



WORKS

any sort of racial unity. Historically, racializing situations has been one of the first measures the state takes to put down rebellions. Whether it was class rebellions against the state in the sixteen and seventeen hundreds or anti-police rebellions in the past decade. The term “outside agitator” was actually first used in the US in the 60’s by a southern Sheriff to describe whites coming down to collaborate and struggle with blacks against segregation. Being in this uprising was the closest I’ve ever felt to people taking real steps to break apart their identities based on race, gender, class, anarchist, etc. Obviously these identities weren’t actually gone, and there were still many dynamics at play based on them, but they started to weaken. And so that was one of the first things that the state (and the many micro-states, or anyone who sought to gain control of the situation) attempted to re-instate. It was visible when the police talked about ‘white anarchists’ and instantly some leftists groups picked up this same language. There was also a strong push by more ‘radical’ groups such as the Nation of Islam, and the New Black Panther Party, to racialize things. They were in the streets trying to push a line that this was a black issue, and it was a struggle for black power. Unlike the leftists and politicians, these groups were in the streets every night, but it was still obvious that their attempts to racialize things was only to gain control of a crowd and push their political agenda.

Nikola: It seems like gender was also a key factor. I’ve heard accounts of Al Sharpton and others calling for “strong black men” to step forward to help police the demonstrations, and for the young men participating in the riots to “grow up and be a man” by helping to end the rioting, or also calling for women to go home “to be with their children”. It seems like gender was an obvious axis along with race that politicians used to try to put things down.

Bart: Yeah, it was actually really funny to see the back and forth of these same groups. The leftists who were trying to gain control would be out there talking about how all the rioters were young men and there weren’t elderly people or women in an attempt to discredit the riots. Firstly, this just wasn’t true, there were so many types of people out there fighting. Even funnier was that their response was to create things like Al Sharpton’s ‘disciples of justice’ who were 100 black men that he called on to control things. They were really pushing these gender roles that women needed to go home or fall to the back, “there are women and children out here, its dangerous” or one night the Nation of Islam was out there saying “take your women home!” When you step back and look at the situation its apparent that the people discrediting the riots for being largely men in their 20’s were either the same parties or working with the same parties who were trying to push women and children off the streets at night, trying to stop the fighting in the name of defending the “women, children and elderly” that were in the streets. But the thing is, in the streets at night, when it was conflictual, people just weren’t

