

Win in California

Cops out of schools!

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

In the midst of a dangerous pandemic, the Black Organizing Project has won an unprecedented victory for the entire Oakland community. On June 24, the Oakland School Board voted unanimously to completely defund, dismantle and terminate their own Oakland School Police Department. This action came from a school district that up until a month ago refused to consider this possibility. The next day, BOP had a celebratory post-victory virtual press conference.

For 10 years, BOP has worked tirelessly to bring attention to the racist and unfair treatment faced by Black students in the Oakland Unified School District.

Jessica Black, BOP Organizing Director, gave some historical perspective when she spoke at a press conference before the June 24 vote. Speaking of their 10-year campaign, Black said, “BOP had a dream that Black children could walk into schools and be valued as human beings. BOP had a dream that people would stand in solidarity with us. We have fought for that. We were too radical. We were the

little Black group that has done extraordinary things.”

The beginning of the dream was won this past week. Leading up to the vote, BOP conducted an ambitious 10-day campaign of actions, including both virtual and in-person events. There were two marches in solidarity with Black and Brown youth led by BOP youth organizers in Oakland and a rally and car caravan by teachers and educators in front of the Oakland school district offices.

What the school board passed was called the George Floyd Resolution to Eliminate the Oakland School Police Department. It was a collaborative effort between BOP and District 5 Oakland School Director Rosie Torres. Torres has been the one board member who has consistently supported BOP in its campaign for police-free schools.

Black stated that it was the pandemic of racism and police murders that pushed BOP to fight harder for victory during COVID. She labeled policing in schools and the community a pandemic. She said, “Just because we are in a health pandemic does not mean that we will stop fighting to be seen as humans. We are faced with



Black Organizing Project's youth organizers, Oakland.

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

two pandemics in our community. During this time of COVID-19, we are still marching in these streets.”

BOP called upon allies in the community who came out in great numbers to support them. A rally dubbed “Educators for Black Sanctuary” on June 22 brought

out hundreds of teachers, educators and school district workers who decorated the sidewalks in front of the school district building with demands for “police-free schools.”

Not only was the power of labor

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FREE
MUMIA!
PROTEST
POLICE
TERROR!

FRANK RIZZO'S STATUE MAY BE GONE BUT THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE STILL MAINTAINS A DICTATORSHIP OVER THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT OF PHILADELPHIA.

DECERTIFY THE FOP.
BRING MUMIA HOME.
DEFUND THE POLICE.

JOIN US FOR A MARCH + RALLY
AT THE SITE OF THE FALLEN RIZZO STATUE

SATURDAY JULY 4TH
12 NOON @ 1401 JFK BLVD
MOBILIZATION4MUMIA.COM

IF THE POLICE CAN'T KILL YOU, THEY LOCK YOU UP FOREVER

Free Mumia! Abolish the FOP!

This statement was issued by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party. Contact the PSC at prisonersolidarity@gmail.com.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY THE POLICE DICTATORSHIP OVER PHILADELPHIA CAN BEGIN TO END AND THE MESSAGE OF THE GLOBAL UPRISING BE HEARD: FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL NOW!

At this moment of a global uprising against systemic police racism sparked by the public torture and lynching of George Floyd, this injustice of historic and global significance must finally be reckoned with.

If that is not done, there is no way that Philadelphia, or this country, can move forward from this moment toward a future without racist police terror.

The prison gates must open, and Mumia

Abu-Jamal — the most famous political prisoner in the world and a living symbol of the struggle against racist police repression and for the Black Liberation movement — must walk through to freedom. And it must happen now!

There can be no further real discussion in Philadelphia about reining in police racism until Mumia is free. If the system fails to do that, then the system is the enemy of those marching everywhere for justice.

The injustice system

Removing Frank Rizzo's statue from Center City was a symbolic gesture. But it

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COVID, cops and white supremacy in N.C.

By calvin deutschbein

Durham, N.C. — While the “second wave” of coronavirus has received much coverage throughout the U.S., North Carolina, under the brutal, totalitarian rule of North Carolina Republicans, has barely slowed the outbreak’s “first wave” since March 10 when the state first entered a state of emergency.

North Carolina is a perfect storm of health crises. White nationalists seized control of the state apparatus in 2010 in an anti-Black insurgency against the election of a Black president. Since then, they systematically shuttered rural hospitals and urban public health initiatives, defunded medical research — especially around racial disparities in health care — and burned billions on corporate wealthfare and police militarization. And while the workers have fought back and pushed back the racists, many options — such as Medicaid expansion — remain off the table.

So when the first reported coronavirus cases in the state emerged in early March, hospital visits and deaths for “influenza-like illnesses” had already been climbing, especially among Black, Indigenous and Latinx workers who were denied access to preventative health care.

The situation worsened after the state Department of Health first reported the degree to which coronavirus was disproportionately harming Black people. Within 72 hours, large mobilizations by white business and home owners to “ReOpenNC” took place across the state — mobilizations that included many known neo-Nazis, neo-Confederates and other designated hate-group members. While many of the first “ReOpenNC” extremists have since contracted the virus, large amounts of untraceable funds have continued to prop them up, even in the face of Black-led uprisings.

Alamance County, situated between Greensboro and Durham, recently made national headlines for having the fastest time for cases to double in the entire U.S. Alamance County is controlled by fascist Sheriff Terry Johnson, best known for being excluded from Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s deportation program by the Eric Holder Justice Department for racial profiling before being reinstated under the Trump administration.

Sheriff Johnson has pledged not to enforce masking laws, which reduce COVID transmission rates significantly, but has enforced — and been sued for enforcing — a ban on #BlackLivesMatter demonstrations in public spaces in the county.

Further, while saying the demonstration ban was for public safety, Johnson refused to comply with laws disallowing events at the Ace Speedway — a site that has now become an infection cluster, as wealthy white enthusiasts infect Black and Brown workers throughout the county.

Alamance County is also home to Elon University, which notably “reopened” after the last day of exams, with no classes on campus, but forcing vulnerable dining hall, residence hall and facilities and other workers to leave their homes without personal protective equipment to labor in service of an inactive university. Elon also operates a private police force at Sheriff Johnson’s beck and call.

The future of North Carolina remains ambiguous, as a 2 a.m. vote by white supremacist legislators on June 26 has now ruled masks illegal — under a law meant to weaken the Ku Klux Klan in less openly racist times. Other sheriffs are following Johnson’s pattern of selectively enforcing laws to maximize danger to Black people.

But whatever the future holds, North Carolinians will continue to struggle for liberation in solidarity with movements around the world. □



Alamance County sheriff and Graham police make an arrest for holding a sign on county property.

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth and trans

Join us in the fight for socialism!

people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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WW COMMENTARY

The monuments of racism continue to fall

By Monica Moorehead

On June 27, Trump signed a reactionary executive order saying that states and cities could lose their federal funding for failing to protect monuments and statues from being either defaced or pulled down.

The order was a reaction to country-wide protests against police brutality and white supremacy ignited by the police lynching of George Floyd, which included a wave of Confederate and other white supremacist statues being toppled.

The order states that “anarchists and left-wing extremists have sought to advance a fringe ideology that paints the United States of America as fundamentally unjust and have sought to impose that ideology on Americans through violence and mob intimidation.” The order also says that a conviction of “willful injury of federal property can result to upwards of 10 years in prison.”

Trump was more set on signing this order to preserve the racist legacy of slavery than on dealing with the worse U.S. spike so far in cases of the coronavirus — especially severe new cases for those previously diagnosed as asymptomatic and under the age of 34.

No wonder Trump has been referred to on more than one occasion as the “Last Confederate President.”

On June 28, Trump retweeted a video showing a small pro-Trump demonstration at a retirement community in Florida. A Trump supporter could clearly be heard yelling “White Power!” at anti-racist counterprotesters. (npr.org, June 28)

Trump’s tweet said in part: “Thank you to the great people of The Villages. The Radical Left Do Nothing Democrats will Fall in the Fall.” Trump’s tweet was removed after three hours, but not before news commentators asked White House officials if they were “embarrassed” by the posting.

Neither the White House spokespeople or Trump apologized or even distanced themselves from the vilely racist tweet.

These developments are connected to the current double pandemic in the

U.S. — systemic racism, especially in the forms of police terror and white supremacy on the one hand, and the coronavirus pandemic on the other hand. The White House is dealing with both in the most callous and despicable way.

Broad issues sustaining the rebellion

While sustained protests are pushing forward a national debate in city councils and even Congress on “defund” and “abolish” the police, the debate over statues with a white supremacist heritage has also become a main focus for activists around the country.

Confederate statues have been taken down either by activists or by official edict in many cities, mainly in the South, from New Orleans to Richmond, Va., to Durham and Raleigh, N.C., but also in the North.

What prompted the signing of Trump’s recent executive order was an attempt by protesters on June 22 to take down the deeply offensive statue of President Andrew Jackson in Lafayette Square, directly across from the White House.

Jackson was not only a slaveowner but also signed into law the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that militarily forced many Indigenous nations off their rightful lands. This genocidal expulsion of Native peoples was ordered so that white settlers could seize vast stretches of land in the South and West and expand highly profitable cotton cultivation using enslaved, unwaged Black workers.

Four activists have already been charged in the June 22 attempt to remove the Jackson statue, now surrounded by a large fence. Protests continue in Lafayette Square, demanding the racist statue be brought down or removed.

Along with Jackson, activists have also targeted monuments honoring other slave-owning presidents, such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

Recently, Princeton University removed President Woodrow Wilson’s name from its School of Public and International Affairs building due to his racist policies toward Black people, including discouraging Black students from attending the university.



Protest against statue of racist Andrew Jackson, Washington, D.C.

Wilson ordered a White House special screening of the hideous 1915 pro-slavery film, “The Birth of a Nation.” This movie, which was nothing more than recruitment propaganda for the Ku Klux Klan, was the first film ever shown at the White House.

In a June 28 weekend session, the Mississippi Legislature voted to remove the Confederacy’s “Stars and Bars” battle emblem from the state flag — after 126 years of it being flown. The University of Mississippi (“Ole Miss”) took down the state flag on its campus in 2017 because of sustained student protest. That has continued against a Confederate monument still standing on the grounds — a rallying point for white supremacist violence for decades.

NASCAR and the noose

Following the overthrow of the radical period after the Civil War known as Black Reconstruction, thousands of Black people were lynched by white supremacists — including police — especially in the South.

Since the rebellion began in late May, three African-American men have been found dead with nooses around their necks in various parts of the U.S. The names of the three African Americans are Robert Fuller, Malcolm Harsch and Dominique Alexander. There have been no arrests related to any of these deaths.

On June 24 the FBI ruled that the noose found hanging in a garage stall assigned to race car driver Bubba Wallace would not be classified as a hate crime. Wallace is the only Black driver on the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing circuit. He had demanded that NASCAR ban the Confederate flag from being brought into the stands by fans or flown on the grounds during races.

After carrying out this offensive tradition for 72 years, NASCAR officially banned the flag. But soon afterward the noose was found, targeting Wallace. Racists proclaimed the noose a “hoax” on Twitter and accused Wallace of planting it. In reaction to the FBI ruling, Wallace stated that he did not “overact” to the noose in light of what was going on in the country following the murder of George Floyd. (ESPN, June 25)

Noteworthy in terms of ongoing white supremacist violence is the fact that, on June 28 in Louisville, Ky. — where police shot and killed a protester on June 2 — someone shot into a crowd of protesters, killing one of those demanding the arrest of the three white police officers who were responsible for the March murder of 26-year-old Breonna Taylor. The Black EMT health provider was shot eight times as she slept. None of the cops have been arrested or even charged with this racist crime. □

WW COMMENTARY

Reflections on the protests and Black Liberation

By Olujimi Alade
Philadelphia

On May 30, after sleeping in after a long work shift, I decided to make my way down to City Hall for the protests planned in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. Making my way down to the parkway and to the art museum, I was astonished by the turnout. Tens of thousands of people from every political spectrum to the left of the GOP turned out to protest. It was one of the most amazing experiences I’ve ever seen.

For over two hours, protesters braved the heat, the escalating brutality of Philly’s “finest” and COVID-19 to take a stand against the injustice that occurred in Minneapolis earlier in the week. I saw everything from tear gas being shot in the air to cop cars engulfed in flames.

While I was enthused and exhilarated by the powerful show of solidarity, as I took the bus home, there was something

in me that was unsatisfied with the day, but I just couldn’t figure out what it was. At the time, I chalked it up to exhaustion and heat. After some hours of rest, I was able to recollect several images and sounds from the protest, and after a while, that disappointment turned to irritation.

Carrying meaningless signs such as ‘Vote blue no matter who’ and ‘This is not America,’ the liberals would prefer to individualize the tragedy in Minneapolis as indicative of Trump’s fascism rather than a symptom of a system which undergirds white supremacy and has harmed Black people for centuries.

First thing that got me stirred up was the seemingly performative nature of many of the people who came out to the protest. I expected there to be protesters from a

variety of leftist tendencies, Marxists, anarchists, even some social democrats. What I found eyebrow-raising was the amount of centrists who showed up.

Carrying meaningless signs such as “Vote blue no matter who” and “This is not America,” the liberals would prefer to individualize the tragedy in Minneapolis as indicative of Trump’s fascism rather than a symptom of a system which undergirds white supremacy and has harmed Black people for centuries.

Where were these “resistance” members when Ferguson happened? Where was this outrage when Eric Garner uttered the same words George Floyd did as he lay dying? Where was this allyship when Colin Kaepernick knelt to protest the same injustices they suddenly noticed?

Does it have to do with the fact that 2020 is an election year, and police brutality is a hot topic the blue team [Democratic National Committee] can exploit to elect Joe Biden, the author

of the 1994 crime bill that laid the foundation for many of the horrific instances of police violence we see today? If (or when) Biden gets elected into office, will many of these liberal protesters maintain the same interest in the injustices facing Black people?

Will they wake up and realize that the United States is an oppressive settler-colonial state founded on racism and genocide, and that it is impossible to reform an inherently violent system. I highly doubt it, but stranger things have happened (speaking from experience).

Police violence is systemic globally

At the May 30 protests, I saw a sea of posters and signs demanding justice for George Floyd. While it is important to keep his name alive, it is also important to bear in mind that there are marginalized members within the Black community who are also victimized by police brutality. I only saw a smattering of posters with the hashtag #sayhername in remembrance of Breonna Taylor, victim of a brutal break-in carried out by the police.

Continued on page 11

Coast-to-coast rallies demand: Keep U.S. Postal Service viable

By Joe Piette

Rallies demanding the U.S. Senate approve funding that would "Save our postal service" were held on June 23 from coast to coast. The message of the day: Include a \$25 billion USPS rescue plan in the next Senate stimulus package.

Without funding, it is projected the agency could run out of money this year because of lost volume and revenue due to the pandemic. At least 70 postal employees have died from the coronavirus. The U.S. Senate is scheduled to deliberate on a new stimulus bill in July.

The protest in Philadelphia was especially noteworthy for the support shown for the post office and its workers by local community and labor organizations and the solidarity with Black Lives Matter expressed by unionists. Over 50 people held signs, cheered, chanted, marched, spoke or car caravanned for two hours.

In front of an historic working post office dedicated to the first U.S. Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin, demonstrators heard from speakers on why the postal service must be allowed to keep delivering the mail. Nick Casselli, president of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) Local 89, and Joe Rodgers, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) Branch 157, started off the rally.

The highlight of the day was a speech given by Kempis Songster of the Amistad Law Project. Sentenced to life in prison when he was just 15, he spent 30 years behind bars until he was released due to a Supreme Court decision making life sentencing of youth unconstitutional. The crowd was spellbound as he spoke on the importance of mail for incarcerated people.

Songster described how the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections requires mail to be sent to a Florida company where every letter, photograph, card and child's drawing is copied, and the photocopy is sent to prisoners. It results in each incarcerated person receiving a black-and-white version of the original documents. The copy fails to capture their "family's tears on the original letter," said Songster. He finished by stating that defending the U.S. Postal Service is part of

protecting everyone's right to communicate with our families and society at large.

Labor, community solidarity

There were also remarks from representatives of many unions, including library worker Perry Genovesi of American Federation of State, County, Municipal Employees DC 47; Coalition for a Just Philly Budget; Omar Salaam, AFSCME Local 427 and District C 33, representing sanitation workers; Paul Prescod with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers; Dr. Robin Cooper, Commonwealth Association of School Administrators, Teamsters Local 502; Max Avener, Temple Association of University Professionals; Ray Martinez, Service Employees (SEIU) Local 668; and Jeeva Muhil from UNITE HERE.

As the car caravan of seven or eight cars circled by the rally every 10 minutes, horns blaring each time they passed, representatives of community organizations further enriched the rally. Speakers included Megan Murray, a Whole Foods worker fired last week for trying to organize a union; Philadelphia City Councilmember Kendra Brooks; Monica Robinson of the Philly Coalition of Labor Union Women; and Mike Wilson and Kamau Mkafele Mshale of Philly REAL Justice.

After a short march, demonstrators finished at Sen. Pat Toomey's office a few blocks away. Several television stations, radio and print media covered the event.

Community and Postal Workers (CPWU) members who organized the rally followed up on June 25 by getting the Philadelphia City Council to pass a resolution that "calls on our US senators and congressional representatives to support the appropriation of funds to sustain the US Postal Service, and to ensure the Postal Service continues to function as a universal public service."

Corporations got bailed out, Post Office got sold out!

Postal demonstrations were timed to coincide with the delivery of 2 million petitions to the Senate in Washington, D.C. APWU President Mark Dimondstein, actor John "Bowser" Bauman and Rahna Epting, executive director of MoveOn, led a 75-car caravan containing the petitions in huge

white Express Mail cartons to the foot of Capitol Hill. The petitions call on lawmakers to enact the Heroes Act, including \$25 billion to save the U.S. Postal Service from financial devastation the coronavirus has caused.

"The post office is literally under threat of running out of money," Dimondstein said. "The Cares Act"—the prior \$2.2 trillion aid bill Congress passed in March—"generated over \$500 billion for private corporations, but nothing for the post office."

Public opinion polls show 91 percent support for the Postal Service — especially in rural areas whose residents depend on it for delivery of food, medicines and other vital items during the pandemic.

And 69 percent of respondents backed a direct, cash, no-strings-attached payment to the USPS, which is what APWU, NALC, the Mail Handlers/Laborers, the AFL-CIO, Jobs With Justice, the Alliance for Retired



Philadelphia activists say, 'Save our post office!' June 23.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Americans and other supporters advocate.

Car caravans, marches and rallies also took place in over two dozen cities, including Toledo, Ohio; Kalamazoo, Mich.; San Francisco; Seattle; Mankato, Minn.; Des Moines, Iowa; San Antonio, Texas; Raleigh, N.C.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; Denver; St. Charles, Mo.; Clarksburg, W.Va.; and Portland, Ore. In New York City postal workers and supporters held signs and gave out fliers to passersby at 17 different post office locations.

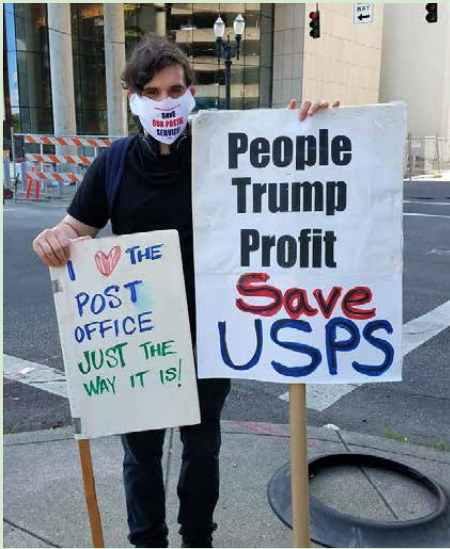
Joe Piette is a retired letter carrier and member of the NALC.

Portland Save our Postal Service!

Dozens of postal workers, retirees, union members and community supporters rallied in front of the East Portland Post Office June 23. People wore masks and chanted "U.S. Mail, Not for Sale!" They mailed postcards addressed to Oregon's Sen. Ron Wyden reading, "Fully Fund the Postal Service! \$25 Billion Now!"

Demonstrators marched over the Hawthorn Bridge to the Waterfront Post Office, symbolizing the need to bridge the gap in federal funding needed to "Save Our Postal Service."

The demonstration was organized by Community & Postal Workers United and included speakers from the American Postal Workers Union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, the Alliance of Retired Americans, Jobs with Justice, the Democratic Socialists of America, and the Oregon AFL-CIO, along with a post commander from the



Veterans of Foreign Wars. Letters from the governor and the two U.S. Senators were read.

— Report and photo by Lyn Neeley

STEM workers join call to 'Strike for Black Lives'

By calvin deutschbein

On June 10, thousands of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) educators and workers around the U.S. and worldwide organized the #ShutDownSTEM and #ShutDownAcademia one-day work stoppage in solidarity with the ongoing Black uprising. Grassroots Black gender-oppressed STEM organizers galvanized their co-workers to join in the nationwide call for #AStrikeForBlackLives.

STEM has been a uniquely privileged



PHOTO: VANGUARDSTEM

Panelists from VanguardSTEM event.

field for years, exhibiting many of the most anti-Black exclusionary practices, while commanding many of the highest salaries and creating profoundly dangerous technologies.

Much of the STEM industry operates in direct or implicit relationships with the U.S. Department of Defense to support the U.S. empire — developing bombs, missiles, chemical and biological weapons. More recently, STEM has shifted to developing technology for surveillance and social control. Increasingly, STEM fields exercise more economic control, too, as Wall Street turns to computational methods of reallocating resources into the pockets of the ruling class.

Enough is enough! After years of organizing with the people in the streets, STEM workers said, "No more!" on June 10. They took a day away from their normal activities to reassess their relationships with powerful groups. They trained in combating anti-Blackness within their field and took up their impact on society. The workers began the process of developing a

restorative relationship with the people and the communities they have harmed.

The one-day strike was conceived of as a collaboration between two groups, Particles for Justice and VanguardSTEM. Particles for Justice organizes the STEM sector as a multiracial collective of STEM educators and workers that is explicitly centered on its Black members. VanguardSTEM is a majority Black collective of nonbinary people and women of color that hosts a web series of panelists who share techniques and practice to use STEM as a tool for social justice.

The organizers recognized the profound power that workers, specifically workers in fields valued by U.S. imperialists, exercise with respect to ruling-class anti-Blackness. Using their many organizational connections, organizers reached millions of workers who took part in the effort and have begun to take action in the pursuit of Black Liberation.

Researchers deeply embedded in the cult of white supremacy have begun efforts to educate themselves about the

true nature of U.S. imperialism, and they are incorporating this information into their decisions about funding, research directions and workplace relationships.

An immediate step the researchers took was to organize community and workplace fundraisers to aid those struggling in the streets. Donations go into bail and bond funds, COVID-relief funds or help with the distribution of essential goods by groups such as Food Not Bombs. It is refreshing that so many workers show a preference for providing food aid to communities, when they work for an industry that has historically produced weapons of destruction.

While it remains to be seen what the full impact of the #ShutDownSTEM effort will be, it definitely was a powerful display of solidarity. The action may lead to some meaningful change in material conditions, and it will serve as a preview of the power of a united working class as the uprisings continue.

Shut down STEM! Shut down academia! Strike for Black lives! □

‘We don’t accept their apology, we want action!’

By Betsey Piette

After 27 days of nonstop protests against police brutality in Philadelphia, city officials finally apologized for their decision to let police and SWAT units use tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets on protesters June 1. Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw held a joint press conference June 25, where they admitted the use of force against people demonstrating on I-676 was “unjustifiable.” Both claimed they changed their minds about the police attacks on protesters based on videos that surfaced since the June 1 demonstration.

Most likely the video that forced their hand was a 10-minute clip posted earlier in the day by the New York Times, in which Philadelphia police are clearly shown attacking protesters.

By late afternoon June 1, around 1,000 protesters had peacefully entered the highway. With no warning, SWAT teams moved in from both sides, trapping the protesters between the two units. SWAT, state and local police fired tear gas and pepper spray toward the crowd, even as people tried to escape, but they were trapped on the steep embankment.

Officers repeatedly pepper-sprayed demonstrators, in some cases pulling down people’s face masks before spraying their faces. Many people were injured during the police attack and dozens were arrested. Workers World photographer Joe Piette was injured and his camera destroyed when police fired a rubber bullet directly at him from 20 feet away. Police in tanks later pepper-sprayed him and other demonstrators who were walking home, blocks away from the highway.

A key unanswered question is whether Kenney and Outlaw would have issued an apology had the Times not covered the police attack. Incidentally it took place the same day that Washington, D.C., police, reinforced by local National Guard troops, at the behest of Trump pushed peaceful demonstrators with tear gas, pepper balls and munitions from in front of the White House before Trump’s notorious photo op.

Kenney and Outlaw also failed to address an outrageous 14-3 vote by the City Council on June 26 that approved Philadelphia’s fiscal budget for 2021, but took no action to decrease police funding — a key demand of



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Philly REAL Justice at protest against police May 30.

multiple protests. Many see this action by a Democratic mayor and Democratic City Council as a betrayal of Black Philadelphians and the entire working class of the city.

Police: Occupying force in Black communities

On June 26, members of the Black Philly Radical Collective held their own press conference across from the Liberty Bell. The group includes Philly REAL (Racial, Economic and Legal) Justice, the Human Rights Coalition, Mobilization 4 Mumia, MOVE, the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement and Reclaim Philadelphia.

Speakers denounced Kenney and Outlaw for their refusal to apologize for a police attack on May 31 against peaceful protesters in the predominantly African-American area in West Philadelphia around 52nd and Market Streets.

Ant Smith, with REAL Justice, stated, “There were about 15 of us demonstrating. Police, SWAT teams and National Guard units quickly moved in, firing tear gas and pepper spray at random people just standing on 52 Street. Police went down the streets in the hood as an army — an occupying force.

“They had a tank, and as it rolled down the streets, a man in the turret just fired pepper spray and tear gas back and forth. At the end of the day we got shot at by the National Guard using rubber bullets. Several people were injured, including one woman hit in the eye and a man hit in his chest. They didn’t use this kind of force against Center City protesters the day before.”

After Smith was arrested by police later in the evening of May 31, he was driven around in a police van until 3 a.m., then dropped off miles from his neighborhood in the middle of a city curfew. He called for “police out of our communities.”

Kamau Mshale denounced Kenney’s and Outlaw’s press conference, noting, “Kenney is not being honest. Outlaw is not being honest. Kenney says that police were justified when they attacked protesters in the Black community. We don’t accept their apology. We want action!”

YahNé Ndgo challenged those who attack Black residents because of “looting,” which took place following the police attack. “People who went into stores to take things wouldn’t be doing this if their needs were being met. They also distributed items to community residents in need. This was not capitalist hoarding.

“We call for funding of communities — not cops. We want a decrease in funding for the Philadelphia Police Department over a five-year period until it is completely defunded.”

Many Black Lives Matter activists and supporters across the city also denounced the PPD for their openly biased coddling of violent, white right-wing protesters who were allowed, on several occasions, to punch, kick, shove and threaten counterdemonstrators as police stood by, some even laughing at the attacks.

The first instance of this fascist mob violence took place on June 1 in the Fishtown area of Philadelphia, with white men carrying bats, axes and even guns, threatening Black residents. Reporters who tried to cover the scene were beaten by the pro-Trump demonstrators. In a similar scene on June 23, when 50 Black Lives Matter protesters marched to the statue of Christopher Columbus, they were confronted by 100 people with baseball bats, golf clubs and hammers.

After repeatedly hurling racist slurs at a Black photographer covering the protest, one white man punched him in the face as police did nothing. Attorney Kevin Mincey, who represents some of the BLM protesters who were pepper-sprayed on June 1, stated, “If there was a Black Lives Matter protest where all the participants were carrying baseball bats, hammers and other makeshift weapons, that protest wouldn’t make it 10 feet down the street before police stopped them.” (Philly.com, June 26) □

On the Road to Justice with im/migrant TPS holders

By G. Lechat

Inspired by the great Civil Rights Movement and in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, immigrant Temporary Protected Status recipients organizing with Alianza TPS Nacional are forging a “Road to Justice.” This is the name they gave their 200+ car caravan that converged on Washington, D.C., June 23-24 to demand their overdue civil rights.

Protections including legal residency, work and driving authorizations are scheduled to end in January 2021. Without TPS or a path to permanent, legal residency, recipients and their families are vulnerable to dispossession and deportation.

Of the total 320,000 recipients from 13 Brown and Black TPS countries in the Americas, Africa and the Middle East, close to 200,000 are from El Salvador. Most are in their 40s, with 20+ years’ worth of 18-month temporary residency extensions behind them. They are union members, business and home owners, and parents to many of the childhood arrivals who struggled for the DREAM Act — which would have granted them, but not their parents, full citizenship rights had it passed. Ultimately those youth either received Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012 or TPS; 68,000, or 22 percent of TPS-holders, arrived in the U.S. as minors.

The multinational Tepesana/os (as they are called in Spanish) also have 300,000 U.S.-born children, many of them activists for permanent residency in their own right. They know if their parents are deported, they could be separated from them, or forced to migrate with them to countries left dangerous and depressed by U.S. intervention.

Representing dozens of local Alianza-affiliated Comité groups, activist families drove to D.C. from almost every East Coast state, as well as Illinois, Texas, even California. Simultaneous rallies also took place in Western state capitals. They called on the Senate to pass both the Dream and Promise Act and the Heroes Act, which respectively offer a citizenship path for qualifying DACA recipients and stimulus funds for all essential workers. Both of these bills were declared “dead on arrival” by the odious Senate



PHOTO: G. CARENS

Im/migrant TPS holders demand civil rights, June 24, Washington, D.C.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Like DACA — a concession to the movement’s massive 2006 mobilizations that resuscitated May Day in the U.S., but a half-measure compared to the Dream Act — TPS status is legal but temporary. Trump terminated both programs early in his presidency. There has been an intensifying struggle ever since.

Legal action on behalf of TPS has been pending in the 9th Circuit Court since last summer. Proceeding faster, the Supreme Court’s DACA decision came last week. An estimated 800,000 DACA recipients could have been forced underground, but the June 18th restoration of the program by right-wing SCOTUS — put on the defensive by the BLM rebellion — signals hope for the TPS case in the lower court.

That said, all that has been won for DACA recipients and all that is possible for TPS recipients through the courts is preservation of their second-class status as temporary residents. This involves more surveillance, check-ins, thousands in fees, no welfare benefits or vote, and only short-term protections dependent on who rules.

TPS-holders renew militancy, demand legal #ResidencyNow

Initially the TPS-holders’ demand was simply “Save TPS.” But TPS workers have become emboldened for a number of reasons: their increasing alliance with the

youth movement already burned by the death of their Dream Act, the callous dysfunction of governmental institutions, Trump’s vile racism, the routine of racist murder on U.S. streets and the unprecedented rebellion in response.

Their resurgent militancy was on full display in D.C.: “Residency Now,” “We Are Essential,” “BLM” and “F*ck 12” (new slang for cops), with only occasional reference to “Save TPS” and no support for any Democratic Party figures. No national politicians stepped forward to vocally support TPS recipients before they became the “heroes” — cleaning, driving, constructing, cooking and caring through the COVID-19 pandemic, facing risk and uncertainty — not even Bernie Sanders.

The demand has become permanent: legal #ResidencyNow. According to Alianza leader Marta Bonilla, the organization is now “calling for legal permanent residency for 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country as well as for TPS-holders.” This is a beautiful display of working-class solidarity and a significant political development!

Few personally embody this promise more than Bonilla, a leader of the Massachusetts Comité, who has continued organizing between her two jobs even after getting her citizenship when her daughter came of age last year: “When I started organizing for TPS it was because my union, UNITE HERE Local 26, asked me to, because they care about the members. They have donated money for our activities and supported the Comité.”

It has not been possible to estimate how many union members have TPS, but it is thought to be a very large percentage, especially for certain unions, binding the future viability of the labor movement to winning the struggle for permanent residency. Bonilla continued that supporters need to bring TPS and immigration issues to their unions: “What we would like to see more is for unions talking about TPS nationally, to members and in the news. It would be nice if they organized members to join us like when we were just in Washington.”

Solidarity is also welcomed by any kind of group reaching out to its closest Alianza chapter to offer support. □

Another reason to tear down the walls

Ohio jail 100% COVID-positive

By Martha Grevatt
Cleveland

In a recent report, the Ohio Immigrant Alliance stated that the Morrow County Correctional Facility in Mt. Gilead is the first county jail in the state to be 100 percent COVID-positive. The jail, holding local prisoners as well as Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainees, is also the first 100 percent COVID-positive ICE detention center in the U.S.

The Alliance accuses jail authorities of failing to follow their own protocols as well as ICE standards.

According to the Alliance report, “None of the inmates and detainees at Morrow County have been seen by a doctor in the facility, despite their COVID diagnoses. Nursing staff are not present at the jail overnight or on the weekends, and even when they are there, they often decline to provide health care, including Tylenol. Jail staff have repeatedly refused to call an ambulance for detainees in serious

distress. What’s more, there are no interpreters available to translate detainee medical conversations, calling into question how jail staff are even making such life-or-death decisions in the first place.” (TiffinOhio.net, June 8)

While jail officials claim the COVID infection rate is less than 100 percent, Alliance members argue that all the prisoners are symptomatic and the tests are not being administered properly.

Migrant rights activists and prison abolitionists in Ohio have united to demand the jail be closed and all the prisoners set free. They have become a presence at various meetings of Morrow County political officials where they present damning testimony. This pressure may be why the jail has released a number of ICE detainees and is not accepting more at this time.

However, a majority of the migrants let out of Morrow County jail have been either deported or moved to other ICE facilities, where conditions are still deplorable and COVID is spreading

rapidly. The few returned to their families and communities were represented in a lawsuit filed by the Ohio branch of the American Civil Liberties Union.

The county prisoners have not been convicted of any crime and are mostly in jail accused of minor offenses, yet all are in danger of dying from the virus. A disproportionate number are men of color, while Morrow County is almost 98 percent white.

Prisons are deathtraps

Most prisons in the country have an extremely high rate of COVID infection. In Ohio alone, 86 prisoners have reportedly died of COVID.

The Cuyahoga County Jail in Cleveland drew national attention when it released 900 prisoners, greatly relieving notorious overcrowding. However, all but 200 of them were not freed. They were sent to state prisons, which have some of the highest infection rates in the country. Prisoners, who make up 0.4% of Ohio’s

population, suffer 17 percent of the state’s COVID cases.

Those who have been released are required to wear ankle bracelets — and then are charged \$56 per week for them! Companies which manufacture these home imprisonment devices have very lucrative contracts with Cuyahoga County.

The wearers are being punished for crimes they have not even been convicted of, making a mockery of the “presumption of innocence.” The same is true for those transferred to state penitentiaries, which are only intended for prisoners already convicted of crimes.

Every prisoner in the country is facing a possible death sentence via COVID, regardless of their alleged “crime.” More prisoners in the U.S. have died of COVID this year than from state executions over the past 10 years. (deathpenaltyinfo.org, themarshallproject.org)

The movement is growing to “Free them all! Tear down the walls!” □



Legacy of Shaka Sankofa lives

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Twenty years ago, as he lay beaten and bruised on a gurney, just minutes before being executed by the state of Texas, Shaka Sankofa had proclaimed: “This is a lynching that is happening in America tonight. ... This is genocide in America. ... You can kill a revolutionary, but you cannot stop the revolution. ... We may lose this battle, but we will win the war. This death, this lynching, will be avenged.”

That June 22, 2000, outside the death house in Huntsville, thousands of people protested the execution all day in the scorching summer sun. Three buses filled to capacity had left Houston’s S.H.A.P.E. (Self-Help for African People through Education) Community Center early that morning.

Minister Abdul Haleem Muhammad of the Nation of Islam’s Mosque 45 had been Sankofa’s spiritual advisor for seven years and had witnessed his execution, along with his stepmother Elnora Graham, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Bianca Jagger and the Rev. Al Sharpton.

As activists boarded the Houston buses, Muhammad said, “His life was not in vain. Through his life he called on the whole world to look at Texas. He represents everything we’ve marched for, chanted for, lost our jobs for and got arrested for. All of it has come down to this little boy born in Fifth Ward, Texas. The little high school dropout. Through all of this, our brother has evolved into a freedom fighter.”

The prison system’s police, local cops, Texas Rangers and state troopers kept the protesters separated from a small Ku Klux Klan group wearing their robes and hoods and carrying racist signs. The New Black Panther Party marched with guns to the town square. What appeared to this reporter to be a huge army tank was half a block away. Tensions and tempers were

as hot as the heat index.

During the day, activists shared the mic as speaker after speaker condemned the racist use of the death penalty and denounced the approaching 6 p.m. execution. Sankofa’s 19-year-old daughter, Deidra Hawkins, pregnant with her



Shaka Sankofa

second child, spoke in the searing sun, telling activists that if her father was killed, they had to all continue his struggle. (tinyurl.com/yaxestuh)

Along with Texas activists, many organizations were present. Representing a delegation from Workers World Party, Larry Holmes led the chant: “Shaka Sankofa, live like him, dare to struggle, dare to win.”

The Rev. Herbert Daughtry, chair of the National Black United Front from Brooklyn, N.Y., militantly decried the killing Texas was preparing to carry out. Martin Luther King III, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was present, as were the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Amnesty International, the Rainbow Coalition, the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the New Black Panther Party and the Campaign to End the Death Penalty.

Attorneys Richard Burr and Jack Zimmerman had filed so many appeals that 6 p.m. passed and hopes built for a stay of execution. But just after 8 p.m., witnesses were assembled for Texas’ 23rd execution that year. At 8:49 p.m. Sankofa’s death was proclaimed.

It was the 222nd execution in Texas since the resumption of state-sanctioned murder in 1982. Today that number has grown to 569.

During his 19 years awaiting execution, Sankofa, born Gary Graham, had educated himself to read and write. He earned a GED and a paralegal certificate. He studied history and philosophy. He read everything from Malcolm X to George Jackson to the Final Call and Workers World newspaper. He started an

organization on death row, the Endeavor Project, with a newspaper that had subscribers around the U.S. and in Europe. He led hunger strikes. And he met with activists and organizers who formed the Gary Graham Justice Coalition.

He later chose the name Shaka, to honor the great South African warrior Shaka Zulu, and Sankofa, which means to bring the past to the present. He connected African peoples’ long struggles to what he was facing.

As the date of his execution approached, worldwide support for Sankofa increased. WW editor Monica Moorehead wrote about being on a delegation to Cuba: “Many Cubans were interested in the struggle to free political prisoners, especially the cases of Mumia Abu-Jamal and Shaka Sankofa, who was eventually executed in Texas just weeks after our visit. One of those interested Cubans was Comandante President Fidel Castro. We had the honor of meeting Fidel on June 19, after we filmed the roundtable discussion seen by millions of Cubans on the island. As we sat around a table in the office at his residence, he asked us many questions about Mumia and Shaka’s cases, along with the state of the prisoner solidarity movement inside the U.S.”

Huge crowd at funeral

Well over 2,000 people attended Sankofa’s funeral to mourn his death and celebrate his life. He lay in a gold coffin, dressed in turquoise blue and gold African clothing. Many paid tribute to this man from humble beginnings who became a leader from death row. Among those who worked diligently to save him were Joanne Gavin, who had laid out, printed and mailed his Endeavor newspapers to subscribers around the world.

Tributes poured in from famous people: Danny Glover, Susan Sarandon, Ed Asner and Ossie Davis. Former death row prisoner Rubin “Hurricane” Carter

and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu sent messages, as did coalitions to abolish the death penalty in Australia, Germany and Italy.

Twenty years later, the legacy of Shaka Sankofa continues to be honored by his family, the friends he left on death row, anti-death penalty activists and many, many in the African-American community.

Behind the Houston headquarters of the National Black United Front is the Sundiata Acoli/Shaka Sankofa Self Determination Community Garden. His posters and photos line the walls of the S.H.A.P.E. Community Center. In California, filmmaker Micki Dickoff is using isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic to edit the huge amount of footage she filmed over seven years of the struggle to save Sankofa.

Millions around the world are in the streets today following the lynching of George Floyd in Minneapolis. “Black Lives Matter” is the rallying cry. Young Black people are spontaneously marching, rallying, disobeying laws and being arrested for destroying and burning relics of the U.S. racist past while calling out the racist present.

With his last breaths, Sankofa told the world, “They know I’m innocent. But they cannot acknowledge my innocence, because to do so would be to publicly admit their guilt. This is something these racist people will never do. Keep marching Black people, Black power!”

The system is now exposed as guilty, and Shaka’s legacy lives. □



June 22, 2000, Huntsville, Texas.

Free Mumia and push back the Fraternal Order of Police!

By Ted Kelly

A new, historic phase in the struggle against white supremacy and capitalism has begun. Millions of workers and oppressed peoples have taken to the streets, the largest uprising against racist police terror and exploitation in decades. And yet there are still revolutionaries from the last major Black, Brown and Indigenous national liberation struggles of the 1960s and 70s who are still behind bars, like Leonard Peltier, Jalil Muntaqim, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Ruchell Magee, Jamil Al-Amin and many more.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is one of those revolutionaries. Held in a Pennsylvania dungeon for nearly 40 years, Mumia is one of the most internationally renowned political prisoners in U.S. history. While still in his teens, he joined the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party. He distinguished himself as a savvy and fair-minded reporter and became the president of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists.

Abu-Jamal befriended and defended the stalwart revolutionaries of the MOVE Organization. For his reporting and activism, he drew the ire and contempt of the Fraternal Order of Police and

arch-reactionary, cop-mayor Frank Rizzo, who publicly denounced Mumia and swore vengeance upon him. And in December of 1981, Mumia Abu-Jamal was shot by Philadelphia police and then framed for murder.

Within the story of Mumia Abu-Jamal’s frame-up are all the elements of the current struggle, decades later: police lies and police violence; a crooked and racist justice system that is structurally incapable of bringing killer cops to justice; and the mafia-like racket and dictatorship that police hold over political institutions.

Today’s hypermilitarized Philadelphia Police Department is the terrorist fantasy of Rizzo, police commissioner from 1968-71 and mayor until 1980, who boasted that his cops could “invade Cuba and win.” A line can be traced from the riotous tear-gas attacks on 52nd Street and the Vine Street Expressway earlier this month to the murderous assaults on the MOVE Organization in Powelton Village (1978) and on Osage Avenue (1985), to the dehumanizing arrests following police raids on various Black Panther offices. These are the forces that framed Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The uprising has brought about the long-overdue removal of Rizzo’s statue.

But the Fraternal Order of Police and the capitalist state have been able to keep Mumia Abu-Jamal behind bars, despite an international campaign spanning decades that has saved Mumia from state execution and from murder by medical neglect.

As the Prisoner Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party wrote in a late-June statement, “There is only one way to end the police dictatorship in our cities. The prison gates must open, and Mumia Abu-Jamal — the most famous political prisoner in the world and a living symbol of the struggle against racist police repression and for the Black Liberation movement — must walk through to freedom. And it must happen now!”

“There can be no further real discussion in Philadelphia about reining in

police racism until Mumia is free. If the system fails to do that, then the system is the enemy of those marching everywhere for justice.

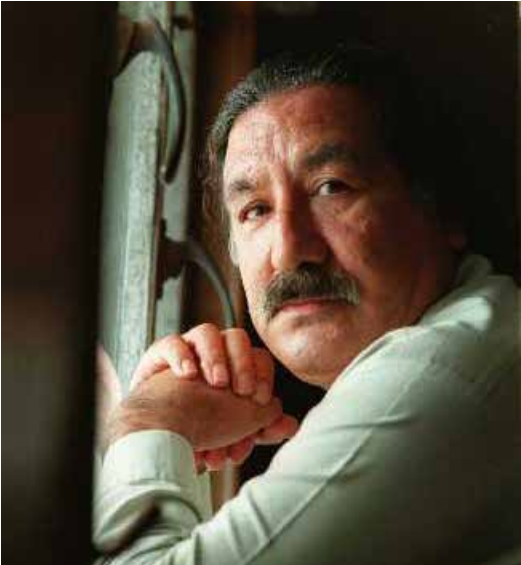
“If that is not done, there is no way that this country can move forward from this moment toward a future without racist police terror.”

This is why we are holding a protest against police terror on July Fourth at 12 noon at the Philadelphia Municipal Service Building — where the Rizzo statue used to be. (tinyurl.com/y7gxlgs8s)

Join us for a webinar Thursday, July 2 to hear from the dedicated organizers who need your help to win a major victory against the cops. (tinyurl.com/yclbch6h)

Free Mumia! Free Them All! Abolish the Police! □

45 years after FBI frame-up, Leonard Peltier must be freed



Workers World Party demands the immediate release of political prisoner Leonard Peltier. Forty-five years after being framed by the FBI for an alleged role in a killing at Pine Ridge Reservation, Peltier still languishes behind bars. Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement, was targeted for his political activism. We encourage our readers to sign this petition. Free Leonard! Free Them All!

freeleonardpeltier.com/petition

#FreeLeonardPeltier. □

Abolish the FOP!

Continued from page 1

means nothing if Mumia is not freed at once. Unless that is done, the entire political and judicial establishment of Philadelphia will remain unrepentant accomplices to structural police racism. They will remain enemies of history and will remain under the dictatorship of the police.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a former leader of the Philadelphia Black Panther Party, a supporter of the MOVE organization, a prominent award-winning journalist — and a political prisoner for nearly four decades. In the early 1980s, Abu-Jamal was the president of the Philadelphia chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists, and his news broadcasts and commentaries were heard on numerous radio stations.

Mumia consistently criticized Rizzo’s racist policies on public radio and in the press. Rizzo, as a former police commissioner, was one of the most notoriously outspoken racist figures in the 20th century. He declared war on the Black movement in Philadelphia. Rizzo’s police created a list of 18,000 activists to keep intelligence on, most of whom were Black radicals like Mumia. He developed a police file on Mumia — over 800 pages long — of information gathered via wiretaps and other counterintelligence practices. That racist harassment and anti-Mumia sentiment remain the cause of Mumia’s incarceration to this day.

Though Rizzo is gone, the Fraternal Order of Police has continued the campaign against Mumia. The FOP, representing the Philadelphia police and police across the country, has demanded that Mumia Abu-Jamal never leave his prison cell alive.

The FOP has so much political power — the kind of power that politicians and judges are deathly afraid of — that the police are essentially able to impose a dictatorship over the entire system. It is hard to find a politician in Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney and most of the state’s supreme court justices, who has

not received FOP campaign contributions and endorsements.

Struggle in the streets aims to break police dictatorship

In truth, the global uprising in the streets is more than anything else a struggle to break the dreadful political power of the police and organizations like the FOP that represent the police. This vast power enables the police to abuse, beat and kill Black and Brown people with impunity, to lie in order to protect themselves from prosecution, and to lie and conspire with prosecutors to send people to death row and into the prison-industrial complex.

Were it not for this FOP dictatorship, Mumia Abu-Jamal would have been freed a long, long time ago. The police dictatorship has demanded that none of the voluminous evidence of judicial misconduct in Mumia’s trial be acted upon, that witnesses not be heard and that a new trial never be granted.

Earlier this year the FOP used its political leverage over the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to coerce the court to accept a rare King’s Bench Petition calling for them to investigate allegations that Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner was biased toward Mumia in handling his current appeals, forcing another unnecessary delay in his appeal.

Because of the police dictatorship, Mumia has spent the last 38 years either on death row or in maximum security. Mumia’s health has been declining due to the neglect of prison officials, making his immediate freedom even more urgent. After spending more than 40 years in prison, Mumia’s good friend, Delbert Africa, one of the MOVE 9, recently died only six months after his release because his health issues were neglected by prison officials.

Mumia’s imprisonment is part of the police war against the struggle for Black Liberation. The war against the Black movement and the dictatorship of the police over the legal system — cannot and will not end — unless Mumia is freed. The system must choose now: What side of history is it on? □

Dead or in prison

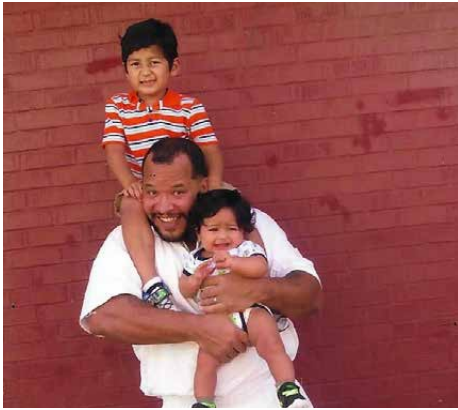
By Nanon Williams

Workers World received this letter from Williams, a Texas prisoner.

In the first week of June 2020, all the inmates at the Ramsey Unit in Rosharon, Texas, were tested for COVID-19. On the 6th and 7th of June, medical personnel and guards came to our cellblock 7 East and gave results. As far as the results for other cellblocks, much is unknown to me as of this time. My cellmate’s result came back positive for COVID-19, and my own negative. At least 30 inmates on the cellblock also tested positive, and that is almost half of this cellblock alone.

The infected prisoners were moved to cellblock 5 West, and those negative inmates were moved to the gym on that cellblock. On the 15th of June, those infected inmates were returned to cellblock 7 East. Some are still sick, have symptoms and even hide those symptoms, so they will not be moved to an unknown destination. The question here is a simple one: Why would Ramsey Unit administration return inmates to the same cellblock after only nine days, instead of moving other inmates who were negative that they [had] moved to the gym?

While paperwork is being played with to look good, it shows a deliberate indifference toward our health concerns or an intentional act to get everyone sick. During this time, four prisoners have been taken by ambulance because they have trouble breathing, and many others are now sick in the cell as I write this. If being dead or in prison is all the same to them, many will die here and those facts will be hid.



Nanon Williams with grandsons Liam and Jason.

Even more so, protocols are in place to limit the virus — meaning for the last three months, we have been confined to a cell practically 24 hours a day, with the exception of protocols not being enforced for the convenience of guards. Cameras will show hundreds and hundreds of inmates being herded to the shower as quickly as possible for convenience, but this laziness spreads the virus. Cameras will also show that sack lunches are made, and we go to the dining hall to grab them by the hundreds. While rules and protocols are often in place to benefit guards and prisoners, the only rules or protocols enforced are the ones that punish prisoners.

During this pandemic, dayrooms, recreations, yards, gyms and all the space in prison can be used to help with the stress and create humane treatment for prisoners. However, we are thrown in a cell that is much like a death trap: Cell mates are fighting; thoughts of suicide are rapidly rising; and we are forgotten.

Dead or in prison. That is the fate of the poor and minorities in prison. □

Supreme Court rulings

Mass fightback and solidarity win concessions

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

This is a slightly edited version of a talk given on a June 25 Workers World Party webinar on “LGBTQ2S+ and the Black Lives Matter movement.”

How fortunate we all are to be in the struggle together this particular June Pride Month — a month of historic uprising and outcry against racism, with young people of color and young queer people in the lead, so much so that many Pride actions have also become Black Lives Matter protests and marches. This happened here where I am, in Syracuse, N.Y., on never-ceded Onondaga land.

This has also been a historic month in terms of U.S. Supreme Court decisions. There was an unprecedented victory for the LGBTQ2S+ community when on June 15 the court re-interpreted Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to make it illegal for employers to discriminate against a person because of sexual orientation and transgender status. Previously, federal law banned job discrimination because of sex — assigned at birth based on traditional male/female definitions — but did not protect sexuality or gender identity/ expression.

And another big win came for im/migrant communities on June 18 when the Supreme Court sided with DACA recipients—the Dreamers who are immigrant children brought to the U.S. by parents with no legal standing here. The ruling said they could stay in the U.S.—for now.

Why did a court with an acknowledged 5-4 deeply conservative majority give these progressive decisions? Because there is an outright intransigent uprising and outcry against racism going on in the streets, highways and byways of U.S. metropolitan cities, in small cities, high schools and universities, even stockcar race tracks, even suburban neighborhoods. This rebellion is led by young people of color, young queer and trans people, young immigrant people who have generated a mass movement that is changing the social and political landscape of the U.S. The monuments of white supremacy are literally being laid low.

The role of the U.S. Supreme Court—to which judges receive a lifetime appointment—is to make rulings that, over time, help the capitalist ruling class maintain a grip on power. So when mass movements say, “Enough is enough!” and rise up in the streets, threatening profound change, the court can be forced into progressive rulings to try to keep a lid on revolution. But the court also zealously rules to buttress up the capitalist state, as SCOTUS did on June 15—the same day as the positive

LGBTQ2S+ ruling. They affirmed that cops—whose main role is to protect capitalist property—continue to have “qualified immunity.” This protects cops from being prosecuted for crimes—like killing people.

A history of struggle

The glorious uprising that is going on now in June has deep roots in Black and Latinx and other struggles against national oppression—and also deep roots in the revolutionary origins of LGBTQ2S+ Pride in the U.S. The very first uprisings that sparked the 20th century LGBTQ2S+ movement were led by trans and queer people of color—the Compton’s Cafeteria Rebellion in San Francisco in 1966, the Black Cat Café Rebellion in Los Angeles in 1967 and of course the Stonewall Uprising in New York City in 1969.

Perhaps people are most familiar with two trans women of color who were combatants and leaders in the fighting at Stonewall — Marsha P. “Pay It No Mind” Johnson and Sylvia Rivera — but many, many more whose names are unknown to history were also fighting back.

These earlier uprisings were rebellions against the criminalization of LGBTQ2S+ sexuality. In the 1960s you could still be prosecuted as a felon in every U.S. state if you were gay or lesbian or had any kind of sex that fell under the vicious “sodomy statutes” — the “crime against nature” laws. There were also many laws on the books criminalizing so-called “cross-dressing” or acts of gender nonconformity.

The uprisings then were also fight-backs against police raids on queer bars and social gatherings — raids justified by the sodomy statutes and gender-policing laws — raids in which there was unending daily, weekly cop violence, police humiliations through public stripping, arrests, beatings, torture, rape in jail cells and publication of the arrests that often led to queer suicides.

The uprisings were emphatically rebellions against the brutal racism of cops, not just at the bars, but also night and day against the overwhelmingly poor, often very young trans and queer people of color who survived by doing sex work on the streets.

These queer rebellions gathered force and power from intertwining with other struggles going on in the 1960s: the fight against racism and national oppression waged by the Black Civil Rights and Black Nationalist currents, Indigenous and Latinx struggles, and the antiwar and women’s liberation movements. Black Panther Party co-founder Huey P. Newton issued a statement of solidarity with gay

liberation and women’s liberation in 1970. Sylvia Rivera was a member of the Young Lords Party, a revolutionary organization that fought for self-determination for Puerto Rican, Latinx and other colonized people.

‘Stonewall means fight back!’

In 1970 an organization founded by Johnson and Rivera—Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries—issued the following demands: An end to homophobia, racism, incarceration, police harassment and job discrimination, and said: “All oppressed people should have free education, health care, clothing, food, transportation, and housing.”

The STAR manifesto ended: “We want a revolutionary peoples’ government, where transvestites, street people, women, homosexuals, Puerto Ricans, [Indigenous], and all oppressed people are free, and not f--ked over by this government who treats us like the scum of the earth and kills us off like flies, one by one, and throws us into jail to rot. This government who spends millions of dollars to go to the moon, and lets the poor Americans starve to death.”

As the first Pride marches began in New York City, Workers World Party’s



Minnie Bruce Pratt.

mass organization YAWF—Youth Against War & Fascism—carried a banner into the streets: “Stonewall Means Fight Back!” Meanwhile, WWP comrade Leslie Feinberg was developing the first Marxist analysis of trans oppression, linking the liberation of all gender-oppressed people, including women, to socialist victory over capitalism.

These are the revolutionary fightback currents that have streamed down from the 1970s through the 1990s into this Pride Fight Back Month. These are some of the roots of this historic new rebellion against racism and national oppression and for a liberation that includes gay, lesbian, bi, trans and gender-nonconforming people and women, people living with disabilities, workers and poor people.

And it is this mass uprising that is forcing unprecedented concessions — like the Supreme Court rulings — out of a capitalist ruling class established on colonization and white supremacy.

The lesson is clear, as Frederick Douglass said: “Power concedes nothing without a demand.” This is a mass uprising that gives us the promise: A better world is in birth! □

Cops out of schools!

Continued from page 1

brought to bear, but the unity between the Oakland anti-racist community and the union representing the unarmed School Service Officers — who were part of the Oakland School Police Department — was firmly cemented. Their role will be renegotiated as part of the People’s Plan for police-free schools.

Donneva Reid, Second Interim Vice President of SEIU Local 1021 in Oakland, spoke at the educators’ rally and later at the press conference before the vote supporting the George Floyd Resolution. She said, “We don’t want any more police. We want the funds to go to social services and building a better community and better education for our kids, and today we are here to support that.”

How did they win?

What brought about this tremendous victory? According to BOP organizers, a combination of factors made the difference.

At the June 25 victory press conference, BOP Executive Director Jackie Byers said the pressure brought to bear by BOP’s organizing was strategic: “Systems and institutions don’t self-correct. They are pushed by the organizations in the communities that demand these systems change. We saw school board members who were in opposition who moved over the last few months.” She noted that the school board members talked about the thousands of calls and emails they received from all over the country and even from Canada.

BOP Development and Communications Manager Jasmine Williams, who chaired the press conference, thanked all the allies in the community, including the teachers union. She said that BOP could not have won this victory without these community organizations and labor. Oakland Education Association President Keith Brown said that, given what is happening in this country with the police murder of George Floyd, it is more important than

ever that teachers stand in solidarity with BOP’s vision.

Brown concluded, “We need to be honest that in the institution of education, many of our Black families have had negative experiences within our schools. As educators in Oakland, it is the time to acknowledge that ... and examine our practices as educators.”

At an earlier press conference, BOP Organizing Director Black noted that similar campaigns around the country to defund or terminate police contracts were being won due to the strength of the national rebellion against police brutality and murder. Locally, the San Francisco Unified School District and the Peralta Community College District were forced to end their contracts with the police. In Portland, Ore., Mayor Ted Wheeler announced that “the entire school resource officer unit called the Youth Services Division—would be disbanded.” (Blogtown, Portland Mercury News, June 4)

Black, however, reminded everyone that Oakland’s victory is unique. “We want to effectively dismantle, completely dismantle, an entire school police department.” At the post-victory press conference, Black stated that this was only the beginning. “It’s very important that we have community at the table. ... While we are very excited to win the removal of the police department from OUSD, we are also embracing this next level of struggle.”

The Black Organizing Project is bracing itself for a continuing struggle to keep the police out of the schools and to change the current climate and culture there. Desiree Mims, a BOP member leader, said it plainly: “This win is history, but we will not stop here. We owe it to Rahim Brown, who was murdered by Skyline School Police, we owe it to George Floyd whose untimely and unjust murder became the catalyst for the momentum we needed to go back up to the board again. This win is for our children. We ask that you keep the pressure on because this journey is only just beginning, and we will get free.” □

Cleveland LGBTQ2S+ for Black Lives



On June 27, the Cleveland community held a LGBTQ2S+ March for Black Lives. Called by two queer activists using social media, the Greater Cleveland LGBT Community Center not only co-sponsored the action, but actively participated in the militant demonstration. Over 300 people marched and chanted, demanding an end to racism and the murder of Black trans people.

— Report and photo by Susan Schnur

LGBTQ2S+ March for Black Lives, Cleveland, June 27.

Broad support for Colin Mattis and Urooj Rahman

Facing 45 years’ imprisonment for property damage

Released by Center for Constitutional Rights
New York

June 22 — The undersigned civil and human rights organizations, legal associations, and policy institutes condemn the excessive and politically-motivated charges that the federal government is leveling against two members of our community, Colin Mattis and Urooj Rahman, and its aggressive effort to keep them imprisoned and separated from their families pending trial.

In its attempt to use the courts and a case of alleged property damage to stifle a historic popular mobilization against systemic anti-Black racism, the United States Attorney’s Office only further exposes the injustices that gave rise to and sustain the mass protests.

George Floyd’s murder by a Minneapolis police officer on May 25 has led to a critical moment of national reckoning with the institutionalized legacy of racial violence and white supremacy in the United States. Structural violence pervades the criminal legal system: from law enforcement, to prosecution, to sentencing, to incarceration. This is the system that killed George Floyd and threatens Black lives, while protecting police officers from accountability.

Attempt to chill popular protest

The Trump Administration is wielding the punitive force of this system against Colin and Urooj, who are Black and South Asian, respectively, in order to chill popular protest against the unjust status quo. On May 30, Colin and Urooj, both attorneys committed to social justice, joined tens of thousands of demonstrators in New York City in defense of Black lives.

That night, they were arrested and charged by the federal government with allegedly attempting to burn an abandoned police car and charring the interior. For this alleged property damage — a routine state law crime — they are facing federal charges carrying a mandatory minimum of 45 years in prison. These are the types of

charges that generally accompany incidents with mass casualties.

If convicted, our colleagues, who are both in their early 30s, would be imprisoned for most, if not all, of the rest of their lives.

Coupled with the outrageous charges designed to stifle dissent, federal prosecutors are insisting that the young lawyers remain in permanent pre-trial detention in the Metropolitan Detention Complex (MDC) in Brooklyn. MDC is a federal jail infamous for its human rights abuses and inhumane conditions, where health risks are only exacerbated due to COVID-19.

Two federal judges decided Colin and Urooj could safely be released on bail, which they were, until the government made the highly unusual move to appeal the decision. Now the Second Circuit Court of Appeals will decide their fate.

Meanwhile, the police officer who is charged with murdering George Floyd is currently out on bail. The perverse system that treats two protesters of color demanding racial justice more punitively for an alleged property crime than it treats a white police officer charged with the murder of a Black man is precisely the injustice animating the calls of the Movement for Black Lives and protesters for fundamental change.

In our current system, Black defendants are far more likely to face charges that carry mandatory minimums than white defendants, and Black and Brown defendants are far more likely to be held in pre-trial detention than white defendants.

As legal, advocacy and policy organizations with long histories of supporting movements for justice, we are well aware that, particularly at the tipping points of social transformation, the state will deploy maximum force to undermine momentum. The federal government’s cruel and unnecessary effort to keep Colin and Urooj in prison pre-trial, and potentially for the rest of their natural lives, is an approach guided by a political agenda rather than by law. It reflects the Trump administration’s animosity toward the



Colin Mattis and Urooj Rahman

powerful and growing Movement for Black Lives. Such political prosecutions mirror historic attempts to undermine racial justice movements in this country and in authoritarian regimes throughout the world. We cannot allow the federal government to use this case to distract from or suppress the underlying demands for justice that have brought many thousands of people in every state in the nation to the streets.

We call for the immediate release of Colin and Urooj on bail and for the federal government to drop these excessive charges. Our community will be made safer upon their return home to their families, and when the state ceases to prioritize property over human life and our collective well-being.

- Center for Constitutional Rights
- Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law - New York University School of Law
- CLEAR - CUNY School of Law
- Defending Rights & Dissent
- Demand Progress
- International Association of Democratic Lawyers
- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
- Make the Road New York
- Metropolitan Black Bar Association
- Muslim Bar Association of New York
- National Lawyers Guild
- Prison Policy Initiative

Black Lives Matter in Leeds, England

By Kadesh Anderson

Kadesh Anderson is a Black Lives Matter activist and journalist in Leeds, England.

Leeds, England — On June 21 in Hyde Park, over 5,000 people came out in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter protest.

With social distancing measures in place, people came together with their banners and posters in hands, shouting “Black Lives Matter!” The gathering included guest speakers and cultural performers who used their voices to touch the crowd and express their deep concerns about events happening in the Black community, both in Britain and worldwide, historically and currently.

These protests were sparked globally after the death of George Floyd, who was murdered on May 25 in Minneapolis, Minn. Officer Derrick Chauvin pressed his knee onto the neck of George Floyd for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.

Floyd repeatedly said, “I can’t breathe,” and in his final moments, as he realized he was dying, he called for his mother. The people who witnessed his death repeatedly yelled to the other officers, “He cannot breathe.”

This awareness brought to mind the conditions that ignited the “London Riots” from Aug. 6 to 11, 2011, and also bridged the struggles against racism and police brutality regularly faced by the Black community in Britain. The 2011 protests started in Tottenham, London, following the death of Mark Duggan, a local man who was shot dead by police Aug. 4. Several violent clashes with police ensued, along with the destruction of police vehicles, a double-decker bus and many homes and businesses, thus rapidly gaining attention from the media. The revolt spread to cities and towns across England.

One of the speakers at the June protest was Marvina Newton, co-founder of Black Lives Matter in Leeds, who stated: “When it comes to Leeds I have a duty to our community to gather and collect the voices and to amplify the amazing Black excellence we have in the city and use that as a stepping stone to challenge racism.

“We need it to build stuff on the back of our allies because racism was not created by us. It needs our white

community to fix that problem. The Black community already can see the support that it’s getting. What we need to do is do a lot of work to unite our community.”

We further discussed why she felt that Black Lives Matter is important to the people in Leeds. “Black unity matters, Black leaders matter and that’s what we need to do. We have leaders in every Black person in the city, and we need to start showcasing all the leaders because we can’t just assume that it’s one or two when we know that there are many of us. This is what today is about. It’s having some old faces but also having some new faces, because they are coming up strong.”

‘A very welcome, revolutionary movement’

I also had an opportunity to speak with renowned poet, speaker, writer and activist Khadijah Ibrahim. She shared her thoughts about the Black Lives Matter movement and how it compared to the fight for equality that she witnessed as a child growing up.

“To be honest, for me as much as it’s a very welcomed movement and it’s a revolutionary movement in this time, I have been a part of activism for a long time — my writing is about activism. It’s about change. It’s about observing the time, talking about what’s happening in the present time as well as looking back.

“The Black Lives Matter campaign: That movement for me is a very welcomed movement, and I also have to remind myself and maybe remind people who are younger than me that this campaign and the hashtags are the same as the other campaigns. ... So when my grandparents arrived here, their hashtag, if there was a thing as a hashtag back then in the late 50s/60s, would have been ‘Come what may, we’re here to stay.’ They would say, ‘Without us, there is no Britain.’ These were the hashtags of that time. We’re still addressing the inequalities of policies

that exist and have existed for so many years, and we’re also addressing institutional racism.”

As the poet talked about the difficulties she faced in her time growing up, I recalled a discussion that I had with a 12-year-old boy who stated that going to the protest made him think about the racism that he has dealt with and will have to deal with as he grows older.

The resistance and solidarity are in motion. For the first time in U.S. history, there were Black Lives Matter protests taking place in all 50 states and across the world.

The struggle for justice, equity and equality continues. Join the movement!

- Instagram @blm_leeds @UKBLMUK
- (scroll down to find article)
- Facebook @blacklivesmatterleeds
- Twitter @blmleeds_
- BlackLivesMatter.com



Leeds, England, June 21. PHOTO: BRIAN HANLEY; ONE TOUCH PHOTOGRAPHY (U.K.)

Working-class demands in COVID economy

The International Monetary Fund issued a warning on June 24 that the global economy faces an even deeper downturn than it previously projected, greater than any since the 1930s Great Depression.

While many economists warned earlier of a cyclical downturn in the world economy, the IMF blamed the current collapse on the coronavirus pandemic alone. The pandemic brought large sectors of the world economy to a stop.

The latest IMF message is that the economic crisis accompanying the pandemic is really big.

And although the IMF refuses to admit it, the evidence is that capitalism and the market-driven economy are completely inadequate for resolving these crises.

The IMF now predicts a 4.9 percent drop in world production in 2020, with more severe drops for the European Union and the United States, followed by 5.4 percent growth in 2021. In contrast, for China, the IMF predicts 1.0 percent growth in 2020 and 8.2 percent growth in 2021.

The loss of production worldwide over the two years will total \$12 trillion, according to the IMF. Annual gross world production is about \$90 trillion.

The relative success of China shows the advantage of a centrally organized economy rather than one organized to maximize profits.

Given the extent of the double challenge—the pandemic and the economy—the key question to answer is: What should the working class demand to protect the poorest and most oppressed people in society and to defend workers’ interests?

Demands in the United States

A powerful ideological and accurate point is that a socialist society — motivated by mutual solidarity and striving toward equality of wealth and income — provides the best chance of overcoming the current crises. Capitalism fails.

Without closing the door on the goal of that socialist society, what demands can be raised within the U.S. that can mobilize large sectors of the population for struggle?

In March, Congress quickly passed a so-called stimulus program. The trillions of dollars allocated went mainly to the biggest corporations. Congress aimed some of those funds at small businesses, although the big chains nearly grabbed those funds, too.

A smaller part of the trillions went to the working class: one \$1,200 stimulus payment to everyone with less than \$99,000 annual income, plus an additional \$600 per week unemployment insurance payment for the tens of millions of workers destined to lose their jobs — lasting no longer than the end of July.

The unemployment supplement was also supposed to cover people working in the gig economy — workers unfairly treated as “self-employed” — and anyone in the self-employed category, as well as those who lost work because of COVID-19. Some 40 million unemployed workers applied for benefits; many have had a hard time getting them.

This stimulus failed to cover undocumented workers who lost their jobs or became sick, and that failure forced more to work in jobs made unsafe by the virus.

By July 31, at the latest, the added benefits end. These payments were the ventilator keeping the economy alive over the past three months. Without them, tens of millions more people risk losing their homes and going hungry. And since the federal government is seeking to cut the Affordable Care Act, people may also lose medical insurance.

The obvious minimum demands from the working class are that Congress (1) provide additional stimulus payments to the entire working class; (2) extend the supplemental unemployment insurance for at least another year; and (3) extend these payments to all those who have been living and working in the U.S. with or without official papers. Those demands can be amplified to include an adequate and guaranteed income for all.

Workers World Party raised a list of demands in March that are still valid. These include protecting all housing—that is, no evictions or seizure of homes. Also

free medical care and testing during the pandemic. And no one should be forced to return to work under dangerous conditions.

Demands throughout the world

Among the imperialist countries of Japan, Western Europe, Canada and Australia, the situation is much like that in the United States — with more social protection and medical care in some countries.

For countries that were colonies of the imperialist countries, or which are still economically dependent, mostly in the global South, the policies of the IMF itself have contributed to the disaster their people face.

The IMF has forced these governments to curtail social programs, including those providing health care and education, to give priority to repaying debts to the banks based in the imperialist countries.

Thus a minimal global demand is that payments on these debts be canceled without penalty.

The imperialist countries have pillaged the global South for centuries. Today they still reap mega-profits through their domination of the world economy, access to data, machine tools, artificial intelligence, scientific development and capital. They set lower prices on goods produced in the global South, especially on raw materials.

The imperialists owe reparations to their former colonies. They should pay reparations as part of restoring the economies of these countries and the public health systems that have been dismantled by IMF programs.

And, of course, the U.S. capitalist class owes centuries of reparations to Indigenous, Black and Brown people and to the working class as a whole.

Reparations now through income payments! Cancel the debts of all workers and oppressed peoples!. □

SOCIALIST DEMANDS

1. Free healthcare for all
2. Nationalize the healthcare system under community control. Build emergency hospitals
3. Full pay, benefits and guaranteed income for all
4. Food, housing, medical supplies, & utilities including internet for all
5. Suspend rent, evictions, mortgages, utility shutoffs & ALL debt

FOR THE COVID-19 CRISIS

6. Prioritize resources for communities of color, migrants, LGBTQ2+ people, seniors, youth, people with disabilities
7. Empty prisons & detention centers. Shut down ICE. End racist attacks
8. Community control. No cops, military
9. \$2 trillion to workers, not the banks
10. End U.S. wars, sanctions, and environmental destruction

WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Workers and oppressed of the world unite! workers.org

True nature of the capitalist state revealed

By Christian Noakes

On the evening of June 1, federal law enforcement agency personnel brutally cleared Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C., of peaceful protesters decrying the police murder of George Floyd, so that President Donald Trump could walk to a nearby church for a photo-op.

The Department of Justice has given the Drug Enforcement Agency the power to surveil the people participating in the nationwide uprising against police brutality. At first glance, this might be perplexing to some. Why would an agency that focuses on drug trafficking take action against those fighting for racial justice?

In actuality, this move makes a good deal of sense. One need only consider the racist nature of the “war on drugs.” The DEA, as a tool of white supremacy, is working in concert with other state apparatuses of oppression and repression.

On June 2, Attorney General William P. Barr stated in a DOJ press release: “I am grateful to the many federal law enforcement agencies and personnel who helped protect the District [of Columbia], including the FBI, Secret Service, Park Police, ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives], DEA, Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Marshals Service, Capitol Police,

Department of Homeland Security’s CBP [Customs and Border Protection] and Border Patrol units.”

The fact that the U.S. Border Patrol — another federal agency that has long brutalized Black and Brown people — is involved thousands of miles from any U.S. border gives credence to the argument that the institution of the state in this country is inherently white supremacist. Federal law enforcement agencies are first and foremost tools of repression, meant to maintain prevailing social relations and inequality.

Bhagat Singh, an Indian revolutionary, said on Feb. 2, 1931: “The state, the government machinery is just a weapon in the hands of the ruling class to further and safeguard its interests.” (tinyurl.com/y8yrwfrz)

In the case of U.S. capitalism, these interests are tightly bound to — and indeed dependent on — the racialized order that is maintained through violence against non-white and hyper-exploited populations.

The open collaboration of these law enforcement agencies also suggests that top state officials feel threatened enough to think it is necessary to lift the thin veil on the state in order to protect the fragile order of the country’s white ruling class. They have every right to be fearful for they know that what is at stake is their own position of dominance. □

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Build Workers World!

The U.S. has the highest percentage of its population in city, county, state and federal prisons — more than any other country in the world and disproportionately people of color. That’s not even counting detention centers for im/migrants who flee their homes to escape U.S. crimes of imperialist aggression. Here they are brutally mistreated, some even suffering cruel separation from their children.

Don’t let Fourth of July fireworks distract you from the streets and from formulating ways to dismantle the deadly, institutionalized, second-class system that oppresses Black, Brown and Indigenous people. That systemic inequality and injustice are responsible for the biggest proportion of those dying from the pandemic being people of color.

What would really show solidarity with the already vibrant Black Lives Matter movement here and abroad? Raising the struggle to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal so it becomes a worldwide cry. The very reasons why Mumia is in jail are that he used his voice and his pen to expose racism, especially the role of police terror in Philadelphia. Then the system framed him, denied him a fair trial and attempted to kill

him. Mumia’s case personifies everything wrong with the world’s largest center of incarcerated workers: the U.S.

Those who understand how this racist, classist, capitalist system works were in the streets over the last four decades to save Mumia’s life and promote his message. Workers World was there, demanding his freedom from the get-go. Now WW’s Prisoners Solidarity Committee is promoting an internationalist call to Free Mumia.

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We’re grateful for your help in building Workers World — sign up today!

COVID figures reveal stark contrasts

By Deirdre Griswold

June 29 — No country boasts louder of its success than the United States. This is the most powerful capitalist country in the world, based on its vast wealth, huge industrial output and formidable military.

But the U.S. is also the country with the most COVID-19 cases in the world — by far. And they are spiking right now, just when the powers-that-be were predicting that it would be safe for the economy to open up again.

Databases that track the growth of the pandemic around the world are revealing a highly significant fact: The countries where there has been the most progress toward combating capitalism have also most successfully contained the virus.

Here are some figures, as of June 28, provided by worldometers.info/coronavirus:

Cuba stands out, with only eight deaths per million inhabitants. This contrasts sharply with the other populous islands in the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic, which shares an island with Haiti, has

had 67 coronavirus deaths per million people. Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony, has had 64.7 deaths per million.

Fidel Castro led the Cuban Revolution to victory over the bloody U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. He announced to the world that the Cuban people had achieved “a socialist revolution under the very noses of the Yankee imperialists.”

Since then, Cuba has become a medical powerhouse, sending doctors and nurses to poor countries around the world suffering from imperialist-imposed underdevelopment.

Another country in Latin America that has successfully controlled the virus is Venezuela, which reports two deaths per million people.

Venezuela’s neighbors include Colombia, where there have been 61 deaths per million; Panama, with 140 deaths per million; and Brazil, now in the grips of a raging epidemic with 271 deaths per million. Except for Venezuela, the economic systems of these countries are rooted in capitalism.

Venezuela is on a difficult road to

socialism because of its dependence on oil and the world capitalist market. The U.S. government has attempted to destroy its economy by imposing sanctions. Nevertheless, Venezuela’s success in keeping people safe during the pandemic has in recent weeks led many of its citizens who had left the country to return.

Al Jazeera reported on June 28: “For more than a decade, thousands of Cuban healthcare providers have been living in Venezuela, helping to build up its health infrastructure for working people. At the same time, Venezuela has been subject to U.S. sanctions meant to destroy its economy.

“This led many middle-class Venezuelans to move to neighboring Colombia. But now, because of the high rate of COVID in Colombia, Venezuelans are returning. They are required to stay in quarantine for two weeks before moving around freely, a precaution against spreading the disease.”

People’s China, where the initial outbreak occurred, has now contained the disease. As of June 28, its COVID deaths average only three per million people,



A medical brigade of over 200 Cuban doctors prepares to leave Jose Martí Airport in Havana on the way to South Africa to provide assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

compared to 388 for the U.S. For the same date, new cases in China were 17; new cases in the U.S. were 40,540. New deaths that day in the U.S. were 285 people — and in China, only three.

Facts are facts. Health care is a priority in countries struggling to build socialism in a world where capitalism is still the dominant social system. Capitalism kills people in many ways, but nowhere is the documentation more stark than in the coronavirus figures. □

U.S. deports mortgage fraudster to control Haiti

By G. Dunkel

Emmanuel “Toto” Constant was in charge of FRAPH (the Revolutionary Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti) during the 1991-94 coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide when this death-squad organization killed 3,000 people and wounded and maimed many more. During that time, he was also on the CIA’s payroll.

In 1994, Toto showed up in the U.S. after fleeing to the Dominican Republic on foot and was basically granted political asylum, even though the U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, opposed it because it would expose that the U.S. supported FRAPH’s genocidal actions in Haiti.

In 2006, Toto was ordered by the courts to pay \$19 million to three women because FRAPH had raped and abused them. He was released from a U.S. prison after serving 12 years for mortgage fraud

and other financial crimes.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement had originally scheduled his deportation for May, under its program to deport those convicted of felonies back to their country of origin, even if they were coronavirus-positive. Many news sources such as the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, CNN, New York Times and ProPublica have documented the devastating health effects of this program on poor countries like Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti.

While Toto was taken into custody as soon as he stepped off the landing pad on June 23, the Haitian government faces a quandary. Toto’s allies in the Bald-Headed Haitian Party (PHTK) are currently in total control of the government. Parliament is dissolved, and judges are on strike.

As Mario Joseph, a lawyer with a long history in the progressive movement in Haiti, put it in *Haïti-Liberté*: “There really is no difference between the PHTK and

the FRAPH. Both organizations have the same modus operandi of violence, corruption, terror and banditry.” (June 25)

Toto under Haitian law has the right to a new trial, since he was previously convicted in absentia. Some of his subordinates in FRAPH, who faced similar legal jeopardy, have already been acquitted and are prominent in PHTK circles.

His acquittal would make it clear that the government of the United States supports the current repressive regime in Haiti lock, stock and barrel. It remains to be seen how the liberal wing of the opposition, who are not totally disabused of the notion that the U.S. supports democracy, justice and human rights in Haiti and



June, Miami, Fla.

Reflections on the protests and Black Liberation

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To add insult to injury, some protesters appropriated the slogan that was meant to bring awareness to the lack of attention that Black female victims of police violence receive inside and outside the Black community. The hashtag *#sayhisname* appeared under drawings of George Floyd.

The Black Lives Matter movement was started by three queer Black women and to see the continued erasure of Black women from the movement didn’t sit well with me. Worse, I didn’t see anyone remember Tony McDade’s name, a Black trans man who was killed by police in Tallahassee, Fla., on May 27. That is further proof that transphobia is the only form of bigotry that is normalized. Black women and Black LGBTQ2S+ people have been the foundation of civil rights, feminism and LGBTQ2S+ liberation, and to see them tacked on as a footnote is an injustice that needs to change.

The concern for Black people and other people of color cannot end at the U.S. border. Protests against the war in Iran didn’t draw a fraction of the crowd that the George Floyd protests received. The Western-backed assassination of Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi was met with jubilation by some liberals; the coup against Eva Morales in

Bolivia was met with callous indifference.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro’s ongoing battle with U.S. puppet Juan Guaidó is met with arrogant paternalism. The U.S. imperialist hegemony’s role in the destabilization of socialist countries has endangered the lives of people of color all over the world.

Black people in African countries and elsewhere continue to suffer under the boot of neo-colonialism, with Western countries exploiting Africa for its resources, enslaving children for literally pennies, and bombing and droning innocent families. What’s worse, so called “radicals” in the West continue to buy the lies and the propaganda Western capitalist governments manufacture in order to justify the horror they inflict on countries in the Global South. If Black Lives Matter then we have to care about Black lives all over the world.

The protests on May 30 are signs of progress. But for lasting change to truly happen, we must care about fighting racism and imperialism every minute and every second, and not just every four years. Also all Black lives have to matter, not just those of U.S. cisgender heterosexual Black men. This might seem like nitpicking to some, but it is imperative to keep all this in mind to guarantee liberation for all Black people. □

Fallos de SCOTUS: la lucha masiva y la solidaridad ganan concesiones

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Este gobierno que gasta millones de dólares para ir a la luna y deja morir de hambre a los pobres estadounidenses”.

Cuando comenzaron las primeras marchas del Orgullo en la ciudad de Nueva York, YAWF, (Juventud Contra la Guerra y el Fascismo) la organización de la juventud del Workers World Party/ Partido Mundo Obrero, llevó una pancarta a las calles: “¡Stonewall significa luchar!” Mientras tanto, la compañera del WWP Leslie Feinberg estaba desarrollando el primer análisis marxista de la opresión trans, vinculando la liberación de todas las personas oprimidas por el género, incluidas las mujeres, a la victoria socialista sobre el capitalismo.

Estas son las corrientes revolucionarias de lucha que se han extendido desde la década de 1970 hasta la década de 1990 en este Mes del Orgullo.

Estas son algunas de las raíces de esta nueva rebelión histórica contra el racismo y la opresión nacional y por una liberación que incluye a personas homosexuales, lesbianas, bi, trans, no conformes con el género, mujeres personas con discapacidades, trabajadores y personas pobres.

Y es esta sublevación masiva la que está forzando concesiones sin precedentes, como los fallos de la Corte Suprema, de una clase dominante capitalista establecida sobre la colonización y la supremacía blanca.

La lección es clara, como dijo Frederick Douglass: “El poder no concede nada sin la lucha”. Este es un levantamiento masivo que nos da la promesa: ¡Un mundo mejor está naciendo! □

Fallos de SCOTUS: la lucha masiva y la solidaridad ganan concesiones

Por Minnie Bruce Pratt

Esta es una versión ligeramente editada de una charla dada en un seminario web del Partido Mundo Obrero el 25 de junio sobre “LGBTQ2S+ y el movimiento Black Lives Matter”.

Qué afortunados somos todos de estar juntos en la lucha en este Mes del Orgullo de junio en particular: un mes de levantamiento histórico y clamor contra el racismo, con jóvenes de color y jóvenes queer a la cabeza, tanto que muchas acciones de Orgullo también se han convertido en protestas y marchas pro Black Lives Matter. Esto sucedió aquí donde estoy, en Syracuse, Nueva York, en tierra de Onondaga nunca cedida.

Este también ha sido un mes histórico en términos de decisiones de la Corte Suprema de EE.UU. Hubo una victoria sin precedentes para la comunidad LGBTQ2S+ cuando el 15 de junio el tribunal reinterpretó el Título VII de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964 para que sea ilegal que los empleadores discriminen a una persona debido a su orientación sexual y su condición de transgénero. Anteriormente, la ley federal prohibía la discriminación laboral debido al sexo, asignado al nacer según las definiciones masculinas/femeninas tradicionales, pero no protegía la sexualidad o la identidad/expresión de género.

Y otra gran victoria llegó para las comunidades de migrantes/inmigrantes el 18 de junio cuando la Corte Suprema se puso del lado de los beneficiarios de DACA, que son niños inmigrantes traídos a los EE.UU. por padres sin legitimación aquí. El fallo dice que podrían quedarse en Estados Unidos, por ahora.

¿Por qué un tribunal con una reconocida mayoría profundamente conservadora 5-4 dio estas decisiones progresivas? Porque hay un levantamiento y una protesta intransigentes contra el racismo en las calles, autopistas y caminos de las

ciudades metropolitanas de EE.UU., en pequeñas ciudades, escuelas secundarias y universidades, incluso en pistas de carreras de autos, incluso en vecindarios suburbanos. Esta rebelión está liderada por jóvenes de color, jóvenes queer y trans, jóvenes inmigrantes que han generado un movimiento de masas que está cambiando el panorama social y político de los EE.UU. Los monumentos de la supremacía blanca están literalmente siendo derribados.

El papel de la Corte Suprema de los EE.UU.,-- cuyos jueces reciben puestos de por vida,-- es tomar decisiones que con el tiempo ayuden a la clase dominante capitalista a mantener el control del poder. Entonces, cuando los movimientos de masas dicen: “¡Ya es suficiente!” y levantarse en las calles, amenazando con un cambio profundo, la corte puede ser forzada a tomar decisiones progresivas para tratar de controlar la revolución.

Pero la corte también dicta con celo reforzar el estado capitalista, como lo hizo SCOTUS el 15 de junio, el mismo día que el fallo LGBTQ2S+ positivo. Afirmaron que los policías, cuyo papel principal es proteger la propiedad capitalista, continúan teniendo una “inmunidad calificada”. Esto protege a los policías de ser procesados por delitos, como matar personas.

Una historia de lucha

El glorioso levantamiento que está ocurriendo ahora en junio tiene raíces profundas en las luchas de los negros y latinos y otras luchas contra la opresión nacional, y también raíces profundas en los orígenes revolucionarios del Orgullo LGBTQ2S+ en los EE.UU. Los primeros levantamientos que provocaron el movimiento LGBTQ2S+ del siglo XX fueron dirigida por personas de color trans y queer: la Rebelión de la cafetería Compton en San Francisco en 1966, la Rebelión del café Black Cat en Los Ángeles en 1967 y, por supuesto, el Levantamiento de Stonewall



Sylvia Rivera (izquierda) y Marsha P. Johnson, Nueva York.

en la ciudad de Nueva York en 1969.

Quizás las personas están más familiarizadas con dos mujeres trans de color que eran combatientes y líderes en los combates en Stonewall — Marsha P. “Pay It No Mind” Johnson y Sylvia Rivera — pero muchos, muchos más cuyos nombres son desconocidos en la historia también lucharon.

Estos levantamientos anteriores fueron rebeliones contra la criminalización de la sexualidad LGBTQ2S+. En la década de 1960, aún podría ser procesado como un delincuente en todos los estados de EE.UU. si fuera gay o lesbiana o tuviera algún tipo de sexo que cayera bajo los viciosos “estatutos de sodomía”, las leyes de “crimen contra la naturaleza”. También había muchas leyes en los libros que criminalizaban los llamados “travestis” o actos de no conformidad de género.

Los levantamientos también fueron contraataques contra redadas policiales en bares queer y reuniones sociales — redadas justificadas por los estatutos de sodomía y las leyes de vigilancia de género — redadas en las que hubo una interminable violencia policial diaria, semanal, humillaciones policiales a través de despojos públicos, arrestos, palizas, tortura, violación en las cárceles y publicación de los arrestos que a menudo



Bolivia, junio.

FOTO: BLMBOLIVIA

condujeron a suicidios extraños.

Los levantamientos fueron enfáticamente rebeliones contra el brutal racismo de los policías, no solo en los bares, sino también día y noche contra las personas de color abrumadoramente pobres, a menudo muy jóvenes trans y queer que sobrevivieron haciendo trabajo sexual en las calles.

Estas rebeliones extrañas reunieron fuerza y poder al entrelazarse con otras luchas que tuvieron lugar en la década de 1960: la lucha contra el racismo y la opresión nacional emprendida por los derechos civiles negros y las corrientes nacionalistas negras, las luchas indígenas y latinas, y los movimientos contra la guerra y la liberación de las mujeres. El cofundador del Black Panther Party, Huey P. Newton, emitió una declaración de solidaridad con la liberación gay y la liberación de las mujeres en 1970. Sylvia Rivera era miembro del Young Lords Party, una organización revolucionaria que luchó por la autodeterminación de los puertorriqueños, latinos y otras pueblos colonizados.

‘Stonewall significa contraatacar!’

En 1970, una organización fundada por Johnson y Rivera, Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, (siglas en inglés STAR), emitió las siguientes demandas: el fin de la homofobia, el racismo, el encarcelamiento, el acoso policial y la discriminación laboral, y dijo: “Todas las personas oprimidas deberían tener educación gratuita, atención médica, ropa, comida, transporte y vivienda”.

El manifiesto de STAR terminó: “Queremos un gobierno revolucionario de los pueblos, donde los travestis, la gente de la calle, las mujeres, los homosexuales, los puertorriqueños, [los indígenas] y todas las personas oprimidas sean libres y no se vean mal por este gobierno que nos trata como la escoria de la tierra y nos mata como moscas, uno por uno, y nos arroja a la cárcel para que nos pudramos.

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editorial ¡Defund significa abolir la policía!

“¡Defund a la policía!” (Quitarles fondos económicos a la policía), ha saltado a la cima de las demandas que las manifestaciones masivas han estado haciendo desde el asesinato policial de George Floyd el 25 de mayo en Minneapolis. Después de que el tercer edificio del Recinto Policial de esa ciudad se incendiara a la alegría de la mayoría de la población de EE.UU., no había forma de que los gobernantes de EE.UU. ignoraran esta demanda. (tinyurl.com/y7lsqoh5)

Había que hacer algo, y no solo arrestar y acusar al policía asesino y a sus cómplices de asesinato.

El mensaje sonó claro: quitar los presupuestos hinchados de los departamentos de policía. Quitar los fondos. Quitareles los tanques y carros blindados. Poner fin a esta fuerza represiva y racista que utiliza el poder letal.

El presidente abiertamente racista y su partido atacaron el eslogan de “defund”. Su oponente del Partido Demócrata, Joe Biden, fue tan rápido en decir que agregaría fondos para la policía, para entrenamiento

adicional en “sensibilidad”.

Fue otro recordatorio de que ambos partidos imperialistas colaboran con respecto a la policía. Si bien podrían discutir sobre los procedimientos policiales, ambos esperan que la policía continúe con su papel esencial.

Como marxistas, sabemos que este papel es estar por encima de la sociedad civil e imponer el dominio de la clase dominante capitalista sobre todos los trabajadores.

En todas las sociedades de clases, las fuerzas policiales se originaron a partir de esos elementos mercenarios que los ricos (terratenientes, esclavistas, capitalistas) contrataron para “mantener a los pobres en su lugar”.

La policía de EE.UU. evolucionó de los que pagan la esclavocracia para capturar a personas fugitivas esclavizadas. Este origen ha dejado su huella racista en la aplicación de la ley capitalista.

La policía protege la capacidad de los capitalistas de explotar, es decir, de robar, la riqueza producida por los trabajadores (que los capitalistas llaman ganancias) y

concentrarla en manos de unos pocos. Para la clase dominante de los Estados Unidos, la policía son los mejores sirvientes.

Ha surgido un debate sobre lo que significa “defund the police”. Originalmente, significaba eliminar los presupuestos policiales o “abolir la policía”.

Algunos participantes en el movimiento han abogado por demandas más limitadas, tales como: evitar que el Pentágono suministre a los policías equipos militares pesados como tanques y helicópteros; recortar los presupuestos policiales en un 10 por ciento y usar los fondos para suministrar servicios sociales a la gente; establecer juntas civiles que respondan a la comunidad para reclutar, entrenar y dirigir la policía.

Workers World apoya a esas fuerzas en el movimiento que plantean el eslogan “Defund a la policía!” En medio de un levantamiento sin precedentes de la comunidad afroamericana, una con un apoyo más amplio de la población general que nunca antes en la historia de los Estados Unidos, cualquier batalla por demandas específicas se fusiona con esta lucha viva y

la impulsa hacia adelante.

La policía y los racistas lucharán en contra de toda reforma, incluso las reformas más pequeñas. Para eliminar a la policía, se debe ganar una lucha no solo contra las fuerzas de Trump sino también contra el establecimiento del Partido Demócrata.

Como marxistas que ven a la policía como un componente central del estado, un estado que impone el gobierno de los capitalistas a los trabajadores, nosotros, desde Workers World, nos solidarizamos especialmente con aquellos que extienden la demanda de “Defund a la policía!” para que signifique “¡Abolir la policía!”

Solamente aboliendo la policía racista y capitalista, lo que Marx llamó “los cuerpos de hombres armados” que imponen el gobierno de clase, y reemplazándolos con organizaciones populares que responden a la clase trabajadora y a todos los sectores oprimidos de la población, pueden las victorias del movimiento masivo de la población actual hacer que esto se haga permanente. □