



The “Floyd Crisis” and How to Resolve It

by Dr. Hanan Shai

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Although the “Floyd crisis” in the US contains the seeds of civil war, acknowledgment of the historical errors that gave rise to this crisis, taking responsibility, and making a commitment to rectify those errors could make this a shining moment for the American people and a milestone in the history of democracy.

The situation of the black community in the US is a societal ticking bomb that threatens American democracy and the wellbeing of the world. If the response to the vandalizing of statues, the looting, and the sowing of destruction is the closure of police departments, that would be a sign that utopian European liberalism is again rearing its head and the fascist right will probably not be far behind.

As in the past, utopian liberalism’s intentions during the “Floyd crisis” are essentially good. As always, though, the problem lies in how proponents of those utopian ideals are putting their views into practice. By violently destroying the old and demanding its replacement with a “new” world based on utopian values—which are to be enforced through threats, intimidation, violence, public shaming, stifling of free speech, and character assassination—the proponents of this new world order are employing the modus operandi of the fascist extreme right. This behavior was authorized by philosophical leaders like Sartre, who said “destruction is vital” to carry out a revolution.

The solution to the ongoing injustice faced by the US black community should be sought in conservative American liberalism—the values embraced by the fathers of the American Revolution. They drew from the biblical liberalism of freedom and justice, though they did not always adhere to its spirit.

The American colonies’ rebellion against the British Empire was based on the value of freedom and the biblical ethos of the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt.

Engraved on the bell that the citizens of Philadelphia procured for the independence ceremony are the words: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." That proclamation did not, however, apply to blacks in the US, who had to wait almost a century to be freed from their enslavement in a blood-soaked civil war. Even then, they were not given grants with which to begin their lives as free men (in the spirit of the biblical injunction "And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty"). It could be that the perception of the freed slaves as foreigners fostered the longstanding discrimination against the blacks.

Nor was the value of justice applied in the US in the spirit of true liberalism. Originally, economic justice meant compensating the weak by taxing the rich, whose wealth was the product of their power and advantages. Influenced by Adam Smith's notion of the "invisible hand," in the US the original biblical value of justice was converted into the value of "fairness"—meaning capitalism without external regulation; that is, a cruel economic "state of nature." Opposition to external regulation stemmed to a degree from the Calvinist idea of predestination, according to which an individual's fate is determined in advance. From that standpoint, a wealthy man is loved by God, while a poor man is a sinner—and even reaching out to support him is a sin.

Because of the perversion of the original spirit of the values of freedom and justice, the freed blacks began their march toward independence on the wrong foot. Without existing wealth with which to build economic independence, and without the legitimacy to receive economic support, they bore a mark of Cain: they were perceived as unloved by God and perhaps even as foreigners.

The result was that the black community got caught in a cul-de-sac of poverty, ignorance, crime, alcohol, drugs, disease, incarceration, destruction of the family unit, hate, and despair. That too few succeeded in extricating themselves from this blind alley is attested to by the high rate of black men imprisoned in the US—over 40%, triple their relative size in the population. This problem was not alleviated during President Obama's tenure.

The vicious circle that the "Floyd crisis" and similar past crises have produced must be broken—not by dismantling the police, which would be like someone having his teeth pulled because he bit his tongue; nor by a fascism of destruction of property and monuments that sparks a counter-fascism from the far right; but in line with another fundamental value of original liberalism: constructivism.

Constructivism refers to the individual's duty to improve by constantly scrutinizing one's own actions, identifying and acknowledging failures,

taking responsibility for them, rectifying them, preventing them from recurring, and not covering them up.

To a large extent, American capitalism owed its huge success to the immense initial wealth that accumulated from the exploitation of millions of slaves. The US government thus bears long-term responsibility for the blacks' position. In keeping with the value of constructivism, it has a moral obligation to provide the descendants of slaves with compensations that were denied to their forebears.

This would not be a gift, charity, or a handout, but an important national investment in the infrastructure of black lives that would also pay off for Americans in general. The measure could be implemented in three ways: a grant for the purchase of health insurance aimed at improving the poor health of black community members; a grant for higher education tuition aimed at enhancing blacks' integration into all societal and economic spheres; and a family grant aimed at encouraging the formation of stable family units and the return of parental authority—particularly paternal authority, which is sorely lacking in this community.

The grants to be provided to every needy black citizen who requests them should be extended over a period of decades in the form of standing loans for life. It could be that rectifying the great injustice in itself, alongside the awareness that criminal activity would cause the grants to be withheld, would mean the police can scale down and alter their crime-fighting policy. Moreover, the likely broad political support for a “new deal” for the black community could be a great unifying moment for the American people, who are now torn between the traditional conservative liberalism of the Republicans and the Democrats' opposing values, which reflect progressive European liberalism.

Remedying this great historical injustice by acknowledging truth, assuming responsibility, and meting out justice could be a formative event in the history of democracy and an example for all humanity.

Dr. Hanan Shai is lecturer in strategic, political, and military thought in the Political Science Department at Bar-Ilan University.