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Police killings = modern day lynchings

written by John Parker
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Photo: Andrew Beaujon

Human-rights organizations have already done multiple studies on the existence of white supremacist gangs within police forces in this country. Perhaps this is why police refuse to hold their fellow officers or the gangs within their departments accountable and continue to enable the genocide we witness almost weekly with the killing of Black and Brown people by law enforcement.

We don't know if the cops who killed Philando Castile and George Floyd, or now, Daunte Wright and Adam Toledo, are members of or enablers of an organized white supremacist grouping within their departments. But we know that the culture of

racist policing has an ideology that is pervasive throughout the country.

This ideology has been encouraged by white supremacists holding high office in the government, including former President Donald Trump. They were also encouraged by President Joe Biden's response to the problem of police shootings. His answer, during his election campaign last year, didn't reflect on the shocking number of these shootings, or their racist nature — he just advised that cops should "shoot them in the leg."

What do we know about the motivations of these murdering cops? We know they all felt justified in their killings; that they all tried to cover up either their own or other police killings; that they were willing to add salt to the wounds of the families by participating in the vilification of their victims. And we also know they've shown no real remorse for what they've done. It takes a special kind of person to do those things.

When then-candidates Joe Biden and Kamala Harris stated that they were against even the weak demand to address police murders by defunding police departments, it sent a signal to that kind of person: the cops and others like them.

And, as we've seen so clearly with the murders of George Floyd, killed by former cop Derek Chauvin, and Daunte Wright, murdered by recently resigned cop Kim Potter — they all use childlike excuses for their acts of inhumanity that would make a 5-year-old blush. Yet they still get to use them, and have a good chance of paying with very little time, if any at all, for doing a lot of bad — another encouragement.

In Los Angeles, a well-publicized scandal in 2013 exposed a previous sheriff and senior officers directing sheriff's deputies in extreme violence against prisoners. [According to the ACLU](https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/2013/04/11/los-angeles-sheriff-department-beatings-left-inmates-with-shattered-bones-eye-sockets-and-teeth), which filed a lawsuit against the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, "Beatings left inmates with shattered bones, eye sockets and teeth."

In addition, the sheriffs ran a drug-smuggling operation in and out of the prison – all in coordination with and to the benefit of white supremacist gangs. This was a systemic culture of behavior that undoubtedly existed far longer than when it was exposed in 2008.

No more shell games

Some in the movement advocate incremental change of policing. They want there to be a partnership with the police and politicians. As a member of the Socialist Unity Party's Black Caucus, I can say we oppose that approach.

Minneapolis again shows that this is a diversion from what is needed. We will never change the situation in this country by being content with taking some funds from police departments, which would be non-enforceable and non-transparent.

The City of Los Angeles got away with a shell game where the \$110 million that was promised to be taken from the cops was given back through a budgetary process. This money shuffle was still lauded by some in the incremental movement for change, who should have known better.

After George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, the politicians there said they understood that the police department needed to be “dismantled.” But then they changed their minds. It's clear that in Minneapolis today, as long as these cops are allowed to continue carrying their guns and are not replaced, they will continue to kill our children.

We don't need reforms that are sensitive to the sensibilities of the Democratic Party. We can't leave the battle up to the politicians, so they can manufacture more childlike excuses for allowing the pandemic of racist murders to go unchecked. We need qualitative changes that are possible only through militant actions by the community and the movement, independent of the police and political puppets.

The call for the abolishment of police departments and their replacement by community entities is already popular, especially among the communities most threatened by the police. It will never be popular with the ruling class – they must be forced to accept it.

Until then, as things stand today in this country, I'm going to have to worry about my Black son's life every time he drives a car, for as long as he is alive. Every time he goes out to shop or visit friends, as long as he is on the streets, there's a chance he will be stopped by police. And I will worry as long as I live in this country. There is not a single day that I can escape the thoughts behind that fear.

