What's at stake: Those who pay the cost of these policies [racism, poverty, militarization], are disproportionately young people of color – and with alarming frequency that cost is death at the hands of police. Ominously, local police increasingly rely on militarized tactics and weapons not only to arrest but to contain people exercising their right to assemble and peacefully protest such tragedies as the Mike Brown killing. . . . We need to challenge policies – at every level, from the school house to the State House, from Missouri to Washington DC – that disproportionately incarcerate people of color and boost profits for corporations running jails, prisons and immigration detention centers. We also must challenge media when they stigmatize youth of color instead of acknowledging their humanity. AFSC (below).

Newsletters

http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

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See: Militarism, Nonviolence, Violence,

Blog http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

Contents of Previous Police Newsletters at end: for a fuller depiction and assessment.
Contents US Police Newsletter #3

Responses to Ferguson, MO, Police Violence

Ferguson, MO: OMNI Demonstrates for Justice and Nonviolence
November 25, 2014 at Courthouse, Dickson and College, 12 to 1
OMNI, October 25, 2014, March from UA to Courthouse
ACLU, Ban Racial Profiling
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Dan Cantor, Working Families, Rally and Petition Pres. Obama and AG Holder
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Michael Niman, From Reagan to Ferguson
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Of Schools, 4 plus 64 Reports

Previous Police Newsletters (together they offer an anthology of reports and analyses)

EXCESSIVE VIOLENCE OF FERGUSON POLICE DEPARTMENT
Fayetteville For Ferguson No Indictment Response

Tuesday Nov 25 - 12:00-2:00
Corner of College and Dickson

A profoundly terrible event has been made worse by refusal to hold perpetrators accountable.

Protesters will gather in front of the Washington County Courthouse to register our support for right to life and dignity for all people, and insistence that police be held accountable for their conduct. You are invited to attend.

Bring posters that reflect the message that "ALL LIVES MATTER."

Four courageous and trained protesters will risk arrest at this event. Michael Brown was shot for walking in the road, and they will be blocking College Avenue for a period of time to point out that freedom and democracy can't survive in a police state. We may be inconvenienced for a few minutes on the road, but all across the country mothers are weeping for children who have died needlessly, by the hands of a police structure that grants immunity for the death of black children, and turns a blind eye to the horrendous pain it causes.

The Civil Rights Roundtable has been working with the Fayetteville Police Department to make this a respectful and effective statement. We want to thank them for their professionalism and cooperation. We're not perfect, but if Ferguson were lucky enough to have our police force things would be different.

What is happening right now is shocking, but the anger exploding is coming from long hurt that has been exacerbated by the foolish responses from decision makers in Missouri. Let those who believe in freedom never be afraid to defend human rights.

A good article in the Fayetteville Free Zone explains this well: http://fayettevillefreezone.com/arrested-in-fayetteville-for-ferguson-your-help-will-be-needed/

Join the facebook event here and get more information: https://www.facebook.com/events/721550017920679/

OMNI Center's legal defense fund is accepting donations at their webpage at www.omnicenter.org. Use the regular donation.
Omni Center Invitation to Solidarity March on October 25, 2014

Partnering to Protect Human Rights for All

Saturday, October 25, 2014 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

October 22 is the national day of protest against police brutality. The community of Fayetteville will stand in solidarity with Ferguson and other areas who have suffered from these issues, but we also want to highlight the city of Fayetteville Police Department's and the University of Arkansas Police Department's efforts towards becoming more accountable to the communities they serve.

The program will begin at the University of Arkansas Union at 9:00 AM for a presentation including Tina Gaston of #HandsUpNWA. The Solidarity march will follow, beginning at the University of Arkansas courtyard and following the sidewalks of Dickson Street. The march is set to end at the Washington County Court House.

Gladys Tiffany posted in Omni Center for Peace, Justice & Ecology

Gladys Tiffany 8:28pm Oct 25

The policeman Daniel who marched with us, and ran ahead to block intersections.... when he got ready to leave he told me "I am really honored to be here."

Why We Are Marching In Solidarity Today!
fayettevillefreezone.com

A guest editorial by Tina Gaston, co-founder
Dear James,

You've probably already heard the news. The grand jury in Missouri failed to indict Darren Wilson, the Ferguson police officer who shot and killed an unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown.

Events in Ferguson have brought the broader problems we face into painful relief, inspiring profound anger and frustration from communities around the country—I feel it too. We've all heard this story too many times, and it's easy to feel like there's nothing left to be done. But I can't stop here.

This is exactly the right moment to stand together and push for police accountability and systemic change. We need to end racial profiling, excessive force, and unconstitutional policing practices.

Will you join me in urging the Department of Justice (DOJ) to release official Guidance that would ban racial profiling by law enforcement officers?

Michael Brown's death is a tragic loss to his family, community, and this nation. But because of this tragedy, and the protests that followed, national leaders are finally paying attention to racial profiling and discriminatory policing.

We must not allow the killing of Michael Brown and other unarmed individuals across this nation...
to be in vain. With enough widespread public pressure we can push our leaders to implement effective structural changes and transform policing across the country. It's about time.

**The DOJ should release this racial profiling Guidance immediately – and make it enforceable, not only on the Federal level but also with state and local law enforcement agencies.**

We can all carry the Ferguson movement in our hearts. I was inspired by the leadership of young Black men and women who organized peaceful protests in response to Michael Brown's killing, and who stood up and proclaimed:

Together we demand mutual respect from law enforcement and elected officials towards communities who are routinely and disproportionately targeted by police violence – particularly Black youth. Too many lives have been lost and too many continue to be endangered.

**It’s time for the DOJ to finally address the problem of racial profiling by law enforcement agencies – both in policy and practice.**

Thank you for taking action,

Anthony for the ACLU Action team

P.S. Participating in peaceful demonstrations against the verdict in your town or city? Check your rights before you leave your home — and share the information with others.

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**Amnesty International USA Action Alert**

We must bring human rights home
In August, Police Officer Darren Wilson shot unarmed 18-year-old Michael Brown to death. Today, a St. Louis County grand jury declined to indict Officer Wilson.

The community response leading up to, and likely to follow, the grand jury decision marks a pivotal moment in U.S. history — a moment of passion, frustration, and activism.

Officials in Ferguson and throughout the United States must ensure that each individual's human rights — including the right to freely express themselves in the form of peaceful protest — are respected, protected and fulfilled.

It's time to bring human rights home.

Dear James,

Today, a St. Louis County grand jury declined to indict Police Officer Darren Wilson for the shooting death of Michael Brown, an unarmed teenager, in August.

The community response to Mike Brown's death, and the response that is likely still to come, mark a pivotal moment in the human rights movement and in U.S. history.
It's a moment of passion, of frustration, and of activism.

It's within this moment that officials in Ferguson and throughout the United States must stand up to ensure that each individual's human rights — including the right to freely express themselves in the form of peaceful protest — are respected, protected and fulfilled.

That's why Amnesty International's human rights observer delegation is on the ground in Ferguson today: to monitor the protests and law enforcement's response.

Amnesty is calling upon law enforcement officers to facilitate peaceful protests.

We are calling on them to bear in mind their role as partners and protectors of community, seeking to do no harm.

We are calling on them to protect peaceful assemblies, even if a small minority tries to turn a peaceful protest into a violent one.

That's what human rights looks like.

As I write this, I'm making final preparations to head to Ferguson, representing Amnesty's commitment to protecting the human rights of all people — including the one pictured in this email. This little boy reminds us that his life, and all lives, matter.

While we can't all be in Ferguson in this moment, we can stand in solidarity with those exercising their right to peaceful protest today.

As you share this image in support of peaceful protest on Twitter and Facebook, we ask that you remember the human rights of boys like this one.

And as law enforcement officers head to work in the coming days, we ask that they do the same.
This wasn't justice

Dan Cantor, Working Families

Dick,

Police officer Darren Wilson shot a teenage Black boy -- several times -- and left his body in the street for hours after his death in Ferguson, Missouri. There was no evidence to indict him of a crime.

The moral logic of this decision would be incomprehensible if it weren't so routine. Another young Black man is killed, and somehow, no one has committed a crime. We must tell the truth about our nation as we see it -- that all lives are not given equal worth. As long as this truth stands, our nation is failing to live up to its promise.

Today we must rededicate ourselves to changing not just hearts and minds, but also laws and public officials. Join us? Click here to find a solidarity rally near you and stand for Justice for Mike Brown.

If you can't make it to a rally, then click here to add your name to demand President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder take federal action to secure justice for Mike Brown.

Fifty-nine years ago, a fourteen year old Black boy, Emmett Till was beaten, tortured and killed for allegedly whistling at a white woman in Mississippi. His mother insisted that his body be in an open casket to allow the world to see the truth of his murder. His mother's decision helped light the spark of the civil rights movement.

Three months ago, Michael Brown's body was left in the street for hours after his death in Ferguson, Missouri. Soon, the eyes of
America, and then the world were watching.

dignity for all.

Join us as we stand together, across the country, to demand justice. Click here to find a rally near you.

If you can't make it, click here to add your action.

Thank you,
Dan Cantor
National Director
Working Families

Become a Working Families Sustainer! support our fight.

"Down Outright Murder": A Complete Guide to the Shooting of Michael Brown by Darren Wilson


Devereaux writes: "The nation is on edge, awaiting a grand jury decision in the fatal shooting of Michael Brown - an unarmed African American teen in Ferguson, Missouri - by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson more than three months ago."

READ MORE

GEORGIA

Arrested, Handcuffed Man Shot to Death by Georgia Police


Rothkopf writes: "Why was he kicking out a cop car's window? Because he had already been arrested. And handcuffed. Then how could he still have a gun? The story remains suspiciously cloudy."


MILITARIZATION

“We live in “a country that seems at once happy to whine about “Big Government” and slam
civilian public servants as “government bureaucrats” – all while telling pollsters it holds the biggest appendage of “Big Government” – aka the military – in great esteem. Thanks to such a martial culture, few ever stop to wonder why our politics so often distinguishes between civilian and military public service, and then insinuates that one is to be denigrated and the other venerated.” David Sirota

American Friends Service  Nov. 25, 2014
Committee via uark.edu

to James

James,

Now that the grand jury has refused to indict police officer Darren Wilson who killed Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, people across the country are justifiably seeking answers. The American Friends Service Committee also is seeking clarity in this case. We remain committed to addressing the issues of militarization of police, police accountability and systemic racism revealed by the killing and its aftermath. If we are to prevent future tragedies, people everywhere should join us in these efforts.

Those who pay the cost of these policies are disproportionately young people of color – and with alarming frequency that cost is death at the hands of police. Ominously, local police increasingly rely on militarized tactics and weapons not only to arrest but to contain people exercising their right to assemble and peacefully protest such tragedies as the Mike Brown killing.

Weeks before today’s announcement, Missouri police and elected officials began stockpiling riot gear and “less lethal” weapons to respond to public protest. We urge protesters to resist provocations such as armored trucks, dogs, and blockades staffed by officers in military garb. We urge police officials to seek dialogue with those they swore to protect and serve, to find common ground and peaceful paths forward. Throughout our decades of work on social justice and human rights in the U.S. and around the world, we have witnessed the effectiveness of such dialogue and exchange programs.

We are proud of the young people with whom we work in Missouri, who are using peaceful means to work for fundamental change in systems that perpetuate racism and inequality. They deserve both applause and help for their leadership in healing and organizing their communities. We urge all people of good will to join us in supporting peace-building programs for these young people.

Starting just days after the shooting, AFSC has been helping youth process the killing of one of their peers through our two-year-old Peace Education Program working in Ferguson and St. Louis. We are standing with teachers and families, with the community organizations protesting, and with the family of Mike Brown.

Most of all we heed and support their vision of what democracy looks like: It looks like police accountability. It looks like equal access. It looks like an end to mass incarceration. It looks like the dismantling of the school-to-prison pipeline. It looks like the demilitarization of police.

As a Quaker organization that believes in the worth of every person, we call on people everywhere to join us in addressing the systemic and structural racism at the roots of Mike Brown’s death – and that of so many others nationwide.
We need to challenge policies – at every level, from the school house to the State House, from Missouri to Washington DC – that disproportionately incarcerate people of color and boost profits for corporations running jails, prisons and immigration detention centers. We also must challenge media when they stigmatize youth of color instead of acknowledging their humanity.

Our nation will only prosper when we invest in all our children. Join us as we work to end militarized policing and the systemic racism that endangers youth of color and thus threatens our common future.

American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
AFSC.org

FROM REAGAN ADMINISTRATION TO FERGUSON: RISE OF MILITARY CULTURE

Waging War vs. Keeping the Peace: Rethinking How We Hire Cops

BY MICHAEL I. NIMAN • 21 OCTOBER 2014

One hot, muggy summer day a few years back I was walking with a friend across a public university campus in Buffalo, New York, when we saw a pair of police officers sporting bulletproof vests and “high and tight” military-style hairdos while patrolling the nearly empty campus. “What’s up with the combat costume?” my friend wanted to know. “That’s just how they dress,” I responded. There were no precipitating incidents. No tactical threats. My friend’s concern, however, made me realize that this really was inappropriate dress for a community police force patrolling what has historically been a peaceful, tranquil community. So I asked a veteran of the force to explain. “It’s the young guys,” he responded. “They’ve got a whole different style.”

He went on to describe the aggressive culture among young police recruits, many of whom had returned from overseas combat. This police agency, like most, allowed a bit of leeway in their uniform regulations. Officers had the choice to gear up with Kevlar vests, even in the absence of any threat to them and despite the implied threat that such dress visually communicates to the public. I learned that these officers would regularly wear such attire to meetings with dormitory residents and student leaders, as if they were expecting incoming random fire. The military haircuts were just an extension of the look. Incidentally, beards were
banned as somehow projecting the wrong message, as was male officers’ hair that strayed over the ear.

Many of us, especially in the alternative press, have been talking about the creeping militarization of our police forces since at least the Reagan administration. I remember back in the late 1980s when the Broadway Area Business Association in Buffalo asked the local police to stop parking their full-track armored personnel carrier in front of one of their precincts because, like the aforementioned vests and hairdos, it projected the wrong message to the community. The tank-like vehicle in question, which tore apart the street the one and only time the police deployed it in a drug bust, was a gift from the Reagan administration. It was the beginning of the same program that eventually gave us the obscene military display in Ferguson, Missouri, this past year (the response to protests after officer Darren Wilson fatally shot Michael Brown) and at about a dozen Occupy camps before that.

What made Ferguson a historical punctuation mark was the fact that the Ferguson Police Department’s remarkably stupid deployment of military force and aggression was so similar to visuals we were seeing from war zones in Ukraine, Gaza, Iraq, and Syria, and because the mainstream press actually began to cover domestic police militarization. Some thirty years later than it should have, the nation is finally discussing the brutal police tactics that communities of color and nonviolent political activists have been falling victim to for decades.

However, the focus has largely been on the military equipment rather than the military culture. This is to be expected from a techno-fetishistic media that has for decades covered U.S. wars in much the same way, marveling at the so-called smart weapons while mostly ignoring the casualties and hatred they create. But what we saw in Ferguson wasn’t just the deployment of inappropriate technology—it was also the deployment of an inappropriate attitude and strategy, one more becoming of an occupation army than a community police force.

And that’s the problem with this myopic focus on military equipment. At the risk of sounding like the National Rifle Association, it’s the military mentality that’s the bigger problem. The toys could have stayed in the garage and rotted.

Looking at the human factor, however, is politically much more dangerous—because it means we have to question the way police officers are recruited and hired. A police officer is essentially a social worker with a gun. Beyond accident and medical response calls, most calls are of a social nature, often defusing a social crisis, be it a robbery, a gang turf war, or a marital dispute. Some police departments require college training in areas such as psychology, criminal justice, or public administration, with criminal justice courses usually administered by sociology departments since policing is a social function of society. A degree in sociology and social work experience would be ideal, with the arms and martial arts training occurring once a candidate is recruited. To hit the streets, the successful officer needs all of this. Even so, seasoned police officers often point out that a good mediator could avoid using force in all but the most extreme cases. Put simply, you can’t successfully address social
problems with brute military force. Historically such strategies, while maintaining despots in power for the short term, ultimately have seeded revolutions, for better or worse. Syria is the latest horrific example.

Much of our current police recruiting, however, is now geared to recruiting warriors over social workers. Let's look at the Philadelphia Police Department. I start with them since they executed the most grotesque use of military power in modern history—and they did it without the state-of-the-art equipment we saw in Ferguson. In an attempt to end a 1985 SWAT standoff with armed suspects, the Philadelphia PD dropped a crude incendiary bomb from a helicopter onto a row house in a black middle-class neighborhood, killing six adult suspects and five children and destroying approximately sixty neighboring homes. So, almost thirty years later, how have they changed?

Unfortunately, a military culture still dominates the department. In their recruiting material they state, “The Police Department is structured as a paramilitary organization. …This means that we employ a culture and protocols that closely approximate those of the armed forces.” This language is certainly not unique to the Philadelphia PD. In various forms it’s echoed across the country. On the West Coast, the San Jose Police Department describes itself as “having a paramilitary structure,” and police departments across the country post variants on the same language. In truth, the organization of any police department is correctly described as paramilitary as it has rank and officers, a rigid chain of command, and uniforms reflecting rank. This is not where the problem lies.

The problem arises when the Philadelphia and San Jose police departments, and, to various degrees, hundreds of others, go on to explain that because they are paramilitaries, they have found that veterans can transition easily from active military duty into their departments, with some, like the Los Angeles Police Department, actively sending recruiters to military bases around the world. Many, if not most, police departments offer some sort of military preference in hiring, either by adding points to civil service scores, waiving educational requirements, or some combination of the two.

I need to be clear that veterans have a lot to offer. Understanding a military command structure does help with understanding a police bureaucracy, and, more importantly, the discipline and restraint that a successful professional soldier learns and practices are essential to success as a police officer. But it is also important to understand that the skillset and experience needed for successful community policing is extremely different than that which combat veterans acquire deployed as an occupation force in a military theater of operation surrounded by well-trained and well-equipped enemies sworn to their destruction. Waging war and keeping the peace are different jobs and require different skills.

On the blogosphere numerous veterans have articulated their disgust at the paramilitary tactics recently seen in Ferguson. Writing for Business Insider, former U.S. Marine and Afghanistan combat veteran Paul Szoldra points out that his unit wore less military equipment when it rolled in Afghanistan than what he was seeing in Ferguson. He quotes various combat
veterans voicing their disapproval of the militarization of a community police force while pointing out how militarization is “counter-productive to domestic policing and has to stop.” Szoldra ends his piece by writing, “If there’s one thing I learned in Afghanistan, it’s this: You can’t win a person’s heart and mind when you are pointing a rifle at his or her chest.”

Veterans tend to be excellent students, and veterans’ benefits often afford them the opportunity to go to school and acquire community policing skills. But fast tracking warriors from the battlefield to police service, as many departments are doing, can be a deadly mistake.

Published in the November / December 2014 Humanist

Michael I. Niman is a professor of journalism and media studies at Buffalo State College. His previous columns are at www.artvoice.com, archived at www.mediastudy.com, and available globally through syndication

CASEY STEINMETZ, “MILITARIZATION OF POLICE IS A VFP ISSUE”

VFP Newsletter (Fall 2014).

Traces the beginnings of police militarization to Nixon’s War on Drugs, which Reagan escalated and subsequent presidents continued [with failure: the US spent $7 billion vs. opium in Afghanistan, and in 2013 that country produced its largest crop yet]. The military weaponizing of the police accelerated particularly in 1990 when the NDAA, Section 1208, allowed the Pentagon to distribute small weapons, and later legislation expanded the program until now some local police departments look and act like military combat detachments. –Dick

MILITARY/LOCAL POLICE FUSION

Navy Routinely Spies on Citizens, Helps Cops Prosecute Them

Jason Koebler, VICE, Reader Supported News, Sept. 20, 2014

Koebler writes: "It's not just the NSA: A Federal Appeals Court has just noted a disturbing and 'extraordinary' trend of the Navy conducting mass surveillance on American civilians, and then using what they find to help local law enforcement prosecute criminals."

MILITARIZATION OF SCHOOLS AS EXTENSION OF MILITARIZED POLICE

Perhaps John’s Hopkins Institute would have something to say about the militarization of schools?

· Missouri Lawmakers Override Vetoes On Abortion, Guns

NPR (blog)-Sep 11, 2014

Missouri Lawmakers Override Vetoes On Abortion, Guns ... to allow teachers to carry guns in school and residents to obtain open-carry permits.

San Diego School District's New 18-Ton Armored Vehicle Creates Stir

NPR (blog)-14 hours ago

News that San Diego Unified School District has acquired an MRAP, or mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle, is adding a new facet to ...

A San Diego School District's Armored Car Is What's Wrong With ... Mic-12 hours ago

Explore in depth (64 more articles)

The Pentagon is Militarizing American Public Schools

Town Hall-2 hours ago

According to data obtained by NPR from the Pentagon, the federal government has sent weapons of war including guns and tanks to 26 school ...

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Dick Bennett

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