

United States: Defeating Trump's white supremacy is possible

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“The 2020 presidential election is between Black Lives Matter, a multiracial democracy — and white supremacy. The outcome is open.”

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President Donald Trump knows what many liberals and some on the left do not: a majority of whites vote “whiteness” over their economic self-interests. Why? When Blacks and other non-whites are perceived as getting benefits that whites believe should be theirs, they cry “reverse discrimination” and are ready to turn back the clock.

Racial solidarity of the dominant group (whites, including billionaires) is primary to its existence, not working-class solidarity on issues like wages, health care and racial equality. Solidarity with the white “racial” group frames their politics.

The 2020 presidential election is between Black Lives Matter, a multiracial democracy — and white supremacy. The outcome is open.

New recession

Since the COVID-19 pandemic exploded six months ago, the country has entered a new great recession. Millions of people have lost jobs and employer-based health care. Hundreds of thousands will soon lose their rental apartments and homes through foreclosures and lack of income. This includes whites and Blacks, although Blacks are disproportionately hit. Black household wealth is only seven percent of white family wealth, down from ten percent 50 years ago.

Blacks who support Trump tend to be those who received some benefit from the government's huge tax cuts and deregulation, which spiked the stock market and made billionaires even wealthier.

There are two Americas and two criminal justice systems — one for whites and one for Blacks.

That's why the "whiteness" issue means poor and working-class whites defend Trump and his racism, no matter what he says or does.

This is not hyperbole. The dominant white group - which Isabel Wilkerson describes in her new book, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* - has ruled over African Americans for 401 years. First as slaves for 250 years, then for 100 years with legal "Jim Crow" segregation, and for the past 50 years with legal equality but inferior status.

White supremacy is not a pejorative. It is rooted in the foundation of the United States as the basis of what many call "racial capitalism". It is so intertwined in the state, that it is impossible to end white domination of Blacks without ending the capitalist system.

As the past 50 years shows, and Blacks understand, the big progress won in the Civil Rights Revolution, from affirmative action to school desegregation, has steadily been reversed. The main beneficiaries have been the Black professional class and entertainers. The election of the first Black president, Barack Obama, in 2008, led to a white supremacist - Trump.

The white majority will not give up power, even if it falls below 50% of the population.

Trump's nationalism

Trump's "America First" chauvinism is based on white supremacy, as both an ideology and practical program of action. He doesn't see whites and Blacks as equals. He likes Black entertainers, and professionals who "like him" and toe the line.

Trump rejects that defending Black rights and democracy is the job of the president. Instead, in his view, it is to protect white domination, which means keeping his power, because he is the only person who can save the country and world.

Understanding white supremacy's origins and the domination of the white racial/caste group is important to tracking Trump's constant lies and actions. He uses the power of the state to support white grievance.

Trump's base is 40-45% of the population and is why African Americans, including militants, see him and resurgent white nationalism as an existential threat to their physical existence.

Trump and his cohorts reject that there is systemic racism. He told prominent Washington Post journalist, Bob Woodward (in his new book *Rage*) he was "drinking the Kool aid" for asking about white privileges.

Moreover, Trump is not expecting to win the popular vote. He says the election will be rigged by his opponents and plans to not recognise the results. His base agrees with him. Roger Stone, a long-time confidante, is urging him to declare martial law if he loses and arrest his opponents.

Trump has ordered the end to any government funding for anti-racism federal training programs because he claims they are "anti-American propaganda". He has instructed the Department of Education to take funds away from schools and universities that use an award-winning series, 1619,

developed by The New York Times.

Taking no chances, Trump seeks to gut the electoral process and transform the institutions to accept his personal dictates. He is doubling down on racist attacks on the BLM movement and institutional racism, because historically it has worked.

Democratic Party presidential candidate Joe Biden is falling into Republican traps by attacking “riots” at BLM protests, even though most are the actions of police or their vigilante allies.

Biden is quietly moving away from the most progressive wing of the Democratic Party. He says he will increase the largest war budget in the world and add millions to police budgets. He says little about climate change, while California, Oregon and Washington burn. Latinos know him as a strong supporter of deportations and are not excited by his campaign, as he appeals to the concerns of more conservative whites.

BLM pushes back

The BLM movement, while not happy with Biden, is fully aware of Trump’s white grievance and chaos strategy.

A new Princeton University study shows that 93% of protests are peaceful. Most of the violence is initiated by the cops, or by criminal elements and white nationalist provocateurs dressed as demonstrators.

A report published by the US Crisis Project, a joint effort of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and the Bridging Divides Initiative at Princeton University, found that almost all of the more than 10,600 demonstrations that took place over three months this US summer have been peaceful.

The study also found that of those 10,600 protests, 7750 were connected to the BLM movement.

“In more than 93% of all demonstrations connected to the movement, demonstrators have not engaged in violence or destructive activity,” said the study.

“Peaceful protests are reported in over 2400 distinct locations around the country. Violent demonstrations, meanwhile, have been limited to fewer than 220 locations — under 10% of the areas that experienced peaceful protests.”

Most of the violence of the 7% that occurred was at the initiative of the cops — “police riots”, using teargas and heavy military-style equipment.

Yet, “establishment” Democrats want the protests to shift focus to organising voter turnout. However, BLM central leaders are refusing to make voting - which they support as a historic right - their focus.

They argue that the street protests are central and must continue - until changes in policing occur, and until after the elections - whether Biden or Trump wins. It is the main way to keep maximum pressure on the state and its institutions.

A significant minority of whites still see Blacks as inferior, even if many Blacks are more educated and successful than they are.

A Black jogger in Georgia, a Black woman sleeping in her own bed in Louisville, Kentucky and a naked Black man with mental health issues in Rochester, New York, were all seen as “threats” and murdered by cops or vigilantes. Few, if any, whites in the same situation ever risk facing death.

Even gun ownership, common in the country, discriminates and reflects racial divisions. Whites can carry rifles down the street (as occurred in Kenosha, Wisconsin) in many states, without fear of harassment or arrest by police. Blacks cannot.

“It has become clear to me that open carry and concealed carry are white privileges — permit or not,” Army combat veteran and NRA-certified pistol instructor Justin McFarlin told USA Today.

“Despite having a license: I am afraid of being killed by police if I carry a gun in public.”

Counter strategy

Whites are 68% of the voting electorate. Trump’s strategy is to win more than 60% of that voting bloc and convince a minority of Black and other people of colour to vote for him, while suppressing the right to vote for millions of African Americans.

Many younger whites, so far, believe all “racial groups” should be treated fairly. They reject the whitewashed history preached by white nationalists.

At the same time, a slight majority of the public support the demands of the BLM movement, even as it weakens under the blows of Trump’s anti-Black nationalist campaign.

Any retreat from the streets gives Trump and the far right the momentum to impose their will. The counter strategy to respond to institutional state discrimination and biased news propaganda is with mass protests. Saving Black lives and democratic rights, and defeating Trump’s white supremacy, is possible.

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P.S.

• Green Left Weekly. Issue 1281, September 14, 2020:
<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/defeating-trumps-white-supremacy-possible>