

Guns Don't Kill People! Racists, Misogynists and Other Chauvinists Kill People!

The massacre in Buffalo on May 14 shows once again that one of the main problems of the large numbers of mass killings in the U.S. is not guns, but racism and national oppression.

Payton Gendron, the 18-year old white supremacist who carried out the massacre, drove more than 200 miles to find a target with a large number of Black people, and 11 out of his 13 victims (killed or injured) were Black.

Remember Dylann Roof, who killed 9 Black people in a church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015. This is a continuation of the bombing of the church in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963 that killed four little Black girls. To this must be added the killings of over 1000 people each year, about **3 each day**, by racist, capitalist police forces; large numbers of the victims are Black, way out of proportion to their share of the population.

Another major factor in killings is misogyny, the hatred and oppression of women, as well as of LGBT people. Every year, “nearly 2,000 women were murdered by men in 2018 nationwide,... 92 percent of women killed by men were murdered by someone they knew and that the most common weapon used was a gun”.¹ 63% of them were killed by current husbands, ex-husbands or current boyfriends.² In the five years from April 2015 to March 2020, on average 74 women per year had been killed by a partner or ex-partner, while only 12 men per year were killed by wives or girlfriends,³ and many of these killings were acts of self-defense by the women. Let us also remember killings of LGBT people, such as the deaths of 49 people in an attack at the Pulse, a gay club in Florida, in June of 2016.

The ruling class will use the Buffalo massacre to push for more gun control. But we must not lose sight of what is at stake here. There used to be a saying: “If guns are outlawed, then only outlaws [and police and troops] will have guns!” Lenin said it better: “An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves.... In every class society, whether based on slavery, serfdom, or, as at present, on wage-labour, the oppressor class is always armed.”⁴ Engels also pointed out, quoting Marx, that “force... is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one.”⁵ (Engels himself learned military science when he volunteered in an artillery regiment in Berlin in 1841.) Even though we are not at this stage in the struggle yet, we know that the ruling class is preparing for this.

¹ <https://vpc.org/press/nearly-2000-women-murdered-by-men-in-one-year-new-violence-policy-center-study-finds/>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/sep/26/femicide-us-silent-epidemic>

³ <https://www.mankind.org.uk/statistics/statistics-on-male-victims-of-domestic-abuse/> See also: <https://vawnet.org/sc/scope-problem-intimate-partner-homicide-statistics>

⁴ “The ‘Disarmament’ Slogan,” *Collected Works*, Vol 23, p. 96.

⁵ “Anti-Dühring,” Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976, p. 235

Gang Violence and Other Killings

Unfortunately, there are also many killings due to drug wars and other random acts of violence. These mostly affect people in Black, Latino and other oppressed nationality communities, and have led to large numbers of deaths of children and others who just happened to have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. We know that the revolution and socialism will put an end to such killings.⁶ But we cannot tell people to just wait for, or fight for, socialism. We must also put forward some reforms to lessen the problem.

One could be to demand meaningful jobs for youths, not just for the summer but in the form of after-school training. Another would be to stop the importation of drugs! People know that dealers can earn much more than in minimum wage jobs. (Note the many tv programs and movies that glorify the lives of drug dealers.) There is also the lack of consciousness among such youths, who are poisoning and killing other poor people. There are no simple solutions under capitalism, so in the long run the fight for socialism is a necessity.

⁶ See my article “Crime and the Role of the Police in the United States and the Soviet Union” at: <http://redstarpublishers.org/TMLUv3n5.pdf> TMLUv3n5: And in the first years of the People’s Republic of China after the national-democratic revolution of 1949, drugs, that had been forced upon China by Britain, were basically abolished.