Obama Justice Department: No charges against Ferguson killer cop

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The US Justice Department announced Wednesday that it will not bring federal charges against Darren Wilson, the Ferguson, Missouri police officer who fired at least six bullets into Michael Brown last August, killing the unarmed teenager.

The announcement is the culmination of months in which the Obama administration sought to posture as the defender of minority youth, all the while solidarizing itself with the police. The decision to exonerate Wilson was announced by Attorney General Eric Holder, who served as the White House's point man at the height of the daily protests in the St. Louis suburb following Brown's murder.

After Brown's killing, Holder went to Ferguson to put on a show of support for the right to protest. At the same time, he signaled the federal government's support for the Missouri state police captain who presided over the mass arrest of demonstrators and virtual lockdown of the town by National Guard troops and police armed with military-grade weapons.

The announcement that the government will not prosecute Wilson, despite multiple eye-witness accounts describing his shooting of Brown as arbitrary and unprovoked, is the result of political, not legal considerations. It is an unambiguous statement of support for the institution of the police and the forces of state violence in general, under conditions of mounting social anger and class tensions.

In its announcement and the 86-page report it issued explaining its rationale, the administration lined up fully behind last year's rigged grand jury proceedings that resulted in a decision not to bring criminal charges against Wilson. The Justice Department report did not differ in any substantial way from the arguments presented by the notoriously pro-police St. Louis County prosecutor to justify the refusal to charge Wilson. This is despite the fact that Prosecutor Robert McCulloch subsequently admitted that he knowingly presented to grand jurors perjured testimony supporting the police officer.

The first piece of "evidence" presented in the Justice Department report is Wilson's self-serving account of the events of August 9. At the same time, the report discounts the testimony of the nearly two dozen witnesses who claim that Brown had his hands up when he was killed.

The decision by the Ferguson grand jury, followed by a similar decision by a New York grand jury not to indict the police officer who choked Eric Garner to death, amounted to a carte blanche for police departments across to the country to beat and kill as they see fit. Now, the Obama administration has given the federal government's de facto seal of approval for police violence and murder.

In effect, the administration has demonstrated its backing for the transformation of the police into a militarized occupation force in working-class communities across the country.

The epidemic of police killings has continued unabated, with the latest atrocity occurring only days ago, when Los Angeles police beat, tased and shot to death a homeless man on the city's skid row.

The decision not to prosecute Wilson was announced alongside a separate Justice Department report accusing the Ferguson Police Department of wrongful arrests, harassment and the use of court fees to raise revenue. That report, which defines violations of democratic rights by the police entirely in racial terms, was released to provide a smokescreen for the decision not to prosecute the killer of Michael Brown.

The report on the Ferguson police department highlights the administration's cynical use of racial

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politics to obscure the more fundamental class issues underlying police violence and provide a political cover for its own assault on democratic rights and the social conditions of the working class. Its main recommendation is for the hiring of more African American and minority police, as though it makes a difference whether a worker or youth is being brutalized by a black cop or a white one.

The juxtaposition of the two reports, intended to divert attention from the administration's endorsement of police violence, actually underscores the complete compatibility of racial and identity politics with the most ferocious attacks on working people of all races and backgrounds.

The exoneration of Wilson by the Obama administration further exposes the reactionary role of the liberal and pseudo-left apologists for the Democratic Party, including fake "civil rights" leaders such as Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, who went to Ferguson to channel popular anger behind Obama and the Democrats, presenting Holder's promise of a federal investigation as good coin.

The promotion of racial politics is designed to divert the attention of workers from the real source of police violence, racism and poverty—the capitalist system. That system is today producing levels of social inequality that are incompatible with democratic procedures.

As the militarization of police in America shows, the response of the corporate-financial aristocracy to the growth of social opposition is repression and the build-up of the apparatus of a police state. There can be no defense of democratic rights outside of a conscious political struggle of the working class to replace the capitalist system with socialism.

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