

Police violence continues unabated three months after the murder of George Floyd

Niles Niemuth
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Three months after the murder of George Floyd sparked mass multiracial and multiethnic demonstrations demanding an end to police violence and racism, the police continue their reign of terror across the United States without any sign of slowing down.

Since May 25, the day Floyd was killed by a Minneapolis police officer pressing his knee into his neck for more than 8 minutes, at least 235 people have been killed by police in the US. The pace of killings is on track to surpass 1,000 this year, with nearly 3 people shot dead by the police every day.

The latest incident to produce an eruption of angry protests is the attempted murder of Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old African American father of six, shot seven times in the back by a police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin. While Blake amazingly survived the shooting, his father told the *Chicago Sun-Times* Tuesday that his son is now paralyzed from the waist down and doctors are uncertain if he will fully recover from his injuries.

A cellphone video taken by a bystander and posted on social media shows that Blake was walking away from police officers and attempting to get into his SUV when a white officer, with gun drawn, pulled him by his shirt and pumped seven shots into his back at point-blank range. Three of Blake's sons were in the back of the vehicle when he was shot.

"Those police officers that shot my son like a dog in the street are responsible for everything that has happened in the city of Kenosha," Blake's father said, referring to incidents of arson and looting after demonstrators were attacked by police. "My son is not responsible for it. My son didn't have a weapon. He didn't have a gun."

Black and white protesters who took to the streets

Sunday and Monday night in Kenosha to demand that the responsible officer be charged and arrested were met with tear gas, rubber bullets and pepper balls. Residents attempting to attend a press conference with the city's Democratic mayor Monday afternoon were similarly met with police in riot gear and pepper spray when they raised demands, heightening tensions.

Protests across the country in recent days against the unending slaughter—from Portland, Oregon to Chicago, Illinois and Detroit, Michigan—have been met by an unrelenting crackdown by the police. Hundreds, including journalists, have been arrested, and many more have been hit by pepper spray, pepper balls, rubber bullets and other munitions deemed "less than lethal" by the police.

Federal agents were directed by President Donald Trump last month to wage an assault on Portland protesters, including carrying out snatch-and-grab operations using unmarked vans in scenes reminiscent of Latin American dictatorships.

While these forces—including the US Border Patrol's paramilitary BORTAC unit—have been largely relegated to the background following widespread outrage over their direct use against protesters, the police have taken their cue from Trump, carrying out their own snatch operations by unidentified officers in New York City and Pittsburgh. Meanwhile, hundreds of federal agents have been deployed to work alongside police in multiple large cities, including Detroit and Chicago, with the consent of Democratic mayors.

Trump and the Republicans are openly inciting police violence and attacks on protesters. The term "police" was invoked 25 times on the first day of the Republican National Convention, and they were hailed as the guardians of society from "mob rule" by the "far left." The president has spent much of his time in office

building up the police at the local and federal level in defense of his personalist rule.

However, it is important to note that it is the Democratic Party in Wisconsin that is overseeing the reign of police terror against protesters in Kenosha.

After the first night of protests, Wisconsin's Democratic Governor Tony Evers deployed 125 National Guard soldiers to aid the police in enforcing an 8 p.m. curfew. Military humvees were used to patrol city streets and dump trucks deployed to block off exit ramps from the main freeway into the city. Evers declared a state of emergency Tuesday afternoon to allow for the marshalling of even more resources against anti-police violence protests.

While there has been a lot of talk from Democratic politicians declaring their support for Black Lives Matter—repeatedly mouthing the phrase and having it painted in big block letters on city streets, while promising to confront “white supremacy” and “systemic racism”—nothing has changed. Nothing has been done to even slow the pace of police killings.

In fact, the Democrats distanced themselves from demands to defund the police, a popular slogan among protesters, almost as soon as they were raised. Minneapolis's Democratic Party-controlled City Council has kicked the can on a much heralded proposal to “disband” the city's police force made in the immediate aftermath of Floyd's killing as part of the efforts to corral and disperse popular anger.

In an interview with ABC News Friday, former Vice President Joe Biden, the Democrat's presidential candidate, alongside his running mate Senator Kamala Harris, made clear that his administration would work to provide more funding for the police and claimed that it was, in fact, Trump who would defund the police. “I don't want to defund the police departments,” Biden declared, “I think they need more help, they need more assistance...”

Biden suggested at a campaign event in June that the solution for police killings would be to train officers to “shoot them in the leg instead of the heart.” Meanwhile, Biden's former primary opponent and now leading surrogate, Senator Bernie Sanders, has called for officers to be paid higher salaries as a possible solution to police killings!

The United States is a tinderbox, with the mass social crisis intensified by the murderous response of the

ruling elite to the COVID-19 pandemic driving the outbreak of explosive protests. Millions of people have been thrown out of work and it has been a month since the \$600 federal extension to unemployment benefits was allowed by Congress and the White House to expire. Tens of millions face the possibility of eviction and foreclosure in the coming months as moratoriums expire.

The police, as special bodies of armed men, are essential to the protection of the state and enforcement of class rule, defending the property interests of the rich and policing the immense social gulf that separates them from the bottom 90 percent. Regardless of who sits in the White House in January, police violence will continue and, in fact, intensify. The more the social tensions rise, the more violent the campaign of police terror overseen by both parties will become.

The fight against police violence and racism requires the mobilization of the working class as a united, independent social force against the capitalist system and a rejection of all efforts to divide workers against each other along racial and other identity lines. This is what the Socialist Equality Party is fighting for in the election campaign of Joseph Kishore and Norissa Santa Cruz for president and vice president. We encourage all those who agree with this perspective to support our campaign and join the SEP today!



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