

Ending Poverty, Hunger and War = Racial Justice?

By [Black Alliance for Peace](#)

Global Research, September 01, 2020

Black Alliance for Peace

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Media Disinformation](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

The Black Lives Matter slogan and the demand for “racial justice” echo as the defining characteristic of the ongoing resistance from Portland to Kenosha. But the drama of the moment obscures the limitation of these demands. What we mean is those demands can be easily manipulated by the same forces the resisters in the streets believe they are in opposition to.

Private corporations such as Uber and Amazon and professional sports teams have contributed money and lined up behind the demand that “Black Lives Matter.” But as these private companies, the media and right-wing neoliberal politicians in the Democratic Party all line up in favor of racial justice, isn’t it wise for someone to inquire what exactly they are backing? This question is especially important in the midst of the pandemic, in which the non-white working-class populations are suffering and dying in disproportionate numbers, with hundreds of African/Black people dying every week.

Extrajudicial murders of Black people at the hands of U.S. police number fewer than 300 per year, on average. The opposition to murders at the hands of police is understandable, given African/Black people make up 13 percent of the U.S. population but represent an average of 25 percent to 30 percent of lethal encounters with the police. These numbers don’t even account for the numbers of African/Black people shot and beaten by the police.

However, other disproportionalities are not being contextualized as racial justice issues. Astronomical rates of Black unemployment, Black people in lines for food assistance, Black people representing the most vulnerable so-called “essential” workers, Black people lacking health insurance, Black people impoverished and Black people unnecessarily dying during a pandemic are expressions of capitalist state violence. But they have been exempted from the category of racialized oppression.

This contradiction might explain why Amazon founder Jeff Bezos can make sure workers trying to organize themselves are fired, but then turn around and claim “Black Lives Matter.”

Black human-rights fighter Ella Baker famously said to Black people and to other oppressed people, “You and I cannot be free in America or anywhere else where there is capitalism and imperialism.” If the current demand for racial justice was identified with the position Ella Baker articulated, would the corporations, the media, liberal foundations, and right-wing Democrats like Joe Biden and Kamala Harris still support it?

The answer is obvious. That is why even the leading personalities of the Black Lives Matter

movement have not publicly embraced Ella Baker's position.

And that is why we have and must continue to develop a Black Alliance for Peace (BAP). Members of this alliance are clear there can be no justice, peace or human rights as long as this rapacious, inhumane colonial/capitalist system is allowed to reproduce poverty, war and the structures of white supremacy.

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