors of the population have shown up in the streets in hundreds of cities and towns across the country.

What has been the response from the state?

Many of us have seen an evolution take place. First there was clear repression. A heavy handed response

from the authorities and from the militarised police. The calling up of what we call the state police and the national guard.

Every state in the US has a national guard. These are civilians who also serve in the military. They do military maneuvers. They serve as active duty soldiers from time to time. During the period when the US was involved in a two-theatre war—in both Iraq and Afghanistan— it was the national guard that played a very important role in those wars. The national guard is one of the foundational elements in allowing the state to carry out two wars simultaneously. We're talking about military personnel.

They were called up to various states and cities across the country. So repression was the first response.

Then there was an attempt to co-opt. Some of you may have seen some of the images of the police kneeling with the protesters; sometimes even joining in with the marchers. We also saw—and it wasn't disseminated as widely—police officers using the kneeling gesture as a way to lure protesters closer to them. And then they would attack. Those images were circulated but not so much in the international press.

After continued attempts to co-opt the resistance we saw a clever move on the part of the state. They began to criminalise the resistance. They began to raise the issue of the violence of some of the protesters. Calling on the protesters to police themselves. To make sure that



George Floyd, who died on May 25 after being pinned to the ground by an officer who pressed a knee into his neck. [Photo] Credit: Offices of Ben Crump Law (From New York Times, *What We Know About the Death of George Floyd in Minneapolis*)

the resistance would remain what they define as non-violent. Part of that criminalisation process was racial division. They used an interesting device, talking about the so-called outside agitators.

In this case it was the white outside agitator. They said it was the white outside agitators who were responsible for the looting and the escalation of violence. You might recall that President Trump then identified Antifa. The antifascist. This amorphous group of individuals—some part of other organisations—who emerged after the election of Donald Trump and who proclaimed that they were going to oppose what they saw as a neofascist movement developing in the country.

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Donald Trump said that this amorphous element were in fact domestic terrorists and that they were the ones responsible for the violence taking place across the country. So what we started seeing was suspicion on the part of the march organisers when it came to the participation of some white comrades.

Then came an attempt to colonise the resistance by the Democrats. Over two weeks, there was a move away from a call for justice and police reform. (Policing) is a local issue, remember; we have almost 19,000 police forces in the US. Policing is a local responsibility. The opposition movement ended up being about Trump in some way. It was an anti-Trump movement and Trump played right into that when he ordered the protesters outside of the White House to be pushed back so that he could engage in a photo op.

Of course his bombastic rhetoric played right along to it too. So after seven days of resistance, it began to look like the resistance was anti-Trump and people started talking about the necessity of voting Trump out of office and started to articulate the talking points of the Democratic Party.

All of these are attempts to control the opposition. I keep referring to so-called racial justice—not to belittle the notion of racial justice—but to suggest that it was in the interests of the state to keep the resistance on the subject of racial justice for an individual, for George Floyd, and for

it to be seen to be moving towards police reform.

They were scared to death that the images we all saw: of young black, white and brown people engaged in resistance. That is a nightmare scenario on the part of the rulers. A multinational, multiracial opposition under the leadership of radical black people emerging in the US. So they were desperate to keep the focus away from pivoting toward a critique of the system, and they were desperate to break up the emerging coalitions of progressive and radical elements among the people in this country.

What will happen next?

We believe they will continue to attempt to control the narrative. That's what we saw with the so-called yellow vests in France. We all recall that what brought them to the streets in the first place was pension reform. It gradually began to morph into a general anti-neoliberal movement. The US state is concerned with the same kind of trajectory.

There will be an attempt to depoliticise the opposition. They are attempting to make sure there is no class analysis. They don't want us to point to the ongoing plight of the working class. In particular the black and brown working class. The fact that it is workers—black and brown workers who they identify as so-called essential workers—who are attracting the virus and dying.

They don't want us to make a connection with the healthcare system in the US in which 80 mil-

lion people are without healthcare. They are concerned about the healthcare system being overwhelmed because it is an industrialised system. When the only way to handle a pandemic is to have nationalised healthcare and a coordinated, sustainable system in the hands of the people.

They want to keep the focus on the issue of race. We say we have to make sure a pivot takes place. That there has to be a focus on class and race issues. We need to connect what is unfolding in the US to US militarism and imperialism. We say to people making the cry to defund the police that if you don't connect that slogan with defunding the military, then it becomes a reactionary slogan that drives the movement into a dead end.

We say it is a moral contradiction to advocate for a kinder, gentler police force domestically while the US is unleashing systematic violence against people around the world.

This situation is very interesting as it is generating international solidarity. The US will never be able, with a straight face, to talk about human rights in other countries. The situation will prevent the US from pretending to be a state that is upholding international law. It is revealing to people around the world the true nature of the US, the plight of the working class and, in particular, the black and brown colonised working classes in the US.

The fundamental collapse of the global capitalist economy is creating a

situation in which there is no telling what may unfold over the next few weeks and months.

This is a situation that may be historical in its implications.

This article was published in LookLeft and can be found at:

lookleftonline.org/2020/07/ajamu-baraka-race-class-protest-in-the-united-states-today/

LookLeft is a leading progressive magazine in Ireland. (British English spelling retained.)

Bio of Ajamu Baraka: "A human rights defender whose experience spans four decades of domestic and international education and activism, Ajamu Baraka is a veteran grassroots organizer whose roots are in the Black Liberation Movement and anti-apartheid and Central American solidarity struggles.

"Baraka is an internationally recognized leader of the emerging human rights movement in the U.S. and has been at the forefront of efforts to apply the international human rights framework to social justice advocacy in the U.S. for more than 25 years. As such, he has provided human rights trainings for grassroots activists across the country, briefings on human rights to the U.S. Congress, and appeared before and provided statements to various United Nations agencies, including the UN Human Rights Commission (precursor to the current UN Human Rights Council)."

From the website ajamubaraka.com/about



Smedley Darlington Butler.
(Photo: Temple University
Libraries)

War Racket: (From page 1)

for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.

I suspected I was just part of a racket at the time. Now I am sure of it. Like all the members of the military profession, I never had a thought of my own until I left the service. My mental faculties remained in suspended animation while I obeyed the orders of higher-ups. This is typical with everyone in the military service.

I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.

During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents...

WAR is a racket. It always has been.

It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It is the only one international in scope. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives.

A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is not what it seems to the majority of the people. Only a small "inside" group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few, at the expense of the very many. Out of war a few people make huge fortunes.

In the World War [I] a mere handful garnered the profits of the conflict. At least 21,000 new millionaires and billionaires were made in the United States during the World War. That many admitted their huge blood gains in their income tax returns. How many other war millionaires falsified their tax returns no one knows.

Out of war nations acquire additional territory, if they are victorious. They just take it. This newly acquired territory promptly is exploited by the few—the selfsame few who wrung dollars out of blood in the war. The general public shoulders the bill.

And what is this bill?

This bill renders a horri-

ble accounting. Newly placed gravestones. Mangled bodies. Shattered minds. Broken hearts and homes. Economic instability. Depression and all its attendant miseries. Back-breaking taxation for generations and generations.

For a great many years, as a soldier, I had a suspicion that war was a racket; not until I retired to civil life did I fully realize it. Now that I see the international war clouds gathering, as they are today, I must face it and speak out...

How To Smash This Racket!

WELL, it's a racket, all right.

A few profit—and the many pay. But there is a way to stop it. You can't end it by disarmament conferences. You can't eliminate it by peace parleys at Geneva. Well-meaning but impractical groups can't wipe it out by resolutions. It can be smashed effectively only by taking the profit out of war.

The only way to smash this racket is to conscript capital and industry and labor before the nations manhood can be conscripted. One month before the Government can conscript the young men of the nation—it must conscript capital and industry and labor...Give capital and industry and labor thirty days to think it over and you will find, by that time, there will be no war. That will smash the war racket—that and nothing else.

Maybe I am a little too optimistic. Capital still has some say. So capital won't permit the taking of the profit out of war until the people—those who do the

suffering and still pay the price—make up their minds that those they elect to office shall do their bidding, and not that of the profiteers.

Another step necessary in this fight to smash the war racket is the limited plebiscite to determine whether a war should be declared. A plebiscite not of all the voters but merely of those who would be called upon to do the fighting and dying. There wouldn't be very much sense in having a 76-year-old president of a munitions factory or the flat-footed head of an international banking firm or the cross-eyed manager of a uniform manufacturing plant—all of whom see visions of tremendous profits in the event of war—voting on whether the nation should go to war or not. They never would be called upon to shoulder arms—to sleep in a trench and to be shot. Only those who would be called upon to risk their lives for their country should have the privilege of voting to determine whether the nation should go to war...A third step in this business of smashing the war racket is to make certain that our military forces are truly forces for defense only...

Looking back, Woodrow Wilson was re-elected president in 1916 on a platform that he had "kept us out of war" and on the implied promise that he would "keep us out of war." Yet, five months later he asked Congress to declare war on Germany.

See page 11: [War Racket](#)

[Bomb Victims:](#) (From page 1)

ny in a video of photos, artwork, remembrances, hopes and intentions. It will be released via YouTube, here on Saturday, August 8th, and remain available on this website (arcatalanternfloatingceremony.org) thereafter. The video will include local musicians, poets, our mayor and other speakers interspersed with images from this years submissions. We have a message board for intentions, hopes and remembrances on this website. We have a photo gallery of past ceremonies *and for us to share your images this year of those you miss, intentions, hopes, community art and inscriptions.* There are also videos on this site, including a documentary of the Arcata Lantern Floating Ceremony by local filmmaker Brianna Chapman and other videography.

This event is an opportunity to offer spiritual consolation for people we miss, departed loved ones, ancestors, intercultural harmony, healing and all we hold dear.

This event is also a memorial for all those affected by the WWII bombings of Hiroshima August 6, 1945 and Nagasaki August 9, 1945. The Arcata Lantern Floating Ceremony was introduced thirty eight years ago by the Arcata Nuclear Free Zone Commission, in part to commemorate the tragic loss of life in the atomic bombings. It is also the intention of this ceremony to bring awareness to the dangers of nuclear proliferation, and to advocate for peace and environmental sustainability...

Our Facebook page is www.facebook.com/ArcataLanternFloatingCeremony

Photo from City of Arcata



[War Racket:](#) (From page 10)

In that five-month interval the people had not been asked whether they had changed their minds. The 4,000,000 young men who put on uniforms and marched or sailed away were not asked whether they wanted to go forth to suffer and die.

Then what caused our government to change its mind so suddenly?

Money.

An allied commission, it may be recalled, came over shortly before the war declaration and called on the President. The President summoned a group of advisers. The head of the commission spoke. Stripped of its diplomatic language, this is what he told the President and his group:

"There is no use kidding ourselves any longer. The cause of the allies is lost. We now owe you (American bankers, American munitions makers, American manufacturers, American speculators, American exporters) five or six billion dollars.

If we lose (and without the help of the United States we must lose) we, England, France and Italy, cannot pay back this money . . . and Germany won't.

So . . . "

Had secrecy been outlawed as far as war negotiations were concerned, and had the press been invited to be present at that conference, or had radio been available to broadcast the proceedings, America never would have entered the World War. But this conference,

like all war discussions, was shrouded in utmost secrecy. When our boys were sent off to war they were told it was a "war to make the world safe for democracy" and a "war to end all wars."

Well, eighteen years after, the world has less of democracy than it had then. . .

The next war, according to experts, will be fought not with battleships, not by artillery, not with rifles and not with machine guns. It will be fought with deadly chemicals and gases. Secretly each nation is studying and perfecting newer and ghastlier means of annihilating its foes wholesale. Yes, ships will continue to be built, for the shipbuilders must make their profits. And guns still will be manufactured and powder and rifles will be made, for the munitions makers must make their huge profits. And the soldiers, of course, must wear uniforms, for the manufacturer must make their war profits too. But victory or defeat will be determined by the skill and ingenuity of our scientists. If we put them to work making poison gas and more and more fiendish mechanical and explosive instruments of destruction, they will have no time for the constructive job of building greater prosperity for all peoples. By putting them to this useful job, we can all make more money out of peace than we can out of war—even the munitions makers.

So...I say,

TO HELL WITH WAR!



LET US HEAR FROM YOU To submit an article, opinion, comment, or anything of interest, e-mail shawnleon33@gmail.com. Please include your name, city and state, and a telephone number where you can be reached for clarification if necessary.

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