

Police and White Supremacist Violence: This Ain't Your Grandfather's Civil Rights Movement

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*Black Lives Matter activist Shaun King writes on his [Facebook page](#) [3] that 2015 saw “the deadliest hate crime against Black folk in the past 75 years” in Charleston, and notes that “more unarmed Black folks have been killed by police this year than were lynched in any years since 1923.” He continues: “Never, in the history of modern America, have we seen Black students in elementary, middle, and high school handcuffed and assaulted by police in school like we have seen this year. Black students, who pay tuition are leaving the University of Missouri campus right now because of active death threats against their lives. If you ever wondered who you would be or what you would do if you lived during the Civil Rights Movement, stop. You are living in that time, *right now*.” Evidence abounds that police and white supremacist violence is reaching a post-World War Two crescendo. Los Angeles is showcased as a model of so-called “community policing,” but the city’s cops are gunning down civilians at [twice the rate](#) [4] of last year. It seems the first response of LA’s “first-responders” is shoot-to-kill. “Right now, police have a down-to-the-bone belief that they have to watch suspects’ hands, and if the hands move, they can shoot,” said civil rights lawyer Connie Rice.*

In Ohio, prosecutor Timothy McGinty appeared to be channeling the ghost of Birmingham’s “Bull” Connor when he accused the family of Tamir Rice of having “economic motivations” for seeking justice in the police killing of the 12-year-old. A local judge ruled there was probable cause to arrest the two Cleveland cops on [aggravated murder charges](#) [5], but McGinty is setting the stage for a grand jury whitewash.

According to Shaun King, who was hired last month as [senior justice writer](#) [6] for the New York *Daily News* and whose Twitter account has 187,000 followers, today’s struggle is much like the “civil rights” period, in terms of violence directed against Blacks. He makes the historical comparison to motivate a new generation to rise to the occasion. However, it is critically important to understand that Black folks are not currently engaged in a repeat of the civil rights movement, which achieved almost complete success by 1965. The remainder of the Sixties was about “Black Power,” and how to get it. The U.S. government’s response was to declare war against the more radical elements of the Movement – which they succeeded in annihilating – and to begin creating the infrastructure of a *new national policy* to control and contain the entire African American population: mass Black incarceration.

Two generations later, the young people that Shaun King seeks to advise confront an entrenched Mass Black Incarceration regime that is far more formidable and ruthless than the local and state security structures – or the freelance white terrorists – of the civil rights era. The modern mass incarceration regime, which Michelle Alexander calls “The New Jim Crow,” is more pervasive than southern segregation ever was, reaching into every aspect of

Black life and warping each social relationship it touches. Its cumulative effects have been so catastrophic that one out of every eight prison inmates on the planet is an African American. The Mass Black Incarceration State killed Michael Brown and Tamir Rice and all the other martyrs of the current, incipient movement.

This regime is a profoundly *post*-civil rights phenomenon – a national project to re-impose state control over Black people after the victory of civil rights and the failed attempt to achieve some degree of Black self-determination. It is true that Blacks have been subjected to mass incarceration ever since Emancipation. Indeed, mass Black incarceration was the White South’s response to Emancipation, a primary tool, along with lynch law, in enforcing the Old Jim Crow. However, the suppression of the awakened Black masses in the late 1960s would require a *national* project that would coordinate, fund and vastly enlarge the various local and state police and prison agencies, under central direction. That process was begun with creation of the [Law Enforcement Assistance Administration](#) [7], signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1968, the first federal program to fund and equip local and state police forces. President Nixon gave the white backlash against the Black Movement a race-neutral national mobilizing project with his War on Drugs. For the first time in history, the U.S. had a truly national security infrastructure – a police state and gulag created specifically to [keep the Blacks in check](#) [8], by methodically criminalizing the entire African American population.

This ain’t your grandfather’s civil rights era. Rather than a potential protector of Black people, the federal government is the funder, equipper and coordinator of an integrated national structure of repression whose primary mission, for almost half a century, has been to contain and control Black people.

The Movement has no choice, therefore, but to seek the overthrow of the Mass Black Incarceration State, whose structures and ideology are embedded in the national government of the United States.

It’s been a long time coming, but this is the big throwdown. Not “Mississippi Burning,” but the whole damn country.

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Notes:

[1] http://www.blackagendareport.com/not_your_grandfather%27s_movement

[2] <http://www.blackagendareport.com/category/african-america/black-liberation-movement>

[3] <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=shaun%20king>

[4]

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/11/us/los-angeles-police-urged-to-review-use-of-force-after-alarmin-g-rise-in-shootings.html?ref=us>

[5] http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/06/judge_finds_probable_cause_for.html

[6]

<http://www.rawstory.com/2015/10/black-lives-matter-activist-shaun-king-will-join-the-new-york-daily-news-as-a-justice-correspondent/>

[7] http://www.blackagendareport.com/police_trained_to_oppress_blacks

[8] <http://www.blackagendareport.com/obama-bogus-reform-on-militarized-police>

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