

A Profound Fight for the Soul of Black People: A *Defeated* People—Or, A *Revolutionary* People?

A number of years ago, I made this statement:

There is the potential for something of unprecedented beauty to arise out of unspeakable ugliness: Black people playing a crucial role in putting an end, at long last, to this system which has, for so long, not just exploited but dehumanized, terrorized and tormented them in a thousand ways—putting an end to this in the only way it can be done—by fighting to emancipate humanity, to put an end to the long night in which human society has been divided into masters and slaves, and the masses of humanity have been lashed, beaten, raped, slaughtered, shackled and shrouded in ignorance and misery.

This continues to be true—to express a very big and very important truth.

On the basis of the whole history, and the overall development, of this country—from the beginning and down to today—there is tremendous importance to the role of Black people; and there *is* the potential for Black people to play a crucial role in *putting an end, at long last*, to this system which has not only brutalized and terrorized them for centuries but also continues to cruelly exploit and murderously oppress masses of people, of different races and nationalities, in this country and throughout the world.

Black people today—like everyone else—live under the rule of this system of capitalism-imperialism; and, like everyone else, Black people's position in society has been shaped, and their spontaneous outlook conditioned, by being forced to live under this completely rotten system with its monstrously oppressive relations and putrid culture. That is why there is, and must be, a profound fight for the soul of Black people—to *positively* resolve the crucial question of Black people's role in regard to the whole direction of society—to *fully bring alive* the potential of Black people as a powerful revolutionary force for the emancipation of people everywhere who are oppressed and exploited, and ultimately for the emancipation of humanity as a whole.

The revolutionary potential of Black people was powerfully demonstrated in the 1960s. But there have been big changes since the 1960s—in the situation of Black people within this country, and in the country and the world overall. I have spoken to this in a number of these messages, and in talks and writings that can be found at revcom.us; and because of the great importance of this, I will be getting into this further in future messages.

Here, I am going to speak directly to what is meant by: a *defeated* people, **or** a **revolutionary** people? These two things have to be understood in relation—and direct opposition—to each other. With all that has happened since the 1960s, there has been the widespread and prevailing orientation among Black people to give up on a revolutionary way out of the very real horror to which they are continually subjected—a horrific oppression which in turn is a major pillar of the whole oppressive structure of this system of capitalism-imperialism and its rule in this country.

The loss of hope for a better world, in this real world—and, in any case, the notion that this is the way the world is (and will always be) and you just have to get what you can, any way you can: These are “spontaneous” notions that are constantly reinforced by the workings of this system and the constant conditioning by its dominant institutions—and this has significantly affected Black people.

Giving up on revolution and really getting free, *accepting the horrific terms of what is*—whether by seeking to become part of this system’s ruling institutions and reinforcing its rule *over* people; or ruthless grasping to “get more...and more” within this monstrous system; or just in the desperate struggle to stay alive and get through the next day—these are expressions of a *defeated* people.

BUT, the striving for a way forward, out of all this, continues to break through—as it has repeatedly over the decades since the 1960s, including in the massive outpouring of outrage in 2020 in response to the cold-blooded murder of George Floyd by heartless pigs—once again manifesting the revolutionary potential of Black people and the powerful positive influence of this on people in the society (and indeed the world) as a whole.

In future messages, I will get into all this more fully. But for now, to return to where I began, there is—through all the madness there continues to be—this profound truth:

There is the potential for something of unprecedented beauty to arise out of unspeakable ugliness: Black people playing a crucial role in putting an end, at long last, to this system which has, for so long, not just exploited but dehumanized, terrorized and tormented them in a thousand ways—putting an end to this in the only way it can be done—by fighting to emancipate humanity, to put an end to the long night in which human society has been divided into masters and slaves, and the masses of humanity have been lashed, beaten, raped, slaughtered, shackled and shrouded in ignorance and misery.

This is what informs and motivates the profound fight that must be waged for the soul of Black people—to unleash and give expression to their potential to play *their full role as a powerful force for a thoroughly emancipating revolution.*

Next: Why Black People Are in the Situation They’re in Today—And Their Continuing Potential as a Powerful Force for an Emancipating Revolution.



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