

LAPD explosion in South Central: Community demands justice

written by John Parker

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Residents of South Central Los Angeles.

On June 30, residents of South Central Los Angeles were shaken by a thunderous

boom like an aerial bombardment. Area residents are used to the sound of helicopters and police sirens, simulating a war zone. But this was even more intense. It was an explosion set off by the LAPD Bomb Squad.

Ignoring all safety protocols, the Bomb Squad decided to explode 42 pounds of fireworks confiscated from a home in a residential neighborhood. They did this during the day while people were in their homes and out walking. The explosion destroyed some homes on 27th Street and injured residents.

According to Comites de Resistencia, a Union del Barrio-initiated organization dedicated to community self-defense and empowerment in South Central LA: "The explosion is linked to two deaths, dozens of injuries, psychological trauma and millions of dollars worth of damage to homes, cars and local businesses. Many residents have lost days of work and many were even fired due to missing days because of the explosion. Over 20 families had to be relocated because their homes were badly damaged. They are currently being housed by the city in a hotel in Downtown LA but they are being denied access to the swimming pool, gym and other facilities at the hotel."

Six weeks have gone by since the bombing and the city has yet to fix the residents' homes. Despite the families' demand, the city has also not released the names of the cops who made the decision to detonate the explosives.

Needless to say, this would not have occurred in an affluent or predominantly white neighborhood. It occurred in a predominantly Latinx neighborhood.

These attacks on working people—especially Black and Brown working people—occur on a daily basis. There is a daily diet of police murder and terror in our communities; a daily diet of intimidation and lack of essential health care, especially now, during the COVID-19 crisis. Working people—disproportionately workers of color—are forced to work under dangerous conditions with little protection from the contagion. All of

this is justified by systemic racism. It is an attempt to dehumanize oppressed peoples and justify even more heinous attacks. Police murder is said to be an unfortunate but necessary evil in Black and Brown communities, no matter how many children are gunned down by assassins with a badge.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki

And this month of August reminds us of another heinous act with racist rationalizations, a bombing of a much bigger magnitude: the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on Aug. 6 and 9, 1945.

At least 200,000 people, including thousands of children, were killed by the bombs dropped on these cities. Even decades later people died from radiation-caused illnesses, and its effects are still felt.

The racist ruling class promotes the argument that those children and civilians in Japan were not as worthy of life as white people, or U.S. soldiers representing the interests of the ruling class. In the same way, the life of a cop is deemed far more important than the life of a Black child, whose killing is justified by law if a cop says they felt the least bit threatened.

This is why solidarity is so essential, especially from those who are not the immediate victims of imperialist aggression, whether the aggression be international or domestic (like the bombing carried out by the LAPD). It was the solidarity and community organization made possible by the Comites de Resistencia that forced some LA politicians to pay attention. Now they are feeling the pressure of the community and a growing movement demanding assistance for the victims of the LAPD's racist carelessness.

The police terror on our Black and Brown communities serves a purpose, and that is to keep down the inevitable fightback against this oppressive system that sacrifices

our lives and livelihoods for the profits of the rich. But our struggle for social justice, just like the struggle intensifying here in LA, will not be shut down.



LAPD bombing, South Central Los Angeles, June 30.

On Aug. 16, the families affected by the explosion will protest in front of City Hall and will deliver a letter with the following demands to Mayor Eric Garcetti. Union del Barrio and the Comites de Resistencia are assisting the community with this action. Other participating organizations include the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and the Socialist Unity Party.

The families are demanding the following:

1. Fix our homes NOW!
2. Give us the names of the LAPD officers who gave the order to detonate the explosives in our neighborhood!

3. Immediate financial assistance for everyone who was affected!
4. We want full access to all hotel facilities at the hotel in Downtown LA where we are being housed temporarily. We don't want to be treated like 2nd class citizens!
5. We want a written guarantee from the city of Los Angeles that the city will continue to pay for our housing until the city repairs our homes and it is safe for us to return.

