

Ferguson grand jury props up a rotten, racist system

On Monday, November 24, St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney Robert McCulloch announced the verdict that many had feared but expected: Ferguson cop Darren Wilson would not be indicted for the murder of 18-year-old Michael Brown. The failure to level a single charge against Wilson for shooting an unarmed Black teenager caused universal outrage at the utter disregard for the lives of African Americans. Instead, the police, as protectors of property in a system where wealth is the highest virtue, were given a free hand to commit state-sanctioned murder against those who are not rich or white.

Grand jury whitewash

McCulloch's sole shred of hard evidence was a reference to "Brown's DNA found on the inside of the police car," a fact that could mean countless possible scenarios. He said the grand jury concluded from this that Brown's killing was justified—no matter that it happened later and dozens of feet from the car. This logic is full of gaps, yet McCulloch, an elected Democrat, asked the public to simply accept his opinion. Though supposedly Wilson's prosecutor, McCulloch had a strong reason to favor him: the prosecutor's father was a policeman killed in the line of duty.

Like the U.S. justice system as a whole, the grand jury process is deeply flawed. Grand juries take place in total secrecy and without a judge. No lawyer was allowed to represent Brown. The prosecutor runs the show. There is no public scrutiny and no opportunity for lawyers to question the accused or review evidence.

Historically, people of color, leftists, the poor, and women suffer a 98% indictment rate when they face a grand jury. But police are almost never indicted.

A class and race divide

Racism is a capitalist invention, created to justify the unconscionable enslavement of an entire people. When slavery was overthrown, racism remained because capitalism uses the lie of inferiority to pay people of color less, and to divide the U.S. working class so it won't rise up against the bosses who grow rich off the labor of others. To prevent revolt, the system uses brutal repression, from public lynchings to today's "lawful" police executions and harassment.

In communities like Ferguson, the poor, who are mostly Black, face unrelenting discrimination from police through mechanisms such as high



levels of traffic stops that trigger unaffordable fines, jail sentences for non-payment, suspended licenses, and lost jobs due to arrests. This adds to the severe economic gap between whites and Blacks in Ferguson—where 16% of the Black labor force was unemployed from 2010-2012, compared to 8.5% of the white labor force.

There is also the constant threat of being killed for driving, walking or shopping "while Black." A person of African American descent is killed by U.S. police every 36 hours. Two-thirds of those killed are younger than 31.

The establishment's defenders are terrified that they won't be able to stop increased revolt in response to the slew of recent police killings of African Americans: Eric Garner, killed by police chokehold on July 17 in Staten Island; John Crawford III killed at a Dayton, Ohio Walmart on August 5 for holding a toy gun; Ezell Ford, killed by Los Angeles police on August 11; Tanesha Anderson, suffering from mental illness, died from injuries when police attacked her in Cleveland on November 12; Akai Gurley, killed when a cop "accidentally" discharged his gun in Brooklyn on November 20; 12-year-old Tamir Rice, fatally shot in Cleveland on November 22 for holding a toy gun at a playground. This litany does not even include recent police violence against other people of color and immigrants.

Militarization of police

With income disparity and protest on the rise, it's no wonder that cops are embracing military-style tanks and weaponry to smash anger and resentment. The well-funded, national militarization of the police is setting the stage for continued mass arrests and escalating crackdowns on resistance to a murderous system. Such tactics are being used by regimes around the world. Closest to home, the U.S. has funded the militarization of the Mexican police who are responsible for the disappearance and presumed deaths of 43 student activists in September.

In anticipation of Ferguson protests, robo-

cop encampments were stationed in U.S. cities, especially where sympathy actions were expected. The goal was to intimidate protest. But community members were not deterred. Neither were they dissuaded by Prosecutor McCulloch, President Obama and other Democratic Party "leaders" who demanded protesters be peaceful while failing to warn police to do the same.

We won't be silent

From coast to coast over several days, thousands of people of all races came out to condemn the Ferguson decision, expose local police attacks, and denounce a skewed justice establishment. Black women and youth in Ferguson have played a key role in mobilizing the national response.

How can outrage be focused to end the deaths and overhaul a racist injustice system?

- Call for elected, independent civilian review boards over the police with the right to hire, fire, investigate and discipline.
- Demand the *demilitarization* of police.
- Call on President Obama to initiate federal charges and bring Darren Wilson to trial.
- Break with Democrats, Republicans and the capitalist system. Work to create a socialist world where meeting human needs, overcoming historic discrimination, and ending systemic violence are the highest priorities.

**Issued by the Comrades of Color Caucus of
the Freedom Socialist Party & Radical Women**

www.Socialism.com • www.RadicalWomen.org

Los Angeles
323-732-6416
fspla@earthlink.net
radicalwomenla@earthlink.net

New York City
212-222-0633
fsp@nyct.net
nycradicalwomen@nyct.net

Portland, Oregon
503-240-4462
fsp@igc.org

San Francisco Bay Area
415-864-1278
bafsp@earthlink.net
baradicalwomen@earthlink.net

Seattle
206-722-2453
fspseattle@mindspring.com
rwseattle@mindspring.com

National Radical Women
radicalwomenus@gmail.com

Freedom Socialist Party National Office
fspnatl@igc.org