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United in Protest, From Coast to Coast

A vast wave of demonstrations took place across the United States on Saturday, including in, clockwise from top left: Washington; Manhattan; St. Paul, Minn.; and Seattle. They were part of a growing, coalescing movement to fight systemic racism. Page 23.

As Heroes Die, Who Will Carry Europe’s Torch?

By JASON HOROWITZ

ROME — For years, Gildo Negri visited schools to share his stories about blowing up bridges and cutting electrical wires to sabotage Nazis and fascists during World War II. In January, the 89-year-old made another visit, leaving his nursing home outside Milan to help students plant trees in honor of Italians deported to concentration camps.

But at the end of February, as Europe’s first outbreak of the coronavirus spread through Mr. Negri’s nursing home, it infected him, too.

Shut inside, he grew despondent about missing the usual parades and public speeches on Italy’s Liberation Day, grander this year to mark the 75th anniversary. But the virus canceled the April 25 commemorations. Mr. Negri died that night.

“The memory is vanishing, and the coronavirus is accelerating this process,” said Rita Magnani, who worked with Mr. Negri, at the local chapter of the National Association of Italian Partisans. “We are losing the people who can tell us in first person what happened. And it’s a shame, because when we lose the historical memory we lose ourselves.”

Time and its ravages have already cut down the lives and blurred the memories of a generation that saw close up the ideologies and crimes that turned Europe into a killing field.

The virus, which is so lethal to the old, has hastened the departure of these last witnesses and forced the cancellation of anniversary commemorations that offered a final chance to tell their stories to large audiences. It has also created an opportunity for rising political forces who seek to recast the history of the last century in order to play a greater role in remaking the present one.

Throughout Europe, radical right-wing parties with histories of Holocaust denial, Mussolini infatuation and fascist motifs, have gained traction in recent years, moving from the fringes and into parliaments and even governing coalitions.

The Alternative for Germany is looking to capitalize on the economic frustration the coronavirus crisis has triggered. In France, the hard-right National Rally had the country’s strongest showing in the last European Parliament

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In the Pandemic, as Ever, ‘I Will Give You Rest’

By ELIZABETH DIAS

Beyond the glass lay a man, unconscious in the electric blue light, shrouded in tubes. His family was not allowed to visit. His body could not be touched.

The Rev. Ryan Connors stood at the door watching, his Roman collar barely visible beneath his face shield.

Since the coronavirus pandemic began, he had gone to the bedsides of Covid-19 patients across the Boston area to perform one of the oldest religious rituals for the dying: the Roman Catholic practice commonly called last rites.

For centuries, priests have physically anointed the dying with oil to heal body and soul, if not in this life, in the next. Many Catholics have spent their entire lives trusting that in their most

Ritual of the Last Rites Changes but Endures

difficult hours a priest, and through him God, would come to their aid.

On this Tuesday morning, in the intensive care unit at St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center, all that Father Connors knew about the patient was his name, and that his family had called for a priest.

He had a clear plastic bag with a cotton ball containing a few drops of holy oil. He carried a photocopy of pages from a liturgical book.

At 10:18 a.m., he slid open the door. He walked over to the bed, careful to avoid the tubes on the ground.

He stretched out his hand, and

began to pray.

The coronavirus has led the United States to the valley of the shadow of death. In just three months, a microscopic particle has laid bare human mortality. The entire nation has worked to avoid death, shutting down cities, masking faces in the streets, and isolating the dying from their loved ones in their final hours. And yet, more than 100,000 people have died, and often, died alone.

Many rituals, a guide through life’s most sacred moments, have been impossible. Children said final goodbyes to dying parents through windows or on FaceTime, if they bid farewell at all. Only rarely have religious leaders been allowed into hospitals and nursing homes. Families attend funerals on Zoom.

The country is facing a deeply

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RYAN CHRISTOPHER JONES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Rev. Ryan Connors praying over a Covid patient at St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center in Boston.

Spared Virus’s Havoc, but Not the Economic Pain

By MICHAEL H. KELLER and STEVE EDER

In Corpus Christi, Texas, many people strain to name anyone infected with the coronavirus. In east central Wisconsin, members of the Y.M.C.A. express frustration with a distant health crisis that shut down the group’s community services. In western Colorado, the summer recreational season was canceled before it

even started — again with little sign of the virus.

The coronavirus has killed more than 100,000 Americans and brought much of the economy to a grinding halt. Though all 50 states have begun to reopen against a bitter partisan backdrop, in many parts of the country the dual health and economic calamities are not playing out in parallel.

A New York Times analysis of coronavirus infections, official layoff notices and federal unem-

ployment data highlights the sharp disconnect between extreme economic pain and limited health impact from the pandemic in many parts of the country. It is a split that presents local officials and businesses with difficult choices even after Friday’s encouraging jobs report suggested more of the country was returning to work.

Some business owners and

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Fierce Protectors of Police Impede Efforts at Reform

Unions Using Their Outsize Political Power Resist Checks on Officers’ Behavior

This article is by Noam Scheiber, Farah Stockman and J. David Goodman.

Over the past five years, as demands for reform have mounted in the aftermath of police violence in cities like Ferguson, Mo., Baltimore and now Minneapolis, police unions have emerged as one of the most significant roadblocks to change. The greater the political pressure for reform, the more defiant the unions often are in resisting it — with few city officials, including liberal leaders, able to overcome their opposition.

They aggressively protect the rights of members accused of misconduct, often in arbitration hearings that they have battled to keep behind closed doors. And they have also been remarkably effective at fending off broader change, using their political clout and influence to derail efforts to increase accountability.

While rates of union membership have dropped by half nationally since the early 1980s, to 10 percent, higher membership rates among police unions give them resources they can spend on campaigns and litigation to block reform. A single New York City police union has spent more than \$1 million on state and local races since 2014.

In St. Louis, when Kim Gardner was elected the top prosecutor four years ago, she set out to rein in the city’s high rate of police violence. But after she proposed a unit within the prosecutor’s office that would independently investigate misconduct, she ran into the powerful local police union.

The union pressured lawmakers to set aside the proposal, which many supported but then never brought to a vote. Around the same time, a lawyer for the union waged a legal fight to limit the ability of the prosecutor’s office to investigate police misconduct. The following year, a leader of the union said Ms. Gardner should be removed “by force or by choice.”

Politicians tempted to cross police unions have long feared being

labeled soft on crime by the unions, or more serious consequences.

When Steve Fletcher, a Minneapolis city councilman and frequent Police Department critic, sought to divert money away from hiring officers and toward a newly created office of violence prevention, he said, the police stopped responding as quickly to 911 calls placed by his constituents. “It operates a little bit like a protection racket,” Mr. Fletcher said of the union.

A spokesman for the Minneapolis Police Department said he was unable to comment.

A few days after prosecutors in Minneapolis charged an officer with murder in the death of George Floyd, the president of the city’s police union denounced political leaders, accusing them of selling out his members and firing four officers without due process.

“It is despicable behavior,” the union president, Lt. Bob Kroll, wrote in a letter to union members obtained by a local reporter. He also referred to protesters as a “terrorist movement.”

Mr. Kroll, who is himself the subject of at least 29 complaints, has also chided the Obama administration for its “oppression of police,” and praised President

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DAVID DEE DELGADO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A police officer at the demonstrations in New York City.

Taking a Knee: From Sidelines To Front Lines

By KURT STREETER

It is a simple gesture, swaddled in outrage and long-endured grief, that gained powerful currency through the protest against police brutality and racial injustice led by quarterback Colin Kaepernick on the fields of the National Football League.

Taking a knee.

Across the nation these last hard, uncertain days, demonstrators have turned to the gesture on city streets. At a nighttime march in Minneapolis on Wednesday, a crowd of 400 knelt for nearly five somber minutes. On the same day, George Floyd’s son, Quincy Mason, walked through a crowd at the site where a white police officer had pinned his father to the ground by a knee to the neck. There, before a makeshift memorial, Mr. Mason dropped to a knee.

The gesture has even been made sporadically by law enforcement officers, members of the National Guard and by prominent politicians as an act of solidarity or effort to pacify.

In New York, a police commander knelt with activists outside Washington Square Park. In Portland, Ore., officers in riot gear knelt before demonstrators, some of whom responded by walking toward the officers to shake their

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In the G.O.P., Some Weigh A Biden Vote

By JONATHAN MARTIN

WASHINGTON — It was one thing in 2016 for top Republicans to take a stand against Donald J. Trump for president: He wasn’t likely to win anyway, the thinking went, and there was no longstanding conservative governing agenda that would be endangered.

The 2020 campaign is different: Opposing the sitting president of your own party means putting policy priorities at risk, in this case appointing conservative judges, sustaining business-friendly regulations and cutting taxes — as well as incurring the volcanic wrath of Mr. Trump.

But, far sooner than they expected, growing numbers of prominent Republicans are debating how far to go in revealing that they won’t back his re-election — or might even vote for Joseph R. Biden Jr., the presumptive Democratic nominee. They’re feeling a fresh urgency because of Mr. Trump’s incendiary response to the protests of police brutality, atop his mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic, according to people who spoke on the condition of anonymity to disclose private discussions.

Former President George W. Bush won’t support the re-election

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A Convention Derailed

President Trump and the G.O.P. are moving to largely shift the proceedings outside North Carolina. PAGE 17

Defending Democracy Abroad

With the United States in turmoil, diplomats struggle to make the case for human rights overseas. PAGE 21

BOOK REVIEW

Conflicted Soul of the West

In his first installment of a series on overlooked or under-read American writers, A.O. Scott considers the individualistic spirit of Wallace Stegner. PAGE 1



INTERNATIONAL 14-16

A Grim Turn in the Amazon

Deforestation has surged as Brazil focuses on the pandemic, raising the risk of worse fires than a year ago. PAGE 14

Girl’s Death Shakes Iran

The beheading of a 14-year-old has set off a national debate: Do women and children have a right to safety? PAGE 15

SUNDAY BUSINESS

How Corporations Fail Blacks

Black executives discuss their private fears and their disappointments with corporate America. “We seem to have hit a wall,” one said. PAGE 1

AT HOME

Talking to Kids About Racism

Discussing race needs to start early in life, and there is no shortage of books that can help keep the complicated conversation moving. PAGE 5

SUNDAY REVIEW

Jamelle Bouie

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SUNDAY STYLES

Fire Island Won’t Be the Same

In the Pines, gay clubs are closed, but many people are keeping their summer shares. Can they social distance? PAGE 1

Summer Camp as Guinea Pigs

Entrepreneurs are swamping camp directors with sales pitches for services to screen for the coronavirus, with your children as test subjects. PAGE 1

ARTS & LEISURE

On ‘The King of Staten Island’

Pete Davidson of “S.N.L.” is trying to tie the many strands of his life together in this film by Judd Apatow. PAGE 6



SPORTS 30-31

‘Not the Hometown’ I Knew

In an essay, Arizona Cardinals wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald Jr. writes of present-day unrest and recalls a more peaceful time in Minneapolis. PAGE 30

