Step one, movement demands 'DEFUND POLICE!'

By Monica Moorehead

June 8 — Today marks the two-week anniversary of the public legal lynching of George Floyd by four Minneapolis police officers. Thousands have filed by his open casket to pay their respects. And on June 9, Floyd will be buried in his hometown of Houston.

Within this two-week span, a rebellion has spread like wildfire, starting in Minneapolis, with the burning down of a police precinct, then throughout the U.S. in every state and then across the world in multiple cities on almost every continent.

Millions of people worldwide have been out in the streets in solidarity with the demand “Black Lives Matter,” now transformed into an international mass struggle. This global rebellion has put the repressive police force on trial for all forms of brutality, especially murder, against Black and other people of color. But white supremacy has also been put on trial as the very foundation upon which police violence rests to safeguard profits for the rich.

This rebellion has helped to generalize the issue of racist oppression by bringing international attention to others who have lost their lives besides Floyd — Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Manuel Ellis, Laquan McDonald, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Tony McDade, Sandra Bland and too many others.

Within days, statues glorifying the Confederacy and other pro-slavery monuments have been physically removed or defaced by protestors. Officials, mainly in the U.S. South, were forced to bring them down by the rebellion. The people of Philadelphia forced the city to once-and-for-all remove the repulsive statue and mural of fascist former Mayor Rizzo.

In Bristol, England, a statue of a 17th century slave catcher was brought down, his neck stomped on and then thrown in the river. Even the statue of the late British imperialist Prime Minister Winston Churchill was defaced with the word “racist.” The offensive statue honoring the colonial butcher of the Congolese people, King Leopold II of Belgium, was finally taken down in Antwerp, Belgium.

A large humongous “Black Lives Matter Plaza” was established by Black Mayor Muriel Bowser, along with millions of people, King Leopold II of Belgium, was finally taken down in Antwerp, Belgium. Along with resistance to police presence at protests has come an incredible amount of brutality and arrests in the thousands. Protesters, young and old, Black, Latinx, white, Indigenous and Asian have been pepper sprayed and tear gassed; injured by rubber bullets and swinging batons; and knocked to the ground. These indiscriminate brutal attacks by the police have also happened to the media.

This repression has not stopped the spontaneous mass outpouring of protests in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City, Philadelphia, Houston and elsewhere, despite curfews. The biggest protests so far took place last weekend in Washington, D.C., where “Black Lives Matter Plaza” was established by Black Mayor Muriel Bowser, along with humongous “Black Lives Matter” lettering painted on the National Mall in front of the White House. Next to it activists painted “Defund the Police.”

Police budgets steal vital services

While Congress is currently debating police “reforms,” legislation initially introduced by the Congressional Black Caucus, the Black Lives Matter movement has been demanding the defunding of police budgets for years. Kailee Scales, managing director of Black Lives Matter Global Network, stated: “It is important to remember that modern-day policing has its roots in slave catching. These systems were created to hunt, maim, and kill Black people.

“As we have seen in the example of George and many others in this month alone, the police are a force of violence that profiles, harasses, and inflicts harm on Black communities without accountability — and with far too many resources.” The police reportedly killed over 1,000 people...
California labor condemns police murder of George Floyd

By Dave Welsh

This is big. Seemingly out of nowhere, the “silent majority” of the working class took to the streets in towns and cities across the land — in a time of COVID-19 lockdowns and state-ordered disruption of normal human interactions — to condemn the police lynching of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Organized labor didn’t lead it, but it did join in this historic, largely spontaneous movement against police impunity and the entrenched system of white supremacy that lies behind it.

Longshore unions plan to shut down West, East and Gulf Coast ports on June 3 and work for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the duration of Floyd’s streetside, slow-motion execution at the hands of Minneapolis police.

“We’re living in a recurring nightmare in America,” said the California Labor Federation in a June 4 statement. “Over the past few weeks we’ve seen the senseless killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, David McAtee, Tony McDade and George Floyd. And for centuries, our brothers and sisters have been murdered for no other reason than the color of their skin.

“Every time a Black person is brutalized by the police, individuals and organizations condemn it. When racism leads to a modern-day lynching, we express shock. But these scenes repeat, over and over. We’re on a vicious loop that ignores the desperate need for change and cements the systemic racism that’s plagued our nation since its founding.”

The California labor statement called for ending the school-to-prison pipeline by creating decent jobs and “zero tolerance of police officers who commit any acts of violence against our communities.”

“A once-in-a-generation call to action”

On the same day, four Bay Area central labor councils, representing half a million working families, issued a joint statement entitled, “Unions must help lead the fight for racial justice.” The statement asked, “What type of society do we want for our grandchildren? Do we want more schoolhouses or more jails? More teachers or more police?

“This is a once-in-a-generation call to action. The fight for racial justice is our fight.”

It’s no secret that the mainstream of organized labor has been slow to act against white supremacy and police violence. You could say this has been an “Achilles heel” of the unions — an obstacle to uniting with the great mass of unorganized workers, the gig workers, the migrants and farmworkers, including members of oppressed nations and nationalities within the borders of the United States. We’re talking about uniting the most numerous and essential class of all, the working class, without whom no commodity would be produced and no service would be performed.

One thing the murders of George Floyd and the others have illuminated for all to see is, first of all, how brutal and corrupt is the system of the exploiters and oppressors and, second of all, how quickly and powerfully the many sectors of the working class can spring into united action to confront them.

Welsh is a retired letter carrier with the U.S. Postal Service and a current delegate to the San Francisco Labor Council.

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multiethnic 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 never-ending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and exploitation, attacks on immigrants, Muslims, LGBTQ+ 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 people are gobbled up 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, multiethnic 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 the hands of the essential class of all, the working class, without whom no commodity would be produced and no service would be performed.

If you are interested in joining Working World Party contact: 212.627.2994

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Vol. 62, No. 24 • June 11, 2020
Closing date: June 10, 2020
Editor: Deirdré Griswold
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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the last week of December by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, N.Y. 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: $85; institutions: $95. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available in microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org. A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, N.Y. 10011.
Racist Rizzo statue taken down

By Betsy Piette
Philadelphia

Philadelphia city officials removed the hated Frank Rizzo statue, long a target of demonstrations against police brutality and white supremacy, on June 3. As Philadelphia police commissioner from 1968 to 1971 and mayor from 1972 to 1986, Rizzo targeted Black activists, including members of the Black Panther Party and MOVE, harassing, beating and arresting them. The Philadelphia Inquirer published a Pulitzer Prize-winning expose in 1977, revealing that the Rizzo administration covered up rampant police brutality.

Rizzo’s statue, placed prominently near City Hall in 1988, has been criticized by many people who object to honoring a man whose bias against the Black, Latinx and LGBTQ+ communities is well documented. The Philly Coalition for REAL (Racial, Economic and Legal) Justice initiated a petition to remove the statue in 2016. On May 30, thousands of demonstrators, calling for justice for George Floyd, surrounded and attempted to topple the 10-foot-tall bronze statue. Demonstrators threw red paint on the statue and tried to set it on fire.

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney had promised to take down the hated 2,000-pound statue, but delayed carrying out his promise while Kenney prioritized cleanup of the statue on May 31, further fueling the campaign for removal.

Rizzo, the Black Panthers and Mumia

A Workers World article, “Why Rizzo’s statue must come down,” by Scott Williams, said this about Rizzo on Aug. 24, 2017: “Rizzo remains infamous for his record of dividing the working class with the poisons of racism and fascism. A precursor to Donald Trump’s authoritarian, male-chauvinist persona, Rizzo embodied white supremacist thugs. Rizzo famously bragged in the 1960s of his growing police force of 9,000 cops as strong enough to ‘invade Cuba and win.’

In 1951, Philadelphia had over 2 million residents and over 355,000 manufacturing jobs. By 1990, Philadelphia had lost over 400,000 residents and had only 85,000 manufacturing jobs.

‘Rizzo’s statue removal, June 3.’

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

People poured through U.S. streets the first week of June, as if answering Martin Luther King Jr.’s cry: “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” Luther King Jr.’s cry: “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

Around the U.S.—

“Technology eliminated millions of jobs across the U.S. and more were exported by globalization. Being ‘tough on crime’ became politically useful as a way to deal with the economy’s unemployed victims, many of whom were Black. Rizzo, a Democrat, was the icon of that racist, anti-worker movement, whose goal was more exploitation of the working class, including mass incarceration of the Black community and more police oppression.

‘One of Rizzo’s most public roles as police commissioner and mayor of Philadelphia was to destroy progressive political movements. ‘Rizzo the Raider’ led a violent crusade as police commissioner, becoming notorious as a violent captain by crushing a November 1967 high school student protest.

In 1969, Rizzo led raids on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which he claimed had ‘boards of dynamite, guns and ammunition.’ This proved to be false. In 1967, he would raid the offices and homes of leaders of the Revolutionary Action Movement and later the Students for a Democratic Society based on false accusations of terrorism.

‘Rizzo even said, ‘The Black Panthers should be strung up.’ He attempted to annihilate the radical left, especially the Black Panthers. In 1970, Rizzo led a raid on multiple Panther offices just a week before the major Revolutionary People’s Constitutional Convention met. Rizzo’s excuse was that Panther members were guilty of widespread extortion, racketeering, bribe-taking, illegal gambling and theft of over $400,000 worth of cocaine from drug sellers.”

Deeper change needed

Removing a statue is much easier than responding to calls for deep reforms in policing and the criminal justice system, especially when many people know ‘tough on crime’ is the only path for defending—and even abolishing the police. Though people are celebrating the hated symbol’s removal, the city’s act of taking it down may be a case of too little, too late. A movement is growing every day to bring down the entire system of racist terror and white supremacy that the statue only represented. []

Historic protests topple monuments of racism

Honoring George Floyd

George Floyd was born in Fayetteville, N.C., and one of his sisters still lives in nearby Raeford, N.C., where his body was brought for a memorial. Raeford is a country town with a population of less than 5,000 people—but thousands more came there on June 6 to honor Floyd. When the hearse arrived bearing his coffin, chants began in the crowd, “Black Power!” and “No justice, no peace!”

On May 30, in Fayetteville, N.C., protesters encircled the Market House, a historic building at the center of downtown. From 1790 to 1865, enslaved Black people were sold at that site about every two months. Local protesters, well aware of this history, burned a U.S. flag at the building and then set fire to the Market House itself.


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Pratt, a white, anti-racist activist born and raised in Alabama, organized for many years in Fayetteville, N.C.
This is an edited version of a talk given during the “What Road To Socialism?” webinar held by Workers World Party on May 16.

Abolitionist Ruth Wilson Gilmore lays out in her book, “Golden Gulag,” the political climate in the state of California that gave rise to the prison expansion. California had an incredibly huge and diverse economy preceding its prison boom, in which the number of people behind bars increased 430 percent between the 1980s and early 2000s.

Prior to the prison boom, California saw heavy policing around the end of the Vietnam war. There was high unemployment and high inflation. The series of crises resulting from this period produced all kinds of upheavals — of workers, land, finance capital. State capacity was also rapidly shifting from social welfare to domestic war.

While crime began to slow, societal production was being arranged around prison expansion. Republicans and Democrats alike were “talking tough,” turning around the notion that they could keep people safe by locking up criminals — a policy that just exacerbates existing inequalities, disappears people and destroys communities.

According to the Sentencing Project, 70 million people in the U.S. have criminal convictions. Simply because they’ve been convicted of a crime, the majority of these people are barred from holding most jobs. An estimated 10 million migrant workers, agriculture workers and domestic workers, are self-described “biggest [prison system] in the country” due to their activism and pressure.

The public report issued by NBUF explains that, with over 8,000 prisoners and 2,000 staff at the third largest jail in the country, the Harris County Jail is a hospital for the virus to spread. Kofi Taharka, national chair of the NBUF, told Workers World, “Prisoners are sick and dying at an alarming rate.”

Convicted prisoners were anxious to leave and be sent to the state prison system. One frustrated man told NBUF, “I’m ready to go to TDJC [Texas Department of Criminal Justice] but can’t. They’re not accepting any new prisoners.”

A Department of Justice investigation in 2009 found that conditions in the jail and treatment of inmates were unconstitutionally cruel, and excessive use of force was often unchecked. Between 2005 to 2015, 199 people died in custody at the Harris County Sheriff’s Office. Of those who died in the jail, 85 percent had not yet been convicted of a crime. University of Texas postdoctoral fellow Amanda Wosg has documented nearly 7,000 prisoner deaths in Texas.

Most prisoners can’t afford bail anyhow. Because judges are not working due to the pandemic, prisoners are not getting a review of their case every day of the tour, but one-half tested positive and three had died. Many prisoners told NBUF of being tested but never getting results.

“Effective and meaningful bail reform is needed,” said Ofer of the ACLU’s Justice Division. “We expected it to be bad, but this is even worse than we thought, and it really should be a wake-up call to everyone.”

“[A]nese struggle blocks new prisons

One of the many ways California abolitionists were able to halt the state’s self-described “biggest [prison system] in the history of the world” was by aligning with powerful governors and prison guard unions and by organizing the California State Employees Association, part of an enormous public sector union in the state. Together abolitionists and workers slowed down a state that had opened a prison every year for 23 years almost to a halt — it only opened one prison between 1999 and 2011. They made it impossible for new jails and prisons to be constructed. All the different sectors of our collective class are bound to one another. Our liberation lives on in our ability to use all levers and all tactics to work across and with the things that make us different.

Our liberation is bound to unemployed people, undocumented workers, incarcerated workers and to each other. A broad understanding of class and the myriad interlocking oppressions working against us is necessary in our fight to resist mass criminalization and the further categorizing of people into more easily containable sectors. An injury to one is an injury to all.

As Andre Lorde said, “Revolution is not a one-time event. It is becoming always vigilant for the smallest opportunity to make a genuine change in established, outgrown responses; for instance, it is learning to address each other’s differences with respect.” (“Learning from the ’60s,” speech, Malcolm X commemoration weekend, Harvard University, February 1982)

By Gloria Rubac

Houston

The National Black United Front in Houston toured the Harris County Jail on Malcolm X’s birthday, on May 16, to observe the conditions facing the prisoners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prisoners, guards, medical staff, custodians and 75 bags of nonperishable groceries, toiletries and supplies and 75 specialized kits to un housed people, which included masks and hand sanitizers. The “This jail is a COVID-19 hot spot” event was held in the building. A broad understanding of class and the myriad interlocking oppressions working against us is necessary in our fight to resist mass criminalization and the further categorizing of people into more easily containable sectors. An injury to one is an injury to all. As Andre Lorde said, “Revolution is not a one-time event. It is becoming always vigilant for the smallest opportunity to make a genuine change in established, outgrown responses; for instance, it is learning to address each other’s differences with respect.” (“Learning from the ’60s,” speech, Malcolm X commemoration weekend, Harvard University, February 1982)
In Buffalo, N.Y.: Viral video exposes police lies

By Victor Enrique

June 7 – As the uprisings against police brutality throughout the last week have shown, Buffalo, N.Y.’s elected officials can no longer hold together the conflicts embedded within it.

During the first weekend of rebellion beginning May 30, riot police teargassed and shot rubber bullets at crowds, as over 1,000 people gathered across Buffalo. By midweek, they switched tactics. On Wednesday, June 3, police kneeled along the sidewalk, the farce of his previous contradiction spoken out against this deployment. So did Trump’s own former and current secretaries of defense, the latter knowing it would likely get him fired.

Reacting to Trump’s threat, at least three organizations of anti-war military veterans called on service members from the U.S. military or the National Guard to refuse to deploy against demonstrators opposing racism.

When the Pentagon, under the guise of “solidarity,” began broadcasting his threats, and those National Guard and federal troops have been called back, they may still be used against the civilian population. The tumult within the military apparatus over Trump’s threat raises two key questions: Where does this opposition come from? What does the generals’ reluctance mean for the anti-racist movement?

To answer the first: The generals and admirals who refuse to use the military force against the African-American community and its allies could wreak whatever cohesion exists within the U.S. Armed Forces. The Pentagon has built a professional — that is, a nonconscript — military over the last 45 years since the decade in Vietnam. The use of troops — who are over a quarter of a billion or more people of color — against the civilian population could destroy its morale and boomerang against the brass. The generals’ reluctance indicates the possibility for the movement to reach out to the rank-and-file soldiers. Weakening the morale of the U.S. Armed Forces means weakening the worldwide grip of U.S.-based monopolies and banks. This would be a step forward for the people of the U.S. and the world.

Dissent from above

Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, who was fired and already on his way out, openly contradicted Trump on June 4.

“The option to use active duty forces in a law enforcement role should only be used as a matter of last resort,” he said, “and only in the most urgent and dire of situations. We are not in one of those situations now. I do not support invoking the Insurrection Act of 1807, (CNN)

Espen, normally a Trump toady, would speak out like that only if he already was under pressure from the military hierarchy to stop the use of U.S. troops in the cities. Retired top officers, who speak more freely on political questions than active officers, gave further proof of this. These included former JCS chiefs Adm. Mike Mullen and Gen. Martin Dempsey, as well as former Secretary of Defense James Mattis, all of whom gave further proof of this. These included former JCS chairs Adm. Mike Mullen and Gen. Martin Dempsey, as well as former Secretary of Defense James Mattis, all of whom have publicly stated, and media condemned the brutality of cops, who were arrested downtown, demonstrators after a handful of protesters were kettled and shot rubber bullets at crowds, as over 1,000 people gathered across Buffalo. By midweek, they switched tactics. On Wednesday, June 3, police kneeled along-the sidewalk, the farce of his previous contradiction spoken out against this deployment. So did Trump’s own former and current secretaries of defense, the latter knowing it would likely get him fired.

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Growing revolt by Black journalists

By Betsey Piette

In an historic week that has witnessed demonstrations, too numerous to count, against police brutality in the aftermath of the brutal murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police on May 25, another anti-racist movement is growing. As reports surface of police intention-ally targeting journalists across the U.S., especially Black and Brown reporters, journalists of color are speaking up and taking action against decades of major publications refusing to address racism, especially in two notable newspapers — the Philadelphia Inquirer and the New York Times.

On June 4, 44 journalists of color at the 200-year-old Philadelphia Inquirer staged a sit-down strike one day after for-cing a public apology from the Inquirer editorial staff for a blatantly racist head-line — “Buildings Matter, Too” — posted on June 4.

This article addressed plans to repair property damages to buildings and infra-structure following May 31 anti-racist protests in communities of color that exploded in an expression of outrage over unaddressed systemic racism.

The journalists issued a collective state-ment detailing what they see as decades of management ignoring their concerns and the glaring lack of people of color on the editorial staff since the retirement of Black editor Acel Moore in 2005. On June 3 among the Philadelphia Inquirer management these reporters stated: “As journalists of color, we do not report on the community — we are the community. We do our best to give the community a platform to be heard. We strive to represent the voice of the people.

“We’re Tired of…”

“It’s no coincidence that communities hurt by systemic racism only ever have jour-nalists in their neighborhoods when people are shot or buildings burn down. It takes them longer to get there and cover the story, and our relationship is thus strained. It is an insult to our work, our communities, and our neighbors to see that truth destroyed — and makes us feel that much more likely to face threats and aggression. The carelessness of our lead-ership makes it harder to do our jobs, and at worst puts our lives at risk.”

As police rained terror upon the Black journalist, which are later used in court by organizers explicitly requested white journalists. (tinyurl.com/9384067)

At an event at the University of North Carolina co-sponsored by the Black Association of Black Journalists, and his members publicly expressed outrage over its editorial decision to publish an op-ed by Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) calling for military intervention in “violent riots” to stifle protests as the case of Black Panther, award-winning journalist and now political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal reveals. 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.

As a former police commissioner and later mayor, Frank Rizzo, in one of many abuses of power, compiled an over 800-page file on Abu-Jamal in an effort to tar him. (thetronym.com, June 5)

Targeting of Black journalists by police is not a new phenomena as the case of former Black Panther, award-winning journalist and new political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal reveals. 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.

As a former police commissioner and later mayor, Frank Rizzo, in one of many abuses of power, compiled an over 800-page file on Abu-Jamal in an effort to tar-get him. When the MOVE 9 were arrested and charged with murder of a police officer in 1978, Abu-Jamal was publicly threat-ened by Rizzo for his reporting on the case.

Continued on page 7

Journalists reporting on Black uprisings under attack

By calvin deutschein

At 5 a.m. in Minneapolis on May 29, Omar Jimenez, a Black CNN reporter wearing press credentials and reporting live on camera on the rebellion against the police murder of George Floyd, was arrested along with the news crew. About a block away, a second CNN crew of white journalists were left unchallenged, even as police rained terror upon the Black demonstrators in both areas. (cm.com, May 30)

Across the U.S., law enforcement offi-cers have beaten, arrested, gassed, fired upon and bullied journalists into collab-orating with their power to carry out extrajudicial aggression. The carelessness of our lead-ership makes it harder to do our jobs, and at worst puts our lives at risk.

That evening, Copwatch, which tracks police misconduct and violence nation-ally, reported that Raleigh police ran out of tear gas and had to use expired gas that often contains cyanide, further increasing its toxicity. (indyweek.com)

On June 1, a crowd of white Antifa prod-ucts beat up WHYY journalist Jon Ehrens with a baseball bat.

Jimenez, police approached a news crew with CBS affiliate WAVE 3 News in Louisville and fired what WAVE 3 reported as “grenade rounds” directly at the crew. (wave3.com, May 29)

Back in Minneapolis, police began pepper spraying journalists, first backing them up against walls and targeting the press corps rather than individual report-ers. Journalists formed human shields and used protective gear to protect them-selves from spray and tear gas fired by riot police, despite having shown their press credentials. (latimes.com, May 30)

Police across the U.S. have been clear that journalists are shot or buildings burn down. It takes them longer to get there and cover the story, and our relationship is thus strained. It is an insult to our work, our communities, and our neighbors to see that truth destroyed — and makes us feel that much more likely to face threats and aggression. The carelessness of our lead-ership makes it harder to do our jobs, and at worst puts our lives at risk.”

As police rained terror upon the Black journalist, which are later used in court by organizers explicitly requested white journalists. (tinyurl.com/9384067)

At an event at the University of North Carolina co-sponsored by the Black Association of Black Journalists, and his members publicly expressed outrage over its editorial decision to publish an op-ed by Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) calling for military intervention in “violent riots” to stifle protests as the case of Black Panther, award-winning journalist and now political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal reveals. 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.

As a former police commissioner and later mayor, Frank Rizzo, in one of many abuses of power, compiled an over 800-page file on Abu-Jamal in an effort to tar-get him. When the MOVE 9 were arrested and charged with murder of a police officer in 1978, Abu-Jamal was publicly threat-ened by Rizzo for his reporting on the case.

Continued on page 7
From Palestine to Minneapolis

Our power is in the streets

By Susan Abulhawa

The following remarks were prepared for a rally at LOVE Park in Philadelphia on June 4.

My name is Susan Abulhawa, from Workers World Party, and I bring revolutionary greetings and solidarity from Palestine, where Palestinians have been marching in the streets of Jerusalem, Ramallah, Haifa, Gaza and beyond in support of Black lives over the past few days. I am here not as an ally, but as your comrade in arms, as your comrade in struggle.

We also need to acknowledge that the owners of the store that called the cops on George Floyd are Palestinian. That is not something our community will ignore. It’s something to be ashamed of.

It needs to be said, repeated and understood, that minorities in this country — including Brown immigrants like myself and that store owner and other minorities — are afforded rights and protections by law, not because white men in power so generously gave them to us; and not because poor people of course, the really big money have been closed.

Because Black people fought and died for those rights. Because Black people made this country the democracy it was purported to be at first, but it wasn’t until the Civil Rights Movement and until Black people made the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 a reality — to end quotas on nonwhite people coming into the country.

I have been robbed of everything my ancestors built in Palestine for 2,000 years, and I have been forced to live my life in exile, banned from my homeland, away from my culture, my language and my history because foreign colonizers with big guns and a lot of money decided I was not the right kind of human being to inherit my heritage. But I will not say that I know what it’s like to be excluded wholesale the way Black people in this country are. It’s about being a lie. I am still afforded some privileges that Black people are denied, even though

I have those privileges because of the struggle of Black people. Linked by oppression and solidarity

Every day in Palestine there is a Palestinian somewhere with an Israeli soldier’s knee on his neck. Every moment in Palestine there is a Palestinian being stopped, checked, frisked, humiliated, arrested, beaten or shot. We can say that we know what it’s like, and to some extent that is true. But we’ve not been terrorized for 400 years. Our ancestors were not uprooted from their villages and flung across the world into unspeakable bondage that has only just changed form, but not truly ended.

That is why I’m here because I am forever bound to Black America by love, pain, gratitude and a shared revolutionary history that goes back to times before I was born. You inspire us and you inspire the world. Your struggle is bringing people pouring into their streets all over the world.

The masses are hungry for revolution. Everywhere in every corner. We are tired of the colonizers, the 1% who eat on the backs of those who are too poor to.

This is our time to stand together for a real revolution. This is no longer about charging the cops or even convicting them. This is about the fact that working-class families don’t have decent schools for their children.

This is why we have been family in solidarity the poor at their lowest moment — is expected to
demand a more just world, a better world, a more equiangle world. If nothing else, this moment proves that the only real power we have as ordinary people is in the streets. It took just two weeks of us being out here for them to finally remove that damn Rizzo statue. We don’t have power in their courts; they’re rigged. We don’t have power through their ballots; those are rigged, too. They’re giving us a choice of which racist, capitalist motherfucker to vote for as president. We have a third choice, and it’s right here. In the streets.

These looters pocketed $11.7 billion

By Deirdre Griswold

Who are the real looters? They wear elegant business suits, not hoodies or jeans. They dine at fancy restaurants, not hotdog stands. They don’t rob banks. They ARE the banks.

They are the U.S. financiers who punish the poor by charging overdraft fees when a check bounces. They don’t rob banks. They ARE the banks.

They wear elegant business suits, not hoodies or jeans. They wear elegant business suits, not hoodies or jeans. They work of producing everything that is needed to stay alive. They are the U.S. financiers who punish the poor by charging overdraft fees when a check bounces. They don’t rob banks. They ARE the banks.

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Antiracist protests for George Floyd circle the globe

By John Catalinotto

The massive popular and antiracist reaction to the cop murder of George Floyd in the epicenter of world imperialism has inspired an equally massive reaction worldwide. Hundreds of thousands have marched, not only in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, but also against local manifestations of insidious racism.

The U.S. spreads its pro-imperialist culture through the world on the wavelength provided by Netflix, Disney, the internet media and even the music airways. This cultural dominance has now boomeranged on the U.S. rulers and struck a blow against Washington’s imperialist allies.

Even the corporate media have covered the breadth and depth of the worldwide protests. Al Jazeera provided one of the most inclusive lists, along with an interactive world map as of June 7 at tinyurl.com/yasd8gg5.

In one of the most satisfying actions of the weekend, demonstrators in Bristol, England, removed the statue of Bristol-born slave trader Edward Colston and dumped it into the river.

Demonstrators take down a statue of 17th century “slave trader” Edward Colston and throw it into the river in Bristol, England.

Colston grew rich in the 17th century transporting over 100,000 enslaved people to the New World — dumping overboard the bodies of 20,000 who died during the passage. He then bought his way into the hearts of the English ruling class, who called him a “philanthropist.”

Bristol’s current population, now 14 percent people of color, disagree.

Solidarity from Global South

In this time of capitalist economic crisis and pandemic, the population in the countries facing super-oppression from world imperialism nevertheless came out in solidarity with African-American people and with George Floyd.

According to Al Jazeera, in Africa there have been demonstrations in Pretoria in South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria; Monrovia, Liberia; Accra, Ghana; Tunis, Tunisia; and Dakar, Senegal.

In Asia, there were protests in South Korea; Tokyo, Japan; and Quezon City in the Philippines.

Workers World received a solidarity message for the U.S. working class from the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist), which “marched in the streets and organized demonstrations in the metropolises and numerous small towns throughout India,” including in the major city of Kolkata, West Bengal.

The Palestinian people’s strong identification with the Black struggle in the U.S. led to demonstrations in East Jerusalem and other actions. (See article this issue.)

In South America, mass protests took place in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. To the north there were protests from Mexico City to Vancouver, B.C.

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In Paris, France.

In France protests took up demands regarding victims of French police brutality. In Germany activists protested the assaults by neo-Nazis on migrants and refugees. The real enemy of the workers in Europe are the big banks, especially those of imperialist Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States — the old colonial powers.

Impact of U.S. protests

Communists abroad have expressed to Workers World the impact of the U.S. protests. A letter to Workers World from the Union of Galician People (Spanish state) read: “The murder of George Floyd has brought home to the world the existence of a decent people and working class [in the U.S.], who confront injustice in the streets and have even been able to force Donald Trump to seek refuge in the White House bunker.”

Fronte Popolare in Italy writes, “Everybody knows that any success, any step forward for the oppressed in the U.S., is a success and step forward for the oppressed of the entire world.”

Antiracist solidarity demonstrations were massive in Europe, especially those countries in Western Europe whose governments and armies are usually lined up with U.S. imperialism in NATO. This time even the governments — many of which are in a difficult relationship with the Trump administration — had to at least speak out publicly against U.S. racist police.

Indigenous people perform the Haka, a traditional Maori dance, in honor of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter in Christchurch, New Zealand.

From Istanbul in Turkey to Belfast and Dublin, from Helsinki and Stockholm to Lisbon, dozens of big cities, and many more small ones, including dozens all over Germany, were the sites of antiracist demonstrations. Besides targeting structural racism in the United States, demonstrators raised slogans against the European ultra-right.

Massive demonstrations in NATO countries

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In war-ravaged Idlib, Syria, Aziz Asmar and Anis Hamdoun said they painted the mural to memorialize George Floyd “to call for peace and love” worldwide.
Step one, movement demands ‘DEFUND POLICE!’

No Pride without justice!

Support the Marxist voice for LGBTQ2+ rights

Ever since the Stonewall Rebellion erupted June 28, 1969, Workers World has covered the global struggle to end homophobia and all forms of discrimination, persecution and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and non-binary people, everywhere.

WW has consistently backed up our activist coverage with analysis. In the early 1970s, WW ran a series of articles that led to publication of "The Gay Question: A Marxist Appraisal" in 1976. And then in 1993, we published "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View."

Then in the 1990s, WW Managing Editor and globally recognized transgen-der leader Leslie Feinberg wrote a series of articles later published in pamphlet form as "Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba." They were followed by the series "Lavender & Red" about socialism and the LGBTQ2+ struggle. In 2012 Feinberg wrote in defense of African American transgender woman CeCe McDonald, who was charged with manslaughter after defending herself from a racist, bigoted attack.

WW helps to build mass struggles, like what’s going on now in the streets from coast to coast. This righteous outpouring of rage and protest over the racist murder of George Floyd comes as the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacts Black, Brown and Indigenous people. This is the time for our community to listen to communities affected by violence, to protest with them, and to support them in all ways possible.

Please help us get out the word. For a donation of at least $75 a year — or $300 or $900 or any other amount if you’re able — we’ll send you a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five free subscriptions to give to friends. Write checks to Workers World and mail them, with your name and address, to 1475 W. 24th St., Second Floor, New York, NY 10011. Or sign up online to donate each month.

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

editorial

The American Federation of Labor was founded in 1886 and the Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1935. The two union federations merged in 1955. For most of this time police organizations—wrongly referred to as unions—were not affiliated with the U.S. labor movement.

The International Union of Police Associations, comprised of local police groups, like the Fraternal Order of Police, the Police Benevolent Association and others, was not chartered by the AFL-CIO until 1979.

If the federation is to uphold its Mission Statement—its stated purpose is to “bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our nation”—the AFL-CIO must immediately expel the IUPA.

Consistently, police associations side with their members against the communities they occupy and routinely subject to brutal, all-too-often deadly force. They defend the violent suppression of recent Black Lives Matter protests, which has led to several deaths and numerous injuries. Their contracts have a long list of protective disciplinary guidelines—which most employers would never agree to—making it nearly impossible to hold cops accountable for misconduct, including murder.

A prime example is Bob Kroll, the president of Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis. Calling on Kroll to resign, Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bill Rich Trumka, are police allowed to be a part of labor movement? Yet he takes the pathetic position that “The short answer is not to disengage and just con- demn.” (publicintegrity.org, June 5)

Supervisors who police workers on the job are not allowed, even by law, to join unions. A lone individual who crosses a picket line can be barred from union membership. It’s time past to expel the cops—police, prison and detention guards, border patrol and all armed agents of the capitalist class—and get their toxic presence out of the labor movement once and for all.

Growing class consciousness explains the mass popularity of the slogans “I—the police” and “all cops are b— d. The awesome FTP! Cops out of labor movement, youth in!

Rebellion empowers Black NFL players

By Monica Moorehead

June 8—The global uprising against police brutality, beginning its third week in the aftermath of the public lynching of George Floyd, continues to make a profound impact on the world of American football. This is certainly true for the sports world—especially the National Football League, which supervises the most popular professional sport in the country.

On June 4, a dozen Black NFL players, whose average age is 25, released a powerful two-minute video asking the NFL to apologize for attacking players who protested police brutality almost three years ago, inspired by Colin Kaepernick or “Kap.”

In the video, the players demanded an end to police brutality and systemic oppression of Black people. The players called out the names of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Michael Brown, Eric Garner and other Black people who have lost their lives to police violence in recent years. One of the players is quarterback Patrick Mahomes, most valuable player in this year’s Super Bowl. New Orleans Saints receiver Michael Thomas — AP Offensive Player of the Year in 2019—organized players from various teams to participate.

The next day, June 5, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell released an “apology” video from his home. Part of his statement reads: “We, the NFL, admit we were wrong for not listening to NFL players earlier and encourage all to speak out and peacefully protest. We, the NFL, believe Black Lives Matter.”

He went on to say, “Without Black players, there would be no National Football League, and the protests around the country are emblematic of the centu-
yes of silence, inequality and oppression of Black players, coaches, fans and staff.”

One clear fact is true: Without Black players, there would be no NFL, since 75 percent of the players are African American. But out of 32 teams, only three have African-American head coaches and one a Latina coach. There is not one Black owner; the majority of owners are either white billionaires or multimillionaires.

Kaepernick’s symbolic protest. But he did not mention Colin Kaepernick or apologize for his treatment by the NFL owners.

Kaepernick, the Black former quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, sparked a national debate in 2016 when he first sat and then knelted, during the playing of the national anthem before every game, to protest police brutality and rac-

Goodell’s main role as commissioner is to represent the interests of these owners, 10 of whom are outright supporters of Trump. These facts alone counter the insen-
sive remarks of Denver Broncos head coach Vic Fangio, who said on June 2 that there is no racism or discrimination within the NFL. He was forced to apolo-
gize on June 3.

What about ‘Kap’? And the cops?

Two significant criticisms of Goodell’s statement are that he did not mention police brutality, especially the lynching of Floyd which ignited the current rebellion, and he did not mention Colin Kaepernick or apologize for his treatment by the NFL owners.

Kaepernick, the Black former quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, sparked a national debate in 2016 when he first sat and then knelted, during the playing of the national anthem before every game, to protest police brutality and rac-

opposition against Black people.

Sports figures in the U.S. and around the world, both amateur and pro, started taking a knee in solidarity with Kaepernick’s symbolic protest. But he was released by the 49ers in 2017, despite having led the team to the Super Bowl and a conference championship in previ-
ses years. He still wasn’t picked up by any other team, not even as a sec-
ond-string quarterback. Kaepernick sued the NFL for violating his rights, when at least one NFL owner admitted publicly that he “hurt with my comments yesterday. In speaking with some of you, it breaks my heart to know the pain I have caused.”

Brees’ June 3 post mentioned noth-
ing about racism or police brutality. That sparked a firestorm of criticism from NFL players, including his own teammates. On June 4, Brees retracted his statement with an Instagram apology, saying, “I would like to apologize to my friends, team-

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continuaría el "saqueo", comienza el "tiro-OLímpico", comienza el "saqueo", comienza el "tiro-llo". Has declarado que el movimiento "antifa" (también conocido como antifas-ckistas) es una organización "terrorista", y has llamado a los gobernadores "imbé-ciles" si no "dominan" y arrestando a los manifestantes por su sola presencia, es la policía la que incita a la violencia, no los manifestantes. Trump hizo una amenaza para llamar a su base neofascista para enfrentar a los manifestantes antes de dar marcha atrás en esa amenaza. Miles de manifestantes se enfrentaron a los agentes del Servicio Secreto y a policías en Lafayette en Washington, D.C., frente a la Casa Blanca el 1 de junio. Durante varias noches, los fuertes efectos explorados lo suficientemente fuerte como para que los escucharen en la Casa Blanca. No se sabe cuánto durará este levan-amiento, ya sean días o semanas o más. Hay un absoluto: esta rebelión no tiene precedentes por estar compuesta predo-minantemente de jóvenes, sino que es multicultural con manifestantes negros, latinos, indígenas, asiáticos y blancos. No hay futuro bajo el capitalismo.

Los manifestantes son abrumadoramen-te jóvenes que trabajan o están des-empleados o son estudiantes solo de la misma edad y generos oprimidos. Atrapados en la his-tórica pandemia de COVID-19, están perdiendo empleos en la economía económica sin precedentes o arriesgando sus vidas para mantener empleos "esenciales" desprotegi-dos y mal pagados. Tal vez ellos y sus fami-liares o vecinos no pueden pagar el alquiler y están siendo desalojados de sus hogares o están enojados, tal vez muriendo, porque la atención médica es solo para personas que se unen. Se niegan a guardar silen-cio cuando se trata de ser solidarios con el movimiento Black Lives Matter y de condenar todas las formas de violencia policial.

Este levantamiento, al igual que la pan-demia, ha impactado a todos los sectores de la sociedad estadounidense. Destacadas figuras del deporte aficionados y profesional se han pronun-ciado contra el racismo y, en algunos casos, asistieron a manifestaciones junto con artistas. Los manifestantes se han arrollado en las calles en solidaridad con el ex mariscal de campo de la Liga Nacional de Fútbol Americano, Colin Kaepernick, quien se arrolló por primera vez en 2016 en oposición a la brutalidad policial. Este levantamiento también ha tenido un efecto dominó en todo el mundo, con acciones de solidaridad en ciuda-des de África y Medio Oriente, Australia, Bélgica, Brasil, Gran Bretaña, Alemania, Irán, Irlanda, Italia, Nueva Zelanda y otros lugares.

Los políticos liberales burgueses y reac-cionarios y sus voceros de los medios de comunicación intentan abrir una brecha entre los participantes en el levantamiento, etiquetando a muchos manifestantes negros como "paísicos" y muchos mani-festantes blancos "anarquistas". Estos apostolistas de la clase dominante temen cuán lejos y cuán profunda podría llegar esta rebelión para romper el frágil sistema capitalista, que ya se está recupe-rando de la pandemia de coronavirus y la crisis económica en curso. Esta rebelión necesita solidaridad política, no aislamiento! Esa es razón suficiente para exigir: ¡Ningún estado policial! ¡Ningún dictador militar! ¡Amnistía para todos los arrestados! ¡Irir a la policía y la Guardia Nacional! ¡Sin justicia, no hay paz! No hay futuro bajo el capitalismo.
(continuación)