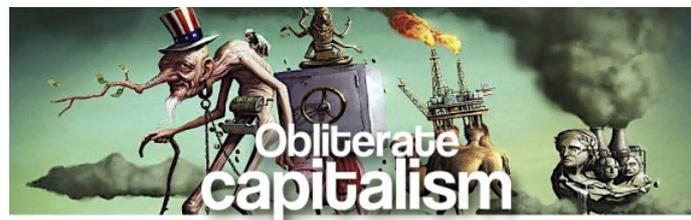


# FROM REBELLION TO REVOLUTION

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Kali Akuno, [Viewpoint Magazine](#)



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## Tactics & Strategies

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The Floyd rebellion is changing the world before our very eyes. What type of change and to what degree it will shift the balance of forces between rulers and ruled, haves and the have-nots remains to be seen. What is clear is that there is an active and open political contest to shape the outcome. For the moment, the right wing and the Republicans have been relatively sidelined in this debate. The real contest as it stands is between the liberals and Democrats on the one hand

and the radical mass that has taken the streets all over the country and the world, which is increasingly examining and advancing critical left demands emerging from anarchist, communist, revolutionary nationalist, and socialist analytical and organizing traditions, such as police and prison abolition, economic democracy, and decolonization. This debate is being played out in the streets, in mainstream media, and through social media.

Following trends in all of these venues, it appears that the liberals and Democrats have gained some significant ground in the narrative war, the war of position, on several points. One critical point is making distinctions between “good protestors” and “bad protestors”. The dominance of this narrative will have consequences, negative consequences. Some of these negative consequences include: (1) narrowing the focus of the rebellion, (2) reasserting the myths of “democratic” reform and capitalist correction that only reinforce the perpetuation of the system, and (3) limiting the scope of the revolutionary possibilities and potentialities of the current rebellion.

The net effect of the positional gains of the liberals is that the rebellion is showing some clear signs of being defused, such as the serious policing of the movement on the streets that is occurring in many places. This is starting to isolate the left in many critical ways and put it and its proposals on the defensive. This is best expressed in the hardcore efforts to water down the abolitionist demand of “defunding” and “abolishing” the police, to which we will return shortly. The aim of the liberals and the Democratic party is to redirect this mass movement towards electoral politics, particularly the 2020 elections, and a limited set of cosmetic corrections and reforms.

Where the liberals and Democrats appear to have made the most significant advance is narrowing the scope of the rebellion in the mainstream media. If you believe them, this is

fundamentally just about reforming the police and the articulation of an obscure iteration of the “Black Lives Matter” demand framework. This downplays the clear calls to eradicate white supremacy, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and settler-colonialism that have been on clear display. Without addressing this it is hard to make sense of the removal of all the statues and symbols edifying settler-colonialism and enslavement, or the targeted acts of redistribution that have occurred, and the forced dismantling of the institutions of repression, exploitation, and gentrification. Their reasoning should be obvious. The liberals and Democrats do not support revolution. They have no interest in dismantling the systems of oppression that confine humanity. Their interest is doing what is necessary to preserve the existing capitalist system. To this end, they are willing to bend a few things, as long as it doesn’t fundamentally break or alter the social relations that shape society, particularly who owns and controls the means of production. The distorted “Black Lives Matter” framework they are pushing is about trying to shore up their electoral base for the 2020 elections, particularly amongst Blacks and Latinos, who they have to rely upon to have any chance of winning. Thus they can support police reform, while condemning the effort to dismantle the institution and its social function as absurd.

On the demand of “defunding the police” or “abolishing the police,” it must be noted that this question is being raised in the absence of a revolution – which the current moment is not, not yet anyway. Most of the responses are being cast in this light as well: “What will happen to communities without police?” This question assumes that capitalist relations of production and social reproduction will continue to exist – i.e., the same ole shit. Neither capital nor the state have been dismantled or destroyed, and few are proposing this possibility (i.e. revolution) or preparing for it in the present moment. If the fundamental social relations don’t change, then this reform could only serve as a temporary

appeasement measure, which the operatives of the state would quickly attack and undermine. They would turn it into a fiasco to create a negative example to dissuade folks from thinking that an alternative is possible. In any case, anything the ruling class giveth, it can take away.

And if you don't think that this is the case, there are several historic and ongoing examples of how the capitalist and imperialist system has successfully twisted limited efforts to break out of the system and turned them into propaganda tools through various means of strangulation and negation to create the impression that there is no alternative. This is how they use the examples of Haiti, Cuba, and now Venezuela, Chiapas, Rojava, etc., as whipping posts.

To be clear, I think the demand for abolition should be raised to heighten the contradictions. But, it must be accompanied by the call for revolution, and the organizing effort to dismantle the entire system. Short of accomplishing that, the empire will strike back. Of that there is no doubt.

Again, the consequences of this narrowness should not be downplayed. State agencies all over the country are waiting for the rebellion to subside so they can hunt down thousands of young partisans and put them in jail in the name of justice and restoring law and order. This history should be instructive. Following the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992, the Los Angeles police and sheriff departments hunted down and arrested over 15,000 people who were captured on footage breaking the so-called "rules." So, if they succeed, it will be the effective negation of the rebellion.

We on the left – anarchists, communists, indigenous sovereigntists, revolutionary nationalists, and socialists – *have to* resist the elevation of the liberal and Democratic party narratives and positions. We have to assert a counter-narrative in all arenas – one that aims towards transforming the Floyd rebellion into something potentially transformative.

This must include upholding autonomous action (with principle), the diversity of tactics, the sanctity of life over property and profits, and the building and execution of instruments of dual power to transform social relations and the balance of forces. And let it be known that should we fail, the left will be the first victims of the targeted execution of the state's hammer, which is here and will advance whether we like it or not.

Despite the challenges we are confronting in this contest of power, the alternative of revolution yet remains. A pathway to revolution does currently exist. In my view it rests with the advance of a strategy anchored by the further politicization of the mutual aid, food sovereignty, cooperative economics, community production, self-defense, people's assemblies, and general strike motions that already existed and that emerged in embryonic form in the midst of the pandemic. This could be harnessed through democratic efforts to federate these initiatives on a mass level to lay the foundations of dual power.

[Cooperation Jackson](#) and the [People's Strike](#) coalition we've been working to build with various organizations and allies are working to advance a program of this character to interject left counter-narratives into the mass movement. One of the central things we are proposing as our next contribution to the movement is the call for mass People's Assemblies. Building on experiences from the Occupy movement, Assemblies have started spontaneously developing in New York city, Oakland, Portland, and Seattle. These are groundbreaking developments. But, we need more. The People's Strike is calling for Assemblies to be held everywhere, and in particular calling for a first strike national day of action on July 1st. What we have been proposing, and will offer in this process, is that we organize and build towards the execution of a general strike. The beginning of a general strike under current conditions starts with People's

Assemblies in the streets debating and voting on having a general strike. This is how a largely street protest movement can blossom into an instrument of dual power that could radically transform society.

Unite and Fight, Build the General Strike!

**Kali Akuno** is the cofounder and executive director of Cooperation Jackson, and coeditor of Jackson Rising: The Struggle for Economic Democracy and Black Self-Determination in Jackson, MS.

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• FINIS •



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Puke if you must

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*This bloodsoaked monster is probably the most evil person on planet earth <https://t.co/nGq2H1EPHt>*

– Ben Norton (@BenjaminNorton) [April 9, 2020](#)

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^3000US citizens have no real political representation.

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I don't want to be ruled by hypocrites, whores, and war criminals.

What about you? Time to push back against the corporate oligarchy.

And its multitude of minions and lackeys.

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