

# The People's Uprising

By Antonio C. Cabral

Hurtful chapters in U.S. history keep repeating themselves causing tremendous human suffering but also triggering uprisings that unfortunately were often ignored or co-opted by the political class that has historically served the interests of the wealthy oligarchs. Now, however, a new massive uprising nationwide over the deadly COVID-19 virus and police abuse may set the stage for qualitative and permanent change in the socio-economic and political path of this country.

The human suffering caused by the virus pandemic unmasked the myth that the U.S. has a democratic system that treats us all equally and with justice for all. It exposed the deep-rooted and institutionalized racism and disdain that people of color and impoverished communities have lived under while working hard and producing wealth for greedy corporations and other exploiters. The cold-blooded murder of Mr. George Floyd was the trigger that launched millions of people into the streets like never before. Their anger was not simply about the murder, as most of the corporate media has reported. Their anger and despair began when the pandemic unveiled to them and to the world the brutally clear evidence that impoverished working families in general have been long-abandoned by the U.S. political class.

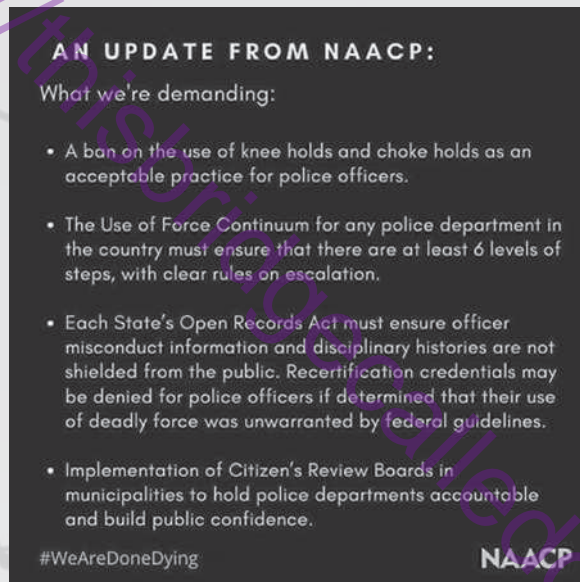
U.S. History in general and San Antonio's history in particular teaches us that police violence dates back many decades.

Just one example: On Christmas Night, December 1980, Hector Santoscoy went to see if Fred's Fish Fry restaurant on Zarzamora St. was open when police officer James Cammack drove up. Santoscoy was an undocumented immigrant and because of that he ran away with Cammack chasing him. Finally, Cammack cornered Santoscoy hiding under a house that sat about 24 inches off the ground on cedar posts. Cammack shot and killed him claiming that Santoscoy had a brick in his hand while lying prone under the house and was going to throw it at Cammack. The medical examiner ruled that Santoscoy's arms were by his side when shot.

Cammack was never punished. He had been a suspect in the 1968 beating death of Bobby Phillips, a Black man living in the East Side of San Antonio. Cammack was never indicated or punished, back then.

Some of us organized frequent marches for weeks following the murder of Santoscoy. Hundreds of locals joined our marches. Petitions were turned in—all demanding justice. No justice was had. Then, in 1986 incidents happened in San Antonio that forced the Police Department to confirm what many of us had been saying for decades: There were racist vigilante officers within the police department.

So, Mexicans/Chicanos know about institutionalized police



A preliminary update from the NAACP provided a springboard for demands to restructure police departments throughout the U.S.

violence. We remember all the victims dating back to Jesus Bazán, Antonio Longoria, Gregorio Cortez, Ricardo Falcón, Luis Martínez, Neva Arlene Romero, Richard Morales, Joe Campos Torres and many others who were murdered by police officers, Texas Rangers or sheriffs. We know that not all police are abusive and mass punishment of them is unjustified. If mass punishment is sought, then all politicians holding a government position where abuses take place should be immediately fired first.

The fundamental difference between previous protests and today's mobilizations is that now every single working person in Texas and throughout the U.S. knows what many of us have been writing, talking and marching about since the 1960's: The political class and governments at all levels have not been looking after the social and economic interests of working families.

## **It took the deadly COVID-19 pandemic to remove the mask of hypocrisy and expose the disdain and lies and manipulation for all to see and witness.**

Thousands of men, women and children have died because there is no vaccine and the government has never been prepared to deal with such a pandemic. Millions were infected and jobs were lost forcing families to join long lines to get a box of food. Workers are now forced to either risk getting infected or lose their unemployment benefits while billions of taxpayer funds appropriated for economic relief were used to help corporations. Then, George Floyd was slowly murdered in the street.

That anger and despair felt deeply by the U.S. working class will not be cured by issuing more empty speeches and promises. Naming parks, plazas, schools or streets after Black persons or Latinos or poor Whites will no longer ease the concerns working families share over the country's unfair and undemocratic path.

Their demands include equal social and economic justice including a living wage for all instead of taxpayers having to subsidize exploiters whose workers have to use public programs just to survive, they demand equal pay for women in all workplaces, better schools and quality education and free health care for all. The corporate media has also ignored their demand for an end to the U.S. wars of conquest in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America that have cost thousands of civilian lives and \$6.4 trillion according to the Watson Institute at Brown University.

The young and old marching throughout the U.S. deserve the support and even the appreciation of every person of conscience who wants a better life for themselves and for future generations.

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