

# Police Murder of George Floyd - NOT ONE MORE!

Jamie Kruger, Minneapolis Mon, 01/06/2020 - 09:56

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When officer Derek Chauvin was kneeling on George Floyd's neck on a Minneapolis street last Monday, it probably felt like routine to the white man who has a long record of abuse and excessive force. And, in a sense, it was; African Americans in the US suffer from racist actions on a daily basis. For his partners in crime, Tou Thao, Thomas Lane, and J. Alexander Kueng everything seemed normal as well, providing cover for the abuse, making sure no bystanders got in the way.

George Floyd was begging for air, to be able to breathe, but the racist system that breeds inhumane police officers did not even grant this basic human need to him. He was killed in cold blood. The murder of African Americans by white cops also happens on a routine basis, think Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor, and so many more over the years. Yet this time something is different. The rebellion that started in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and Saint Paul) and that is now sweeping the whole country is unprecedented in recent history.

## The Beginnings of the Revolt

On Monday, May 25, the police was called to a local corner store on Chicago Avenue in South Minneapolis because of a suspected forgery. When the four police officers arrived, they found George Floyd sitting in a nearby car. Little is known of what precipitated the arrest, but the police later claimed he was resisting arrest, which is why they pinned him to the ground face down, with Derek Chauvin kneeling with his full body weight on Floyd's neck for more than 8 minutes while two other officers held down his body.

Not fazed by Floyd's begging for air and bystanders pleading to let him breathe, Chauvin did not even loosen his choke-hold after Floyd became unresponsive and limp. He was declared dead after paramedics brought him to the hospital, but other, unofficial, reports had him unresponsive and without a pulse at the scene. After the gruesome video footage that disputed the police narrative was posted, people started gathering at the store and crowds soon swelled demanding justice.

At a speed not seen before, the four Minneapolis Police Department officers were fired, and the FBI was brought in to investigate. This was undoubtedly a result of the scale of the militant and aggressive fight-back against this latest example of police terror. However, much to the surprise of local and state officials, it did not calm the protesters who continued what they had started with an increasingly combative posture. It culminated in the early hours of Friday morning when they marched to the 3rd Precinct, where the officers were stationed and burned it to the ground. Chauvin was taken into custody and charged later that day.

Even though public pressure had been mounting fast, it still took until then, May 29, for Mike Freeman, Hennepin County Attorney, to order the arrest of Derek Chauvin with charges of third-degree murder and

manslaughter. No charges have been laid against the three officers who assisted Chauvin in the killing of Floyd as of this writing.

## Police Terror in Minneapolis

Police brutality and racial profiling are nothing new in the Twin Cities. They are just as prevalent and long-established as in other big cities throughout the US. The Minneapolis police force is historically known to breed a culture of white supremacy and excessive force. The union representing the Minneapolis Police Department's 800+ officers, the Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis, is led by Lt. Bob Kroll, an outspoken Trump supporter who has been accused in a lawsuit, actually brought by the current chief of police, Medaria Arradondo, of donning a "White Power" button on a motorcycle jacket in the past. Kroll is a strong believer in the "broken-window" policy that disproportionately affects neighborhoods of color. This deep rooted and systematic racism flourishes because the political and judicial system allows and condones it. For example, only 1 percent of complaints filed against officers since 2012 have resulted in disciplinary actions.

Racial inequalities in Minneapolis are among the worst in the US. Besides segregated living, African Americans in Minnesota are hit hard with education and health care disparities. Exacerbating the health crisis within the black and brown communities is the fact that the current Covid-19 pandemic is hitting them disproportionately: many, working in first line, low-paying jobs, have been laid off, have pre-existing health conditions and inadequate health insurance.

This latest killing of an unarmed African American man provided the spark for an uprising that is rooted in a long history of racial disparities in Minnesota, and especially in Minneapolis. The state that upholds the idea of "Minnesota Nice" and claims to be welcoming and open has been systematically oppressing People of Color throughout its history. White residents of the Twin Cities consider themselves progressive and inclusive, yet traditional black neighborhoods in the city center have been eradicated to make room for highways and historically redlined neighborhoods continue to be underserved. The majority of the black and brown population in Minneapolis still lives in highly segregated areas.

These underlying forces of oppression provided the fuel for this ongoing rebellion. People in the streets are demanding that the other three officers are charged and arrested, and an end to the killing of unarmed African Americans. After protests grew and clashes with the local police escalated, buildings were set on fire and widespread looting occurred. In a show of force, Governor Tim Walz, a Democrat, brought in an unprecedented number of the National Guard in order to quell the uprising, and implemented a curfew from 8:00pm to 6:00am through the weekend. In addition, all public transport was halted, causing even more hardships for the poor and working class in the Twin Cities.

The fact that more and more people in an increasing number of cities are joining in the rebellion against an openly racist system, and the force with which the political system tries to crush it, shows the urgent need for a political and social revolution. People in the streets are starting to realize that this system is inhumane and can be fought against. It is to be hoped that the masses won't be quenched with the lofty promises of reform in the future we have heard over and over again.

## Labor Movement support for the resistance

In solidarity with protestors, union bus drivers in Minneapolis refused to transport police officers and arrested protestors to jail. New York bus drivers have done the same. Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005, which represents 2,500 workers in the Twin Cities, drafted and signed a petition. It said:

?ATU members face racism daily. Our members live in and work in neighborhoods where actions like this happen, and where this took place, now watched in horror across the globe. (?) We say 'NOT ONE MORE' execution of a black life by the hands of the police. NOT ONE MORE! JUSTICE FOR GEORGE FLOYD.?

On the Facebook group Union Members for#JusticeForGeorgeFloyd more than 400 union members, including Minneapolis postal workers, nurses, teachers, and hotel workers signed and posted.

The Democratic Socialists of America, DSA, also issued a statement:

?Racist police violence is not incidental to the capitalist system, it is necessary to maintain its operation. We recognize that as we fight for a better world, it will be the police who threaten our protests, the police who will break up our picket lines, the police who selectively wield their monopoly on violence against Black people and working-class people to protect those with power and privilege.?

It concludes:

?We call on Minneapolis Mayor Frey to stop all state-sanctioned violence and call off the SWAT, the state patrol, the National Guard. We stand with and share the rage of all those who are making themselves heard on the streets after years of being suffocated by policing and poverty, after years of being looted by corporations, landlords, and billionaires.

?The killing of George Floyd, the nationwide uprising against it, and the support from union members and socialists all point the way to the unbreakable unity we need to forge between all the racially oppressed and all the exploited against the racist police and Trump and his supporters - who incite them.

Organize the Anger and Change the System

We need to organize the anger! We need to build structures in the here and now that will ultimately call the whole capitalist system into question. We need a People?s Tribunal to challenge the rotten judicial system that is fundamentally based on oppression, oppression of People of Color, oppression of women and the LGBTQ+ communities, oppression of the poor and working class. We need to build self-defense forces to protect us from the oppressive State and its henchmen, along with the fascist and white nationalist forces that have attempted to infiltrate the demonstrations and have targeted libraries, post offices and local petit bourgeois neighborhood businesses. These structures need to be rooted in the working class and the unions if we want to be successful in this struggle.

As with everything else in this continuing crisis of the capitalist system, if it happens for the people, it will only happen because of the people. We will not find answers in black police chiefs, district attorneys who cover for police terror, Democratic Party governors and mayors or Republican presidents. Nor will it happen through elections. All of these ?remedies? have been tried for decades and still have not stopped the murder of black citizens by the people who are supposed to ?serve and protect? them. Not even increasing the number of black and minority cops will change anything, because being a cop is a function of the system, not an identity that can have an effect on that function or that system.

This is an evolving situation that we expect to continue to analyze and comment on over the next few weeks and months but one thing is sure even at this early date in the struggle. It's all got to change, or nothing will change.