

Understanding Baltimore's Violence

As much as the United States thinks it's made lots of progress on racial equality we have a black president, you know the on-the-street reality has, in many ways, gotten worse with the "war on drugs," police violence and other repressive policies devastating black communities – and finally provoking a violent response, says Daniel Patrick Welch.

By Daniel Patrick Welch

First of all, spare me any #notallwhites vitriol because **you** haven't personally lynched any black people today. If that is your initial reaction, you have already missed the points I haven't even made yet. You might want to stop reading here (though you in particular should probably read the whole thing).

It is a thing of sheer beauty – terrible, evil beauty to be sure. But beauty nonetheless in the way that a near perfect, almost poetic conflation of hubris, hyperbole and hypocrisy can be admired for its boldness and bluster: Resistance to oppression is required to be polite, and to conform to standards of politeness set by the very oppressors themselves and their allies, witting or un-.

FUCK YOU. The youth of Baltimore are rising and expressing a pent up rage that is centuries in the making. It is not for me to tut-tut and impose my idea of political organization. The Left needs to watch, and learn. Look at who is protecting whom, who is threatening whom, who is siding with whom. Judge the media. Judge the police state. Judge a white supremacist society in all of its tentacles that shape our perception and experience in so many fields. This is the lens through which to understand what's going on.

As one friend sardonically observed, "White people care more about white property than black lives, which is ironic, considering black lives used to be white property. Through memes and social media, friends probe the irony of white people rushing to defend the property rights of a megacorporation whose greed for profit has destroyed more local businesses in Baltimore than "looters" ever could, spawning the hashtag #jesuiscvs and "White people be like #AllStoresMatter."

The rising body count from what seems to be unchecked police violence is old news to those raising black and brown children in this society. These tips of the iceberg that gain national attention are a window into the daily worries of our communities, shedding light on what a challenging and scary proposition it is – some of the dangers and fears parents of white children rarely have to confront.

This is probably why outside observers completely miss the significance of the now viral footage of the black mother beating her son in public in Baltimore. Police and media tout her as a model mom, implying that she was against the protests or thought her son should respect the police.

The simple fact was far less dramatic – in her own words she just didn't want her son to be another Freddie Gray – a fact immediately obvious to those in the community, but perhaps lost on those who thrill at the idea of someone **anyone** – beating down a young black man.

For our own part, we want our son to be focusing on first year finals next week, not out posing as target practice for killer cops. Parents tend to be a bit conservative when it comes to kids' lives – can you blame us? That is why we also need to watch, listen and learn.

While we were right in the middle of tweeting, texting and sharing about what police brutality's Enabler-in-chief called the "senseless violence" in Baltimore, it happened again like clockwork. Unarmed 20-year-old Terrence Kellum was shot 10 times by Immigration police (working jointly with Detroit police) in his parents' home just a few hours ago.

But please tell us again about "bad apples" and "isolated incidents," and how "some police officers did the wrong thing." Really, I'm all ears. My cousin was taken in by these same people a few years back. Guess we're lucky he made it out alive... What is also shocking (to some of us) is how invisible this internalized perspective is. The white jury watched **video** footage of Rodney King and just couldn't see police brutality.

When white observers see footage of a black mother running in the street with toilet paper and diapers – instead of a desperate mother trying to provide for her family at the end of a month (thanks for the cuts in food stamps, by the way) – they see a violent thug.

And in public, many whites aggressively pursue and defend this point of view. I was in a bar recently and had to try to keep my composure while a patron droned on and on about how the cop who drove into that kid at 50 mph had "no other choice."

And all the while I'm supposed to worry more about a killer cop's twisted ankle than the survival of my own son and brothers. Are you fucking kidding me? On what planet?? This stands at the very core of white supremacist thought – even when the "thinkers" are ignorant of it. We need to amplify our collective voice and speak out – and encourage and support those kids on the front line who are speaking truth. We are up against the most sophisticated propaganda matrix the

world has ever seen.

Remember Malcolm: “If you’re not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.”

Above all, we need to be careful. But not in the way politicians and handwringers like to think: My people have been killing you for centuries. But please, let me tell you how to resist. Or lead your movement – even better. The utterly depressing thing about the now ubiquitous comparisons to the “riots” of the 1960s is that, 50 years later, conditions are actually **more** hopeless.

Inequality is measurably, tangibly worse. There is no talk of a national commission or legislation to address the elephant in the room. No opposition to the status quo of the police state is tolerated from any quarter taken seriously; there is no organized dissent or political force to push back.

Moreover, and even more dangerous, the increased repression is part and parcel of a global assault on all the peoples and countries of the Global South – a worldwide Jim Crow, as it were – by an ever-more-bloodthirsty unipolar war machine. Scary, depressing shit.

This is a **global** struggle, folks. The fight to eliminate broken windows police terror at home is inextricably linked to the struggles of our global south peoples to push back against the systemic and overwhelming violence that fuels endless imperial wars.

The symbolic and real juxtaposition of Palestinian and American youth, cast in rock-throwing positions side by side, raised the tag “Baltimore Intifada.” What they use against these kids is what has been, is being, and will be trotted out to repress dissent not only against them, but any of us who try to resist.

Cartoonist Matt Lubansky penned a hilarious and pointed piece titled “Great Moments in the History of Peaceful Protest.” Example: “1791: Haitian slaves ask very nicely to be freed and are immediately liberated by all those reasonable white people.” It is a brilliant prebuttal to all the fools who can’t repress the need to preach to the next generation of revolutionaries how they would get much farther if they would just calm down and circulate a few petitions.

And vote for Hillary!

(c) 2015 Daniel Patrick Welch. Reprint permission granted with credit and link to danielpwelch.com . Political analyst, writer, linguist and activist Daniel Patrick Welch lives and writes in Salem, Massachusetts, with his wife. Together they run The Greenhouse School. Welch has also appeared in numerous television

and radio interviews, and can be available for comment and analysis as his day job permits.

In Case You Missed...

Some of our special stories in May focused on the Ukraine crisis, the continuing fallout from neocon war strategies, and some inconvenient truths about Jesus.

["Who's the Propagandist: US or RT?"](#) by Robert Parry, May 1, 2014

["Twisting Putin's Words on Ukraine"](#) by Robert Parry, May 2, 2014

["A People's War in East Ukraine"](#) by Daniel Patrick Welch, May 3, 2014

["Will Ukraine Be NYT's Waterloo"](#) by Robert Parry, May 3, 2014

["Needed: Obama-Putin Summit on Ukraine"](#) by Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, May 4, 2014

["Another NYT 'Sort of' Retraction on Ukraine"](#) by Robert Parry, May 4, 2014

["Ukraine's Dr. Strangelove Reality"](#) by Robert Parry, May 5, 2014

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["How NATO Jabs Russia on Ukraine"](#) by Ray McGovern, May 15, 2014

["The Bloody Victory at Monte Cassino"](#) by Don North, May 18, 2014

["Chastened Saudis Look to Iran Détente"](#) by Andres Cala, May 19, 2014

["Jesus Mandate: Peace and Stewardship"](#) by Rev. Howard Bess, May 23, 2014

["The Proud Message of Utah Phillips"](#) by Richard L. Fricker, May 23, 2014

["The State Department's Ukraine Fiasco"](#) by Robert Parry, May 24, 2014

["WPost Seeks US-Patrolled 'Safe Zone' in Syria"](#) by Ray McGovern, May 25, 2014

["NYT's One-Sided Ukraine Narrative"](#) by Robert Parry, May 26, 2014

["One More Casualty of US Wars"](#) by Richard L. Fricker, May 27, 2014

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A People's War in East Ukraine

Ukraine's Western-backed coup regime in Kiev has launched an offensive against ethnic Russians in the east while a pro-regime mob used fire to kill some 31 anti-regime protesters in Odessa. Virtually all U.S. pundits favor the coup regime, but Daniel Patrick Welch offers a different view of the conflict

By Daniel Patrick Welch

As the fog of war descends on Ukraine, it is important to shout a few main points from the rooftops before they get lost in the details. A coup-appointed junta in Kiev, designed, engineered and controlled from Washington, has begun a massive armed assault on its citizens in the east.

This war crime is no longer in doubt. Nor can there be any more doubt about who is pulling the strings. The illegitimate junta has done what its International

Monetary Fund masters demanded it do just the other day. Pointedly and tellingly the Washington-based IMF, the mafia enforcer of western capital, issued a statement saying that the crushing austerity agreement – already a death sentence for many Ukrainians living at subsistence levels – might have to be “revised” if the chosen cabal in Kiev could not control the rebellious and resource-rich eastern regions, the grand prize in the whole “democracy” charade.

The junta, using a rump military and fascist shock troops, has dutifully complied, a shameful and disgusting moment in world history. It is also, however, a moment that I think will be transformative in ways we can’t even yet understand.

For a moment, I was afraid that in a fully militarized phase the resistance would be less able to access its chief asset – the people. When war breaks out, soldiers are not forced to confront the humanity of their opponents, and we would no longer see scenes like cordons of ordinary people trying to stop tanks with their bare hands. I was wrong again, I fully admit. The struggle, like life, teaches me something new every day. The people’s resilience is love itself, and I am in awe of their courage; I wake up every morning glad to be alive because I’m glad they are still alive.

And a giant middle finger to the “peace” community in the West, these apologists of the war machine, and especially liberals and elements of the First-World Left who are always the last to see that their purist intellectual detachment is always – **always** – suspiciously close to empire’s agenda, who watch (and cheerlead!) while the U.S. and its proxies slaughter innocents and thwart the will of the people from Afghanistan to Zaporizhia, a city in southeastern Ukraine.

The United Nations has exposed itself as an eager and unabashed tool of western supremacy and apologist for the crimes of empire. It will be discarded along with the other detritus of the old world as UNjust, UNequal and UNwilling to break the yoke of the western paradigm. I think the organization is much worse than useless.

I actually think this conflict in Ukraine is the death knell for the UN, along with the IMF/EU/NATO and all the other western organizations which act in concert to try to force billions of people to believe that $2 + 2 = 5$. They are the problem, and they have no solutions. As it should be – for as Eduardo Galeano gently reminded us, “it would be strange if the remedy should come from the United States, the same place which brings us the disease.”

Amid the lies and distortions of a bought-and-sold press and a government propaganda machine, we can still cut through the bullshit and see the hustlers

for what they are: pitchmen of a war machine hell bent on selling us more death and destruction. We all have it within us to refuse the pitch.

Each of us has the ability to grasp a Michael Corleone moment, in that scene from "The Godfather" in Havana in 1959, when he knew instinctively that he was right and Hyman Roth was wrong. Though no fan of the revolution, he saw that it was a bad investment when Castro's revolutionaries would rather kill themselves than be captured.

The current crisis presents many such opportunities, not the least of which are those stories and images of people stopping tanks with their own bodies. One moment of particular clarity for me came in an absolutely stunning interview by Graham Phillips of a man on the street in Kramatorsk, who condensed what it's all about for the people of East Ukraine in two and a half minutes. Eloquent, impassioned and clear, it still brings a lump to my throat.

"Furthermore, the Banderites who have now come here and want to impose their ideology on us have given us a precious gift because they have awakened for us in East Ukraine our patriotism, which had been dormant for many years."
(“Banderites” is a name for the neo-Nazi militants who spearheaded the Feb. 22 coup which ousted Ukraine’s elected President Viktor Yanukovich. They are proud followers of Stepan Bandera, who led Ukrainian forces in World War II that collaborated with the Nazis in the extermination of Jews and Poles in pursuit of a racially pure Ukraine. The Banderites are contemptuous of the ethnic Russians of eastern Ukraine whom they considered inferior, if not sub-human.)

The man continued: “This happened because people [in East Ukraine] had forgotten more or less who they used to be, who they had become. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to a kind of depression. People saw this event, the collapse of the Soviet Union, as a kind of natural disaster. The Soviet Union fell apart, and the rain came. People didn’t understand what had happened – they were demoralized, they used to believe in their leaders.

“Now people understand that it is not necessary to believe in leaders. We don’t need to believe in any Yanukovich, we don’t need to believe in a Party of Regions. We need to organize ourselves **by** ourselves– and to remember our own history, remember our own culture. That is our foundation.

“So thank you to all the Banderites who have come into Kiev, and who have made people remember who they are, who they are in the world, and above all **why** they are here on this earth.”

Filter this in among the ludicrous and increasingly obvious slanders about “pro-Russian separatists,” “pro-Russian Russians” and other ill-fitting and

deliberately vilifying terms to synch up with the ginned-up Russophobia now polluting virtually all western airwaves. One might consider the similarly bizarre yet more honest term “pro-self selves,” or “pro-self humans.” Or simply, “People who object to being killed.”

As the helicopters and missiles start flying, you can feel the desperation of a people under attack, as in this more pointed “Letter from East Ukraine,” from those whose grandparents fought and died to defeat fascism:

“Each Banderite scum, each rat of the National Guard and other gangs must know this: you came to our land with weapons! You’ve come to kill us in our land! So don’t expect any mercy from us! You will find only grim death! Because you have not yet tasted Slavic-Russian anger! But it will overwhelm you in a severe, violent flame! Do you think we are afraid? We, Russians in the South-East afraid? You are very, very deeply mistaken. And not many of you will be able to understand, as few of you will get to return from the South-East.

“So ask your parents, wives, sisters, from the heart to prepare coffins for their husbands, sons and brothers. Or at least a place in the cemetery, as most of the bodies may be hard to find.

“We have nowhere to retreat and we are Russians, though for a while yet with Ukrainian passports. We are Russians, who never give up! We will defend ourselves to the last bullet, the last grenade, to our last breath! And if we die, we die for the glory of the Russian land! We will never be under the Banderite fascist scum!

“Brothers, Slavs, Russians, if we perish, avenge us. Death to fascism!”

Even more astonishing, beyond geography and cultural ties, an experiment in western Ukraine is quite eye-opening. Ukrainian TV in the central-western town of Zhytomir sent Maidan activists posing as armed southeastern rebels (opposed to the Kiev regime) to the town center of Zhytomir asking for directions. The pretend rebels were apparently quite surprised that local residents willingly helped them, even giving details on how to avoid police checkpoints. Then, armed, they stood for a time by the local police station, and no one paid them any attention.

In other words, the mask is off, and the junta is done. Massive, suppressive violence is the only way for the western puppet junta to maintain power. They will kill a good number of people, but their deaths will be avenged, and the world will be transformed. It is an amazing moment.

I often dig into my repertoire of Irish Republican songs, a wellspring of sentiment that defines moments like these, encapsulating the often vulgar

determination of a people with their backs to the wall:

Go on home, British soldiers, go on home
Have you got no fucking homes of your own?
For eight hundred years we have fought you without fear
And we'll fight you for eight hundred more

A new world is arising right before our eyes, and those who still don't see it will be consigned to the dustbin of history. Are you ready? Do you hear the people sing? The heroic people of southeast Ukraine are taking a stand for us all, on behalf of the peoples of the world and against the sick and sorry world the Washington consensus wants to sell us.

It is developing and unfolding now, and we can't quite predict its course. We do, however, have the power to choose whether we want to be on the right side of history. In the words of the old gospel spiritual:

Get on board, little children
Get on board, little children
Get on board, little children
The ark is a gonna move!

(c) 2014 Daniel Patrick Welch is a political analyst, writer, linguist and activist. Daniel Patrick Welch lives and writes in Salem, Massachusetts, with his wife. Together they run The Greenhouse School (<http://www.greenhouseschool.org>). A version of this article first appeared at <http://danielpwelch.com> . This version has undergone some copy-editing to provide additional background for the purpose of clarity.
