

Workers and youth across US speak on police murder of Michael Brown

Our reporters
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Over the last several days *World Socialist Web Site* reporting teams have been speaking to young people and workers at vigils and in neighborhoods throughout the country about the police murder of 18-year-old Michael Brown and the brutal response of militarized police forces to protests in Ferguson, Missouri.

A reporting team interviewed individuals who had assembled at a vigil for Michael Brown in the mostly African-American working-class neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, in Brooklyn New York.

Queen, a retired Verizon worker said, “Police brutality has got to stop. We are under siege. I am afraid for my sons, my nephews. American society is basically built on social injustice. It is not going to be fixed in my lifetime. The schools, the housing, our infrastructure is not safe. Did you hear of a *Tale of Two Cities* ? We live in two countries. The Pentagon is giving tanks to local police. For what reason? To kill people.”

Joshua Brown said, “I think it is crazy that all this is happening around the same time. Cops have been known to target young Black men. Things may start getting more violent. That is where it is going. People are reacting, the cops increase their violence, and people react to that. It is escalating. The way the system is, like in the courts, you can’t beat the cops. So what else is there to do? What course of action has not been tried yet?”

Another reporting team spoke to workers in Barrio Logan, a primarily Hispanic working class neighborhood of San Diego.

Ramon, age 31, denounced the recent surge in police brutality throughout the country, “I think it’s horrible what happened to that kid [Brown]. I recently saw another video of police brutality, an officer was choking and punching a woman on the side of the

street. It made me so angry. I understand why the people are protesting. What would you do if that was your mom or sister?”

Asked why he thinks police react with such brutality towards workers and youth, Ramon responded, “They don’t care about poor people. I believe these days it’s about making life more difficult for people. I think they’re just trying to find a way to make life worse for us.”

Another resident, Joe, said, “I think we all need to let them know what we think about these shootings. There are a lot of things that the government hides from us. There are a lot of demands we need to make of them.

“The United States government is very corrupt just like Mexico; they just cover things up better than any other government.”

Karla, a recent high school graduate, who is working part time in retail and trying to pay her way through college to get a degree in audio production, spoke about the attack by police on protestors in Ferguson. “People can’t express their feelings with a gun to the head. They are trying to create fear in everyone. They are trying to control society. That is what it is about.”

A reporting team in Baltimore spoke to residents Kelly and Brittany, who were incensed at the level of police brutality in Missouri. Brittany said, “I can believe it. It’s happening all over the country, and not just shootings. I am a victim of police brutality. A cop sexually harassed me in front of his friends. It was awful.”

“They act like they’re above the law,” Kelly added.

Margaret expressed her disgust at the police brutality in Ferguson, “These cops are like criminal gangs. They have all the power and they abuse it.”

Walter, an unemployed resident of Baltimore, quoted Martin Luther King when asked about the events in

Ferguson: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” He continued, “Police abuse their authority and they have the politicians on their side. Society knows who the killers are, but there are two societies—theirs and ours.” Speaking on the senselessness of the police’s claims of self-defense, he said, “How can you feel threatened when the boy’s back is turned? If we start getting the word out, like you are doing, then we can expose them.”

A WSWs team intervened at a protest in metro-Detroit organized to oppose the bombing of Gaza, distributing copies of the Socialist Equality Party resolution, “ Oppose the Imperialist Assault on Gaza ” along with the WSWs perspective, “ Ferguson, Missouri: War Comes Home .” The protest drew a crowd of approximately one hundred people, mainly young workers and students; many drew the connection between the brutality of the Zionist regime in Israel, armed by US imperialism, and the buildup of state repression at home.

Nagi, a young worker, commented, “It’s wrong to use force on anyone. Since the killing of Michael Brown I have been watching YouTube videos depicting many instances of police brutality. In one case a cop knocked someone to the ground and put him in a choke hold almost killing him the way they did with the worker in New York. They don’t even follow their own laws or the US Constitution, that one is innocent before proven guilty. Over the past number of years, one is really struck by how much democracy has declined in this country.”



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