



**LINKING FERGUSON, FLINT AND TRUMP:
MAPPING AMERICA'S RACIAL RIVERS AND ROADWAYS**
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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

THERE IS CLEARLY SOMETHING HOLLOW and shamelessly hypocritical about the eleven-hour expressions of surprise and alarm concerning the emergence, racist rant and savage and simple-minded solutions to national and global problems posed by the un-presidential candidate Donald Trump. It carries with it an odor of feigned forgetfulness, convenient amnesia and a willing accomplice's pretended innocence and ignorance at the scene of the crime. But whatever excuses, explanations and justifications are assembled to denounce and declare distance from Trump now, we should all admit he has, all along the way, had an abundance of allies and fellow travelers—whether through open support and sanction or secret and silent acceptance.

And we should also concede that the polluted rivers, rutted roads, bloody streets and dark alleys that lead to Trump have passed thru Ferguson, Flint and flooded New Orleans; through Baltimore, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Mississippi and Pennsylvania, Charleston, New York, Cleveland and other well-known sites of lynching, killings, hatred, hostility, systemic violence and man-made disasters, peddled and posed as necessary, normal and justifiable in racial, religious and realpolitik terms. There is also a blood-red line of history that runs through Haiti, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Hawaii, the Philippines, Australia and all other places coveted, conquered and occupied by the U.S. and its most favored and lavishly funded allies and associates.

Trump is a reflection of a city and society that regularly commits to pay its police's legal and settlement costs for their violence against the vulnerable, the feared and the hated; that raises legal funds for and exonerates its racist vigilantes, and that gives armed White right wingers weeks to surrender, but justifies police killing a little Black boy with a toy pistol immediately upon arriving on the scene.

He is a real representative of a city and society that privileges profit over people, especially people of color and the poor, and like Flint causes the poisoning of its water system and citizens to save money and denies the evidence of fecal matter, lead and other toxic chemical and their causing rashes, hair loss, lead poisoning, legionnaires disease, leukemia, birth defects, kidney failure, cancer, problems of memory and vision, and loss of life. Having been forced to face the human catastrophe in its raw and unscripted form, the governor of Michigan considers it a public relations problem rather than a health and human crisis and hires a PR firm, instead of fixing the problem and providing the medical and social services urgently needed.

Therefore, it is dishonest and self-deceptive to pretend that the U.S. government, its corporate collaborators and favored allies have not already done and are doing, in various ways and places, what Trump proposes and promises if elected. Nor are his republican rivals proposing a different road or route to "making America great again". So let's face it; Trump is not the first to propose or build an apartheid wall of separation which this country condoned and helped fund, nor the first to justify torture and propose its legalization. Nor is he the first to propose killing the families of suspects and nor will he be the first to do it, if he assumes power. Indeed, it is going on now unannounced by this country and its allies of various so-called democratic and dictatorial kinds. Sometimes, it is called collateral damage when discovered or a mistake, a technological misreading in targeting the ever-present and useful "terrorists". But whatever it is called, it is always deadly and destructive to its victims and their way of life.

Trump comes from a mind-set or culture that has a deep and abiding affinity for wealth and war, and thus having declared persons, groups and peoples enemies of God, country

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and corporations, it can and does, without moral reflection or flinching, mercilessly bomb hospitals, schools, religious institutions, wedding parties, men and women at work, children at play and whole cities. It is all rooted in a racist, classist and anti-human conception of human life, a perversity of perception that devalues the different, posits the vulnerable as prey, and sees any disability, disadvantaging, disease, death or disaster of others as self-inflicted and unworthy of recognition or remedy.

Moreover, Trump finds a kindred "soul" in the corporate media which has given him unlimited and continuous opportunities to whip up the White masses, playing on their racial and religious fears and hatreds, their social and economic insecurities, and their penchant for a patriotism of suppression and supremacy of racial and religious kinds. Indeed, the media calls the man-made or human caused disaster and catastrophe in Flint a "water crisis" as if the water was having a crisis rather than the people. But it is clearly a *human crisis* which is multidimensional, i.e., a health crisis, an education crisis, an employment crisis, a political crisis. And it is about the lives of real people, their needless and cruel suffering imposed by racialized and racist practices of *domination, deprivation and degradation*.

It is racialized and racist fare, peddled at bargain prices not only at rallies, but in the media which advertises the spectacle of racial fire-feeding as merely an angry populace—read White people—clamoring to rid itself of the established group. But again, this is no more than media mystification and manufacture of fantasies for alienated and angry Whites, who are looking for a soft and easy target in the vulnerable peoples of society and the world. For although Trump is clearly outlandish and ever outrageous, he is no outsider.

He belongs to the corporate class. And before his embarrassing exposure of his class' ruthless thought and customary practice, he was their golf and plunder partner, routinely discussing conquest, occupation, outsourcing and resource robbery over long lunches and decision-making dinners.

Trump's mistake is his unrestrained race and class ranting, his lack of class discipline and desire to tell it all before he actually does it. His fellow class compatriots want to say it and do it in the dark and then deny it. But if they decide to do it in the light, they will develop a set of lengthy and intricate lies to justify it or minimize its moral monstrosity by calling it "stupid" rather than *radically evil*. So Trump's speech is pathetically uninformed, abusive, racist and even at times infantile, but his class and race interests are the same and theirs, i.e., domination, deprivation and degradation of others for the benefit of the chosen few in race, religion and class terms.

And so here we are at a critical juncture in American and African American, indeed African and world history and we must think deeply and decisively about where we go from here. President Obama is about to make his exit and perhaps this will help break middle class leadership and too many of the masses from the disabling deference they extended to him—given the racist attacks on him personally and his policies and given what we hoped he would stand for and achieve. But again in our hearts we know a man can never be a substitute for a movement, and that it is a self-conscious, organized and engaged people that must wage the righteous and relentless struggle to free ourselves and be ourselves in the most expansive ways and build with other oppressed, struggling and progressive peoples the good society and world we deserve, need and know is possible.

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