

Hundreds protest police killing of Sonya Massey in Chicago

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Hundreds of people took part Saturday in a rally at Federal Plaza in downtown Chicago to denounce the recent murder of Sonya Massey by police in Springfield, Illinois, the state's capital.

Massey, a 36-year-old black woman, was shot in the face in her own home during the early hours of July 6. She had called the police to report a suspected prowler outside her home, thinking the police would help her. Instead, as Illinois State Police bodycam video showed, Sangamon County Sheriff's Deputy Sean Grayson killed her in cold blood.

Between 100 and 200 people demonstrated with hand-made placards and banners. A number of speakers addressed the rally, including a civil rights lawyer, a minister, the mother of another young teenager who was murdered at just 15 years old over a decade ago, and other local community leaders.

Speakers highlighted the brutality and inhumanity that Sean Grayson subjected Sonya Massey to, and advocated for Democratic Party-approved reforms, including the "George Floyd Justice in Policing Act" and community-controlled policing.

Significantly, however, no Democratic Party elected officials, including the Democratic Socialists of America members of the city's board of aldermen, were present at the rally to voice even token opposition to police murder.

WSWS reporters spoke with attendees.

- A young woman stated the only solution was to abolish the police. She said that there was no reforming a sick system that has been given so many chances.

- A young man spoke powerfully to say there was no hope in any of the current political parties and that the only way out of this situation was for the working class to unite and organize independently from any mainstream parties.

- Another young attendee drew attention to the violence of American imperialism in the world, linking the murder of Massey to the wars taking place in the world right now.

- A student from California was visiting Chicago, and when he heard about the murder and the upcoming protest, he felt he had to be there, and drew parallels to what is happening in Los Angeles.

The crowd went on to march downtown, with some local media covering the event.

Some speakers, through the lens of identity politics and intersectionality, insisted that the source of police violence stems from issues of race, sex, gender, or disability. Other speakers spoke to the class nature of the police, that it was not only an issue facing women, the black community, and the disabled community, but it was a "labor issue" and the result of the "capitalist system."

Merawi Gerima, a co-chair of the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, a Stalinist-led group that co-sponsored the event, ended the rally saying that the police serve not the people but the "ruling class, that's how they protect their money," and that the Democratic Party was the face of the ruling class, noting they have carried out violence no less horrid than what Sonya Massey experienced.

Despite these sentiments, however, the CAARPR is a longtime offshoot of the Communist Party USA, which has the closest connections with the Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracy, particularly in Chicago.

Two days ago, Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris, once an aggressive state prosecutor in California and the party's presumptive presidential nominee for the 2024 elections, released a statement on Massey's murder: "Our thoughts are also with the communities

across our nation whose calls for help are often met with suspicion, distrust, and even violence. The disturbing footage released yesterday confirms what we know from the lived experiences of so many—we have much work to do to ensure that our justice system fully lives up to its name.”

For his party, President Biden said, “When we call for help, all of us as Americans—regardless of who we are or where we live—should be able to do so without fearing for our lives. Sonya’s death at the hands of a responding officer reminds us that all too often, Black Americans face fears for their safety in ways many of the rest of us do not.”

The Democrats are advancing the wars driving imperialist violence abroad and domestically, giving standing ovations to leaders responsible for genocide. Last week, the US Congress held a joint session welcoming the war criminal and mass murderer, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who delivered an address to the US Congress bragging about the Gaza genocide, to cheers and applause from the assembled Democrats and Republicans.

The Socialist Equality Party held a rally in Washington, D.C. to protest Netanyahu’s appearance before a Joint Session of Congress. David North, the National Chairman of the Socialist Equality Party, drew the necessary conclusions that flow from Netanyahu’s address, the genocide in Gaza, and the support of the entire political establishment for it:

“The building of an antiwar movement requires the mobilization of the working class as an international force. It requires the establishment of the political independence of the working class. And it requires a perspective that has as its aim not protesting to the capitalists, appealing to them to adopt a peaceful policy, but explaining to the working class that if they want to put an end to these horrors, if they want to secure the future, they have to conquer power.”



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