

In the face of increasing government, fascist attacks

Protests against police violence continue across the US

By Jacob Crosse
7 September 2020

This weekend marked 100 days of protests in the US against police violence since the Memorial Day murder of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis police department. Large demonstrations were held in rural towns as well as major cities in the face of new instances of police brutality and murder and an increasingly virulent and violent law-and-order campaign led by the Trump administration, with the complicity of the Democratic Party.

The overwhelmingly peaceful, multiracial and multiethnic protests are being met with tear gas, stun grenades, baton charges and mass arrests by riot police for the most part mobilized by Democratic governors and mayors, while Trump and the Republicans denounce the protesters as anarchists, socialists and terrorists and incite fascistic vigilantes to attack them.

This explosive situation is only the prelude to a mass movement of the working class, driven forward by the death and poverty being meted out by the ruling elite and all of its political representatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ruling corporate-financial oligarchy, even as it enriches itself over the bones of pandemic victims, feels itself besieged. It is terrified at the prospect of a mass movement against capitalism, increasingly exposed before the world as a bankrupt and criminal system.

The breadth and duration of the protests express the courage and determination of millions to fight for a more egalitarian society, free of racism, repression and social inequality. But this must be elevated into a conscious struggle for socialism that brings together all sections of the working class, from educators to autoworkers, both in the US and around the world.

A recent report from the US Crisis Monitor,

associated with Princeton University, noted the global nature of the protests. It stated: “In the weeks since Floyd’s killing, at least 8,700 demonstrations in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement were reported across 74 countries, including the US. Demonstrators focused their outrage on American symbols—including embassies, consulates and Trump properties—but they also rallied around local cases of police brutality and racial inequality.”

Since the protests in the US began in May, at least 19 protesters have been killed, including three within the last two weeks.

Last Thursday, a police task force headed by US marshals shot and killed Michael Reinoehl hours after an arrest warrant had been issued for him in connection with the killing of a far-right Patriot Prayer member during a protest in Portland on August 29. Right-wing vigilante and ardent Trump supporter Kyle Rittenhouse killed two protesters and injured another in Kenosha, Wisconsin less than two weeks ago.

The corporate media has increasingly cast the protests as violent and aggressive and portrayed the police as responding to unprovoked attacks by demonstrators. This is belied by the facts. The Princeton report points out that between May 24 and August 22 there were more than 10,600 “demonstration events,” of which over 10,100, “or nearly 95 percent” were peaceful protests, while less than 570 involved “demonstrators engaging in violence.”

The authors of the report noted that in demonstrations that did become violent, aggression was often instigated by right-wing militias and racist gangs such as the Three Percenters, the Ku Klux Klan, the Proud Boys, the Boogaloo bois and the

New Mexico Civil Guard.

Demonstrations over the weekend included:

Rochester, New York

Saturday marked the fourth straight day of protests against police murder in upstate New York, following the release of bodycam video showing police torturing and murdering 41-year-old Daniel Prude on March 23 of this year. Over 1,500 protesters marched to the Rochester Police Department headquarters chanting, “No justice, no peace.” In the evening, the police, backed by armored vehicles, fired pepper balls and tear gas into the crowd. The police say they arrested eight people Thursday, 11 Friday and nine more on Saturday night.

Portland, Oregon

Ignoring pleas from Democratic Governor Kate Brown to end the protests, hundreds of demonstrators once again took to the streets, resulting in over 50 arrests Saturday night. Prior to protests on Thursday, Governor Brown issued a statement declaring that “the violence must stop... All who perpetrate violent crimes must be held equally accountable.”

Louisville, Kentucky

Police were nowhere to be found for several hours Saturday as protesters were confronted by over 400 heavily armed “patriots” led by Dylan Stevens, a self-described “staunch supporter of Trump, police, our troops, 2nd amendment, America and the Flag!” Stevens, who in a recent YouTube video defended the Rittenhouse slayings as “100 percent self-defense,” organized a counter-protest at Jefferson Square Park, where protesters demanding justice for Breonna Taylor have peacefully gathered since May 28 to demand the officers involved in her killing be arrested.

After several heated confrontations, including at least two instances where pistols were unholstered by associates of Stevens, the counter-protesters left the park, only to be replaced by over 24 riot police.

The Democratic Party and the presidential campaign of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have remained silent on the recent murders of protesters, while condemning violent protesters and demanding that they be arrested and prosecuted.

In a CNN interview on Sunday, vice presidential

nominee Kamala Harris did not mention the names of Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber, both murdered by Rittenhouse, nor did she comment on the police slaying of Michael Reinhoehl last Thursday. When questioned by interviewer Dana Bash if she believed Kenosha cop Rusten Shesky should be charged for shooting Jacob Blake in the back seven times, Harris, a former prosecutor, backtracked on earlier statements, saying she thought “charges very much should be considered... but everyone is entitled to due process, everyone, including police officers.”

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>