



For trade union protest against state repression!

Cop rampage at G20 protest killed Ian Tomlinson

The cops were out for blood at the G20 protests last week in London, and they got it. Weeks of press articles ominously predicting widespread destruction and violence by G20 protesters set the stage for an enormous cop presence which then terrorised the protesters, cracking heads and corralling or “kettling” thousands in a virtual mass detention for hours. Ian Tomlinson died at the hands of the cops in the City of London on 1 April. A video clip posted on the *Guardian* website (7 April) shows Tomlinson, a 47-year-old who lived in the area, walking home from work through the City and getting caught up in the police corral. The video shows him being clubbed with a baton from behind by a cop wearing a balaclava. Seconds later, the cop violently pushes Tomlinson to the ground. Minutes later he was dead.

Even before the video came to light, a growing body of witness statements showed the cops’ story to be a tissue of lies: that Tomlinson simply dropped dead of a heart attack, unprovoked; that protesters intentionally blocked the police medics’ access to Tomlinson and hurled “missiles” at them. In fact, witnesses told how protesters who were trying to help Tomlinson were pushed away by the cops. Witness statements printed in the *Guardian* (8 April) indicate that Tomlinson was attacked twice, “both times from behind and as he was walking away”. Press photographer Anna Branthwaite gave a detailed statement of one of the assaults, in which she saw a riot cop grab Tomlinson: “It was a very forceful knocking-down from behind. The officer hit him twice with a baton when he was lying on the floor.” She continues, “It became an assault. And then the officer picked him up from the back, continued to walk or charge with him, and threw him. He was running and stumbling. He didn’t turn and confront the officer or anything like that.”

This is of a piece with the cops’ conduct throughout the protests; the 3 April *Guardian* quotes protester Ashley Parsons describing the police conduct at the “climate camp” protest in Bishopsgate as “sickening and terrifying”: “Without warning, from around midnight, the police repeatedly and violently surged forwards in full riot gear, occasionally rampaging through the protest line and deliberately destroying protesters’ property, some officers openly screaming in pumped-up rage.”

An investigation into Tomlinson’s death is underway by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), but

recall the 2005 police killing of Jean Charles de Menezes: point blank execution on the London Tube in the name of the “war on terror” followed by a blizzard of lies from the Met about the innocent Brazilian electrician’s “terrorist” behaviour. The jury at the de Menezes inquest last year were instructed *not* to return a verdict of unlawful killing, the police were exonerated, and the clear message was *the cops can kill and they will get away with it*.

The IPCC is no “independent” body committed to establishing the truth. Funded by the Home Office with its chair “appointed by the Crown following recommendation by the Home Secretary” (IPCC.gov.uk), it exists to defuse outrage at cop brutality; to whitewash the police and thereby facilitate their violent, racist business as usual. And it is their business, as millions of workers are being thrown on the scrapheap, to use riot shields, dogs and truncheons when a protest assembles outside the Bank of England. Contrary to the Labourite drivel of so-called “socialist” organisations who say cops are part of the working class, they are a key component of the capitalist state. The state is no neutral arbiter, it is at its core “armed bodies of men” comprising police, courts, prisons and military that exist to maintain the capitalist system of exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed through parliamentary claptrap, investigations, or moral pleadings; it must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced with a workers state.

The cops were determined that no “disruption” would mar the perfect obscenity of Obama and Brown at the G20 summit plotting how best to shore up their crumbling capitalist economies on the backs of the working people and send more imperialist troops to Afghanistan. State repression such as was meted out in the City of London ultimately targets the working class. And it’s the trade union movement — the organised working class — that must be mobilised in self-defence which means also the defence of all the oppressed, of immigrants, blacks and Asians, Muslims witchhunted under the “war on terror”, and of those who protest the barbarism of capitalism. The necessary instrumentality for the uprooting of the capitalist system is a revolutionary party, like the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky which led the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. It is the building of such a party to which the Spartacist League is committed.

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