Juneteenth: Racist cops, statues under siege

By Betsy Piette

On Juneteenth — June 19, 1865 — also known as Freedom Day, enslaved Black people in Galveston, Texas, were told they were finally freed. Abraham Lincoln’s issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, declaring that all enslaved people in the Confederate states would be forever free, took over two and a half years to affect them.

Juneteenth has been celebrated by African Americans for 154 years. While corporate U.S. history focuses on Lincoln and the Union Army freeing the people enslaved by the Confederacy, W.E.B. Du Bois argued that around 500,000 Black people freed themselves from slavery by walking off plantations. Many joined the Union Army and helped the Union win the war. Their withdrawal of labor from the plantations was a devastating blow to the South’s economy.

For many Black communities, Juneteenth rather than July Fourth is considered their true independence day. Now Juneteenth 2020 will go down in history as a turning point as many municipalities declared it an official holiday. Fueled by weeks of protests against systemic racism, thousands turned out in cities large and small to celebrate and demand recognition of Juneteenth as a national holiday marking the end of slavery in the U.S.

Trump’s racist rally fizzles

Donald Trump’s efforts to use Juneteenth to galvanize his racist, right-wing supporters at his first major campaign rally in 2020 — in, of all places, Tulsa, Okla. — fizzled by all accounts. Public outcry forced him to change the rally date to June 20. Turnout was far from the 1 million he bragged were registered to attend.

Two-thirds of the 19,000-seat BOK Center remained empty. Six staff members turned up COVID-19 positive. Yet that didn’t stop Trump from delivering a racist speech that downplayed COVID-19, blamed protesters for the low turnout, defended Confederate statues and threatened legitimate Black Lives Matter protesters with state repression.

Meanwhile anti-racism and anti-police brutality protests continue unabated around the globe. The following are reports from just a few that took place in the days surrounding June 19.

Manhattan, New York

Several hundred demonstrators gathered around City Hall in downtown Manhattan for the Juneteenth remembrance called by the December 12th movement on June 19. However, the tone of the demonstration was one of defiance rather than celebration. Organizers marched from City Hall to Wall Street to make the connection between the violence of the police and the capitalist ruling class they protect.

Within hours numbers swelled to over a thousand, with many different political tendencies attending. As has become common, there was interference from liberal reformers. This time, it was representatives from the WWP webinar on “Juneteenth and the unfinished revolution.”

This Juneteenth is probably going to be one of the biggest Juneteenth in a long, long time. That’s because of the uprising against the racist police that has been going on for the better part of a month since the lynching of George Floyd. In a sense, the Juneteenth occasion is a reminder that every step in the struggle for Black Liberation in this country has been compromised, with one step forward and two steps backward.

Even though the Emancipation Proclamation had been in existence for more than two years, a lot of enslaved people of African descent, particularly in Texas, but elsewhere in the South, did not know that they were free. That is the significance of June 19.

It’s important to note the heroic figures who don’t get enough credit for this struggle against slavery, like John Brown and Nat Turner. They favored an armed insurrection by enslaved people, supported by progressive whites as a way to end slavery. That is not the way it ended up.

The Northern capitalists came in with their army and ended slavery legally, not
Support the Marxist voice for LGBTQ2S+ 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 gender-nonconforming communities.


Then in the 1990s, WW Managing Editor and globally recognized transgender leader Leslie Feinberg wrote a series of 25 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 LGBTQ2S+ 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 cop murder of George Floyd comes as the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacts Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples.

Please help us get out the word. For a donation of at least $75 a year—or $100, or $300 or much more if you’re able—members receive a year’s subscription to WW, a monthly letter about timely issues and five posters a year 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. Then in 1993, we published “The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View.” Read it at workers.org/books.

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This rebellion is about much more than police violence

By Monica Moorehead

An earth-shattering rebellion against police violence and systemic racism has just completed its fourth week, culminating with tens of thousands of protesters in the streets on June 19 (June 16 on a county-wide basis) in the U.S. and across the planet.

That is the historic day that the chains of enslaved people of African descent were finally broken from the wretched plantations on June 19, 1865, just over half a year after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed into law on Jan. 1, 1863. While the struggle for total Black Liberation is far from being over, it has certainly taken center stage on a global scale like no other time since the 1960s.

This rebellion has already won important concessions from the powers that be and continues to sharply expose, on a class-wide basis, historical and present-day white supremacy in all forms. Police brutality is the immediate catalyst and most acute crisis, ignited by the public lynching of George Floyd by Minneapolis police on May 25.

Who would have thought it was conceivable that just a month ago corporate bosses like Nike, the NFL and other big corpora-
tions would be giving their workers a paid holiday on Juneteenth— which is neither a federal holiday nor Juneteenth is a state holiday in 47 U.S. states, so could it become a federal holiday, sooner rather than later, due to the ever-changing political climate? What about the nation decades-long, embedded racist culture? Since the U.S. government’s betrayal of the most revolutionary period for Black people— Radical Reconstruction in the 1860s and 70s— Black people have had to endure continued degrading, less-than-human treatment. This included dehumanizing representations in movies like “The Birth of a Nation” in 1915 and “Gone With the Wind” in 1939, along with generations of images on food products like Aunt Jemima syrup and pancake mix, Uncle Ben’s rice, Mrs. Butterworth’s syrup and more. Mega-companies such as PepsiCo and B&G Foods that promote these racist stereotypes recently announced that the images could no longer be tolerated— but whose days are numbered.

This rebellion is about much more than police violence and racism, in addition to their being out in the streets in vast numbers.

Confronting proslavery symbols and towns

Much of the spotlight has been on the large, historic protests against police brutality taking place in big cities like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Oakland, Denver and elsewhere— and rightfully so. But protests in smaller, more isolated cities and towns, especially in the South, are just as politically significant, if not more so. Why? Because many of these places have been strongholds for white supremacist, Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi views for decades— if not centuries.

In some places, for white protesters to bravely carry “Black Lives Matter” and “White silence = violence” placards has been nothing short of a revolutionary act as they show which side they are on. These unarmed protesters have gone face-to-face with armed, ultra-militias— and they have refused to bow down to white supremacy.

Whether the protesters were ten or a couple of hundred in number, these anti-racist demonstrations are a psychological defeat for Trump’s racist worshippers everywhere. And this is happening as more and more police are becoming demoralized from the steadfast opposition and demands to “Defund, disband, abolish!”

A tidal wave has erupted with the removal of pro-Confederacy and pro-co- differential racism four years ago, many more of the monuments, statues and symbols all over the country. None of them are safe anymore from the wrath of this righteous uprising, whether the protesters deface them, pull them or burn them down on their own, or if they force city officials to remove them. The same is true with Confederate flags, still emblazoned in some state flags or revered by reactionaries on college campuses like Ole Miss— but whose days are numbered.

Striking down Confederate flags

Probably the biggest story of all in dealing with the Confederate flag has been its removal from all events of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing. NASCAR is a 72-year-old institution that has flown Confederate flags officially and allowed its fans to bring the pro-slavery flag into the stands.

Bubba Wallace, the full-time Black NASCAR driver, demanded that NASCAR owners ban the flag from its races, which CEO Jim France Jr. agreed to. Wallace proudly competes wearing his “I Can’t Breathe” T-shirt and drives a car that displays the “#Black Lives Matter” slogan. Now NASCAR officials have announced that a noose was found in the Wallace competitor’s stall on June 21, the first official racing day ever without Confederate flags at the Superspeedway in Talladega, Ala. A noose historically promotes the lynching of Black people. Wallace described this as “a despicable act of racism and hatred [that] leaves me incredibly saddened and serves as a painful reminder of how much further we have to go as a society.” (Washington Post, June 22)

NASCAR has promised an official investigation, saying that no one who had security clearance could have carried out this cowardly act. Also on June 21 a “Defund NASCAR” plane with a Confederate flag attached to it was flown over the same race.

Wallace’s fellow white drivers and other well-known athletes have responded with #IStandWithBubba on Twitter and before the race, expressing their anti-racist solidarity with him against this hate crime. Megacorporations and politicians will continue to raise this critical question in a crucial way: Which side are you on in the overall struggle? Not only against white supremacy, but also against a capitalist system founded on racist exploitation.

Coast to coast, marchers declare ‘Black trans lives matter!’

By Martha Grevatt

“Say his name! Tony McDade!”

These words rang out on June 20 as hundreds of Clevelanders, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and allies, took to the streets on Juneteenth in 2020, carrying at Edgewater Park on Lake Erie. Demonstrators marched for several miles through Cleveland’s Near West Side, ending at Edgewater Park on Lake Erie.

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A tidal wave has erupted with the removal of pro-Confederacy and pro-co-
1921 racist terror in Tulsa
Black survivors demand reparations

By Monica Moorehead

This slightly edited article first appeared in the March 16, 2005, issue of Workers World.

“The morning that the riot started we heard the shooting ... just a couple of blocks from the end of Greenwood on Archer. After we heard the shooting, I came to ... Jackson’s Funeral Home. It was also right on the end of Greenwood, a few doors down. He (Samuel Jackson) had not been long purchasing a new ambulance. ... We went to the undertaker. ... One of the young men that drove during the funeral sessions was also going out to the garage to get the ambulance. There was an old mill right across the tracks, right on Greenwood. You could look out of that mill; they could look right over and see us. While the boy was trying to unlock the door to get the ambulance ... somebody white shot out. ... They were up in that mill which was probably four or five stories high, and they shut out of that mill and hit the boy on the hand. ... Blood shot out his hand. I am standing right behind him. He dropped the keys and we run to the back part of the funeral home by the dead folk.” — Otis Clark (Feb. 13, 1903—May 21, 2012) (reparations.blacks.blogspot.com)

The year was 1921. The place was Oklahoma. And the incident — the Tulsa race riot. This event got next to no notice when it happened almost 84 years ago, but for the survivors, like 102-year-old Clark, it’s like it happened yesterday.

On May 31, 1921, racist whites carried out a brutal attack against what was then known as “Black Wall Street,” a segregated section of Tulsa where the Black population established prosperous businesses. These racists killed and maimed hundreds if not thousands of Black women, men and children and burned all of their businesses and homes to the ground.

All of the survivors received any kind of apology, compensation or any public recognition that this massacre happened.

As of June 19, Payday Report’s “Strike Tracking Map” showed 540 wildcat strikes in support of Black Lives Matter in the United States over the past three weeks of June. The Week of June 8, #ShutDownStem strikes saw academic scientists go on strike at 109 locations across the United States. The Washington State General Strike saw workers partici-pate at over 230 locations across the state on June 12. Between March and May, Payday reported 260 strikes demanding personal protective equipment, hazard pay and other working conditions needed to cope with the pandemic. A total of 840 strikes have been recorded since early March.

Communication Workers statement against racism

An example of statements made by many unions opposing racism and the murder of George Floyd is that of the Communication Workers (CWA) issued on May 22, by its president, in response to the vicious murder of George Floyd and other Black lives. We must move to action.” On June 11, CWA members nationally “took a stand against racism by stopping work and reflecting for eight minutes and 46 seconds, the length of time Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd’s neck.”

Bay Areas unionists march against racism and for police reform

At least 3,000 union members took part June 13 in a march from Oakland, Calif., to Berkeley in support of Black Lives Matter. They called for funding to be re-directed from the police to community services and for holding police accountable for their actions.

The protest was organized by Service Employees Local 1023 and other local unions and organizations, includ-ing American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3290, the Alameda Labor Council, Ryse Youth Center and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Dwight McIlroy, chief steward of Local 1021, explained that all unions need “to make a massive con-trIBUTION toward the elimination of systemic racism, beginning with police reform. We are not only people of color, we are all people of humanity committed against human rights, and the distribution of personal protective equip-ment.” Calling out company policies that “force hun-dreds of thousands of Black and Brown workers to live in poverty,” Edie wrote, “You cannot claim to be against ‘inequality, injustice and racism’ while lobbying against paid sick days during a pandemic, cutting profits ahead of workers’ safety, ignoring sexual harassment and fight-ing efforts of Black and Brown workers to join together in a union.”

Seattle health care workers demand COVID protections

University of Washington Medicine staff and work-ers from the UW campus rallied at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle on June 14 calling for better protections from COVID-19 and protesting planned furloughs and lay-offs, after UW Medicine claimed $950 million losses during the pandemic. The health care workers, rep-re-sented by Washington Federation of State Employees, accuse the university of cutting pay raises, the reim-bursement of personal protective equip-ment designed to flatten the curve, includ-ing personal protective equipment to keep us safe and paid sick leave to protect our co-workers and customers.” To sign a petition calling for $85 an hour and union rights, visit fightfor15.org.
San Francisco, June 29

2,500 people chant ‘Black Lives Matter’ in San Francisco, N.Y., the traditional land of the Onondaga Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederation, on June 6.

Over 2,500 people chanting “Black Lives Matter” gathered in Syracuse, N.Y., on June 6. Brought together by BLM Syracuse, CaseYouthBLM and the Muslim charitable organization Raha Syracuse, the multigendered, predominantly young and white crowd included the Syracuse Teachers Association.

An Indigenous Peoples contingent represented three continents and more than seven nations in solidarity with Black lives. Nikeeta Slade, BLM organizer, received thunderous applause when she said: “Like the old union slogan, this is a ‘which-side-are-you-on’ moment. If you are not for Black people, oppressed people and workers, then you are on the side of the murderous police of the state.”

At the rally’s close, CaseYouthBLM and Last Chance for Change led about 1,000 young people in a march through downtown—the seventh consecutive day they marched through Syracuse.

—Report by Minnie Bruce Pratt

Syracuse, N.Y.

As pent-up anger against white supremacy boils over in the uprising after the murder of George Floyd, Black and Indigenous solidarity in California’s took down statues of Junipero Serra—the hated boss of the California mission system, which enslaved and murdered thousands of Native people during Spanish coloni (tinyurl.com/y9h8mr85)

The Albuquerque Police Department riot police came to the scene only after a woman was injured. They arrested the N.M. Civil Guard militia members and Steven Baca. But what was the most troubling to witness was how those domestic terrorists were treated. We have seen countless videos of police inflicting violence and brutality on unarmed Black, Indigenous and people of color, and yet these men were able to sit in their asses comfortably and unharmed. We feel as if their arrest was to remove these men from another dangerous situation as riot police then began to administer tear gas and rubber bullets at the unarmed demonstrator. Many of our relatives were harmed by these lethal weapons and no de-escalation methods were administered. Just straight violence to those only armed with signs and their voices.

This type of violence against the community displays the uplifting of white supremacy; the police weren’t there to protect anyone except their allies. The APD has been seen coercing with N.M. Civil Guard, and some have even heard on their police scanners that these men are “friends.” We identify both the APD and N.M. Civil Guards as enemies to Black, Indigenous and people of color and demand their abolishment. These military forces don’t and will not protect us.

As the Environmental Justice Director of Pueblo Action Alliance, and as a Tiwa woman, I do not consent to the violence continuously happening on stolen Tiwa Territory. Our ancestors didn’t die for the repossession of Pueblo lands, but they also killed to ensure that we are the surviving descendants of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. That we remain the descendants of the war in Acoma and the descendants of any war on Pueblo territory. We will not be forgotten and we will fight until the day we thrive in peace.

We are the extension of 1680 and we are not going anywhere. We will continue to outnumber our homelands and continue to fight for Indigenous liberation, sovereignty and revolution. Kherken/Thank you to everybody that stood for what was right and advocated for these racist monuments to be removed and hopefully destroyed. Our thoughts, prayers, and energy go to the victim and the victim’s family. Thank you on behalf of Pueblo Action Alliance coming from Tiwa territory. Let’s see to it that all these monuments never exist in our territories ever again.

Additional statements from Pueblo Action Alliance

“A testament to a lineage of tyranny and oppression. Standing at the door of reconciliation for my Indigenous people is a constant reminder of slavery, genocide, and sexual violence on our women. Yesterday was a double-edged sword—we continually de-escalated the tensions between our people and the domestic terrorist that is the N.M. Civil Guard.” — Preston DeVore, P4A Youth Intern

“Yesterday’s incident added another layer of historical trauma that our people will continue to need to heal from. As a mother and lead with our Youth Internship, it is my duty and role to ensure that I continuously do the work to break the harmful cycles that perpetuate violence against our youth and peoples. This means calling out systemic racism that is embedded in every inch of our society. I will not remain silent. We, PAA, will continue to uplift our peoples, for us to continue to thrive. It is our privilege, as the descendants of Pueblo Revolutionaries.”

— Reyes DeVore, Community Outreach Director

“Strength to those who rose up to the evils yesterday. I love my people. I love those who show no fear, are connected to our just cause, to our communities, to each other, and the rights to live: to breathe. We know the truth of when it comes to being heard, seen, respected—our voices have been silenced for way too long. Enough is enough! The cowardly actions of the N.M. Civil Guard only further fuels us in seeing this struggle through. Statues and struggle yes-yesterday, Revolution today, Liberation tomorrow.”

— Sheldon Tenorio, Creative Strategist

‘We are unified as Pueblo on the removal of monuments that glorify murderers’

The uprising in response to the murder of George Floyd has become a movement against white supremacy. Generations of anger have exploded against settler colonialism and slavery and all-white-supremacist historical monuments. In New Mexico, the Pueblo Nations still see through the genocidal conquistador Juan de Oñate, who led Spanish troops to conquer and occupy the Rio Grande Valley.

The year 1598 began centuries of Spanish oppression. In 1599 after Spanish troops defeated Acme Pueblo after a fierce battle, Oñate killed 800, ordered all Indigenous Acme Pueblos enslaved, and ordered his men to cut off a foot of every male warrior over the age of 25. Indigenous resistance peaked in the 1860 Pueblo Revolt, led by Po’pay, which was the second-largest set-back to Spanish colonialism in the hemisphere, driving the Spanish out for 12 years.

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— Reyes DeVore, Community Outreach Director

“Strength to those who rose up to the evils yesterday. I love my people. I love those who show no fear, are connected to our just cause, to our communities, to each other, and the rights to live: to breathe. We know the truth of when it comes to being heard, seen, respected—our voices have been silenced for way too long. Enough is enough! The cowardly actions of the N.M. Civil Guard only further fuels us in seeing this struggle through. Statues and struggle yes—yesterday, Revolution today, Liberation tomorrow.”

— Sheldon Tenorio, Creative Strategist
Continued from page 1

the Ottee at the Mayor who approached organizers and tried to lead the march. However, the liberal presence was drowned out by more radical groups.

Buffalo, N.Y.

People’s Pride: Solidarity In The Spirit Of Stonewall, held June 21, was created to express solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives going on here and around the world. The speakers addressed the history of Buffalo’s own Conde Peoples III who helped strike down sodomy laws in New York. Other speakers included two Black poets who discussed white appropriation of the Black Lives Matter movement, racism and cultural appropriation. The final speaker spoke about living as a Black disabled queer person and the effects of racism.

Philadelphia

Multiple events took place in Philadelphia on June 19. Demonstrators gathered at the African American Museum, marched through Center City chanting, “Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter!” At City Hall they merged with another group of demonstrators who were blocking traffic. The demonstrators ended with a protest against police violence in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. City officers were closed in honor of Juneteenth, as were several businesses.

The Philadelphia chapter of Black Lives Matter and We Want Freedom for Black Philly celebrated with an event called Jawnteeneth at Malcolm X Park in West Philadelphia. Several hundred people marched from the park down 52nd Street as motorists honked in support. Residents along the street, where police had violently attacked demonstrators with tear gas and rubber bullets on May 31, stood on porches with fists in the air.

Muda Bey, with the Revolutionary Black Panther Party of Philadelphia, called Juneteenth the true independence day for people of African descent: “A lot of people don’t understand that July Fourth for them and July Fourth for us looked totally different. So this is our true Independence Day, and I encourage every Black person and every person in the African diaspora to celebrate Juneteenth because this is when you were rightfully free.” (Inquirer.com, June 20)

Former prisoner Robert Saleem Holbrook, with the Human Rights Coalition and Abolitionist Law Center, spoke about his experiences and those of other Black women incarcerated in these massive organizing efforts are proof of the opposite. The movement is gaining momentum. And if we center Black Trans lives in our struggle for collective liberation, we will win!

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Over 15,000 people took to the streets on June 14, as part of the Brooklyn Liberation March for Black Trans Lives. In a true show of Black Trans power, the event was organized in a week’s time by The Okra Project, Marsha P. Johnson Institute, For The Gwarls, Black Femmes in the Arts and G.L.T.T.S. (Gays and Lesbians Living In a Transgender Society).

After a transformatively loving rally, the sea of people, clad in white, walked from Grand Army Plaza to Fort Greene Park. The silent march was designed to make a safer space for Black Trans people and give a nod to the NAACP’s auto-organized protest parade for Black Lives down Fifth Avenue in 1917.

The Brooklyn event was a massive, Black Trans-led, socially distant march with a physically accessible route. It was an outpouring of love for Black Trans people — the real beginning of Pride 2020. Queer people know there would be no Pride without Black people. Reclaim Pride is back in New York City this year with their second annual march on June 28 — the Queer Liberation March for Black Lives and Against Police Brutality.

After weeks of rebellion all over the world, conservative media outlets have tried to force the narrative that this season of protest is drawing to a close. But these massive organizing efforts are proof of the opposite. The movement is gaining momentum. And if we center Black Trans lives in our struggle for collective liberation, we will win!

San Antonio, Texas

Three days of Juneteenth actions in San Antonio brought anti-racist activists into the streets again. There were two marches on June 19 and one on June 20. On June 21, a caravan of over 80 cars wave through the city honking and displaying Black Lives Matter placards.

Makasi Motema, Sawyer Eason, Ezra Icho, Calvin Deutschbein, Dianne Mathiowetz and Shelley Ettinger contributed to this article.

Racist cops, statues under siege

New York City children’s march.

In the evening, the demonstration converged with several others in Washington Square Park. The energy level of the crowd was high and the police decided to keep their distance. Before the demonstration ended, protesters knelt for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, the amount of time the policeman knelt on the neck of George Floyd when he was murdered. The police had engaged in an obvious evening, Raleigh, Decatur, and other cities had respectively pulled down Confederate statues.

Raleigh, N.C.

Later that day, police had reportedly arrested two protesters near the Confederate monument in front of the DeKalb County Courthouse. Those arrested were members of the “Last Chance” Confederate group. The protests in Raleigh — one suspended from a traffic light and the other on the steps of the courthouse, as Wake County cops, in comical levels of military gear, cowered inside the building.

The crowd dispersed safely and returned to the streets the next day when they witnessed a crew removing the remains of the white supremacist monuments from the Capitol grounds.

Decatur, Ga.

After almost three years of struggle, the “Last Chance” Confederate monument in front of the DeKalb County Courthouse was taken down on June 18. Erected in 1908 — the year the Georgia Legislature passed a constitutional amendment denying Black voting rights — the statue has symbolized white supremacy for 112 years. Community groups Beacon Hills Black Alliance for Human Rights and Hate Free Decatur led the campaign that forced the removal on the eve of Juneteenth. Hundreds gathered in the square, cheering as it was disassembled and hauled away on trucks.

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Juneteenth
ILWU shuts down 29 ports along the West Coast

By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

Taking bold stands against systemic racism and oppression is nothing new for the Bay Area’s Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10. The union has organized work stoppages to protest many injustices from apartheid in South Africa to the police murder of Oscar Grant to the Israeli bombing of Gaza. Local 10 was instrumental in organizing the Million Worker March in 2004 and bringing back the militant tradition of May 1, International Workers’ Day, when workers struck for higher wages and better conditions.

When Local 10 put out a call for action on Juneteenth (June 19, 1865), it is the date the Emancipation Proclamation reached Texas after the Civil War–to protest police terror against George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and all the victims of police brutality, every single ILWU local joined in to shut down the entire West Coast.

On June 19, longshore workers brought shipping commerce to a halt from Vancouver to San Diego. This work stoppage cost the ship owners and ports tens of millions of dollars.

In Oakland, ILWU Locals 10, 34, 75 and 91 organized a march and a car caravan under the banner: “An Injury to One Is an Injury to All.” On the morning of Juneteenth, thousands of people on foot, in cars, on bicycles and even on motorcyles showed up at the Port of Oakland.

The opening rally included speeches by “the real Clarence Thomas”—the retired ILWU Local 10 leader—as well as scholar and activist Angela Davis and actors/activist Danny Glover, calling in from home. ILWU Local 10 President Trent Willis spoke and helped chair the opening rally.

Then the march and car caravan took off slowly toward downtown Oakland. Thousands of demonstraters wearing masks, many carrying homemade signs and banners, streamed across the Adeline Overpass down to the city streets. ILWU members and supporters stopped traffic to allow the huge protest to work its way up Broadway. On this day, not only did all work stop at the Port of Oakland—all traffic in Oakland ground to a halt!

First stop was the Oakland Police Department headquarters, where Michael Brown Sr., whose son was killed in Ferguson, Mo., in 2014; the parents of Oscar Grant; and other victims of police terror spoke out for a citywide campaign to defund the OPD and invest in Oakland’s communities. Cat Brooks of the Anti Police-Terror Project called on everyone to support this effort as well as the campaign by the Black Organizing Project to end the school police department, creating “police-free schools.”

Finally the march reached Oscar Grant Plaza (renamed by the people after Grant’s 2009 murder by Bay Area Rapid Transit police). The plaza was filled beyond capacity with thousands of demonstraters, and the streets were clogged with hundreds of cars from the caravan. Closing speakers included ILWU members, community activists and family members of those killed by police—all expressing solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

One special guest speaker was hip-hop artist, rapper and movie director, Boots Riley, who comes from Oakland. Riley talked about the political significance of the shutdown. He asked everyone to imagine what would happen if this wasn’t just a one-day shutdown of West Coast ports. He said the financial costs of an indefinite shutdown would be unimaginable, but that’s what would be needed to make change happen.

Riley said, “We need to show them we ain’t thinkin’ we’re tellin’. We’ll stop the world and make them mother—er jum off.” (SFGATE.com, June 20)

U.S. to Palestine, stop racist police terror!

By calvin deutschbein
Durham, N.C.

As the uprising rocks the U.S., increasingly the veil over policing—a form of neocolonialism—is wearing thin. In the Triangle area of North Carolina, home of the DemilitarizeDurhamPalestine movement, solidarity with Palestinians—world leaders in struggle against racist occupation and colonial-state violence—is more important than ever.

As the United States is the central sponsor of Israeli apartheid, those of us in the U.S. can support Palestinians by stopping the flow of resources.

One way the U.S. upholds the Israeli occupation is by using dollars from massive military budgets—which often make up about half the general budget of towns and cities, not to mention the personal protective equipment at work! Now back behind bars, the official explanations for how theIEF, even as they faced new financial costs due to the lack of protections. The demonstration demanded freedom for the six, health care for prisoners and an end to mass incarceration. A copy of these demands was signed by many organizations and fixed on the DOC’s front door.

Seattles longshore workers stop work on Juneteenth

By Jim McManah
Seattle

Longshore workers and supporters in Seattle marched on Juneteenth as part of a strike of 29 ports from California to Canada. Seattle’s Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Locals 52 and 19 marched, along with local Black leadership, from the Local 19 union hall down the waterfront to Pier 46 for a rally.

Hundred of marchers chanted “Black Lives Matter.” There was representation from the Inlandboatmen’s Union in the ILWU and delegations of Filipino internationalists from BAYAN USA.

At the rally, march organizer Gabriel Prawal, the first Black president of ILWU Local 52, spoke and then read a solidarity statement from the Arab Resource and Organizing Center, echoing the call of the Palestinian Uprising.

ILWU Local 19 President Austin spoke in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. Family members of people killed by the cops showed up and spoke.

A Latinx member of the Highline Education Association/National Education Association spoke of their successful petition for the Seattle-King County Labor Council to expel the Seattle Police Officers Guild.

After the rally, the march traveled to the Washington Department of Corrections. The longshore workers, along with supporters, demanded justice for six work-release prisoners, who had been disciplined at work and sent back to prison simply for insisting on personal protective equipment at work! Now back behind bars, the six, mostly prisoners of color, are showing symptoms of COVID-19 due to the lack of protections.

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Demilitarize/DurhamPalestine at the annual Historic Thousands on Jones Street, joining over 200 social justice organizations, Feb. 8.
Attica, 1971

By Tom Soto

In September 1971, prisoners at Attica Correctional Facility in New York State staged a rebellion that drew international attention to the struggle of incarcerated workers. Prisoners requested that the Prisoner Solidarity Committee of Workers World Party intervene on their behalf during negotiations. New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller eventually ordered a massacre that led to the deaths of over 40 people. The following is an excerpt of PSC member Tom Soto’s eyewitness account. Soto died earlier this month at the age of 77.

There is one scene I’ll never forget. I was leaving the prison for the last time, late Sunday night. As I entered corridor A leading into the liberated area there was a brother whom I happened to know personally standing on security. His arms were folded as he faced 40 machine guns on the administration side. On his shirt he was wearing a [Prisoners Solidarity Committee] button. Today, I don’t know if he is alive. Another thing I’ll never forget—a brother who had been a long time noted the ring on my finger and asked about it. I told him it had been made from an American fighter bomber shot down by Laotian women over Laos. I gave it to him, and he considered it to be a very dear show of solidarity between the PSC and the prisoners and the Indochinese people.

As I left, I knew that I might never see these men again. The atmosphere was filled with tension. There were many hugs and kisses, many goodbyes, many messages to families on the outside. Yet there was also an incredible strength and determination among all the prisoners to fight for their just demands or die in the attempt.

Finally, I’d like to add that the prisoners don’t view themselves as criminals. They know that they—the Black people, the Puerto Rican people, the poor white people—are not “criminals” but oppressed people, driven by poverty. They know that they have been denied jobs; they have families to support; and they know that the only way for poor people to survive, for those with no hope of getting jobs, was through stealing $20 or $100 or $200, in other words, crimes of survival. They see themselves as victims of a racist society which oppresses and exploits their people. They see the Rockefeller’s, the companies, the big corporations, the banks, those who rob and steal their labor for profit, as the real criminals.

The inmates always told me that they had no intention of killing any of the hostages. They took them because there was no other way to redress their grievances.

Philadelphia police

Too late to reform, time to disband

By Betsy Piette

Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Police Department, the fourth largest in the U.S., is one of the oldest municipal police agencies, founded in 1839. Its history has been marked by patterns of police brutality, intimidation, coercion and disregard for constitutional rights.

Recently, a statue of former Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo (1967-71), whose tenure is synonymous with racist police brutality, was finally removed.

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With these latest layoffs, CEO Mark Culliton targeted one-third of the remaining youth service employees working for his company, College Bound, after workers declared their intention to unionize as Uncensored United-Service Employees (SEIU) Local 888 on June 5. College Bound is a “further education” preparation program, while Boston Uncensored hires neighborhood leaders impacted by violence to be mentors in the program. The company website advertises the programs as “opportunities to turn away from the ‘street corner’ for good.”

The UU members are Black and Brown neighborhood leaders who have demonstrated against police violence and are opping young people by drawing on their own challenges and experiences. These workers are demanding that Culliton recognize their organizing drive that has resulted in those illegally fired in retaliation for organizing. Uncensored United’s Facebook page asks supporters to sign and share a petition and contact Culliton supporting their demands.

As workers spoke out at the June 16 rally, they described a quintessentially capitalist story of structural racism and gender violence.

Tenché Taché explained that Culliton reduced his company from 94 workers to fewer than 25 in a decade: “At the same time, in 2019, Culliton’s salary was $410,000 and now it’s $185,000 … a raise of $45,000. That’s more than any of us make in a year!” Taché noted that in 2020 Culliton probably made even more.

Another worker pointed out that big banks and corporations oppress workers—and so do nonprofit entrepreneurs.

Workers detailed how Culliton exploits and disrespects the reality of giving donations by publicly narrating selected painful details from their personal stories without consent, then excluding them from decision-making.

Culliton, a white graduate of the University of Michigan with a Yale MBA, calls himself “the vision behind the solution,” highlighting his school-privatization credentials on the company website. His biography suggests Black and Brown trauma is a profitable problem for him. Meanwhile, the company’s advisors, instructors and mentors, on call 24/7 for their youth clients, earn between $30,000 and $55,000—an unlivable wage in the hyper-expensive Boston area.

Just three days before the layoffs, Culliton raised $650,000, evidence that his motivation in the firings was retaliation, not response to the recession. He had certainly removed workplace activists in the past.

At the close of the rally, workers marched to Culliton’s fancy house—presumably valued above a million dollars in a predominantly White neighborhood where once multiple working-class families were crammed into triple-decker housing. Protesters blocked midday traffic, chanted and leafleted essential workers of color in the streets, receiving a friendly reception. As they attached flyers to Culliton’s door, workers loudly appealed to his neighbors—for home because of the pandemic—to help Culliton see the light. They also announced that they encourage people anywhere in the world to give him a call and support the workers’ struggle.

Larry Holmes

the liberal bourgeoisie which is trying to catch up and sound like they’re on the right side, so they can co-opt the struggle with sloganering and measures. This is what they do. On the other hand, there are the masses who want to tear stuff down, and realize that even if the first thing you tear down is a statue, that’s just symbolic of the fact that we need to tear down systems like capitalism. These two paths will be contentious, and that’s going to be a protracted struggle.

But for the masses to come out ahead, there’s going to be a time when it’s no longer sufficient for these uprisings to be spontaneous. They are great, and they accomplish a lot, and they push things forward.

But the time is coming when the struggle needs to be organized, and revolutionaries will have to be involved and will need to influence it and lead it. That’s where we can really accomplish some of the revolutionary goals that we have. That requires organization.

That’s why there is Workers World Party. We are hoping that those of you who understand this, who are moving in that direction, will look into joining Workers World Party. Now is the time. It’s very decisive. What you do can make a big difference.

View this and other WWP webinars at workers.org/videos.

Black workers resist union-busting Boston gentrifier

By Workers World Boston bureau

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Another worker pointed out that big banks and corporations oppress workers—and so do nonprofit entrepreneurs.

Workers detailed how Culliton exploits and disrespects the reality of giving donations by publicly narrating selected painful details from their personal stories without consent, then excluding them from decision-making.

Culliton, a white graduate of the University of Michigan with a Yale MBA, calls himself “the vision behind the solution,” highlighting his school-privatization credentials on the company website. His biography suggests Black and Brown trauma is a profitable problem for him. Meanwhile, the company’s advisors, instructors and mentors, on call 24/7 for their youth clients, earn between $30,000 and $55,000—an unlivable wage in the hyper-expensive Boston area.

Just three days before the layoffs, Culliton raised $650,000, evidence that his motivation in the firings was retaliation, not response to the recession. He had certainly removed workplace activists in the past.

At the close of the rally, workers marched to Culliton’s fancy house—presumably valued above a million dollars in a predominantly White neighborhood where once multiple working-class families were crammed into triple-decker housing. Protesters blocked midday traffic, chanted and leafleted essential workers of color in the streets, receiving a friendly reception. As they attached flyers to Culliton’s door, workers loudly appealed to his neighbors—for home because of the pandemic—to help Culliton see the light. They also announced that they encourage people anywhere in the world to give him a call and support the workers’ struggle.

Larry Holmes

the liberal bourgeoisie which is trying to catch up and sound like they’re on the right side, so they can co-opt the struggle with sloganering and measures. This is what they do. On the other hand, there are the masses who want to tear stuff down, and realize that even if the first thing you tear down is a statue, that’s just symbolic of the fact that we need to tear down systems like capitalism. These two paths will be contentious, and that’s going to be a protracted struggle.

But for the masses to come out ahead, there’s going to be a time when it’s no longer sufficient for these uprisings to be spontaneous. They are great, and they accomplish a lot, and they push things forward.

But the time is coming when the struggle needs to be organized, and revolutionaries will have to be involved and will need to influence it and lead it. That’s where we can really accomplish some of the revolutionary goals that we have. That requires organization.

That’s why there is Workers World Party. We are hoping that those of you who understand this, who are moving in that direction, will look into joining Workers World Party. Now is the time. It’s very decisive. What you do can make a big difference.

View this and other WWP webinars at workers.org/videos.
Defund means abolish police!

In the wake of national uprisings due to the lynching of George Floyd, the United Nations Human Rights Council took a historic vote on June 18, 2020, to demand the U.S. stop the use of lethal violence by the police. This vote marked the first time the council has condemned the use of police force by any member state.

"Che died defending no other interest than the interest of the people," said Fidel Castro (1926–2016), former President of Cuba, in a speech honoring Che Guevara on Oct. 9, 1967, in La Higuera, Bolivia. "Che's example, we will always look for and replace them with popular organizations—class police—abolish the police budgets or 'abolish the police.'"

Che's example—inspiration in struggle, determination and optimism. In his character, his will, his tenacity. He left us his example!

The police and the racists will fight against anti-racist demonstrators and mass marches. While none of the victories has yet been made permanent, the wave of unprecedented global struggle is already something that even reactionary Supreme Court justices would like to avoid drowning under.

By Lyn Neeley

Honoring Che: Revolutionary hero, internationalist

In the wake of national uprisings due to the lynching of George Floyd, the U.S. Human Rights Council held an emergency session on June 18. The council unanimously passed a resolution condemning systemic racism and police brutality against people of African descent in all countries, but particularly in the U.S.

More than 600 rights groups and 54 African nations called on the council to investigate the murder of George Floyd, as well as police violence against anti-racist demonstrators and mass marches.

Floyd's family and families of other victims murdered by the police also appealed to the HRC. Ben Crump, Floyd's family lawyer, sent a tweet to the council, "encouraging the U.S. government to press federal criminal charges against involved officers and making recommendations for systemic police reform.

In 2018 the U.S. pulled out of the HRC, which is now made up of 47 states. The U.S. villainized the council for not condemning Venezuela's Chavista government, for welcoming the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for its critical stance toward Israel, which included questioning Israel's backing of the U.S. war in Iraq.

Many speakers at the hearing condemned recent actions by the U.S. The Iranian representative called George Floyd's killing a "public execution." Cuba's spokesperson said severe racism in the U.S. is "not the exception," but "part and parcel" of daily life. The Somali representative called this systemic racism more dangerous than COVID-19.

Zeid Raad al-Hussein, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, criticized President Trump's new anti-immigration strategy of "zero tolerance" at the U.S./Mexico border. He noted the U.S. has been deporting over 2,000 children from their families over the last two months. Al-Hussein reminded the council that the U.S. is the only U.N. member that has opposed every U.N. list and put the existence of police on the list of points for debate.

While the U.S. has yet to ratify the 1964 Civil Rights Act protects LGBTQ+ workers from job discrimination. The new powerful movement has swept momentum from the streets and cop shows from the airwaves. It has raised anti-racist literature to the top of the best-seller lists and put the existence of police on the list of points for debate.

By Lyn Neeley

Over the past month a Black Lives Matter movement has arisen 100 times stronger than before, impacting every social event. The Dreamers have been in solidarity with BLM and vice versa. This new powerful movement has swept monumental victories that the rich—landowners, slave owners, capitalists—impose on the working people (which capitalists call profits) and concentrate it in the hands of a few. To the U.S. ruling class, police are the best servants. A debate has arisen over what "defund the police" means. Originally, it meant to eliminate police budgets or "abolish the police."

Some participants in the movement have argued for more limited demands, such as: Stop the Pentagon from supplying the cops with heavy military hardware like tanks and helicopters; cut police budgets by 10 percent and use the funds to supply social services to the people; establish civilian boards that answer to the community to recruit, train and run the police.

Workers World supports those forces in the movement that raise the slogan of "abolishing the police." This is an unprecedented uprising of the African-American community, one with broader support from the general population than ever before in U.S. history, any battle over specific demands merges with this living struggle and pushes it forward.

Police and the racists will fight the U.S. rulers to ignore this demand. (tinyurl.com/y7lsqoh5)

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By Lyn Neeley

Honoring Che: Revolutionary hero, internationalist

"If you tremble with indignation at every injustice, then you are on the road of mine." Those are the words of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, anti-imperialist, guerrilla fighter and a leader of the Cuban revolution. This working-class hero is revered by revolutionaries and oppressed peoples worldwide.

Che was born on June 14, 1928. (CIA-directed) Cuban soldiers executed him on Oct. 9, 1967, in La Higuera, Bolivia. Cuban leader Fidel Castro told his grieving country on Oct. 18, 1967: "Che died defending no other interest than the interest of the people." He left the world with a legacy that is greater than the only continent he ever knew. He has left us his example! "Che carried to his highest expres- sion revolutionary stoicism, the ‘Defend the police,’ sacrifice, revolutionary hatred, revolutionary combativeness, the revolution- ary's spirit of work. Che brought the ideas of Marxism-Leninism to their freshest, purest, most revolution- ary expression. No other person of our time has carried the spirit of proletar- ian internationalism to its highest pos- sible degree," Fidel wrote.

"We must face the future with firm- ness, determination and optimism. In Che's example, we will always look for inspiration—inspiration in struggle, inspiration in tenacity, inspiration in internationalism toward the enemy, inspiration in internationalist feeling!" (tinyurl.com/vgyq56)

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work and no overtime. Seafarers' companies pay as little as $250 for a month's The labor inspectors report that other companies' contracts can be extended by a month. That generally varies from two to 10 months. After a worker's contract is finished, they are not fit to continue to safely perform their job. Therefore, economists and business analysts use the number of claims as an indicator of the health of the economy. For every one million people, the U.S. had 83,956 cases and 4,634 deaths. In the U.S., the facts as of June 22 were these: China may now be seeing a second wave of the virus—and is prepared to contain it. How different from the divisiveness people in the U.S. get to see as capitalist government, no matter which party is in power. To overcome the imposed divisions in the U.S. that keep the working class from realizing its power to create a better world, change is coming now from the cooperation of movements rising against racism, sexism, mass incarceration and the oppression of immigrants, as well as by people living with disabilities and LGBTQ2S+ people. Cooperation and solidarity: These are the greatest antidotes to any disaster, natural or human made. And a socialist system develops and strengthens these qualities among people.

By Deirdre Griswold

Facts are stubborn things. Take the fact that the People’s Republic of China, with four times the population of the U.S., has had far fewer COVID-19 deaths, even though it was the first country to be confronted with this new disease. How do defenders of the capitalist system deal with that fact? They don’t. They just ignore it.

Yet according to the website Coronavirus Update, which tracks the numbers of deaths and cases all over the world, the facts as of June 22 were these: The U.S. had a total of 2,356,715 cases of COVID-19 and 122,249 deaths. China had 83,956 cases and 4,634 deaths.

When seen in relation to population size, the contrast is even more remarkable. For every one million people, the U.S. had 396 deaths. China had just three deaths per million people.

WW wrote about this at the beginning of May. At that time, the U.S. had 110 F. He considered mutilating himself on the ship’s gear to get off the vessel. A friend talked him out of it. (June 19)

Countries and companies want their merchandise moved. The companies need orders to limit the spread of the coronavirus— and is prepared to contain it as effectively as it did the first cases. The work that Chinese workers are doing in China’s strength relies on the solidarity of its people to work together in a time of crisis. It is impossible to ignore the difference in social policies behind these glaringly different outcomes. The U.S. is unabashedly a capitalist country, one where competition is hailed as a virtue—although the wealth they will next get work. Both totals are rising by tens of thousands every day. Both the secretary general of the United Nations and Pope Francis have issued statements about the “involuntary servitude” being imposed on seafarers.

The International Transport Workers’ Federation, a coalition of a wide variety of national maritime unions, has initiated an “Enough is Enough” campaign. The ITF issued a June 21 statement saying that “when seafarers have finished their extended contracts, they are fatigued physically and/or mentally and feel that they are not fit to continue to safely perform their duties at the level required of a professional. The responsible action at this point is not to extend their contract and request repatriation.”

China is a country transformed by a socialist revolution that relies not on competition but on cooperation and human solidarity. It is not perfect. How could it be in a world still dominated by capitalist imperialism? But the situation of workers in China is an anachronism showing how far China has come in its journey to transform human relations. How different from the divisiveness people in the U.S. get to see as capitalist government, no matter which party is in power. To overcome the imposed divisions

By G. Dunkel

Over a million workers on 60,000 ships, moving hither and yon through the world’s oceans, transport 80 percent of the world’s trade. Container ships carryting cell phones, computers and frozen meat; ore, oil and chemical transports—all the necessities of modern life—need crews to move them safely and expeditiously.

Crews at all levels work on contracts that generally vary from two to 10 months. Contracts can be extended by a month. After a worker’s contract is finished, they are guaranteed a free trip home by international agreement.

Monthly salaries range from $400 for trainees and $1,000 for junior seafarers to around $10,000 for captains. Some labor activists report that other companies pay as little as $250 for a month’s work and no overtime. Seafarers generally come from poor countries like the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and a few more developed countries like China, Ukraine and Russia.

The工作 can be very hard, demanding and dangerous. Le Monde interviewed a French seafarer who spent five months at sea, working seven days a week on the ship’s machinery, in temperatures often over 110 F. He considered mutilating himself on the ship’s gear to get off the vessel. A friend talked him out of it. (June 19)

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June 21—For the thirteenth week in a row, the number of initial claims the Bureau of Labor Statistics counts for unemployment insurance was over 1 million. Now every week, the press in the District of Columbia has begun the process of loosening the restrictions it had imposed in order to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Relaxing these public health measures, they argue, is necessary to restart the economy. President Donald Trump and his cronies have put the virus in their rearview mirrors. His Coronavirus Task Force has stopped its briefings, signaling, “Do your own thing.” Trump has basically avoided the topic since he made some ridiculous comments about the “involuntary servitude” being imposed on seafarers.

But the situation of workers in this country has rapidly deteriorated. So rapidly, in fact, that the number of claims has amounted to well over 41 million since the crisis began. In addition, some 700,000 workers who were self-employed have finished their contracts and have no idea when they will be relieved. Similar numbers are stuck at home with no idea when they will get work. Both totals are rising by tens of thousands every day. Both the secretary general of the United Nations and Pope Francis have issued statements about the “involuntary servitude” being imposed on seafarers.

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Denying health crisis won’t save jobs

By G. Dunkel

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Lo que no parece ser, que si ya los afroamericanos no querían a los protestantes y que la sociedad se mantuvieron en la teoría esta demanda. Se realizó un movimiento que predijo las demandas que ahora tiene tres años después de que la Proclamación de Emancipación se convirtiera en ley el 1 de enero de 1863. Si bien Texas fue el último estado del sur en reconocer legalmente la Proclamación, fue el primer estado en hacer que Juneteenth fuera fechado oficialmente en 1799. Actualmente, 49 estados a Juneteenth como feriado oficial.

El movimiento de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril conmemorado el 19 de junio, los afroamericanos conmemoran la Emancipación de abril 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