100+ strikes demand PPE before profits!

By Martha Grevatt

Since the beginning of March, workers have held over 100 walkouts, sick-outs, sit-ins, pickets and protests over their bosses’ failure to protect them from the highly contagious coronavirus. Common demands include adequate personal protective equipment, modifications to the work environment, hazard pay, paid sick leave and the shutdown of nonessential jobs such as casino construction and vehicle assembly.

The most recent actions have hit fast food restaurants, poultry and meatpacking plants, high-rise apartment buildings, assisted living housing, city sanitation departments, shipyards, bookstores, warehouses, hospitals, pizza parlors and supermarkets. The six weeks of workplace resistance have occurred in most of the 50 states and Washington, D.C.

Strikes have been large and small—from a handful of workers at five New Jersey high-rises to 13,000 carpenters across Massachusetts. From hospitals to grocery chains, food processing to mass transit, workers deemed “essential” are in the forefront of this emerging class struggle. They are being asked repeatedly to choose between their livelihoods and their health, while they watch their coworkers die.

Fatality figures tell it all:

- Four workers dead at a Tyson chicken plant in Georgia
- 68 New York City transit workers
- 42 grocery workers
- 46 health care workers around the country

By the time this article is published those numbers—a small sample and likely a shocking undercount—will be out of date.

The meatpacking industry’s disregard for workers, who are forced to toil in cramped conditions without protective equipment—as they did before the outbreak—has made these workers especially vulnerable to exposure. In southeastern Iowa, at least 186 workers have tested positive for COVID-19 at the Tyson Foods pork processing plant in Columbus Junction, resulting in two deaths. The Columbus Junction plant has been shut down, but the company does not plan to close the Tyson Fresh Meats plant in Waterloo, showing Tyson’s policy of putting profits over workers’ safety.

As reported by The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier April 16, “Hundreds of Tyson employees in Waterloo have refused to work in recent days,” as “the company is not protecting workers from coronavirus spread.” Calls for Tyson worker walkouts and consumer boycotts are growing louder as the number of COVID-19 cases continues to escalate statewide and around the country.

Racism killing workers

Essential workers are disproportionately workers of color. The huge processing plants of Smithfield, Tyson, JBS and other food corporations employ large numbers of Black and other workers of color.

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HEALTH CRISIS & VIRUS

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- Sailors vs. U.S. Navy
- Stop layoffs!
- A suggested prescription
- Uncounted deaths
- Nursing homes = death traps

The real criminals

Mumia Abu-Jamal & prison hoax

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The real criminals are not in prison

By Gloria Rubac

The following excerpted remarks were made by Gloria Rubac, a longtime Texas anti-death penalty activist, on an April 9 Workers World Party webinar entitled “Free them all.” Go to tinquart.com/igjgj/kjetry to hear all the talks.

Why do we say FREE THEM ALL? Who are we talking about? Who is in prison and where do these prisons come from? Prisons came about after the Civil War, after the end of slavery.

Here in a Houston suburb called Sugar Land, 95 graves were found last year as a new school was being built. This city had been home to large sugar plantations during slavery. Some of the remains still had chains on them of people who had been chained during slavery.

So we say FREE THEM ALL, because every single person who is in prison is a political prisoner. Why? They are victims of this political and economic system.

Who should be in prison? The head of Tyson Foods should be in prison. He is now dead, as are two of his coworkers. The Tyson Foods executives should be in prison for murder. The head of Baylo State, Luke’s Medical Center in Houston should be in prison. My daughter was registered nurse, is working there in the ICU, but she doesn’t have an N95 mask and has worn the same cotton mask two days. I can go on Amazon to buy a mask. Why in the hell can’t this major hospital have proper masks?

The executives of McDonald’s or Kroger grocery stores should be in prison. They don’t supply personal protection equipment for their workers — essential workers.

The militarization of the armed forces and the war profiteers should be in prison. They are responsible for mass murder all over the world.

COVID-19 has exposed everything wrong with capitalism:

- No national planning for universal free, quality healthcare.
- No provisions to support families from cradle to grave.
- No guaranteed high standard of living for all people.
- Institutionalized racism, sexism, LGBTQ2+ bigotry.
- Class system rigged in favor of profits for the 1%.
- Billions for the Pentagon, cutbacks for people’s welfare, including food and housing.
- Workers world provides the theoretical and organizational ammunition needed to crush this inhuman system and create one that supports the working class and all oppressed people — revolutionary socialism.
- Those who hold power are in prison during this devastating pandemic — where everyone is being called upon to show solidarity and form a united front — then for a socialist future!

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

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should be in the hands of the working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

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

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, transnational, multigender and multiracial organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to create a new world system.

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

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Prison hoax sparks response from Mumia Abu-Jamal supporters

By Betsey Piette

When a Pennsylvania Department of Corrections spokesperson callously claimed that Mumia Abu-Jamal was being hospitalized with COVID-19 at 5 p.m. on April 15, the news was broadcast minutes in minutes. Supporters, who have been misled by DOC statements in the past, immediately flooded the institution with calls demanding confirmation from Abu-Jamal himself.

By 8:45 p.m., bowing to pressure, the DOC allowed Mumia to call supporters. He confirmed that the official “report” was false. “I am fine, I am not hospitalized,” he reported. “What I need is freedom.”

This instant and cruel hoax appears to be the prison’s response to a day-long twitter storm and phone call blast to Pennsylvania state and prison officials demanding the release of Abu-Jamal and all state prisoners. The COVID-19 pandemic imposes a death sentence on the incarcerated, including 66-year-old Mumia, who already suffers from cirrhosis of the liver.

As of April 15, a total of 45,000 prisoners had been tested for 454 out of 45,000 inmates, with a 17 percent positivity rate; one death had been reported on April 8. In the last month there has only been a reduction of 747 out of 45,000 state prisoners.

Virtual press conference exposes DOC lies

On the morning of April 16, Abu-Jamal supporters held a virtual press conference where they went into detail on the actions of the DOC spokesperson and its impact on family, friends and supporters of Abu-Jamal.

Santiago Alvarez, a University of California Santa Cruz student who called the prison, described the recorded conversation he had with the DOC spokesperson and played a portion of it. The person clearly told Alvarez: “Mumia was taken to the hospital 30 minutes ago... suffering from headaches and breathing problems ... to be tested for COVID-19 as a precaution.” The speaker identified himself as “Philip Howard.”

On Alvarez’s second call to the prison, the person who answered the phone said, “No one has left here today” and could not answer the question: NO! We don’t have COVID-19! We don’t know what that water is spraying on us. And to let us eat off the same dirty tray that’s being refilled. And some at least a hundred at a time. Who knows how many prisoners have already eaten off that same dirty dirty dish that’s being refilled. There’s one pitcher of water or juice on each table for four that sits there for all the shifts of prisoners who come to that room. There’s one pitcher of water or juice on each of the same dirty trays on each table. Prisoners are not being fed. There’s no food. Just water. And they are taking at least a hundred at a time. We are not being given food. We are being fed water. Nothing else. Nothing else. And we are not being given food. We are being fed water. Nothing else. Nothing else. And we are not being given food. We are being fed water. Nothing else. Nothing else. And we are not being given food. We are being fed water. Nothing else. Nothing else.

The real criminals are not in prison

Continued from page 2

The world. Talk about serial killers! And if they do not kill our youth, who they send to fight their imperialist wars, these youth come back so mentally and physically damaged that it affects them for the rest of their lives.

The police who murder a Black or Brown youth — they are serial killers. Politicians refusing to shut down prisons are going to be serial killers.

And Philadephia can release 45,000 prisoners, then so can every one of our 50 states.

And what about the border patrol, the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents, those separate parents from their children? That is child abuse raised to the extreme.

Right now in Texas, there are 15 to 20 reviews of liver loss tests. Those tests are causing severe problems, especially for the mentally ill who are locked down and hearing about this virus. They don’t understand what’s going on. They are getting into fights, and it is really bad.

“I think we need some revolution to happen, rather than keeping us locked up. We need to let us out! Put us on monitors if they want, but this virus is going to spread over every prison system.”

The real criminals are not in prison. Prisoners are concentration camps for the poor and oppressed. In Houston’s county jail, there are 9,000 prisoners, the largest in Texas, with half of them held there for small drug and parole violations. In most of those in county jails have not even been convicted of any crime, haven’t gone to trial yet. They are locked up because they can’t afford the $500 bond to get out of jail. This is cruelty, and the people responsible for these are criminals.

Open up the jails, the prisons, the detention centers. Let’s lock up the real criminals! ☐

Philadelphia failure to empty jails causes COVID-19 death

The first COVID-19 death in Philadelphia jails occurred on April 14. She was Yvonne Harris, a 48-year-old woman incarcerated at Riverside Correctional Facility. In the meantime, city judges have mocked the danger our incarcerated neighbors face and have only reduced the jail population by 13 percent in the past month — far below what other big cities are doing as well as what activists are demanding.

In response to Harris’ needless death, a quickly organized protest held on April 15 at the “Criminal Justice Center” included two life-size cardboard coffins representing two local incarcerated people who have died so far of COVID-19.

In addition to Harris, a Philadelphia state Department of Corrections prisoner, Rudolph Sutton, died of the virus on April 8. Innocence Project Legal Director Nnamdi Sanogho said on April 15: “Mr. Sutton should never have been incarcerated in the first place. ... His tragic death underscores the urgent need for the governor, the Department of Corrections, the legislature, and the courts to act quickly so that another factually innocent person does not risk death in prison due to COVID-19.”

Philadelphia Inquirer, April 15

Live reports by cell phone from people inside Philly jails told the demonstrators how difficult it is to be locked up at a time of the deadly pandemic.

At one point, participants chanted Judge Anne Marie Coyle to the parking ramp and yelled “Free our people” as she drove out. Judge Coyle has refused to let even one prisoner out of jail despite the pandemic’s danger.

The two cardboard coffins were left behind, leaning on the wall of the court house, the place responsible for both unnecessary deaths. Organizers with the #No215Jail Coalition pledged to hold more rallies whenever anyone dies in the city’s jails due to COVID-19.

Report and photo by Joe Piette
People die as capitalists profit from pandemic crisis

By Lucy Cruz

April 21—Seven weeks after initial reports broke on the first confirmed COVID-19 case in New York City, we are in the midst of an unprecedented public health crisis. As of today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 776,093 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 41,758 total deaths in the U.S. Despite warnings from the global health community dating back to December and early January, the Trump administration’s response to the developing crisis has been lax, bureaucratic and wholly inadequate, leaving the U.S. as the country with the most confirmed cases worldwide at this writing.

Many have assessed the current state of affairs, illustrating the failures of both state- and federal-level legislation and legislators alike to quell panic and to care for the most vulnerable. Ongoing debates over the critiques offer an abundance of points on the limited capacity of our governing bodies to care for us, even in New York City, the financial heart of U.S. imperialism.

I would go a step further and contend that the system isn’t failing at all, but is, rather, operating exactly as intended. Capitalism is concerned above all else with generating profits, and it does so at the expense of the lives of the workers who sustain it.

A brief overview of history from the last 50 years could provide numerous examples of examples of foreign regimes toppled by the U.S. for barely better profit margins. The COVID-19 crisis is no different, as profiteers are quick to find new ways to make gains from human suffering.

Today, we see how one person’s affliction can be used as another’s stepping stone to pursue the elusive “American Dream.”

Welfare for the 1%

On March 12, the ruling class blatantly made its primary concern known by injecting $1.5 trillion to support industries and workers, without a second thought. COVID-19 was proving to be lethal to industries as well as human beings, bringing the mighty U.S. economy to its knees.

Suddenly, the same federal government that couldn’t find funds for social programs and universal health care could pull billions out of thin air. The government of the ruling class has the money; they just don’t want to spend it on anyone aside from themselves.

A March 13 article in The Atlantic glossed over the incredible welfare received by the 1% and argued a “progressive case” in claiming the trillions were necessary for the greater good of the nation to prevent an economic collapse. Right-wing spectators and capitalist apologists were quick to note that the short-term loans offered to big-name firms wouldn’t “cost” the federal government anything—assuming they would be paid back in full with interest. (tinyurl.com/tpytntk)

In doing so, capitalists and apologists silently acknowledge their prioritization of a system more concerned with generating profits than saving thousands of human lives, willing to turn a blind eye to the suffering of the masses to preserve their standard of living.

Profits off pain and suffering

Furthermore, many U.S. capitalists had full knowledge of the crisis to come as the initial outbreak was occurring in Wuhan. These exploiters rushed to export personal protective equipment and supplies soon to be desperately needed in the U.S. Sellers were solely incen-

tivized by the promise of profit, not by mitigating the spread of the disease. U.S. manufacturers exported more than $7.5 million worth of face masks, more than $13.6 million in surgical gowns and more than $27.2 million in ventilators to China during the first two months of the year. (USA Today, April 2)

Today, the outbreak in China is winding down, while it continues to ramp up in the U.S. Ventilators and PPE are in very short supply and demand gets higher every day as understaffed hospitals try to manage an ever-growing influx of patients. Equipment prices skyrocket when hos-

pitals must buy on the “free market” which is perpetually profit-driven.

In the trading markets, masks are being aggressively peddled for exorbitant prices, incentivizing the hoard-

ing of supplies by anyone who can afford to. According to Reuters, the federal reserve of supplies isn’t looking much better, with the U.S Strategic National Stockpile nearly depleted of masks, ventilators and other medi-

cal supplies. (March 31) The Federal Emergency Management Agency now presides over the stockpile, and has assured the public that it will replenish its stocks with the $16 billion stimulus bill recently approved by Congress. Where’s a $1.5 trillion bailout when you need one?

Recent controversy regarding White House advisor and Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner shows how

something has to change. The “free market” will not

accomplish the greater good of the nation to prevent an economic crisis.

In the second year of the law with “no sunset provi-

sions such as the Interferon Alfa 2B drug, produced by China’s National Health Commission as one of the greatest weapons in the Chinese arsenal.

The COVID-19 crisis continues to fuel the spread of the disease.

In the trading markets, masks are being aggressively peddled for exorbitant prices, incentivizing the hoarding of supplies by anyone who can afford to. According to Reuters, the federal reserve of supplies isn’t looking much better, with the U.S Strategic National Stockpile nearly depleted of masks, ventilators and other medical supplies. (March 31) The Federal Emergency Management Agency now presides over the stockpile, and has assured the public that it will replenish its stocks with the $16 billion stimulus bill recently approved by Congress. Where’s a $1.5 trillion bailout when you need one?

Recent controversy regarding White House advisor

By Jim McMahan

Seattle already had over 11,000 people affected by a deadly epidemic when the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. In the week of March 13-21, a total of 37,296 unemployment claims were filed in Seattle and King County, following the biggest stock market crash since the Great Depression. Many thousands of workers have since been evicted from their homes to live in cars or tents, or to move to far away suburbs, due to big real estate landlords profiting from sky-high rents.

Suddenly, the Amazon super-monopoly, a trillion-dollar company based in Seattle, continues its dominance of the city and the rest of the world. The Tax Amazon campaign seeks to tax the top 3 percent of Seattle’s businesses at 1.5 percent.

Tax Amazon has launched a ballot initiative cam-

paign to collect 300,000 signatures to get the proposal on the ballot. City Councilmember Kshama Sawant has been organizing town hall meetings, City Hall members of insti-

tute of future meetings to build this campaign. People like Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, and representatives of the Amazon worker strike have spoken up for the initiative.

Allied with Sawant are Councilwoman Tammy Morales and a coalition of labor unions, community organizations and socialist groups.

The legislation would raise $300 million a year. In its first year it would provide cash assistance to help working people who lost income during the COVID-19 economic crisis.

In the second year of the law with “no sunset provi-

sions,” the $300 million would go to build affordable, nonprofit social housing for workers. The housing would be under a Green New Deal to assist in the conversion of gas-heated homes to sustainable elec-

tric-heating homes.

In the second year of the law with “no sunset provi-

sions,” the $300 million would go to build affordable, nonprofit social housing for workers. The housing would be under a Green New Deal to assist in the conversion of gas-heated homes to sustainable electric-heating homes.

In Seattle, the People’s Emergency Clinic, which serves 10,000 Amazon workers, has become a company town. The most visible opposition to CEO Jeff Bezos was a walkout and march of 1,500 workers during the Global Climate Strike in September 2019. Amazon Employees for Climate Justice has continued to protest Amazon’s polluting policies, despite its firing of two key leaders on April 10.

Amazon is resisting the Tax Amazon movement every step of the way. But the campaign has overcome many obstacles and is not turning back.

People die as capitalists profit from pandemic crisis

(April 21) People die as capitalists profit from pandemic crisis.

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(April 21) People die as capitalists profit from pandemic crisis.
Interview with antiwar Navy veteran Jon Hutto

‘The average sailor has been politicized’

Workers World Managing Editor John Catalinotto held the following interview with antiwar Navy veteran Jon Hutto to discuss the recent events on the USS Theodore Roosevelt where Hutto was assigned from 2004 to 2008.

John Catalinotto: Jon, we first met in Norfolk in 2007 at a Workers World conference where you announced a petition sailors had signed protesting the Iraq war. As I remember, you were assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt. That ship has been in the news recently with nearly 600 of its sailors tested positive for COVID-19. Tell our readers — few of whom have been on carriers — what it’s like on that ship.

Jon Hutto: Well, believe it or not, you are assigned to you and respect your consistency over the years and decades. First, I spent more than four years within the United States Navy in one enlistment, a little over four years onboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) known as the “TR” in the Navy, aka “The Big Stick,” from July 26, 2004, until Sept. 1, 2008.

I then spent the remainder of my time on shore duty as a mass community specialist for the Navy magazine, All Hands, from Nov. 1, 2008, until early May 2011. I separated honorably from the Navy on May 11, 2011, after a total of 7 years, 7 months and 1 day.

Life aboard a carrier-in-port depending on your rate (your job) can be something between (not overly time-consuming) especially in my rate (mass communications). Ours was a story-telling ship story through print, video, still photography, etc.

In port, we tended to get off some very heavy personnel unless you have maintenance, extra duties, etc., if the carrier is not in workups-operational training mode for deployment or still in deployment mode.

(There is a 11-month yard period for a carrier to build back up for deployment.)

However, once in deployment mode or fully deployed, it’s a full 24-hour operation out to sea. With the ship company plus air wing aboard, you’re talking roughly 5,000 sailors on ship. The aircraft carrier is the biggest ship in the Navy fleet.

JH: Is it possible to do “social distancing” aboard ship?

Jon Hutto: Social distancing is beyond comprehension and not doable especially for the blue shirt enlisted sailor. It was the summer of 2008. The carrier can be very dangerous, especially for the enlisted sailor. It was the summer of 2008.

JC: And how did this come with Capt. Brett Crozier, who was just cheered by the crew after being fired, and then the Acting Secretary of the Navy when Crozier fired Crozier in turn had to resign.

JH: A number of emotions and thoughts. First, I believe and know that the actions of Crozier are unprecedented based on my experiences as an enlisted sailor. It is commonly known that every CO of an aircraft carrier strike group wants to make admiral. His job is to command the carrier, mine was to train a disciplined, obedient and well-trained fleet of sailors.

And if the CO is obedient to Navy top brass and executive leadership of the country, it almost guarantees them career advancement.

I was shocked to learn of an open letter that had gotten to the mass corporate media.

I then thought about how Crozier had been relieved from duty, nor was I shocked to see the mass of sailors supporting him as he departed the ship. If they were deeply forward deployed (I don't know what stage they were in) — on average sailors can be out to sea 25-26 days without a port visit — working an average 16-hour day — not including “man overboard” and fire drills — in the midst of a tough work schedule, compounded with COVID-19 hitting the ship, Crozier standing up for them is huge for ship morale.

Most important, however, is that Crozier’s action sharpened the contradiction inherent in military service, especially for the enlisted corps, who are by and large cannon fodder for the country’s imperialist missions abroad.

I would have to believe, based on the mass cheering for Crozier as he was departing, that the average deck plate sailor has been politicized by what has taken place, especially with the acting secretary of the Navy having attacked the CO on the SMC to all the sailors on board.

The environment is beyond ripe for some organizing to take place within the Navy with a strong focus on the E5 and below, reminiscent of the GI-movement era along with our work 10-plus years ago.

The E5s and below are the foundation of the ship’s operational personnel. Absent the obedience and compliance of the deck plate sailor, no ship can operate. The true power of the ship does not reside in the Captain, the Navy Secretary or the Joint Chiefs, but directly within the enlisted sailors below deck. As an officer, I salivate thinking of the opportunity present here to build a movement.

JC: If you had an opportunity to talk to the crew of Theodore Roosevelt, what would you say?

JH: In the spirit of the late Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael) who supported the Fort Hood Three as chairman of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) during the Vietnam Era, I would strongly urge and advocate for the E5 and below (for those would be our target base) to organize, organize, organize!

I would begin to potentially educate and expose them on the historic movement struggle within the Navy they may be aware of (the USS Forrestal in the early 1970s on the USS Constellation, dissenters such as Susan Schnall from the Vietnam Era, along with the antiwar/antiracism work we did 10-plus years ago on the TR).

This demonstrates the power of the working class within the military, connected to the struggle for the working class both domestic and global to bring the warmaking ruling class to its knees, serving as a spark and catalyst for our struggling class at this pivotal COVID-19 hour.

JC: If you had a chance to talk to people in the anti-war movement, which those oppose the U.S. military, what would you tell them about what their attitude should be toward the sailors?

JH: In my conversations and dialogues over the years with war movement activists along with anti-oppression fighters overall, I remind those lacking a class analysis that the overwhelming majority of the military, enlisted in composition, come directly from the abandoned and marginalized working class of the United States.

These persons come largely from towns decimated by globalization, towns such as Steubenville, Ohio, and Flint, Mich. I remember in my shop on board, it felt like nearly a third of the sailors came from Ohio. They come from towns where the Military Recruitment Office is the major employer of few people.

At the end of the day, the greatest impulse of any person is to survive within the society. I would struggle with persons within the movement to make the distinction between those such as the Navy Secretary and the Joint Chiefs representing the ruling class, those forced to carry out orders based on economic need and compulsion — the enlisted ranks comprising the working class. Lastly, we must educate ourselves and the Navy, which the late Malcolm X taught us is best prepared to reward our research.

Based on the history of enlisted personnel dating back to the Vietnam Era and beyond, their innate loyalty, as demonstrated in this crisis, is inherently with their families and their class.

The challenge is, whether we as organizers are prepared and trained enough, clearly understanding the timing of this present situation, to immerse ourselves deeply within that core, building the necessary relationships and solidarity to do as you have advocated over the years, John: To turn the guns, planes and bombs around and stand down. That is our challenge.

To contact Jon Hutto directly, email him at jonathan-hutto99@gmail.com. For his book, “Antiswar Soldier: How to Dissent Within the Ranks of the Military,” see online vendors, and click on tinyurl.com/y9v4unxs and tinyurl.com/jhutto45t to follow his recorded statements.

Turn the Guns Around: Mutinies, Soldier Revolts & Revolutions by John Catalinotto

drafters and eifiers the Pentagon’s war machines, leading the antiwar movement and organizing a union in the conscient military to battle war, racism and their officers.

324 pp. workers.org/books
Health care workers are suddenly facing the largest layoffs and pay cuts in three decades. These workers are being justifiably lauded as the frontline of defense in a global pandemic. But rather than thanks, health care workers face hardships as administrators, investors and stockholders look first at the bottom line of profit.

Altarum, which describes itself as a nonprofit research firm for vulnerable and publicly insured populations, provided a mailed study of the job loss and pay cuts. It reports that in past economic recessions, jobs in health care grew. Not this time.

More than 43,000 health care workers lost their jobs in one day in a catastrophic cut in hours and pay are expected in April and moving forward.

The Altarum report lists just how deep the cuts go: Mountain Health Network furloughed the majority of its 6,000 employees at hospitals throughout West Virginia. Cookville Regional Medical Center in Tennessee cut 400 staff and cut hours for others. The Medical University of South Carolina cut 900 workers. Ohio, its largest health system, Mercy Health, cut 700 workers. Boston Medical Center cut 10 percent of staff, approximately 700 workers.

Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic, a Catholic nonprofit hospital chain which employs 125,000 workers in 92 hospitals and hundreds of continuing care centers in 22 states, is cutting 2,000 jobs. Connecticut’s Hartford HealthCare, the state’s largest health system, cut 700 workers. Boston Medical Center cut 10 percent of staff, approximately 700 workers.

Medical care faces the same insurmountable, artificial barriers to access. No one should ever go without health care because of systemic racism, sexism, class, counterproductive and immoral for charge and profit from medicine. We need community and health care worker control over medicine.

The drive for profit underlying every supplier, every business-oriented health care system whose hospitals operate strictly within the framework of the capitalist system. Every institution, even so-called nonprofit insti- tutions, operate on the basis of maximizing profits and making cuts in order to survive.

The health care system of huge hospital conglomerates operates on tight margins, keeping the smallest possible inventories in stock. That meant hospital systems were incapable of ordering inexpensive personal protective equipment, supplies and essential medicines in advance to plan for the pandemic emergency.

The drive for profit underlying every supplier, every company involved in health care, means that the U.S. today has the most expensive and least accessible health service in the world.

Medical care faces the same insurmountable, artificial constraints as food production. There are giant surpluses of food in the U.S., including milk, grains, vegetables and potatoes. Yet 40 million people in this country are categorized as “food insecure,” and food banks face lines of desperate people.

A capitalist crisis brings every ugly contradiction in the U.S. health care system faces the same insurmountable, artificial barriers to access. No one should ever go without health care because of systemic racism, sexism, class, counterproductive and immoral for charge and profit from medicine. We need community and health care worker control over medicine.

No one should ever go without health care because of systemic racism, sexism, class, counterproductive and immoral for charge and profit from medicine. We need community and health care worker control over medicine.

After much discussion, the health care workers caucus — comprised of Workers World Party members working in various areas of medicine and patient care — has developed a 10-point program, or prescription, to address some of the ailments in the U.S. health care system. We intend to elaborate on each point in future articles.

1. Free health care for all. End profit-based medicine.
2. Continue and expand reproduct- utive and mental health services.
4. Produce and issue personal protective equipment to all workers.
5. Abolish pharmaceutical and medical technology patents.
6. Free all prisoners and ICE detainees, stop raids, deportations and policing.
7. End all U.S. wars and sanctions.

A Texas nurse comments

“We nurses are a peculiar bunch. We can all talk to one another, and we can all understand one another. Whether we work in different geographic areas, prac- tice in different specialty settings or even have different patient populations, we all speak ‘nurse.’ And we all have the same mind- set: Our patients come first. We suit up and we show up. That’s what we signed up for, and that’s what we do. We’re not looking for your sympathy, but there are things you can do to help us.

And please stay put, keep your dis- tance, and wash your hands. That can help reduce the number of patients who need our care.”

Thank you,
Judie Lerma RN
San Antonio, Texas

A capitalist crisis brings every ugly contradiction in the U.S. health care system faces the same insurmountable, artificial barriers to access. No one should ever go without health care because of systemic racism, sexism, class, counterproductive and immoral for charge and profit from medicine. We need community and health care worker control over medicine.

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Among the most vulnerable during this pandemic are our health care workers. They don’t have the luxury of working from home. They don’t have the luxury of staying home if they are sick. They don’t have the luxury of social distancing or wearing masks. They don’t have the luxury of PPE. And they don’t have the luxury of sick pay.

They have to go to work even when infected. They are putting themselves and their families at risk. They are putting themselves and their families at risk. They are putting themselves and their families at risk.

Our health care workers are building the only virus that attacks. It crosses all borders. Every socio-economic group. And it has no respect for rich or poor; what is happening is to all of us.

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This Texas city rarely makes national news. But since the outbreak of COVID-19, the so-called River City has made the national news twice.

The latter one was a poignant scene on April 9 of 10,000 families lined up for a food bank distribution. The scene exposed the crisis of hunger in this city.

The first national news, however, was the case of a nursing home in a Northeast Rehabilitation Center, in the predominantly Brown and Black southeast part of this city. News reports on April 1 stated that residents and staff at the facility had tested positive for COVID-19.

Since then, 17 of the elderly residents have died from the virus, and 28 of the staff have been infected or become quarantined.

Community leader Tommy Calvert called the nursing home “a house of horrors.” (Fox News, April 16)

The New York Times reported April 10 that “Counts can also vary between states.” In California, the Times noted, “state counts had been made?”

NBC News counted 2,246 deaths associated with long-term care facilities, based on responses from 24 states, and cautioned that the figures are an undercount. Key states with many nursing homes and long-term care facilities, including Florida, did not provide any data. This was also true for California, Michigan and Pennsylvania, states with large outbreaks.

In fact, half of all states said they could not provide data on nursing home deaths or declined to do so. Lynn Stiffin, a spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services admitted: “We don’t currently have the infrastructure within that system to collect the information at this time.”

Speaking to NBC News, David Grabowski, a professor of health care policy at Harvard Medical School, said: “It’s not easy to track and contain a virus if we don’t know where it’s located.”

The U.S. government’s count, much less track, the human toll of this historic pandemic once again exposes a capitalist health care system that puts profits before people. ☐
Texas statewide protests demand ‘Shut down ICE detention centers!’

By Workers World Texas bureau

Across the state of Texas on April 19, social distancing protests in the form of car caravans circled detention centers and Immigrant Justice Project (IJP) offices. Workers Organizing for Economic Justice (WOEJ) offices demanded the release of all migrants in custody. The violent borders that allow for migrants and refugees to be locked up in concentration camps are a form of genocide against humanity. Additionally, in the face of a global pandemic, those kept in cages have a high risk of the coronavirus spreading quickly and are unable to take even the most basic measures to protect themselves.

The call, posted April 1 by Cooperation Jackson, reads in part:

“We should take inspiration in that spirit, a broad-based effort for migrant justice in New Jersey includes Kathy O’Leary, coordinator for the New Jersey Region of Pax Christi, a consistent organizer; power at its best can completely change those that now have a new sense of urgency. Others involved include Action 21, Casa New Jersey, Central Jersey Coalition Against Endless War, Workers World Party, Green Party New Jersey, Jobs & Equal Rights for All Campaign, Never Again Action, Lazo America Unida and NJ 5 Indivisible. These new forms of struggle, which arise to confront rapidly deteriorating conditions, will be further developed in the immediate future for May Day actions all across the country.

Contributing to this article were Mirinda Crissman, Luis de la Cruz, Eno Garcia and Gloria Rubac.

N.J. car caravan raises demand #FreeThemAll, exposes detention center conditions

By Sara Flounders

Elizabeth, N.J.

Resistance continues, even in the lock-down conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite essential social distancing guidelines, social justice organizations have stepped forward to actively defend the vulnerable.

Car caravans across the country have surrounded jails, detention centers and city halls to demand: Free them all! Mass protests, intense phone banking and online forums have focused on breaking the deadly lockdowns.

Since social distancing orders were implemented in New Jersey on March 17, six driving protests have been organized, calling for the immediate release of people held in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers. Family members of immigrants held in detention are especially active in the #FreeThemAll NJ campaign.

A car caravan drove to the notorious Elizabeth Detention Center on April 17. The action called once again on Gov. Phil Murphy and ICE Field Office Director John Tulearlis to act immediately and release all people held in immigration detention. While the car caravan circled the center, other activists with ICE Free NJ who could not participate were busy making hundreds of calls to county officials and the Elizabeth Detention Center.

The cars met at a restaurant parking lot close by and drove with flashing lights and honking horns through the LCD parking lots and then back past the prison for another round.

This detention center has been a focus of reports by NJ Advocates for Immigrant Detainees, the NYU Law Immigration Rights Clinic and the National Immigrant Justice Center. Previous reports documented lack of access to clean drinking water, spoiled food, denial of medical care and torturous solitary confinement.

Past civil disobedience actions, human chains and blocked roads have challenged these abuses. In the face of a highly contagious, rapidly spreading coronavirus, such unsanitary conditions can be a death sentence for prisoners whose sole crime is the lack of a piece of paper.

‘If this were a kennel for dogs, it would have been shut down’

Alejandro Jaramillo, an organizer with Cosecha New Jersey, described the situation today; people who are locked up face potential death sentences from the deadly virus, with little to no protections. The rest of the people who are detained there live in open dorms. They sleep in beds 5 feet apart as they watch the people around them get sick and they are served spoiled food. If this were a kennel for dogs, it would have been shut down. Amanda Rapace documented the history of this systematic abuse in NJ Today. (tinyurl.com/5oj6csto)

Over 3,000 medical professionals have signed petitions calling on ICE to release detainees to stop the spread of COVID-19 in crowded, unsanitary prison conditions. Based on campaigns and political pressure, several jails have reduced their overcrowded, pre-pandemic number. The broad-based effort for migrant justice in New Jersey includes Kathy O’Leary, coordinator for the New Jersey Region of Pax Christi, a consistent organizer; power at its best can completely change those that now have a new sense of urgency. Others involved include Action 21, Casa New Jersey, Central Jersey Coalition Against Endless War, Workers World Party, Green Party New Jersey, Jobs & Equal Rights for All Campaign, Never Again Action, Lazo America Unida and NJ 5 Indivisible. These new forms of struggle, which arise to confront rapidly deteriorating conditions, will be further developed in the immediate future for May Day actions all across the country.

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PPE before profits!

continued from page 1

of migrant workers from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Compared with white workers, a larger percentage of Black workers—50 percent—work in food service, retail, health care and other sectors of the service economy. (CNN, April 18) Those in blue-collar jobs—mostly low-wage workers—have formed the vanguard of the “$15 and a union” movement. They now are on the frontlines in the life-and-death struggle for their lives.

They have millions of potential allies, from the 22 million newly laid-off workers who are especially active in the #FreeThemAll movement. Members of immigrants held in detention are especially active in the #FreeThemAll NJ campaign.

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PPE before profits!

Slogans such as the tried-and-true “People before profits,” like a rolling general strike. Imagine if all working class, their lives are at stake. Strike all at once!

The phrase “rolling general strike” was first used to describe the situation in Detroit in February-March 1937 when there was not one big general strike, but multiple sit-downs every single day. Altogether there were 7,300 strikes in the U.S. that year.

The class struggle is not at that stage yet. But with over 100 strikes in six weeks and no sign of ebbing, it is starting to look like a rapidly growing general strike. From all these courageous workers — and many more facing danger on the job — all walked out on the same day!

If Trump has his way, millions of working class spontaneously taking matters into their own hands. Autoworkers, chicken factory workers, nurses, drivers, grocery store workers and all are taking independent action. Calls for a rent strike are going viral, as working poor and homeless workers are starting to occupy hundreds of vacant homes to meet their needs and practice the necessary social distancing to ensure their survival. Things are in motion and we need to build upon this momentum, quickly.

“This crisis changes everything.

“Everyone needs to understand...”

We should take inspiration in that we are not alone in calling for and acting upon a call for a general strike. Workers throughout the country and the world are spontaneously taking matters into their own hands. Autoworkers, chicken factory workers, nurses, drivers, grocery store workers and all are taking independent action. Calls for a rent strike are going viral, as working poor and homeless workers are starting to occupy hundreds of vacant homes to meet their needs and practice the necessary social distancing to ensure their survival. Things are in motion and we need to build upon this momentum, quickly.

“This crisis changes everything.

“We have an opportunity to take control now, and we are ready to fight for a society in which all people can live with full autonomy without having to worry about survival.”

Mike Kuhlenbeck contributed to this article.
Big money backs ultra-rightist protests

By Makasi Motema

Amidst the unending stream of grim news flowing from the COVID-19 crisis, a new disturbing image has emerged over the past week: the sight of Trump supporters congregating in large, potentially infectious, groups to protest in states all across the nation. In flagrant contravention of stay-at-home orders, public safety, common sense and good taste, hundreds of protesters have flock ed to state capitals decked in red, white, and blue to challenge government precautionary measures.

It’s difficult to understand why people would risk their lives—and the lives of their loved ones—to attend a demonstration like this. In order to provide clarity, we must look at the major capitalist backers behind this outbreak of right-wing dissent.

The protests are centered primarily in the Midwest, but they have spread throughout the country. There have been demonstrations in Lansing, Mich.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Austin, Texas; and Oklahoma City. These protests look much like Trump rallies: mostly white demonstrators waving U.S. and Confederate flags, wearing MAGA hats and cheering for Trump.

More threatening is the presence of armed right-wing militias, as well as contingents from the fascist Proud Boys. Just as with the 2016 election, and the Tea Party movement before that, there seems to be an outpouring of right-wing racist rage.

These rightists have assembled to demand the lifting of stay-at-home orders. Some claim that the COVID-19 crisis is exaggerated or even a total fabrication. Others simply want safety measures to be loosened. All the demonstrators have echoed the refrain that they want to “get the economy started.” They argue that preventing workers from engaging in wage labor is an infringement on individual freedom.

A war within the ruling class

That section of the capitalist corporate media that opposes the president has portrayed these demonstrations as the irration al outbursts of rabid Trump supporters, fueled by the president’s incendiary rhetoric. But what is obscured by this star-span gled spectacle is that these protests are part of a larger proxy war between two factions of the capitalist ruling class.

On one hand, the neoliberal faction associated with the Democratic Party—who would hide the iron fist of capitalism within the velvet glove of empty rhetoric. On the other, are the Randian free marketeers—nihilists who understand that capitalism is destroying our society and our biosphere, or those who ignore those threats—and who seek to extract every last drop of profit they can before the inevitable collapse.

The neoliberal faction is best exemplifi ed by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who has been lionized by liberals and the anti-Trump wing of the capitalist press for his supposed leadership in this time of crisis. What is less remarked upon is that Cuomo’s separate empire has been dismantled during his daily briefings that he too is anxious to restart the economy. These regular comments are trial balloons—albeit more subtle than Trump’s—to mean to prepare the public for a re-opening of society before the recommendations of medical professionals.

A more comprehensive, often substance-free oratory also distracts from his ruthless policies. In spite of the massive health care crisis, Cuomo cut $2.5 billion from the state’s Medicaid program. He likewise has expressed no interest in pro viding financial support to undocumented im/migrants affected by the crisis.

The working class has no refuge from neoliberal technocrats like Cuomo else where. Just as the gazelle, fleeing from lions of the savannah, soon finds itself in crocodile-infested waters, so too is the working class faced with vicious right wing ideologues like Cuomo’s fellow governor, Gov. Ron DeSantis. In callous indifference to public safety, DeSantis re-opened public beaches last week, causing a spike in crowds (and quite likely infections).

Neither ruling-class faction puts the interests of the working class first. Both see their capitalist masters. But policymakers only reflect the interests of their respective capitalist backers, and some of those backers are becoming extremely anxious as the economy slowly grinds to a halt. This more desperate and ruthless wing of the capitalist class, dis satisfied with the slow progress of right wing mercenaries, has opened the door to fascists gangs—as they historically always have—to advance their agenda.

Stephen Moore’s moneyed hand

There is no better example of the mon eyed hand behind fascism than Trump’s informal economic advisor, Stephen Moore. The obsequious, symphonic Moore has been behind the scenes driving the “free market” super pac of the past 20 years, tirelessly working to dismantle environmental regulations, remove workers’ protections and cut taxes for the wealthy.

Moore, a parasite’s parasite, has latched onto extreme fringe Republican campaigns in an effort to draw the party into the right-wing abyss. His comments comparing the recent pro-Trump protests to Rosa Parks (along with his decades-old comment designating women as he revels in revolting. He’s a perfect fellow traveler for the fascist goons whom he supports.

Moore, who recently promoted an upcoming Wisconsin protest on a Libertarian think tank’s YouTube video, serves on Trump’s council for restarting the economy. His desire to sacrifice work ers and his connections to these demon strations are apparent.

Moore is no solitary puppet master. There is a veritable Legion of Doom providing organizational support for these right wing protests. One is the Klako Freedom Foundation, which has planned protests for Boise, was founded with grants from the ultraliberative heirs of the Coors familybrewing company as well as from Charles Koch. Another backer is the Michigan Freedom Fund, led by Greg McVan, a former Advisor for the failed gubernatorial campaign of Dick DeVos, spouse of Trump’s Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

The image that begins to form is of a web of right-wing billionaires and billionaries who, as they did during Trump’s 2016 campaign and the Tea Party protests, are bringing the nation to its knees with a hope-tumthing movement of angry white small business owners fearful of falling back into the working class. This sector is now fronted by a core of fully radicalized fascists—to create panic and push for an agenda that benefits the ultra-rich to the detriment of everyone else.

Unemployment explosion reveals class conflict

By John Catalinotto

April 19 — The explosion of unemployment during the COVID-19 crisis underscored the vicious class contradictions in the United States and showed that the billionaire ruling class has the upper hand in the government apparatus and in directing the economy.

Not even in the 1930 Great Depression did such a leap in the number and rate of jobless people occur. In the last four weeks, more than 22 million people, or nearly 13 percent of the total labor force, tried to file for unemployment insurance.

By April’s end, the unemployment rate could top 20 percent. Official unemployment figures omit the uncounted millions who dropped out of the labor force.

Among the 10 socialist demands the Freedom Foundation, which has planned protests for Boise, was founded with grants from the ultraliberative heirs of the Coors family brewing company as well as from Charles Koch. Another backer is the Michigan Freedom Fund, led by Greg McVan, a former Advisor for the failed gubernatorial campaign of Dick DeVos, spouse of Trump’s Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

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The debt trap

The International Monetary Fund is giving itself a pat on the back for approving "immediate debt service relief" to 25 of the poorest countries in the world because of the coronavirus pandemic. It made the announcement on April 13.

But don’t cheer for the imperialist bankers. What these impoverished countries need is not "debt service relief," but reparations for the centuries of outright robber bourgeoisie (white slavery) that committed by the colonial and neocolonial powers that control the IMF.

First of all, these global bankers know that during this global health crisis they can’t sneeze away any more wealth out of the pockets of the colonial and neocolonial peoples that control the IMF.

Just why are these countries so poor in the first place? The answer is that they have a long history of being robbed of their resources and labor—first by the colonial, and now by neocolonial overlords, and the IMF and World Bank that finance them.

Take Kenya, for example. Not one of the 25 poorest, it is an African country with rich resources taken over officially by British imperialists 135 years ago in 1885. After a long struggle to gain independence from Britain in 1963, but its economy was still tied to imperialism through "debt" incurred by colonial rulers.

Kenya’s 2009-06 budget for "debt payments" was as much as it spent on water, health, agriculture, roads, transport and finance combined! And these payments are never-ending. The debt trap is an endless cash cow for bankers in the oppressor countries.

The truth is that Kenya doesn’t “owe” Britain anything. It is the British ruling class that owes the people of Kenya for all the wealth extracted by that rich colonial power.

South Africa has a history of being colonized by both the Dutch and the British. Brutal racist rule under apartheid persisted until 1994. But when the African National Congress, which took over the South African government in 1994, it was stuck with "debt" of $82 billion that had been loaned, not to the people of South Africa, but to the apartheid government. The ANC-led government has been forced to pay on this "debt" ever since.

It is in the interests of workers everywhere to demand that these “debt” be canceled. Money stolen from poor people is the class exploiter that oppresses us, too.

International working-class solidarity, not the hotels and schools, as apologists for the IMF claim, is the only way to cancel the blood-sucking system that creates debt in the first place.
Africa’s response to COVID-19

By D. Dunkel

As of April 18, according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control, there were 21,990 cases of COVID-19 in Africa, with no country having more than 3,000 confirmed cases.

Africa is home to 1.3 billion people. Many of the 52 countries that make up the African continent have been relatively unprepared, economically underdeveloped, and are still confronting the neocolonialism of their former colonial overlords and residual policies and practices of neocapitalism, which seeks unfettered access to Africa’s vast riches.

Nigeria, with nearly 214 million people, and Ethiopia, with nearly 128 million, are its most developed countries. Sixty percent of the people living in Africa are under 25. About 70 percent of Africa’s working class are in the informal sector. Infectious diseases like malaria, polio, Ebola, measles, AIDS and tuberculosis are epidemic in Africa. There was an Ebola outbreak in West Africa during the years 2014-16 that infected over 28,000 people, of whom 11,000 died.

ACDC for disease prevention

Based on the need for coordinated public health care with COVID-19, the ACDC was established to mitigate, contain and then the end the Ebola outbreak, the African Union established the African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (ACDC) in 2012 in order to help in humanitarian crises. This is as true now, during the coronavirus pandemic, as ever. Cuban doctors and nurses are required to mitigate, contain and then the end the outbreak.

Italy’s Communist Party expressed gratitude to First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Raúl Castro and President of the Republic Miguel Díaz-Canel for sending a delegation of doctors to Lombardy which has been hit hard by COVID-19 and for cooperating with Italy’s public health system.

Dr. Moeti’s interview with Wang Yi

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, director for WHO’s Africa region, spoke to the financial and political aspect to President Trump’s suspension of funds the United States gives to WHO, which amounts to 15 percent of its budget.

According to Dr. Moeti, WHO has shown the world what solidarity means, sending multiple medical brigades to fight COVID-19 in over 120 countries.

The director of the ACDC was designated a newly arriving delegation of 348 doctors and other health workers. Minister of Health Marie Greta Roy Clement welcomed the “Cuban doctors” collaboration and their critical assistance after a massive earthquake in 2016, during a cholera epidemic and the treatment of COVID-19 patients. They offered their practical advice on how to overcome the problems produced by extreme poverty. WHO specialists point out that it is possible to contain and mitigate COVID-19.

For the first time, a Cuban medical brigade of 101 nurses, most of them women led by Dr. Daimarelis Ortega Rodríguez, went to Barbados.

Social solidarity with African people

The Cuban antiviral “wonder drug” interferon Alfa-2b, Recombinant is being dispensed by its medical brigades to treat COVID-19. Cuba shared the technology to produce the drug, and a joint Chinese-Cuban facility makes it in China.

Helen Yaffe, author of “We are Cuba!” and a University of Glasgow lecturer, explained, “The Chinese National Health Commission listed this medication among the treatments it is using for COVID-19 patients. Effective and safe in the therapy of viral diseases including hepatitis B and C, shingles, HIV-AIDS, and Dengue, the Cuban antiviral drug has shown some promise in China and the island has now requested requests for the product from 45 countries.”

Cuba’s medical internationalism, beginning soon after the revolution, continues as strong as ever despite Washington’s bellicose opposition.

Mural by youth artists on the risk of coronavirus in the Mathare slum of Nairobi, Kenya.

Wang Yi has promised to continue to provide medical aid to Africa, to share its antipandemic experience and to send medical experts.

Cuba, which has been under U.S. sanctions for over 60 years, recently sent a contingent of over 250 medical practitioners, mainly doctors, to Angola, a country whose connection to Cuba matured in their common armed struggle against the racist apartheid regime then ruling South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s.

The flights are a joint initiative of the AU, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and WHO. The governments of the United Arab Emirates and Ethiopia financed the flights.

If the Trump administration had not cut funds to WHO in an attempt to find a scapegoat for his own disastrous errors, the U.N. would have been financing the Cuban Medical Brigade, as was the case with the 1960s and 1970s. The government of Angola, physicians, along with the Cubans, will visit families around the country.

Potential ‘wonder drug’

Despite a 60-year U.S. blockade against Cuba, causing shortages of necessities, the socialist country has developed an advanced health care system, with free medical care for all residents and advanced scientific and medical research. Cuba has developed life-saving medications that are not available in the U.S. because of the blockade.

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Organizar asambleas obreras, ¡construir un mundo obrero!

Por Makasi Motema

Quebrando las comunidades como un fuego furioso, el COVID-19 nos quita a los más vulnerables. Ya envenenado por el racismo ambiental, las personas de color están siendo consumidas por el virus a tasas extremadamente desproporcionadas. A los estratos más pobres de la clase trabaja-adora, ahora denominados esenciales, no se les permite distanciarse del peli- gro. Y los trabajadores de atención médica de pri- mera línea, sin salarios justos, beneficios y equipo vital, arriesgan sus vidas en la lucha para extinguir esta plaga.

En la etapa ardiente en la que se encuentran aquellos que luchan por la justicia. ¿Cómo se puede ganar la lucha contra tan abrumadoras probabilida- des? ¿Cómo enfrentarán los socialistas la próxima crisis que no puede ser inevitable? Solo una clase obrera unida puede resistir esta epidemia capitalista.

La crisis de la legitimidad

La respuesta de los legisladores capitalis- tas al COVID-19 es un desastre no miti- gado. A diferencia de China, Vietnam o Cuba, Estados Unidos no ha logrado poner en cuarentena a las masas, movilizar a los trabajadores de la salud, construir hospitales de emergencia o requisiciones de las fábricas para la ventilación de ventiladores y equipos de protección personal.

Otros gobiernos capitalistas como Italia e Inglaterra se han mostrado igual- mente mal equipados para proteger a sus poblaciones. El obstáculo no es la falta de adversidad o la falta de recursos. El hecho es el resultado de la crisis de la legitimidad. Wall Street tiene un control mortal sobre el gobierno; los funcionarios electi- vos responden a la industria financiera, no a los trabajadores. Este control capitalista magnifica el impacto de la crisis más allá del sector de la salud.

El desempleo se está disparando. Hasta el momento, en abril, un tercio de los inquilinos de todo el país no podían pagar el alquiler. En una sociedad capi- talista, las soluciones a estos problemas son tan simples como lo son irrealizables. Cualquier gobierno sensato congelaría los pagos de la hipoteca y el alquiler y pro- porcionaría un ingreso habitable durante la duración del cierre.

En este caso, el gobierno de los Trabajadores Socialistas ha sido el único motor que ha impulsado esta crisis documentada por la creación de la medida de la congelación y el alquiler habitante que ha sido una parte integral del sistema ni la medida de la congelación.

Si los pagos de la renta pueden sim-plemente "desactivarse", si un ingreso vital se puede distribuir con el golpe de un alquiler, entonces ¿por qué la clase trabajadora se ha visto obligada a luchar para llegar a fin de mes?

Una respuesta de sentido común a esta crisis demostraría que todo el dolor y sufrimiento que no jugaba y sufrimiento sentido hasta ahora por la clase trabajadora es el resultado de una lucha que tener en el poder. El sistema de desigualdad no es el resultado de la naturaleza ingrediente e incontrola- ble del mundo, sino de una elección cons- tante para privar a la clase trabajadora de su salud y seguridad a cambio de que unos pocos disfruten de enormes ganancias. Ningún gobierno podría controlar la ope- ración de sus residentes después de ser expuesto como tan insensible.

Sin embargo, la legitimidad de este gobierno se le escapa de las manos. Estados Unidos no ha podido detener el COVID-19, y pronto será incapaz de dete- ner la recesión económica. La economía ya se tambaleaba sobre una base inestable antes del coronavirus.

Los choques duales de un colapso del sistema de salud y la explosión del des- empleo llevan a algunos economistas a predecir que la mayor recesión econó- mica en nuestra vida es inminente.

Cuando llegue la próxima gran depre- sión, ¿quién pondrá su fe en Washington, D.C.?

Las necesidades de la gente

El único refugio disponible para la clase trabajadora es la unidad: la creación del verdadero poder de la clase trabajadora es nuestra única contrapartida al capitalismo de desastre. La clase obrera debe organi- zarse en Asambleas de Trabajadores, cuer- pos políticos altamente estructurados que se opo- nen al sistema capitalista. Lo que más teme la clase dominante son las comuni- dades de clase trabajadora que se unan para determi- nar su propio destino.

Desde Petrograd, Rusia (1917) y Jiangxi, China (1931), hasta Bogotá, Colombia, Venezuela y Chappare, Bolivia, hoy, las asambleas del consejo de trabajadores han sido los motores que impulsionaron las revoluciones socialistas.

Dado los obstáculos que enfrentamos, solo las Asambleas de Trabajadores son las que pueden coordinar una respuesta efectiva al COVID-19, y no deje a nadie atrás. El único objetivo de las necesidades de atención médica de las personas es que nuestros recursos médicos sean de propiedad y administración pública, no por los encar- gados de formular políticas capitalistas, sino por Asambleas de Trabajadores. La verdadera gobernación democrática por parte de la clase trabajadora pondría fin a la acumulación de recursos corporati- vos y garantizara que los trabajadores de primera línea estén debidamente protegi- dos y compensados. Una administración de clase trabajadora, que representa todas las opresiones, tampoco permitiría el diseño de seguridad legalmente actualizado para personas de color, mujeres, personas con discapacidades y pacientes LGBTQ+.

El control de la vivienda también debe caer bajo la soberanía de la clase traba- jadora. No es suficiente decir que nadie debe ser obligado a abandonar su hogar porque no puede pagar el alquiler. Se deben formar Asambleas de Trabajadores para tomar el control de las propiedades inmobiliarias y finalmente poner fin al flagelo de la falta de vivienda. También hay muchas empresas fuera de la industria médica que afirmen que sus trabajadores son esenciales. Sin embargo, el pago, la protección y los beneficios que reciben estos trabajadores no coinciden con su nuevo estatus elevado. La creación de Asambleas de Trabajadores también pondrá fin a esto. Si una empresa consi- dera que sus trabajadores son esencia- les, las Asambleas de Trabajadores deben tomar el control de esa empresa.

Forjando Asambleas Obreras

¿Cómo se puede lograr todo esto? La construcción de un ejército popular regular de un ejército de organizadores. El único imperativo moral del cuadro socia- lista es organizar a los que lo roden. Mediante una organización profunda, los socialistas deben establecer conexiones con los trabajadores en todos los sectores. Los trabajadores no sindicalizados deben ser sindicalizados, y los trabajadores sindi- calizados deben ser radicalizados. Los inquilinos, los bloques de apartamentos y los vecindarios enteros deben reunirse para luchar contra los propietarios, urba-