



U.S. Fight Against Racism and Repression Reaches New Heights

BY JEFF MACKLER

For six weeks now, since George Floyd's brutal May 25 strangulation police murder in Minneapolis, massive protests in over 2,000 cities and towns have transformed U.S. politics. Unprecedented, multi-racial, daily mobilizations against the ingrained institutional racism that permeates every aspect U.S. society have exploded in scope and intensity. Recent surveys estimate that 15 million to 26 million Americans have taken part in the widespread demonstrations over the murder of George Floyd. They continue to this day.

In Washington, D.C., at the beginning of June, the world witnessed the spectacle of united Black, white and Latinx working people, youth and clergy brutally attacked by clubbing police, the National Guard, and low-flying helicopters ordered by the Pentagon to intimidate and scatter protestors with a maneuver called a "show of force."

The peaceful protestors, including an array of the nation's corporate media reporters bearing witness, were subjected to concussion explosives and noxious gases aimed at clearing a path for the posturing, chin up egomaniac President Trump to walk across Lafayette Park to St. John's Episcopal Church for a one-minute, widely condemned photo op, where he brandished an upside-down bible. Trump was accompanied by an entourage of top military and civilian officials including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark A. Milley and Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper, who soon after went to great lengths to disassociate themselves from the president's militaristic rhetoric. As if to imply that his threats to bring "law and order" were akin to a declaration of martial law, Trump designated the nation's top military official, General Milley – dressed in combat fatigues – "in charge" of the government's response to the protests.

And all this in the context of the deadly, dangerous COVID-19 pandemic that has taken the lives of 150,000 people to date and infected 2.8 million in the U.S., with new infections nationwide reaching record highs of 50,000 per day – in a week when Dr. Anthony Fauci predicted daily new cases could soon rise to 100,000. Just two months earlier, workers' consciousness was rising based on a fully justified skepticism of ruling class demands to prematurely abandon the necessary shelter-at-home strictures and return to work to bolster flagging capitalist profits. But after working people viewed



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the video of George Floyd's murder, the world witnessed a near-instant dramatic nationwide expression of outrage and solidarity. From quiet quarantine isolation to protect against COVID-19 to risk-filled, often close-quartered mass street protests in the millions across the nation, the hearts, minds and bodies of American working-class youth opened a new era in U.S. politics. Everything that was impossible, unimaginable, unthinkable, inconceivable yesterday was placed on the order of the day.

ILWU closes West Coast Ports

The ongoing protests most recently included the June 19 Juneteenth 8-hour West Coast strike initiated by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) that closed all U.S. ports from San Diego to the Canadian border and beyond to Vancouver. ILWU locals and dozens of trade union and community organizations joined the mobilization militantly asserting "Black Lives Matter!" and "No Justice, No Peace!" An estimated 10,000-15,000 mobilized in solidarity. The widely-supported coast-wide

action centered on solidarity with the simultaneous anti-racist protests across the country and the growing demand to make Juneteenth – the date in 1865 when the abolition of slavery reached Texas – a national holiday. The ILWU's demand to stop the privatization of the Port of Oakland, aimed at gutting union power, was also highlighted.

In Oakland, the ILWU action began with a march and car caravan from the city's docks to the Oakland Police Station and then to a 5,000-strong mass rally in Oscar Grant Plaza (Oakland Civic Center). The Plaza was unofficially renamed by the Occupy Movement following the murder of Oscar Grant, who was shot in the back while lying on the ground by a Bay Area Rapid Transit cop in 2009. This writer estimates that the overwhelmingly youthful Juneteenth crowd was two-thirds Black and Latinx. The most militant speakers, often ILWU activists like former ILWU Local 10 Executive Secretary Clarence Thomas, who stressed the pressing need for "union power at the point of production," always drew the loudest and most sustained applause. Other speakers during the course of the day were Angela Davis, Danny Glover and "Sorry to Bother You" filmmaker and rapper Boots Riley.

Top generals challenge Trump

The public schism wherein the top leadership of the most powerful military on earth denounced President Trump's call to arms to put down the ever-widening and overwhelmingly peaceful rebellious protests is unprecedented. The

same generals who dramatically broke with the racist bigot President Trump have never hesitated to rain down death and destruction, if not genocidal wars, on poor and oppressed nations in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, Asia and indeed, around the world. But sending in troops to beat back the uniting and highly visible anti-racist millions in the streets today is quite another matter.

Trump had amassed 1,600 active-duty soldiers on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., presumably ready for action. Days later he was compelled to send them back to their bases, claiming that the threatening protests has subsided, when in fact their size and breadth had dramatically increased.

Gen. Milley made his disassociation from Trump absolutely clear when he wrote a message to all top military commanders, stating that "every member of the armed forces swears an oath to support and defend the Constitution," which "gives Americans the right to freedom of speech and peaceful assembly." Forty-three percent of the U.S. armed forces are people of color. No doubt the general was dead set against bringing thousands of multi-racial working class U.S. troops, all victims of the economic draft, to fight against their civilian counterparts, who are demanding Black Lives Matter and "No Justice, No Peace!" louder than ever.

Former Defense Secretary and retired Marine Corps General James Mattis similarly offered a withering denunciation of Trump's photo-op two-block march from

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System Change, Not Climate Change!

CLIMATE CRISIS COMMENTARY

By JAMES FORTIN

Just coincidental. A number of environmental groups that have exposed Exxon Mobil's efforts to mislead the public about climate change have been phished and possibly hacked by an unknown source. Citizen Lab, a Canadian cybersecurity watchdog group, has been investigating the electronic attacks for the past several years. Now, the head of a private investigations company and former member of an Israeli police surveillance unit, has been indicted on related charges and arrested in New York. Exxon claims "no knowledge of, or involvement in, the hacking activities." Of course not. Exxon and its lackies...break the law? No way...not possible. Just coincidental, you see.

Coal: The good and the bad. Good news: Duke Energy and Xcel Energy plan to retire four dozen more coal fired plants by 2025, and it is estimated that coal will be reduced to fueling only 10 percent of the nation's electric capacity by that time. Bad news: Trump wants to subsidize those dirty U.S. coal plants to "improve grid reliability." Soon, there may not be a coal plant left to subsidize, however. Can someone please slip that piece of info to the President?

Sorrowful twins: Systemic racism and climate injustice. A paper published by a California State environmental health division notes the "heat island effect" when it comes to minorities suffering the greatest impact of a changing climate. Black pregnant women are exposed to higher temperatures and greater carbon air pollution due to their residential locations than white women. The result: the children of Black mothers have a greater likelihood of being premature, underweight, or stillborn.

Signs of the times. Climate activists in Uganda and elsewhere in Africa have been postering with the demand: "One Earth, One nature, One chance. Save our future, Save Congo rainforest." And from Canada, this short and sweet refrain was recently noted on cardboard, "Capitali\$ = Climate Crisis."

More than the temperature gets hotter in July. The month of July, 2019 was the hottest global July ever; the five hottest Julys on record have been in the last 5 years; and nine of the 10 warmest Julys have taken place since 2005. The trend is in for July, unfortunately, due to growing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. As the struggles for racial and economic justice grow, however, the movements for system change are getting hotter, too. That's where hotter is always better.

Still shirking. In late 2019, Greta Thunberg and two other co-thinkers wrote: "The climate crisis is not just about the environment. It is a crisis of human rights, of justice, and of political will. Colonial, racist, and patriarchal systems of oppression have created and fueled it. We need to dismantle them all. Our political leaders can no longer shirk their responsibilities." Guess we need to shirk the shirkers and do it ourselves. ■

Mumia Abu-Jamal: "The World Is On Fire"



By MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Guess what? The world is on fire. I'm not referring to environmental degradation or global warming here. No, although, that too is true.

I refer to protests – not just all across the United States, but all around the world. Protests from London to Paris. From Berlin to Nairobi. From Toledo, Ohio to Tokyo, Japan.

Protests in solidarity with Black Lives Matter against police aggression and racism. Protests stemming from the cruel brutality that led to the slow-motion killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The solidarity from Sydney, Australia stems in part from long-standing discontent from the "dark" Aborigines, the indigenous communities of Australia

and New South Wales, who, like Black folk in America, have suffered from generations of state repression.

For example, the recent killing of David Dungay, an Aborigine who, like his brothers and sisters in America, last words? "I can't breathe," as they choked him to death.

How have police responded to this challenge? By having temper tantrums, and by attacking protesters – men, women, and even a 75-year-old white man, who was pushed to the ground as they stepped over his fallen, bleeding body.

America is on fire. And the world has caught the blaze. ■

This commentary was originally published at PrisonRadio.org and recorded by Noelle Hanrahan. Mumia's audio is available [here](#).

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Join Socialist Action!

Socialist Action is a national organization of activists committed to the emancipation of workers and the oppressed. We strive to revitalize the antiwar, environmental, labor, anti-racist, feminist, student, and other social movements with a mass-action perspective. Recognizing the divisions that exist on the left and within the workers' movement, we seek to form united front type organizations around specific issues where a wide range of groups have agreement. In this way we seek to maximize our impact and demonstrate the power and effectiveness of mass action.

In the process we hope to bring activists together from different backgrounds into a revolutionary workers' party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite – whose profit-based system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics – not alliances with the bosses' parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a labor party based on democratic fighting trade unions in alliance with the oppressed and exploited.

We support the struggle of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism – women, LGBTQI people, national minorities, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. We are internationalists and hold that workers of one country have more in common with workers of another than with their own nation's capitalist class. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. We maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International.

Socialist Action believes that the capitalist state and its institutions are instruments of the ruling class, and that therefore they cannot be used as tools of the working class but have to be abolished and replaced with institutions of direct working class rule. That is why we fight for revolution. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the final analysis real social change can only come about with the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a workers' government and the fight for socialism. Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian society organized to satisfy human needs rather than corporate greed. We invite you to join us in the struggle to make the world a better place!

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Combating the Crisis: What Socialists Demand

BY JAMES FORTIN

Not since the Great Depression of the 1930's has the American working class experienced with such gravity an assault to its standing as we are witnessing today. Accompanying this attack has been a murderous wave of modern-day lynchings of Black people – whether a knee to the neck or a bullet in the back. The intertwined crises of the government's failures to control the COVID-19 disease, the capitalist economic meltdown, and the widespread societal trauma imposed on the working class is beginning to pose, in the most vivid terms, a choice. Do we continue under the irrational capitalist rule of the 1%, or do we demand meaningful solutions to the problems that have been thrust upon us, the 99%?

Increasingly, workers of all manner in the U.S. are seeing that their needs for good jobs, a healthy environment and the ready availability of food and decent housing do not align with the actions of the bankers, corporate titans and politicians of the capitalist class. While class differences have existed since the rise of capitalism, these differences are now being understood and consciously expressed by growing numbers of working people. Our class increasingly sees that the interests of the privileged 1% are wholly contradictory to those of the working 99%.

Socialists have the political and moral responsibility to contend for the leadership of our class in this era of COVID-19. What demands in these times should we raise to provide the clarity and action points needed for greater numbers of workers to fully comprehend the contradictory situations they confront and then to act?

Some Basic Points

Equal rights for all workers free from police violence.

African-Americans, Latinx, Native Peoples, Asian-Americans and other oppressed peoples have suffered the worst consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. These minorities experience the highest infection rates and a highly disproportionate number of deaths compared to whites. At the very same time, unending police murders of Blacks for the “crimes” of jogging in white neighborhoods, selling sundries without a license, or sleeping in car, are rampant testimony to systemic racism. This combined onslaught has magnified the already disparate difficulties suffered by the oppressed such as inferior housing, higher rates of unemployment and less opportunity for better paying jobs. Socialists must address and fight to eliminate these shortcomings. We say:

- **Disarm, defund, and disband the police!**
- **Self-determination for Black, Latinx, and Native American people!**
- **Commence re-building of poor neighborhoods, inner cities, and tribal lands under worker & local community control!**
- **For a community-based jobs program to provide work for all the oppressed!**

Women and LGBTQI persons are entitled to full democratic and economic rights.

Historically, many other distinct groups
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in the U.S. have suffered daily disparate treatment, economically and socially. Pay scales for women, LGBTQI, and people of color remain below that of white men. Rampant discrimination is often found in employment, housing, accommodations, and even retail, financial and restaurant services. Fear of coming out has relegated many to closeted lives and, in turn, empowered bigots and police to continue their brutal treatment of these oppressed. We must unreservedly insist:

- **End all discrimination against women! Equal pay for equal work; full access to free quality health care including abortion!**
- **Ban all discrimination against LGBTQI persons, in addition to the Supreme Court's ruling outlawing workplace discrimination!**
- **Support mass movements of the oppressed to gain full democratic inclusion!**
- **End violence against women and LGBTQI people! Jail the offenders!**

The health of working people is more important than the profits of the super-rich.

Let us not hesitate for a moment to state that the novel coronavirus is a capitalist virus – born and bred in the rapacious land uses of capitalist growth and agriculture, and fed by the inaction and denial of the likes of Donald Trump, Boris Johnson and other “leaders” serving the needs of the ruling rich. It is unacceptable that in the face of the Covid contagion American workers are either uninsured or under-insured; that hospitals across the country have been closed in name of profit while communities needs are the greatest; that lack of PPE and ventilators has become the benchmark of government inaction in the face of growing numbers of infections; and that the inhabitants of nursing homes, homeless shelters, prisons and schools are now the fodder for the disease. All of this while the rich retreat to their yachts and second homes to avoid infection. We must take the profit motive out of health care and demand:

- **Free health care for all, for life, including virus testing, PPE, and**

vaccines!

- **Nationalize the health care industry including hospitals & pharmaceutical giants!**
- **Re-open the closed hospitals and clinics & place under worker & community control!**
- **For a massive expansion of medical facilities serving the communities of the oppressed!**

Everyone has the right to a secure, safe, and good paying job.

For the past 40 years Democrat and Republican administrations alike have coddled the rich with massive tax cuts and subsidies, accompanied by an assault on trade unions and cuts to social services. A regime of austerity has seen a living wage and job security replaced by an economy of part time jobs, low pay, and few if any benefits. This has resulted in the greatest transfer of wealth from the working class to the ruling elite in the history of our country. As the waves of COVID-19 emerged an immiserated working class succumbed to new economic indignities imposed by the ruling class. We must take control of our working lives and demand:

- **Share the work. Shorten the work week to 30 hours with no reduction in pay!**
- **Full pay & benefits during unemployment until rehired!**
- **No forced return to deadly, unsafe work!**
- **For a massive public works program at top union wages for jobless workers to rebuild the nation's infrastructure, schools, and hospitals!**

Safe, habitable housing is a human right.

Economic contractions are a problem created by the capitalist class, not the working class. The homes and apartments of working people cannot be placed in jeopardy because of capitalism's business cycles nor due to its financial recklessness. The banking system historically has been complicit in capitalism's drive for profits at the expense homeowners and renters. The poor and

the homeless, senior citizens and the young, working people universally -- all deserve a decent place to inhabit and to retain, COVID-19 or otherwise. Our demands for universal quality housing must include:

- **Limit housing costs to no greater than 25% of household income!**
- **No evictions, no foreclosures!**
- **Nationalize the banks!**
- **Begin immediate national programs to build quality housing for all!**

Re-orient all elements of health, jobs, housing, and personal and global security to the needs of working people, not the idle, controlling rich.

For centuries, the actions of the U.S. government have reflected the interests of the capitalist ruling class. Austerity aimed at the working class, wars abroad for territory and natural resources, destruction of the environment in the name of fossil fuel profits – these and virtually all other actions taken by Democrats and Republicans alike are meant to primarily serve the needs of the 1%. And now, the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic shredding of our existence lays bare the hollowness of promises by spokespeople for the ruling class that they have our interests at heart. We must demand substantial change in our own right:

- **Tax the rich, not working people. 100 percent tax on all annual incomes exceeding \$300,000!**
- **Abolish the trillion-dollar war budget. Money for human needs not war!**
- **Stop the fossil fuel-induced climate catastrophe. Nationalize Big Oil, Agribusiness, and all elements of the fossil fuel industry and place under worker control!**
- **Transition to a clean, environmentally sustainable economy. Jobs at top union wages for all replaced workers during the transition!**

If these demands make sense to you, or if you want to discuss these further, contact Socialist Action. We are the revolutionary socialist political party of your class. We welcome you. ■

Supreme Court Decision Expands LGBTQ Job Protections To All 50 States

BY ANN MONTAGUE

On June 15, the U.S. Supreme Court by a wide 6-3 margin immediately expanded job protections to LGBTQ workers in 23 states where none had existed. Over the past decades, some states had included bans on employment discrimination. Many union contracts included protections. But in those 23 states few workers have unions, and workers are routinely fired with no grounds for legal redress when based solely on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The strategy of the case was unique and not complex. It revolved around the word “sex” in a law that had long been accepted as a bulwark against discrimination in the United States. The Supreme Court decision reflected that simplicity in its brevity and clarity.

The question of whether the word “sex” includes sexual orientation and gender identity was clarified in the decision written by President Trump’s first Supreme Court nominee, Justice Neil Gorsuch: “It is impossible to discriminate against a person for being homosexual or transgender without discriminating against that individual based on sex. An employer who fired an individual for being homosexual or transgender fires that person for traits or actions it would not have questioned in members of a different sex. Sex plays a necessary and undisguisable role in the decision, exactly what Title VII [of the Civil Rights Act] forbids.”

The court also specifically upheld rulings of lower courts that said sexual orientation discrimination was a form of sex discrimination.

This decision is broader and ultimately more far reaching than two previous decisions. In 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* established the constitutional right to private sexual expression. The 2015 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* established the constitutional right to marry. The right to have sex and the right to marry in no way protected workers from discrimination in the workplace.

The Plaintiffs

Gerald Bostock was a social worker for Clayton County Georgia who was fired after he joined a gay softball league. Donald Zarda was a skydiving instructor who was fired by Altitude Express after mentioning being gay. Aimee Stephens was fired by R.G. & G.R. Funeral Home. She presented as male when she was hired. After she informed her employer she planned to “live and work full-time as a woman,” she was fired. Her employer said she violated the dress code and said, “this is not going to work.”

The plaintiffs claimed their employers had violated Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on “race, color, religion, sex or national origin.”

The central dispute was the word “sex.”

The Civil Rights Act was created in the midst of the struggle for Black Liberation and a year after Martin Luther King’s March On Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Chief organizers of the march were A. Phillip Randolph, a union organizer who founded the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and openly gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin.

The question of whether to even add sex as a protected class to the 1964 Civil Rights Bill created controversy from the beginning. Segregationist Rep. Howard Smith, Democrat from Virginia thought that adding “sex” would sound so ridiculous that it would derail the passage of



the entire bill. He clearly underestimated the effect of the growing women’s liberation movement.

This Was a Working Class Fight

The fact that job protections often took the back seat to marriage rights reflects the money and power of a few national organizations. They were successful and marriage equality became the law of the land in all fifty states. A popular slogan which ridiculed the situation they created became widespread: “Now we can get married on one day and get fired the next”.

Some lobbying organizations were just currying favor with Democrats and raising money. But from the beginning the struggle for workplace rights had always been front and center for workers.

That long struggle did not start with individuals being fired because they were discovered to be gay. It started because lesbians and gay men were facing mass firings that started in the U.S. State Department. This was an integral part of the Cold War anti-Communist witch hunts. (“The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government” by David Kay Johnston)

In 1957 Frank Kameny, an astronomer in the U.S. Army Map Service, was fired for being gay. A few years later, Kameny and Barbara Giddings, founder of the Daughters of Bilitis the first lesbian civil rights organization, joined together

to initiate a series of nationwide visible gay protests. One of the most prominent was a 1965 picket in front of the White House.

As the gay liberation movement spread across the country so did the mantra, “come out, come out, wherever you are”. At the same time rank and file stewards, organizers and leaders in unions started coming out and engaging with their co-workers. They bargained contract language to protect gays, lesbians and trans workers in their jobs and fought for equal health benefits. They followed it up with training stewards on the new contract language and going to bat for their co-workers. (“Out In The Union: A Labor History Of Queer America” by Miriam Frank)

Myths About the Supreme Court

Some people were surprised that the majority decision was written by Justice Neil Gorsuch and supported by Chief Justice John Roberts. There is a myth that the justices exist in an isolated cloister apart from society and immune to pressure by social movements. This has never been true. In addition, the Democrats’ incessant cry to the working class that they must vote for the “lesser evil” – because Democrats will appoint justices who are more “progressive” – is also not true. Note that the same week as the decision regarding expansion of job protections there was another decision. Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen

Breyer, both appointed by Democrat Bill Clinton, voted with the majority which upheld a permit for a controversial \$8 billion gas pipeline that will tunnel below the famous Appalachian Trail.

The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that women have a fundamental right to decide whether or not to have an abortion without government restriction came from a conservative court. It was a 7-2 decision with all Republican appointed justices voting in the majority and the one Democratic appointee voted “no.”

What is true is the effect a strong independent movement can have on court decisions. *Roe v. Wade* came at the time when a militant women’s liberation movement was on the rise. Today there is an unprecedented mass movement erupting against police brutality in small towns as well as large cities throughout the nation. These mobilizations are continuing and only getting stronger as the rebellion expands against injustice and in some cases questioning the capitalist system itself. This is a time of fighting back

At the center of the expansion of job protections decision is the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This decision came in the midst of weeks of protests against systemic racism and violence directed at Black men and women. The very people this act was supposed to protect but instead now represents the years of “reform” that has failed.

Housing and Healthcare

There are additional areas of discrimination that this decision does not cover. The lawyers in this case believe that because federal law already prohibits sex discrimination in housing through the Fair Housing Act, that should end housing discrimination in all 50 states based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Healthcare may be more challenging but also there is a possibility of a broad-based movement in this case. While it is true that President Trump is stripping away protections for trans persons, the attack is also much broader. The Trump Administration reversed the Health and Human Services (HHS) rule which prohibited discrimination in healthcare. This means denial of healthcare or healthcare coverage based on pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation is no longer prohibited. New exemptions have been added that allow healthcare providers to invoke religious objections to service provision. Healthcare providers must now comply with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

This harms women seeking abortions as well as allowing discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. The victory here belongs to the religious right who are waging a war on women and LGBTQ people against the principle that health care is a human right.

It is time for a united, broad-based movement to demand: No Exceptions! Healthcare Is A Human Right! Free Universal Healthcare For All!

Stand Up, Fight Back!

This is a time of general defiance and a new generation experiencing the power of independent mass movements. Laws and court decisions are only pieces of paper if the struggles don’t continue. Those 23 states who just heard they cannot discriminate will not just change because of a court decision. The capitalist class benefits from divisions in the working class. Now is the time for workers to unite: An Injury To One Is An Injury To All! ■

Demonstrators Demand Removal of Racist Monuments and Confederate Flags

BY MALIK MIAH

The rebellion against police violence and murder continues to expand. There are new demands on other issues against institutional racism by Black and Brown people and in opposition to the symbols of white genocide by the Native American nations.

The demonstrators are demanding removal of symbols, monuments and flags of oppression. They are refusing to wait for politicians and institutions and have taken direct action to do so.

Symbols of white supremacy

Within a few days in early June Confederate monuments began to tumble. (The Confederacy was the 12 states that declared a secessionist rebellion in the 1860s to maintain the slave system.)

The Confederate statues at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., are in the incongruous position of exalting people who raised arms against the United States government and who killed members of its military in defense of white supremacy and Black enslavement. A Senate committee is reviewing if those monuments should be removed. Previous attempts have failed.

A statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis along Richmond, Virginia's famed Monument Avenue was torn down by activists. Demonstrators beheaded four Confederate statues before pulling one down using a tow rope at the Portsmouth, Virginia, Confederate monument as police watched.

Alabama's flagship state university took down memorials to Confederate soldiers. The University of Alabama removed plaques honoring students who served in the Confederate Army and student cadet corps.

Two of Alabama's largest cities – Birmingham and Mobile – took down Confederate monuments that were focal points for civil unrest. Violating a state law intended to protect such memorials, Birmingham dismantled a massive obelisk dedicated to Confederate soldiers and sailors in a downtown park.

Mobile took down a statue of a Confederate naval officer that had been vandalized. Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson said on Twitter the move was not an attempt to rewrite history but intended to remove “a potential distraction” to focus on the future of the Gulf coast city.

Pressure is mounting in Mississippi over the state flag. Adopted in 1894, the design incorporates the Confederate battle flag – a red background with a blue X lined with white stars. In 2001, Mississippi voted to keep it. Now Republican Gov. Tate Reeves says it is not up to elected leaders to change it.

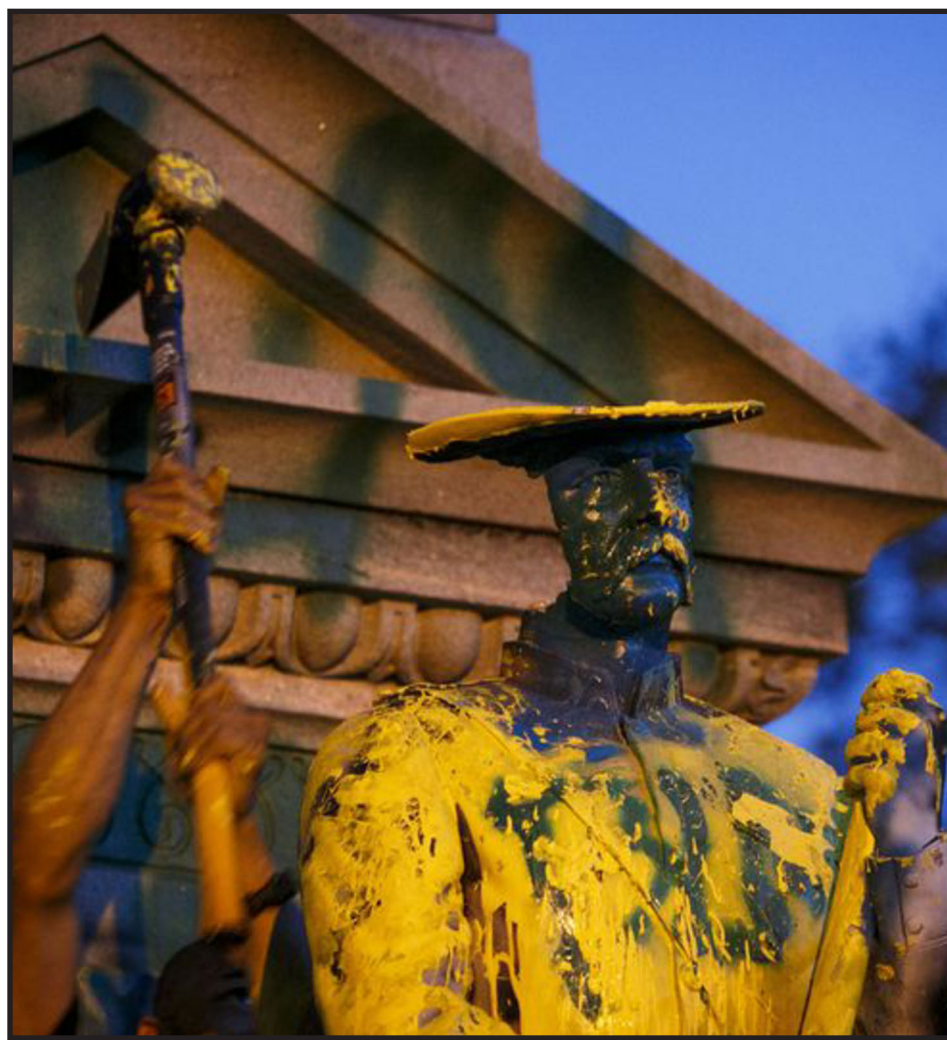
Jefferson Davis and his legacy departed Kentucky's Capitol Rotunda after a 12-foot marble statue commemorating the lone president of the Confederate States of America was removed June 12.

The Marine Corps recently banned displays of the Confederate flag, with an exception for Mississippi's flag.

Traitors' names on military bases

Ten military bases are named after Confederate generals who are properly seen as traitors by African Americans and many whites. Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Fort Hood in Texas are two examples.

In addition, two Naval Academy buildings, Maury Hall and Buchanan House, the superintendent's residence,



are named for Confederate officers. Also, a Navy ship, the guided-missile cruiser Chancellorsville, is named after a Confederate Civil War victory.

These bases are in former slave states in the South. They were named after World War I and in the 1940s. That's some 50 to 80 years after the Civil War. Why then? It represented the emphatic victory of white nationalism over Black civil rights. African Americans have suffered this indignity for decades.

Defenders of these dishonorable men argue that it reflects “Southern heritage and culture.” They mean white culture even though the wealth of the southern economy was built by slave labor.

Blacks ask: Where are the monuments to former slaves who fought in the army and militias for freedom? Of Frederick Douglass? Of Harriet Tubman?

Donald Trump, the chief white nationalist-in-chief says not on his watch. “These Monumental and very Powerful Bases have become part of a Great American Heritage, and a history of Winning, Victory and Freedom.”

Yet the names represent men of treason. The constitutional definition of treason is clear: “Treason against the United

States, shall consist only in levying War against

them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort” (Article 3: Treason).

The modern display of flags used by and associated with the Confederate States of America started in response to the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. It continued into the present day and is supported by white nationalist and white supremacist ideology.

The power of the Black Lives led movement is seen in the impact on sports. NASCAR decided to ban the Confederate flag and decals on its cars and racetracks. There is only one African American driver.

The National Football League came out in support of the movement and against racism. It now supports the right of players to speak out against police violence. Many NFL owners are strong supporters of Trump who criticized the Commissioner for the change in policy.

White players in the National Hockey League also condemn the killing of George Floyd. There are few Blacks in the sport. In Canada, the main issue concerns the country's racist treatment of in-

igenous people.

Columbus statue falls

Protesters in Minnesota, the launch point of the current anti-cop struggle, led Native Americans to successfully pull down a statue of Christopher Columbus outside the State Capitol. The protesters threw a rope around the 10-foot bronze statue and pulled it off its stone pedestal.

The protesters, led by Mike Forcia with the Bad River Band of Lake Superior or Chippewa, said they consider Columbus a symbol of genocide against Native Americans. The Minnesota State Patrol told the group that they could fill out paperwork to have the statue removed, but they said they had tried many times to remove it through the political process, but without success.

“We don't have to wait for the state,” Forcia said. “We don't have to wait for the process because we've already waited far too long.”

It has been a longstanding demand of indigenous peoples to remove the symbol of European colonialism and genocide. It was never a positive symbol of Italian Heritage as defenders argue.

What next?

African Americans are fed up. Latinos are angry. Indian peoples are outraged. They are all not safe in their homes, walking, jogging, sleeping or breathing. They fear the police.

On June 12 in Atlanta, Georgia, once again, another young Black man was shot and killed by white cops for sleeping in his car in a fast food restaurant. He had agreed to park his car and go home before one cop pulled out his handcuffs and tried to taser him. Fearing for his life (George Floyd was handcuffed and died), he ran and was shot dead.

President Trump meanwhile continues to praise the police and calls for “law and order.” He is planning two campaign events on dates where white riots murdered hundreds of Blacks in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921 (known as “Black Wall Street”) and brutally beat nonviolent civil rights activists in Jacksonville, Florida in 1960 (“Axe Handle Saturday”).

Fear is real. Why would any African American call the police for help?

The broad uprising is unique because it is multiracial, multi-generational and draws in all segments of society including from big and small businesses, sports, churches and unions.

There is concern in the ruling class that the Black led movement cannot be contained by modest police reforms. Shouts or “law and order” ring hollow to most whites since it leads to more dead African Americans, and even bigger mass demonstrations and chaos on the streets.

The policing system is rotten to its core. It must be abolished, and a new safety force created from the ground up. It must be controlled by the Black and Brown communities. It must include creation of an independent prosecution office that can confront the police “union bosses” and the police department management.

All those who argue that the movement should focus on winning reforms and voting especially in the upcoming presidential elections are selling protesters a bill of goods.

What African Americans have known all their lives, and more whites are learning today: Black lives do not matter to cops and the capitalist system. People's Power does. ■

Rank and File Movement Demands: *Cops Out of Our Unions!*



BY MARC ROME

The unprecedented Black-led, multi-racial uprising in defense of Black lives against police murder has elevated and amplified the critique of the police's role in society that only weeks before, few could have imagined becoming part of a broadening mass opposition to police as a repressive societal force.

Seemingly overnight, every institution of social and political consequence has become the subject of growing collective scrutiny by this massive anti-racist movement, with a new layer of mostly youthful BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) workers stepping up as the standard bearers and leaders of this new radicalization. They are questioning the very foundations of the US police system, including its role in perpetuating the inequality and divisions among workers based on race.

The ferment from the still smoking streets has bubbled over into Big Labor, as calls to disaffiliate from police unions are beginning to pop up. On June 8, Writers Guild of America, East, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, unanimously passed a resolution citing “irreconcilable differences” between cops and workers and called on the AFL-CIO to “disaffiliate with the International Union of Police Associations (IUPA).” A portion of the resolution states, “We believe that police unions are incompatible with the AFL-CIO’s stated goals: ‘to vanquish oppression, privation and cruelty in all their forms,’ and to improve the lives of working families and pursue social equity. As long as police unions continue to wield their collective bargaining power as a cudgel, preventing reforms and accountability, no one is safe. Therefore, we believe that police unions do not belong in our labor coalition.”

AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka not only denied that opposed interests existed between police and workers but called police “community friendly.” The truth is that they are anything but that, as witnessed by the world when a massive militarized police force in all 50 states and 99 cities – in which 62% of the mayors are Democrats – brutally suppressed peaceful protests. Along with their Republican counterparts, these elected leaders, many having received political and financial support from both labor unions and police unions, presided over police forces that tear gassed and brutalized peaceful protesters.

The Atlanta cop who murdered Rayshard Brooks was an SEIU/NAGE union member.

By contrast, SEIU President Mary Kay Henry acknowledged that, “Disaffiliation [from police unions] must be part of the conversation.” Jane Hopkins, RN and SEIU 1199 Healthcare NW executive vice president, made a major contribution to the discussion when she joined the King County Labor Council to successfully expel 1,300 Seattle Police Officers Guild (SPOG) by a vote of 55% to 45%. Hopkins, speaking in favor of the motion said, “We can’t both stand with a police system that’s set up to hurt our Black community and stand up for our people of color who are oppressed by police.”

Fueled by the ongoing protests against police both inside and outside of organized labor, not to mention sensing the looming shadow of the police forces that suppressed them only weeks ago and even to this day, a growing group of rank and file members are leading a campaign to demand that SEIU disaffiliate from police unions, organized by their affiliate, SEIU/NAGE (National Association of Government Employees).

This historic moment of mass unemployment and never-ending police killings of BIPOC, has some among the ranks of organized labor going deeper to examine the historic roots of police – part 18th-century slave patrols, part 19th and 20th-century Pinkerton strike breakers. From Bloody Thursday in the 1934 San Francisco General Strike, when police shot and killed pickets, or the police killings of workers in the Minneapolis General Strike of that same year, to the attacks by police in 1988 of the Justice for Janitors (SEIU) strike in Los Angeles, and now, tragically, to the trigger finger of an Atlanta SEIU/NAGE “brother” who recently executed Rayshard Brooks, police uphold the rule of the inherently racist bosses with violence.

Somewhere along the way, and largely unbeknownst to them, members’ dues went toward supporting this modern-day lynching of Brooks, not to mention a political system backed by police who

deployed chemical agents banned by the Geneva Convention against young multi-racial workers. It suggests that the movement to defund the police can have a component in organized labor that seeks these ends, in part, through disaffiliation from police unions and also through a deeper political debate regarding the paradox of unionists’ dues going to support their and their allied community’s historic oppressors.

More abolition-minded sections of the movement advocate varying degrees of defunding and dismantling the police, most far-reaching in Minneapolis, which now faces a possible yearlong bureaucratic process certain to water down the effort. Others advocate keeping the institution intact. The leadership of the

co-founded 15 years ago.”

Offered as solutions are many things already tried and failed: improved or more ubiquitous use of police body cameras, a database compiling the names of “bad cops”, or even creating civilian review boards, like the one in Minneapolis, which was once heralded as one of the most far-reaching police reforms in the nation.

Former Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak wrote a piece in *The Atlantic* describing the outcome of these reforms. In short, it was the murder of George Floyd.

“When duly elected officials propose reforms, police unions do not merely oppose them; they actively work to thwart them. Last year, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey banned so-called warrior-style training, which emphasizes physical



Democratic Party heads the chorus of the reform-minded, with Joe Biden proposing \$300 million dollars more for police. Bernie Sanders himself also advocated more funding for police, according to his website, “to enhance the recruitment pool by ensuring that the resources are available to pay wages that will attract the top-tier officers we need to do the difficult work of policing.”

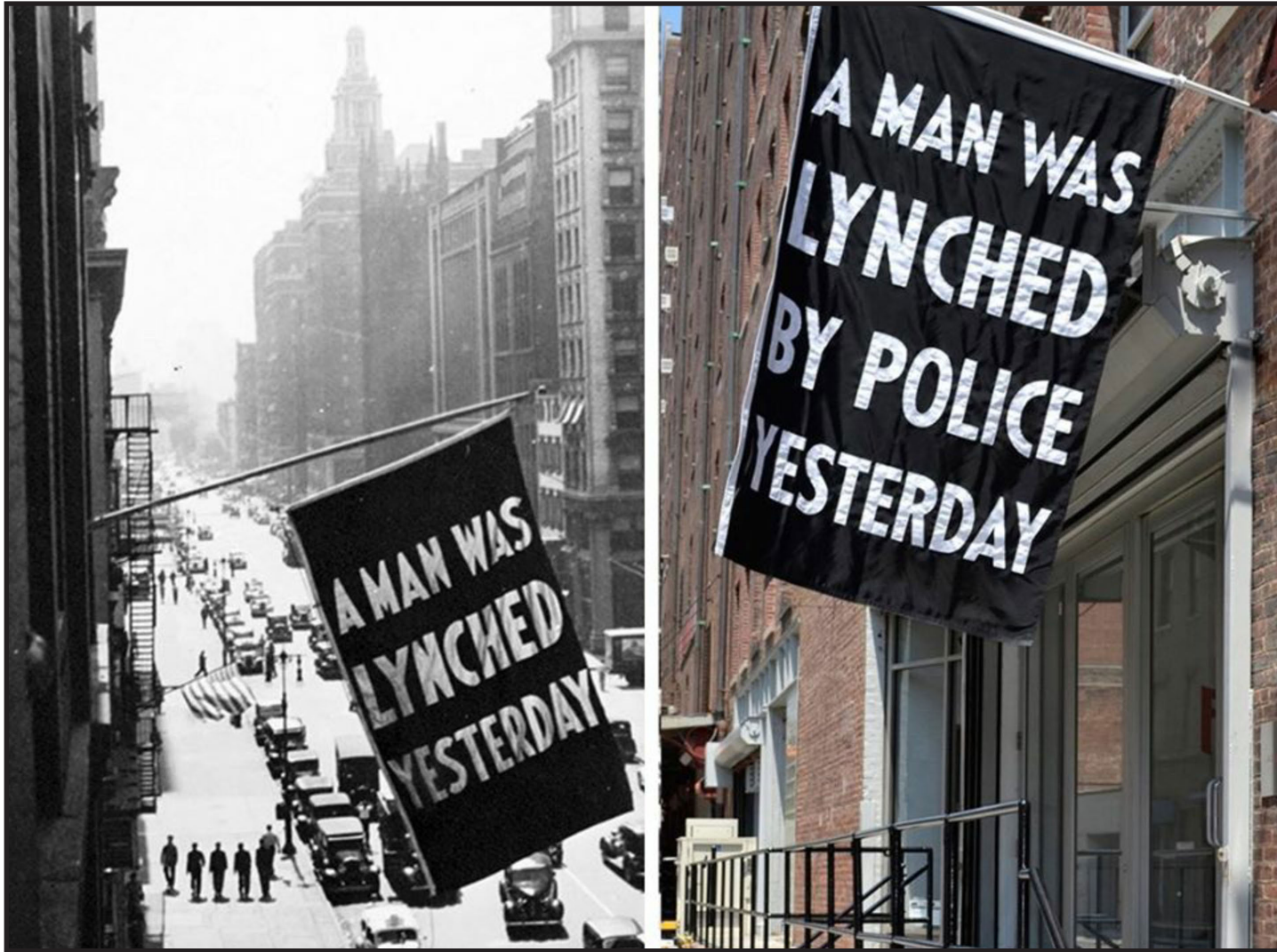
CNN pundit Van Jones, formerly in the Obama administration, has even worked directly with the Trump administration to craft his toothless pro-cop executive order on policing. According to the *NY Post*, “He lauded the president even as the executive order was slammed as cynical and unproductive by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and described as ‘delusional’ by the Color of Change, a racial justice group that Jones himself

threats to police officers rather than the benefits of de-escalating confrontations. Critics have implicated a variant of this training—a course titled ‘The Bullet-proof Warrior’—in the shooting of Philando Castile during a traffic stop in a Minneapolis–St. Paul suburb in 2016. Kroll and the police federation defied Frey’s move by offering warrior-style training of their own.”

Kroll worked closely with Tulsa police Major Travis Yates who was the training director for the Minneapolis Police Department’s “warrior-style training.” Yates not only notoriously denied that racism exists in policing but added that “research says [police] are shooting African Americans about 24% less than we probably ought to be based on the crimes being committed.”

(continued on page 8)

... U.S. Fight Against Racism and Repression



the heavily barricaded White House to Lafayette Square's St. John's Episcopal *(continued from page 1)*

Church. Hours earlier, the fearful bragging bigot Trump and his family had to be hastily escorted by his security forces to the White House's underground bunkers, lest the unarmed peaceful protesters outside break through the might of all of Washington's repressive forces to capture the frightened coward, who ordered the lights turned off before he descended. The prevaricating president later told the media that he was merely "inspecting" the bunker.

The next day, Washington, D.C.'s Black mayor, Muriel Bowser, ordered that the street leading directly to the White House be painted in huge block letters, "Black Lives Matter." Not impressed by this act from a Democratic mayor who has enacted massive increases in the police budget and routinely supports cops against the victims of police brutality, protesters painted "Defund The Police" next to it in the same yellow letters.

Said General Mattis, "Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people — does not even pretend to try." Nicknamed "Mad Dog" Mattis, the war hawk general, who was Secretary of Defense for Trump's first two years in office and previously attacked Trump for ordering the withdrawal of some U.S. troops from Syria, added, "Instead he tries to divide us. We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership."

Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper, who marched to St. John's along with Trump, later falsely claimed that he didn't know where they were going. Esper similarly broke with Trump stating that, "The option to use active-duty forces in a law enforcement role should only be used as a matter of last resort... We are not in one of those situations now." The New York Times summed-up ruling class sentiment as, "Active-duty military troops should not be sent to control the wave of protests in American cities, at least for now." At least for now!

The Washington, D.C. National Guard

was far from unanimous in using mass force against the peaceful demonstrators. An insightful account in Politico, based on interviews with Guard members on the scene not only refuted Trump's assertion of violent protestors but indicated political support and kinship with the protestors.

Torrie Osterholm, the D.C. National Guard's director of psychological health, reported, "The Guardsmen were ill-prepared for the hate directed at them by the protestors, which was reminiscent of the anti-military sentiment during the Vietnam War. The shift from being viewed as heroes during the coronavirus pandemic to villains suppressing citizens' right to protest happened overnight."

Politico continued with an account of a soldier who spoke on condition of anonymity, "As a military officer, what I saw was more or less really fucked up." The official line from the White House that the protestors had turned violent, he said, is false.

"We have a lot of National Guardsmen who are struggling with this, because unlike in combat when you have an enemy, these are our neighbors, our friends, our family," another Guard officer stated.

More than 60 percent of Washington, D.C. National Guards are people of color. One Guard soldier told The New York Times that "he and some fellow troops were so ashamed in taking part against the protests that they have kept it from family members." Similar sentiments no doubt permeate rank-and-file active-duty soldiers, many of whom joined the armed forces in a vain effort to escape the increasingly hopeless prospects before them only to find themselves confronted with the prospect of going to battle with their own people — the most oppressed communities, as well as working class America.

Undoubtedly, among the military's rank-and-file there is outrage against America's racist mass incarceration and school-to-prison pipeline, against the blue plague of police brutality and murder and the parallel plague of generalized racist discrimination.

This inevitably coincides with capitalism's incapacity to effectively deal with one crisis after another — real unemploy-

ment-underemployment rates of close to 50 percent, a low wage "gig economy" job market, if there are jobs at all, the COVID-19 pandemic, the impending global warming-climate catastrophe, endless imperialist wars across the globe, mass evictions and foreclosures, unpayable student debt, increasing levels of poverty and hunger, multi-trillion-dollar bailouts for the super rich and ever-declining health care and educational opportunities. American workers of all nationalities are questioning capitalist prerogatives as never before with the most oppressed Black, Brown and Native American communities today on the frontline leadership of the struggle.

Mass support for anti-racist protests

A new Monmouth University poll indicated that 76 percent of Americans — including 71 percent of white people — called U.S. racism "a big problem." That's a 26-percentage-point spike since 2015. Fifty-seven percent of Americans said demonstrators' anger was fully justified, and another 21 percent called it somewhat justified. Among respondents age 35 and under in a recent Washington Post/Ipsos poll of African Americans, nine out of ten did not trust the police to treat people of all races equally — higher than in any other age group.

On June 8, CNN reported that their survey showed an unprecedented 84 percent of the population supported the mass protests against police brutality and repression.

Similarly, Trump's repeated allegations that the protestors were essentially "looters, anarchists, antifa [short for 'anti-fascists'] and violent outside agitators" have been roundly rejected by ever-increasing majorities. Even the corporate media has felt compelled to largely refrain from characterizing the protests as anything other than expressions of mass outrage against deep social inequities. Trump's spurious charge that their protests were largely the actions of disaffected and violent looters have been discarded with contempt. "Black people in the U.S., as well as Latinx, Native Americans and immigrants have been enslaved, exploited and looted for centuries and to this day" has become the pointed reply.

The Black Lives Matter spokesperson at George Floyd's Minneapolis memorial meeting blithely stated, and to cheers of approval, "White people have been looting Africa and African-Americans for centuries. Pay-back is long over-due." No one winced.

There has been little condemnation of the handfuls of desperate and outraged individuals who break storefront windows; nor has there been condemnation of those who massed to burn to the ground the Third Precinct police station in Minneapolis.

Indeed, face-to-face in the Oval Office with his boss Donald Trump, during a heated discussion over whether to invoke the 1807 Insurrection Act to deploy federal troops into the streets, General Milley, according to The New York Times, "argued that the scattered fires and looting in some places were dwarfed by peaceful protests."

Minneapolis City Council pledges Police Department abolition

That the impossible can appear as the order of the day briefly appeared then disappeared before the nation, when nine members — a claimed veto-proof majority — of the Minneapolis City Council announced before an assembled crowd of 500 on Sunday, June 7 their intention to dismantle the city's police department. The city's present system, they stated, could not be reformed. Citing the city's own figures, they had the facts to prove it.

A 2018 report stated, "About 20 percent of Minneapolis's population of 430,000 is Black. But when the police get physical — with kicks, neck holds, punches, shoves, takedowns, Mace, Tasers or other forms of muscle — nearly 60 percent of the time the person subject to that force is Black." About 63 percent of those shot and killed by police in Minneapolis between 2000 and 2017 — 19 people — were Black, while only 17 percent — 5 people — were white.

Democrats and Republicans seek "police reforms"

Absent organized mass forces in the communities of the oppressed today, demands for Black and Brown Control of Black and Brown Communities, as opposed to the present white racist cop control, remain in the earliest stages of discussion and debate. Increasingly, we are hearing important demands aimed at sharpening this discussion, including the three D's: "Disarm, Defund and Disband the Police."

In past years, often following public and videotaped police murders of unarmed Black people, Democratic Party establishment politicians, in tandem with corporate-funded NGOs, have moved to orchestrate well-planned series of paper concessions to assuage community outrage. These always include retaining the basic institutions of racist police violence intact, while introducing a number of "reforms" including the election or appointment of "more sensitive" Black police chiefs or the establishment of toothless Civilian Review Boards, or even a claimed "fundamental restructuring" of existing police departments, as is underway today in Minneapolis.

The "wash, rinse, repeat cycle"

This ritual window dressing was aptly described by Jody David Armour, a law professor at the University of Southern California, who studies racial justice, and who estimates that the current widespread outrage over economic and racial injustices may give the new movement a greater durability.

"There was a wash, rinse, repeat cycle, a standard script," said Armour, "Convene a commission, hold some hearings,

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...Fight Against Racism and Repression

(continued from page 7)

have community members vent and testify, and here come some policymakers saying, ‘Here’s a fix.’” The result, he said: “Look where we are.”

This “wash, rinse, repeat cycle” is in full operation today, with the posturing “veto-proof” Democrats on the Minneapolis City Council planning on a lengthy discussion with the community” and a possible citywide referendum on a vague proposal before taking any action, while their congressional counterparts rush to introduce a myriad of police reform legislation “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

The draft language of the Minneapolis City Council amendment to the city’s charter, discussed at their late June meeting, would replace the police department with a Department of Community Safety and Violence Prevention, “which will have responsibility for public safety services prioritizing a holistic, public health-oriented approach.”

The contemplated department director would have “non-law-enforcement experience in community safety services, including but not limited to public health and/or restorative justice approaches.” Nevertheless, the department would also provide for a division of licensed peace officers, who would answer to the department’s director. Bureaucratic restrictions may delay a citywide vote on the vague draft in progress until November 2021.

Minneapolis City Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins stated, “Until we really address racism, nothing is going to change. We’re going to have a new name of a new public safety measure with the same underlying racist foundations.”

Democratic Community Control: The Right of Self-Determination

The right of Black, Brown and Native American people to control and govern their own lives and communities, free from white racist police brutality and corporate exploitation, can only begin

with a fundamental change in relations of power. The struggle to disarm, defund, and disband the racist institutions of police power begins with the emergence of new organs of democratic control of the communities of the oppressed themselves. Only in this context can the billions of dollars spent on the institutions of racist police repression and corporate largess be redirected to advance and safeguard the broad interests of Black and Brown communities for free quality education and health care, for affordable housing and for restorative justice to remedy the debilitating effects of capitalism’s ingrained racism. Today’s unprecedented mobilizations of society’s most oppressed, in the context of a more generalized working class radicalization, provide the first glimpses of how the independent mobilization and leadership of Black and Brown communities can dovetail with and inspire all working people to take the class struggle road.

“And the next day!”

One recent afternoon in Washington, D.C., one person among hundreds of demonstrators shouted that they would all be coming back the following day. Another person added, “and the next day.” The phrase caught fire, and the crowd started chanting, “And the next day! And the next day!”

Today, we hear voices raised louder than ever proclaiming “No Justice, No Peace” and Black Lives Matter” and “They Say Cut Back, We Say Fight Back!” They will soon be joined by voices also demanding “Unions Now! Organize the Unorganized!” And not too far away, we will hear “Break with the Two-Party Capitalist Duopoly! For Workers Power!” as working people struggle for a fighting labor party based on powerful and democratic trade unions in alliance with all the oppressed and exploited! Again and again, yesterday’s impossible, unthinkable, unimaginable idea of building a world of justice and freedom for all is on the agenda today! Join us! Join Socialist Action! ■

...Cops Out of Our Unions

(continued from page 6)

Tulsa police officer and police union leader, Jerad Lindsey, mocked the civilian review board on his podcast “The Skirmish Line” in a discussion with Kroll, who followed up to say: “I’ve had 54 complaints filed against me over my 31 years, and I’m still here. I’m still Lieutenant. I’ve been disciplined, but none of it has ever been upheld. I’ve been sued 11 times.”

Kroll recalled that when a Civilian Review Board was created in Minneapolis in the 1990s, many officers thought it was the death of policing. “Civilian oversight tends to ‘come and go.’ They ‘burn out and wear out when they don’t get the result that they want, and that is bringing the next guilty cop in here no matter what the circumstances are.”

Citing police control in such proceedings, Kroll said, “We can still kind of guide a fair investigation, and at the end of the day, it’s binding arbitration — if we need to bring our case before an arbitrator, we’re well-versed in doing that and overturning discipline in a lot of cases.”

Kroll remarked that body cameras are a “godsend” since they “clear [officers] 95-plus percent of the time.”

Indeed, this is the power of police unions in the face of Civilian Review Boards. Only 3% of the over 1600 complaints against police between 2013 and 2018 have resulted in discipline, according to the Office of Police Conduct Review. In other words, the police unions ensure through arbitration that their misdeeds, brutality and murder are rarely punished. They’ve gamed and institutionalized the very system touted to reign them in.

Meanwhile, with labor union membership at an all-time low of 6% of the workforce, police unions have seen growth in their ranks, and with that comes with an outsized political influence at the highest levels of political power, crushing attempts at police reform. According to Minneapolis councilmember Steve Fletcher, “It operates a little bit like a protection racket,” he said referring to the union.

According to The New York Times, “Six of the larger police organizations have spent a combined \$2.9 million since 2017 lobbying the federal government. And various law enforcement entities have contributed more than \$100,000 to members of Congress this election cycle, roughly evenly split between Republicans and Democrats.”

Even as Congressional Democrats propose ending the notorious “qualified immunity,” which shields cops from punishment for misconduct, the effort arrives as a dead letter with Senate Republicans pledging to quash it. In essence, the Democratic Party’s efforts amount to little more than showing a left face toward a mass movement who momentarily spun out of their orbit of control.

It would seem the entire system of policing is being upheld, with minor tweaks offered here and there, by the most powerful in capitalist society, the very powers who maintain a system that inherently creates inequality and results in the wholly undemocratic control of property, resources, and political power into the hands of 2,200 billionaires worldwide.

When workers, unionized or otherwise, demand even a tiny bit more of the wealth that their labor created, their actions are often deemed illegal by the political powers at the behest of their billionaire economic masters. In a time of over 40 million unemployed, looming mass evictions, and generalized austerity, workers have their backs against the wall, but history has shown that they will defend their interests.

Should organized labor mobilize in the streets to their fullest potential and ally with the masses who faced police terror in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder, those same police will be there to attack their just political actions. The coming fightback demands that organized labor take a stand against the forces who are brutally and violently opposed to them.

No Cops In Our Unions!

Defund, Disarm, and Disband the police!

Black control of the Black community! ■

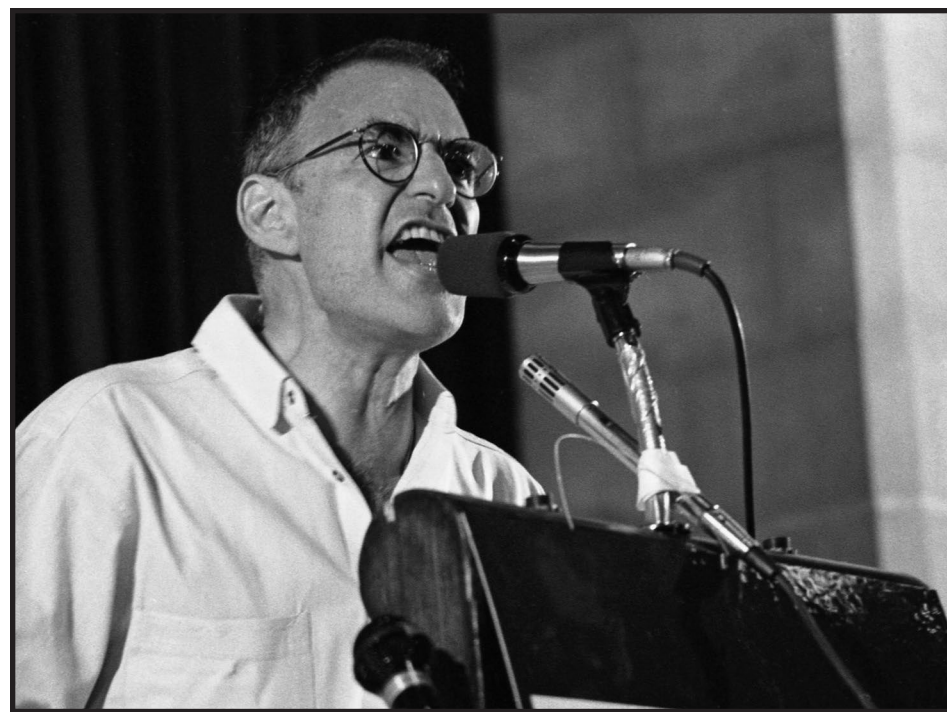
Larry Kramer fought indifference—and won!

By JOHN WILSON

The death of Larry Kramer on May 27th was a huge loss, not only for gay men and others in queer communities, but for all of us involved in the fight against every kind of oppression brought down on us by our decaying, crisis-ridden capitalist society. It was also a major loss for the world of art and culture. Kramer was a playwright, author, film producer, public health advocate and activist. He was a key figure in the fight against AIDS, being a co-founder of both the Gay Mens Health Crisis (GMHC) in NYC (1981) and the Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). ACT UP, with its bold, militant protests and policy of direct action, started in 1987 in New York city, quickly growing and spreading to many cities in the US and internationally. It denounced the paralysis, indifference and bias of governments and public health agencies as well as the predatory role of Big Pharma. Many protests were designed for a maximum number of arrests, since these attracted media attention. Kramer was often on the list of those arrested.

ACT UP became known for its creativity and inventiveness. One of its first posters was Silence=Death with its pink

triangle (the symbol which the Nazis put on the uniforms of queer concentration camp prisoners). One of its famous protests, covered live in the media, was the engulfing of the Washington house of the notorious Senator Jesse Helms with a 15-foot yellow condom saying: A CONDOM TO PREVENT UNSAFE POLITICS. HELMS IS DEADLIER



THAN A VIRUS. Two of its signal victories were to change the inordinately slow and secretive process of drug trials and the winning of benefits for people with HIV-AIDS (PWAs).

Kramer, previously not political, became enraged by the death of friends from the virus. He said of his famous public anger at the oppression of

LGBTQ+ people and the lack of action on AIDS: “I was trying to make people united and angry. I was known as the angriest man in the world, mainly because I discovered that anger got you further than being nice. And when we started to break out in the media, I was better TV than someone who was nice.”

Arguably, he sometimes went over the top. Among his many literary contributions, his 1978 novel, *Faggots*, angered many gay men and others who considered it accusatory, sensationalist and sex-negative. He was viewed as quite abrasive at times, but not vindictive. Anthony Fauci, who heads up the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, was one of his targets initially but later they became friends. Says Fauci, “Once you got past the rhetoric, you found that Larry Kramer made a lot of sense and that he had a heart of gold.” But whatever his supposed shortcomings, they were dwarfed by what he achieved. He will be missed for a long time. The struggle for a just society needs more Larry Kramers. ■

John Wilson is a pioneer of the gay liberation movement in Ontario, and a leading member of Socialist Action Canada / Ligue pour l’Action socialiste.

Malcolm X: The Black Revolution

Speech to the Militant Labor Forum

April 8, 1964

BY MALCOLM X

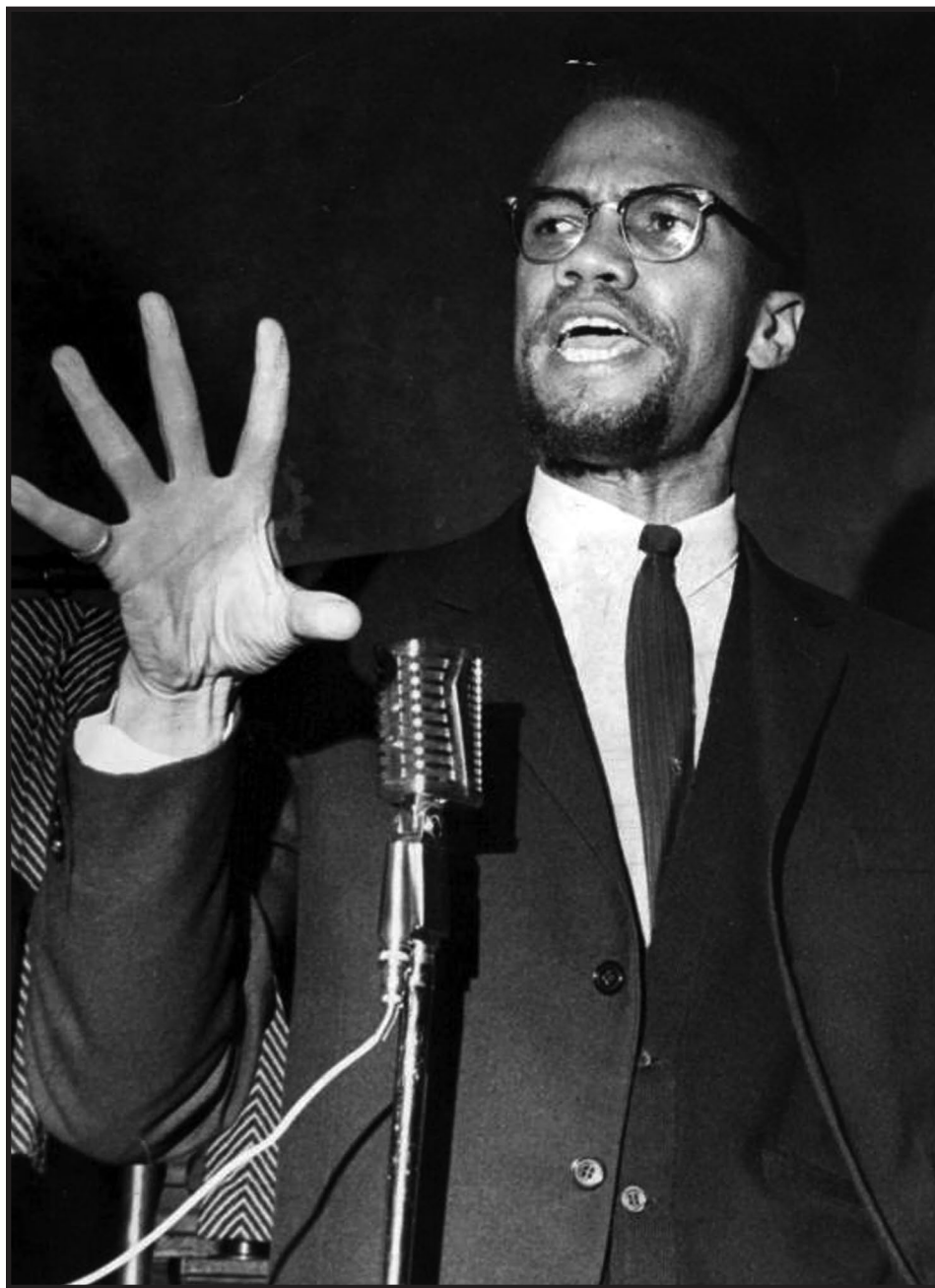
Published here in excerpts.

...What happens to a black man in America today happens to the black man in Africa. What happens to the black man in America and Africa happens to the black man in Asia and to the man down in Latin America. What happens to one of us today happens to all of us. And when this is realized, I think that the whites who are intelligent—even if they aren't moral or aren't just or aren't impressed by legalities—those who are intelligent will realize that when they touch this one, they are touching all of them, and this in itself will have a tendency to be a checking factor...

If George Washington didn't get independence for this country nonviolently, and if Patrick Henry didn't come up with a nonviolent statement, and you taught me to look upon them as patriots and heroes, then it's time for you to realize that I have studied your books well. Our people, 22 million African-Americans are fed up with America's hypocritical democracy...Again, I go right back to the people who founded and who secured the independence of this country from the colonial powers of England...They were fed up with taxation without representation. And you've got 22 million black people in this country today, 1964, who are fed up with taxation without representation and will do the same thing. Who are ready, willing and justified to do the same thing today to bring about independence for our people that your forefathers did to bring about independence for your people. And I say your people, because I certainly couldn't include myself among those for whom independence was fought in 1776. How in the world can a negro talk about the Declaration of Independence and he's still singing "We Shall Overcome." Our people increasingly are developing the opinion that we just have nothing to lose but the chains of segregation and the chains of second-class citizenship.

...Now the black revolution has been taking place in Africa and Asia and Latin America; when I say black, I mean non-white—black, brown, red or yellow. Our brothers and sisters in Asia, who were colonized by the Europeans, our brothers and sisters in Africa, who were colonized by the Europeans, and in Latin America, the peasants, who were colonized by the Europeans, have been involved in a struggle since 1945 to get the colonialists, or the colonizing powers, the Europeans, off their land, out of their country.

This is a real revolution. Revolution is always based on land. Revolution is never based on begging somebody for an integrated cup of coffee. Revolutions are never fought by turning the other cheek. Revolutions are never based upon love-your-enemy and pray-for-those-who-despitefully-use-you. And revolutions are never waged singing "We Shall Overcome." Revolutions are based on bloodshed. Revolutions are never compromising. Revolutions are never based upon negotiations. Revolutions are never based upon any kind of tokenism whatsoever. Revolutions are never even based upon that which is begging a corrupt society or a corrupt system to accept us into it. Revolutions overturn systems. And there is no system on this earth which has proven itself more corrupt, more criminal, than this system that in 1964 still colonizes 22 million African-Americans,



still enslaves 22 million Afro-Americans. There is no system more corrupt than a system that represents itself as the example of freedom, the example of democracy, and can go all over this earth telling other people how to straighten out their house, when you have citizens of this country who have to use bullets if they want to cast a ballot.

The greatest weapon the colonial powers have used in the past against our people has always been divide-and-conquer. America is a colonial power. She has colonized 22 million Afro-Americans by depriving us of first-class citizenship, by depriving us of civil rights, actually by depriving us of human rights. She has not only deprived us of the right to be a citizen, she has deprived us of the right to be human beings, the right to be recognized and respected as men and women...

So America's strategy is the same strategy as that which was used in the past by the colonial powers: divide and conquer. She plays one Negro leader against the other. She plays one Negro organization against the other. She makes us think that we have different objectives, different goals. As soon as one Negro says something, she runs to this Negro and asks him, "What do you think about what he said?" Why, anybody can see through that today—except some of the Negro leaders.

All of our people have the same goals, the same objective: freedom, justice, equality. All of us want recognition and respect as human beings. We don't want to be integrationists. Nor do we want to be separationists. We want to be human beings. Integration is only a method that is used by some groups to obtain freedom, justice, equality and respect as human beings. Separation is only a method that is used by other groups to obtain freedom, justice, equality or human dig-

nity.

Our people have made the mistake of confusing the methods with the objectives. As long as we agree on objectives, we should never fall out with each other just because we believe in different methods or tactics or strategy to reach a common objective.

We have to keep in mind at all times that we aren't fighting for integration, nor are we fighting for separation. We are fighting for recognition as human beings. We are fighting for the right to live as free humans in this society. In fact, we are actually fighting for rights that are even greater than civil rights and that is, human rights. We are fighting for human rights in 1964. This is a shame. The civil rights struggle has failed to produced concrete results because it has kept us barking up the wrong tree. It has made us put the cart ahead of the horse. We must have human rights before we can secure civil rights. We must be respected as humans before we can be recognized as citizens...

...The difference between the thinking and the scope of the Negroes who are involved in the human-rights struggle and those who are involved in the civil-rights struggle is that those so-called Negroes involved in the human-rights struggle don't look upon themselves as Americans. They look upon themselves as a part of dark mankind. They see the whole struggle, not within the confines of the American stage, but they look upon the struggle on the world stage. And, in the world context, they see that the dark man outnumbers the white man. On the world stage the white man is just a microscopic minority...

He doesn't see any progress that he has made since the Civil War. He sees not one iota of progress because, number one, if the Civil War had freed him,

he wouldn't need civil-rights legislation today. If the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by that great shining liberal called Lincoln, had freed him, he wouldn't be singing "We Shall Overcome" today. If the amendments to the Constitution had solved his problem, his problem wouldn't still be here today. And if the Supreme Court desegregation decision of 1954 was genuinely and sincerely designed to solve his problem, the problem wouldn't be with us today...

So you have whites in the community who express sincerity when they say they want to help. Well, how can they help? How can a white person help the black man solve his problem? Number one, you can't solve it for him. You can help him solve it, but you can't solve it for him today. One of the best ways that you can help him solve it is to let the so-called Negro, who has been involved in the civil-rights struggle, see that the civil-rights struggle must be expanded beyond the level of civil rights to the level of human rights. Once it is expanded beyond the level of civil rights to the level of human rights, it opens the door for all of our brothers and sisters in Africa and Asia, who have their independence, to come to our rescue.

Why? When you go to Washington, D.C., expecting those crooks down there—and that's what they are—to pass some kind of civil-rights legislation to correct a very criminal situation, what you are doing is encouraging the black man, who is the victim, to take his case into the court that's controlled by the criminal that made him the victim. It will never be solved in that way. It's like running from the wolf to the fox...

No, something is wrong. And when these black people wake up and find out for real the trickery and the treachery that has been heaped upon us, you're going to have revolution. And when I say a revolution, I don't mean that stuff they were talking about last year, about "We Shall Overcome." That's no revolution. The Democrats get Negro support, yet the Negroes get nothing in return. The Negroes put the Democrats first, yet the Democrats put the Negroes last. And the alibi that the Democrats use, they blame the Dixiecrats. A Dixiecrat is nothing but a Democrat in disguise. You show me a Dixiecrat and I'll show you a Democrat. And chances are, you show me a Democrat and I'll show you a Dixiecrat. Because Dixie in reality means all that territory south of the Canadian border...

This is the conspiracy that our people have faced in this country for the past one hundred years. And today you have a new generation of black people who have come on the scene, who have become disenchanted with the entire system, who have become disillusioned over the system, and who are ready now and willing to do something about it...

Revolutions are fought to get control of land, to remove the absentee landlord and gain control of the land and the institutions that flow from that land. The black man has been in a very low condition because he has had no control whatsoever over any land. He has been a beggar economically, a beggar politically, a beggar socially, a beggar even when it comes to trying to get some education...And as the young ones come up, they know what they want. And as they listen to your beautiful preaching about democracy and all those other flowery words, they know what they're supposed to have. ■

Northern Lights

News and views from Socialist Action Canada

website: socialistaction.ca

Transitional Programme for Canada in Covid-19 Times

BY BARRY WEISLEDER

The following is a shortened version of a document approved at Socialist Action Canada's recent online convention. To read the full document, go to socialistaction.ca

World War 1 spawned the Russian Revolution, the Winnipeg General Strike, and spurred union recognition. Following World War 2, out of the debris of fascism and holocaust, the industrial unions, the labour-based NDP, and the welfare state emerged. What will be the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic? Qualitatively enhanced class consciousness and greater social responsibility, or regression to capitalist austerity?...

The reflex of the vast majority of people is to seek remedial action from... who? Giant corporations? Big banks? The Business Council of Canada? No. They expect the government to act, to cushion the blow, to spend massively so that lives may be saved.

Reform-minded journalists, like Erica Ifill and Les Whittington, writing in The Hill Times, separately observed: "Market fundamentalism is dead. We are all socialists now." This is a gross exaggeration, to be sure. So then, why does it resonate with millions of people?

Because capitalism is exposed as a feckless and fraught system that utterly dooms humanity. The private profit world order has shriveled biodiversity, pauperized billions of people and is speeding the train to climate catastrophe. In response to enormous pressure from below, stumbling capitalist regimes either improvise massive (but inadequate) spending programs and slowly move to restore health care services that should never have been cut -- or they just deny pandemic reality.

A case in point is the scandalous situation in long term care facilities. Over 80 per cent of Canada's COVID-19 deaths occurred in nursing homes, where aged and vulnerable residents live and eat in close proximity to each other, and where staff have been carriers or become infected. At one care centre in Dorval, Quebec provincial health officials forcibly entered to discover many seniors utterly abandoned, dehydrated, and laying in a fetid swamp of their urine and feces. Quebec and Ontario requested the Canadian Armed Forces to send medical personnel, in an effort to save imperiled folks from a grisly end...

The present situation is so 'novel' and so compelling that it demands an elaboration of a set of demands and proposals, a Transitional Programme for the Working Class in COVID-19 Times, towards which the following is but a modest contribution.

More than ever it is clear that capitalism is a dying system that threatens to destroy nature and humanity. What should we call it when capitalist governments cut funding to public health services and medical research? When they fail to provide protective gear? When they decry the shortage of staff at for-profit Long-Term

Care centres, while brave personal care workers and cleaners are limited to part-time hours, low pay and no benefits? What is it when the rulers close borders to starving millions displaced by wars and climate change caused by the G7? Let's not mince words. It is MURDER. Mass murder, rooted in the capitalist system.

But there is an alternative to this genocidal system -- a rational, democratic, humanistic and cooperative alternative: Socialism. To achieve socialism, it is vital that we advance concrete transitional demands to increase the confidence and capacity of the working class to achieve change, to win power.

Socialist Action demands a decent living wage for every adult, regardless their immigration status -- with no cuts to social programs and special benefits, and no privatization of public services. Jobs for all can be achieved by reducing the hours of work, without loss of pay and benefits. Put a halt to contract employment. End the gig economy. Enforce the right to refuse unsafe work with no loss in pay. Guarantee the right to sue bosses for injuries due to boss negligence.

Provide unemployment insurance at a living wage level with no cut off. Substantially raise the rates on welfare and housing allowance. Ensure a living wage for people on disability and support programmes. Institute full Canada Pension and Old Age Security payments at age 55, and at double the present rate. Require employers to pay all CPP and EI contributions. These are not taxes but deferred wages.

No one should have to buy their health care or medications. Nationalize Big Pharma. Bring all Long-Term Care facilities into public ownership. Incarceration is a pandemic death sentence. Release prisoners convicted of non-violent crimes now.

The Ontario Health Coalition has exposed the criminal extent of the cuts to funding and beds within the hospital system. Given the impact of the virus on a weakened health care system, it is vital that the health network and hospitals be restored and improved.

There is stark fear of a 'tsunami of evictions' after the lockdown. This cannot be permitted. Our demands must be clear.

Freeze residential rents and mortgage payments. No evictions. No cut-off of heat, electricity, water, or inter net service. Cancel student debt. Make post-secondary education free. Expropriate the big landlords and the construction/land development corporations. Build quality social housing on a mass scale. Learn from the brilliant example of Venezuela.

Freedom of communication, especially vital at a time like this, means putting an end to bandwidth limits, long distance phone fees, restricted minutes and exclusionary paywalls. Nationalize the telecoms!

Tax the rich. Expropriate the big banks, the giant oil and gas corporations. No state bail-outs for

private corporations without public ownership. Seize 'dead' capital sitting idle in offshore and domestic bank accounts. Use these resources to fund mass testing for COVID-19, to develop a vaccine against it, and to encourage farmers to grow healthy food. Reduce credit card interest rates to zero. Outlaw Pay Day loan sharks. Transition away from fossil fuels and nuclear fission. Move rapidly to green, sustainable energy systems, under public ownership and workers' control. Forward with socialist measures! We will not go back to pre-COVID days!

Socialist Action remains opposed to Universal Basic Income as a solution to the present crisis. In the April 12 edition of Canadian Dimension magazine OCAP-founder John Clarke observed, "As a social policy end run around the dominant regressive agenda, the UBI project fails to challenge low wage precarious work or the degrading of the social infrastructure, asking only for a basic payment provided out of general revenues, and it is taken on faith that the adequacy of this can somehow be assured.

"If UBI were to be implemented, progressive hopes would quickly be dashed on the rocks of neoliberal reality. It will take the form of a meagre payment that functions as an effective subsidy to low wage employers and that replaces, rather than complements, other elements of social provision. As public services are gutted and privatized, basic income recipients will find themselves shopping in the rubble of the social infrastructure with its cash replacement. In the period following the pandemic, when austerity and wage cutting are widespread and a ruthless drive to restore rates of profit and pay the bill for corporate bailouts gets underway, UBI would be an even more lethal weapon in the neoliberal arsenal."

Under the present mode of production, it is *capitalism for the poor, and socialism for the rich.* It must be replaced by a cooperative commonwealth, a genuine economic democracy -- a goal the rich and powerful will resist tooth and nail. Only a socialist revolution, led by a mass revolutionary workers' party deeply rooted in the majority class, can crash the barriers erected by the rich elite. Only in that way can the full potential of humanity be released, in harmony with nature...

Some homeless people are being allocated rooms in empty hotels. Free childcare is provided to front-line health workers in need. Good. But why just now? Good quality housing, food, childcare, education and mass transit -- these are rights and necessities, not privileges. They must be enhanced, made permanent. It's time to organize in work places, unions, NDP district associations, social justice movements and in local communities to demand rapid progress, and beyond that, to insist on revolutionary change towards a society fit for human beings.

The prime directive is simple: **We Refuse to Go Back to pre-COVID times!**

Rejection of Trudeau's Security Council Bid Is a Stunning Rebuke

BY BARRY WEISLEDER

Why did the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau fail to secure a seat on the United Nations Security Council? On June 17 it lost out to Norway and Ireland on the first ballot at the U.N. Canada needed 128 votes -- or two-thirds of the voting members of the assembly. Norway passed the threshold with 130 and Ireland garnered 128 votes. Canada fell short with 108 votes.

The loss was Canada's second consecutive defeat in a bid for a seat on the powerful body for a two-year term. The failure of the Trudeau Liberal government bid followed the loss by the former Conservative government of Stephen Harper in 2010. Prior to that, Canada won six times in a row, roughly each decade since the creation of the UN in 1946.

Bourgeois pundits cited Ottawa's low spending on 'international development assistance' and its reduced contributions to so-called UN peacekeeping missions as reasons for the rejection. Socialists see the outcome differently -- that the regres-

Justin Trudeau promised Benjamin Netanyahu that Canada on the Security Council would be "an asset for Israel".

sive behaviour of the Canadian state on climate change, Indigenous rights, Canadian mining operations abroad, global trade issues, Venezuela's sovereignty, and its staunch support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine proved negatively decisive.

Justin Trudeau promised Israeli P.M. Benjamin Netanyahu that Canada on the Security Council would be "an asset for Israel". Trudeau's slow, soft criticism of current plans by the Zionist state to annex over 30 per cent of the West Bank shows the precise meaning of 'asset.' Thus, Ottawa's defeat at the U.N. was a victory for the Palestinian people and for all oppressed nations denied the right to self-determination.

According to a Canada-wide survey conducted in June by Ekos Research Associates, 74 per cent of Canadians oppose the annexation, and 42 per cent want Ottawa to impose sanctions against Israel. Still, the parties in Parliament trail far behind public opinion. Indeed, the authorities at all levels try to vilify, even to outlaw talk of Boycott Divestment and Sanctions. They seek to ban the annual Al Quds march and to stop anti-Zionist free speech. Zionists and their friends in big business are in a panic. It is a sign of their weakness. ■

To support the growing campaign against Israel's illegal annexation of the West Bank, please contact the Palestinian Canadian Community Centre -- Palestine House at: palestiniancanadians@gmail.com.

Toronto Council Votes to Increase Police Budget

BY BARRY WEISLEDER

It was a slap in the face to the tens of thousands who rallied and marched for weeks to protest cop brutality and murder. On June 29 Toronto City Council defeated a move, 8 votes to 16, to ask the Toronto police to cut its budget in 2021 by at least 10 per cent.

Instead, the Council adopted a series of motions backed by Mayor John Tory which propose reforms that don't include immediate defunding of the police.

These hardly-novel 'reforms' include developing alternative ways for police to respond to calls that don't involve weapons, a call for the Police Services Board to provide Council with a line-by-line breakdown of the budget, and ask that Council "commit to eradicating racial profiling in policing."

One of Tory's motions approved by Council will actually see the police budget increase by \$5 million in 2021 — if the request for body-worn cameras for all officers is fully implemented.

"I'm very frustrated, but beyond that I am so incredibly embarrassed that this is our city council," Sandy Hudson, a co-founder of Black Lives Matter Toronto, told the Toronto Star after the vote.

While most of the councillors who voted for a measly 10 per cent cut to the bloated \$1.1-plus billion police budget happen to be individual members of the labour-based New Democratic Party, they sit on council as 'independents.'

The 'independent' Liberals and Tories who dominate Canada's largest municipal government make sure it serves Toronto's rich and powerful. This example of toadying to the cops, not to mention



condoning the escalating crises in housing, transportation and healthcare, vividly demonstrates the need for radical change. How? Compel the NDP to run an official party slate that is committed to slashing the police budget by at least 50 per cent, as demanded by Black Lives Matter and the No Pride in Policing Coalition. And if such a pledge is not made soon, labour and the left should form a coalition pledged to run candidates in 2022 on socialist policies, including Disarm, De-fund and Disband the cops.

Below is the statement widely distributed by Socialist Action at numerous anti-racism protests in June, including the rally on Pride Day, June 28, attended by

over 1,000 at Toronto City Hall Square.

Jail Killer Cops! Smash Racist Capitalism!

Cruel racism abounds in the USA. From the slave ships, to the slave auctions, to the schools and prisons of today; from the whippings, rapes and murders of the past to the beatings, racial profiling and killings of today... slavery is endemic to the capitalist system across North America. On the land stolen from the brutalized and decimated Indige-

ward Indigenous peoples, Metis, Quebecois, Blacks and racialized immigrants. In 1755-64 the Crown expelled Acadians from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Slavery was legal in Canada until 1833. Ottawa imported Chinese workers, many of whom died building the Canadian Pacific Railway; the survivors were ordered to leave. The state interned Canadians of Japanese heritage during World War II. In 1946, Viola Desmond went to jail for challenging anti-Black segregation in Nova Scotia. Racial profiling

nous peoples, capitalism was built on the backs of African and Indigenous slaves, and by impoverished, exploited and oppressed immigrants and racialized workers.

In Canada, the ruling class papered over the violent seizure of land from the indigenous peoples -- much of it still unceded. Those peoples were starved, raped, injured and murdered. Their children were seized, imprisoned in residential schools where the "Indian" in them was suppressed relentlessly, where many were over-worked, underfed, beaten, raped and killed.

"No institutionalized racism in Canada"? Canada was founded on racism to-

and racist murder by cops continue. Canadian mining companies exploit and brutalize black and brown people around the globe, stealing their resources for a fraction of their market value. Canadian capitalism was born of racism. It carries the virus to this day. We demand:

1. Stop and reverse the invasion of unceded lands and First Nations territories by mining, gas and oil corporations.
2. Enforce fully the U.N. Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People.
3. Jail Killer Cops. Prosecute Police Brutality. Smash anti-Black racism.
4. Disarm, De-fund and Disband the capitalist police force. For Workers' and Community-Controlled Policing. ■

How Venezuela Helped Defeat Canada's Security Council Bid

BY YVES ENGLER

Was Canada defeated in its bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council because of Justin Trudeau's effort to overthrow Venezuela's government? Its intervention in the internal affairs of another sovereign country certainly didn't help.

According to Royal Military College Professor Walter Dorn, "I spoke with an ambassador in NYC who told me that yesterday she voted for Canada. She had also cast a ballot in the 2010 election, which Canada also lost. She said that Canada's position on the Middle East (Israel) had changed, which was a positive factor for election, but that Canada's work in the Lima Group caused Venezuela to lobby hard against Canada. Unfortunately (from her perspective and mine), Venezuela and its allies still hold sway in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM or G77)."

The only country's diplomats — as far as I can tell — that publicly campaigned against Canada's bid for a seat on the Security Council were Venezuelan. Prior to the vote Venezuela's Vice-Minister of foreign relations for North America, Carlos Ron, tweeted out his opposition: "With its deafening silence, Canada has de facto supported terrorists and mercenaries who recently plotted against Ven-

ezuela, threatening regional peace and security. The UNSC is entrusted with upholding the United Nations Charter and maintaining International Peace and Security: Canada does not meet that criteria."

The post was re-tweeted by Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza, who has 1.6 million followers, and numerous Venezuelan diplomats around the world, including the Venezuelan ambassador to the UN. Joaquín Pérez Ayestarán added, "Canada recognizes an unelected, self-proclaimed President in Venezuela, in complete disregard for the will of the voters. It also tries to isolate Venezuela diplomatically & supports sanctions that affect all Venezuelans. Is the Security Council the place for more non-diplomacy?"

After Canada lost its Security Council bid, Ron noted, "not surprised with UN Security Council election results today. A subservient foreign policy may win you Trump's favor, but the peoples of the world expect an independent voice that will stand for diplomacy, respect for self-determination, and peace." He also tweeted an Ottawa Citizen article titled "Why Black and brown countries may have rejected Canada's security council bid."

For his part, UN ambassador Ayestarán tweeted, "losing two consecutive elections to the Security Council of United

Nations within a 10-years period is a clear message that you are not a reliable partner and that the international community has no confidence in you for entrusting questions related to international peace and security."

Over the past couple of years, the Trudeau government has openly sought to overthrow Venezuela's government. In a bid to elicit "regime change", Ottawa has worked to isolate Caracas, imposed illegal sanctions, took that government to the International Criminal Court, financed an often-unsavoury opposition and decided a marginal opposition politician was the legitimate president.

Canada's interference in Venezuelan affairs violates the UN and OAS charters. It is also wildly hypocritical. In its bid to force the Maduro government to follow Canada's (erroneous) interpretation of the Venezuelan constitution Ottawa is allied in the Lima Group with President Juan Orlando Hernandez, who openly defied the Honduran Constitution. Another of Canada's Lima Group allies is Colombian President Ivan Duque who has a substantially worse human rights record.

Reflecting the interventionist climate in this country, some suggested Canada's position towards Venezuela would actually help it secure a seat on the Security Council. A few weeks before the vote

the National Post's John Ivison penned a column titled "Trudeau's trail of broken promises haunt his UN Security Council campaign" that noted "but, Canada's vigorous participation in the Lima Group, the multilateral group formed in response to the crisis in Venezuela, has won it good notices in Latin America." (The Lima Group was set up to bypass the Organization of American States, mostly Caribbean countries, refusal to interfere in Venezuela's affairs.) A Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East factsheet regarding "Canada's 2020 bid for a UN Security Council seat" echoed Ivison's view. It claimed, "Canada also presents a positive image to Latin American states, likely reinforced by its leadership of the Lima Group in 2019 and by its promise to allocate \$53 million to the Venezuelan migration crisis."

While it is likely that Lima Group countries voted for Canada, a larger group of non-interventionist minded countries outside of that coalition didn't. Venezuelan officials' ability to influence Non-Aligned Movement and other countries would have been overwhelmingly based on their sympathy for the principle of non-intervention in other countries' affairs and respect for the UN charter.

The Liberals' policy towards Venezuela has blown up in its face. Maduro is still in power. Canada's preferred Venezuelan politician, Juan Guaidó, is weaker today than at any point since he declared himself president a year and a half ago. And now Venezuela has undermined the Liberals' effort to sit on the Security Council.

Will Canada's defeat at the UN spark a change in its disastrous Venezuela policy? ■

NY Cop Reforms? The Whole System Has to Go!

By MARTY GOODMAN

Tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, have been in the streets across New York State – despite the Covid-19 pandemic – to protest the murder of George Floyd and innumerable other victims of racist police. Thus far, a few victories have been won but what has been gained can also be lost as long as the monster of racist capitalism remains.

In New York City, a cynical game was played out on anti-racist forces – and in particular the African American, Hispanic and oppressed communities – by the administration of the “progressive” Mayor Bill de Blasio and the Democratic Party City Council.

Late on June 30, the overwhelmingly Democratic City Council passed an \$88.1 billion budget for fiscal 2021, which included a purported \$1 billion cut to the \$6 billion NY Police Department budget, “supported” by Mayor Bill de Blasio. The NYPD employs 36,000 uniformed officers and is by far the largest in the U.S. But the “cut” merely included shifting school policing to the Board of Education’s budget and blocking a new officers class in October. What was touted as police “reform” was, in reality, merely moving spending from one budget column to another, with no impact on the racist behavior of cops.

“To everyone who is disappointed we did not go farther, I am disappointed as well,” said City Council Leader Cory Johnson, who added the mayor, “is not budging.” In 2015, Johnson and de Blasio, both Democrats, supported expanding the NYPD by 1,300 officers, despite years of declining street “crime.”

What the Democrats and the capitalist media did not mention was: Who controls the cops? Did that change – at all? No, the class remaining in control is the capitalist class, not working people and oppressed communities. In the self-interest of the ruling class, limited concessions were granted because the anti-racist protests are huge, militant and diverse. Without concessions the system might fall.

When the rich were under attack and expensive stores were being “looted,” de Blasio imposed a curfew, criticized for its racist enforcement. Democratic Governor of New York Andrew Cuomo, like Republican President Trump, threatened to send in the National Guard in defense of property.

Socialist Action says, “Disarm, disband, and dismantle the police!” Black community control of the police!

As the budget sham unfolded inside City Hall, hundreds of mostly young anti-racist protesters of Occupy City Hall (OCH) began camping out for several days in City Hall Park. OCH was subject to two frontal attacks by de Blasio’s NYPD (as of July 2) as protesters chanted, “I don’t see no riot here! Why are you in riot gear?” Linking arms, OCH managed to force the cops to retreat - for now.

After the vote OCH protesters and even a few politicians slammed the final budget deal as a sellout. Said Tatiana Hill, a 32-year-old activist, “It’s trickery. It’s pretending to answer our demands. It sounds like they’re defunding the NYPD but they’re literally just moving things around,” Hill said. Eliel Cruz, a protester, said the Black Lives Matter movement will not be fooled by “smoke and

mirrors.”

Occupy City Hall is organized by an ad hoc coalition and Hill is part of that collective, and also an organizer with VOCAL-NY, a statewide organization working with low-income members. Hill insists, “We need black voices in the forefront. Because privilege exists even in these spaces that are supposed to be for us.”

2011’s Occupy Wall Street was located not far from City Hall in Zuccotti Park until billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg teamed-up with the Obama administration in a nationally orchestrated plan to smash the anti-corporate movement by force.

On June 25, a New York City cop was

In June, State Attorney General Letitia James held an investigation into the police conduct at demonstrations. One witness, Dounya Zayer, recalled being forcefully shoved to the ground by a cop, Vincent D’Andraia, at a peaceful protest and hit her head on the pavement, as seen in a video that went viral. Zayer experienced a seizure and concussion. Almost three weeks later, “I’m nauseous, my back hurts, I’ve had consistent migraines and I can’t hold down food. I can’t sleep,” said Zayer. The cop was arrested and charged with misdemeanor assault and suspended without pay.

Said Zayer, “Vincent D’Andraia being suspended so that, you know, the publicity can go away, and then they can bring him back to do the same thing over and

“oversight” of the NYPD surveillance technology, a penalty system for police officers with disciplinary issues, and a bill that puts into law the right to record police interactions.

Also, Police Commissioner Dermot Shea announced June 15 he’s disbanding the department’s plainclothes anti-crime unit of 600 cops, which had been involved in several controversial shootings and spying on Black Lives Matter. The 600 cops will be reassigned.

In his 2014 mayoral run De Blasio gathered the support of liberal Democrats and virtually the entire so-called Left in NYC (except Socialist Action). Promoting a demagogic “Tale of Two Cities” campaign theme, de Blasio billed himself as an anti-racist reformer by



arrested and charged with illegally using a chokehold to a man on a Rockaway Beach boardwalk in Queens, NY. A chokehold caused the 2014 death of Eric Garner, a Staten Island father who was being arrested on suspicion of selling loose cigarettes. Five years later, the NYPD officer, Daniel Pantaleo, was found guilty – in a cop’s court! – and finally fired but never spent a day in jail under de Blasio’s watch!

On June 29, Robert Cuffy, an African American anti-racist activist, was attacked while leading a march to “Defund the NYPD & Abolish the Police” from Washington Square to Foley Square in lower Manhattan. As Cuffy was filming the march he was tackled by an unidentified man who slammed Robert into another car, dislocating his shoulder.

Socialist Action spoke with Cuffy, who explained, “I was dragged against a car and saved by other protesters who intervened. The police were alerted and very criminally let the person go. They escorted him away.” Cuffy added, “The cops said there was no title registered for the attacker’s car, highly unlikely,” feeding speculation that the attacker was a cop. Cuffy described him as weighing 250-300 pounds and 6 feet tall. The attacker was not arrested. The struggle now, Cuffy says, is to identify the assailant.

To sign the petition to demand justice for Cuffy and view powerful videos go to Facebook: New York City Fight for Our Lives Coalition.

over again. Where the hell is the humanity in watching these officers assault a human for no reason?”

Mobilizations Score Some Reforms

In Albany, the New York State legislature passed a set of laws backed by “91 members of families of New Yorkers Killed by Police” and dozens of organizations urging Albany to prioritize police accountability and transparency.

On June 12, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed laws limiting police abuse, including strengthening a special prosecutor to investigate cases where police kill people, and the Repeal50a Bill, which struck from the books the country’s most secretive law on police misconduct. On June 15, they passed the vital reporting legislation, the Police STAT Act, which requires reporting of demographic and geographic data on law enforcement activity. These three bills together are known as the Safer NY Act, all signed by Cuomo.

At a press conference, Gov. Cuomo said after signing the bills, “To the protesters, you can go home, you’ve achieved what you wanted.” In response, an angry State Assemblyman Charles Baron told a June 19 Black-led protest on Wall Street, “Tell Governor Cuomo to go to hell!” to a cheering crowd.

On June 18, a set of police reforms were approved by the New York City Council: requiring that officer badge numbers be visible, a ban on chokeholds,

feigning opposition to the racist “Stop and Frisk” program, which overwhelmingly targeted African Americans for arrest and harassment and was ruled “unconstitutional” by a Federal Court. De Blasio maintained that he is in agreement with the “broken windows” philosophy of policing that targets low level crime in poor communities, i.e., that is, the oppressed communities. To the shock/betrayal of many of his supporters in the Black community, de Blasio, upon taking office, appointed Bill Bratton as police Chief, who was seen as Stop and Frisk’s creator when he was chief of police in Los Angeles.

Under de Blasio, prior to the pandemic, racist police enforcement has been rife. In 2019, reported stops increased by 22% – and 59% of stops were of Black people and 29% Latinx people in New York City.

Today, Black Americans are at least four times as likely to be shot by police as white Americans and six times as likely to be thrown in prison. Black drivers are three times more likely to be searched and twice as likely to be arrested during traffic stops. On June 25, the New York Times ran an article titled, “The Black White Wage Gap is as Big as it was in 1950.” Its findings and conclusions were devastating, given it has been more than 50 years since the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Simply put, racism and capitalism were twins at birth. There is no “progressive” Democrat that can change that reality. ■

Deadly New Sanctions on Syria

BY JUDITH BELLO

On May 20, President Trump signed into law the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. Embedded in this bill, a housekeeping bill of sorts where yearly “defense” appropriations and priorities are spelled out, was the basic text of the 2019 Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act. Perhaps they were buried here because they didn’t have bipartisan support, but there is certainly no reason to think that is the case. The war on Syria has had bipartisan support for the duration. Perhaps they were just embarrassed by the title, as the bill is named after a presentation that was a fraud.

The Caesar photos, which first emerged in January of 2014, were claimed to be 55,000 photos of people tortured to death by the Syrian government brought out by a military defector. The subsequent research was paid for by the Qatari government and overseen by a law firm, Carter Ruck, which had previously worked for Turkish President Erdogan. The photos are real but who are the subjects? Nearly 2 years later, Human Rights Watch published an article that was light on analysis and made many baseless claims about the data. A few months after that in March of 2016, Rick Sterling published a detailed analysis of the Caesar photos and the context in which they were published. On reviewing the photos, Rick says that they appear to be record keeping photos from the morgue of a hospital in a war zone and included the dead from both sides.

“In summary,” Rick says in his pdf research document, “the photos and the deceased are real. But how they died and the circumstances are unclear. There is strong evidence some died in conflict. Others died in the hospital. Others died and their bodies were decomposing before they were picked up. The photographs seem to document war time situation where many combatants and civilians are killed. It seems the military hospital was doing what it had always done: maintaining a photographic and documentary record of the deceased. Bodies were picked up by different military or intelligence branches. While some may have died in detention; the big majority probably died in the conflict zones. The accusation by ‘Caesar’, the Carter Ruck Report and HRW that these are really victims of “death in detention” or death by torture” or death in “government custody” are almost certainly false.”

The Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act doubles down on secondary sanctions which punish those who would have any economic exchange with Syria including aid. Though technically made anonymous, it was not killed, but rather hidden in the 2020 NDAA. Even the name didn’t really die. It just became a meme which refers to the most severe sanctions on the Syrian people and attempts to justify them. But why, 6 years after the Caesar files appeared, and 3 years after the claims that the photos of Syrian government victims were debunked, why secretly enact these sanctions now?

This set of sanctions are an attempt to land a death blow on the Syrian government while the world is focused on other problems. The U.S. has lost the hot war. They have been unable to poison the world against Syria beyond their close allies. The Assad government has restored order to the most populated areas of the country and also houses at least

half of the displaced persons from other areas. As long as Syria is still intact, the war against them will be escalated on some front. Regardless of the term ‘regime change,’ the war is a hybrid war against the people of Syria. The demand is that they change their identity and their way of life along with their leadership.

Syria has suffered under increasing US sanctions for decades. After the beginning of the war in Syria, the sanctions were hardened and deepened with increased 3rd party sanctions to include other countries in the sanctions. Either

rency is falling as well because Lebanon and Syria are traditional trading partners. According to SANA, US Envoy James Jeffrey claimed that the collapse of the Syrian currency is due to US policies. In northern Syria, Turkish backed militants are moving capital out of the country, while Erdogan is enforcing the use of Turkish currency in the areas where his people have control.

People can’t get basic necessities of food and medicine. The war has devastated Syria’s independent manufacturing sector. Mercenaries paid by Saudi Ara-

documenting Turkish backed militants burning crops in northern Syria.

Syria has gone off the radar for activists, but not for the relentless US imperialist war mongers. They have upped the ante once again, on a country suffering from nearly 10 years of war. And so you hear that in Syria, ‘rebuilding’ is being undermined by the economic sanctions, but you don’t hear that even people who had food and medicine through the war, now can’t get it. They can’t get oil and gas for cooking and heating. Their money is worthless and even the government is struggling to feed them because THEIR MONEY is WORTHLESS.

This is siege warfare. The people cannot feed their children. There are no resources for the sick and elderly. While the rest of the world is busy fighting COVID-19, Syrians are finally starving. It is hard, I think, to imagine this kind of cruelty even as vindictiveness. Even if the government of Syria were run by a cold blooded serial killer and a pack of hyenas, which it is not, the sanctions target the people of Syria, the victims of a terrible war instigated and perpetuated, armed and funded by the United States and its allies.

The “Caesar Syrian Civilian Protection Act” Sanctions should be renamed the “Caesar Syrian Civilian Genocide Act.” And yet, with the COVID-19 pandemic going on; with the dysfunction of our own economy leaving hundreds of thousands unemployed and food insecure, without medical insurance and on the brink of eviction; with gunboats off the coast of Venezuela and nukes moving to the Russian border in Poland, there is silence around Syria. And, isn’t that convenient. The new sanctions on Syria are like the knee of Derek Chauvin on George Floyd’s neck. But the video isn’t playing on YouTube.

When will this end? How can we put an end to it?

Hands off Syria! End the Syrian Sanctions!

End the Syrian Occupation! End the Imperial War on Syria Now! ■

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they abide by our sanctions against Syria or suffer sanctions and economic penalties themselves. The Caesar Act sanctions have completely isolated the the Central Bank of Syria. They impose secondary sanctions on any country or corporation that trades with Syria or even provides aid to Syria. They attack Lebanese banks that have so far supported Syrian trade, causing economic mayhem in that small and largely impoverished country. Only the biggest and boldest of their allies can take the risk of any kind of economic engagement with Syria.

The dollar value of the Syrian Lira has plummeted to 1800:1 from 47:1 before the war. There are rumors of capital flight through Idlib, the last enclave of Al Qaeda in Syria and other armed groups who are funded by US dollars. According to the Guardian, the Lebanese cur-

rency is falling as well because Lebanon and Syria are traditional trading partners. According to SANA, US Envoy James Jeffrey claimed that the collapse of the Syrian currency is due to US policies. In northern Syria, Turkish backed militants are moving capital out of the country, while Erdogan is enforcing the use of Turkish currency in the areas where his people have control.

People can’t get basic necessities of food and medicine. The war has devastated Syria’s independent manufacturing sector. Mercenaries paid by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey deliberately dismantled factories over the last decade, looting the machinery or destroying it before laying waste to the buildings that housed them. Earlier US sanctions have denied Syria the most basic ingredients of pharmaceutical manufacturing. Tom Duggan and Mark Taliano detail the list of imports forbidden to Syria in their recent article “Western Governments Collectively Punishing Syrian Civilians with Criminal Economic Embargoes.”

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Trump's Big Rally Fizzles, While the Movement Rises

BY BARRY SHEPPARD

According to the preliminary information given out by his election team, the Trump campaign rally set for June 20 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, would be like the large raucous adulations of his 2016 campaign.

A million people had sought to get tickets, we were told. There would be two rallies, one inside an arena that seats some 19,000, and a bigger open air overflow rally just outside the arena, expected to be at least 40,000, and maybe even double that.

The big day came. There were people who had bought tickets who came to Tulsa from other states and cities in Oklahoma who waited hours (in some cases days) to get into the arena. They were joined by Tulsa people who got tickets.

As the day wore on, only a few people trickled to the outside rally, which never materialized. These few were urged to go inside. As the seats in the arena were taken, TV cameras scanning the audience showed the upper balcony nearly empty. In fact, only 6,200 were inside the arena, according to the Tulsa fire department.

Trump chose Oklahoma, a state he overwhelmingly carried in 2016, counting on a big turnout, for his first rally in months.

"President Trump's attempt to revive his reelection campaign sputtered badly [He] delivered a disjointed speech that did not address the multiple crises facing the nation or scandals battering him in Washington," an article in the New York Times said.

He didn't take up the suffering of the many millions of unemployed, under employed, and small mom and pop businesses hit hard by the economic fallout of the pandemic, referring only to the high stock market to show how great he is.

"In rambling, grievance-filled remarks, Mr. Trump made no reference to the Tulsa massacre of 1921 or to George Floyd, whose death at the hands of a white police officer in Minneapolis sparked global demands for racial justice" the article said. "He also did not mention Juneteenth, which marks the end of slavery in the United States and fell just a day before his rally.

"Instead, the president railed about 'left-wing radicals' who he falsely claimed were rioting in cities across the country and praised police officers...

"The unhinged left wing mob is trying to vandalize our history, desecrate our [Confederate] monuments, our beautiful monuments, tear down our statues and punish, cancel and persecute anyone who does not conform to their demands for absolute, total control," Mr. Trump said."

If anyone is punishing and persecuting "anyone who does not conform" to his "demands for absolute, total control" it is Trump.

Trump held his rally, with people in close contact, most not wearing masks, in a city experiencing a big increase corona virus cases, in spite of local health officials warning that the rally could result in a new upsurge of cases.

"The president once again shrugged off the threat of the corona virus," the NYT

wrote. This is in keeping with his demand that the economy be fully reopened like it was before the pandemic hit, to bolster his election prospects.

Six members of his team sent to Tulsa to organize the rally were infected there, as were two members of the Secret Service preparing for Trump's visit. Trump was furious that these facts were given to the press by his own campaign, according to sources close to him.

He put the blame on China for the now over 120,000 deaths in the U.S. from the virus, taking no responsibility for his

demonstrator, a 62-year-old art teacher and grandmother named Sheila Buck, was handcuffed and arrested at the request of the Trump campaign, even though she had reserved a ticket. Buck, who says she was inspired to protest after years of witnessing her Black students suffer from racism, says she plans to sue the city, the police department and the Trump campaign."

Trump and his spokespeople blamed the empty seats on protesters and the media. But no protesters were allowed anywhere near the arena entrance where

coming the epicenter of infections, hospitalizations and deaths in the world.

What happens with the virus will have an effect on the economy, and the elections. Did the upsurge in cases in Tulsa affect the turnout for Trump's rally? In any case, it will become much harder to find venues for the kind of rallies Trump wants – packed shoulder to shoulder mass events.

Whatever the facts are about the upsurge in cases affecting the turnout in Tulsa, there is another factor. That is, the mass uprising against police vio-



own actions which were responsible for the way the pandemic mushroomed here. He referred to the virus by the racist term "Kung Flu."

He said that testing for the virus increases the number of known cases – true and necessary knowledge to contain the pandemic -- and drew the astonishing conclusion that as a result he is ordering testing to be slowed down! That is, finding new cases doesn't look good for him.

Previously, he made the comment that people are wearing masks in order to discredit him.

The day after the rally, his spokespeople went on TV to vociferously make the claim that Trump was just joking about cutting back on testing. The next day he refuted them, saying that he doesn't joke.

In his speech, he accused Ilhan Omar, a Representative in Congress from Minnesota, a Muslim and Black born in Somalia, of wanting to turn America into a failed state "just like the country from where she came".

Trump's son Eric also spoke at the event, where he referred to Black Lives Matter protesters as "animals."

Trump spent 20 minutes refuting some media claims that he looked shaky at a previous event. He doesn't want to let his followers to think he has any health problems.

Protesters demonstrated outside the event. In spite of Trump's threat to unleash violence against any protests there, none materialized.

Democracy Now reported, "One

people calmly filed in without incident. He attacked the media for frightening people away, presumably for saying that the Tulsa health authorities warned that attending the rally could spread the virus.

Trump is again saying that the virus is defeated in the U.S. The facts speak otherwise. Twenty nine states are reporting an increase in cases, largely in states that reopened without adequate safety measures. This is not a "new wave" of infections, but a continuation of the first wave. While the number of new cases in the U.S. being reported daily fell down from its high of about 30,000, it fell to a plateau revolving around 20,000 new cases every day.

This contrasts in most other advanced countries, where the number of new cases kept falling, not reaching a plateau. The difference with the U.S. is that in those countries there was a vigorous nationally organized testing campaign. The Trump administration left testing up to the states, without adequate funding.

With the new surge in cases, the seven-day average of new cases has turned upward, and climbing. For one day, new cases reached 30,000 again and then dropped to around 27,000. Hospitalizations, which lag new cases, are also increasing. Deaths lag hospitalizations, but will rise.

In Florida, which reopened willy-nilly in most areas, the number of new cases is growing exponentially, that is, doubling every few days, the same curve that New York City saw in the first stage of it be-

lence and institutional racism gripping the country has demoralized white racists, dampening their enthusiasm. Many whites are shedding their passive racism as the movement exposes more and more aspects of the systematic oppression of Blacks, and its long history.

From the start of his election campaign for 2016 up to the present, Trump has presented himself as the strongman who can "Make America Great Again." He is increasingly saying that the 2020 elections will be rigged against him. He hints that he might refuse to accept any result that goes against him. Many in the media are wondering if he will even allow the elections to take place, possibly using the pandemic as an excuse.

His authoritarian aspirations are becoming more evident. Top Republicans openly affirm they are for a "strong executive". That is one of the reasons they back Trump. Members of the reactionary wing of the Supreme Court have the same views. Obviously, a wing of the ruling class is backing them.

The most important force blocking Trump is the mass Black Lives Matter uprising. There is growing understanding within the movement that their fight goes way beyond elections. Every indication is that the movement will not be silenced this autumn out of concern for not upsetting the boat for the Democrats, but continue beyond November, unlike many others.

At least there is real hope that will be the case. ■