

Resolution on Taking an Active Anti-Racist Stand in our Unions and Support the Movement for Black Lives

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Whereas we believe the fight against racism is not just a struggle of Black, Latinx, and Native peoples but also for them as workers — insofar as class and race intersect — and our unions and the workers movement as a whole should actively address and combat oppression with a working class perspective and

Whereas we are seeing in our country a massive epidemic of racist police killings of Black, Latinx, and Native youth throughout the country (more than 2,000 people killed by the police since August 2014, the very vast majority people of color), the increasing militarization of police departments and the even more aggressive policing of working-class neighborhoods (mostly composed of communities of color), and

Whereas these forces manifest themselves directly *through* campus policing and *on* the bodies of Black, Latinx, and Native students and employees, and

Whereas for the Black community, those racist police murders have a very clear and disgraceful, historical antecedent — being slavery and the lynching of the Jim Crow era — in addition to now having reached the point that, while on average 39 people were lynched per year in 2015 alone, 258 Black people were murdered by police, and

Whereas the fact that most killer and racist cops are protected by the judicial institution so that they can act with impunity given that they are never found guilty (for example, with the cops who murdered Freddie Gray in Baltimore in 2015, who have been found not guilty on all counts), and

Whereas the very nature of police unions is antithetical to the interests of labor, provided that a historical perspective demonstrates that police unions protect capitalist interests and support white supremacy, ultimately aiding in the continued brutalization of working-class Black, Latinx, and Native communities, and

Let it be resolved that the CGEU Conference calls on and supports the formation of as many independent review commissions as necessary to investigate all police killings as well as violent and racist activities in our communities, while also demanding the strict and severe prosecution of all cops found guilty of murder or abuse with aggravating charges of racism, and

Let it be further resolved that, while we support a diversity of tactics *beyond* legislative action, we recognize and support the call made by the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) in addition to the work being done by the organizations that have established this call, and

Let it be further resolved that given the current situation of increased polarization of the Obama government and other state institutions against the M4BL, the CGEU Conference of 2016 expresses solidarity with the M4BL and the defense of the right to self defense of black people, and

Let it be further resolved that the CGEU conference frontally rejects the “Blue Lives Matter” framing and the attempt (as it is the case in Chicago) to expand hate crime legislation in that direction to further increase the repression and criminalization of the M4BL and political protest and activism in general, and

Let it be further resolved that the CGEU Conference wants to break with and expose the shameful silence of the AFL-CIO leadership regarding supporting our black comrades and the public condemnation of this vicious and racist police activity, and that the CGEU conference suspects that this silence is due to its links of the top AFL-CIO with the government, the state institutions, its lack of political independence from the Democratic Party and the internal lobby and pressure of reactionary and racist unions like the police and prison guards unions, who are nevertheless a large minority of the workers affiliated to the AFL-CIO but are given a privileged position, and

Let it be further resolved that a national committee of Graduate Student Employees Against Racism will be formed, with the goal of:

1. Discussing the existing manifestation of racism in our locals, campuses and society at large and provide some critical education to our own members and to the campus community on systemic racism, the history of Black resistance and colonialism.
2. Developing institutional mechanisms to lift up and center the voices of Black, Latinx and Native workers.
3. Participating, whenever possible, in the formation and/or support of independent review commissions (and raise the demand of community control and all the police reform demands put forward by the M4BL) in all the cities and communities where our locals intervene and where racist police murders or cases of racist abuse have occurred.
4. Finding the ways, whenever possible, in collaboration with the Movement for Black Lives to show this solidarity in the streets, doing joint forums, opening up our classrooms to those conversations etc., and of course, to argue for the right to strike or respect picket lines of Black students in our campuses.
5. Find the ways whenever possible to initiate or participate in “invest-divest” campaigns that propose to Divest from campus police departments and the military industrial complex and fund instead community programs, such as recruitment and retention programs, academic and educational needs.