

Speech – 4th July

What does the 4th of July mean for prisoners in the USA?

The Campaign for Victims of Racist Police Violence (KOP) has nothing to celebrate. Listening to the words of a collective of prisoners in Germany who are political, fighting and resisting, we say:

Prisons and detention centres are an integral element of national and international counter-insurgencies. The deeply ingrained racism and the murders and attacks that occur on a daily basis both in Germany as well as the rest of the world are not isolated cases, but rather a structural and purposeful policy of those in power. People who resist and fight against this, are fighting for the rights of humans. Because the struggle against racism is not a crime, it is the duty of every person.

We are in a state of emergency here in Germany: harassment and repression – that is what People of Colour, people who are refugees, people who are immigrants, and Black people experience every day. From the police, from the judiciary, from public authorities. In this way, the USA is not that far removed from Germany, as is often assumed. There, just as here, racial profiling criminalises people; there, just as here, people are sentenced by a judiciary that does not see or acknowledge racism.

Since 2001, the Campaign for Victims of Racist Police Violence remains on the side of those people who resist these racist

practices of the police. KOP has documented over 170 cases of racist police violence between 2000 and 2015 – ranging from harassment and verbal abuse, up to murder. We see again and again how relations and associations are distorted, how police officers portray themselves as victims, how racism as a real problem is denied, and in all these cases, the police retains the authority of how the situation will be defined.

If someone does now and then manage to make a complaint to the police, then the police are supposed to lead the investigations against themselves. As such, police officers would have to make statements against their colleagues - as if no one has ever heard of esprit de corps – the idea of responsibility to members of your group. That is absurd. And the prosecution lets the charges simply be lifted. Because of this, 97% of all reported cases of bodily harm in police stations do not make it to court.

Racist misjudgements and practices are not isolated cases – they are part of a system. Police officers specifically pursue Black people and People of Colour because they consider them to be criminals per se – just because of their skin colour. Victims of police violence often have very little power to object or make complaints and therefore usually cannot correct situations that occurred. Laws enabling the police to stop and search people without any concrete suspicions open all doors for a racist system.

Institutional racism divides. Institutional racism kills. Let's make sure it doesn't go too far! We show solidarity with victims of racist police violence. When the police stops a person, look over, stay

standing there, ask questions, offer your help, document what has happened, present yourself as a witness, demand a police ID number, press charges against the police, seek advice, make connections and networks with others and do some concrete activities and projects in the public, to make this public.

We resist the institutional racism within the police!

We resist the everyday racism in society!

We show solidarity! We demand without exception the release of Mumia Abu Jamal immediately!