

Protests continue in Wisconsin following police killing of Anthony Robinson

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About 200 demonstrators gathered on the steps of City Hall in Madison, Wisconsin yesterday as protests against the police murder of 19-year-old Anthony Robinson entered their fifth day.

There is widespread outrage over the killing the unarmed Robinson. Protests on Tuesday followed a demonstration of thousands of people—including hundreds of high school and university students—at the state capital on Monday. Students at local high schools and universities had walked out of class and announced plans to do so again today.

Preceding yesterday's rally, *Buzzfeed News* published an article noting that two of Robinson's friends were questioned for hours by the Madison Police Department and that their attorney's requests to be admitted to the interrogation were denied.

The killing of Robinson is part of a wave of police violence throughout the country, including the police murder of unarmed men in Colorado and Georgia over the past five days. This violence has been sanctioned by the Obama administration, which announced earlier this month that it would not bring any charges against Darren Wilson, the Ferguson, Missouri police officer who killed Michael Brown in August.

The organizers at the rally on Tuesday refrained from mentioning the Democratic or Republican parties, President Obama, or the political establishment in general. Many of those in attendance, however, were eager to speak on the broader political significance of the murder.

"The police kill people to protect the interests of the capitalists," Tremain Williams said. "It's in the nature of the system."

Though Tremain explained the killings in mostly racial terms, he voiced strong opposition to President Obama's decision to file no charges against Wilson.

Elsa, who immigrated to the United States from Mozambique 14 years ago and has lived in Madison since then, expressed concern about the possibility that police could kill her own two children.

"When I came to the United States I thought I was coming to a democratic country. I'm really disappointed with what's happening here. The shooting on Friday was very devastating. I have two children and it makes me think about them, especially about my son. Now I feel like I don't just have to warn him about the dangers of gang violence but also the threat from the police."

Elsa also spoke about the effect of social inequality in the United States. "The disparity between the rich and the poor in this country is astounding. I think the situation is unfair because poor people work very hard. I have two jobs, go to school and have to care for my kids and I'm still poor. The reality in this country is that workers are treated differently."

There was a noticeable divide between the vague, apolitical rhetoric of the official protest organizers and the sentiments of many of those attending the demonstration.

To the extent that poverty and inequality were mentioned by protest organizers at yesterday's rally, they were portrayed entirely in racial terms. At one point, an official organizer noted that Madison was "the best place to live if you're white."

Efforts by protest leaders to portray the shooting and the issue of police violence in purely racial terms contrast with statements from Anthony Robinson's family. Robinson's uncle Turin Carter said at a press conference on Monday that "we don't want to just stop at black lives matter because all lives matter. Tyrell [Anthony's middle name] is a mixture of everything. You can't look at him and say he's black." Anthony's

mother is white and his father black.

Protest leaders' efforts to paper over the fundamental class issues involved in the police killings are entirely in line with their efforts to channel opposition into toothless appeals to the ruling class. At yesterday's demonstration, one lead organizer of the group "Young, Gifted, and Black," Matthew Braunginn, told demonstrators to file into City Hall and "voice our concerns" to the government in order to "apply the pressure to make real change."

Many demonstrators must have wondered why Braunginn, whose LinkedIn profile boasts of his experience as an Obama campaign organizer, would encourage them to "apply the pressure" to the very government whose police shot down Anthony Robinson last Friday.

There is a growing hostility felt by broad sections of the population to the endless series of police killings in America, backed by the entire political establishment.

As Tremain told the WSWS: "It's clear that there's no democracy in the United States, even though we have a black president.

"Just look around. There are homeless people all over the place, and Obama is bombing little children in the Middle East. Obama's job as president is to make sure capitalism runs correctly. His interest is with the police, and the police are not here to protect and serve us, but to protect the establishment."



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