



**International Workers' Unity-Fourth International**

On a racist police officer smothered 25 May, George Floyd, a 46-year-old African-American worker, on a public street in Minneapolis, while other officers held off a group of people trying to stop the attack. Several videos of the arrest showed that he was not armed and did not resist the arbitrary and racist arrest. After they handcuffed him, racist henchmen threw him to the ground and police officer Derek Chauvin choked him for ten minutes, pressing Floyd's neck onto the asphalt with his knee, even after he lost consciousness. Passers-by filmed the crime and filled millions around the world with outrage. Thousands of protesters echoed the cry of "I can't breathe" over the next few days.

Large demonstrations have erupted across the country with the slogan "No justice, no peace", recalling the anti-racist uprisings in Ferguson and Baltimore in 2014 and 2015. In defiance of repression and the pandemic, crowds have taken to the streets of Minneapolis first and then to many of the nation's major cities. Protesters surrounded the home of the murderer Chauvin until the National Guard attacked them. The police facility to which Floyd's killers were allegedly assigned was set on fire on Thursday. There was also extensive looting.

Beyond the role of police provocateurs in some actions, the attack on the symbols of repression has generated a great impact, and the mobilisation has spread to the rest of the country. In Louisville, where young Breonna Taylor was recently killed by racist cops, there have been large protests and seven reported gunshot wounds in the repression. There has been a pattern of attacks on the press by the police, with arrests like that of Black journalist Omar Jimenez of CNN in Minneapolis, and shots at cameramen and other attacks in several cities.

On Friday 29th, hundreds of protesters gathered in front of the White House, where Trump was staying, defying the curfew. Banners with slogans like “An Eye for an Eye” reflected the radicalised spirit of the fighting youth in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Phoenix, Oakland, Houston, Atlanta, Detroit, Las Vegas, San Jose and Memphis. In the small Mississippi town of Petal, the mayor spoke out to support Floyd’s murder, and hundreds of people rallied around his resignation. There are workers’ resistance to the repression: In Minneapolis, bus drivers used to transport the rioters refused to do so, and the same thing happened in Brooklyn. It is important to demand that the unions take action on a national level in solidarity with the anti-racist struggle. If the bureaucrats refuse, they must be swept away.

### **Right-wing Trump calls for shooting protesters**

Trump’s first reaction was cautious, sympathising with Floyd’s family and assuring them that a federal investigation would provide justice. But as the people’s struggle grew, his fascist convictions came to the fore. In the early morning hours of 29 May, he tweeted that protesters were “thugs,” threatened militarisation to impose “order,” and even quoted a phrase from Miami’s racist police chief Walter Headley, who in 1967 said that “when the looting starts, the shooting starts,” a clear incitement to use military and paramilitary violence against the protests.

The president not only gives the green light to the brutal methods of the repressive forces, he also signals the neo-Nazi paramilitary and white supremacist groups. Already an unknown attacker has shot and wounded a protester in Minnesota and there has been at least one hit in Denver. The contrast between the repressive forces’ treatment of violently attacked anti-racist demonstrations, and the protection afforded to armed mobilisations by extreme right-wing racist groups, which have taken over government buildings protesting against social distancing measures in the pandemic’s context, is striking.

Trump’s message of incitement to shootings has been criticised by some Democrats and the social network Twitter has partially reduced its visibility, a sanction that irritated the racist president, who has already taken legal initiatives to regulate the networks. But one factor preventing a deepening crisis in the ruling class is the role of the Democrats in serving repression and order.

### **The Democrats, the liberal component of the party of order**

Minnesota's Democratic governor declared an emergency to allow the deployment of the National Guard, and by Thursday night, they had deployed 500 military personnel. Trump lashed out at the Democrats, whom he accuses of being "leftist radicals" and threatened to further militarise the state. The mayor of Minneapolis, also a Democrat, also called for the deployment of the National Guard. Overwhelmed by the mobilisation, they have enforced a curfew, with little or no effectiveness.

Former President Obama has called for an investigation but refused to call Floyd's death a murder. He concluded his message by congratulating "most of the men and women" in the police force who "take pride in doing their hard work properly. He was scrupulously careful not to use the word "racism" and he praised the repressors. Former Social Democratic pre-candidate Sanders did criticise systematic racism and police violence against Black people and demanded the arrest of all the cops involved in the murder. He demanded that all future deaths in police custody be investigated and criticised Trump for inciting the police to carry out shootings. But it did not call for mobilisation, nor did it show solidarity with the ongoing ones.

The virtual Democratic presidential candidate, Joe Biden, issued an extensive statement criticising racism and calling for calm, without using the word murder. Amy Klobuchar looked like a likely running mate of Biden's, but she has been unmasked by the crisis. African-American communities already repudiated her for her complicity with racist police in Minnesota during her years as a prosecutor. After Floyd's murder, her role in covering up police brutality in Minneapolis has been widely publicised.

The governor of New York, Democrat Cuomo, who has been antagonising Trump over the response to the pandemic, has said he supports the protesters while condemning "the fires and robberies". This is pure demagoguery and double talk. The police in his state, who are as racist as the others, have taken it upon themselves to suppress the protests with the same violence.

### **The US: A Racist State**

This heinous crime brings back into focus the racist character of the regime of the world's largest capitalist and imperialist power, and its very limited bourgeois democracy. The U.S. rose as a power based on hundreds of years of slavery and maintained apartheid-like laws of racist

segregation until the 1960s. Several states apply policies designed to deny the right to vote to the black population. Until 2000, interracial marriage was illegal in the state of Alabama. One third of black children live in poverty, and the per capita income of blacks is ten times less than that of whites. Twenty-seven percent of Black people live below the poverty line. Unemployment, at over 10 percent among Black people, is more than twice as high as among whites. A 2017 study showed that a third of the over two million prisoners in the U.S. are Black. There are proportionally six times as many Black prisoners as white prisoners and twice as many Latino prisoners. A low-income Black man is over 50 percent more likely to be incarcerated in his life. Convictions for drug use are six times more frequent against Blacks than whites, although the rate of use is the same in both groups. In 2016 the murder rate at the hands of the repressive bodies was 10.13 per million among the indigenous population, 6.6 per million among blacks, 3.23 among Latinos, 2.9 among whites.

Racist groups like the KKK carried out thousands of lynching against Black people between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. In the post-war period, they applied policies of state terrorism with racist criteria. The FBI's Cointelpro programme had as its priority the destruction of organisations of the indigenous movement and black communities, through infiltration, criminalisation and physical elimination. Traitors from the movement murdered the anti-racist fighter Malcolm X in the service of the FBI. The oldest political prisoner in the country is the indigenous Sioux leader Leonard Peltier, imprisoned for 44 years. One of the most impressive displays of racist violence was on 13 May 1985 bombing of a Black neighbourhood by Philadelphia police. Sixty homes were destroyed, and they killed eleven people. The attack, with warlike characteristics, was directed against the Black organisation MOVE.

Racist police violence under the cover of impunity. The racist paramilitaries who recently murdered Amandla Arbery in Georgia were only charged because they filmed the murder and the denunciation became widespread. No police were charged with the recent murder of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky. When Eric Garner was strangled in 2014 by racist cops in New York City, not one cop was prosecuted, nor for the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson the same year.

Racist cop Chauvin, Floyd's killer, was arrested after three days of intense nationwide protests. It was so exceptional, wiped out by popular mobilisation, that prosecutors claimed it was the quickest charge ever brought against a cop. But it is an exception that confirms the rule: he is only charged with third degree murder, i.e. "unintentional". Meanwhile, the bourgeois media refrain from using the word "murder".

**International anti-racist solidarity!**

Racism is a scourge inherent in capitalism, from its very birth. The slave trade was one mechanism of the original accumulation. The ideology of pseudo-biological racial differentiation arises in this process of genocide and slave exploitation. Within the framework of capitalist relations of exploitation, racist hatred is advocated by the bourgeoisies to divide the working class and perpetuate the super-exploitation of the most marginalised and oppressed sectors, blacks, indigenous people and immigrants.

The Covid pandemic<sup>19</sup> has shown that the destructive effects of capitalism have a global dimension and hence the need for a global fighting response from the working class. The anti-racist uprising in the U.S. deserves the solidarity of the world's revolutionaries. Along with the protests in Chile, Lebanon and Iraq, it is part of the revival of the class struggle after the impact of the pandemic. In the U.S., structural racism has also been reflected because Black and Latino populations have been punished much more harshly in proportion. This has contributed to the widespread situation of discontent that has been overtaken by the vicious racist murder of George Floyd.

Let us call on the leaders of the U.S. unions to break their complicity with the repressive Trump government and call strikes to bend the arm of the racists. Let the public employee unions refuse to defend police who repress workers, attack popular communities or commit racist crimes. Let us call on the members of the National Guard to break discipline and not to repress. Let us demand justice for George Floyd, an independent investigation and an exemplary punishment for the murdering police. In the struggle's heat it is also necessary to build the independent social and political organisations of the left that will give continuity to the struggle until we defeat the Trump government and its reactionary and racist policy in the service of the multinationals and the capitalist-imperialist system.

We call for united acts of protest in front of the U.S. embassies and consulates to express our support to the Black and Latino hardened youth who, from the bowels of the greatest imperialist power, resist racist oppression and increasingly question inequality and capitalist exploitation. Let us take the momentum that the struggle in the U.S. gives to the anti-racist cause to denounce and combat expressions of racist violence and oppression in our own countries.

**International Unity of Workers-Fourth International (IWU-FI)**

**30 May 2020**