

Kentucky State Police training documents approvingly cited Adolf Hitler

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On Friday, Louisville student newspaper *Manual RedEye* published an article exposing a Kentucky State Police (KSP) training slideshow which prominently featured quotes from the fascist German dictator Adolf Hitler as part of a “warrior” training course which urged new recruits to be “ruthless killer[s].”

In the 33-page slideshow presentation titled, “The Warrior Mindset,” Hitler, perhaps the person most synonymous with genocidal violence in the 20th century, was quoted three times—the most quoted figure in the presentation.

In addition to Hitler, the presentation, created by retired Kentucky police lieutenant Curt Hall, features quotes from Confederate general Robert E. Lee, US general Douglas MacArthur, Attila the Hun and former president George W. Bush, demonstrating the reactionary, racist, and fascist ideology and culture that is endemic to police departments across the US and internationally.

In statements responding to the exposure of the training documents KSP spokesperson Morgan Hall did not say how long the presentation was used, or how many cadets were trained with the materials, only that this specific slideshow was no longer in use as of “2013” according to a statement that was sent to the *RedEye*.

The training slide show was obtained via an open record request through a local attorney who works at a law firm, Adams Landenwich Walton, that is currently suing the department regarding a police killing from 2018. The detective who murdered the victim, 36-year-old Bradley Grant, was trained using this presentation.

As the *RedEye* authors note, since 2018, KSP troopers have perpetrated at least 16 fatal shootings. According to MappingPoliceViolence.org nearly 140 people have been killed by all police departments in

Kentucky since January 2013.

According to a deposition received by the law firm from KSP Captain James Goble, Hall taught “warrior mentality” at the police academy where he was the Assistant Commander from 2005 to 2015 before moving up to Commander of Internal Affairs. Hall recently retired. It is not known how many complaints of misconduct, abuse or outright crimes were swept under the rug after the completion of “investigations” by Hall, or like-minded fascist police commanders.

The first major historical figure quoted in the presentation is Confederate general Robert E. Lee, in a slide titled “The Thin Gray Line,” which valorizes “truth and manliness” over “policy, or tact, or expediency.” The slide features a historical and a current photo of white KSP troopers dressed in their gray uniforms, similar to those worn by the Confederate Army.

The very next slide which purports to cover, “ethics, morality, values, and beliefs” then cites a supposed quote from the war criminal Bush—responsible for the deaths of 1 million Iraqis—which reads: “Doing the right thing is not always the popular thing.”

The first slide featuring a Hitler quote is shortly thereafter. In a slide titled “A Warrior Must Possess,” five qualities are highlighted: Vision, Courage, Discipline, Belief and Patience. In the Belief section, a passage from *Mein Kampf* is cited. Unlike the attributes given to previous quotes, Hitler’s name is in a lighter font color, partially obscuring the name.

Later on, in a slide entitled, “Violence of Action,” which instructs police to have “a mindset void of emotion” and to “meet violence with greater violence” a second quote from *Mein Kampf* is cited which reads, “the very first essential for success is a perpetually constant and regular employment of violence.”

The slide also instructs cadets to embody “ruthlessness without anger.” Notably, if one clicks on Hitler’s name on this slide, a hyperlink redirects to a goodreads.com page which includes a sanitized biography and links to read Hitler’s writings.

The next slide, entitled “It All Boils Down to This,” features a photo from the movie “300” in between photos of a UH-60 Blackhawk with soldiers rappelling down, and another photo of US soldiers wielding assault rifles and grenade launchers with a third quote from Hitler directly underneath.

After that, another slide with the propaganda photo of US Marines raising the flag after the battle of Iwo Jima simply contains the phrase “Über Alles.” The phrase, meaning “above all,” was previously part of the German national anthem and was glorified by the Nazis.

In the *RedEye* article, the authors note that the KSP has not yet responded to an October 14 additional records request to see how long the presentations were used or if any complaints were lodged by trainees or other KSP personnel regarding the slideshow. Under Kentucky state law, an open records request is to be responded to within 10 days during a state of emergency, under which Kentucky has been since March.

Responding to an email request from student journalist Satchel Walton, KSP spokesperson Lieutenant Joshua Lawson justified the department’s use of the presentation writing, “the quotes are used for their content and relevance to the topic addressed in the presentation.”

Lawson continued: “The presentation touches on several aspects of service, selflessness, and moral guidance. All of these topics go to the fundamentals of law enforcement such as treating everyone equally, service to the public, and being guided by the law.”

The content of Hall’s presentation is inspired by retired Army Ranger Dave Grossman, author of *On Killing* and a well-known police trainer. Grossman’s “teachings” have been used by the US military to train recruits to kill without thinking.

Grossman has argued, without evidence, that policing is more dangerous than in previous decades and therefore cops must be prepared to use more, not less, force. During a PBS Frontline interview in 2004 Grossman argued that he was not conditioning soldiers

and police to kill without hesitation, but to embrace the responsibility of killing stating: “Killing is not the goal, but we all understand that killing is the likely outcome.”

He, along with his business partner, Jim Glennon, a Chicago Police officer for 21 years, have been elevated to bring the training and “lethality” they learned in the military to the “homeland” to be used against the domestic working class.

It is notable that Hall’s training curriculum was used by the KSP during the administration of former Democratic governor Steve Beshear, and was only brought to light years later upon an open records request. There is no doubt that similar curriculums are currently in use by police agencies throughout the country.

While the Democratic party occasionally pays lip service to the idea of “reforming” the police, the fact is the police are the frontline troops of the bourgeoisie, given immense power and virtual legal immunity to beat, assault and kill workers and youth. It was the Obama/Biden administration that oversaw the militarized crackdown in Ferguson, Missouri and of Native American and other protesters during the Standing Rock demonstrations in North Dakota. They also oversaw the transfer of 460,000 pieces of military equipment to local police departments under the 1033 program.

The defeat of fascism and the elimination of police violence is bound up with the abolition of capitalism. Those who are interested in joining this struggle must break from the Democratic Party, and all their pseudo-left hangers-on, and make a class conscious decision to fight for socialism by joining the Socialist Equality Party.



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