Beyond Boundaries

The Manning Marable Reader

MANNING MARABLE

Edited by
RUSSELL RICKFORD

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9/11 RACISM
IN THE TIME OF TERROR

Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends.... As T. S. Eliot has said, "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

—Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," April 16, 1963

I

It is still mourning time here in New York City. No matter how much time passes, the tragedy of the terrorist attack against the World Trade Center towers will remain brutally fresh and terribly vivid to millions of residents in this overcrowded metropolis. The horrific specter of nearly 3,000 human beings incinerated in less than 100 minutes, of screaming people free-falling more than 1,000 feet to their deaths, cannot be comprehended or even explained. For those of us who live and work here, or for any American who loves New York City, the grief was almost overwhelming.

As I first witnessed the smoke billowing across the city's skyline, I knew that the criminals who had obliterated the World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon were attempting to make a symbolic political statement about the links between transnational capitalism and U.S. militarism. But by initiating acts of mass murder, those who plotted and carried out these crimes totally destroyed any shred of political credibility they might have had. There can be no justification, excuse, or rationale for the deliberate use of deadly force and unprovoked violence against any civilian population. This was not essentially an act of war, but a criminal act, a crime against not only the American people, but all of humanity. I immediately felt that all of

those who planned, financed, and assisted in carrying out these crimes had to be apprehended and brought to justice—but under the aegis of international law and the United Nations. I feared that unilateral military action by the United States might provoke new terrorist assaults against American cities and civilians.

In the days following the unprecedented terrorist attacks, some elements of the sectarian U.S. Left, including a few black activists, took the bizarre position that those who carried out these crimes were somehow "freedom fighters." These "leftist" critics implied that these vicious, indiscriminate actions must be interpreted within the political context of the oppression that gave rise to those actions. In short, the brutal reality of U.S. imperialism, including America's frequent military occupation of Third World countries, they said, somehow justified the use of political terrorism as a legitimate avenue for expressing resistance. It is certainly true that the American Left was correct to vigorously challenge the Bush administration's militaristic response to this crisis, because the unleashing of massive armed retaliation would have inevitably escalated the cycle of terror. Progressives, however, should have also affirmed their support for justice—first and foremost, by expressing our deepest sympathies and heartfelt solidarity with the thousands of families who lost loved ones in this tragedy. How can a Left that claims to defend workers' rights ignore the fact that in the World Trade Center attack an estimated 1,000 labor union members were killed; approximately 1,500 children lost a parent; and hundreds of undocumented immigrants may have also perished, but their families were unable to step forward to governmental authorities because of their illegal residence in the United States?

Political condemnation of the members of the Al Qaeda group should not, however, support their demonization, their description as "evildoers," as in the denunciations of President George W. Bush. We must denounce their actions as criminal while also resisting the Bush administration's and media's racist characterizations of their political beliefs as "pathological" and "insane." Bush's rhetoric only fed racist attacks against Middle Eastern peoples and Muslims here in the United States. Perhaps one of the most effective criticisms would be to highlight the important differences between the sectarianism of Islamic fundamentalism and the rich humanism that is central to the Islamic faith. In the eloquent words of the late Muslim intellectual Eqbal Ahmad, Islamic fundamentalism promulgates "an Islamic order reduced to a penal code, stripped of its humanism, aesthetics, intellectual quests, and spiritual devotion. It manipulates the politics of resentment and fear, rather than sharing and alleviating the oppression of the masses in the Third World."

Once again, as in my earlier discussion concerning black reparations, we must make a clear distinction between "guilt" and "responsibility." The Al Qaeda terrorist group was indeed guilty of committing mass murder. But the U.S. government was, and is, largely responsible for creating the conditions for reactionary Islamic fundamentalism to flourish. During Reagan's administration, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provided more than $3 billion to finance the mujahadeen's guerrilla war against the Soviet Union's military presence in Afghanistan. The CIA used Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, or secret police, to equip and train tens of thousands of Islamic fundamentalists in the tactics of guerrilla warfare.

According to one 1997 study, the CIA's financing was directly responsible for an explosion of the heroin trade in both mujahadeen-controlled Afghanistan and Pakistan. By 1985, the region had become, according to researcher Alfred McCoy, "the world's top heroin producer," supplying 60 percent of U.S. demand. The number of heroin addicts in Pakistan subsequently rose "from near zero in 1979 ... to 1.2 million by 1985." Our Pakistani "allies" operated hundreds of heroin laboratories. The Taliban regime consolidated its authoritarian rule in the mid-1990s in close partnership with Pakistan's secret police and ruling political dictatorship. And the Clinton administration was virtually silent when the draconian suppression of women's rights, public executions, and mass terror became commonplace across Afghanistan. As *The Nation* columnist Katha Pollitt observed, under the Taliban dictatorship, women could not work or attend school, had "virtually no healthcare," and could not "leave their houses without a male escort." The Bush administration's current allies in Afghanistan, the so-called Northern Alliance, are no better. As Pollitt noted, both fundamentalist groups were equally "violent, lawless, misogynistic [and] anti-democratic."

One fairly standard definition of "terrorism" is the use of extremist, extralegal violence and coercion against a civilian, or noncombatant, population. Terrorist acts may be employed to instill fear and mass intimidation or to achieve a political objective. By any criteria, Al Qaeda is a terrorist organization. Most Americans have never experienced terrorism, but we have unleashed terrorism against others throughout our history. The mass lynchings, public executions, and burnings at the stake of thousands of African Americans in the early twentieth century were homegrown, domestic acts of terrorism.

The genocide of millions of American Indians was objectively a calculated plan of mass terrorism. The dropping of the atomic bomb on Japanese cities during World War II, resulting in the fiery incineration of several hundred thousand civilians, was certainly a crime against humanity. The U.S.-sponsored coup against the democratically elected government of Chile in 1973, culminating in the mass tortures, rapes, and executions of thousands of people, was nothing less than state-financed terrorism. There is a common political immorality linking former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, Osama bin Laden, and former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger: They all believed that their political ends justified their means.

II

This global tragedy has been most profoundly felt by the 8 million residents of New York City. It is difficult, if not impossible, to explain the deep emotional loss people felt and in many ways continue to feel here, the emptiness of spirit, as if one's soul has been taken. The sense of personal insecurity and civic uncertainty has permeated all things for more than a year. The sheer enormity of the crime and the media's moving presentations of the many individuals who perished and of their grief-stricken families created the image of a city united, both in its pain and its determination.

Rudolph Giuliani, who for nearly eight years had played a profoundly polarizing role as the city's aggressive, confrontational mayor, assumed overnight the image of compassionate, heroic leadership. Journalists and novelists tried to put into words the qualities that gave all New Yorkers the capacity to endure. As Roger Rosenblatt observed in the *New York Times*, "What makes the city different is a civilized wildness born of compression. Deep in their hearts, New Yorkers live comfortably with a thrilling irrationality, perhaps because the city itself is so hard to believe."

The post–September 11 image of a unified city transcending boundaries of class and color became widely and quickly popularized. Adding to the public perception of a unified city were the media's images of the faces of the 9/11 victims. Based on the countless photos reproduced in the city's newspapers and on the local all-news cable channel, it appears that the majority of those who died were either workers, people of color, and/or recent immigrants. As labor historian Joshua Freeman observed: "The September 11 attack and the response to it have once again made working-class New Yorkers visible and appreciated. Not only were the rescuers working class, but so were most of the victims.... Killed that day, along with fire, police and emergency medical workers, were accountants, clerks, secretaries, restaurant employees, janitors, security guards and electricians." Writers and intellectuals celebrated both the city's resilience and its pluralistic, multicultural character. Peruvian novelist Maria Vargas Llosa, for example, praised New York City as "a fairytale cosmopolis." Vargas poetically observed: "New York is of no man and every man: of the Afghan taxi driver who barely speaks English, the turbaned Sikh, the wok-wielding cook in Chinatown and the singer of Neapolitan songs in the restaurants of Little Italy. It is of the Dominicans and Puerto Ricans who fill streets with plena, salsa and merengue; and the Russians, Ukrainians, Kosovars, Andalusians, Greeks, Nigerians, Irish, Pakistanis, and Ethiopians who, as soon as they arrive, are turned into New Yorkers by the absorbent magic of the city."

Yet Vargas's eloquent description of the "city that never sleeps" is an illusion. Despite the newfound civic hype, the harsh reality is that this remains a bitterly divided city. American apartheid *is* strikingly and visually apparent in almost every neighborhood of New York City, and the events of September 11 have only made the racial and class stratification worse. According to the New York–based journal *City Limits*, the 2000 Census indicates that "in New York City, the ostensible capital of diversity the segregation of Asians, Latinos and black residents from white households is at virtually the same level today as it was in 1960."

Out of 331 metropolitan areas surveyed in the United States, New York City now ranks first in both Asian-white segregation and Latino-white segregation. New York's black-white residential segregation also worsened during the Giuliani years, moving from seventh overall in the 1990 Census to third place, just below Detroit and Milwaukee. New York City's Latino population doubled in the 1990s, yet the vast majority of new immigrants were concentrated in Spanish-speaking enclaves like Washington Heights and Sunset Park. As the white population became a minority group within a city that was predominantly defined by people of color, many middle- and upper-class whites retreated from any meaningful, direct interaction

with segregated black communities. As *City Limits* observed, New York's children, like other children throughout the country, increasingly live their lives "in segregated neighborhoods, schools, clubs, sports teams and friendship networks."

The city's hypersegregated neighborhoods not only perpetuate distrust and social isolation behind color-coded barriers, but also obscure from public attention other major social problems reflected in the statistics of poverty and unemployment. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, an estimated 80,000 people in the city's metropolitan area lost their jobs. About 60 percent of the jobs lost, however, paid under $23,000 per year. The largest single group of workers who became unemployed after September 11 were waiters and waitresses, numbering more than 4,200. The Fiscal Policy Institute of New York calculated that the average hourly salary of these waiters and waitresses was $7.08. The second occupation group most devastated by the World Trade Center's collapse comprised nearly 3,400 cleaning and maintenance workers who took home an average of $14.90 per hour. The next five occupations most affected were retail sales clerks (2,843 unemployed, averaging $9.15 per hour), food preparation workers (2,284 unemployed, averaging $8.90 per hour), cashiers (2,282 unemployed, averaging $7.36 per hour), housekeeping workers (1,840 unemployed, averaging $13.42 per hour), and food preparation and fast-food servers (1,718 unemployed, averaging $7.09 per hour).

Most of these individuals were employed at hotels, bars, restaurants, and private transportation companies. Only 4 percent were employed at Wall Street brokerage firms. Over four-fifths of the affected workers probably could not afford to live in Manhattan. About half lived in Brooklyn and Queens, with another 12 percent residing in the Bronx. Many of the jobs destroyed in Manhattan, in fact, were in Chinatown. The Fiscal Policy Institute's survey found that about 20 of that neighborhood's 200 sewing sweatshops went under financially. More than 1,000 members of Unite, the city garment workers union, had been fired by early November.

The vast majority of these jobless low-income workers did not benefit from the hundreds of millions of dollars donated to charities for the World Trade Center's victims. Only one-third of the jobless workers were covered by unemployment insurance, partially because in most instances, self-employed and part-time workers cannot qualify for it. As of the end of 2001, a second federal aid program, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, had extended benefits to only 2,350 jobless workers. As autumn turned into winter, New York's mostly volunteer-staffed food pantries and soup kitchens were reaching the limits of their capacity. As of November 2001, Food for Survival was supplying food for 275,000 meals a day, and City Harvest was providing another 20,000 meals—yet Joel Berg, director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, estimated that 30 percent of all pantries would soon have to "turn people away because they ran out of food."

Federal bureaucratic disorganization and poor planning compounded the problems of tens of thousands of families in New York City affected by 9/11. For example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was charged by Congress to provide resources to needy families to cover the costs of rent or mortgages. In the first nine months of FEMAs efforts in New York City, an estimated 79,000

people contacted the agency for assistance. Less than one-half, 33,000 people, were judged to be potentially eligible for rent or mortgage assistance. Of that number, only 3,585 families received FEMA money between September 2001 and June 2002, amounting to $20.6 million, and with an average monthly payment of $1,140. Most of FEMA's case evaluators were temporary workers hired from other states who had no knowledge of the city's neighborhoods or workforce. FEMA's applications were only available in English for nine months. Not surprisingly, the rejection rate for applicants was a staggeringly high 70 percent, far higher than the rejection rates by FEMA at other disaster areas.

Politically, the net effect of 9/11 in New York City was tremendous fragmentation within the city's liberal political establishment. Throughout Giuliani's controversial administration, literally hundreds of civil-rights, labor, women's, and community-based organizations have marched, picketed, and protested. Everyone assumed that the city's public advocate, Mark Green, a well-known Upper West Side liberal, would be elected the new mayor with little difficulty. But the severe impact of 9/11 diverted the attention of community-oriented coalitions and progressive groups toward addressing more immediate political issues. Some organizations focused attention on efforts to raise public awareness about the dangers involved in the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan; others emphasized the threat to American civil liberties and constitutional rights represented by new federal antiterrorism legislation. Civil-rights organizations highlighted problems of anti-Muslim hate crimes and ethnic profiling by law-enforcement officers. Grassroots activists who worked primarily on the issues of low-income people found themselves soon overwhelmed by the crises of widespread joblessness and food shortages. Individual donors and some foundations redirected funds largely to relief efforts and away from community-oriented and antiracist organizing. Very few groups dedicated to progressive change had the infrastructural capacity to engage in emergency activities while at the same time maintaining their commitments to long-term objectives.

The result, in many ways, was a sense of diffused energies, the performance of good and humanitarian activities lacking the broad, strategic vision essential for restructuring the city's power structure. At the general election in November, less than 30 percent of the city's registered voters bothered to go to the polls. In a city where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by a margin of five to one, a novice candidate, Republican billionaire Michael Bloomberg, narrowly defeated the veteran Democratic politician Mark Green. Power remained firmly in the hands of those who owned the city, while its black and brown population slid farther into economic recession and political marginalization.

III

Did "everything fundamentally change" in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks? Yes, there was an upsurge of public patriotism and national chauvinism, an understandable desire to "avenge" the innocent victims of the Al Qaeda network's terrorism.

Perhaps these terrible events marking the real "beginning" of the twenty-first century are, however, not a radical departure into some new, uncharted political territory, but rather the culmination of deeper political and economic forces set into motion decades before.

The core ideology of "Reaganism"—free markets, unregulated corporations, the vast buildup of nuclear and conventional weapons, aggressive militarism abroad, the suppression of civil liberties and civil rights at home, and demagogical campaigns against both "terrorism" and Soviet communism—has become central to the Bush administration's current policy initiatives today. Former President Ronald Reagan attempted to establish a national security state where the legitimate functions of government were narrowly restricted to matters of national defense, public safety, and tax subsidies to the wealthy. Reagan pursued a policy of what many economists have termed "military Keynesianism," the deficit spending of hundreds of billions of dollars on military hardware and speculative weapons schemes such as "Star Wars."

This massive deficit federal spending was largely responsible for the U.S. economic expansion of the 1980s. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union was pressured into an expensive arms race that it could not afford. The fall of Soviet communism transformed the global political economy into a unipolar world characterized by U.S. hegemony, both economically and militarily. The result was a deeply authoritarian version of American state power, with increasing restrictions on democratic rights of all kinds, from the orchestrated dismantling of trade unions to the mass incarceration of racialized minorities and the poor. By the end of the 1990s, 2 million Americans were behind bars and over 4 million former prisoners had lost the right to vote, for life. "Welfare as we know it," in the words of former President Clinton, was radically restructured, with hundreds of thousands of women householders and their children pushed down into poverty.

Behind much of this vicious conservative offensive was the ugly politics of race. The political assault against affirmative action and minority economic set-asides was transformed by the Right into a moral crusade against "racial preferences" and "reverse discrimination." Black and Latino young people across the country were routinely "racially profiled" by law-enforcement officers. DWB, "Driving While Black," became a familiar euphemism for such police practices. As the liberal welfare state of the 1960s mutated into the prison industrial complex of the 1990s, the white public was given the unambiguous message that the goal of racial justice had to be sacrificed for the general security and public safety of all. It was, in short, a permanent war against the black, the brown, and the poor.

The fall of communism transformed a bipolar political conflict into a unipolar, hegemonic New World Order, as the first President Bush termed it. The chief institutions for regulating the flow of capital investment and labor across international boundaries were no longer governments. The International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and transnational treaties such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took on these roles, exercising significantly greater influence over the lives of workers in most countries than their own governments. By the year 2000, 51 of the world's 100 wealthiest and largest economies were actually

corporations, and only 49 were countries. The political philosophy of globalization, termed "neoliberalism," emphasized privatizing government services and programs, eliminating unions, and applying the aggressive rules of capitalist markets to public institutions such as schools, hospitals, and even postal services. The social contract between U.S. citizens and the liberal democratic state was being redefined to exclude the concepts of social welfare and social responsibility to the truly disadvantaged.

A new, more openly authoritarian philosophy of governance was required to explain to citizens why their long-standing democratic freedoms were being taken away from them. A leading apologist for neoauthoritarian politics was former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani. In 1994, soon after his initial election as mayor, Giuliani declared in a speech: "Freedom is about authority: Freedom is about the willingness of every single human being to cede to lawful authority a great deal of indiscretion about what you do and how you do it." As we all know, the Giuliani administration won national praise for reducing New York City's murder rate from 2,000 to 650 a year. The rate of other violent crimes also plummeted. But the social cost to New York's black, brown, and poor communities was far more destructive than anything they had known previously. The American Civil Liberties Union has estimated that between 50,000 and 100,000 New Yorkers were subjected annually to "stop-and-frisk" harassment by the police under Giuliani. The city's notorious Street Crimes Unit terrorized black and Latino neighborhoods.

Many white liberals in New York City passively capitulated to this new state authoritarianism. It is even more chilling that in the wake of the September 11 attacks, *New York Times* journalist Clyde Haberman immediately drew connections between "the emotional rubble of the World Trade Center nightmare" and Amadou Diallo, the unarmed West African immigrant gunned down in 1999 by forty-one shots fired by four Street Crimes Unit police officers. "It is quite possible that America will have to decide, and fairly soon, how much license it wants to give law enforcement agencies to stop ordinary people at airports and border crossings, to question them at length about where they have been, where they are heading, and what they intend to do once they get where they're going," Haberman predicted. "It would probably surprise no one if ethnic profiling enters the equation, to some degree." Haberman reluctantly acknowledged that Giuliani may be "at heart an authoritarian." But he added that, "as a wounded New York mourns its unburied dead, and turns to its mayor for solace," public concerns about civil-rights and civil-liberties violations would recede. Haberman seemed to be implying that the rights of individuals like Amadou Diallo are less important than the personal safety of white Americans.

As the national media enthusiastically picked up the Bush administration's mantra about the "War on Terrorism," a series of repressive federal and state laws were swiftly passed. New York State's legislature, in the span of one week, created a new crime—"terrorism"—with a maximum penalty of life in prison. Anyone convicted of giving more than $1,000 to any organization defined by state authorities as "terrorist" would face up to fifteen years in a state prison. When one reflects that, not too many years ago, the United States considered the African National Congress a "terrorist organization," it becomes apparent that the danger of being severely penalized for

supporting any Third World social-justice movement has now become very real. This policy suppresses legitimate activities by U.S. citizens.

At all levels of government, any expression of restraint or caution about the dangerous erosion of our civil liberties is equated with treason. The antiterrorism bills in the New York State Assembly were passed, with no debate, by a margin of 135 to 5. The U.S. Senate, on October 12, 2001, passed the Bush administration's antiterrorism legislation by 96 to 1. The militarism and political intolerance displayed in the Bush administration's response to the September 11 attacks created a natural breeding ground for bigotry and racial harassment. For the Reverend Jerry Falwell, the recent tragedy was God's condemnation of a secularist, atheistic America. He attributed the attacks to "the pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the lesbians" and to "the ACLU [and] People for the American Way." After a firestorm of criticisms, Falwell was forced to apologize. Less well-publicized were the hate-filled commentaries of journalist Ann Coulter, who declared: "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders, and convert them to Christianity." Similar voices of racist intolerance are also being heard in Europe. For example, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi stated that "Western civilization" was clearly "superior to Islamic culture." Berlusconi warmly praised "imperialism," predicting that "the West will continue to conquer peoples, just as it has Communism." Falwell, Berlusconi, and others illustrate the direct linkage between racism and war, between militarism and political reaction.

Even on college campuses, there have been numerous instances of the suppression of free speech and democratic dissent. When City University of New York faculty held an academic panel that presented a variety of viewpoints about the historical and political issues leading up to the terrorist attacks, the university's chief administrator publicly denounced some of the participants. "Let there be no doubt whatsoever," warned CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein, "I have no sympathy for the voices of those who make lame excuses for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon based on ideological or historical circumstances." Conservative trustees of CUNY sought to censure or even fire the faculty involved. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* hundreds of Middle Eastern college students were forced to return home from the United States as a result of widespread ethnic and religious harassment. At UCLA, Library Assistant Jonnie Hargis was suspended without pay from his job when he sent an e-mail on the university's computers that criticized U.S. support for Israel. When University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian appeared on television talking about his relationships to two suspected terrorists, he was placed on indefinite paid leave and ordered to leave the campus "for his [own] safety" university officials later explained. The First Amendment right of free speech, the constitutional right of any citizen to criticize policies of our government, is now at risk.

Perhaps the most dangerous element of the Bush administration's current campaign against democratic rights has been the deliberate manipulation of mass public hysteria. Millions of Americans who witnessed the destruction of the World Trade Center are still experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder anxiety and depression.

According to the Wall *Street Journal,* during the last two weeks of September, pharmacies filled 1.9 million new prescriptions for Zoloft, Prozac, and other antidepressants, a 16 percent increase over the same period in 2000. Prescriptions for sleeping pills and short-term anxiety drugs such as Xanax and Valium also rose 7 percent. The American public has been bombarded daily by a series of media-orchestrated threats focusing on everything from the potential of crop-dusting airplanes being used for bioterrorism, to anthrax-contaminated packages delivered through the U.S. postal service. People are constantly warned to carefully watch their mail, their neighbors, and one another. Intense levels of police security at sports stadiums and armed National Guard troops at airports have begun to be accepted as "necessary" for the welfare of society.

By the beginning of 2002, we began to witness "dissident profiling": the proliferation of electronic surveillance, roving wiretapping and harassment at the workplace, the infiltration and disruption of antiwar groups, and the stigmatization of any critics of U.S. militarism as disloyal and subversive. As historian Eric Foner has noted, "Let us recall the F.B.I.'s persistent harassment of individuals like Martin Luther King, Jr., and its efforts to disrupt the civil rights and anti-war movements, and the C.I.A.'s history of cooperation with some of the world's most egregious violators of human rights. The principle that no group of Americans should be stigmatized as disloyal or criminal because of race or national origin is too recent and too fragile an achievement to be abandoned now." I believe that one cannot preserve democracy by restricting and eliminating the democratic rights of any group or individual. To publicly oppose a government's policies that one believes to be morally and politically wrong, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., asserted, is to express the strongest belief in the principles of democracy.

Those of us who oppose our government's course of action must clearly explain to the American people that the missile strikes and indiscriminate carpet bombings we unleashed against Afghanistan's peasants did *not* make us safer. The policies of the Bush administration actually placed our lives in greater danger, because the use of government-sponsored terror will not halt brutal retaliations by the terrorists. The national-security state apparatus we are constructing today is being designed primarily to suppress domestic dissent and racially profiled minorities, rather than to halt foreign-born terrorists at our borders. In 2000 alone, there were 489 million persons who passed through our border inspection systems. More than 120 million cars are driven across U.S. borders every year, and it is impossible to thoroughly check even a small fraction of them. Restricting civil liberties, hiring thousands more police and security guards, and incarcerating more than 1,000 Muslims and individuals of Arab descent without due process only foster the false illusion of security. The "War on Terrorism" is being used as an excuse to eliminate civil liberties and democratic rights here at home.

This "war at home" also has a profoundly racial dimension. Because U.S. democracy was constructed on institutional racism, the government has always found it difficult to present a clear, democratic argument to advance its interests in the pursuit of warfare. Instead, it relies on and manipulates the latent racism and xenophobia at

all levels of society. Usually, racism is used to target external enemies, such as "Japs" during World War II. But in general, whenever the United States mobilizes militarily and goes to war, white racism goes with it hand in hand.

The extreme degree of racial segregation in New York City provides part of the explanation for the rash of hate crimes committed here after September 11. For example, in the days immediately following the attack, according to the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, a Sikh man in Richmond Hill, Queens, "was assaulted with a baseball bat and shot at with a BB gun," and a "Huntington, Long Island, man tried to run down an Asian woman with his car." Arab and Muslim street vendors and store owners throughout the city experienced verbal and physical harassment and were threatened with economic boycotts. Such incidents, of course, were not confined to New York City. The New York–based South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow (SAALT) issued a report based on more than 400 media sources documenting 645 separate incidents of hate-inspired violence against Arabs, Asians, and Muslims in the United States during the first week after September 11. These included 3 murders, 49 assaults, and 92 incidents of arson and property damage.

Those who are coded or classified by appearance, dress, language, or name, as those of Muslim or of Arab background are, have been rudely escorted off airplanes and Amtrak trains, and many have been detained without formal charges or access to attorneys. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a significant number, perhaps even the majority, of the people of color singled out for harassment as potential "terrorists" have not been Muslims or Arabs at all. In Seattle and other West Coast cities, dozens of Hawaiians, Central Americans, South Asians, and even American Indians have been subjected to verbal insults and harassment because they "appear" to be vaguely "non-American." On the East Coast, many Sikhs and Hindus have been victimized, along with non-English-speaking and non-European undocumented immigrants. Most white middle-class Americans in the so-called heartland of the country, the Midwestern states, lack both the cultural capacity and geopolitical awareness to make fine distinctions between "Muslims" and racialized others who happen to be non-Muslims.

The great exceptions to this phenomenon of new racialization in the time of terror, curiously, were African Americans. People of African descent, having lived on the American continent since 1619, occupy a unique position in the construction of white American identity and national consciousness. State power was deliberately constructed to exclude black participation; but black labor power was absolutely essential in the economic development of the nation. Black culture, moreover, contributed the most creative and original elements defining American national culture and various forms of representation.

Thus, the African American is unquestionably a recognized member of the American national household—but has never been a member of the American family. We are the Other that everybody knows. Yet there is a necessary kind of dialectical connection here, linking the false superiority of whiteness as a political and social category in the United States to the continued and "normal" subordination of blackness. Without "blacks," whiteness ceases to exist as we know it. White supremacy has

difficulty imagining a world without black people, but has no reservations about the indiscriminate mass bombing of Afghan peasants, or about supporting an embargo against Iraq, which is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Muslim children, according to international human-rights observers.

The great sociologist Oliver C. Cox understood this contradiction, the subtle distinctions between white racism, social intolerance, and xenophobia. As Cox put it: "The dominant group is intolerant of those whom it can define as anti-social, while it holds race prejudice against those whom it can define as subsocial. In other words, the dominant group or ruling class does not like the Jew at all, but it likes the Negro in his place." In a time of political terror, the "terrorist" becomes the most dangerous Other and is recognized by certain "subhuman" qualities and vague characteristics—language, strange religious rituals, unusual clothing, and so forth. The "terrorist Other" thus is presented to the white public as an uncivilized savage who has richly merited our hatred and must be destroyed to assure our safety and the preservation of the American Way of Life.

The fundamental contradiction that has always confronted black Americans during these periods of racist wars is whether or not to take advantage of this situation in order to advance up the racial and political hierarchy. I began noticing the large number of American flags, for example, displayed on the fronts of black homes and businesses. On New York City subways immediately following the attacks, I saw more blacks and Latinos wearing red, white, and blue buttons, caps, and other patriotic paraphernalia than at any other time in my memory.

Even before the devastating economic impact of 9/11, black Americans and Latinos were experiencing an economic downturn coinciding with the inauguration of the Bush administration. Between September 2000 and June 2005, African-American unemployment nationwide had increased from 7.2 percent to 8.4 percent. Latino jobless rates during the same period also rose, from 5 percent to 6.6 percent. Thousands of minority and low-income heads of household who owned homes through the Federal Housing Administration's government-insured program became delinquent in their mortgage payments. After the terrorist attacks, black jobless rates soared: 9.7 percent as of October 2002 and 10.1 percent by November 2002. Urban job-counseling centers experienced significant increases in African Americans searching for employment. In the Urban League's Job Centers in the Los Angeles area, there was a 25 percent jump in clients in 2001 "attributed mainly to Sept. 11–related job loss." A number of black-owned businesses, both in New York City and nationally, were seriously affected by the terrorist attacks. Most prominent on this list were Rice Financial Products, *Black Enterprise's* tenth-ranked investment bank, with total issues of $10 billion, which was located on the fifty-second floor of the World Trade Center's north tower; and another black investment bank, M. R. Beal and Company, ranked fourth in *Black Enterprise*, with $46.5 billion in total issues, located several blocks from the towers.

Like most Americans, African Americans were generally outraged by the terrorist attacks, and during this moment of national crisis they gave unprecedented levels of support for the Bush administration. The most widely publicized post-9/11 poll,

conducted by the Gallup organization, found that 70 percent of blacks "approved of the way Mr. Bush was handling his job." Probably more accurate was the survey of the Pew Research Center, which found that 49 percent of African Americans generally supported the president, up from 32 percent prior to the attacks.

But the majority of blacks were also troubled by the exuberant hyper-patriotism of whites and the possible linkages between racism, national chauvinism, and the suppression of democratic rights. Bishop Cecil Bishop, a leader of the Congress of National Black Churches, reminded the press that "African-American people themselves have been terrorized … [by] the killings, lynchings, hangings years back," as well as the more recent examples, such as the killing of Amadou Diallo by New York policemen. The Reverend James A. Forbes, Jr., pastor of New York's Riverside Church, called for blacks to espouse a critical "prophetic patriotism.… You will hold America to the values of freedom, justice, compassion, equality; respect for all, patience and care for the needy, a world where everyone counts." National Urban League director Hugh Price asserted that "black America's mission, as it has always been, is to fight against the forces of hatred and injustice." Price condemned the "morally repugnant notion that the need for increased security justifies racial profiling.… There is no excuse for singling out and stopping some Americans for no reason other than the color of their skin or their ethnic background or the way they dress."

The African Americans who were made to feel most vulnerable in the aftermath of the attacks were Muslims. In the early 1970s, there were only about half a million adherents to Islam in the United States, including roughly 100,000 members of the Nation of Islam. By September 2001, the American Muslim community numbered nearly 7 million, which is larger than the U.S. Jewish population. About one-third of all Muslims, more than a million, are African Americans. The most influential Muslim leader, Imam W. Deen Muhammad, is the son of the NOI's late patriarch, Elijah Muhammad. As the head of the orthodox Muslim American Society, W. Deen Muhammad has been described as "fiercely patriotic." For years, the Muslim American Society's national newspaper, the *Muslim Journal,* has featured on its cover page an American flag at the upper left corner.

Virtually all prominent Muslim religious leaders and civic representatives of the Arab-American community unconditionally condemned the attacks. Even Farrakhan denounced the criminals behind the assault as "depraved wild beasts," while at the same time urging the U.S. government to reevaluate its Middle East policies. Muslims overwhelmingly opposed U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan and favored some type of United Nations resolution to the crisis. They justly feared that the non-Muslim, white majority would aim its desire for retaliation indiscriminately, classifying all Muslims, recent immigrants and native-born citizens alike, as potential terrorists.

By the spring of 2002, many prominent African-American leaders and organizations had voiced criticisms of Bush's "War on Terrorism" and expressed concerns about the permanent deployment of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Numbers of African-American and Latino activists participated in antiwar demonstrations and teach-ins, many led by working-class and poor people of color, that were largely ignored or

unreported in the media. In San Francisco, for example, the People Organizing to Win Employment Rights (POWER) led a May Day 2002 rally and march calling for "Land, Work, and Peace." The broad range of participating organizations included the Chinese Progressive Association, the Homeless Pre-Natal Program, Hogares Sin Barreras (Housing Not Borders), and Mujeres Unidas y Activas (United and Active Women). On April 20, 2002, an estimated 80,000 people attended a Washington, D.C., protest demonstration against the Bush administration's "Permanent War on Terrorism." Significantly, at least one-third of those participating in the demonstration were Arab Americans and/or Muslims.

But the national media's attention focused exclusively on stories about the "new American patriotism," and people of color were frequently featured center stage. Blacks were reminded constantly that Colin Powell, after all, is President Bush's secretary of state, and Condoleezza Rice is his national security adviser. I also suspect that the new xenophobia was being viewed by a significant sector of African Americans as not entirely a bad thing, if jobs that had previously gone to non-English-speaking immigrants would now go to blacks. There is considerable hostility in cities such as Detroit and Houston between impoverished and working-class black urban neighborhoods and Arab shopkeepers. Blacks in 2000 voted overwhelmingly for the Gore-Lieberman ticket, while at least 40 percent of Arab Americans supported Bush-Cheney, based in part on their political and religious hostility toward Lieberman.

Part of the frustration the African-American community feels is rooted in our complicated love-hate relationship with our own country. That U.S. democracy was crudely constructed on the mountain of black bodies destroyed by centuries of enslavement, segregation, and exploitation is abundantly clear to us. Yet there is also that knowledge, gleaned from our centuries-old struggle for freedom, that the finest ideals of American democracy are best represented by our own examples of sacrifice. This was undoubtedly behind W.E.B. Du Bois's controversial editorial, "Close Ranks," which endorsed African-American participation in the U.S. war effort during World War I. It is important to remember, however, that immediately after World War I ended, the "Red Summer" of 1919, during which hundreds of African Americans were lynched, beaten, and even burned at the stake, erupted. Most African Americans understood, however, that we cannot overturn the structural racism against us if we accommodate or compromise with war and racism against others.

IV

The bombing campaign against the people of Afghanistan may be described in future history books as "The United States Against the Third World." The launching of high-tech military strikes against a feudal peasant society did little to suppress global terrorism and only eroded American credibility in Muslim nations around the world. The question, repeatedly asked in the U.S. press in the days after 9/11, "Why do they hate us?" can only be answered from the vantage point of the Third World's widespread poverty, hunger, and economic exploitation.

The U.S. government cannot engage in effective multilateral actions to suppress terrorism because its behavior illustrates its thinly veiled contempt for international cooperation. The United States owed $582 million in back dues to the United Nations, and it paid up only when the 9/11 attacks jeopardized its national security. Republican conservatives demanded that the United States be exempt from the jurisdiction of an International Criminal Court, a permanent tribunal established at The Hague, Netherlands. For the 2001 United Nations–sponsored World Conference Against Racism in South Africa, the U.S. government authorized the allocation of a paltry $250,000, compared to more than $10 million provided to conference organizers by the Ford Foundation. For three decades, the United States refused to ratify the 1965 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Racism. Is it any wonder that much of the Third World questions our motives? The carpet bombing of the Taliban seems to Third World observers to have less to do with the suppression of terrorism than with securing future petroleum-production rights in Central Asia.

The U.S. media and opinion makers repeatedly went out of their way to twist facts and to distort the political realities of the Middle East by insisting that the Osama bin Laden group's murderous assaults had nothing to do with Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. Nobody else in the world, with the possible exception of the Israelis, really believes that. Even Britain, Bush's staunchest ally, cited Israel's intransigence toward negotiations and its human-rights violations as having contributed to the environment for Arab terrorist retaliation. In late September 2001, during his visit to Jerusalem, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw stated that frustration over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might create an excuse for terrorism. Straw explained: "There is never any excuse for terrorism. At the same time, there is an obvious need to understand the environment in which terrorism breeds." Millions of moderate and progressive Muslims who sincerely denounced terrorism were nevertheless frustrated by the extensive clientage relationship the United States has with Israel, financed by more than $3 billion in annual subsidies. They want to know why the United States has allowed the Israelis to relocate more than 200,000 Jewish settlers—half of them after the signing of the 1993 peace agreement—to occupied Palestine.

How did terrorist Osama bin Laden gain loyal followers transnationally, from northern Nigeria to Indonesia? Perhaps it has something to do with America's massive presence—in fact, its military-industrial occupation—of Saudi Arabia. In the past two decades, U.S. construction companies and arms suppliers have made over $50 billion in Saudi Arabia. As of late 2001, more than 30,000 U.S. citizens were employed by Saudi corporations or by joint Saudi-U.S. corporate partnerships. ExxonMobil, the world's largest corporation, signed a 2001 agreement with the Saudi government to develop gas projects worth between $20 billion and $26 billion. Can Americans who are not orthodox Muslims truly appreciate how spiritually offensive the presence of 5,000 U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia is for them?

There is a clear link between 9/11 and the shameful political maneuvering committed by the United States at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, only days before the terrorist attacks. There, the U.S. government opposed the definition of slavery as "a crime against humanity."

It refused to acknowledge the historic and contemporary effects of colonialism and racial segregation on the underdevelopment and oppression of the non-European world. The majority of dark humanity is saying to the United States that racism and militarism are not the solutions to the world's major problems.

If the fundamental challenge of U.S. democracy in the twenty-first century is that of "structural racism," then at an international level, the central problem of the twenty-first century is the growth of "global apartheid." The wealth and resources of all humanity are unequally divided, and warfare and systemic forms of violence are employed to preserve that gross inequality. According to a United Nations Human Development Report in 1998, the world's 225 wealthiest individuals had a combined net wealth of $1 trillion, which was equal to the combined income of the planet's most impoverished 2.5 billion people. One-half of the people currently living on earth, slightly more than 3 billion individuals, exist on the equivalent of $2 or less per day. About 1.3 billion people survive on less than $2 each day. The overwhelming majority of those 3 billion people live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. For them, globalization is nothing less than a new phase of racialization on a global scale.

Terrorism is frequently the tool of the weak. A global superpower that possesses overwhelming material resources and armaments can afford the luxury of buying off its Third World opponents, or overthrowing unfriendly governments, through covert action and the collusion of local elites. A classical mixture of fraud and force is preferable because it maintains the facade of democratic procedures and processes. But for extremist fundamentalists in the Third World, terror is a cheap, low-tech alternative for striking back. The American people must understand what the black and brown world already knows: The threat of terrorism will not end until a new global dialogue is established that constructively works toward the elimination of the routine violence of poverty, the violence of disease, the violence of hunger. Global apartheid is essentially only a form of violence.

To stop the extraordinary violence of terrorism, we must stop the daily violence of class inequality and poverty. To engage in the struggle for justice—to find new paths toward reconciliation across the boundaries of religion, culture, and color—is the only way to protect our cities, our country, and ourselves from the terrible violence of terrorism. Without justice, there can be no peace.

A year after 9/11, Afghanistan remained occupied territory, as will be the case into the foreseeable future. The Western donor nations pledged $4.5 billion in economic aid to the devastated nation, but only one-third of the promised aid had been delivered after one year. More than half the country's population of 27 million had directly benefited from humanitarian aid such as food shipments or housing resettlement. Hundreds of local schools, hospitals, and health clinics had been rebuilt or newly constructed. Yet an unknown number of Afghani citizens, perhaps thousands, were killed or maimed by the "friendly fire" of U.S. forces. More than 1.5 million refugees had reentered the country from Pakistan in 2002, most of whom were living in intolerable conditions.

What I have also learned from the experience of being near Ground Zero on 9/11 is the simple truth that sometimes, even for intensely political people, "politics"

is not enough. No political ideology, no crusade, no belief in a virtuous cause, can justify the moral bankruptcy of terror. Yet, because of the military actions of our own government, any claims to moral superiority have now disintegrated, in the minds of much of the black and brown world. The American bombings have indeed destroyed the ruthless Taliban regime, but in the process the lives of innocent civilians were also lost. Martin Luther King, Jr., possibly, would have admonished us for using "moral means to preserve immoral ends." We were, and are, politically and morally right to oppose the violence of terrorism. But by employing the tools of violence and repression, we blur the brutal boundaries between the killers and the victims. We must share history's terrible judgment of common responsibility, making sinners of us all. As T. S. Eliot observed seven decades ago:

> Because these wings are no longer wings to fly
> But merely vans to beat the air
> The air which is now thoroughly small and dry
> Smaller and dryer than the will
> Teach us to care and not to care
> Teach us to sit still.
> Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death
> Pray for us now and at the hour of our death.
> —T. S. Eliot, "Ash Wednesday," 1930

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THE POLITICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXTS OF THE CHANGING RACIAL TERRAIN

At the first Pan-African Conference held in London in August 1900, the great African-American scholar, W. E. B. Du Bois, predicted that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." Today, with the tragic and triumphant racial experiences of the twentieth century behind us, we may say from the vantage point of universal culture that the problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of "global apartheid," the construction of new racialized ethnic hierarchies, discourses, and processes of domination and subordination in the context of economic globalization and neoliberal public policies. Within the more narrow context of the United States, the fundamental problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of "structural racism": the deeply entrenched patterns of socioeconomic and political inequality and accumulated disadvantage that are coded by race and color and are consistently justified in public and private discourses by racist stereotypes, white indifference, and the prison industrial complex.

African political scientist and anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani has observed that, beginning with the imposition of European colonial rule in Africa, "race was the central organizing principle of the development of the modern state." This also holds true for the U.S. In the United States, racial identities were, more than anything else, politically constructed. That is, racial identities were legally sanctioned categories, supported by the weight of the courts, political institutions, organized religion, and custom, and they were reinforced by deliberate and random acts of violence. Thus, the African American became the permanent reference point for the racialized *other* within political and civil society. To be Black was to be excluded from the social contract that linked white citizens to the state through sets of rights and responsibilities.

After more than a century of Black civic and political exclusion, the early American colonies, even before the American Revolution against the British and the consolidation of the new federal system of a United States in 1787, were structured such that the