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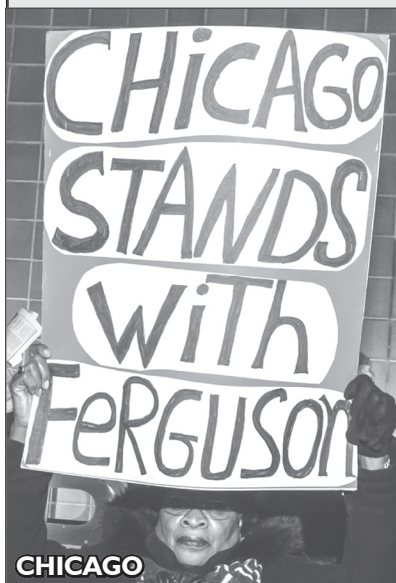
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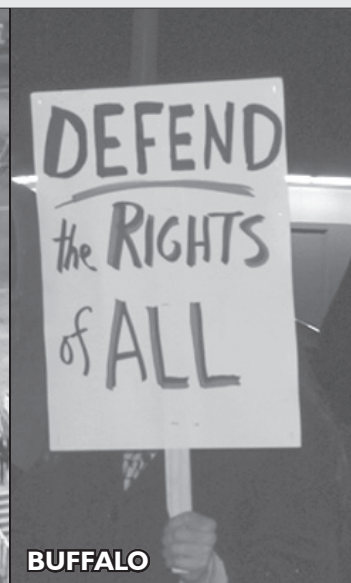
Salute Protesters Nationwide Demanding Justice and Equality — p.3



CHICAGO



NASHVILLE



BUFFALO

No to Government Impunity! Step Up the Organized Fight for Our Rights! — p.7

TWO-MONTH ANNIVERSARY OF
MEXICAN STUDENTS' DISAPPEARANCE

Unrelenting Mass Actions Demand Justice and Reject State Violence and Impunity

November 26 marked the two-month anniversary of the disappearances of 43 student teachers from Ayotzinapa, in Guerrero state, Mexico. The people's outrage is seen in the widening mass protests. The

case of the missing students has exposed the anarchy, violence and impunity the U.S. "war on drugs" has imposed on Mexico. The U.S. arms and funds the drug cartels and then

Mass Actions in Mexico • 23

STEP UP INDEPENDENT ORGANIZING

Strengthen the Role of the Public in Defending Public Education

Government at the federal and state level are organizing to wreck public education while claiming to improve it. Public schools are being closed in many cities, like Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans and Philadelphia. The federal government instigates and backs these efforts, such as through

Race to the Top funds and their requirements to submit to the Common Core testing and evaluation regime. State government use the federal regime to set schools and whole districts up for failure. Both state and federal act not to defend the right to education
Step Up Independent Organizing • 19

December edition of ***Voice of Revolution***

Editorials & Statements

- *Mexico: Unrelenting Mass Actions Demand Justice and Reject State Violence and Impunity* 1
- *Strengthen the Role of the Public in Defending Public Education* ... 1
- *Salute Protesters Nationwide Demanding Justice and Equality* 3
- *No to Government Impunity!*
Step Up the Organized Fight for Our Rights!..... 7

Step Up Organized Resistance for Justice and Equality

- *Mass Protests Across U.S (photos)*..... 4
- *Failure to Indict is a Crime of Government Impunity*..... 7
- *Obama Indicates Confidence of the Rulers Has Been Shaken* 8
- *Justice Department Says Cleveland Police Use Excessive Force*..... 9
- *Tamir Rice: The Story Behind the Killing, Character Assassination, and Resulting Cover-Up*..... 10
- *National Bar Association Responds to Grand Jury's Decision*
Not To Indict Police Officer Darren Wilson in Death of Michael Brown... 12
- *CODEPINK Condemns Decision Not to Indict Darren Wilson* 12
- *Statement of Iraq Veterans Against the War on Ferguson*..... 13
- *Prosecutor Manipulates Grand Jury Process to Shield Officer*..... 14
- *Why We Will Not Wait*..... 16

Public Control of Public Schools

- *Public Vision for Public Education Emphasizes*
Need for Public to Decide..... 19
- *We Support Public Control of Public Schools* 21
- *Dr. Steve Perry and Keeping Public Schools Public* 21

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I • Salute Protesters Demanding Justice and Equality



Massive protests for justice and equality continue to take place across the country in major cities and towns in every region. People immediately took to the streets following the November 24 announcement of no indictment of Officer Darren Wilson for the killing of unarmed African American teenager Michael Brown. Some 90 demonstrations were held November 24 and in more than 170 cities on November 25, with protests continuing to spread. In cities like Boston, DC, Nashville, Seattle, Los Angeles and more, thousands marched on the streets and highways, shutting down traffic and forcing authorities to cede the roadways to the people.

On November 26, Thanksgiving, thousands of people attended protest vigils for Brown and the many other victims of police killings. Some actions on November 27 — Black Friday, the biggest shopping day of the year — centered on shopping malls, including in Ferguson and St. Louis and other cities. Protesters joined in support of Walmart workers, striking and holding sit-ins that day demanding a \$15 minimum wage and full-time work. Largest strikes ever at Walmart occurred in all 50 states at more than 1,600 Walmart stores. The workers in turn joined the protests for justice and equality. There is broad recognition that Walmart workers are mainly women and minorities and that raising the minimum wage is an important part of eliminating poverty and providing justice, like the equal right to jobs at living wages. Workers and youth stood as one in the struggle against injustice and for rights.

On December 1, many student walkouts occurred in high schools and universities. Youth are a main force in all the actions. In various areas, students together with teachers, are working to expand youth participation, especially among high school youth who commonly bear the brunt of police brutality.

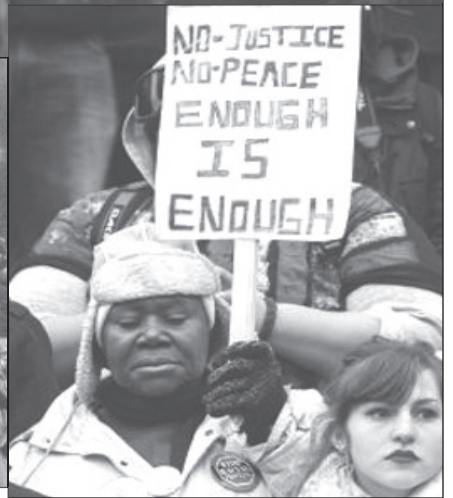
The December 3 announcement of no indictment for the police killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island only strengthened the resolve of protesters to advance their fight. Demonstrations of thousands again took place in New York City for two days, blocking Times Square and other roadways. Many other *Justice for Eric Garner* actions took place across the country on December 5. Many had signs for Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old African American killed by police on a Cleveland playground.

Worldwide actions have also taken place in Canada, Britain and elsewhere, targeting the U.S. for its brutality abroad and at home and joining in demanding *Justice Now!*

Everywhere there is recognition that these are only two of the most recent examples of brutal police killings of hundreds of unarmed African Americans every year. The injustice of all these government crimes, the fact that they are repeated daily, everywhere, and that they go unpunished means the anger and outrage is building and being directed at the system. *Indict the system!* is the demand. *Government Impunity is the Crime, Resistance the Solution!* is the stand.

The police killings are precisely part of a social and political system meant to disempower the people and deprive them of their rights, which belong to them by virtue of being human beings. The spirit of the actions made clear that people are standing up to say enough is enough and will persist in the fight for equality and justice. *Voice of Revolution* urges all to join in the actions, in teach-ins being organized, in discussion with co-workers and friends. The government has no solutions. State violence, police impunity and the criminalization of the youth are an attack on the rights of all and cannot continue. Join the fight and bring others with you!

MASS PROTESTS IN FERGUSON AND ST. LOUIS



MASS PROTESTS ACROSS THE U.S.

HAPPENING NOW



NEW YORK CITY



PHILADELPHIA

ATLANTA



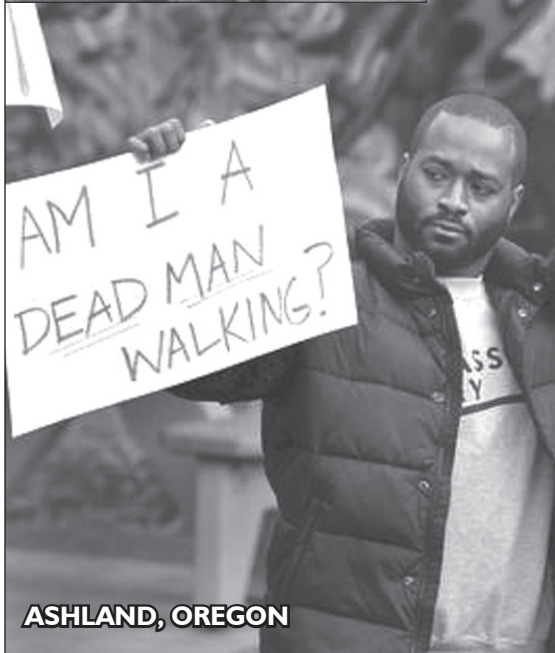
NEWARK



BUFFALO



MASS PROTESTS ACROSS THE U.S. DEMAND JUSTICE & EQUALITY



I • Step Up Organized Fight for Our Rights

Broad outrage is being expressed across the country in hundreds of actions over the last two weeks, condemning government at all levels for the repeated refusal to hold police accountable for killing unarmed African Americans. Darren Wilson, who killed unarmed Michael Brown in the Ferguson case, and Daniel Pantaleo, who, along with other police, killed unarmed Eric Garner on a Staten Island sidewalk, were not indicted. The just demands across the country are to charge the police involved and to indict a system that refuses to deliver justice. Increasingly the conclusion is being drawn that the system does not and *cannot* provide equality, as it cannot guarantee the rights of the people.

Voice of Revolution joins in condemning the government-organized violence and racist attacks, the criminalization of the youth and the broad militarization of police and society. We salute all those persisting in resistance of various kinds and continue to go all out to strengthen the organized quality of that resistance. We reject federal intervention as a solution, as it is the federal government that has militarized the police and systematically eliminated due process, as the war on terrorism and war on drugs show.

Police today are armed and trained, like the military, to shoot to kill and be aggressors against civilians, as the many killings of unarmed people show. One indicator of this is the fact that the ratio of police homicides to overall crime incidents has increased by 75% over the period from 1992 to 2012.

As well, demonstrators in many cities faced police with military tanks and tear gas — which is outlawed as a chemical weapon for use in wars. Government plans for police violence

and the disregard of the people was seen in their refusal to not use tear gas, rubber bullets and come dressed for combat, despite these demands made by demonstrators. In Ferguson there were also more than 2,000 National Guard and an FBI presence of 100 agents or more, including those undercover. It is this massive machinery of state repression and arrogant refusal to respect the demands and rights of the people that is the source of violence.

The widespread and increasing police killings in every region of the country along with the failure to charge all those responsible indicates that the problem is not with local police departments. While the Justice Department will try to present local police as the problem, this diverts from the police-state infrastructure, under military and federal command, that has been put in place.

Local police were replaced in Ferguson and they are now coming under fire from the Justice Department in Cleveland (see p.9) — all as a means to install joint operations of state, federal and military forces in urban areas, armed and commanded by the military. And, as is well known, the U.S. military is the most racist and aggressive in the world. The aim is not providing equality or even civil rights — it is brutal repression of the growing resistance not only to police killings but to the social issues of poverty, the genocide of mass incarceration, and government racism in every aspect of life, like jobs, housing, healthcare and education. Stepping up the fight for equality and the rights of all by continuing to rely on our own efforts and together strengthening the organized quality of that fight, is the path forward to providing justice.

Failure to Indict is a Crime of Government Impunity

News of the first failure to indict occurred in the Ferguson case November 24, where no charges were brought against Darren Wilson in the killing of Michael Brown. The grand jury, at the direction of the district attorney — who did not ask for an indictment on specific charges — said there was no probable cause for any charge, even involuntary manslaughter. This occurred despite there being no dispute that Brown was unarmed, a distance away from the officer at the time of the shooting and with his hands up.

The second failure to indict, announced December 3, was in Staten Island, New York, for the police killing of Eric Garner. In July, a group of police had surrounded and harassed unarmed 43 year-old African American Eric Garner. Several police then jumped him using a chokehold and killed him with a combination of knees forced down on his back, crushing his face against the sidewalk and the chokehold. There is video of the police attack with Garner repeatedly saying he could not breathe. He was left, motionless on the sidewalk, without medical attention. The coroner ruled Garner's death a homicide yet, as with the Ferguson case, the prosecutor did not ask for a specific charge and did not secure an indictment.

Both prosecutors used secret grand juries instead of a public preliminary hearing before a judge, where witnesses are cross-examined. Both allowed the police to testify on their own behalf for hours, using leading questions to convince the jury the police acted “reasonably,” and the excessive use of force was justified. Normally a prosecutor presents only the evidence against the accused as that is all that is needed to show probable cause. But in both these cases, the opposite was done, with considerable testimony presented that favored the police. The reality that prosecutors ensured no indictment would be issued in these cases can be seen in the fact that, according to federal statistics, in 2010, federal prosecutors sought indictments in about 162,000 cases, and grand jurors failed to indict in only eleven.

In the time since Brown and Garner were killed, a number of other police killings of unarmed African Americans has occurred, including that of twelve-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland. He was playing at a city recreation center, holding a toy gun when he was shot and killed by a white police officer only two seconds after the officer and his partner arrived at the center. He too was left on the sidewalk without medical attention.

It is evident from these examples and many others that police

are acting as though civilians are enemy combatants. Whatever due process existed is being eliminated and anything goes in terms of violence and killing of unarmed African Americans and youth more generally. And this brutality, and impunity for it, is being flouted publicly by officials from the top down. This is a means to get all involved used to such repeated lawlessness and violent, racist actions by the state.

President Obama has responded in part by saying the problem is “We’re seeing too many instances where people do not have confidence that folks are being treated fairly. And in some cases, those may be misperceptions; but in some cases, that’s a reality,” (remarks December 3).

The problem is one of rights and government impunity. The overwhelming number of cases involves unjust, government-organized racist attacks and killings that go unpunished. There is not misperception involved. There is government impunity and a denial of rights and widespread inequality. This is the reality and is the source of anger as African Americans and people in general are supposed to accept, time after time after time, that killings occur and equal justice does not. These are crimes of the government.



As many are demanding, *Indict the killer cops and indict the system!* Stepping up organized resistance for rights is the way forward. The fight for justice — and the inability of the government to provide it — is raising the necessity for new governing arrangements where impunity is outlawed, rights guaranteed and we the people decide!

PROTESTS SAY INDICT THE SYSTEM

Obama Indicates Confidence of the Rulers Has Been Shaken

In recent statements following announcements of no indictments for police killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, President Barack Obama has spoken repeatedly to a lack of confidence and trust between the people and law enforcement. He also presents the federal government, particularly the president, as being able to deal with this problem.

Indications are, however, that the actual problem the government wants to deal with is how to divert and disrupt the on-going struggles for rights and equality. These have spread from Ferguson to many cities across the country where protests continue to be organized and where the call to indict the system is increasingly raised. It is the confidence of the rulers in their ability to repress resistance that is being shaken. Further strengthening of executive power, including federal/military command of all policing, is the solution they give.

Immediately after the announcement in Ferguson of no indictment, Obama made an appearance on national television. In the face of massive and repeated police violence and a National Guard presence, his plea was for the people to remain peaceful and non-violent and respect the rule of law. “First and foremost, we are a nation built on the rule of law. And so, we need to accept that this decision was the grand jury’s to make.”

This is provocative in a situation where people in Ferguson, including Mike Brown’s parents, have long called for removal of the prosecutor and emphasized that experience repeatedly shows use of the secret grand jury in police killings means justice is not served. Further, extolling the virtue of rule of law and non-violence

is hypocritical and desperate coming from a known warmonger who justifies targeted assassinations, drone attacks, militarization of the border and of local police. The Ferguson situation and that in cities nationwide show the brutal elimination of any due process, before, during and after police killings and violence. The U.S. is imposing lawlessness at home and abroad and the president is in the forefront of these crimes.

Obama attempts to speak to the anger and outrage stemming from the combination of the unending police killings of unarmed African Americans, the failure to punish the guilty, and the claim by the federal government that it is a problem of “misperceptions,” and mistrust rather than government-organized racism and impunity. “We need to recognize that the situation in Ferguson speaks to broader challenges that we still face as a nation. The fact is in too many parts of this country a deep distrust exists between law enforcement and communities of color. Some of this is the result of the legacy of racial discrimination in this country. And this is tragic because nobody needs good policing more than poor communities with higher crime rates.”

Here with slight of hand he speaks to a legacy of racial discrimination but does not take responsibility for the fact that it is government organized and sustained through use of force. Further, he reinforces the excuse police give for increased arrests and profiling of African Americans — poor communities have higher crime rates. The government responsibility for poverty and its elimination is not spoken to as a critical basis for eliminating inequality and crime. Government refusal to guarantee the rights to jobs, housing and education for all is not recognized as the problem and not

part of Obama's solutions. Instead, he basically wants more police informants and "training."

He said, "The good news is, we know there are things we can do to help. And I've instructed Attorney General Holder to work with cities across the country to help build better relations between communities and law enforcement. That means working ... to train officials so that law enforcement conducts itself in a way that is fair to everybody. It means enlisting the community actively on what should be everybody's goal, and that is to prevent crime." Note the emphasis on the role of the federal government, and that preventing crime — not elimination of poverty and guaranteeing rights — the goal.

Few can forget that Guantánamo, torture, indefinite detention without charges, mass arrests of protesters, profiling at the border and against Latino and African American communities, all have been done in the name of "preventing" crimes that have not occurred. All have contributed to the elimination of due process and getting everyone used to such brutal attacks on rights.

Reject Federal Control of Policing

Obama is concerned about justifying repression and striving to divide resistance by urging support for federal intervention. He wants people to partner with the federal government and see this as a solution. As he put it, "There are good people on all sides of this debate... who are interested in working with this administration and local and state officials to start tackling much-needed criminal justice reform."

Speaking after the refusal to indict police for the Eric Garner killing, he said, "We are not going to let up until we see a strengthening of the trust and a strengthening of the accountability that exists be-

tween our communities and our law enforcement." He again expresses concern about confidence, saying that law enforcement is "only going to be able to do their job effectively if everybody has confidence in the system." The

problem is an American problem he emphasized, and "When anybody in this country is not being treated equally under the law, that's a problem. And it's my job as President to help solve it."

The ground is being laid to put the blame on local police forces that are not accountable, requiring intervention by the federal government. The high ideal of "being treated equally under the law" is used to justify actions by the president, using the Pentagon, Department of Justice and Homeland Security.

The problem the rulers see is the rejection by the people of the system and their persistence in resistance despite police violence. They are hoping to derail this fight by using the anger against local police to present federal control as an answer. This only further strengthens executive rule and its elimination of due process. Rejecting federal control of policing is integral to strengthening the organized fight for rights and persisting on a path that favors the people.



POSSIBLE JUSTIFICATION FOR REMOVING LOCAL POLICE

Justice Department Says Cleveland Police Use Excessive Force

The Department of Justice (DoJ) took more than a year to conduct a study and reach a conclusion people in Cleveland have long had: Cleveland police use excessive force. After an investigation that started in March 2013, on the basis of complaints by civilians, the DoJ reported December 4 that it has found "A pattern or practice of unreasonable and unnecessary use of force" by the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP).

The report is based on a review of nearly 600 use-of-force incidents in Cleveland between 2010 and 2013. It provides facts of police violence and racism that are readily found in police departments all across the country. As the report states, "Many African-Americans reported that they believe CDP officers are verbally and physically aggressive toward them because of their race."

In one incident, officers fired 24 rounds in a residential neighborhood with six rounds striking houses and 14 hitting parked cars. A November 2012 police chase ended with two unarmed people killed in a hail of 137 bullets.

"We found incidents of CDP officers firing their guns at people

who do not pose an immediate threat of death or serious bodily injury to officers or others and using guns in a careless and dangerous manner, including hitting people on the head with their guns, in circumstances where deadly force is not justified," federal investigators reported. "Officers also use less than lethal force that is significantly out of proportion to the resistance encountered and officers too often escalate incidents with citizens instead of using effective and accepted tactics to de-escalate tension."

Anyone watching the video of the killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island or that of Oscar Grant in Oakland knows this is the reality in every urban area. With all the DoJ investigators on the ground and already talking with the CDP, twelve-year-old African American Tamir Rice was killed just seconds after police arrived at a playground. De-escalation never entered their minds. A young black person is not seen as a human being, but rather an enemy combatant to be shot on sight. It is this demand to be treated as human beings with rights that finds expression in the many signs saying *Black Lives Matter*!

Reject Efforts to Justify Federal Takeover

City officials and the DoJ now will begin negotiating an agreement that will be submitted to a federal judge outlining the scope of changes, to include the appointment of an independent monitor. Various cities have already dealt with similar reports dealing with police and prisons, such as the DoJ agreement with the Erie County Holding Center in Buffalo. While some small changes sometimes occur, basic problems — like excessive use of force, government racism and inequality that imposes mass incarceration on African Americans and Latinos, and impunity for police killings — remain in place. The aim of the negotiations is not to eliminate such problems, but rather, as President Obama and Attorney General Holder have repeatedly said to restore “trust” and “confidence,” between the people and the police agencies.

One has to wonder whether this issue of restoring “confidence” will now be used by the federal government to take over local police departments, much as they are moving to take over local “failing” schools. In both cases, any ability for the public to have public control and a role in governance is eliminated. Executive authorities that are not part of the community get to decide.

The DoJ will likely use facts concerning local police to back such a move. For example, the report refers to many years of reporting by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* about failure to hold police accountable. A 2007 analysis by the paper found that over the preceding four-year period, police supervisors reviewed 4,427 uses of force and justified the force in every case. A subsequent *Plain Dealer* report found that the police department’s high command found no fault with 99.5 percent of all Taser incidents in the six years the devices had been used.

The federal government has systematically militarized local

police. The Pentagon funded and encouraged local police to secure military equipment and supplies — program 1033. Both Holder and Obama have refused to end the program and instead said it will be continued but the Pentagon will provide more oversight! This militarization includes more automatic weapons and the repeated practice of pointing them at unarmed protesters, tanks with machine-gun capabilities, huge stockpiles of tear gas and pepper spray. The integration of policing agencies under federal, and often military control has occurred in various ways, including joint forces for demonstrations, such as those in Ferguson, against NATO in Chicago (2012), opposing the G-20 in Pittsburgh (2009) and others.

Policing, at all levels is characterized by this military quality — come armed and ready for combat, escalate, use force and violence, and shoot to kill. This reflects not a local police problem, but rather a ruling class unable to solve any social problem and thus requiring force to hold onto their rule. The broad and on-going actions rejecting this direction and demanding an end to impunity and indictment of the system has shaken the rulers’ confidence that they can repress resistance.

In this situation, an effort to make the problems appear local and that the federal government can bring change is designed to divert the struggle for rights and equality and attempt to legitimate the federal government. It is highly dangerous for the people for policing to be in the hands of the federal government and military. This solves no problem and lays the groundwork for urban warfare against the people.

As the demand raised says, indicting the system and replacing it with one that is in the hands of the people themselves and stepping up the fight to demilitarize and guarantee equal rights of all can provide solutions.

Tamir Rice: The Story Behind the Killing, Character Assassination, and Resulting Cover-Up

Shaun King, December 2, 2014, Daily KO’s

The equation is increasingly predictable.

An African American is killed by police.

Controlling the narrative, police release their version of events and state that they had no other alternative but to use lethal force.

Eyewitnesses, recordings, and indisputable facts counter the police narrative and expose glaring inconsistencies in their story.

The character assassination of the shooting victim and his family begins.

The officers are not punished for what they did.

The family and community are left in a state of grief — fueled by a lack of closure or justice.

Repeat.

Tragically, this equation has been used over and over again and is proving itself to be quite effective at protecting police and infuriating communities all over the United States.

Do your own research, look at your own sources, and Google names like:

John Crawford

Kendrec McDade

Sean Bell

Ramarley Graham

Eric Garner

Kajieme Powell

(Those six names could be exchanged with 600 more.)

In each case, you will find the above equation to work like a well-oiled machine. The police kill a black man, grossly misrepresent the facts, assassinate the character of the victim, and then completely get away with it.

Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old boy who was shot and killed by Cleveland police is the newest name we must add to the list. Seen on a local security camera loafing around a community park, alone, Tamir makes snowballs, walks around, and plays with a pellet gun.

Concerned, a man calls 911 to report Tamir. The call itself was actually very thorough and reported that Tamir appeared to be a young kid and that the gun he was flashing was likely fake. [...]

These facts, tragically, were left out when the police dispatch operator radioed the call into local officers. In the dispatch, the operator leaves out the young age of Tamir, just 12, and the possibility



that the gun was fake.

Given what they were given, the police should have responded to the dispatch with extreme caution. They had no idea if Tamir was 12 or 21 or if he had an air pistol from Walmart or a loaded 9 mm.

The police responded to the call, reporting, what we now know, was 12-year-old Tamir Rice with an unloaded and harmless air pistol, and shot him. He died hours later at a local Cleveland hospital.

Not knowing that a camera recorded the entire incident, the police told what appear to be at least five lies about what happened.

1. Police said Tamir Rice was seated at a table with other people.
2. Police said that as they pulled up, they saw Tamir Rice grab the gun and put it in his waistband.
3. Police said they got out of the car and told Tamir Rice three times to put his hands up but he refused.
4. Police said that Tamir Rice then reached into his waistband and pulled out the gun, and was then shot and killed by Officer Timothy Loehmann.
5. Timothy Loehmann was described as a rookie.

The video of the shooting shows us that these five essential points are not true at all.

1. Tamir Rice as not seated at a table with other people.
2. Tamir Rice does not appear to grab the gun and put it in his waistband.
3. Police shot and killed Tamir in less than two seconds and

could not have told him to put his hands up three times.

4. Tamir Rice absolutely does not pull the air gun out of his waistband and brandish it in any way. This fact is so crucial.

5. Timothy Loehmann was not a rookie, but had been an officer for over two years.

We later learn that the officers on the scene refused Tamir Rice any type of first aid for four crucial minutes of his life. [...]

Soon, the character assassination began and the media began reporting that his father had been arrested for domestic violence and that his mother had had legal troubles before as well — implying that this criminality somehow should be reflected on how we view Tamir.

As expected, the officer's father and spokespeople are already claiming that the officer had no other choice.

But how can that be true? Virtually every other choice the officer could have made would have been better than the one he chose. Why did the officer lie and say Tamir was with a crew of people? Why did the officer lie and say Tamir brandished the weapon? Why did the officers pull up so closely to Tamir? How are we expected to believe that he was told three times to put his hands up in such a short period of time?

This never should have happened. Blaming their fear of Tamir or blaming their training, or lack thereof, or implying that the officer was too inexperienced on the job, are all completely unacceptable excuses and do nothing to give Tamir's family or the community even a small sense of peace or hope that anyone will be held responsible or that this will not continue to happen again and again.

National Bar Association Responds to Grand Jury's Decision Not To Indict Police Officer Darren Wilson in Death of Michael Brown

November 24, 2014

The National Bar Association is questioning how the Grand Jury, considering the evidence before them, could reach the conclusion that Darren Wilson should not be indicted and tried for the shooting death of Michael Brown. National Bar Association President Pamela J. Meanes expresses her sincere disappointment with the outcome of the Grand Jury's decision but has made it abundantly clear that the National Bar Association stands firm and will be calling on the U.S. Department of Justice to pursue federal charges against officer Darren Wilson. "We will not rest until Michael Brown and his family has justice," states Pamela Meanes, President of the National Bar Association.

President Meanes is requesting that the citizens of Ferguson, Missouri not allow this decision to cause an unnecessary uproar in the community that could lead to arrests, injuries or even deaths of innocent people. "I am asking for everyone to remain as calm as possible and to join in solidarity as we continue to support the family of Michael Brown and put our legal plan into full effect" says Meanes. "I feel the magnitude of the grand jury's ruling as Ferguson, Missouri is only minutes from where I reside," adds President Meanes.

Over the last couple of months, the National Bar Association has hosted Town Hall meetings informing attendees of their Fourth Amendment (Search & Seizure) constitutional rights, whether it is legal to record police activity, and how citizens should behave/respond if and when they interface with police

officers. "The death of Michael Brown was the last straw and the catalyst for addressing issues of inequality and racial bias in policing, the justice system, and violence against members of minority communities," states Pamela Meanes.

The family of Michael Brown requested that District Attorney McCullough step aside and allow a special prosecutor be assigned to the investigation to give the community confidence that the grand jury would conduct a complete and thorough investigation into the tragic shooting death of 18 year old Michael Brown. The grand jury's decision confirms the fear that many expressed months ago — that a fair and impartial investigation would not happen.

"The National Bar Association is adamant about our desire for transformative justice. While we are disappointed with the grand jury's ruling, we are promoting peace on every street corner around the world. The only way to foster systemic change is to organize, educate, and mobilize. We are imploring everyone to fight against the injustice in Ferguson, Missouri and throughout the United States by banding together..." said Meanes.

(The National Bar Association was founded in 1925 and is the nation's oldest and largest national network of predominantly African-American attorneys and judges. It represents the interests of approximately 60,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and law students. For more information, visit: www.nationalbar.org)

CODEPINK Condemns Decision Not to Indict Darren Wilson

November 24, 2014

The peace group CODEPINK strongly condemns the court decision not to indict Darren Wilson, the officer who shot and killed the young unarmed black man Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, 2014. CODEPINK decries rampant police brutality in the US that routinely targets people and communities of color. The organization calls on the American government the Department of Justice, Congress and the courts to make radical policy changes that will hold police accountable and lead to real justice for victims' families.

"It has been said that 'a prosecutor can indict a ham sandwich,'" said Nathan Sheard, the leader of CODEPINK's campaign to demilitarize the police. "But what has been proven today in St. Louis County, as it was weeks ago in Ohio, is that what cannot be indicted is a police officer who has killed a black person in the United States."

"Today's announcement presents the true face of injustice

today in America, an America that wears a false mask of 'post-racial'," said CODEPINK's Sophia Armen. "As people of color and allies, it is time to see the 'justice' system as not broken or corrupt, but functioning in the service of the elite few. We must demand deeply rooted changes in America's system and in the consciousness of the American public. Only then will we see true justice."

CODEPINK, a group known for its actions against wars abroad, is also working on police brutality at home. The group has been on the ground in Ferguson and has been joining solidarity actions around the country against police brutality. "The police have essentially become occupying armies with equipment designed for war," said CODEPINK co-founder Jodie Evans, who has been working closely with the group Hands Up United in Ferguson, Missouri. "Who is their enemy? Local young men? Peaceful protesters? This is not just an attack on Ferguson, but

an attack on us all.”

CODEPINK recently launched a campaign called Communities Organize to Demilitarize Enforcement (CODE) to demilitarize the police. The campaign works with communities to stop police departments from acquiring military equipment through the 1033 federal program. CODEPINK is also working with student groups to target campus security firms that also have military equipment.

For International Human Rights Day, December 10th, CODEPINK is bringing to Washington DC a group of mothers whose children were killed by police officers. The women are calling for justice for their families and for changes in existing laws that leave families vulnerable to police brutality and accountability loopholes. They will be in Washington from December 9-11 meeting with elected officials, holding briefings and speaking at public gatherings. (For more information contact alli@codepink.org.)

Statement of Iraq Veterans Against the War on Ferguson

A line has been drawn in Ferguson, Missouri. A line that separates a community collectively grieving for their lost son, and on the other side, a police force that is sworn to serve and protect but instead has brought nothing but fear and violence. A line that separates the institutionalized racism of city, state and federal government decisions and the people across the country who want to see justice for Michael Brown and the many other victims of police violence. This line did not begin and does not end in Ferguson. It has its roots in a long history of police violence against Black and Brown communities in the U.S.

As an organization made up of veterans of the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and those who support them, we intimately know what it is like to stand on one side of a line and face down a community that you are not from. We understand the institutional dehumanization that takes place in the name of ‘security.’ We know what it is like to be an invading force sent to aggressively defend the interests of people outside that community. We have witnessed the irreparable damage this militarized invasion has on individuals, families, and entire countries. Seeing the last few weeks of brutal police response, we can’t help but notice how familiar the equipment that police are using against the people of Ferguson is. Familiar because the armored vehicles, assault rifles and camouflage utilities are the exact same that we used against the Iraqi and Afghan people to rob them of their self-determination, while destroying communities, homes, and lives.

The explosion of community anger in Ferguson and the local police response has strengthened a conversation about why local police forces appear to be an occupying army. Defense Department projects like the 1033 Excess Property Program enabled the flow of \$4.3 billion dollars worth of discarded or surplus military equipment into local police departments, with little accounting and absolutely no democratic oversight. This program provides the Pentagon with cover and justification for their enormous equipment expenditures, while continuing to enrich contractors, even as military leaders slash healthcare for soldiers and pinch pennies by denying benefits to traumatized service members administratively forced out due to downsizing and budget cuts.

It is not only weaponry and equipment that is transferred from

the U.S. military to local law enforcement agencies, but people and their training as well. Few U.S. veterans leave the military with the job skills they were promised and find few options outside of the law enforcement field. Thus, many of our local police are themselves veterans, already traumatized by their experience in the military.

We also see an undeniable link between the military equipment the Department of Defense has funneled into local police departments across the country and the military equipment our nation continues to send to governments all over the world to facilitate the repression of popular uprisings. It seems that our government has determined that the only appropriate response to a community’s desire to be heard and to enact some measure of self-determination is violence and repression.

However, to focus our outrage only at the steady militarization of our police forces would be a mistake because without the systemic racism that mediates and justifies violence on communities of color and occupied people, that same violence would never be possible in the first place. This dehumanization of people makes it possible to casually brush off the more than 650,000 civilians killed in Iraq as ‘collateral damage’ and for people of color in the U.S. to be effectively ‘guilty until proven innocent,’ and in some cases, killed extra judiciously by those that are supposed to protect them.

We see the intersection of all of these forces as an enduring reason to resist militarization and racism on multiple fronts. Whether that is in the streets of Ferguson, where a community is demanding real justice, or in Oakland, California at the upcoming ‘Urban Shield’ expo, where foreign and domestic law enforcement and military agencies purchase ‘non-lethal’ and ‘less-than-lethal’ weaponry, while trading skills and strategies for repressing dissent in their respective countries.

For all of these reasons and more we call for a nationwide effort to fully demilitarize our police forces. Military equipment in the hands of police officers only encourages the use of force against the communities that they should be working in cooperation with. We call for an end to the occupations and re-occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. And we stand with the Ferguson community in their call for accountability for the murder of Michael Brown, and for the freedom to exercise their rights to protest and to resist police brutality. (August 29, 2014)

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Prosecutor Manipulates Grand Jury Process to Shield Officer

Marjorie Cohn, Truthout, November 28, 2014

You know the fix is in when a suspect who shot an unarmed man voluntarily provides four hours of un-cross examined testimony to a grand jury without taking the Fifth.

On August 9, Ferguson, Missouri Police Officer Darren Wilson gunned down 18-year-old African American Michael Brown. Since that fateful day, people across the country have protested against racial profiling, excessive police force, and the failure of the criminal justice system to provide accountability.

The nail in the coffin of “equal justice under law” came on November 24, when the St. Louis County grand jury refused to indict Wilson for any criminal charges in the shooting death of Brown. In a virtually unprecedented move, St. Louis Prosecutor Robert McCulloch in effect deputized the grand jurors to sit as triers of fact as in a jury trial.

In a normal grand jury proceeding, the prosecutor presents evidence for a few days and then asks the grand jurors to return an indictment, which they nearly always do. Of 162,000 federal cases in 2010, grand juries failed to indict in only 11 of them, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

The standard of proof for a grand jury to indict is only probable cause to believe the suspect committed a crime. It is not proof beyond a reasonable doubt, which is required for conviction at trial. Yet McCulloch’s team presented testimony and documents to the panel for three months, evidence not subjected to adversarial testing by cross-examination.

Justice Antonin Scalia explained the function of the grand jury in *United States v. Williams* as follows:

[I]t is the grand jury’s function not “to enquire . . . upon what foundation [the charge may be] denied,” or otherwise to try the suspect’s defenses, but only to examine “upon what foundation [the charge] is made” by the prosecutor. [citations omitted] As a consequence, neither in this country nor in England has the suspect under investigation by the grand jury ever been thought to have a right to testify or to have exculpatory evidence presented.

Every principle Scalia cited was violated in this case. The grand jury was asked to determine whether Wilson acted in self-defense. Wilson was allowed to give four hours of self-serving testimony to the grand jury. And for three months, prosecutors presented both incriminating and exculpatory evidence.

The prosecutor did not ask these grand jurors for an indictment. They were left to sift through the evidence on their own, with no prosecutorial guidance about what to charge. Indeed, the transcripts indicated that prosecutors asked Wilson gentle, leading questions designed to bolster his self-defense claim. For example, a prosecutor told Wilson, “You felt like your life was in jeopardy,” followed by, “And use of deadly force was justified at that point, in your opinion?” But prosecutors rigorously challenged witnesses who contradicted Wilson’s testimony.

As the grand jury is a secret proceeding, with only the grand jurors and the prosecutor present, the grand jurors did not hear any cross-examination of the officer’s testimony, or that of other witnesses (which is customary in an adversarial jury trial). These grand jurors, who were nearing the end of their term, which began in May, knew the drill, since they had sat on several other cases. They knew the prosecutor always asks for indictments. Thus, when the prosecutor handled the Wilson case in a radically different manner, this signaled to the grand jurors that they were not expected to indict. And they did not.

Another unorthodox aspect of this case was McCulloch’s announcement of the grand jury’s decision on national television. Sounding like a defense attorney delivering a closing argument in a jury trial, McCulloch characterized and analyzed the witness testimony in the light most favorable to the officer.

McCulloch has a history of bias in favor of police involved in altercations with black men. But, ignoring the pleas of 7,000 residents in and near Ferguson who signed a petition, McCulloch refused to recuse himself in the Wilson case.

McCulloch had mischaracterized testimony in a 2000 case in which two black men were killed after officers fired 21 shots at them. As in the Wilson case, the reasonableness of the officers’ use of deadly force was critical. In the 2000 case, the officers said the two victims were driving toward them, trying to run them down, and McCulloch claimed that all the witnesses corroborated the officers’ story. A later federal investigation, however, determined that the car was not moving forward, and that only three of the thirteen officers said the car was moving forward.

Likewise, Wilson’s claim that Brown was “charging” at him when the officer fired the fatal shots into the top of Brown’s bowed head was critical to the reasonableness of Wilson’s use of deadly force. When McCulloch announced the grand jury’s decision, he characterized the witnesses who testified that Brown was “charging” the officer as believable, but dismissed the testimony of witnesses who said Brown was surrendering. McCulloch sounded like a defense attorney, not a prosecutor charged with representing “the people,” including Brown.

Wilson fired 12 shots at Brown, six of which struck the teenager. There was a great deal of contradiction among the witnesses, including whether Brown’s hands were up or down when Wilson shot at him. That is precisely why there should have been an indictment and a jury trial. Jurors would hear all of the evidence, subjected to adversarial testing by cross-examination. They would assess the credibility of the witnesses, and determine whether Wilson had committed any crime(s) beyond a reasonable doubt.

After reviewing the transcripts and evidence in the Wilson case, San Francisco Public Defender Jeff Adachi noted:

Dorian Johnson, the key witness who was standing next to

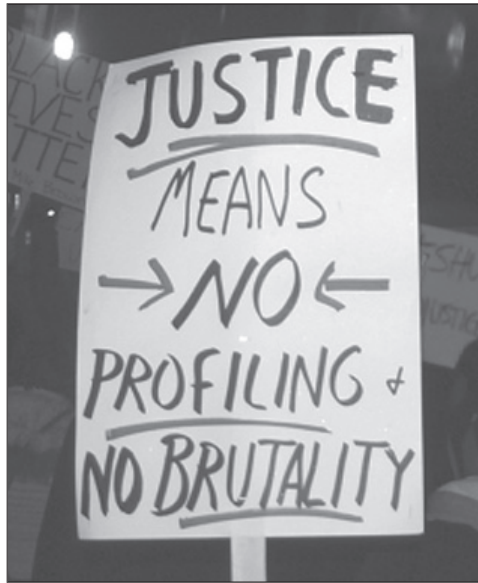
Brown during the encounter, provided strong testimony that called into question Wilson's claim that he was defending his life against a deranged aggressor. Johnson testified that Wilson, enraged that the young men did not obey his order to get on the sidewalk, threw his patrol car into reverse. While Wilson claimed Brown prevented him from opening his door, Johnson testified that the officer smacked them with the door after nearly hitting the pair. Johnson described the ensuing struggle as Wilson attempting to pull Brown through the car window by his neck and shirt, and Brown pulling away. Johnson never saw Brown reach for Wilson's gun or punch the officer. Johnson testified that he watched a wounded Brown partially raise his hands and say, "I don't have a gun" before being fatally shot.

Adachi also wrote, "Prosecutors never asked Wilson why he did not attempt to drive away while Brown was allegedly reaching through his vehicle window or to reconcile the contradiction between his claim that Brown punched the left side of his face and the documented injuries which appear on his right side."

If properly directed, the grand jury may well have indicted Wilson for one of several offenses, including first degree murder, second degree murder, voluntary manslaughter, involuntary manslaughter, assault with a deadly weapon, unlawful discharge of a firearm, and battery. Wilson testified that he was acting in self-defense when he shot Brown. If he were indicted, the jury would assess whether Wilson acted reasonably when he used deadly force against the teenager.

A police officer in Missouri can use deadly force in making an arrest or preventing escape if he reasonably believes it is necessary to effect the arrest and also reasonably believes the person to be arrested has committed or attempted to commit a felony, or may otherwise endanger life or inflict serious physical injury unless arrested without delay. The key word is "reasonably." The jury would be told to consider whether a deadly weapon was used, how far apart Wilson was from Brown when the former used deadly force, any disparities in the sizes of the two, the crime involved, etc. The evidence was contradictory about the distance between the two during the confrontation, both Wilson and Brown were the same height but Brown was heavier, and the officer contradicted himself about whether he knew that Brown was suspected of committing petty theft for stealing cigarillos (a misdemeanor, not a felony) before the officer stopped him.

In *Tennessee v. Garner*, the Supreme Court held that an officer cannot arrest an unarmed felony suspect by shooting him dead. If the suspect threatens the officer with a weapon, or there is probable cause to believe he has committed a crime involving the infliction or threatened infliction of serious physical harm, deadly force may be used if necessary to prevent escape. Although



there is a dispute about whether Wilson knew that Brown was suspected of stealing cigarillos before stopping him, Brown had likely committed petty theft - a non-violent misdemeanor, not a felony.

Wilson's testimony raises several questions, listed in a piece by Ezra Klein on Vox: "Why did Michael Brown, an 18-year-old kid headed to college, refuse to move from the middle of the street to the sidewalk? Why would he curse out a police officer? Why would he attack a police officer? Why would he dare a police officer to shoot him? Why would he charge a police officer holding a gun? Why would he put his hand in his waistband while charging, even though he was unarmed?"

In my opinion, McCulloch should have filed charges against Wilson, who would then have had the right to a public preliminary hearing. He could present evidence and cross-examine the witnesses against him. And if it were televised, the viewing public could see that justice is done.

According to Adachi, "Wilson's description of Brown as a 'demon' with superhuman strength and unrelenting rage, and his description of the neighborhood as 'hostile,' illustrate implicit racial bias that taints use-of-force decisions. These biases surely contribute to the fact that African Americans are 21 times more likely to be shot by police than whites in the US, but the statement's racial implications remain unexamined."

Because of the great social implications of cases involving police shootings of people of color, the presumption in these cases should be that prosecutors utilize the public preliminary hearing process instead of the secret grand jury proceeding.

In a unified statement, several civil and human rights organizations recommended an independent and comprehensive federal investigation by the Department of Justice (DOJ). They said the DOJ should also investigate all police killings and reports of the use of excessive force and racial profiling against youth and people of color. And they would require Body-Worn Cameras to record every police-civilian encounter, and increased community oversight of local law enforcement.

Thousands of people in cities throughout the country are protesting the travesty of justice that occurred in Ferguson. But, as the civil and human rights organizations wrote in their statement, "Nothing will be resolved until there is a systemic change throughout this nation in the implicit and explicit bias against people of color and particularly African-American youth who are routinely targeted by law enforcement even within their own communities."

(Marjorie Cohn, a criminal defense attorney, is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, where she teaches criminal law, criminal procedure, and international human rights law. She is former head of the National Lawyers Guild)

RESISTING THE WAR AGAINST THE BLACK AND BROWN PEOPLE

Why We Will Not Wait

Robin D.G. Kelley, November 25, 2014

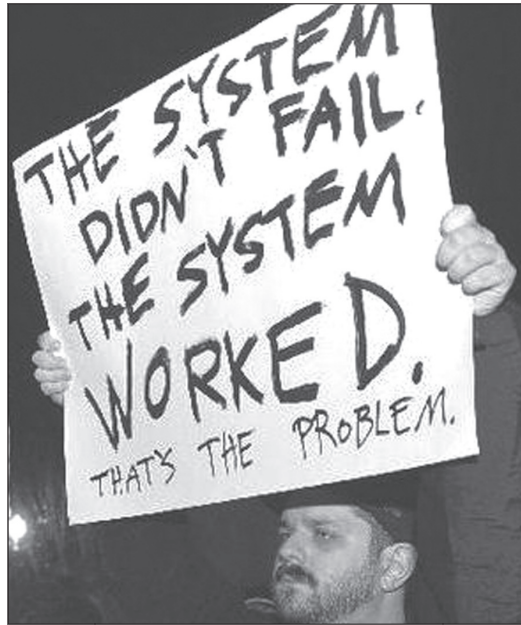
Wait. Patience. Stay Calm. “This is a country that allows everybody to express their views,” said the first Black president, “allows them to peacefully assemble, to protest actions that they think are unjust.” Do not disrupt, express. Justice will be served. We respect the rule of law. This is America.

We have all been waiting for the grand jury’s decision, not because most of us expected an indictment. District Attorney Robert P. McCulloch’s convoluted statement explaining — or rather, defending — how the grand jury came to its decision resembled a victory speech. For a grand jury to find no probable cause even on the lesser charge of involuntary manslaughter is a stunning achievement in a police shooting of an unarmed teenager with his hands raised, several yards away. Distilling 4,799 pages of grand jury proceedings to less than twenty minutes, he managed to question the integrity of eyewitnesses, accuse the 24-hour news cycle and social media for disrupting the investigation, and blame alleged neighborhood violence for why the removal of Mike Brown’s body from the pavement had to wait until morning. McCulloch never indicted a cop in his life, so why expect anything different now? [...]

Governor Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency, calling up National Guard forces from across the state and beyond, training the state militia for riot control and counterinsurgency. The federal government has dispatched FBI agents, some presumably undercover operating inside protest movements. As I write these words, all forces are being deployed against protesters and the Black community more generally, and the governor has requested more National Guard troops.

Meanwhile, as we waited for the grand jury’s decision, a twelve-year-old Black boy named Tamir Rice was shot and killed by police in Cleveland because the officer mistook his toy gun for a real one. Tamir was playing outside of Cleveland’s Cudell Recreation Center, one of the few public facilities left that provide safe space for children.

As we waited, Cleveland cops took the life of Tanisha Anderson, a 37-year-old Black woman suffering from bipolar disorder. Police arrived at her home after family members called 911 to help her through a difficult crisis, but rather than treat her empathetically they did what they were trained to do when confronted with Black bodies in Black neighborhoods — they treated her like an enemy combatant. When she became agitated,



one officer wrestled her to the ground and cuffed her while a second officer pinned her “face down on the ground with his knee pressed down heavily into the back for 6 to 7 minutes, until her body went completely limp.” [Much as occurred with the killing of Eric Gardner — VOR Ed. Note] She stopped breathing. They made no effort to administer CPR, telling the family and witnesses that she was sleeping. When the ambulance finally arrived twenty minutes later, she was dead.

As we waited, police in Ann Arbor, Michigan, killed a forty-year-old Black woman named Aura Rain Rosser. She was reportedly brandishing a kitchen knife when the cops showed up on a domestic violence call, although her boyfriend who made

the initial report insisted that she was no threat to the officers. No matter; they opened fire anyway.

As we waited, a Chicago police officer fatally shot 19-year-old Roshad McIntosh. Despite the officer’s claims, several eyewitnesses reported that McIntosh was unarmed, on his knees with his hands up, begging the officer to hold his fire.

As we waited, police in Saratoga Springs, Utah, pumped six bullets into Darrien Hunt, a 22-year-old Black man dressed kind of like a ninja and carrying a replica Samurai sword. And police in Victorville, California, killed Dante Parker, a 36-year-old Black man and father of five. He had been stopped while riding his bike on suspicion of burglary. When he became “uncooperative,” the officers repeatedly used Tasers to try to subdue him. He died from his injuries.

As we waited, a twenty-eight-year-old Black man named Akai Gurley met a similar fate as he descended a stairwell in the Louis H. Pink Houses in East New York, Brooklyn. The police were on a typical reconnaissance mission through the housing project. Officer Peter Liang negotiated the darkened stairwell, gun drawn in one hand, flashlight in the other, prepared to take down any threat he encountered. According to liberal mayor Bill DeBlasio and police chief Bill Bratton, Mr. Gurley was collateral damage. Apologies abound. He left a two-year-old daughter.

As we waited, LAPD officers stopped 25-year-old Ezell Ford, a mentally challenged Black man, in his own South Los Angeles neighborhood and shot him to death. The LAPD stopped Omar Abrego, a 37-year-old father from Los Angeles, and beat him to death.

And as we waited and waited and waited, Darren Wilson got

married, continued to earn a paycheck while on leave, and received over \$400,000 worth of donations for his “defense.”

You see, we have been waiting for dozens, hundreds, thousands of indictments and convictions. Every death hurts. Every exonerated cop, security guard, or vigilante enrages. The grand jury’s decision does not surprise most Black people because we are not waiting for an indictment. We are waiting for justice — or more precisely, struggling for justice. We all know the names and how they died. Eric Garner, Kajieme Powell, Vonderitt D. Meyers, Jr., John Crawford III, Cary Ball Jr., Mike Brown, ad infinitum. They were unarmed and shot down by police under circumstances for which lethal force was unnecessary. We hold their names like recurring nightmares, accumulating the dead like ghoulish baseball cards. Except that there is no trading. No forgetting. Just a stack of dead bodies that rises every time we blink. For the last three generations, Eleanor Bumpurs, Michael Stewart, Eula Love, Amadu Diallo, Oscar Grant, Patrick Dorismond, Malice Green, Tyisha Miller, Sean Bell, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Margaret LaVerne Mitchell, to name a few, have become symbols of racist police violence. And I’m only speaking of the dead—not the harassed, the beaten, the humiliated, the stopped-and-frisked, the raped.

Meanwhile, Governor Jay Nixon, President Obama, Attorney General Eric Holder, the mainstream press and every state-anointed Negro leader lecture Black people to stay calm and remain non-violent, when the main source of violence has been the police. Mike Brown’s murder brought people out to the streets, where they were met with tear gas and rubber bullets. State violence is always rendered invisible in a world where cops and soldiers are heroes, and what they do is always framed as “security,” protection, and self-defense.

Police occupy the streets to protect and serve the citizenry from (Black) criminals out of control. This is why, in every instance, there is an effort to depict the victim as assailant — Trayvon Martin used the sidewalk as a weapon, Mike Brown used his big body. A lunge or a glare from a Black person can constitute an imminent threat.

When the suburb of Ferguson blew up following Mike Brown’s killing on August 9, the media and mainstream leadership were more concerned with looting and keeping the “peace” than the fact that Darren Wilson was free on paid leave. Or that leaving Brown’s bullet-riddled, lifeless body, on the street for four and a half hours, bleeding, cold, stiff from rigor mortis,



constituted a war crime in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It was, after all, an act of collective punishment — the public display of the tortured corpse was intended to terrorize the entire community, to punish everyone into submission, to remind others of their fate if they step out of line. We used to call this “lynching.”

War? Yes, war. The immediate and sustained resistance to the police following Mike Brown’s murder revealed the low intensity war between the state and Black people, and the disproportionate use of force against protesters following the grand jury’s decision escalated the conflict. To the world at large, Ferguson looked like a war zone because the police resembled the military with their helmets, flak jackets, armed personnel carriers, and M-16 rifles. But African-American residents of Ferguson and St Louis proper, and in impoverished communities across the country, did not have to endure tear gas or face down riot cops to know that they were

already living in a war zone — hence Mike Brown’s and Dorian Johnson’s initial trepidation toward the police.

Past and present police violence in the area gave Brown and Johnson good reason to fear Wilson. The prosecution turned what may have seemed like a reasonable act of self-defense on the part of a startled and angry eighteen-year-old kid into an “assault of a law officer in the first degree.” That Wilson feared for his life was all he needed to justify lethal force. But it is the instructions to the grand jury toward the end of the three-month-long deliberations that deserve our attention. After asking jurors to judge Wilson’s actions against Missouri statute on police use of deadly force, the assistant county prosecutors, Sheila Whirley and Kathi Alizadeh, suddenly announced that after “doing our research” they learned that the statute had been superseded by a U.S. Supreme Court decision. In lieu of the decision and the old statute, Whirley wrote up a description of how the law applies when an officer can use force when making an arrest. When a grand juror began asking questions for clarification, Whirley explains that the old law “is not entirely incorrect or inaccurate, but there is something that is not correct, ignore it totally.” She then indicates that they will rely on the U. S. Supreme Court decision in *Tennessee v. Garner* (1985), “not that that matters much to you. . . . We don’t want to get into a law class.” She went on to focus on the self-defense instruction.

But just a quick glance at the decision reveals that the ruling was intended to limit the use of deadly force, arguing that killing a fleeing suspect constitutes an intrusive “seizure” potentially

violating 4th Amendment protections against being deprived of life. If a suspect is not armed and dangerous, the use of deadly force is not warranted and thus the seizure of life is not reasonable.

Whether we call it a war on drugs, or “Operation Ghetto Storm” as the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement dubs it, what we are dealing with is nothing less than permanent war waged by the state and its privatized allies on a mostly poor and marginalized Black and Brown working class. Five centuries in the making, it stretches from slavery and imperialism to massive systematic criminalization. We see the effects on our children, in the laws that make it easier to prosecute juveniles as adults; in the deluge of zero tolerance policies (again a by-product of the war on drugs); in the startling fact that expulsions and suspensions have risen exponentially despite a significant decline in violent crime. Crisis, moral panics, neoliberal policies, racism fuel an expansive system of human management based on incarceration, surveillance, containment, pacification, lethal occupation, and gross misrepresentation.

The Black community of Ferguson and adjacent communities experience war every single day, in routine police stops, fines for noise ordinance violations (e.g., playing loud music), for fare-hopping on St. Louis’s light rail system, for uncut grass or unkempt property, trespassing, wearing “saggy pants,” expired driver’s license or registration, “disturbing the peace,” among other things. If these fines or tickets are not paid, they may lead to jail time, the loss of one’s car or other property, or the loss of one’s children to social services.

The criminal justice system is used to exact punishment and tribute, a kind of racial tax, on poor/working class Black people. In 2013, Ferguson’s municipal court issued nearly 33,000 arrest warrants to a population of just over 21,000, generating about \$2.6 million dollars in income for the municipality. That same year, 92 percent of searches and 86 percent of traffic stops in Ferguson involved Black people, this despite the fact that one in three whites was found carrying illegal weapons or drugs, while only one in five Blacks had contraband.

And yet, defenders of the status quo always deflect critiques of state violence by citing the number of intra-racial homicides in low-income Black communities. Who can forget former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s recent quip to Michael Eric Dyson on “Meet the Press”? “White police officers wouldn’t be there [in Black neighborhoods] if you weren’t killing each other.” Racist bluster, to be sure, but such assertions have succeeded in foreclosing a deeper interrogation of how neoliberal policies (i.e., dismantling the welfare state; promoting capital flight; privatizing public schools, hospitals, housing, transit, and other public resources; investing in police and prisons,) are a form of state violence that produces scarcity, environmental and health hazards, poverty, and alternative (illegal) economies rooted in violence and subjugation.

Ironically, Giuliani’s vitriol makes a compelling case for the failure of modern law enforcement. If the police are charged with keeping the peace and protecting citizens, but instead have contributed to the “epidemic” of violent deaths, then a case can

be made for the complete withdrawal of the police from Black and Brown neighborhoods. The police are trained for combat and often regard the youth in low-income communities of color as potential enemy combatants. This is why the killing of innocent Black men in dark stairwells, Black women with kitchen knives, or little boys brandishing toy guns are not accidents. Cops patrol these areas with their weapon close at hand; behind every shadow lurks a suspect, and in war it is kill or be killed.

In light of Missouri’s failure to indict Darren Wilson for the murder of Mike Brown, calling for the withdrawal of the police — even temporarily — is a reasonable demand for people terrorized by state violence and feeling particularly vulnerable over their safety. They want law and order, but the police have shown a consistent disrespect for the law, flagrantly violated the Constitution, and operated with little to no accountability. Instead, the police operate as a rogue outfit, their actions create disorder and fear. Furthermore, failure to indict effectively exonerates the police force, providing a pretext for the police to ramp up violence and repression in response to the legitimate expression of anger and frustration over the government’s failure to protect Black lives and ensure justice. It is already happening in the aftermath of the grand jury’s decision, as riot police invade the headquarters of Hands Up United as well as designated safe spaces.

The young organizers in Ferguson from Hands Up United, Lost Voices, Organization for Black Struggle, Don’t Shoot Coalition, Millennial Activists United, and the like, understand they are at war. Tef Poe, Tory Russell, Montague Simmons, Cheyenne Green, Ashley Yates, and many other young Black activists in the St. Louis area have not been waiting around for an indictment. Nor are they waiting for the much vaunted Federal probe, for they have no illusions about a federal government that provides military hardware to local police, builds prisons, kills tens of thousands by manned and unmanned planes without due process, and arms Israel in its illegal wars and occupation. They have been organizing. So have the young Chicago activists who founded We Charge Genocide and the Black Youth Project, and the Los Angeles-based youth who make up the Community Rights Campaign, and the hundreds of organizations across the country challenging everyday state violence and occupation. They remind us, not only that Black lives matter — that should be self-evident — but that resistance matters. It matters because we are still grappling with the consequences of settler colonialism, racial capitalism and patriarchy. It mattered in post-Katrina New Orleans, a key battleground in neoliberalism’s unrelenting war on working people, where Black organizers lead multiracial coalitions to resist the privatization of schools, hospitals, public transit, public housing, and dismantling public sector unions. The young people of Ferguson continue to struggle with ferocity, not just to get justice for Mike Brown or to end police misconduct but to dismantle racism once and for all, to bring down the Empire, to ultimately end war.

(Robin D. G. Kelley teaches at UCLA and is the author of the biography *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original*, 2009)

I • Step Up Independent Organizing

but rather to turn over public education funds to private interests, such as hedge fund managers. Every effort is being made to exclude and eliminate the public and local public governance. In this situation strengthening the role of the public, fighting for public control of public schools and organizing to unite parents, students, teachers and staff and empower them is vital.

The Buffalo Example

New York Governor Cuomo has repeatedly targeted the public schools, most recently claiming they are a monopoly to be broken up (see November VOR). He secured more public funding for private charters, while refusing to fully fund the public schools consistent with court rulings.

Commissioner King and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) made a special effort just for Buffalo to allow more private charter schools to take over public schools, potentially including the public school buildings. These efforts also include offering grants of up to \$750,000 in public funds to private charters that provide plans for what NYSED calls “persistently low performing” schools — a label devised by the federal government. The large majority of Buffalo schools fall into this category. This means not only are the four main schools targeted by NYSED, Lafayette, Bennett, East and MLK on the auction block, but so are all Buffalo schools branded “low-performing.” It is Commissioner King and the appointed Board of Regents that will decide these matters, not the Buffalo School Board.

These efforts are being facilitated by the federal government, all in service to private monopoly interests, like Microsoft, Walmart’s Walton family, Pearson and hedge fund managers like those behind New York City’s Success Academy. Cuomo and King have both called on Success to come to Buffalo and many expect they will be among those to file an application. But so far such information remains secret.

The local effort by teachers, staff, administrators, students and community organizers to develop a plan for Lafayette High School have been done in public. Indeed, the schools are organizing public meetings to inform people about their plans and encourage public input on them. Teachers and students have also gone to School Board meetings and participated in demonstrations, all contributing to the defense of public education and the

role of the public in having its say.

Teachers and parents also organized together to have a public forum and develop their own public vision for public education (see below). They are expanding efforts to involve parents and students alike in refusing the state’s standardized tests and the whole Common Core testing regime.

All of these various activities are contributing to developing the independent politics of people’s empowerment, as they bring to the fore the right of the public to decide. They are demonstrating that politics that defend the public are needed and positive, as they serve to inform and unite the public in defense of its interests. This is in contrast to the rotten and dirty non-politics of the rich and their representatives, so completely revealed in the most recent elections where two thirds of voters said “No, None of the Above!”

Wherever public schools are under attack, stepping up independent political organizing means having more public meetings to advance a public vision and alternative where we, the people decide. It means increasing the role of students in the work. It means strengthening our independent voice. For Buffalo this means joining in building *Buffalo Forum* and the various webpages of those organizing, like NYSAPE and Western New Yorkers for Public Education.

We urge all to demand that their School Board and local representatives hold public meetings on the danger of privatizing public schools and alternative public visions for public education. We encourage all weekly and monthly newspapers to also organize public meetings. Broad discussion and unifying public opinion in defense of public education, by defending the rights of all is necessary. Join in!



TEACHERS AND PARENTS ORGANIZE FORUM

Public Vision for Public Education Emphasizes Need for Public to Decide

Teachers, parents and community organizers in Buffalo recently took the initiative to organize a public forum on “Corporate School Reform and a Public Vision for Public Education.” Held November 15 at Karpeles Library Museum, the event brought together about 100 people from Buffalo and surrounding school districts. While speakers and participants spoke to Corporate School Reform — calling it corporate *deform* for its negative

impact on the public and public schools — what stood out about the forum was its united stand to raise the quality of public schools by defending rights.

Participants from Buffalo and the suburbs rejected the current trend to eliminate the public from governance of public schools and target the teachers as the source of problems. As the resolution unanimously passed emphasized, “It is the public that needs

to decide how best to raise the quality of our public schools and ensure the equal right to education for all. We teachers, parents and students are the experts in the field of education and we refuse to be excluded or silenced... We stand united in defending the right to education, opposing all attacks taking place on our public schools and supporting the teachers, parents, students and community members standing up for rights," (see below).

The forum also challenged those supporting privatization, like the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, representing Buffalo's largest monopolies, and Commissioner King and Governor Cuomo, to a public debate on the matter. *Voice of Revolution* also encourages those defending the right to education everywhere to call on school board members to organizing public meetings to debate how best to raise the quality of the public schools and have public control of them.

Opposing Public Space for Private Charters and Urging Student Organizing

The event had three main speakers, with lots of questions from the audience. Leonie Haimson, from New York City (NYC), spoke first. She is executive director of Class Size Matters and works to strengthen the role of parents in public education. She spoke to the significance of smaller class sizes in education, something the privatizers in Buffalo try to ignore. She also played an important role in exposing inBloom, the data mining company of Microsoft's Bill Gates, which tried to establish a pre-K-20 (graduate school) 400 point database of all New York students, without parental consent. InBloom was blocked but she and others cautioned that it could re-emerge in different form as much of the Common Core testing and teaching modules depend on a similar infrastructure.

She also spoke to the very harmful impact of sharing public school space with private charters. Private charters use public funding, but they also commonly get additional funds from their private backers, like banks (M&T here in Buffalo is one example) or other financiers. One way this is reflected in NYC schools is that the floors where the charter schools are housed have better quality facilities, such as bathrooms — which the students on the public school floors are not allowed to use! This blatant inequality has served to increase conflicts among parents and make public schools appear worse than they actually are in terms of the education provided. The inequality in funding and the harm to society of undermining public schools is to be ignored. She brought out that students have an important role to play and urged participants to involve students more in the organizing efforts.

Right of Public to Decide

Dr. Mark Garrison of Buffalo was the second speaker. He elaborated on the trend, mainly since the end of the Cold War, to eliminate the public from governance of the public schools. This includes eliminating the conception that government has a social responsibility to provide the highest quality public education for all students. Instead, government is facilitating the takeover of public institutions, and their public funds, by private

interests. He joked that Bill Gates is the real Secretary of Education.

He brought out that facts are important in the discussion and spoke to two kinds of facts. One kind, for example, speaks to whether private charters have shown themselves to actually improve the quality of education. Studies have shown that they do not perform better than the public schools on state standardized tests — the main means used to compare them. This narrow comparison of test scores

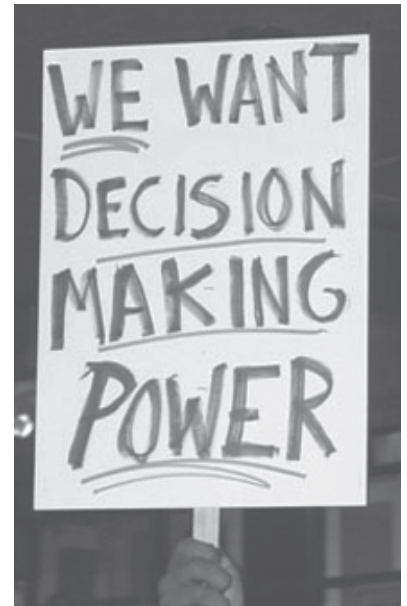
also leaves out facts like suspension rates (charters are 2-3 times higher), the harm to teaching and learning conditions when the test score is all that matters and so forth. A second type of fact is that those who are promoting private charters as the means to improve education systematically ignore the facts showing that they do not do so. This is purposeful, and significant as it indicates that the aim is not improving schools, rather justifying the dismantling of a system of public education.

Public schools are public institutions built over a long period of time to provide free public education for all students — as the NY constitution requires. Garrison brought out that what is needed today is decision making by the public for the public interest. The forum itself was an important example of providing public space for public discussion, a discussion that informs and unites, rather than deforming and dividing.

Those pushing privatization and eliminating the role of the public also ignore that education is impacted by important social factors, like poverty and racism. To fix the public schools it is necessary to strengthen the communities of which they are a part by dealing with poverty and government racism. Teachers play a main role in the school building, but these social factors play a much larger role in education overall. He concluded that the issue of who decides has to be kept in the forefront, and that it is the right of the public to together decide all matters of public education.

Refuse the State Tests

The last speaker was Eric L. Mihelbergel, a parent and organizer of the New York State Allies for Public Education (NYS-APE). He spoke to the growing efforts of parents statewide to refuse the standardized testing of the Common Core. He provided information as to why the testing is arbitrary and harmful to the students, including that they are commonly developmentally inappropriate and narrow the curriculum. Teaching to the test and emphasizing English and Math largely to the exclusion of history,



social studies, art, music, lowers the quality of education.

Parents are organizing together to refuse the tests as a means to defend their children and public education. He spoke to how both NYSAPE and Western New Yorkers for Public Education provide materials for parents to use. These include letters to their school principal and teachers, steps to take on test day and more. Parents are increasingly organizing to leaflet at school events where large numbers of parents gather so as to inform people about the movement to Refuse the Tests! and bring more people into the organizing. He explained that an estimated 60,000 statewide refused last year and organizers are aiming for 250,000

statewide this year. Efforts are going forward to identify parents in each school district, establish groups and develop organizing consistent with the specific needs and concerns of each area.

The various questions asked in the course of the forum brought out experience of teachers and parents in organizing and contending with efforts to suppress their resistance and use fear to silence teachers. The importance and necessity for raising the quality of public education by defending the rights of teachers and students alike also was highlighted. The spirit and united stand was reflected in the resolution, which affirmed the support of all for public control of public schools.

We Support Public Control of Public Schools

*Unanimous Resolution of the Meeting on Corporate School "Reform" and a Public Vision for Public Education,
Saturday, November 15, 2014, Buffalo, New York*

The participants of the November 15 forum on a Public Vision for Public Education express our support for the teachers, parents, students, staff and administrators opposing the efforts to privatize Buffalo public schools and turn them over to private charter school interests, including handing over public school buildings and space for free. We represent teachers, parents, students and community members from Buffalo and surrounding school districts and we stand together for public control of public schools. It is the public that needs to decide how best to raise the quality of our public schools and ensure the equal right

to education for all. We teachers, parents and students are the experts in the field of education and we refuse to be excluded or silenced. We call for public debate and discussion on the need for public control of public schools and challenge those calling for privatization to such debate. We stand united in defending the right to education, opposing all attacks taking place on our public schools and supporting the teachers, parents, students and community members standing up for rights. We will continue to conduct public forums and debate opposing the corporate agenda and elaborating our vision for public education.

Dr. Steve Perry and Keeping Public Schools Public

On December 12-13, Dr. Steve Perry will be speaking in Buffalo, New York. He regularly travels the country for speaking engagements. Perry is currently the principal at a public school in Hartford Connecticut, Capital Preparatory Magnet School. The school is a public magnet school, which means it has particular programs and requirements and students have to be accepted into the school.

In Buffalo Dr. Perry will speak at the Community Action Organization's (CAO) first Education Action Symposium at Waterfront School. On Friday December 12 from 6-9pm Dr. Perry will share "best practices" and likely present his views on the role of charter schools and unions. On Saturday from 9-noon there will be "Action Workshops" and panels on topics like effective school governance, changing the structure of school organization, neighborhood schools, parent engagement, after school programs and community based mentoring.

Buffalo Public Schools are currently under attack, with concerted and on-going attempts by Commissioner King and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to take over public schools and turn them into privately controlled charters, using public funds. It is not alone in this situation, with similar attacks taking place in Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago and elsewhere. New Orleans, usually presented as a model for successful replacement of public schools with private charters, now has no public schools. The charter schools, part of the Louisiana Recovery School

District, rank almost at the bottom state-wide in terms of performance on test scores.

The schools most directly targeted in Buffalo, Bennett, Lafayette, East High Schools and MLK Multicultural Institute, are all working hard to provide plans to improve their schools. All are hosting public meetings, involving the community, parents, teachers and students in an effort to keep public schools public

and raise their quality. The state and federal governments are working to eliminate public governance and hand the schools, including the school buildings, over to private charters. This could take place over the summer.



In this situation, more public discussion is welcome. We encourage our readers to participate in the event and strive to focus discussion on the need for public control of public schools and increasing the role of parents, students, teachers and staff in being decision makers. They are the experts and need to be the ones to decide.

We also encourage all to inform yourselves about Dr. Perry. He is a private charter advocate and has his own private charter management company. He is supported by corporate defectors, striving to eliminate public schools and public governance. Examining his existing work as principal at Capital Preparatory Magnet School is also useful. Perry uses the school as the basis for his charter school applications and more generally to support his views on education. Several useful facts about the school, based on data from the Connecticut Department of Education:

1) Capital Prep's academic outcomes based on tests are not superior. Connecticut uses what is called a School Performance Index (SPI), which is the average of all Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) test performance for all subjects tested for all students, on a scale from 1-100. Looking specifically at rates for African American males, the average rate for Hartford Public Schools for 2013 was 59.7. The average rate for Capital Prep was lower, at 58.3.

2) Capital Prep has high attrition rates between its freshman and senior classes. On average one in three freshman will not make it to their senior year.

3) The two facts above are true despite the fact that Capital Prep serves far fewer students in poverty, with disabilities, and who are English Language Learners than most public high schools in Hartford. These factors all have significant impact on test scores. Most Hartford public high schools, like Buffalo, have close to 100% of students receiving free lunches. Capital Prep has about 45%. Most have about 15-20% with disabilities, Capital Prep has about 6%. Most have more than 15% and some more than 25% English Language Learners, Capital Prep has less than 5%.

Dr. Perry also heads a private charter school management company, Capital Preparatory Schools, Inc. (CPS) and is striving to open several private charters using public funds. He was recently approved for a private charter school in Harlem. There are a number of concerns being raised about the approval however, as Perry's company claims to already be running other charters. It does not run any. His application also stated that the concepts, curriculum and intellectual property from efforts at Capital Prep Magnet School belong to



his company. They do not, they belong to the Hartford Public Schools, his employer. It is also worth noting that in his application for the Harlem charter, managed by his company CPS, Dr. Perry says "The annual ending cash balance per year for CPS will be just over \$500,000 in management fees collected. Conservative five-year estimates have our year end cash balance at \$2 million by year five between Hartford, Bridgeport and our Harlem 6 to 12 school."

Dr. Perry is also known for his anti-union views and commonly uses his speeches to attack teachers. In considering such views it is important to keep in mind that teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions so raising conditions for teachers is essential to improving schools for students. Efforts to divide parents and teachers also do not contribute to raising the quality of public education. Both are needed and together have vital roles to play. Public discussion needs to be directed at strengthening the united efforts of teachers, parents, students and staff to defend the equal right to education for all and have public control of public schools. The most essential ingredient is uniting to secure decision making power by parents, students, teachers and staff!

(More information about Dr. Perry and his efforts to open private charter schools can be found at Jonathan Peltó's blog, jonathanpelto.com, and Jersey Jazzman, jerseyjazzman.blogspot.com. Peltó is a former five-term Connecticut House of Representatives legislator who served on the Appropriations and Education Committee. Jersey Jazzman is Mark Weber, a New Jersey public school teacher, public school parent, taxpayer, and union member.)



I • Mass Actions in Mexico Demand Justice

uses the claim of “suppressing the drug trade to greatly militarize Mexico and further increase impunity and violence. The Mexican government’s subservience to U.S. interests and the corruption of the Mexican state and its security agencies have also been exposed. As in the U.S., with the mass protests against police killings and the police violence against protesters, both governments are being exposed for their refusal to look after the well-being of the people and their increasingly violent repression of their just struggles.

The people’s resistance is known as the #YaMeCanse (“I am tired”) movement — a phrase uttered by the Attorney General (PGR) to say he was worn out by the case — to mock and decry the callous aloofness of the Mexican state, and to highlight that the people are sick and tired of the government’s corruption and U.S. interference. The Attorney General said this to the media despite the fact that it is the families of the missing who are suffering the most and are sick and sleepless with worry. The 43 disappeared students are among many hundreds disappeared or killed by the cartels, with their U.S. protection.

Reports have begun to surface of another abduction of 31 students in July of this year in Cocula, also in the southern Mexican state of Guerrero, not far from Iguala, scene of the abduction of the Ayotzinapa students on September 26. On November 27, the state government admitted that the Cocula abductions and disappearances had actually taken place on July 2-3, 2013, after initially saying it could not verify the reports. The governor callously stated that, “The information on this abduction is available on the Guerrero state government website ... it was reported there despite nobody coming forward with the crime.” France 24 said interviews were conducted with several other Cocula residents, all of whom confirmed the abduction. All witnesses said nobody in Cocula wanted to report the mass kidnapping, because they — and their children — were threatened with death by heavily-armed criminals.

Guerrero Teachers, Students Protest at Two-Month Mark

To mark the anniversary of the disappearance of the 43 students from the Ayotzinapa teacher’s training college, classmates,



An effigy of Mexican President Peña Nieto is burned in the Zocalo, Mexico City’s central square, during a rally of some 100,000 people against state violence and impunity.

teachers and social organizations blocked a major highway connecting the Mexican capital to the resort beach city of Acapulco.

Meanwhile, families of the disappeared students cancelled a meeting with Mexico’s National Security Commissioner Alejandro Rubido at the Chilpancingo Airport. They reportedly called off the meeting to protest the presence of more than 500 Federal Police personnel organizing to confront protesters in the city.

Protests were also held to demand the release of 11 people, most of them students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), arrested during actions November 20 in clashes with police in

Mexico City, on spurious charges of terrorism, organized crime, attempted homicide and sedition, which made them ineligible for bail. They were temporarily held at a Specialized Investigation Deputy Attorney for Organized Crime (SIEDO) before being sent to maximum security prisons in the states of Veracruz and Nayarit. On November 29, a judge in Xalapa, capital of the Gulf coast state of Veracruz, found insufficient evidence to prosecute the 11 people.

Alejandro Jimenez, lawyer from the Mexican Institute for Democracy and Human Rights stated, “In this tense time the country is going through, if the PGR [Attorney General] wants to regain some credibility it must stop using the legal system with political motivations, [while] the federal government must stop using the PGR politically.”

Despite Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto’s threats to use more force against protestors, the Ayotzinapa missing students protests are still going on all over Mexico. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets to demand that the 43 missing students be found alive.

November 20 Global Struggle for Ayotzinapa

Actions across Mexico and worldwide on November 20, Mexico’s Revolution Day, were named a “Global Struggle for Ayotzinapa.” Actions took place in every major city in Mexico. Mexicans were urged to refrain from attending work and school in a national strike. Actions also took place in the U.S., Canada,

PROTESTS IN MEXICO

Spain and the Netherlands.

Events organized in Mexico City, the capital of the country, seat of the federal government and home to no less than a quarter of the country's total population, led the global actions. An estimated 100,000 people rallied in the Zocalo, the city's historic central square

Family members of the 43 disappeared students led three caravans to Mexico City. When they arrived at the capital district, the caravans spawned three corresponding marches, emanating from some of the city's most important places and headed to the Zocalo: the Angel of Independence; Tlatelolco, the site of the infamous 1968 massacre of hundreds of students; and the Monument to the Revolution.

The border cities of Ciudad Juarez and El Paso, Texas held simultaneous cross-border marches and political actions. The two cities combined form the largest border city in the world and international bridge crossings were temporarily blocked by protesters. After demonstrators ended the blockade, they successfully demanded free passage for hundreds of passenger vehicles that usually have to pay 26 pesos (about two dollars) to cross the bridge. Thousands protested the official Juarez parade, while in El Paso, student groups and solidarity organizations converged in front of the Mexican consulate.

In Hermosillo, in the northern state of Sonora, thousands participated in a march organized by local labor unions and students. Students proceeded to occupy and take control of the state congressional chambers in solidarity with the disappeared students and to demand an end to impunity and state violence.

In Tijuana, Mexico's second largest border metropolis, high schools and the Autonomous University of Baja California held a Revolutionary March, as an alternative to that city's official parade. Protest leaders called for an end to state repression.

Toluca, Culiacan, Leon, Campeche, Zamora, Xalapa and Tenoisique were among other major cities that held actions of solidarity. Countless more small towns across Mexico, according to local media reports, also organized marches, assemblies and vigils in solidarity with the #YaMcCanse movement.



Protest in support of Mexican students, above, Boston; below, Canada

Violent Role of U.S. to Militarize Mexico as Part of "War on Drugs"

The vast majority of U.S. so-called aid to Mexico is focused on fighting what is called the war on drugs. This money comes primarily through two channels: the Merida Initiative, administered by the State Department, and Department of Defense counter-narcotics funds. The Merida Initiative, launched as a three-year plan by the Bush Administration in 2007 and funded in 2008, supports Mexican security forces, primarily in counter-narcotics efforts whose purpose is said to be to dismantle drug cartels. The Obama administration extended the Merida Initiative "indefinitely."

The Merida Initiative has already been given \$2.4 billion dollars. The Department of Defense has spent \$214.7 million on the Mexican drug war just since 2011, when figures are available. Additional public funds for Mexico's drug war come through the Department of Justice for extensive Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) operations in Mexico. This means that the U.S. government has spent approximately \$3 billion dollars on the war on drugs in Mexico alone. While Merida is said to help stop drugs, it has instead served to bring U.S. forces, like the DEA and ATF into Mexico, against the strong demands of the Mexican people to keep the U.S. out. The U.S. also has established a command center in Mexico City that includes the FBI. The DEA has been directly tied to gun-running operations for the cartels. The CIA is also notorious for using drug money, from Mexico, Colombia and elsewhere, to fund its various black ops worldwide.

On October 29, the Center for International Policy Americas Program (CIP-Americas) delivered a report at a Congressional Briefing hosted by the office of Representative Hank Johnson (D-Georgia), co-sponsored by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), the Guatemala Human Rights Commission, Just Associates, CISPES and CIP-Americas. They reported that the results of U.S. funding in the so-called war on drugs include:

- 100,000 murdered in drug war-related violence
- More than 25,000 disappeared, tens of thousands



PROTESTS IN MEXICO

forced to flee their homes, thousands of orphans and incalculable psychological trauma

- Mass graves in Guerrero, Tamaulipas, Chihuahua and other states with unidentified bodies
- Increase in violations of the rights and physical safety of transmigrants in the country
- Increase in violations of the rights of women and sexual crimes, including femicides

- Increase in torture and extrajudicial executions

Students Affirm They are Fighting to Stabilize Mexico, Not Destabilize It

Students reject President Peña Nieto's assertions that protests are seeking to "destabilize" his government, saying they want stability for the country. A group of graduate students from UNAM released a video November 25. "As UNAM graduate students, we respond to our social responsibility. That's why we take to the streets to protest against systemic abuse, while trying to build an alternative for our country...." students said.

Students said they are tired of Mexican presidents living like royalty when there are millions of poor people in the country, and tired of how legislators make laws to legalize the plundering and looting — largely by the U.S. — as they did with the energy reform.

Intensified Demand for Resignation of President

Calls for the resignation of President Peña Nieto grow increasingly loud. Telesur reports that while the #YaMaCanse movement "was founded to demand justice for and the return of the missing 43 students, it now seeks to transform the country. The case of the missing students has exposed the deep-rooted problems of the Mexican state, which appears to be intimately wed to organized crime."

"We will not be content with the fall of a governor, or of the president. We want them all to fall, because if not, another pig will assume



Protest in support of Mexican students, above, France; below, El Salvador

the presidency," one student told Proceso.

More Mass Graves Found in Guerrero State

Tomaz Zeron, head of the Criminal Investigation Agency, said that forensic experts are continuing their work at the mass graves sites located by Guerrero's Union of Commoners and Organizations (Upoeg).

Upoeg stated that so far, as many as 500 bodies have been found in the state of Guerrero alone. In a press conference, Bruno Placido, a spokesman for the group, said his organization has been issuing warnings since 2013, however the PGR only began to act well after the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students began to garner global attention.

According to Julia Alonso, Director of Civil Governance Forensic, a Mexican non-profit that works to improve the justice system through better understanding of forensic practices, Iguala could have upwards of 50 more mass graves. Alonso's group has urged the authorities to press forward with investigations in order to give the families of the missing people in Guerrero some definitive answers about their relatives. *(With files from Telesur; CIP Americas, Mexican National Commission on Human Rights, TML Weekly, cpcml.ca)*

