

The Battle of Seattle Was Fought by the Pro-war “Left” in Northern Syria

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*The ongoing series of protests, riots and unrest following the death of **George Floyd** culminated in the establishment of a self-declared “autonomous zone” by activists in Seattle, Washington, after police abandoned a local precinct in the city’s Capitol Hill district. Lasting just three weeks until law enforcement retook the six block territory from occupants on July 1st, the Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHOP) — initially called the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ) — was a short-lived experiment which unfortunately exhibited all the contradictions of the so-called “left” that have become characteristic in the United States today. Although it is undeniable that American police have a brutality and racism problem (having been [trained by Israel](#)), within weeks it was clear that what began as spontaneous protests were hijacked for an establishment agenda. Meanwhile, the ill-fated demise of the Seattle commune should be understood as symptomatic of a larger problem within the U.S. left as a whole.*

One of the most influential figures of the French Revolution, **Maximilien Robespierre**, who died 226 years ago this month, famously said that

“the secret of freedom lies in educating people, whereas the secret of tyranny is in keeping them ignorant.”

The insurrectionary Paris Commune was the first attempt in history to establish a workers state after the storming of the Bastille fortress on July 14, 1789. Unfortunately, this protest movement could not be any less educational and the siege of the Seattle Police Department’s East Precinct was certainly no Bastille Day. Many have speculated as to why Mayor Jenny Durkan and the SPD seemingly allowed the protesters to occupy the neighborhood, while they enjoyed direct support from local politicians such as Seattle City Council member Kshama Sawant of the Trotskyite Socialist Alternative organization who fancies herself the first “socialist” to win an election in the city since Anna Louise Strong in 1916. However, the more meaningful question is what has this movement accomplished besides recoiling the U.S. working class further away from progressive politics?

The biggest misconception across the political spectrum, especially on the right, is that this leaderless and haphazard movement is somehow “Marxist.” Karl Marx, whose entire worldview was based on a material and scientific understanding of history, focused on the class system and would be spinning in his grave knowing what a mess identity politics has made in his name. In contrast, the ‘wokist’ cult at the center of these marches ignores both science and class with no political vision beyond destruction, vindictiveness, and the stifling of free speech. This is why the U.S. political establishment, which has been completely unable to implement the most elementary measures in providing healthcare and securing employment to Americans during the pandemic, is quite happy to jump on board a narrative

that pits divisions of the working class against each other based on race while wealth trickles up to the 1%.

The CHOP/CHAZ occupants reportedly established a [reverse hierarchical social structure](#) where whites self-flagellated by performing quasi-religious rituals of atonement for the sins of slavery. There was also a diversity quota of “centering” certain individuals based on their ethnic background, gender and sexual orientation to cede leadership roles at the co-op, with white participants coerced into overcoming their “fragility” (or sensitivity in discussing racism). Concurrent with the protests, corporate consultant and University of Washington professor Robin DiAngelo’s [intellectually fraudulent](#) book *White Fragility* shot to the top of *The New York Times* bestseller list and is a perfect example of how such identity politics fails in dealing with social issues. Collective punishment is never a suitable guiding principle in addressing social problems, nor is using a conception akin to the religious idea of original sin where “white privilege” is the root cause of racism. There were even mini-reparations demanded of repenting white protesters reminiscent of the collection plate passed around by worshippers in a church. This sort of bizarre and self-indulgent identity politics is much like what was widely mocked in a [viral video](#) of a Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) convention collapsing into infighting last year.

What began as protests against police brutality were not only derailed into efforts to set-up communes in major cities but a nationwide debate on statues, after the wave of demonstrations and rioting across the country led to the Taliban-style destruction of historical monuments perceived as glorifying racism. As a result, the toxic political atmosphere which surrounded the events in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017 was reignited. While the calls for the removal of Confederate statues erected during the Reconstruction era is long overdue, more debatable is the removal of those honoring slave-owning Founding Fathers such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson which were toppled in Portland, Oregon. This was followed by a statue of Union General Ulysses S. Grant being knocked over in San Francisco and calls to remove the Lincoln Memorial in D.C., two men who victoriously led the North in the Civil War. Regrettably, the prioritization of such iconoclastic gestures has not only defanged the protests but diverted them from bringing real change to social inequities in the immediate future.

This is not the first time we have witnessed this phenomena. Last year, a more troublesome example were the calls to [remove a historic mural](#) at George Washington High School in San Francisco that were capitulated to by the city school board. The thirteen panel mural, *Life of Washington*, painted in 1936 by Russian-American artist Victor Arnautoff was commissioned as part of the Federal Art Project, a New Deal program funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) which employed visual artists to create public works during the Great Depression. One controversial panel depicts George Washington pointing to a group of armed colonizers standing over the corpse of a Native American, while another fresco portrays two colonizers surveying land as slaves toil in a field. It would seem obvious to anyone that the mural is not only explicitly *anti-racist* but representative of an important period in U.S. history where art was a force for social change and progressive politics was at the center of American life. Arnautoff was a Russian immigrant who was an assistant to Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, while the WPA and its art program were dominated by communists such as the two men. Still, no matter the context or intent—the unflinching depiction of American history was deemed “offensive to certain communities” because students were “triggered” by the harsh realities illustrated.



This might seem unrelated, but the same illogic is behind the vigilantism of the statue removals. While the Arnautoff mural is clearly anti-racist and certain monuments may glorify slavery, the distinction is indecipherable to the social justice sect which needs its “safe space” from the uncomfortable truths of American history. The differentiation between a left-wing WPA mural opposing racism and colonial statue commending it is illegible to them. The *entire purpose* behind the Arnautoff mural is to make one uncomfortable because its subject matter is something no one should ever be at ease with. Yet its undeniable educational and artistic value did not prevent the San Francisco school board from voting to paint over it, while articles were published in *The New York Times* and even *The Nation* magazine applauding their decision. What on earth is happening to the left when it is censoring anti-racist art in the name of fighting racism?

The whole point of education at a high school is to teach students to analyze and interpret subjects like art and history, not just emotionally react to them. When the very fabric of culture and society like a historic mural or statue can be torn down simply because people are upset by them, the next plausible step is book burning. San Francisco High School completely failed to educate its students when they decided upon the most backwards way of interpreting the mural, just as the protesters tearing down these statues did not use their faculties to understand them in a historical context. Genocide and slavery are indeed the foundations of the U.S., but we should learn from our tragic history to grasp the equivalent injustices happening today. Simply eradicating murals and statues that remind us of it, whether they oppose or elevate them, is totally ineffectual.

While some activists have expressed concern that the protests have deviated from their original purpose, the right has fixated on the presence among the marches of “Antifa” which Trump wants to designate as a “terrorist organization”, a reckless idea given the completely decentralized nature of the group. The original Antifa movement in the 1930s had been part of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in its effort to form a popular front against fascism, but the dilettantes in the modern incarnation are closely associated with black bloc anarchism and other amateurish orientations. Two decades ago, Seattle had been the site of the 1999 protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO), often referred to as the ‘Battle of Seattle’, which saw 40,000 march against globalization. Some may recall this was where the black bloc first became notorious for injecting vandalism and senseless violence into peaceful demonstrations and were widely thought to have been [infiltrated by law enforcement](#). In 2016, the current embodiment of Antifa first came to attention during protests on college campuses against speaking appearances by far right media personalities during the U.S. presidential election, including at the University of California at Berkeley

which had ironically been the site of the Free Speech Movement in the 1960s.

Following Trump's election, the stage was set in Charlottesville during the Unite the Right rally and counter-protests over the removal of a Robert E. Lee statue in August 2017 for 'Antifa' to be crowned as heroes shadowboxing the historical ghost of fascism. When the likes of *The New York Times* is suddenly [promoting the black bloc](#), that's your first clue something else is afoot. In order to prevent the emergence of a truly progressive movement in the wake of Hillary Clinton's defeat, a false narrative was concocted by the political establishment about the significance of Trump's victory, which we were told was the result of alleged Russian meddling and the racism of "deplorable" Trump voters. Instantly, any critique of the system which produced Trump disappeared and the establishment wing of the Democratic Party was able to neutralize the Bernie Sanders-led opposition in its ranks.

As a result, the vast majority of the left became convinced by the interpretation that Trump's election was purely the outcome of a resurgence of "fascism", thus making Trump the singular, most immediate danger — while U.S. imperialism and endless war continue unopposed, including the support for actual fascists in Ukraine. It should be understood that what Trump and the wave of pro-Zionist, Islamophobic right-wing populists in the EU represent is something qualitatively different. Still, anyone on the left who dares oppose U.S. imperialism today is risking being branded a 'red-brown' collaborator. The Democratic Party, which spearheaded the Orwellian idea of "humanitarian interventionism" used to justify the wholesale destruction of uncooperative nations by the American war machine in recent decades, has since tricked the majority of the left into unwittingly backing U.S. imperialism to unseat "dictators." Even when the left today ostensibly opposes war, it is often forced to qualify its objections by repeating the same talking points about countries attacked by Washington used to justify it.

The U.S. foray in the Syrian war is a perfect example. Trump's idea to designate Antifa as a terrorist group would be especially ironic considering that many American leftists who self-identify using the "Antifa" black and red standard have thrown their support behind the creation of another infamous "autonomous zone" in Northeast Syria established by mostly-Kurdish militias known as Rojava — with the help of none other than the U.S. military.

There is even a self-proclaimed International Freedom Battalion of American and European volunteers fighting to defend the enclave that purports to be in the tradition of the International Brigades which defended the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War. These "Antifa" conscripts fight alongside the YPG (People's Protection Units), a Kurdish-majority militia which has been rebranded by the Pentagon as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). These leftists are apparently in serious need of a history lesson, considering it was the Soviet Union alone which intervened to defend the Spanish Republic from fascism, not the United States. From Washington's perspective, CHOP/CHAZ should be considered blowback from this policy.

The U.S. creation of the SDF has not been without controversy, as the YPG is widely regarded as the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey which Washington's NATO ally regards as a [terrorist organization](#). While the Kurds and their Western volunteers may believe they are creating an anarchist utopia, in reality they are infantryman for the Zionist plan to balkanize Syria and [prevent Damascus from accessing its own resources](#). So it makes perfect sense that they would try to replicate what they learned in Afrin in an American city using Rojava as a model. When Trump tried to follow through on his anti-interventionist pledges as a candidate and pull U.S. troops out of Syria, it sparked

outrage from the pro-war “left” which glorifies Rojava as a ‘libertarian socialist’ and ‘direct democracy’ experiment, even though non-Kurds such as Arabs and Assyrian Christians face ethnic cleansing at hands of Kurdish nationalists in their efforts to create an ethno-state.

The ideological inspiration for the Rojava federation is the Jewish-American Zionist anarchist philosopher Murray Bookchin who was especially influential to PKK founder Abdullah Öcalan. Unbeknownst to many, Bookchin was also a [noted Zionist](#) — but this is not as unlikely a paradox as it may seem. After all, Israel itself was initially established with the settlement of communes and the Zionist form of “autonomous zones” known as kibbutz (“gathering” in Hebrew). Even prior to WWII, European Zionists and early kibbutniks came to Mandatory Palestine as illegal immigrants and began living in their communes while fusing Jewish nationalism and their own conception of socialism, an amalgamation not unlike what the Kurds are practicing in Syria today. One other highly influential thinker in the anarchist community who purports to be a ‘libertarian socialist’, Noam Chomsky, [was himself part of the Zionist kibbutz movement](#) in his youth. This explains why Chomsky would call for a [continuation of the U.S. occupation](#) of northern Syria on the basis of “protecting the Kurds”, who are trying to repeat the formula used to found Israel to create a Syrian Kurdistan as another U.S. protectorate in the Middle East.

It is no coincidence that in the [manifesto](#) listing the demands of the sit-in in Seattle, nowhere to be found is the defunding of the Pentagon — the primary supplier through the 1033 Program of the militarized police violence being protested. The same cognitively dissonant left calling to “defund the police”, which will almost certainly be used as a pretext to privatize them, completely ignores endless U.S. wars abroad and opposed efforts by the Trump administration to scale back expansionism in Syria. The focus on the tearing down of statues from America’s colonial ‘past’ has also coincided with Israel’s preparations in colonizing what remains of Palestinian territory with the annexation of the West Bank — where are the mass protests to stop that? If Black Lives Matter dared focus on AIPAC, it would be shut down very quickly. In 2016, when BLM endorsed the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign to boycott Israel, their previously enjoyed benefits suddenly were [in jeopardy](#) and was revealed to be the direct result of [sabotage by the Zionist lobby](#).

In the last several decades, there has been a retreat of class conscious forces in U.S. political life, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union. The degenerate form of the left that exists today is an unfortunate result of the academization of social issues and the influence of the Frankfurt School critical theorists whose bourgeoisification of Marxism reduced it to a lens by which to critique culture and the arts while removing its class politics. The politically correct obsession with the policing of language by the postmodern cult of identity politics is excluding the working class from the conversation and counteracting its revolutionary potential. The CIA fronts in the Open Society, Ford, and Kellogg Foundations of the non-profit industrial complex have successfully corralled the protests while no substantial change has been made to the real ills in U.S. society where the 1% has made trillions during the pandemic and subsequent economic depression. While the masses are busy tipping over statues and monuments in a crusade to purify history, the ruling class is laughing all the way to the bank.

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