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Black Americans and Police State Fascism

By Margaret Kimberley
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The word fascism has reappeared in the American popular lexicon thanks to Donald Trump's presidential campaign. The word is used to keep progressive Democrats in a state of fear should he win, but its existence in this country right now is rarely discussed.

If Trump became president and was indeed a fascist he wouldn't bring anything to the country that is not already in existence for black Americans. Fascism is practiced against them on a daily basis. They are at risk of police interaction, arrest and even death for committing the most minor infractions or for no infraction at all.

Korryn Gaines was shot to death by police in her own home near Baltimore, Maryland. Her five year-old son was also shot and injured. Ms. Gaines came into contact with police initially because of a traffic violation and a dispute with her boyfriend. Every day thousands of people are given tickets or make accusations against one another but rarely do they have an expectation of ending up dead as a result.

Arrest warrants are the first line of defense for the police, who are the 21st century embodiment of the slave patrol. If black people are lucky they may have to pay a fine or suffer some inconvenience, if unlucky they are killed.

The Baltimore police used maximum force and disregarded accepted police practice meant to de-escalate such situations. They broke down Gaines' door and cut off her Facebook feed. As is

typical, their much vaunted body cameras were turned off and the dead woman was deprived of any means of defense or telling of her story. The only version of events comes from the people who killed her.

Death is the worst result but not the only means of keeping black people under physical control and in a state of humiliation. A recent video from a Kentucky courtroom shows an unidentified black woman suffering the cruelties of the police system. She was arrested for not completing a diversion program after a 2014 shoplifting charge. The only logic to arresting someone for this violation is cruelty for its own sake and the proof of that played out in the courtroom.

The woman arrived at court wearing only a pair of shorts. She reported that she had been denied feminine hygiene products and clean pants. The judge dismissed the charges but not before lecturing the woman. “The fact that you’re in custody is your fault. You gotta come to court. But once you were arrested, the rest of this is completely inhumane and unacceptable and I’m very sorry that you had to go through this.” She added, “This is not normal. I’ve never seen this.” Of course this treatment is normal and happens all the time. Her arrest for a minor offense was normal and so was the denial of her human rights in an American jail. Actually the humiliated woman may be considered lucky. It was recently revealed that 6,900 people died in custody in Texas jails and prisons in the last ten years.

All of the tools which are supposed to protect the public from this system are useless. Paul O’Neal (*link O’Neal) was summarily executed by Chicago police while driving a stolen car. Again their cameras were turned off during the shooting. But once they felt safe, they recorded themselves rejoicing over their kill, giving one another high fives. One complained, “Fuck, I’m going to be on desk duty now for 30 days.” The nonchalance is logical. The officer has no reason to fear anything worse.

Body cameras and other “reforms” won’t save black people’s lives because they are meant for public relations purposes only. The system in this country spends large sums of money, passes legislation and empowers the police to do what they like to black people. The suffering is quite intentional.

All the videos in the world won’t upend the brutality of the laws enforced against black people. It matters not whether a victim complies, or has hands up, or is armed, or is unarmed, or opens a door, or speaks, or doesn’t, or flees, or stays put, or does or doesn’t resist arrest. The police are a constant threat to black lives because the system demands it.

There will be no end to the body count without serious discussion about the ways in which racism is supported and encouraged. None of the supposedly non-fascist politicians dare lay a finger on the modern day slave system. Occasionally white people die at the hands of police, too. But that is considered a small price to pay to keep the racial hierarchy in order. There is no hope of ending the carnage without first understanding the system we have and calling it what it is. Black Americans have always lived under fascism.