

# The Internationalist



For Labor/Black/Immigrant Action to Fight Racist Terror

## Fury Over Minneapolis Police Murder of George Floyd

Only Revolution Can Bring Justice!

MAY 28 – “I can’t breathe,” George Floyd kept saying as the police officer dug a knee into his neck. This murderous torture continued for at least seven minutes as Floyd, 46, of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, lay handcuffed on the ground. Then he stopped breathing – yet another black man murdered by the racist police. For millions across the country and the world, it hauntingly, unbearably recalls the last words of Eric Garner, the Staten Island, New York man that a cop killed by chokehold in 2014 as Garner kept saying, eleven times over, “I can’t breathe.” A cellphone video of the police lynching showed Floyd desperately pleading with his killer, a Minneapolis cop: “Please, please, please, I can’t breathe. Please, man” (*Star Tribune*, 27 May).

Thousands marched through South Minneapolis Tuesday afternoon and evening, chanting “Black lives matter,” “I can’t breathe,” and demanding that the four cops responsible for Floyd’s murder be arrested and prosecuted. Protesters gathered at 38th Street and East Chicago Avenue, where Floyd was murdered, filling the streets in all directions, and then marched for three miles to the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) 3rd Precinct. There windows were shattered, and a squad car was totaled. Some protesting youth climbed on top of the building. When they were met with riot police, tear gas and rubber bullets, protesters erected barricades with shopping carts from a Target store across the street and fought back with righteous anger. Good!

Large-scale protests continued on Wednesday and are



Carlos Gonzalez / Star Tribune

**On May 26, thousands of angry protesters converged on the place where Minneapolis police murdered George Floyd the day before. The Democratic mayor asked for the National Guard, the Democratic governor called it in, Republican racist-in-chief Trump threatened “shooting” of protesters.**

spreading to other cities. In Minneapolis, police swarmed the area where furious protests were taking place. Now Mayor Jacob Frey has requested “support” from the National Guard. On top of wanton police murder of a black man, they add racist repression of the community. As outrage spread, a Metro Transit bus driver, member of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1005, announced that he would refuse to transport arrested protesters, as the MPD was demanding, and called on his fellow union members to do likewise. With police menacing the masses demanding justice for George Floyd, the entire workers movement and defenders of black and democratic rights must demand: **Cops and National Guard, get out NOW!**

This latest racist outrage occurs in the midst of the

**Break with the Democrats and All Capitalist Parties  
Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

COVID-19 pandemic, which is killing African Americans and Latinos at staggeringly high rates. Capitalism's built-in racist oppression means that those most exploited and most oppressed – who are most “essential” to profits and most expendable to the profiteers – are the most likely to die. And now the rulers' racist police choke another black man to death – it is too much to take. It has to end. To put an end to it ***we have to overthrow this capitalist system of racism and death.***

The African American, Latin American, Native American, poor and oppressed communities in the Twin Cities, including a sizeable Somali population, have long been targeted by the police. In 2015, 24-year-old Jamar Clark was shot in the head by Minneapolis cops while handcuffed and on the ground near the 4th Precinct. The next year, Philando Castile was shot to death in his car in front of his girlfriend and four-year-old daughter by a police officer in the St. Paul suburb of Falcon Heights. In 2018, Thurman Blevins was shot dead by two white cops as he pleaded, “Please don’t shoot me. Leave me alone.” And last December, Chiasher Fong Vue, a Hmong man, was killed by a squad of nine MPD officers who fired over 100 bullets.

Today, as the pandemic has led to mass unemployment, the ruling class fears that the killing of George Floyd could lead to a resurgence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement that started after the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and took off in 2014 as hundreds of thousands protested the police murder of Michael Brown, Eric Garner and so many others. And as right-wingers have besieged the Minnesota state capitol demanding an end to the COVID-19 shutdowns ordered by the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) governor, an uproar against racist repression could trigger a backlash, like the armed KKKers who attacked a BLM protest against the police murder of Jamar Clark.

So Minneapolis' DFL mayor Frey and black police chief Medaria Arradondo moved quickly to try to get out in front of the protests. “Being black in America should not be a death sentence,” said Frey after watching the bystander's video. On Tuesday, Arradondo fired the four police involved in the arrest of Floyd. The next day, the mayor said that the cop who had his knee on Floyd's neck should be arrested and tried. But as we wrote after the cop slaying of Clark:

“Democrats and Republicans will not and cannot put a stop to racist police terror because they depend on the guard dogs of capital to maintain ‘law and order.’ Some of these politicians feign support to protests like Black Lives Matter in order to make sure they don’t get ‘out of control’ (i.e., threaten the domination of United Healthcare, Target, Best Buy, 3M, U.S. Bancorp, General Mills and other giant corporations). And if protesters can’t be assuaged by ‘I feel your

Screenshot from bystander video.



Minneapolis cop knees George Floyd, killing him, 25 May 2020.

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## The Internationalist



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EPA



**Internationalists at May 27 Los Angeles protest over murder of Floyd George by Minneapolis police.**

pain' bromides, the liberals call in the cops."

—"Minneapolis: 'Cops and Klan Go Hand in Hand,'" *The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016

In the massive BLM protests in 2014, a slogan chanted by the Internationalist Group, "*Eric Garner, Michael Brown – Shut the whole system down!*" was quickly picked up. But with all the mass marches in the streets – or shutting down Interstate highways, as protesters did for a few hours on I-94 after the cop murderer of Philando Castile was acquitted – it will take much more to shut down the capitalist system. That is why the IG and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth call to *mobilize labor/black/immigrant action against racist police terror*. It is the power of the multiethnic working class, grouping around it all the oppressed, that can actually bring the wheels of racist American capitalism to a halt. And that is also why, as many chanted "No justice, no peace," we chanted the hard and necessary truth, "*Only revolution can bring justice!*"

Can the working class be mobilized against police terror? There's no better place in the U.S. to ask that question than Minneapolis, with its long history of labor struggle going back to the 1934 Teamster Strike that shut the city down. In that knock-down, drag-out fight, workers squared off with scabs, strikebreaking cops and deputies of the Citizens' Alliance (which later allied with the fascist Silver Shirts) in the "Battle of Deputies Run," turning Minneapolis from an "open shop" haven into a

solid union town. And the answer to the question is, yes, the workers movement can and must come out in the thousands demanding an end to racist cop repression. It could happen now, not just in the distant past, but that requires class-struggle leadership.

Six years after Eric Garner's murder, five years after Jamar Clark's, four years after Philando Castile's, two years after Blevins' and six months after Fong Vue's, the video of Floyd's killing is a stark reminder that nothing has changed in the racist, capitalist U.S.A. On May 6, Sean Reed livestreamed his murder by Indianapolis, Indiana police on Facebook. After shooting Reed, one cop can be heard saying: "It's going to be a closed casket, homie."

On March 13, Breonna Taylor, an emergency medical technician in Louisville, Kentucky, was shot while sleeping in her apartment by police thugs who stormed in to serve a "no-knock warrant." And on February 23, Ahmaud Arbery was shot and killed in Georgia by a retired cop and his son. The two chased Arbery down in their pickup truck while he was out for a jog, and shot him dead like a couple of Ku Klux Klan night-riders. The lynchings never stop.

"Driving while black," "jogging while black," "sleeping at home while black." Floyd is just the latest addition to the



**"Battle of Deputies Run," 21 May 1934. Hundreds of striking Teamsters ran off 1,500 police, special deputies and scabs.**

National Archives



NYC protest, May 28, against cop murder of George Floyd.

endless list of African Americans and Latinos murdered by the police, in a country where racist repression is and always has been the linchpin of capitalist exploitation. This goes back to slavery days, when runaway slaves would be hunted down by squads of slave catchers. These patrols paved the way for modern-day police departments. In recent decades, the police and courts have ramped up mass incarceration, particularly of black men, while cops across the U.S. kill an average of over 1,500 civilians a year, with black men five times as likely to be gunned down by police as white men (see “Black America Under the Gun: Workers Revolution Will Avenge Philando Castile,” *The Internationalist* No. 48, May-June 2017).

In Minneapolis, 31 people have been killed by police since 2000, 21 of them black. As in 2015, the city has asked for a civil rights investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. FBI investigations of police departments from Chicago and Baltimore to Ferguson, Missouri, have shown that they are shot through with racism, but have changed nothing.

Another favorite cop-out to disguise the racist nature of the cops is to put some “black (and Latino) faces in high places” to head the police. Arradondo is the first black police chief of Minneapolis. He replaced Janeé Harteau, who was a liberal identity politics dream: the city’s first Native American, female and openly gay police chief, all in one. She introduced body cameras and “implicit bias training.” But police racism isn’t implicit, it is overt and *systemic*: it expresses the function and nature of the police and “criminal justice system” in this racist capitalist society. Harteau managed to tough it out through the crisis over Clark’s killing, but was forced out after police murdered a white Australian woman, Justine Damond, outside her home, after she had called to report a possible sexual assault. This happened just weeks after the Latino cop who killed Philando Castile was acquitted. Whatever the ethnicity, the job of the police is to enforce racist capitalist “law and order.”

One demand heard in Tuesday’s protests, trumpeted by various opportunist left groups, is the call to “jail killer cops.” Certainly, *Derek Chauvin*, the officer who knelt *George Floyd* to

death, *Tou Thao* who stood by and protected his murderous partner, and the other two officers involved are all guilty of murder and should spend the rest of their lives behind bars. But as revolutionary Marxists, we must warn that this won’t happen in the capitalist U.S.A.: the bourgeois politicians will go all out to protect their professional killers-in-blue. Similarly, calls by reformist leftists for “community policing,” “community control of the police” and the like only build illusions, which can be exploited by skillful capitalist politicians, as Minneapolis mayor Frey just did by calling to jail and charge killer cop Chauvin. (Democratic congresswoman Ilhan Omar, a favorite of the pseudo-socialists, didn’t even go that far, only calling for an investigation.)

Those who stand on the side of the oppressed must look not to the bosses’ state but to *our own* forces, above all the working class. After Jamar Clark was killed in 2015, over 200 union members

from around the Twin Cities protested outside the 4th Precinct, including from the Minnesota Nurses Association, Letter Carriers, SEIU Healthcare MN, St. Paul Federation of Teachers, and CWA Local 7250. *We need much more today.*

Class-conscious workers and defenders of democratic rights should respond to the police murder of George Floyd by fighting for *mass workers action joining with the black population and all the oppressed to shut the Twin Cities down!* This means *breaking with the Democrats and all capitalist parties and politicians*. In almost every big city in the U.S., *Democratic mayors are the bosses of the racist killer cops*. It is urgently necessary to *build a revolutionary workers party*, for the inescapable fact is that *justice for George Floyd and all those killed by this racist system can only be achieved by socialist revolution*, which alone can bring down the murderous capitalist state and open the way to black freedom and the liberation of all the exploited and oppressed. ■



George Floyd



# Police Murder of Jamar Clark, November 2015

## Minneapolis: “Cops and Klan Go Hand in Hand”

*Reprinted from The Internationalist No. 42, January-February 2016.*

In the early hours of Sunday, November 15 [2015], an unarmed black man, Jamar Clark, 24, was shot in the head by police in north Minneapolis, Minnesota just a couple blocks from the 4th Precinct station. A crowd gathered at the scene screaming at the cops. According to witnesses, Jamar was in handcuffs when he was shot. Police at first denied he was cuffed, but the Minneapolis Bureau of Criminal Apprehensions later said it was “still examining” the issue. Handcuffed or not, whatever the circumstances of what authorities are calling his “altercation” with the police, Jamar Clark is one more victim of murderous, racist U.S. capitalist rule. Even in “progressive” Minneapolis, police murder unarmed black men in plain view on the street.

The next day protests led by Minneapolis Black Lives Matter marched through the city. Family members reported that Jamar had been shot point-blank, right above the eye “execution-style.” An official of the local NAACP told the press that they had been saying for some time that “Minneapolis is just one bullet away from Ferguson. That bullet was fired last night.” The city has a history of police killings, 29 since 2000, 18 of them of black people. Two-thirds of those arrested are African Americans, although they are only 20% of the population. Minneapolis was already one of six cities nationwide in a Justice Department “pilot project” to “improve community relations.” Feeling the heat, the mayor immediately called for a federal investigation.

When Jamar died in the hospital two days later after being taken off life support, enraged protesters besieged the police station demanding that video footage from the shooting be released. Meanwhile, hundreds streamed onto the nearby I-94 freeway and shut it down for several hours; 51 were arrested. As people returned to the spot where Jamar was shot, they set up an encampment saying they wouldn’t let the issue go away. The police crackdown only escalated tension. Protest spread to the labor movement, as AFSCME Local 3800, which represents clerical workers at the University of Minnesota,



Jeff Wheeler/Star Tribune

**Black residents of North Minneapolis demand answers from police at 4th Precinct on 15 November 2015 after Jamar Clark was shot by cops.**

and the SEIU Minnesota State Council passed resolutions of solidarity with Black Lives Matter demonstrators and repudiating police attacks.

That Saturday, November 21, over 200 union members from around the Twin Cities gathered at the 4th Precinct campsite where labor officials from the state Nurses Association, Letter Carriers, and others including the vice president of SEIU Healthcare MN and the president of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers, spoke out. “It is our union’s duty to fight for our freedom ... we have nothing to lose but our chains,” said CWA Local 7250 activist Alanna Galloway to cheers and applause. But as protests continued, the police built a concrete barrier in front of the precinct. When racists began showing up, cops made “disparaging comments to those at the protests instead of taking the threat seriously,” a BLM organizer said.

Then late on November 23, four masked fascists who had previously harassed the protests appeared and began filming the camp. When a safety committee escorted them away after they refused to remove the masks, the white supremacist infiltrators began firing, shooting five protesters, all black men. A relative of Jamar Clark told the *New York Times* (25 November 2015) that the police just “sat here and watched.” When protesters asked why they didn’t do anything, the police responded, “This is what you all wanted, right?” As the would-be assassins fled, police *attacked the encampment* with pepper spray. Here was proof positive: from

the days of Jim Crow to today, “cops and Klan go hand in hand.”

The murderous attack did not deter people waging a determined fight against racist injustice. The next day, November 24, protests swelled as thousands marched on City Hall. Students and campus workers came from the UofM. Hundreds of high school students walked out at Southwest and Washburn high schools to join the downtown march, defying the previous day’s fascist attackers and drawing attention to the *de facto* segregation of Minneapolis public schools. By the end of the day, three of the white supremacist attackers were arrested. They had bragged in an on-line video that they were headed

to the protest, flashing a pistol and spewing racist insults, saying they were going to “make the fire rise” and to “stay white.”

Outrageously, and typically, the response of various politicians to the deadly attack was to *smear the protesters* and increase pressure to shut down the protest camp. Mayor Betsy Hodges held a press conference with U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison denouncing “near-daily threats to burn the precinct, kill our officers and to hurt people.” The *Star Tribune* (1 December 2015) reported, “Hodges described the scene as one with protesters’ warming fires polluting the air, makeshift barricades blocking ambulances and snowplows, and outside agitators committing violence with guns.” Finally, at 4 a.m. on December 3, the city brought in police and dump trucks and gave the Black Lives Matter protesters 15 minutes to pack up and get out or be arrested (eight were).

Significantly, all of the politicians involved are from the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party (DFL), including Mayor Hodges, Rep. Ellison, Governor Mark Dayton (of the Dayton/Target department store dynasty, married to a Rockefeller heiress) and the rest. Although Minnesota has turned to the right in recent decades, the DFL (a merger of the Democrats and the Farmer Labor Party), from which Hubert Humphrey purged the Communists in 1948, has a reputation of being on the liberal wing of the Democratic Party nationally. Yet here are the liberal Democrats lining up to defame anti-racist demonstrators, defend the cops and then order police to remove the protesters, all the while claiming to respect First Amendment rights to free speech and assembly!

Having maintained the protest camp for 18 days in the face of freezing temperatures, fascist attack, and police threats and arrests, Black Lives Matter demonstrators refused to be intimidated. On December 23, hundreds of BLM protesters converged on the Mall of America in suburban Bloomington, the largest mall in the country, to protest on one of the biggest shopping days of the year. While a judge refused to enjoin protesters from coming, the mall owners brought in an army of rent-a-cops and state police in riot gear to enforce their “right as private property owners to prohibit demonstrations



**Union members came out to protest police murder of Jamal Clark, 21 November 2015. Labor must use its power to shut down the Twin Cities over racist cop terror.**

on our property.” The evicted protesters then proceeded to the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport, where they faced a combined force of suburban police, managing to shut down access to Terminal 1 and temporarily block the highway.

Behind a liberal façade, Minneapolis has long had festering racism, and not just in the police. \* Longtime Northside residents remember Nelson Tycel, 17, shot in the back six times in 1990 while fleeing from the police. Terrance Franklin, 22, was shot ten times in the back and back of the head in 2013 because police said someone said he looked like someone involved in a burglary a week earlier. There were demonstrations then, too, and demands that police practices change, but nothing did. Then there was Dominic Felder, suffering from mental health issues, who in 2006 was shot seven times in front of family members who had called 911 for help. The current police chief, Chief Janee Harteau, says she fired officers who made racist remarks in Green Bay. But Fraternal Order of Police head Bob Kroll belches out this filth almost daily.

Democrats and Republicans will not and cannot put a stop to racist police terror because they depend on the guard dogs of capital to maintain “law and order.” Some of these politicians feign support to protests like Black Lives Matter in order to make sure they don’t get “out of control” (i.e., threaten the domination of United Healthcare, Target, Best Buy, 3M, U.S. Bancorp, General Mills and other giant corporations). And if protesters can’t be assuaged by “I feel your pain” bromides, the liberals call in the cops. It is important that hundreds of trade unionists have come out to protest the murder of Jamar Clark. In another promising effort, young members of the United Electrical Workers in Burlington, Vermont organized

*continued on page 10*

\* Recently the local Fox TV posted a casting call on its Facebook page for a “Caucasian Female co-host For Luxury Product Placement... no visible tattoos, 5’8” or taller” on a weekly TV show titled *Minnesota Nice* – until they got a flood of critical comments, and took the post down (*CityPages*, 5 January 2016)!

# Bad Apples, Broken Windows and Other Myths About the Police

*From www.internationalist.org, February 2016.*

There is lots of talk today about the police and race in America, prompted by the continued killing with impunity of unarmed black men, women, and children by cops in Ferguson, Chicago, New York, Baltimore, Cleveland, and elsewhere. Some of these legalized murders have been caught on video for all to see. This national “conversation” will not change the fundamental injustice of the capitalist system’s racist enforcement on the streets. Even the large and inspiring protests in city after city against transparent murderous police brutality and its cover-up in cop-rigged grand-jury and court systems will not result in the justice that so many idealistic young protestors desperately desire and demand.

The goals of the protestors are undermined by a number of dominant liberal illusions that support the racist status quo. First is the common sense story that “of course, there are good cops and bad cops.” There is hardly a person-on-the-street interview or a pundit or politician on TV who does not refer to this distorted individualized construction of the situation. It is a convenient fable that shifts the political focus away from the role of the police as an *armed institution* of the capitalist state apparatus to a consideration of individual attitudes. This logically leads to ideas of getting rid of “bad apples,” improving police training, establishing “community policing,” etc.

Of course, it is often the case that cops are personally racist, it’s part of cop culture that views the black population as “perps,” “animals” and at least proto-criminals. Darren Wilson, the cop who shot unarmed Michael Brown in Ferguson, for instance, said he saw Brown as a “beast.” This is a linguistic holdover from chattel slavery. But the most revealing statement in Wilson’s released testimony was that he knew he was doing his job. Doing what he was supposed to do, trained to do. This is basically what all the cops say when they are perfunctorily called upon to explain why they shot or beat someone. Cops understand the great leeway they have legally. The oppressed bear the suffocating weight of the institutional barrel that contains plenty of bad apples, but mainly all kinds of apples that are just doing their jobs.

The fundamental job of the cops is to maintain brutal social control over the urban ghetto. They are supported in this purpose by the myth of “broken windows policing.” According to this “theory” cops are charged with enforcing “quality of life crimes” such as “loitering,” public drinking and begging. This was the original rationale for the racist “stop and frisk” policies of the New York Police Department. It was certainly the motivation in the NYPD’s strangling to death of Eric Garner in Staten Island. Garner was on the street selling



Reuters

**National Guard locks down black Baltimore in April 2015 after police murder of Freddie Gray. Cops and National Guard, out!**

“loosies” – single cigarettes. Of course “broken windows” is enforced only in poor, black and Latino neighborhoods. The famous dictum of Anatole France applies here: “The law in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.”

The liberals’ emphasis on a racially diverse police force is a result of the idea that racism is a personal and psychological characteristic rather than a structural buttress of U.S. society. But in Baltimore, for instance, where the cops’ “rough ride” killed Freddie Gray, the mayor, the prosecutors and the entire criminal justice establishment are African American. NYC has one of the most diverse police forces in the world. As a result of decades of protest, a majority of NYC’s 35,000 cops are African American, Latino, or Asian. That didn’t help Amadou Diallo, Abner Louima, Sean Bell, Eleanor Bumpers, Eric Garner and many others.

Today the cop who beats the kid in his hoodie, or stops, frisks, harasses and drives the kid into the criminal data base is a lot more likely to look like a member of the “community” than the racist PBA head, Patrick Lynch, who lives up to the older cop stereotype. But Lynch’s philosophy dominates cop culture and sets the real informal initiation rules for becoming a conscious agent of “law and order” in capitalist society. In defending the interests of capital, the “community” that cops represent is the “blue community” of occupation and oppression.

For the ruling class the problem is one of public relations: how to get the oppressed to trust the cops. The more far-seeing capitalist rulers know that their supremacy depends upon efficient control of the oppressed. That is why liberals are wringing their hands over the “lack of trust between police and communities of color.” But for the cops the problem is



one of fear: who owns the streets?

Liberal illusions divert attention from the historically developed role of the capitalist state as an instrument of racist and class control and coercion. Besides the constant drumbeat for generalized gun control, we now also hear references to the implicit racism held throughout the U.S. population. Social science research has certainly demonstrated that this is widespread. As a legacy of slavery and ghetto compaction, the dominant capitalist ideology perpetuates the perception that black bodies are suspicious and dangerous. In this view the murderous cops are just like any American except that they have a gun.

Everyone is guilty in this alibi for intentional cop terror. A cop feels threatened when he sees a black man holding a toy rifle in the toy section of a K-mart, and shoots him dead (in a suburb of Dayton, Ohio in August 2014). Even a recent *New York Times* (30 December 2015) editorial notes that the shooting of Tamir Rice – a young boy with a toy gun on a playground – would not occur “in just about any middle-class neighborhood in the country.”

But the focus on the fact of widespread implicit racism tends to sidestep the role of the cops as lethal enforcers of the racist status quo. The cops’ rules of engagement are different. The racism of the cops is not simply implicit – it is central to their historically developed function as the truncheon of the capitalist state against the population of impoverished ghettos.

Many of the youthful protesters have inherited the debilitating illusion that the federal government can be relied upon to reform the local, militarized and out-of-control cops. Their illusory hope that the federal government will right the wrongs of state and local authorities is a holdover from the civil rights movement when national political opposition to *de jure* legal segregation did temporarily ameliorate the most egregious examples of Southern legal apartheid. At the same time, the feds occupied cities like Little Rock and Birmingham to *put down black resistance* to the racist nightriders.

So today, in response to civil rights complaints, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) comes to town pretending to reform and modernize police practices. The DOJ has issued reports on Ferguson, Cleveland, Chicago and elsewhere. We have seen decades of “agreements” between local cops and the DOJ promising to reform the police in Detroit, Baltimore, Los Angeles, New Orleans and other major cities. In the last two decades DOJ has launched 67 civil rights investigations of police departments. It doesn’t work. It can’t work.

As the *Washington Post* (“Forced Reforms, Mixed Results,” 15 November 2015) reported, police departments get new equipment and lots of money, but cop violence often gets worse. The *Post* reported that in the ten cities where they investigated DOJ agreements, not one showed a decrease in the “use of excessive force.” In five police departments excessive use of force stayed the same, and “in five of the 10 police departments for which sufficient data was provided, use of force by officers *increased* [our emphasis] during and after agreements.”

This is the same federal government that supplies the local

cops with military hardware. The same federal government that launches “signature” assassination drone strikes (based on patterns of behavior that suggest “terrorist activity”) using the same kind of “pre-cog” (predictive) crime profiling that targets black and Latinos in the U.S. The same DOJ that designed the legal cover for the sick, medieval torture of perceived enemies. The same federal government that supports the racist death penalty, and that expanded prosecutorial reach under Democrat Bill Clinton.

It’s the same government that runs the torture prison at Guantanamo Bay where prisoners are held for years without charges and force fed. There is no accountability for torturers at the federal level – not one torturer, or the lawyers who justified it legally, or the psychologists who consulted on it, will ever face charges. As President Obama said in his home-spun way, “We tortured a few folks.”

Taken together these illusions generate an ideological fog that makes it nearly impossible for many young protesters to recognize the essential materialist class character of the state – born out of irreconcilable class conflict – and the institutions that embody and carry out its coercive purpose. In the United States, where racism is deeply baked into the development of capitalism, that coercion is necessarily racist. It is the entire barrel – the structure of capitalist class justice – that is rotten to the core.

These illusions, particularly as expounded by the Democratic Party, overshadow the current protest movement because of the weakness of the U.S. left and the dominance of middle-class politics in U.S. political life. The bloody class line between cops and workers has been a lot clearer in Appalachian mining towns like Harlan County, for instance, where generations of workers have fought the bosses’ gun thugs and cops. They posed the proverbial and sometimes musical question, “Which Side Are You On?” Everybody in town understood the social and political role of the cops.

There is also clarity on militant picket lines – workers’ necessary tool for organized survival – where the cops try to herd the scabs through the pickets. It’s easy for strikers to see that all the cops are following orders. “Good cops” and “bad cops” are part of the same strikebreaking armed force. In black ghettos across the globe where the cops regularly occupy and “control” the population through brutal harassment bordering on terror, and often legalized murder, there is little confusion about the cops’ social function.

But among the liberal and reformist left, the role of the cops has been obscured by loyalty (sometimes unstated) to the capitalist state and an individualist ideology that supports it. Sometimes this loyalty is primitively expressed as the false assumption that cops are “workers in uniform” – part of the “99 percent.” Sometimes the justification can be sophisticated and theoretical. But by creating illusions that the police could somehow “serve the people” the result is to divert struggle into a dead end of attempts to reform the unreformable. Everywhere and always, the political stance toward the cops is the touchstone that defines allegiance or opposition to capitalism and its state. ■



# Jim Crow “Justice” and the Capitalist State

*From www.internationalist.org, February 2016.*

The denial of access to legal redress in the courts is part and parcel of lynch-law “justice.” It is a system born in the toxic cauldron of chattel slavery, brutally maintained by the slave patrols, and expressed in the notorious “black codes.” African Americans were not regarded as fully human under the law. For decades after slavery, the lynch rope hung between African Americans and their “day in court.”

Police terror has always been a crucial device in America’s white supremacist history. Under Jim Crow segregation in the South, it was well understood that the local police departments were often synonymous with the local Ku Klux Klan. The nightriders took off their blue uniforms and put on their white ones. Far from protecting African Americans, the cops more often worked gun-in-glove with white racist mobs.

In one infamous example, Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921 was the site of one of the worst racist pogroms in U.S. history. Mobs burned down the entire vibrant black community of Greenwood – destroying more than 1,000 homes and businesses – and murdered hundreds. Precipitating the spasm of racist terror was a white mob howling to lynch an innocent black man being held in the local jail. Black veterans of WWI came armed to the jail to offer their services in defense of civic order against lynch-mob fury. Their offer was rebuffed by the authorities; instead the police deputized the lynch mob terrorists.<sup>1</sup>

This history is still with us today. Just look at the proliferation of “neighborhood watch” patrols such as the one George Zimmerman coordinated as he was “patrolling” a gated community in Sanford, Florida where he shot Trayvon Martin dead.<sup>2</sup>

The racial character of mass incarceration is not merely the result of excessive penal policies instituted since the election of Ronald Reagan, as many liberal reformers suggest. The policies that created urban ghettos started long ago and were intensified with industrialization and under the liberal New Deal.

As African Americans were driven into blighted areas of industrial cities by conscious policies of housing and employment discrimination, the capitalist state’s coercive machinery



**Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1 June 1921: Hundreds of black men were seized at gun point and marched to detention centers while vigilantes burned down the black community of Greenwood.**

– the cops and prosecutors, the courts and prisons – were given the green light to be the blunt instruments of social control of that oppressed population. The niceties of rights were simply disregarded as the cops rode roughshod over the residents who were viewed as actual and potential criminals. That’s how a 12-year-old boy, Tamir Rice, gets gunned down in Cleveland by a cop who starts shooting as soon as he sees the child. The cop knew he would get off – not even a trial.<sup>3</sup>

The too-familiar sociopathic cop culture is largely the institutional reflection of their legal immunity – the implicit understanding that there will be no legal accountability for the brutal actions of the “thin, blue line.” With impunity, police stop, frisk, bust and generally terrorize the young black men who inhabit urban ghettos built to contain and control them. In this sense, the cops are the contemporary iteration of the slave patrols of the ante-bellum South.

With the civil rights movement and radicalization of the 1960s and early ’70s, both capitalist parties instituted the “war on crime” backlash that murdered Black Panther Party leaders in their beds in Chicago, set up the COINTELPRO spying apparatus, and illegally imprisoned the most radical elements of the “black power” movement on all manner of trumped-up charges. In 1994 the Clinton Administration

<sup>1</sup> See “Black Self-Defense Against ‘Ethnic Cleansing’: Racist Hell in Tulsa, 1921,” *The Internationalist* No. 22, September-October 2005.

<sup>2</sup> See “Lynch Law U.S.A.: State Defends Murderer of Trayvon Martin,” *The Internationalist* special issue, May 2012; and “Workers Revolution Will Avenge Trayvon Martin,” *The Internationalist* No. 36, January-February 2014.

<sup>3</sup> See “Baltimore, Cleveland: ‘The System Is Rigged,’” *The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016.

passed the Omnibus Crime Bill that provided millions of dollars to expand state prisons, put 100,000 additional cops in the streets and expanded the death penalty to cover more than 50 federal crimes. On the streets, the target expanded to entrap and imprison thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of youth, including those trying to survive like [Pennsylvania frame-up victim] Corey Walker, in the only employment available to them: the underground drug trade.

The Internationalist Group opposes all laws criminalizing or regulating drugs (as well as alcohol, tobacco or other substances). Repealing those laws would put an end to the “drug wars” that have jailed hundreds of thousands of young people, devastated African American and Latino communities in the U.S., and laid waste to much of Mexico. Many defenders of democratic rights recognize that the outlawing of drugs

has not stopped their use but only turned users and dealers into outlaws, while generating police and gang violence. Following the end of Prohibition in the 1930s, the organized crime associated with bans on alcohol was drastically reduced.

Modern mass incarceration in the U.S. is the result of a long racist history. Racism is tightly woven into the fabric of American capitalism. A distinctive characteristic of the U.S. capitalist state is that its concrete and coercive state institutions – its standing army, cops, court system and prisons – are forged in a crucible of official and unofficial racist terror. Although the forms may differ, this is true today no less than 100 years ago. It will take nothing short of a socialist revolution to put an end to the living legacy of slavery and the lynch law justice that lives on, half a century after the formal abolition of Jim Crow segregation. ■

## Cops and Klan...

*continued from page 6*

a workers defense guard to counter the Ku Klux Klan. But much more is needed.

It is necessary to *mobilize the workers movement* to shut down the profit system. And that requires, first of all, a fight to break with the DFL and all bourgeois parties and politicians.

Several leftist groups have been involved in the Minneapolis protests, including Socialist Alternative (SAIt, whose candidate, Ty Moore, endorsed by the Green Party, narrowly lost a 2013 election for city council), Freedom Road Socialist Organization, Socialist Action and Workers International League. All criticize the Democrats, but fighting inside the unions to break the chokehold of this party of big business over labor is another matter. SAIt, in particular, limits itself to attacking the “Democratic Party establishment,” since it is now feverishly campaigning for Bernie Sanders as he runs in the Democratic primary. These social democrats consider cops to be “workers in uniform” and call for “community control of the police,” an illusion that flatly contradicts the Marxist understanding of the class nature of the state.

Instead of forlornly appealing for Democrat Obama’s federal government to “investigate” the police – which everyone from Black Lives Matter organizers to union leaders to the mayor did, and which will at most produce only cosmetic changes – the unions must move beyond gestures and bring out the economic and social power of their tens of thousands of members to *shut down the Twin Cities* and protect the protests. As an example, last May 1 [2015] International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 *shut down San Francisco Bay Area docks* and marched on Oakland City Hall at the head of thousands demanding “Stop Police Terror.”<sup>1</sup>

On the same day, inspired by the Bay Area action, Class

<sup>1</sup> See “May Day Oakland Port Shutdown Against Racist Cop Terror,” in *The Internationalist* No. 39, April-May 2015.



**International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 shut down San Francisco Bay Area docks on May Day 2015 denouncing police terror.**

Struggle Workers – Portland, Oregon organized a multi-union contingent in the May Day 2015 protests marching under the banner, “Labor Against Racist Police Murder.” (The CSWP is a tendency in Portland-area unions that is politically supported by the Internationalist Group.) These are small examples of what needs to be done, but they point in the right direction. The idea that justice could be obtained by pressuring the courts and capitalist politicians to investigate, “reform” or prosecute the racist police on which capital depends is a dangerous illusion. We must look to using our own class power to put an end to the bloody lynch law system that has taken so many of our brothers and sisters from us.

We need to oust the bureaucrats, break with the Democrats and build a revolutionary workers party as a champion of the oppressed, a party in which African American, Latino, Asian, Native American and immigrant workers play a leading role. The task of this party is to finally sweep away the racist terrorists, in and out of uniform, and finish the Civil War, by achieving the revolutionary emancipation of today’s wage slaves from the tyranny of capital. ■



## Black America...

*continued from page 14*

All the trigger-happy cop had to do was lie and say he feared for his life. “Seventy-four seconds after Yanez activated his squad lights, he fired the last of seven shots into the car,” Minnesota Public Radio reported.

Even then, as Castile lay dying, the cop kept screaming not to move. But the jury wouldn’t convict. Not on the minimal charge of second-degree manslaughter (due to negligence), not even on lesser charges of dangerous discharge of a weapon. Hours after the acquittal, the city fired him, saying “the public will be best served if Officer Yanez is no longer a police officer in our city.” As if that would satisfy people.

So why did the killer cop walk? There were some highly dubious prosecutorial decisions, like not entering Yanez’ self-contradicting statement to state police authorities into evidence. And the jury was stacked against conviction. A *StarTribune* profile listed an older woman manager of a gas station with a contract with the police who had pro-cop posts on her Facebook page; a middle-aged white man who grew up around police, had a nephew who is a cop and said it would be difficult for him to be unbiased; a middle-aged white female who had a high regard for police; a retired white man who thought Reynolds’ Facebook video “seemed overly calm.”

More fundamentally, U.S. laws give police “qualified immunity” from prosecution for actions in carrying out their official duties, and the Supreme Court has ruled that even an imagined threat, as long as the cop “reasonably” believed it, is enough to justify pulling the trigger. Ramsey County prosecutor John Choi said “we gave it our best shot” and that the jury’s decision “must be respected,” because that is the “premise of the rule of law.” He added that prosecutors sought to bolster “the integrity of the process.” What the police murder of Philando Castile and its aftermath shows, however, is that in this capitalist system, the “rule of law” is the embodiment of racist injustice.

We are told that “Before Yanez, no officer had been charged in more than 150 police-involved deaths in Minnesota since 2000,” and that he was “the first Minnesota police officer in modern history to be charged with the shooting death of a civilian” (*StarTribune*, 17 and 18 June 2017). That’s supposed to inspire confidence in the “integrity of the process”?! The reality is that police are very seldom charged with any crime at all for killing a civilian, and almost never convicted. Since 2005, nationwide 82 cops have been charged with manslaughter or murder for an on-duty shooting. That is less than half of 1 percent of the at least 16,000 civilians killed by police over that period. Of those charged, only 13 were convicted, and only one for murder.

The federal government until recently had no count of killings by cops around the country, although it had a sketchy list of “justifiable homicides” by police. Since the massive protests over the police murders of Eric Garner and Michael Brown in 2014, a number of independent Internet databases of police killings have been established, including by the *Washington Post* and *Guardian* newspapers, and the websites Mapping



Renee Jones Schneider / Star Tribune

**Valerie Castile denounces verdict acquitting killer cop who murdered her son Philando.**

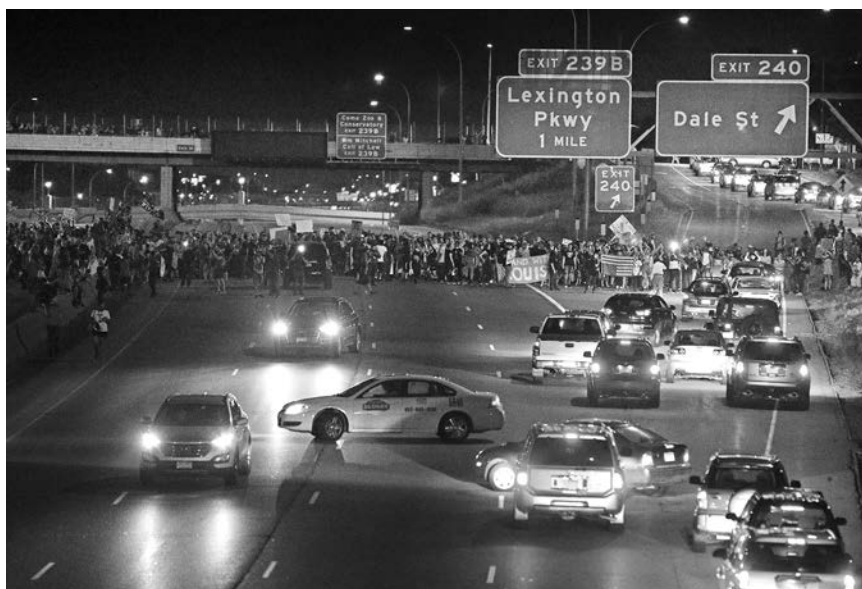
Police Violence, Killed by Police and Fatal Encounters. The last is the most complete, showing 1,760 police killings of civilians in 2013, 1,703 in 2014, 1,545 in 2015, 1,554 in 2016 and 749 so far in 2017.

This is a horrendous slaughter, comparable to that of an occupying military force. And it is racist to the core: the number of African American victims is proportionately two and a half times higher than the number of whites; black men are five times as likely as white men to be killed by cops; and young black men are *nine times* more likely to be gunned down than young white men (*Guardian*, 31 December 2015). We have noted before: “Like the death penalty, the massive racist killing by U.S. police goes back to the very foundation of American capitalism on the basis of slave labor. That bloody heritage continues to this day” (see “Democrats Are the Bosses of the Racist Killer Cops,” *The Internationalist* No. 42, January-February 2016).

And this time it was not in Texas, Mississippi or Ferguson, Missouri – this was a close suburb of St. Paul and its twin city, Minneapolis. It was in the historically liberal state (not so much any more) that prides itself on its reputation for congeniality, “Minnesota Nice.” Not so nice, after all, and not the first time. The cop execution of Philando Castile came only a few months after Minneapolis police shot Jamar Clark in the head, killing him, in November 2015. Fascists then shot and wounded five protesters at a Black Lives Matter encampment (see “Minneapolis: ‘Cops and Klan Go Hand in Hand,’” *The Internationalist* No. 42).

After the not-guilty verdict was read out in court on June 16, protesters went to the state capitol with signs declaring, “Justice Is Dead” and “On Trial: The System. Verdict: Guilty.” Philando’s mother, Valerie Castile, fervently denounced injustice in Minnesota: “There has always been a systemic problem in the state of Minnesota. And me thinking with my common sense, that we would get justice in this case. But nevertheless the system continues to fail us, the system continues to fail black people and it will continue to fail you. When they get done with us they are coming for you and you, y’all are next.”

That night angry protesters headed to the I-94 highway in St. Paul and shut it down for several hours; 18 were arrested. Last



**Demonstrators block I-94 highway 16 June 2017 to protest acquittal of the killer cop who murdered Philando Castile in July 2016.**

July, hundreds headed to the Interstate to protest, and held it for six hours. Over 100 were arrested as Democratic-Farmer-Labor mayor Chris Coleman denounced the protest as a “riot.” Charges of third-degree unlawful assembly were later dropped, and an absurd bill to charge protesters in “disruptive” demonstrations with the cost of overtime pay for the police who arrest them was shelved. But in the end, Philando Castile was murdered, killer cop Yanez walked, and nothing has changed.

Not only in Minnesota. On 21 June 2017, a jury in Milwaukee acquitted the cop who shot and killed Sylville Smith as he lay on the ground. And on June 23, in Cincinnati for the second time a hung jury failed to convict the trigger-happy cop who killed unarmed motorist Samuel DuBose in 2015. In each case, it was murder. In each case, it was filmed. Cellphone cameras, police bodycams and dashcams have indeed changed matters – now everyone can see the full horror of these crimes. But it has not changed the impunity of the murderers in blue one iota. They have a license to kill from their bosses, the capitalist rulers, whether Republican or Democrat.

Various leftists and would-be socialists have weighed in on the killing of Philando Castile. Socialist Alternative posted a June 16 statement on its website from Ginger Jentzen, the SALT candidate for Minneapolis City Council, who after condemning the verdict goes on to say, “We need restorative justice, housing and jobs programs by taxing the rich, to address the deeper social issues that feed criminal and antisocial behavior, like the violent robberies on the University of Minnesota campus last week.” How repulsive, in talking about the racist cop killing of Philando to relate this somehow to a couple of muggings (reportedly by a “black male and female”)! Who is SALT appealing to with this garbage?

On top of this, calls to “tax the rich” spread illusions that the vast inequality of capitalism can somehow be altered by tax reforms, while talk of “restorative justice” implies that the injustice system can be made more “people-friendly.” Throw

in SALT’s call for “elected civilian review boards with real teeth: full powers over police department priorities, over the budgets, and with the ability to launch investigations.” It’s all a reformist pipedream, which never has been and never will be realized. Why not? Because it ignores the basic character of the capitalist state as an instrument of repression. Of who? Of us. Don’t believe it? Look around, look at U.S. history.

Socialist Alternative is a social-democratic outfit that incredibly holds that cops are workers. In addition, SALT’s recipe would take responsibility for the “priorities” and “budget” of capitalism’s police apparatus. In reality, the police are professional enforcers for the bourgeoisie. In 2014, Kshama Sawant, SALT’s city council member in Seattle, praised the process of hiring a new police chief, saying it was “positive ... that a woman will be at the head of what has been and still is a male-

dominated bastion.” She hailed the new top cop’s “openness” and “commitment to build a relationship with the community,” as well as her “tiered approach for policing protests,” so that riot police will only be deployed “if absolutely necessary.”<sup>1</sup>

So last week, when Seattle police shot and killed Charleena Lyles, 30, a pregnant black mother of two, fully aware that she was struggling with mental health issues, Sawant’s response was to petition for a “community-based investigation.” She took the same tack last year when Seattle cops gunned down another African American, Che Taylor, calling for a hearing where the public could question Police Chief Kathleen O’Toole. As if that would solve anything. They can petition and question and investigate all they want, but the racist killer cops keep on killing. It’s what they do, and will continue to do until the racist capitalist state is swept into the dustbin of history.

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) likewise calls for “greater community control of policing,” urging that “police intervention must be as restrained as possible, with the use of firearms as an absolute last resort.” And it calls for “Stronger gun control policies, as well as severe restrictions on police use of firearms” as part of a “restructuring of the role of police” (statement on DSA web site, 12 July 2016). To pretend that the police can be “restructured” and “restrained” by a “radical democratic change” is to build dangerous illusions in the reformability of capitalist rule.

As for gun control, the hobby horse of white liberals, this is a threat to black people first and foremost. As Marxists we are opposed to the capitalist state controlling guns and are for the right of black armed self-defense. A disarmed black population would be even more vulnerable to the police, who are armed to the hilt. The program of social democrats like SALT and the DSA is “color-blind” liberalism, reflected in their support for the presidential campaign of Democratic

<sup>1</sup> See “Killer Cops, White Supremacists: Racist Terror Stalks Black America,” *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015.



Party “socialist” Bernie Sanders, who never called to mobilize against racist cop terror. On the acquittal of the cop who killed Philando Castile, Sanders said the justice system “has failed African Americans” and that “major reforms” were needed, “making certain that lethal force is the last response, not the first response.” Where have we heard that before?

Finally, the fact that the police who murdered Philando Castile, Sylville Smith and Samuel DuBose were not convicted, all in the space of one week, underscores the disorienting effect of calls by various reformist leftists to “jail killer cops.” Certainly Jeronimo Yanez and the rest of them should be locked up behind bars for the rest of their lives. But as they go free along with the killers of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Alton Sterling, Akai Gurley, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Terence Crutcher and so many others, it should dawn on the pseudo-socialists that the ruling class is not about to lock up the snarling guard dogs that it depends on to uphold its rule. In the rare instances where some kind of verdict comes down against one, as with the Bay Area cop who murdered Oscar Grant on New Year’s Day 2009, it will be a slap on the wrist and they will be out in no time.

It is the task of genuine revolutionaries to warn that all these supposed reforms – community control, community policing, civilian review boards, disarming and demilitarizing the police, more black police, black police chiefs, black mayors, women police and police chiefs, gay police, dashcams, bodycams, calls to jail killer cops, etc. – are “not only utterly worthless in controlling police violence, they actually serve to legitimize it” (see “Killer Cops, White Supremacists: Racist Terror Stalks Black America,” *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015). The Internationalist Group doesn’t peddle illusions of impossible reforms to the nucleus of the capitalist state. We look to the working class, calling for *labor/black/immigrant mobilization against racist attacks, cop terror and deportations*.

Following the June 16 verdict, the St. Paul Federation of Teachers put out a statement saying, “We are outraged that the justice system failed today, yet again.” The teachers and other unions also protested over the killing of Jamar Clark. This is important, but expressions of outrage alone will accomplish little. The Internationalist Group has insisted on the need to *mobilize the power of labor* together with all those targeted by police violence – African Americans, Latinos, immigrants and all the oppressed to put a stop to this racist terror. Not just shutting down the Interstate for a few hours – the Twin Cities should be shut down tight by strike action in the face of such racist atrocities. And the same everywhere else in this nation blighted by murderous racism from before it was born.

It can happen. On May Day 2015, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 shut down the Port of Oakland, California and marched on City Hall at the head of thousands behind a union banner demanding “Stop Police Terror.” What’s key in bringing out the full

power of labor to smash this racist system is the understanding that the police are the iron fist of the ruling class. These are the special bodies of armed men enforcing the dictates of capital that, as Marx, Engels and Lenin explained, are at the core of state power. If there is outrage and protest, their job is to repress it. The courts are part of the same machinery of the capitalist state. Their role is to ensure that the cops can repress with impunity.

Today the police kill with abandon under Republican Trump. Yesterday they did the same under Democrat Obama. Various liberals and opportunist pseudo-socialists call to join together all protests in a broad “resistance” to Trump. Meaning they want to make a “popular front” with the Democrats, chaining black people to the party whose mayors preside over police murder across the country. Changing which capitalist party is in office will not alter things. We must fight instead to build the nucleus of a multi-racial and multi-ethnic revolutionary workers party that can attack the scourge of racial oppression at its roots.

Kill-crazy cops are an expression of the fact that American capitalism is based on black oppression, the forcible subjugation of the African American population which has continued from the days of chattel slavery through Jim Crow segregation to today’s mass incarceration. Professional police in the U.S. began as slave-catching patrols. The racism that pervades every facet of cop activity – from “stop and frisk” and “broken windows” policing to rampant murder of black, Latino and immigrant “suspects” – is inherent in their function. The police “protect and serve” exploiters and oppressors by repressing the exploited and oppressed. Nothing short of workers revolution will change that.

It is our job to cohere the most conscious and committed defenders of all the oppressed to organize that revolution. ■

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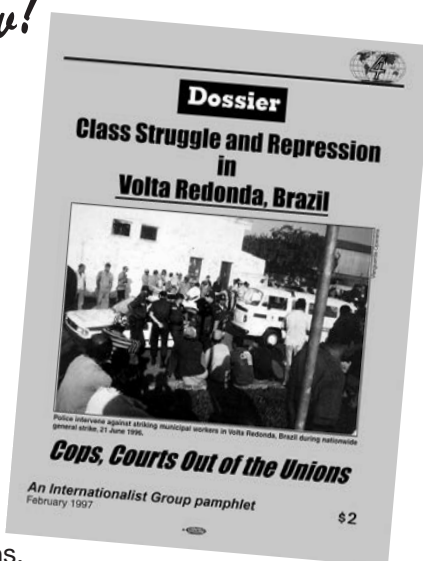
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## There Is No Justice for Black People in the Racist Capitalist Courts **Black America Under the Gun**

*Reprinted from The Internationalist No. 48, May-June 2017.*

25 JUNE 2017 – This proves it beyond a shadow of a doubt: *there is no justice for the oppressed in the racist capitalist courts.* The acquittal of Jeronimo Yanez, the cop who gunned down Philando Castile last July 6 [2016] as he sat in his car in suburban St. Paul, Minnesota, is proof positive that the whole system is rigged to guarantee that the police can kill with impunity.

Philando Castile did nothing wrong. When Yanez pulled him over, he was calm and polite. He followed the protocol that young black men are taught about how to stay alive in an encounter with the police. Philando knew the drill: he had been stopped by cops at least 46 times over the past dozen years. Only six times was it for something that could be seen from outside the car (speeding, broken muffler). He was racially profiled, targeted. And look what happened.

Anyone who saw the heart-wrenching Facebook Live video by his girlfriend Diamond Reynolds, as millions did, knows. It showed Philando in a puddle of blood as he lay dying after being struck five times from seven shots. Anyone who saw the horrifying police dashboard camera video and audio, as the jury did repeatedly, of the frenzied cop pumping bullets into Philando with his girlfriend Diamond and her four-year-old daughter in the car with him, can have no doubt.

Philando Castile was executed, the ultimate penalty for “driving while black.” And his executioner, killer cop Jeronimo Yanez, walked. It’s the way the system works.

That system is capitalism. From the time it was founded on the bedrock of chattel slavery, racist American capitalism has meant extermination of Native Americans, subjugation of African Americans, persecution of Latino Americans and all-sided oppression. Today the system is based on exploitation of “wage slaves,” as Karl Marx described the working class. Immigrants and Muslims are currently top targets. But there is always an “enemy within” to be hounded.

Philando Castile was a supervisor in the school cafeteria of J. Hill Montessori Magnet School in St. Paul. He was a member of Teamsters Local 320. The kids called him “Mr. Phil” and he served meals to more than 400 kids twice a day. He knew all

### Workers Revolution Will Avenge Philando Castile



Courtney Pedroza/Star Tribune

**Demonstrators with portrait of Philando Castile protest in St. Paul suburb on 18 June 2016 against the verdict acquitting the cop who murdered him.**

their names, and remembered who had which food allergies. He was well-liked by the kids, parents and school staff. To the J.J. Hill community, Castile was a “kind, gentle soul,” as parent Sally Rafowicz said, “kind of like Mr. Rogers with dreadlocks” (Minneapolis *StarTribune*, 7 July 2016).

Castile was pulled over as he was driving in Falcon Heights, a tiny suburb of St. Paul near the state fairgrounds, so small that it hired police from another suburb, St. Anthony, to patrol it. A 2003 study of racial bias in policing by University of Minnesota law professor Myron Orfield found that in the lily-white suburbs of the Twin Cities, African Americans and Latinos were “up to seven times more likely to be stopped by police” (National Public Radio, 15 July 2016).

When Yanez approached the car, he told Philando he had been pulled over because of a cracked tail light, which was a lie. The cop later testified he stopped the black man because the driver “resembled a suspect in a local convenience store robbery a few days earlier.” What was the resemblance? He said that as Castile drove past, his nose reminded him of the nose the black suspect in the robbery. His nose? That “suspicion” was enough to pull him over and in a matter of seconds shoot him.

As Philando was producing his driver’s license and registration, as requested, he told the officer he had a gun. Reynolds told the officer that Philando had a permit. That was it. Yanez went off, began screaming and started shooting. *He never saw a gun.*

*continued on page 11*