

“What kind of a society, what kind of system is this?”

On the Murder of Trayvon Martin

Statement by the
Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

On February 26, 2012, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin went out to buy some snacks at the nearby 7-Eleven. George Zimmerman, the neighborhood watch captain in a small gated community in Sanford, Florida, was driving around in his SUV. Zimmerman called 911, saying Martin looked “real suspicious” – i.e. he was a young, Black male, walking around in a hoodie. After the 911 dispatcher told Zimmerman not to pursue the youth, Zimmerman followed Trayvon Martin, got out of his car and then confronted Martin. Zimmerman was carrying a 9 millimeter handgun. Trayvon Martin was carrying a bag of Skittles and a can of iced tea. There was yelling, then a gunshot. Trayvon Martin lay face down in the grass with a fatal bullet wound to the chest. Zimmerman was taken into custody, questioned and released. To this day, he has not been arrested and charged with any crime.

It is very good and very important that people, not only in Sanford, Florida, but all over the country, are outraged by the murder of Trayvon Martin and are making their outrage known in many different and creative forms of protest. It is also important that, in connection with the murder of Trayvon Martin, the memory of Emmett Till—wantonly murdered by white supremacists decades ago—is being raised to express the fact that people have seen this go on for far too long and will not stand by to see it happen yet again.

At the same time, the fact that yet another Emmett Till moment can arise—that yet another outrage of this kind can take place—today, more than 50 years after the original Emmett Till lynching, and that this murder of Trayvon Martin is not an isolated incident but only the latest of an endless chain of such acts that are perpetrated, condoned and covered up by the powers-that-be, shows very powerfully that, this time around, we must not settle for anything less than stopping this, once and for all—we must build a movement to really and finally put an end to these and countless other outrages that spew forth from this system, by sweeping away this system through revolution. This is deadly serious and we must take this up very seriously.

—Revolutionary Communist Party, USA
March 23, 2012



Trayvon Martin
1995-2012

Emmett Till and Lynchings, Past and Present

An excerpt from
Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible, What It's All About
by Bob Avakian

Then there's the story of Emmett Till. Emmett Till was born and grew up in Chicago. In 1955, when he had just turned 14, he went to Mississippi to visit family there. His mother warned and she schooled him about what he would find in Mississippi, what a young Black male like himself should expect, what he must do and not do in order to stay alive. And think about the fact that a mother has to school her child that way just when he goes to visit

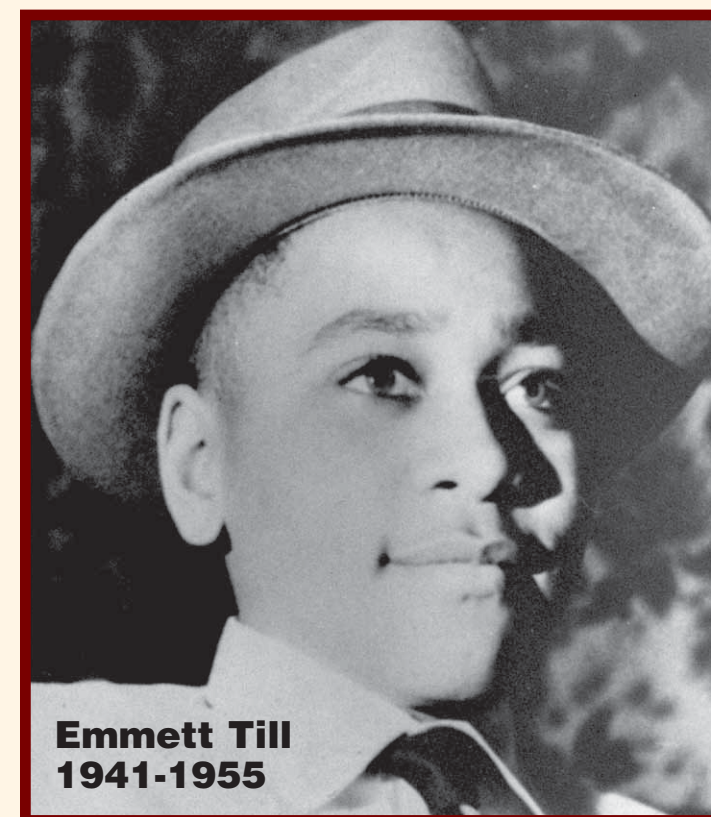
family. But Emmett Till was full of life and full of fun. One day, while in Money, Mississippi, he made the fatal mistake of whistling at a white woman as he was leaving a store owned by her husband. A few days later, the storeowner and his brother-in-law came in the middle of the night with guns and took Emmett Till away. They were seen beating him as they drove him away. His relatives began looking for his body along river banks and under bridges where Black folks always look when things like this happen, as his uncle put it. Think about that, think about what that means—where Black folks always look when this kind of thing happens. Think about what that tells you about this country. Emmett Till's body was found in a river. He was beaten and shot to death. Beaten so badly he could barely be recognized, even by his mother. A 14-year-old boy lynched. For what? For whistling at a white woman.

In an act of tremendous courage and large-mindedness, his mother, Mamie Till, displayed his body publicly in Chicago. And she refused to have it touched up so that all could see what had been done to him. His body was viewed by tens of thousands of Black people in Chicago.

The story of what happened to Emmett Till aroused deep anger among Black people all over the country. It shocked many white people in many parts of the country and it became an international news story and outrage.

But back in Mississippi, white people rallied to the defense of the men who had kidnapped and brutally murdered Emmett Till. These men were put on trial only because of the outrage around the country and around the world. Death threats and terror against Black people in the area where this lynching took place were increased to keep them from saying what they knew and how they felt about this lynching. In a court room that was segregated, with white people filling the seats, and the few Black people who were allowed in, forced to stand at the back, the jury of all white men found the murderers of Emmett Till not guilty in an hour. Their lawyers even accused Mamie Till and the NAACP of conspiring to cook up this whole story of the lynching. Actually, Emmett Till was alive in Detroit, these lawyers claimed. Not long after they were acquitted of this crime, the two men sold their story to a national magazine, telling in detail how they brutally murdered Emmett Till. But nothing was ever done to them. Despite a massive campaign calling for the federal government to indict these two men, the government refused. Sound familiar?

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Emmett Till
1941-1955

See the talk by Bob Avakian —
Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible, What It's All About
at revolutiontalk.net and selected clips at YouTube.com/revolutiontalk.

Raising The Fight To Stop Mass Incarceration To A New Level: National Day of Action on April 19, 2012

A statement issued by activists and others, Raising The Fight To Stop Mass Incarceration To A New Level calls out the reality: “More than 2.4 million people, most of them Black or Latino, remain warehoused in prisons across the country; Black and Latino youth are treated like criminals by the police and the criminal justice system, guilty until proven innocent, if they can survive their encounters with police to prove their innocence; former prisoners wear badges of shame and dishonor even after they serve their sentences—discriminated against when applying for jobs, denied access to government assistance, not allowed in public housing, denied the right to vote.” (The statement, “RAISING THE FIGHT TO STOP MASS INCARCERATION TO A NEW LEVEL” can be found at revcom.us.)

That statement calls for “demonstrations, rallies, teach-ins, and other actions ... focusing on bringing out the reality of mass incarceration and calling on people to join the resistance to it in cities across the U.S.”

Convergence 4 p.m. One Police Plaza, NYC. March 5:30 p.m. to Union Square. Go to revcom.us for demonstrations in other cities.

Revolution newspaper urges all the people who are outraged by the murder of Trayvon Martin and have been out in the streets in protest to also join in the April 19 National Day of Action.

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