

United States: George Floyd, Black man, murdered by white cops; U.S. erupts with mass protests

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California—Mass protests in cities and towns across the United States exploded after four cops murdered an unarmed Black man, George Floyd, 46, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25.

The white cop, Derek Chauvin, 44, for nearly 9 minutes, put his knee on Floyd's neck. He cried out, "I can't breathe" and called for his "mama." After four minutes his body went limp but Chauvin kept his knee on his neck for an additional 4 minutes and 46 seconds to make sure he was no longer breathing. Two other cops held Floyd's arms and legs pinned down as a fourth cop stood guard so bystanders could not intervene.

Bystanders videotaped the premeditated murder. They yelled at the cops killing the man who offered no resistance. His hands had been handcuffed behind his back. One person said, "He was treated like a roach."

Chauvin and his three cop associates acted with murderous intent. The cell phone videos showed that Floyd waited for the cops to arrest him after a clerk at a store said he used a "counterfeit" \$20 to buy cigarettes.

The cops came to his car, gun drawn, and pulled him out and put him in handcuffs. He was then walked to the police car across the street. He did not resist arrest. He willingly went to the cop car. Whether Chauvin did so because he knew Floyd or not, is irrelevant. He knew he was a Black man and did not deserve life.

How anyone with eyes or a conscience could not see this for what it was, a white terrorist lynching, is complicit in the crime. It is outrageous. Black lives do matter.

Four cops fired

Some 24 hours later the mayor of Minneapolis said the four murdering cops were fired from the police force. None were arrested or charged with murder. That night mass street protests demanding "No Justice, No peace" occurred.

The family demanded arrests of the killer cops. The County District Attorney ((DA) incredibly said it was likely more evidence would show no crime was committed. Laws in the US allow cops to assert they are doing their job always in fear, to avoid arrest and prosecution for murder or police violence.

Extreme anger rose in Minneapolis and the next-door city of St Paul, the state capital. Blacks and other residents demanded, "No Justice, No Peace" and "Black Lives Matter." Some violence did occur, including the burning of the police precinct where the four cops worked even as the police pushed back.

Two more days of mass protest led the same DA to reverse course and announce a charge of third-degree murder and manslaughter for one cop, Chavin. The other three remain at home but could face indictments.

On May 30, the new progressive Minnesota Attorney General, Keith Ellison, took overall charge of the case. Ellison was the first Muslim elected to Congress prior to being elected attorney general.

Blood and violence on their hands

Blood and street destruction are on the hands of the cops and the criminal justice system. Even when a cop is fired and charged for the crime of murder, the “justice” system lets him off. The US Supreme Court ruled cops are justified no matter the facts and live videos show the murder of Black and Brown people.

The Minnesota National Guard, city police and state troopers applied maximum force to push out democratic protesters in Minneapolis and St Paul on May 29. Curfews in Minnesota and other states were also enforced.

The government did so with aggressive tactics. It included indiscriminate shooting of tears gas canisters and rubber bullets at peaceful protesters and reporters. Infiltrators from white nationalist provocateurs promoted by the dark web and other social media, elements who heard the dog whistle coming from the White House and Justice Department that seeks to use the Floyd murder to advance their anti-Black and anti-progressive agenda. Some of the properties burned were well known community centers and popular sites.

The so-called police “union” (that actually operates like a criminal cartel to protect thuggish violent actions by police) defends the cops criminal actions and attacks community activists as “anti cop.”

Two Americas

Justice for George Floyd is a central demand for national protests. But the underlying reason is the inequalities rooted in a capitalist system based on systemic discrimination. The peaceful multiracial demonstrators have raised this issue of the pandemic of racism that has no solution under the current system of national oppression of African Americans.

Blacks, who are 13 percent of the US population are nearly 50 percent of deaths by cops and suffer mass incarceration. Many liberals see the issue as excessive police use of force; Blacks know otherwise. We live in two Americas—one white majority, one Black minority.

Why is this important? Whites in the modern day still refuse to understand that *democracy is not real* unless all peoples are treated as equals and respected as humans. The concept of “Two Americas” is a recognition that Blacks, Latinos, Asians and indigenous peoples as well as immigrants (legal and undocumented) were never included by the white male Founding Fathers as “citizens.” That false concept is why every fight for social change leads the status quo ruling class to organize counter legal and extra-legal actions by the white majority to seek to reverse those gains.

The white led backlash after the first Black president, Barak Obama, is the white supremacist, Donald Trump. Any illusions that a colorblind America was on the horizon was quickly shattered. It is why a vast majority of African Americans see the 2020 presidential election as life threatening.

Whites continue to see most things in racial terms even as they deny doing so. It’s why a liberal white woman in Central Park, New York City, recently played the “race call” in telling the police by phone that an “African American man was threatening her” (a birdwatcher) because he asked her to

leash her dog.

A Black man jogging in Georgia is murdered by three white vigilantes believing as white citizens they could do so.

A Black woman, an essential worker emergency medical technician, was killed by plain clothes cops bursting into her apartment in Louisville, Kentucky. The only person arrested for attempted murder was her boyfriend who grabbed his legally registered gun to shoot at the intruders.

Dual pandemics

How to fight the twin pandemics of coronavirus and racism inequalities?

The health crisis is much simpler to do than racism. Social distancing and wearing masks works until a vaccine or treatment is created. Racism of 400 years requires a change of the capitalist system and laws that enforce equality.

Most Black street protester wore masks because of the coronavirus. Blacks have disproportionately high numbers of cases and deaths. Most Trump MAGA supporters did not care.

The greater white public, additionally, generally tries to avoid discussing US history honestly. Racism is a Black people issue. It is not taught in schools.

To see the protest in Minnesota, New York, Los Angeles, California, Louisville, Kentucky and dozens of other cities, showed them demanding more than justice for George Floyd. The chief white nationalist in chief, President Donald Trump, has urged violence against the protesters. He invoked a racist comment from the white Miami police chief in 1977 saying "that when the looting starts, the shooting starts," He added he would use vicious dogs against Black rebellions.

Trump did not condemn the cop killers and failing justice system. He asked his Justice Department to blame violence on "left wing agitators" and declared without evidence the antifascist group "antifa" a terrorist organization while not naming a single white supremacist organization and armed vigilantes that have murdered innocent Blacks and Jews. Antifa has responded to these groups' racist actions with firm counter actions. (It is a violation of US law to label a group "terrorist" because you disagree with it. Crimes are based on illegal actions, not speech or goals.)

Trump also said "MAGA loves African American people" showing his view that like previous bigots in the White House that people of color are inferior to the white majority.

History of revolt

The US was founded on mass disobedience and alleged violation of unjust laws. The most famous was the 1773 Boston Tea Party that was attacked by the British rulers as hooliganism and illegal.

Slave revolts and runaways were illegal.

The labor strikes in the 1930s were infiltrated and attacked by employers agents (Pinkertons) and cops. Strikes were declared "illegal" until victory was won.

Without civil disobedience and struggle against corrupt rulers and police, no progress can be made.

What has been must positive about the current explosions is that young whites and other minorities joined with African Americans united in protests everywhere. A true multiracial coalition emerged

where many stood up to the police and demanded justice.

The roots of the inequality is the capitalist system itself that uses racial and class inequalities to maintain national oppression (“Two Nations” white nationalist privilege of skin color versus Black oppression). Rebellions occur frequently. Read about 1967-68, it sounds like today’s struggles.

The difficulty of forging unity of the oppressor and oppressed workers is necessary to launch mass revolutionary movements for fundamental change. African Americans are an oppressed national minority without full citizenship—deserving self-determination.

Marx and Engels made this analysis about oppressed peoples in the 19th century, and elaborated on by the Russian revolutionary leaders Lenin and Trotsky that remain valid today:

No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations. (Friedrich Engels)

The nation that oppresses another nation forges its own chains. (Karl Marx)

Right of self-determination for all nations included within the bounds of the state. (Article 9, Program of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party 1903)

Malcolm X said in response to police brutality and national oppression: *“That’s Not A Chip On My Shoulder. That’s Your Foot On My Neck”*

Martin Luther King Jr., the most prominent leader of the mass civil rights movement in the 1960s and advocate of nonviolent protest:

“We adopt the means of nonviolence because our end is a community at peace with itself. We will try to persuade with our words, but if our words fail, we will try to persuade with our acts.”

He also said, *“Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself.”*

In 1967 speech, the “Other America,” King said about “riots”:

“In the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it that America has failed to hear?”

Until the four cops in Minneapolis are arrested and charged with first or second degree murder, the movement will continue and spread A Minneapolis Black Lives Matter leader put it clearly: the police force needs to be disinvested and resources put into the Black, Brown and native peoples communities.

The occupying force should be dissolved and community control of the police with strong regulations that the new police force must live in the community they patrol and be accountable to that same community.

No Justice! No Peace!

Malik Miah

Trump invokes Insurrection Act of 1807

On June 1 President Donald Trump held a Rose Garden gathering of white mainly male staffers to announce the invocation of the rarely used Insurrection Act of 1807. He said if the governors do not “dominate” protesters with force he would do so by sending in the armed forces.

His reality show of the presidency was orchestrated for the cameras. He spoke to his white nationalist supporters and the FOX news media. He issued his claim of being a “Law and Order” president and then walked to a nearby famous church where he waved a Bible for the cameras, and then left.

The 1807 Act is short: *“Whenever the President considers that unlawful obstructions, combinations, or assemblages, or rebellion against the authority of the United States, make it impracticable to enforce the laws of the United States in any State by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, he may call into Federal service such of the militia of any State, and use such of the armed forces, as he considers necessary to enforce those laws or to suppress the rebellion.”* (Signed into law by President Thomas Jefferson)

The president can do so only if requested by a state’s governor. The law was written specifically to prevent dictatorial actions by the president. Trump disagrees. The last time the Act was used was 1992 in California. The governor requested it after days of furious protests when a jury acquitted the four cops who savagely beat up Rodney King.

Since the US capital, Washington DC, is a Federal territory, Trump did not request permission from the mayor. Trump sent the armed police to attack peaceful protesters with tar gas and rubber bullets.

Trump’s action is a clear violation of the 1807 law. No governor has requested the army. His smear of “left wing radicals” and antifascists (antifa) will not stop the protests. The challenge is whether Congress and the courts will call Trump out.

The people, led by African Americans, will not stop their peaceful marches until justice for George Floyd and others Black men and women shot and killed by cops and white vigilantes are arrested and convicted of murder.

Malik Miah

P.S.

- Articles written for Green Left Weekly (Australia).