

Don't Look for Peace Where There Is No Peace!

Black People Under Siege in Racist, Capitalist America

Some 36 hours after the release of a horrific video showing Baton Rouge cops executing Alton Sterling, pumping his body with bullets as he was pinned to the ground, millions watched as Philando Castile bled to death in his car from repeated gunshots by a Minneapolis suburban cop. While Castile moaned in agony, his girlfriend Diamond Reynolds, in the car with her four-year-old daughter, courageously live-streamed as a rabid cop outside the open car window kept his gun to Castile's head while screaming at Reynolds to keep her hands on the dashboard. She was later ordered out of the car, forced to her knees, handcuffed and taken away with her daughter as if they were a couple of runaway slaves.

Protests exploded around the country under the call "black lives matter." But the bitter truth is that for America's racist rulers black lives don't matter. They secured their golden riches on the lashed backs of black slaves and today wield anti-black racism to divide and conquer their wage slaves. Tens of thousands have repeatedly taken to the streets demanding that the killer cops be forced to clean up their act. But for all the federal investigations and promises of police reform nothing has changed or will. The reason is simple. The cops are the everyday domestic armed thugs of a system rooted in the brutal capitalist exploitation of labor and the forcible segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of this society.

In Dallas on July 7, 25-year-old Army vet Micah Xavier Johnson was driven into a homicidal rage, aiming his rifle fire at the white cops taking part in policing a protest against the killings of Sterling and Castile. When it ended, five cops were dead and seven wounded. In the parking garage where Johnson had been cornered, the police dispatched a bomb-carrying robot to blow him to pieces. Just as drones are deployed by the Obama administration against the dark-skinned peoples of the world, Johnson's life was ended by a military weapon of war. No judge, no jury, just blown away.

Protesters have continued to mobilize against cop terror, braving heavy police repression and the arrest of hundreds. At the same time, there is a very real, and understandable, sense

of fear that the police will exact vengeance for the cops who were killed. With their fingers on the trigger, heads of various police associations have ranted against Black Lives Matter and others as "terrorists." Donald Trump is promoting himself as the candidate who will enforce racist "law and order," further emboldening the fascists who have rallied behind his campaign. For her part, Hillary Clinton supported her husband's racist laws that ended welfare and further built the U.S. as "incarceration nation." Now she hypocritically intones that it is time "to start listening" to black people.

Obama cut short his trip to Europe, where he went to enforce the economic and military interests of U.S. imperialism, to go to Dallas and preach "reconciliation" between black people and the cops who routinely humiliate, brutalize and kill them. Preachers, liberals and even some self-declared socialists join hands in prayer for all the lives lost, from Sterling and Castile to the Dallas cops, grotesquely equating the police with their victims.

No amount of praying can change the truth: more than 150 years after the end of the Civil War, black people are still being hunted. As Diamond Reynolds put it in explaining her harrowing live-stream: "I did it so that the world knows that these police are not here to protect and serve us. They are here to assassinate us. They are here to kill us. Because we are black."

The infamous 1857 Dred Scott decision that black people "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect" may have been reversed in the legal code, but the reality lives on. The author of that ruling, Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney, noted with horror that if blacks were granted citizenship they would have the right "to keep and carry arms wherever they went."

That Alton Sterling and Philando Castile were apparently carrying was enough for the cops to gun them down, no questions asked. Neither drew a weapon. The cops claim that Sterling had a gun in his pocket and Castile told the cop that he had a registered firearm. As Castile's mother poignantly said: "He had a permit to carry. But with all of that, trying to do the right thing

**Mobilize the Power of the Multiracial
Working Class Against Cop Terror!**

and live accordingly, abide the law, he was killed by the law.”

Originally, citizenship rights were granted only to white, male, property owners. The more they were expanded to others, the less they actually meant. Nowhere is that clearer than the rights of black people to bear arms. Gun control laws in this country have largely been aimed not at controlling guns but rather at the working class, and especially at the ability of black people to defend themselves against racist terror. They serve to keep guns only in the hands of the cops, criminals and fascist killers. As Ida B. Wells, the courageous black woman who fought against the lynching of black people by the KKK, said in 1892: “A Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give.”

While Obama cynically preaches “peace,” *there has been a continuing class war in this country* against labor, black people, immigrants, the poor and all those relegated to the bottom of this society. The bosses are winning because the labor misleaders have kept the power of labor under lock and key, sacrificing it to the interests of the exploiters. Philando Castile was a member of the Teamsters, one of the biggest and potentially most powerful unions in the U.S. All that the leaders of his union local could offer was a statement urging its members to keep the Castile family in their “thoughts and prayers.” As if it were solace, the bureaucrats noted that the cop who killed Castile was not a union member, unlike other cops the Teamsters have organized in Minnesota! It would be hard to find a starker example of the treachery of the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class enemy than their embrace of the racist, strikebreaking enemies of labor, black people and the oppressed as “union brothers.” *Cops out of the unions!*

Is it any wonder that increasing numbers of people, including some black workers, think that the only way they can have any economic impact is in the despairing call to boycott white-owned businesses? However, the capacity to have a real impact rests with the multiracial working class, which has the social

and economic power to choke off the bosses’ profits by shutting down production and distribution through strike action.

A massive show of force based on the mobilization of labor against cop terror would strike some genuine “fear of god” into the police and their capitalist masters. And it would drive home the point that the interests of the working class—white and black, immigrant and native-born—are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and the fight for black freedom. But that means the workers must be mobilized independently of, and in opposition to, all the political parties and agencies of capitalist class rule.

It took a bloody Civil War, the Second American Revolution, with 200,000 black troops, arms in hand, to smash the chains of black chattel slavery. But in pursuit of their class interests, the Northern capitalists betrayed the promise of black freedom, making peace with the former slavocracy to defend the “property rights” of the capitalist rulers against the liberated slaves and against rebellious workers in the North. Nothing short of a third American revolution—a proletarian socialist revolution that breaks the chains of capitalist wage slavery—will end racist cop terror.

The key to unlocking the social power of the working class is the fight for a class-struggle leadership of labor forged in opposition to the capitalist state. What’s needed is to turn the righteous anger against the rampaging cops into a struggle against the social order they defend, a struggle to make the working class the rulers of a new society. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, is dedicated to the fight to build a revolutionary workers party committed to the fight for a workers government. Such a party will lead all the exploited and oppressed in taking the wealth of this country out of the hands of the greedy and corrupt capitalist rulers. When the power of the ruling class and its state apparatus has been shattered, this wealth will be dedicated to the benefit of those who produced it—not least the descendants of the black slaves whose labor was a cornerstone on which American capitalism was built.

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