

# New protest in Ferguson, Missouri over police murder

Gabriel Black  
2 September 2014

Nearly a thousand people participated in a march Saturday in Ferguson, Missouri as part of the ongoing protests over the killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown by a police officer on August 9.

Three weeks after the police murder, hundreds of residents marched through heavy rain and high heat carrying signs and chanting slogans. Pictures and YouTube videos of the march show the predominance of young people at the event—many unaccompanied by their parents. On-the-spot reports described the march as being the largest daytime protest so far.

The turnout demonstrates how widespread the anger is over the youth's slaying and the violent state repression of protests that followed. The political establishment employs an array of groups aligned, in one way or another, to the Democratic Party, to channel the popular outrage into a dead end.

In contrast to previous protests that started later and continued into the night, the march Saturday began early in the day at 10 a.m. Beginning at a parking lot, protesters marched to the site of where police Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown. Brown's family circled around the spot where Michael died and a preacher and a Muslim clergy member gave prayers.

From there, the crowd marched to a park where organizers of the event, which included the Nation of Islam, the NAACP, the Green Party, and the New Black Panther Party, had been given a tent and stage by the St. Louis County Parks Department.

The militarized police forces that descended on Ferguson were notably absent. Days earlier police and army personnel, clad with assault rifles, armored vehicles, and high-tech riot gear, had shot at protesters with flash-bang grenades, tear gas, and rubber bullets—arresting hundreds.

Capt. Ronald Johnson, the black Missouri Highway Patrol Officer put in charge of the Ferguson police mobilization during the explosion of public outrage, expressed confidence that the rally would be peaceful. He told *Huffington Post* cynically that the event "Should be a nice anti-me rally."

Police had met with organizers of the event to work out a protest route and make plans to deal with traffic. Johnson, told the *Post-Dispatch* that Highway Patrol and St. Louis County officers helped the Ferguson officers control traffic throughout the march.

At the stage event in the park, Michael Brown's family spoke alongside the various organizers of the event. Also present at the event were several Democratic politicians, including state senator Maria Chappelle-Nadal, Ferguson Democratic committeewoman Patricia Bynes, and St. Louis Alderman Antonio French.

There were two dominant and connected refrains that ran through the speeches. One, speakers presented Michael Brown's killing as being exclusively about race. Two, they told the audience that the way forward was to pressure the Obama administration into hearing their pleas.

One speaker voiced regret that Obama was not present, saying, "We want him to come here. He remarked that he didn't have a strategy for ISIS and Syria, but we need a strategy for urban America."

Akbar Muhammad, a leading assistant to Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam, said the "authorities" had "already seen the whole world look at the missteps that they made, how they handled the black community like an army going to war in Iraq." He went on to suggest, "If they had any sense, they will handle it in a tactful manner." He concluded with an appeal to Obama, saying, "We expect the federal

government, the president, to step in and see what's happening inside these police departments.”

Another organizer of the event, the No FEAR Coalition, made a statement, leading up to the event that also expressed why they were organizing the event. A leader in the organization, Marsha Coleman-Abedayo, said, “We need the full support of the Attorney General’s office to make sure that Michael Brown is not simply another name added to the anonymous statistics and meaningless deaths of African-Americans at the mercy of a merciless system.” This statement was made in conjunction with a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder.

It says a lot about this social milieu that they see the Obama administration, an administration that has overseen the largest transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich, as their savior. What is it that they want from Eric Holder, the man who declared it legal for the state to kill an American citizen without due process of law?

The various pseudo-left groups operate as functionaries of the Democratic Party by trying to channel mass outrage back into “pressure” campaigns toward this or that Democratic Party figure. To them, Michael Brown’s death is an opportunity to advance their own careers by showing their usefulness to the political establishment.

As the WSWs has noted in several articles, workers of every race are the target of police violence and repression. The militarization of the domestic police forces, and the regular police shootings throughout the country, are the expression of a political order that is breaking down and coming into sharp conflict with the entire working class.

As the economic situation worsens, throwing more people into poverty, police have stockpiled military equipment, practiced exercises in anticipation of domestic unrest, and generally become more repressive. The common thread that underlies the victims of this growing brutality is not that they are all of one ethnic background, but rather that they are all poor.

In interviews the WSWs conducted, many workers in Ferguson agreed with this sentiment, that class is the defining feature of Michael Brown’s death.

A large group of protesters acknowledged that there was something rotten going on with the various official speeches at the park. This group split off from the park

event, trying to draw other protesters with them. Some chanted, “Ain’t no justice in the park!” This section of the crowd left to protest outside the police station.

This largest of the day’s protests took place after the official speeches, once protesters converged on the police station. The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* reports that the “crowd grew rapidly” around this time, just after one in the afternoon. Police formed a line, barricading protesters from marching closer to the police station.

At one moment, police suddenly grabbed a protester, and jerked him behind the police barricade for arrest. The protester had been yelling at Capt. Johnson, who was present at the police line, calling him a “sell-out.” The *Huffington Post* reports that police officers refused to say why they were arresting the protester.



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**