

From Ferguson to Los Angeles— Demilitarize the cops under community control!

Massive militarization of police forces has intensified a racist Rambo mentality among U.S. cops, as they disproportionately kill young African American men with impunity. Among the latest victims is Michael Brown, an 18-year-old, college-bound resident of Ferguson, Missouri, a poor, highly segregated, black suburb of St. Louis that is under the thumb of a white government and police force.

Michael's crime? Walking while black. To compound the injustice of this present-day lynching of an unarmed youth, the cops rolled out tanks, tear gas, rubber bullets, and military combat gear in an attempt to stop the justifiable protests that erupted. Evoking images of the Jim Crow south, police turned dogs on the protesters. They jailed news media and set up a no-fly zone to block reporters from filming the assaults. Protesters responded with signs reading "I am a man" and "I am a woman," echoing those carried by Memphis sanitation workers in 1968.

The brave protesters in Ferguson, surrounded by overwhelming police forces, don't need President Obama telling them *not to yell*. They need him to order an end to the massive militarization of police forces and for those responsible for the tragic murder of Michael Brown to be held accountable.

War on communities of color

The assault on the Ferguson community has ignited a national outcry over militarized police

abuse and Gestapo tactics. *Huffington Post* reports that under Obama's watch, 80,000 SWAT team raids occurred in 2013 alone. Homeland Security doled out \$34 billion to outfit police departments with tens of thousands of machine guns, hundreds of armored cars and aircraft, and other surplus military-grade equipment. These weapons were used to kill, create war zones,



terrorize whole communities, and jail black men at seven times the rate of white men. Ferguson is the latest neighborhood to know what a U.S. war zone feels like.

Tragically, hundreds of Michael Browns are murdered by the cops each year. In July, Eric Garner died in a police chokehold in Staten Island New York. On August 11 in Los Angeles, 25-year-old Ezell Ford was shot in the back three times, although, according to his mother Tritobia Ford, Ezell was lying on the ground, complying with the officers' orders. Other cases such as that of Florida's Marissa Alexander, a black woman

threatened with a 60-year jail term for firing a gun in self-defense, point out the disparate treatment meted out to people of color by the criminal justice system.

According to Yuisa Gimeno, a resident of South Los Angeles and a Radical Woman organizer against police brutality, "We feel like we have police targets on our backs because we are poor, immigrants, transgender or people of color. From L.A. to St. Louis to New York City, we are *beyond tired* of cops playing racist roulette with our lives." Gimeno calls for an elected civilian review board over the police with the power to hire, fire and discipline.

Why is police terror ramping up?

As the economic system confronts an ever-deepening crisis, capitalism relies more and more upon divide and conquer. The bosses need an unemployed or jailed army of workers who can be scapegoated for the ills showering down upon the population at large.

Emily Woo Yamasaki, a Freedom Socialist Party activist in Harlem, says NYPD raids on multiple housing projects and mass arrests in Harlem this past June were carried out like a military invasion, terrorizing and brutalizing residents of all ages. She links the raids to city attempts to privatize public housing and to the drive for mass incarceration, which aims to crush resistance

to an unjust system while fueling the profits of private prisons.

Black and brown men are the new "terrorists;" immigrants are "stealing jobs;" and unionists are "thugs." These lies fuel the bosses' continued attacks on everyone's standard of living. Youth of color bear the brunt through an astronomical unemployment rate and the poverty-to-prison pipeline.

The system isn't "broken" as some claim, it is working exactly as it is supposed to. Capitalism sees only one way out of the economic crisis — to drive down wages and eliminate the social safety net — and it must stifle Ferguson-type protests in order to do that.

Time for united action!

- Demand an end to the police violence in Ferguson. The residents don't need increased militarization by the National Guard, they need economic and political justice.
- Build a movement that fights for immediate needs such as jobs, education and community control of the police, but don't stop there —
- Come together to replace the bigoted capitalist system, which forces hardship and want on the many, with a socialist world of shared abundance and equality of all races and oppressed peoples.

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