

Cottage Grove Sentinel
 116 N. Sixth St.
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

Opinion

The First Amendment
 Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



Let's change history together

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

White people in America are clearly steeped in a very real moment. We are being urged to listen, reckon, reflect and act. We are being asked, in so many ways, to open our ears, eyes, hearts and brains in ways that many of us have never done before. And in doing so, there will certainly be feelings of guilt, remorse, sadness, outrage, confusion, compassion and a myriad of other emotions and impulses coursing through us.

However, if done right, what can come from this breakthrough societal moment cannot be denied. Following the lead from communities of color, what will emerge is a clarity to drive forward the efforts needed to break the cycles of oppression and racism — to dismantle the systems that validate oppression and racism.

Together, we will build a just system that honors and respects all life. This is not only possible, but inevitable.

In a recent *New York Times* op-ed drafted by William Barber II, Liz Theoharis, Timothy B. Tyson and Cornel West titled, "What the Courage to Change History Looks Like", they said this:

"Cries of 'I can't breathe' call out in compelling shorthand, America's enduring racial chasm in every measure of well-being: health care and infant mortality, wages and wealth, unemployment, education, housing, policing and criminal justice, water quality and environmental safety.

"The bills that bustle through our legislatures offer narrow reforms of police procedures and bypass the fullness of what the protesters are saying: The children of privilege are protected not by a higher grade of policing, but by deeper layers of resources — and that is what

ought to protect all of our children." The collective goes on to sharpen its ridicule of legislative bodies by saying, "You cannot solve what is happening to Black people in this country by 'mere policy tinkering', but that you must dismantle the interlocking systems created by and for white supremacy and gen-

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Michelle Holman Community Rights Lane County

der-based oppressions." With dismantling comes the opportunity to rebuild, and how we rebuild will be crucial.

Seeing the world as a collection of systems is so critical. It's why the phrase "interlocking systems" is so powerful because of the truth it speaks. It is also why the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) lays out various demands vs. narrowing their focus on just the brutality of policing towards black people. A critical piece — one that does not receive the attention it deserves to those "interlocking" platforms — is the call for community control:

"We demand a world where those most impacted in our communities control the laws, institutions and policies that are meant to serve us — from our schools to our local budgets, economies, police departments and our land — while recognizing that the rights and histories of our Indigenous family must also be respected."

This is not a new demand, but one that has been part of the Black resistance since its inception.

The ability to self-determine is a necessary element for balance, equity, survival, evolution and the protection of the sacred. This drive for self-determination — a community self-determination — cannot be stopped or ignored.

I include the two following clauses, not as a distraction from the focus on

Black lives, but as a sharpening of that lens by reminding everyone that the drive for community control is universal. It is inherent. It is what we all want and it can be a major aid in universally binding us together:

1) Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

— Article 3, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

2) The people of Lincoln County possess both a collective and individual right of self-government in their local community, a right to a system of government that embodies that right, and the right to a system of government that protects and secures their human, civil, and collective rights.

— *Law adopted by the people of Lincoln County, Oregon to ban aerial spray of pesticides*

The dismantling of "the interlocking systems, created by and for white supremacy and gender-based oppressions", is a must. But before we even arrive at the moment where those systems come crumbling down, we need to vision what we want to collectively rebuild.

Recognizing that so many of us want the same things — that we understand that decentralizing power is vital to achieving our collective needs and desires — will be the very power that sends us on the path forward. We need to be decision-makers in our communities, thereby creating real, authentic, capital "D" Democracy.

Barber, Theoharis, Tyson, and West finish their statement on the state of America and Black lives by saying "All demand that our legacy must include a livable planet. Black and white, immigrant and Indigenous, Asian-American and Latinx, straight and LGBTQ, of every hue and faith ..."

We are all being called out, called up, called to come together, and called to act. Let's change history together.

What is happening to our nation?

There have been many peaceful marches since the unjust and horrific murder of George Floyd. People marching against police brutality and for the equality of the Black community.

But the officer who committed this evil, along with the three other officers who watched and did nothing to help the victim, are being prosecuted for murder and aiding and abetting murder.

Is there racism? Yes, there always has been, but I don't believe for one minute that it is systemic. I believe our country is filled with good people who are against it and that our country has come a long way in the fight to stop racism.

Now all we hear is that it is only White people who are racist. That in itself is racism — a reverse racism. You can't erase racism against one group of people by replacing it with racism against another group of people. Just like you can't blame every police officer for what a small few have done.

We have all seen the destruction, looting and burning of business. Statues being toppled of people who

fought for and against slavery, along with statues of people who had nothing to do with any of that — such as Christopher Columbus and many others.

People have been threatened and

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Loise Worley Cottage Grove

called racist because they are White. Other people have been beaten, shot and injured trying to protect their property.

We have also seen violence against police officers, the majority of whom are there to protect innocent people. Some of them have been murdered and many have been injured.

Many may or may not know that the BLM Organization's movement has more to do with power than it does with Black lives. One of the group's founders, Patrisse Cullors, openly states that she is a Marxist. In a 2015 interview, she assured her interviewer that the group has an underlying ide-

ology: "We are trained Marxists."

Karl Marx (1818–1883), a communist, is best known as a revolutionary whose works inspired the foundation of many communist regimes in the 20th century.

Marxists define capital as "a social, economic relation" between people (rather than between people and things). In this sense, they seek to abolish capitalism.

The people who are taking over sections of cities and tearing down statues, rioting and yelling BLM and "defund the police" are all about intimidation and power. Their movement has nothing to do with statues, masks or policing. These are the tools they are using is to bring about a social change to take away our civil liberties.

If we really want peace in our country, we have to stop and think about what we are doing to each other and what is actually happening to us as a nation. Like myself, I am sure that most would like to see their children and grandchildren enjoy the freedom and rights that we have enjoyed — and for the most part have taken for granted.

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The *Sentinel* welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The *Sentinel* readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

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Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must: 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

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Periodicals postage paid at Cottage Grove, Oregon.
 Postmaster: Send address changes to P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

Local Mail Service:

If you don't receive your Cottage Grove Sentinel on the THURSDAY of publication, please let us know.
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