

Hundreds march on the DNC in Milwaukee, 'We can't breathe!'

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Photo: Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement

Milwaukee — In the early evening of Aug. 20, around 500 people gathered in Dontre Hamilton (officially Red Arrow) Park in downtown Milwaukee to mark the final day of the Democratic National Convention. The turnout in spite of the pandemic and the vastly diminished physical presence in the city for the convention was a testament to the hard work and dedication of the organizers with the Coalition to March on the DNC.

“No matter who anybody votes for, no matter who wins, we’re always going to be out in the streets. We’re always going to be fighting for justice,” said Omar Flores, an organizer with the Milwaukee Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression and a leader in the coalition.

The event represented something of a historic moment for Milwaukee and for the state of Wisconsin. As people everywhere have risen up against police crimes, families from all across the state victimized by police convened in Milwaukee at the demonstration.

The families of Alvin Cole, Joel Acevedo, Jay Anderson, Jonathan Tubby, Dexter Baxter and Isaiah Tucker all came together at the park where Dontre Hamilton was murdered in April 2014. Maria Hamilton, Dontre’s mother and a mother of the movement in Milwaukee, was present to open the evening’s speeches. A statement was also read on behalf of the family of Jason Pero.

This marked the first time in recent memory that families from multiple cities in Wisconsin and representing multiple nationalities united in one place for one purpose. They came to share their stories of losing their loved ones to racist killer cops, and to join their voices with the coalition in demanding justice and action from Democrats like Joe Biden and Milwaukee mayor Tom Barrett.

“We cannot focus on a Democratic Convention when a national crisis is going on,” said Taleavia Cole, Alvin’s sister. “Joe Biden, Ms. Harris, do you know what’s going

on here? Do you know that one officer killed three people of color within five years?”

The speeches from the families were gut wrenching, both for them and the people in attendance. The love and solidarity were palpable as members of families who had never met embraced one another, to comfort each other in their shared struggles, and to reassert that justice would be done for all if they fought together.

Frank Chapman, the executive director of the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, spoke after all of the families had the opportunity to share their solemn stories about killer cops and crooked district attorneys. Chapman has been active in the movement against police crimes for 50 years. He said that the issues of police crimes and national oppression extend back in time far longer than that.

“This country was founded on genocide and slavery. Let’s be clear, because you can be awful damn confused if you don’t know the kind of quagmire that you’re in,” Chapman said. “And the quagmire that we’re in is this: this is not a broken situation, the system ain’t broke. The system was designed to do exactly what the hell it’s doing.”

After Chapman’s comments, those gathered in the park began to march, with a large banner at the front that read “We can’t breathe.” Leading the way behind the banner were the families of the victims. Taleavia Cole led chants, demanding justice and saying the names of those that they were demanding justice for.

The march route traversed a good portion of downtown Milwaukee and included several important stops along the way. The first of those stops came at the District 1 Police Station, otherwise known as the Police Administration Building. People chanted “We can’t breathe” before Kobi Guillory, an organizer with the Chicago Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, spoke to the crowd.

“This uprising started a few months ago, started at the end of May, because people

were outraged by the murder of George Floyd, by the murder of Breonna Taylor, by the murder of Ahmaud Arbery,” Guillory said. “The only people we can expect change from are ourselves. These politicians do not move unless we make them move,” said Guillory

After that, the people made their way to the Wisconsin Center, where the convention was hosted. On the way, the march passed by a large billboard that read, “3% of the U.S. military budget could end world hunger,” which prompted a “No justice! No peace! U.S. out of the Middle East!” chant. The march came to a stop right outside the center, with people pressed up against the chain link fencing that had been erected as a part of the hard security zone.

After a speech at that stop, the march continued to Milwaukee’s Homeland Security building, where the Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and the federal agents deployed to the city as part of President Trump’s Operation Legend are housed. A few spoke here, specifically about the crisis facing immigrants and undocumented people, particularly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, the march completed the round trip and ended back at Dontre Hamilton Park, where the event was closed out with several more speakers. The first of these final speakers was Ryan Hamann, a lead organizer with the Wisconsin district of Freedom Road Socialist Organization. He spoke about the uprising in the context of the broader political struggle.

“What cannot be lost in all of this is the fundamentally political nature of the fight being waged. Black people, Chicano or Latino people, Indigenous people — they are all a part of oppressed nations within the U.S.,” Hamann said. “The struggle against these crimes is not just one of social justice, but quite literally of national liberation — of Black liberation, Chicano and Latino liberation, and Indigenous liberation.”

The event officially concluded with a few pieces from a social justice collection

played by the Black String Triage Ensemble. Many connections were made over the course of the event that will undoubtedly come into play as the movement against police crimes in Milwaukee and across Wisconsin continues to develop. The people won't stop until all victims of killer cops have won justice.

Source: [FightBack! News](#)

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