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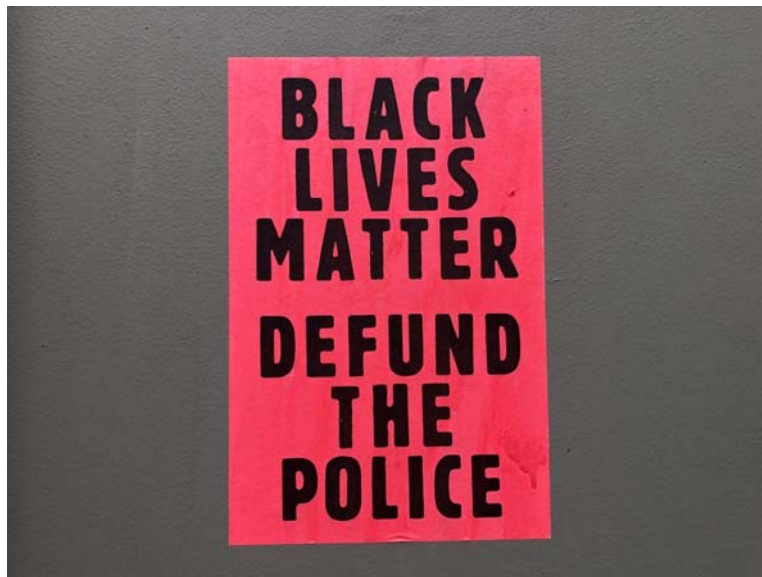
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Will This Be the Radicalization of Black Lives Matter?



Photograph by Nathaniel St. Clair

On Monday a group of local Black Lives Matter chapters [issued a statement to the public](#) calling for more transparency and accountability from the Black Lives Matter Global Network (BLMGN), the umbrella structure for the Black lives matter structures.

In what appears to be an ongoing internal discussion, the chapters claimed that BLMGN not only did not collaborate on political visioning and collective analysis with the chapters but shockingly, with the millions reported in the media that was raised from foundations and corporations, “most chapters have received little to no financial support since the launch in 2013.”

The lack of accountability and questions regarding the use of funds were almost inevitable because it was designed that way. Counterinsurgency efforts in the U.S. and elsewhere

discovered that these methods are effective and adopted them as part of the playbook for corrupting and redirecting potential oppositional groups.

This does not mean that everyone participating in this effort were opportunists — quite the contrary. There were thousands of Black activists across the country who sincerely supported and participated in what has become the Black Lives Movement.

These activists for the most part had no idea that questions emerged from the very beginnings of this “movement,” which only intensified in relationship to the George Floyd demonstrations, especially when it appeared that the state had successfully placed BLM at the head of something it had not organized.

Most of the activists who hit the streets just wanted to do the work and didn’t know that questions about whether this movement was more valuable as an instrument of the ideological re-legitimization of the system than it was as an instrument for advancing the oppositional, anti-capitalist radical Black movement, especially as it seemed to align itself with right-wing neoliberal democrats from Obama, Clinton, Warren and now to Biden.

So, with the field being flooded with cash from the enemy to keep the focus on easily incorporated themes of “racial justice” and “criminal justice reform,” issues of both financial and political accountability were always beneath the surface. Now those issues have found the light of day and accountability is being called for.

I hope that this effort will result in a serious discussion around the politics of BLM more so than the money issue, even though both are intertwined by the source of the money and the reasons why resources were generated to support this effort.

The situation that faces African workers and the colonized peoples of this settler colony are dire. There is no capitalist solution to the crisis of capital at this stage of its’ development. No Keynesianism, no “new deals,” no appeals to U.S. exceptionalism or “making America great” will reverse its rot. The material contradictions of the capitalist order have accelerated social-economic forces toward either a unique period of a “new” national expression of U.S. fascism (colonialist fascism was the base upon which racialized capitalism was erected), or of a revolutionary situation in which socialist revolution is presented by left forces as a viable option.

This dual trajectory is understood by the rulers and is the basis for why they have consciously moved to pre-empt the radicalization of the present moment by propping up what has now become a diversionary movement meant to de-politicize, even in the midst of dramatic mobilizations across the country, in reaction to the lynching of George Floyd.

Throughout the first few months of Covid pandemic in April and into May, stories started to surface that revealed how environmental racism, neoliberal privatization that devastated the public health system, poverty, Black and Brown workers concentrated in the lowest rungs of the employment ladder – the “essential” workers – had created the conditions that made the virus a plague for us.

But those stories just about disappeared for several months, beginning at the end of May. And what happened? George Floyd.

The streets were filled with righteous indignation demanding “justice” for Floyd and correctly linking the other cases of police violence such as the execution of Breonna Taylor. Yet, while the marches demanded that we say the names of Floyd and Taylor and remember Rice and Sandra Blaine — out of sight in run-down nursing homes, overcrowded hospitals, and alone in apartments — our folks were dying in silence. The movement would not claim them; would not say their names or it seemed — fight for them.

And even as the lines for food extended for miles, the unemployment check stopped coming and people were driven into the streets by landlords released from moratoriums against evictions. Somehow these crimes of capital did not fit the definition of an assault on our people. It was as if this was neither a “racial justice” issue nor a crime of racialized capitalism.

It is clear to me that the chapters raising questions about BLM from the frontlines are doing so not out of a desire to destroy but to strengthen the movement by generating this discussion. Will it be a tough conversation? Yes. Because partially obscured by the liberal appropriation of intersectionality is the issue of class that the largely petit-bourgeois classed-based leadership of the movement will not even acknowledge, let alone struggle with.

But that may soon change.

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