

Thousands protest police violence nationwide

Our reporters
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Thousands of people participated in demonstrations Wednesday night throughout the United States to protest the ongoing wave of police violence and the military/police crackdown in Baltimore. Protesters took to the streets in New York City, Boston, Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, Denver, Houston, and other cities.

The largest demonstration outside of Baltimore took place in New York, where thousands of people rallied in Union Square. New York had last year seen protests over the murders of Eric Garner and Akai Gurley. Demonstrators expressed opposition to police violence, poverty, and inequality, taking up the chant “New York is Baltimore, Baltimore is New York.”

The rally was met with a large and provocative police presence. A loudspeaker blared throughout the demonstration warning that sidewalk blockage and street marching were against the law and violators would be subject to arrest. Barricades kept protestors penned in at Union Square, and at least sixty people were arrested.

Several hundred people participated in demonstrations in Boston, Minneapolis and Washington, D.C. In Denver, police responded violently to a demonstration of approximately 100 people, deploying pepper spray and making several arrests. Additional rallies are scheduled to be held throughout the week in other major cities.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to demonstrators in New York City Wednesday evening.

Michael Mitchell, a retail worker from New Jersey, said, “I am out here to voice my opinion on the injustice going on. Police know the law and they should be held accountable. The justice system does not hold them to account because it is corrupt.

“I think the police use certain tactics to rile people up, so then they can implement martial law. Right now we have a little bit of freedom, but that is under attack. They are just looking for a way to take that away.”

Mitchell added, “I feel like the politicians just toe the company line. They should take a walk in the ghetto, and see what it’s like.”

M. Bey, a Human Resource worker, said he participated in the demonstration “because I have two sons, and I don’t want what happened to Freddie Gray to happen to them.

“Obama just the other day called protesters ‘thugs.’ You can’t call these people thugs. They have been victimized, since they are poor and don’t have jobs. The [violent protests] are the only way they can express themselves. Before they had peaceful protests, but the media did not pay any attention to them. People are hurting and this is the only way they can show it.”

Kevin Coe, a student at St. Johns University, said he joined the demonstration because police violence is “something I have seen and experienced. The police are allowed to get away with these crimes because they control the narrative, but now that is changing. With social media a lot more people are finding out about what is going on.”

Asked about the police crackdown against demonstrators, he said, “They view us as a threat. They send tanks or police with military equipment before they even try to send someone to talk with us.” He voiced opposition to both parties, saying “The Democratic Party just wants to pacify us.”

“I’m out here especially for the youth,” Amanda James said. “I want them to be aware and take a more active role, to get together and do something positive.” She said that while she did not agree with the rioting that took place in Baltimore, “I understand it. There’s a lot of built up rage. Everyone is angry.”

Leslie Williams told the WSWS that the looting which took place in Baltimore was “no comparison to what the cops did.”

She added, “We’re supposed to see the army as honorable, but when you look at it from the outside, the

military is seen as the terrorists, using violence everywhere and invading countries.”

Abdou Bamou, a food service worker originally from North Africa, declared that the rallies are taking place because “People have been moved... All of a sudden you see these things. Everybody sees social media, and people will draw from their awareness ”

He added, “The rich are becoming richer and want to control the poor. It is about control, and People need to stand up for a fair system.”



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