

Every March Ain't A Protest

More Police Counterinsurgency In Memphis

Black Autonomy Federation

December 18, 2013

Memphis Black Autonomy Federation has talked before about how police counterinsurgency works in the city of Memphis. Yesterday, December 17, 2013, a demonstration against “police operations” took place with a small group of protesters, sponsored by the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center. Although Black people were visible in the event, this group itself is white controlled and works directly with the cops and city hall politicians. For years, they have been the “official protest movement” because they represent no threat to the status quo, in fact, they receive corporate and gov’t grant money and other special privileges from city officials to mislead the masses of people.

Yesterday’s so-called “people’s protest against police operations” is no different. While Black people in this city are subjected to daily “stop and frisk” and other brutal police harassment, not to mention there have been 23 civilians killed by the police since February 2012, the majority of whom are Black, that did not concern these people. In fact, not one word was uttered about this campaign of police murder and all the lives that were lost, instead it was about middle class concerns over the way the police “does its business”. See, this group thinks of itself as part of the police department and the governmental structure, designed to “keep the peace”. That is one reason why we call them the “Peace Police”.

Shamefully, their bogus “united front” called Memphis United, which was earlier discredited by working with the cops, the Mayor’s office and the Chamber of Commerce to undermine the March 30, 2013 anti-Klan demonstration, resurfaced to “lead” this bogus event. These are the same people who when the Klan came to town, hid out themselves at an “alternate event”, denounced the very idea of protesting the fascists, and characterized protesters as “troublemakers”. They encouraged people to come to their location, rather than the downtown protest. Back then, they even worked with the cops on their security plan to hold back demonstrators and put us in a “protest pen”. When word of this leaked out, they went out of existence in disgrace. We must never forget this treachery, and somehow believe that yesterday’s “protest” was real, rather than play-acting or lobbying for more privileges for their middle class coalition.

This is the kind of counterinsurgency you have in this period, where bogus middle class front groups working with the cops and the political establishment try to undermine real grassroots protest movements of families whose husbands, sons and children were murdered by cops, who worked with Black Autonomy. This scam protest could not take place with the added connivance

of the white corporate media, who fawn after the every move of this white-led campaign. The truth is they are not confronting the police about their civilian body count, they are talking about the “restrictions” on their rights. Of course, we do not want activists to be arresting for video-taping police, but that is not more important than people losing their lives because of excessive use of force by Memphis cops, and the police state they have created in Black poor and working class communities.

This all started on October 25, 2013 when the cops harassed and arrested people who were filming them during a hip hop event. Black Autonomy members were part of the attendees at the public event to protest the harassment, and we proposed a protest campaign at that time, rather than negotiations, filing a police internal affairs complaint, or begging for an apology from the cops who had hassled them. When we presented this, we were rejected and pushed out of the coalition at the time by a flunky of the Memphis Peace and Justice Center coalition, who said that we “threatened his authority.” Now, it appears that they have found out what we were saying was true, and are trying to adopt some of the ideas we raised in our proposal, but do it in an underhanded way.

Yet, they still refuse to confront the cops over all the fatal police shootings in Memphis, which leads the entire country. So, this event was about their middle class privileges to video police, not that of fighting police brutality or defending the rights of poor and working people in the Black community.

It is important for radical activists to understand how this works in this period where left-liberals are used by the cops, so that activists and community organizers can know what is real and what is bogus, who are their enemies and who are their friends, and how the government and corporations can and does finance their own op positional movement with nonprofit organizations who accept corporate/government grants.

You also need to understand how this works so that you can see that this is not a real protest movement, it is instead a game of deception to keep those forces in power who have traditionally been there: the capitalist class and their corrupt politicians. So every march is not a genuine protest, some are political theatrics.

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