

MLK Day 2016:

Forward in the fight against racist police murders and brutality!

This Martin Luther King Day assassinations of African Americans by the police continue to be a reality of daily life in America. Just last year the police shot and killed some 1100 people—about the same number as the year before. Many of those being gunned down are no threat to the police and completely innocent of any wrong-doing whatsoever, like 12 year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland. They're disproportionately African Americans, other national minorities and immigrants. And this is happening when both violent crime and shootings of police officers have been in decline for years.

But the masses of people are not taking this lying down. They're resisting. During the fall of 2014 the people of Ferguson, Mo. launched a sustained movement protesting the police murder of Michael Brown and exoneration of his murderer in blue. With justice on their side, they militantly fought back against the authorities sent to suppress them. Their actions helped fuel the Black Lives Matter movement and helped inspire protests against police atrocities in city after city. Taken together, these mass actions have resulted in increasingly wide discussion and consciousness about racist police brutality and racial discrimination more generally, along with increased determination to take action against it.

The development of this nation-wide movement is something to cherish this Martin Luther King Day. And to keep the it alive and moving ahead requires opposing attempts by the establishment to steer it off track.

The problem is not a few bad cops, but the whole damn system

The reason racial discrimination continues from generation to generation despite all reforms, and the reason the cops disproportionately gun down African Americans from generation to generation despite all reforms, is that they're rooted in the capitalist system of production: The general oppression of African

Americans forces them into lower-wage jobs resulting in extra profits for the capitalist class; promoting racist poison against Blacks is part of the divide-and-rule tactics they use to hold down the entire working class and thereby guard those profits. The police, backed by the courts, are the defenders and enforcers of this racist system. And because this system is so unjust and is resisted, their psychology becomes to enforce order and obedience at all cost—which often translates into racist street murders. Additionally, remembering the 1960s, the ruling class has been militarizing the police forces for no other reason than to suppress just rebellions of the masses.

Nor is the problem just the Republicans

In this election year Republican Trump has vocally taken the lead in inciting racism and bigotry against African Americans, immigrants and Muslims. But the Democrats complement this with their actions. Hence, Obama has talked about immigrant rights but then deported more people than any other president, talked about civil liberties while continuing to strip them away and further militarizing the police forces, and talked and talked.

What is more, many of the most outrageous police brutality cases have occurred in cities and states with Democratic mayors and governors, e.g., the Democratic mayor of Ferguson defended the police in the shooting of Michael Brown, and the Democratic governor of Missouri called out the National Guard to suppress the rebelling people. There are endless other examples, but let's just look at Chicago:

Democratic Mayor Rahm Emanuel's city administration authorized the payment of hush money to the family of Laquan McDonald, who was shot 16 times by a cop--mostly in his back or when he lay dying on the street. The police and Mayor's office kept the police dash-cam video hidden for over 13 months, only releasing them after several independent investigators and reporters threatened lawsuits. And

the police department threatened witnesses whose stories didn't fit the story the police concocted. In short, this was a full-fledged cover-up under the watch of Obama's former White House Chief of Staff, good Democrat and good buddy, Rahm Emanuel.

And what about the Black elected officials?

Well, the Baltimore mayor, president of the City Council, and Police Commissioner are all Black (and 44% of the cops are Black), but Baltimore remains notorious for police brutality just the same, e.g., the decades-long practice of giving suspects “rough rides”, i.e., bouncing a handcuffed, un-belted suspect around in the back of their vans like they did when snapping Freddie Gray's spine and brutally killing him.

Those officials who have profited from this situation are part of the minority of Blacks who've been integrated into the ruling class since the great African American rebellions of the 1960s. They defend the interests of the overall bourgeoisie, even though that means accommodating racial discrimination and police repression. And they also represent the interests of the Black CEOs and owners of major businesses, who exploit their workers as do the rest of the bourgeoisie.

Further building the movement

Thus, while demanding justice for the victims of racist police brutality, and demanding it be stopped, in 2016 we should also continue to target the capitalist

system and its state as the source of this criminality. We should work to build working class organization, and take every opportunity to base the movement among the working masses. We should integrate the movement against police brutality and murder with defense of the economic well-being of the masses. And we should oppose looking to the Democrats or the Black bourgeoisie for a solution. The Democrats, like the Republicans, are a party of Wall Street who fight in the interests of the rich; while there's a likewise unbridgeable class line that divides the Black bourgeoisie from the vast majority of African Americans, who are doubly exploited working people. Thus we need to continue organizing the movement based on defending the interests and mobilizing the action of the working majority.

The anti-racist struggle in the U.S. was a major feature of the tumultuous struggles of the past, and it's still a burning issue today. If the working people and the minorities don't stand up for their democratic rights and oppose police brutality, they will be unable to stand up for their economic rights either. If the police and the bourgeoisie are allowed to make life hell for Blacks, Latinos, undocumented workers, and other minorities, then they will make life hell for the working class as a whole whenever we go out on strike, or stand up in any way for a better world and a new economic system.

*Justice for all victims of police brutality!
Say her name: Sandra Bland!
Black lives matter!*

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