This year’s celebrations of May 1, International Workers’ Day, in the United States reflected the growing coast-to-coast fightback of workers confronting their bosses’ and the capitalist system’s total disregard for worker health and job safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The array of workers’ actions is historic, with essential workers in health care, food, retail and delivery services taking the lead, joined by unionized, undocumented and incarcerated workers.

Caravans offered creative and safe alternatives to mass gatherings to adhere to social-distancing safety concerns. Actions also included one-day strikes, walkouts and sick-ins. Whatever the tactics, the resilience and determination of an awakening powerful working class were on display.

On May 1, revolutionary and progressive forces organized car caravans throughout New York City, in keeping with COVID-19 social distancing protocols. Caravans crisscrossed Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens under the banner of May Day Workers Solidarity: Caravan for Our Lives. Demands included hazard pay and personal protective equipment for essential workers; cancellation of rent; free health care and COVID testing for all; a relief fund for undocumented workers; an end to U.S. wars and more.

The caravans managed to assemble despite police attempts to disband them, blocking off gathering locations and threatening participants with arrest. The caravans visited hospitals, Whole Foods, Target, Trader Joe’s, jails, public housing and a bus depot, where they were enthusiastically received by Metropolitan Transport Authority workers from Transit Workers Local 100, before converging on Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s Manhattan office. The response from working and oppressed people on the street was overwhelmingly positive.

The caravans were organized as part of the nationwide People’s Strike called by Cooperation Jackson in Mississippi. Participants involved a broad coalition of migrant rights, workers’ organizations and anti-imperialist forces, including Fight for Immigrants and Refugees Everywhere (FIRE), the Laundry Workers Organizing Fight for Im/migrants and Refugees of Color Caucus, Desis Rising up and Moving, Afrosocialists and Socialists of Color Caucus, Unity and Struggle, Queens Neighborhood United, Workers World Party and more.

May Day events in New York City included banner drops across the city with the slogan #CancelRent on dozens of buildings announcing rent strikes; a socially distanced action at Elmhurst Hospital Center in Queens, organized by BAYAN USA in solidarity with health care workers; and a rally at a Staten Island Amazon warehouse organized by Chris Smalls, an Amazon worker fired for organizing for safe working conditions. Despite the unprecedented circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the complete failure of the U.S. government to organize an effective response, May Day in this city was full of WWP May Day message

Organize!

This edited talk was given by First Secretary of Workers World Party Larry Holmes at “May Day Webinar! Workers Power: Building Workers Assemblies” sponsored by WWP on May 1.

Happy May Day to everyone. This is the perfect occasion for everybody in the workers’ movement around the world to reflect on the real meaning of International Workers’ Day. That is the need for solidarity across all boundaries, the need for militancy, the need for revolutionary direction and the need for massive organizing.

Because no matter how bad things were for workers before this pandemic, they are worse now. And they’re going to get even worse. People are dying unnecessarily of this pandemic because capitalism does not value the lives of workers, all workers, but Black and Brown workers in particular. Workers have been forced to go to work without proper protection.

And on top of all this, the global capitalist economy is sinking into another recession. The impact of the pandemic on the deepening global capitalist economic crisis 11 am – 1 pm ET / 8 am – 10 am PT

Strategies and tactics to help build political solidarity with workers & the oppressed 2 pm – 4 pm ET / 11 am – 1 pm PT

Registration link at www.workers.org

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Sat., May 16: Two plenary sessions:

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Strategies and tactics to help build political solidarity with workers & the oppressed 2 pm – 4 pm ET / 11 am – 1 pm PT

Registration link at www.workers.org

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Caravan demands aid for poor, not companies

By Calvin Deutschbein
Durham, N.C.

Following decades of genocidal governmental policies exposed by the coronavirus crisis, North Carolinians had enough! A coalition of hundreds of community groups called “NC United for Survival & Beyond” organized a 30-car caravan on April 24—a protest that allowed activists to safely distance from one another.

The cars travelled to gather outside the home of North Carolina Senate President Phil Berger in Eden, N.C., to demand that he and the N.C. General Assembly respond to the pandemic crisis and provide immediate relief to the people of the state—and not the corporations. Drivers honked while passengers banged pots and pans. Protesters read a list of 10 demands from the coalition’s platform, which 200 local organizations had signed. Activist Juan Miranda explained: “The demands ranged from expanding Medicaid without impediment to access. We are demanding all immigrants, regardless of legal status, have access to emergency services, access to language justice, cash assistance to community members who don’t have access to government ID, and ending all collaboration with ICE.” (Triad City Beat, April 24)

For years, Berger had opposed expanding Medicaid in the state, which health experts estimate costs the lives of 4,000 state residents a year. He presided over a sprawl- ing statewide system of killer jails and prisons, with sheriffs who collaborate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to engage in ethnic cleansing and with landlords to manufacture a homeless population. Conditions within the prison system have been found by even the neoliberal United Nations to violate human rights.

Stop police repression!

The police have not only allowed, but supported right- wing demonstrations in favor of forcing workers back to work, ignoring the health risks they face. But the cops treated this protest quite differently, as its aim was to hold the politicians in power accountable for their actions—and their inaction in not helping the communities hit hard by COVID-19.

Not long after the caravan moved on, cops from the Eden Police Department stopped it in what they alleged was a routine traffic stop. But obviously, it was not that, as the cops identified and arrested Loan Tran of the Emergency Committee to End the Durham Eviction Crisis. Like many other activists, especially in the U.S. South, Tran has previously been targeted by police at social justice actions.

Another local activist said that her colleague was released soon after the arrest, but was charged with three traffic violations: “It is disturbing that, instead of allowing people to have free speech, that instead of how they did in Raleigh [during the Reopen NC protests] with people who weren’t socially distant, [the police] decided to detain people for exercising their rights. [Activists] were being targeted and potentially profiled. We call for those charges to be dropped immediately!” (Triad City Beat, April 24)

Drop the charges! Free Loan Tran!

Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward! Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and apartheid, racism and repression, attacks on immigrants, misogyny, LGBTQ+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with educational and lack of hope for the future. No social problem is solved under capitalism.

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Vol. 62, No. 19 • May 7, 2020

Closing date: May 6, 2020

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**Outrage after police killing is caught on video**

By Taegan Stross

Austin, Texas

The Austin Police Department carried out an extrajudicial killing of 42-year-old Michael Brent Ramos, known as “Mike,” on April 24. Local media reported that the APD was responding to a call about two people, allegedly in possession of a gun, doing drugs in a parked car.

According to local witnesses, police responded by surrounding the vehicle, blocking the exit from an apartment complex parking lot as well as a nearby intersection. What followed was captured by numerous cell phone cameras and uploaded to various social media pages.

A video showed the police drawing their weapons and ordering Mike Ramos out of the car. As he steps out with his hands in the air, his waistline is exposed. None of the video angles show a weapon. The cops order Ramos to step toward them. In one video he can be heard saying that he is afraid of what might happen if he does.

That’s when a pig who just graduated from the academy three months ago fires a bean bag from his shotgun, hitting Ramos in the chest. Ramos falls to the ground and scrambles to get inside his vehicle. He pulls the door closed while trying to drive away. The video shows that his vehicle never went in the direction of the police.

The rookie’s partner, a five-year APD veteran, fired three rounds at Ramos, causing him to crash into a car parked next to Ramos later died in the hospital.

Top cop Chief Brian Manley, whose police force has been widely criticized for an internal culture of racism that intimidates anyone who speaks out, stated no weapon was found on Mike Ramos. His tragic death has left his mother, Brenda Ramos, without her only son. She has since started a gofundme.com fundraiser at “Justice for Mike Ramos.”

Local residents, enraged by the killing, risked personal safety to protest outside that same night. Then a follow-up protest was held on Saturday night, April 25, with many calling the APD murderers and racists. The Austin Justice Coalition, a local police reform and justice advocacy group, wrote a letter addressed to the City Council, mayor and city manager demanding the removal of Police Chief Manley, Chief of Staff Troy Gay and Assistant City Manager Rey Arellano. It demanded an independent investigation of the shooting and a delay to a scheduled June police academy class to implement training reforms.

The letter detailed the APD’s history of racism and its refusal to respond to demands made by both the people of Austin and its City Council. It was signed by nearly 40 different local organizations, including the newly formed Central Texas Workers Alliance (fb.me/central-txworkers) and the Texas branch of Workers World Party (fb.me/workersworld-texas).

That evening, as people who were forced to work during the COVID-19 pandemic drove to their homes, a series of four banners were dropped at several highway overpasses. They called for justice for Mike Ramos and a general strike as well as a rent strike on May 1. The slogans read: “May Day general strike/No blood for the Dow.” “May Day general strike/No work, no rent.” “Rent strike May 1st! Justice for Mike Ramos!” and “Justice 4 Mike Ramos!”

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott plans to continue allowing businesses to open, despite the advice of experts and the general support among workers for social distancing and economic shutdown. With the police killing of Mike Ramos on top of this health disaster, workers in Austin are finding themselves with no choice but to fight back.

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**Lessons from the First Union Climate Strike in the U.S.**

The one-day, unfair-labor-practices strike on a very cold Feb. 24, evening by Service Employees (SEIU) Local 26, which represents 4,000 commercial janitors in Minneapolis, was overwhelmingly successful. Janitors and their allies fought for green cleaning techniques to reduce greenhouse emissions from corporate office towers, which account for over 70 percent of carbon emissions from all buildings in Minnesota. The workers, mostly immigrants from Somalia, Mexico, Ecuador and Nepal, were joined by high school students, who led last year’s climate strikes, and environmental justice allies like Friends of the Earth affiliated on April 29.

Students introduced to trades in St. Louis area

In March, before the coronavirus shutdown and millions became unemployed, the Southwestern Illinois Building & Construction Trades Council organized apprenticeship tours to introduce more than 400 high school students to their programs. The Trades Council started the program because “young people will respond if they get a chance to find out what the work is like” and “the trades provide an excellent way to make careers in an unpredictable economy.”

Over the course of a weekend, students from 13 high schools around St. Louis were introduced to 11 trades, including those of sheet metal workers, boilermakers, carpenters, electrical workers, plumbers and pipefitters and operating engineers. Trades Council officer Totsie Bailey stated: “We’ve had a lot of good feedback about it … the locals did a very good job. … Guys took off work to help. They were that interested in showing off their local unions.” Bailey added, “And the kids were really interested.”

In addition, special schoolwide outreach events were held at several schools. Some 47 industries were represented at Mascoutah High School where 1,200 students heard from their programs. The Trades Council plans to continue this hands-on program, with strong support from high schools. (Labor Tribune, April 27)

---

**Union for nonprofit workers grows in April**

On March 25, the Nonprofit Professional Employees Union announced a union drive. In April 29 seven nonprofit had joined their growing fold. Three new members were legal organizations: Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, which joined April 13; the National Immigration Law Center on April 23. Also joining on April 23 was the Groundwork Collaborative, which deals with economic policy and related issues. Friends of the Earth affiliated on April 20.

The NPEU’s mission is to help workers at nonprofit organizations dedicated to social and economic justice create positive, healthy workplaces. The union’s goal is to negotiate collectively for higher pay, better benefits and a voice in each organization. Its contracts encourage a collegial relationship with management and establish standards for “fair and equitable treatment of all staff.”

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**UCFW petitions for members to be treated as frontline workers**

Local 400 of the Food and Commercial Workers (UCFW) has started a petition on their website addressed to governors to recognize their members — grocery store, pharmacy and food production workers — as frontline
We envision a world without prisons

By Amber-Rose Howard

Here is a slightly edited transcript of Amber-Rose Howard’s talk during the April 9 Workers World Party webinar. Howard is the executive director of the Center for a World Free of Individuals in Prison, a nonprofit organization. This is how we view the way toward that goal.

We don’t believe that anybody belongs in a cage. And we think to have hold true to that means that we have to do our part. Because when we start to say that some people belong in the cage, then that makes room for many people to be put in cages, and that’s why we have an incarceration crisis on our hands right now.

And so we’re always calling for the end of incarceration, as we’re always calling for the end of the military-industrial complex. Right now CURB is really focused on making sure that people understand in this moment, where we are concerned about people who are incarcerated and coming in contact with the Coronavirus, it’s really important to realize that there is no way for them to socially distance.

It is important to understand that we need to look at this from a public health lens. We see lots of organizations, lots of people who are working hard to take care of their community. They’re trying their best to do that.

And so I’m saying that was the diabolical point. You know, that is why we have to continue to fight. You know, that does not make me a violent person.

We have been doing call-ins, emails to our governors, and on Twitter. We have a campaign that we have part-nered with RAPP (Release Aging People in Prison) and the Parole Preparation Project at New York University. We are doing, together, with the CCWP (California Coalition for Women Prisoners) here in California, where we’re calling for clemency coast to coast. Governor Newsom and Coumo out in New York set themselves forward as very, very progressive governors — they have made a plan to release 3,500 people. And so we have a campaign that we have made a plan to release about 3,500 people from California state prisons, and those releases will come from clemency parole decisions, of people who were going to be paroled in the next 30 to 90 days already.

That does not include the 30,000 people that we have over the age of 50. That does not include over 300,000 people that we have serving on “three strikes.” That does not include over 5,000 people that have low-level offenses which are non-serious, non-violent, non-sexual.

And so I’m saying that was the diabolical point. You know, that is why we have to continue to fight. You know, that does not make me a violent person. That is true for so many folks who are also convicted of violent things, especially the ones who are locked up.

We also want to make sure that we’re calling for clemencies and releases at this time. You know, our governor has made a plan to release about 3,500 people from California state prisons, and those releases will come from clemency parole decisions, of people who were going to be paroled in the next 30 to 90 days already.

That does not include the 30,000 people that we have over the age of 50.

And we’re calling for the release of people who are in the category of those low-level offenses, I think what we’re doing is forgetting to recognize that people have spent decades inside transform-ally changing, and that doesn’t make me a violent person.

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Louisiana prisons are ‘death concentration camps’

By Quezz Moore

This slightly edited talk is by Quezz Moore speaking at the April 9 Workers World Party webinar. Moore organizes with New Orleans Workers Group and Take ‘Em Down NOLA, a group which has been working to take down symbols of white supremacy and slavery.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in this chair about my coalition, my comrades and everybody in New Orleans doing this work.

First and foremost, ‘Take ‘Em Down NOLA’ was established about five years ago this summer, and our mission is basically the removal of all symbols of white supremacy in the city of New Orleans, as they reflect the systems of racial and economic injustice and oppression of a more than 60 percent Black city. And so, in the city of New Orleans, you’ve had at least 17 monuments to white supremacy. Now, essentially, thanks to some of our organizing, we were able to successfully get four of them removed back in 2017.

But all of that was really just a wake-up call, a rally to the people in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement to highlight the fact that, you know, state-sanctioned violence has an entire system behind it, an entire apparatus behind it. A Black person is killed in this country every day, extrajudicially, like unarmed Black people being killed by police, and quite often there’s no justice for it. So we wanted to mobilize the system as a whole when we first come out with the work with Take ‘Em Down NOLA and show that this happens for a reason—this is obviously because of the violence of the state has been codified inside of this country since its inception.

Since the very beginning, it’s been okay to do with a Black body what you will. Not to mention what’s done to Brown bodies and was done to the Indigenous people of Louisiana, the first state from which the plantation spread. The Indigenous people who have been here, you know, they’ve been marginally meant gathering of tons of gathering of several cultures.

This has always been a port city, the actual infrastructure and the layout of it was established by the native Indigenous people who have been here about 3,000 years, some 30 or so groups. They had been here gathering and establishing culture and technology and creating the template, the blueprint that the French and the Spanish took from and created off of their backs.

The Indigenous people who have been here, you know, they’ve been marginally meant gathering of tons of gathering of several cultures.

When you look at a city that, to this day, still has a majority Black population that lives in 53 percent poverty, it’s essentially meant gathering of tons of plantation to the prison, and it’s a prison house economically and a literal prison house. And so right here in this city where it’s mostly Black folks, and it’s 400,000 or so population, 53 percent of us live in poverty.

And that’s the result of wage slavery. It’s a result of the fact we have one of the most booming tourism industries in the world. Eight billion dollars a year come through the city, to this very small city.

And, yet, hardly any money, obviously, trickles down to the hospitality workers and the people are actually holding that system up on their backs. A lot of hospitality workers are working without benefits and really low pay jobs.

And, so, it puts us in jeopardy and at risk. And, you know, that risk leads to higher processes, because we do this, as we say in New Orleans, “get it how they live” and try to figure out how to make money outside of the so-called legal means and that leads to the so-called legal means of crime leads to us being the number one carceral state in the world’s history. And of course, you know, America is the number one carceral state in the world.

Louisiana is number one in the country; we might be number two to Oklahoma at this point, but usually it’s been us. And number one in the state is New Orleans.

And so right here in a very small town is where you have the greatest prison state in the United States. And you see the reflection of that, you know, in prisons like Angola, which was once formerly the plantation Angola. And so what we want to talk about is: These are death concentration camps.

In an instance, like what we’re in right now, a pandemic is ticking off the prisons themselves and between a population where one out of five of us are in the hospitality industry, on the so-called essential jobs, a lot of them have been sent home and don’t have work. The ones who still have to go to work are the most exposed, and then the least protected, because, of course, they don’t have the kind of health care that they need in the first place, living in poverty conditions.

So in response to that, what we did about two days ago [April 7] in the New Orleans Workers Group, which is one of at least a few coalitions that grew out of Take ‘Em Down NOLA a couple years ago, we organized the motorcade and got about 70 cars to drive down to City Hall and also the area around Tulane and Gravier where a lot of incarcerated folks are locked up, because of the ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] detention camps Louisiana has, because it’s, you know, the prison capital [with] two of the biggest ICE detention camps in the country; they just transition from prisons over to ICE detention camps.

That leads to the fact that none of these people belong in prison in the first place. The real criminals are the system; they put them in a position to be inside of a cage in the first place.

And it’s even more of a crime now that they’re sitting there in that place where all of the virus and all of the disease is concentrated. At least 15 cases were already detected inside the Orleans Parish. We know that that’s only going to spread to the workers; they’re going to bring it back to the people. So, as one of our coalitions, the New Orleans Hospitality Workers Association, says, “If we get sick, you get sick.” And that applies not just for the cooks and for all the essential workers and for all the employees, owners and for our mothers and sisters and our siblings locked up.

We took that stand in solidarity for them, with them. The bourgeois media, of course, has tried to erase all that narrative. They don’t want people to believe that, you know, all these people believe these workers and their freedom. And they’ve tried to wipe over the story, but we’re keeping that story going. So that’s the most present work that we’ve done here in New Orleans.

How to donate a Workers World subscription to a prisoner

Workers World is an independent, revolutionary communist newspaper that began publication in 1959, and has grown to be published weekly in print and daily online, we are committed to building solidarity among workers and oppressed peoples around the globe. For that reason, we have always been a newspaper of free subscriptions and other radical printed materials to prisoners in the U.S. One in three subscribers to Workers World pays for these publications for prisoners; we take out a subscription for an incarcerated person. It means more than you could possibly imagine."

Makasi Motema

You can donate to subscribe a Workers World Patron to go to an inmate—today at patreon.com/wwp.

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President Donald Trump utilized his ing 61,000 deaths related to COVID-19, job— and while the U.S. tops a stagger-
 presidential “Get back to work” order statement on May 2 after the April 28
Jobs Save Lives” campaign released this
PHOTO: LYN NEELEY
The Southern Workers Assembly “Safe Jobs Save Lives” campaign released this statement on May 2 after the April 28 presidential “Get back to work” order was issued.

On April 28, Workers Memorial Day — a day when the labor movement commemorates workers who have died on the job — and while the U.S. tops a stagger-
ing 61,000 deaths related to COVID-19, President Donald Trump utilized his
powers under the Defense Production Act to order meat and poultry processing plants to stay open.

Meat processing plants are COVID-19 hotspots of infection. This is another move which prioritizes corporate profits over the lives of workers, many of whom are Latinx, African American and immigrant.

Southern Workers Assembly’s solidarity with meat packing workers

Southern Workers Assembly’s “Safe Jobs Save Lives” campaign is already among the country’s highest. Rates of infection among these plants are higher than those in 75 percent of other U.S. counties. The South is also a region where many of the governors are calling for workers to return to work, representing a strong base of anti-working-class racism and political conservatism.

While the bosses claim the industry has thus far maintained sufficient produc-
tion, union leaders have pointed out that 20 workers have died, and at least 5,000 meatpacking workers and 1,500 food processing workers have been directly impacted by the virus at 48 plants. Those in the South are impacted by industrial pollution that is not regulated, affecting the health of millions and making them more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Meatpacking and slaughter companies can be found in every state in the South. With the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans blocking OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] from issuing a rule protecting essential employees during COVID-19, workers say they have little choice but to take matters into their own hands. Meatpacking workers all over the country, working in freezing cold rooms and unable to practice social distancing, have staged walk-outs demanding workplace safety from Kathleen, Ga., to Timberville, Va.

Meatpacking Workers in the South Need to Unite, Organize and Struggle! Join the Southern Workers Assembly’s Safe Jobs Save Lives Campaign: • Don’t Go to Work without a solid agreement that guarantees testing, monitoring, PPE [personal protective equipment], separation of work sta-
tions, 100% health care family cover-
age for virus treatment.
• If you don’t have a union, form a work-
ers’ committee right away and open up discussions with management on these issues, and depending what they say and do, move to take protective collective actions.
• We call upon other workers and the general public to support meatpack-
ing workers with a boycott of brands that refuse to abide by Safe Jobs Save Lives mutual agreements.
• Connect with other workers in indus-
tries and employment sectors in the Safe Jobs Save Lives Campaign by contacting info@southernworker.org.

For more on the campaign, go to southernworker.org.
Workers will not die for capitalist profits!

Workers will not die for capitalist profits, lauded as heroes while suffering the most overcrowded conditions in detention of migrant people—at high risk and cheered as the caravan went by. COVID-19 pandemic. Residents waved with Black and Brown working-class residents through much of western and downtown Pensacola's local transgender advocacy group. Their caravan traveled through much of western and downtown Pensacola, including Brownsville and Attucks Court, as a show of solidarity with Black and Brown working-class residents of those neighborhoods. Many of them are being forced to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Residents waved and cheered as the caravan went by.

The caravan started from North Carolina's Border Patrol office to protest the imprisonment of migrant people—at high risk for coronavirus—because of the overcrowded conditions in detention camps—and to call for the abolition of ICE. The caravan's final destination was the Texas Capitol, a show of solidarity with health care workers, who are not receiving hazard pay or PPE. They are at risk for this pandemic, lauded as heroes while suffering the most under capitalism.

The caravan was organized by El Paso's Border Patrol office to protest the imprisonment of migrant people—at high risk for coronavirus—because of the overcrowded conditions in detention camps—and to call for the abolition of ICE. The caravan's final destination was the Texas Capitol, a show of solidarity with health care workers, who are not receiving hazard pay or PPE. They are at risk for this pandemic, lauded as heroes while suffering the most under capitalism.

Workers will not die for capitalist profits!

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COVID-19 = genocide for Detroit
By Martha Grevatt

May 4 – Coronavirus, COVID-19, the pandemic – or as they say in the Motor City it “coy-ron-a” – by any name this disease has been particularly devastating to Black-majority cities. Detroit, 80 percent Black and Latino, has been particularly hard hit. The three counties that comprise Metro Detroit – Wayne (which includes Detroit), Macomb and Oakland – have at least 3,369 virus-related deaths as of May 4. The entire state of Michigan has had 4,000 deaths, making it third in the country in deaths behind New York and Louisiana. Outside of Metro Detroit, only one other county, Genesee, which includes Flint, has had over 100 deaths. While the statewide population is 14 percent African American, 41 percent of those who have died from COVID-19 statewide are African American.

A Facebook group, Detroit COVID-19 Memorial, puts a human face on the statistics. They include nurses, doctors, union leaders, clergy, youth coaches and others loved by the community they serve. As this crisis expands, we must take swift action to protect our senior citizens, children and communities that have already been so harshly impacted,” said State Representative Isaac Robinson. “We must defend the public health of all people including our most vulnerable residents and low-income families. The working families and students in my district already slumbered by the weight of economic insecurity and were made more vulnerable by the impact of this pandemic.” (Voice of Detroit, March 31)

Robinson, of Hamtramck, who also represents the city, is 44 years old and at age 44 of suspected COVID-19 complications. He had just introduced legislation for a 90-day moratorium on foreclosures, evictions and utility shut-offs. Moreover, Detroiters are more likely to die from the virus because of the higher incidence of preexisting conditions, including asthma, obesity, kidney disease and heart conditions, compared to the rest of Michigan. (Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2020)

“Rates of asthma, diabetes and obesity are higher in African American communities,” explains Dr. Velda Crowder, chair of the health committee for the Washington, D.C.-based Black Women for Positive Change. “Those chronic conditions increase the likelihood of serious illnesses from COVID-19, even among young people.” Crowder is an emergency room physician.” (Detroit News, March 26)

Also contributing to the spread of the virus is the unsafe working conditions that have made Detroiters work. After protesters protected the lack of social distancing and proper sanitation, Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles closed the plants temporarily. But many autoworkers were already infected, along with people they came in contact with. Close to 30 members of the United Auto Workers have died, including at least two members of this writer’s union, UAW Local 869. The Detroit Three are pushing to reopen the plants and restart production, supposedly with new safety measures in place — but workers are dubious, understandably so.

African Americans are disproportionately impacted by the virus in yet another way. More than half of all state COVID-19 deaths are African American. Half of those tested in Michigan’s prison system have tested positive.

Capitalism behind the destruction
The racist, anti-working-class attacks on Detroit did not begin with the coronavirus. Detroit’s pivotal role in the Civil Rights and later the Black Liberation movement, and much earlier the U.S. labor movement, earned it the enmity of the ruling class. Auto plant closings, a trend that began in the 1970s and accelerated in the 1980s with the dismantling of Chrysler’s Dodge Main complex, have cost the city tens of thousands of jobs — and eroded its tax base.

Thanks to union wages in the auto industry, Detroit at one time had the highest rate of homeownership of any major U.S. city. But as jobs moved to the suburbs or out of Michigan altogether, or were eliminated by automation, many Black Detroiters saw their incomes drop. Now, because of racist predatory lending, Detroit has had the highest foreclosure rate since the 2008 recession. Bloated interest payments to Wall Street banks undermined Detroit’s financial solvency, leading to the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history in 2013. What followed was a mass looting of city assets, slashing of union pensions and other austerity measures that the banks mandated — treating Detroit the same way they treat countries in the global South. This was accomplished via the appointment by then Gov. Rick Snyder of a dictator known as an “emergency manager” – Kevyn Orr of the Jones Day corporate law firm.

In 2012, Michigan’s legislature passed a law allowing the governor to impose emergency managers, stripping elected city officials of their powers. At one time half of Michigan’s Black residents, compared to 2 percent of white residents, were under emergency management.

While the city is not currently under an appointed fiscal dictator, Detroit’s white mayor, Mike Duggan, is a loyal corporate servitor. The heavily armed, well-funded fascists who invaded the Michigan Statehouse, pushing their mandate to work, are happy to watch the death toll climb. While the capitalist class筛查 Black cities to the ravages of COVID-19, a timely demand would be “Reparations for Detroit!”

Grevatt lived and worked in Metro Detroit from 2010 to 2019 and serves on the executive board of UAW Local 869.

Cuba: We don’t deny anyone our assistance
By J.太原

The Cuban Foreign Ministry on April 16 reiterated its international community to come together to combat the COVID-19 outbreak. Following are excerpts from the call.

The impact of COVID-19 can already be measured and will be assessed in the future by the striking numbers of people infected, the unacceptable numbers of deaths, the unquestionable damages to the world economy and health, and the personal and economic loss of millions of people. It is a crisis that goes well beyond the scope of health. The pandemic has emerged and spread amidst a scenario previously marked by overwhelming economic and social inequalities within and among nations. With it, unprecedented migratory and refugee flows, xenophobia and racial discrimination have reappeared. The remarkable advances of science and technology, particularly in the area of health, focus in the pharmaceutical business and commercialization of medicine, rather than addressing the well-being and healthy living of majorities.

COVID-19 has come into a world overshadowed by the anti-southern and anti-immigrant sumpption patterns, especially in highly industrialized countries and among the elites of developing countries, that are uninterested in the well-being of the human race. The finite character of natural resources upon which life on the planet depends. Before the pandemic, the United Nations estimated that at least 3.3 billion people lived without access to clean drinking water, 2.2 billion people with no access to fresh food, 4.2 billion without access to safe sanitation services and 3 billion lacking basic amenities for handwashing. This scenario becomes more inadmissible when it is known that globally around $6.7 trillion is spent on a yearly basis only in advertising, while military expenditure amounts to $1.8 trillion that is completely useless against the COVID-19 threat, which has already taken the lives of almost 300,000 people. ... In most developed countries, the death toll is higher among the poor, migrants and, in the specific case of the United States, among African Americans and Latinos.

Challenges for global community
The international community has to deal with this global threat while the biggest military, economic, technological and commercial power of the world implements a foreign policy that seeks to incite and promote conflicts, divisions, chauvinisms, and supremacist and racist positions. At times when the worldwide combat against the COVID-19 pandemic requires the existing cooperation and the leading role of international organizations, the U.S., particularly the United Nations and the World Health Organization, the current U.S. administration attacks multilateralism and seeks to disqualify the established leadership of WHO.

A new strategy of anti-communism, a petty strategy of taking advantage of the circumstances to impose its dominance and attack countries whose governments it has discrepant experiences, is nothing but a desperate attempt to prevent the coordination and distribution of medical equipment, personal protection equipment and medicines, with a sense of justice. Cuba has tangible and available resources should share them with the most affected COVID-19 countries that are least prepared to cope with the pandemic.

Putting people’s needs first
That is Cuba’s approach. For decades we have accumulated experiences in the global South in national cooperation in the area of health, as generously acknowledged by the World Health Organization and our counterparts. In the last few weeks, we have responded to cooperation requests.

So far, a brigades of healthcare professionals have been deployed to join in the national and local efforts of 20 countries. All these actions are undertaken without neglecting the responsibility of protecting the Cuban population, a duty that is rigorously fulfilled despite the huge limitations imposed by the U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade. A recent example was an aid cargo from China that could not be shipped to Cuba because the carrier claimed the U.S. blockade.

Cuba is convinced that these times require cooperation and solidarity. Cuba pursues its historically-entrusted international endeavor that seeks to develop and share the scientific research results and experiences of social countries in the prevention of the disease, the protection of the most vulnerable, and social behavior practices that will contribute to shorten the duration of the pandemic and slow down the loss of lives.
What the statistics reveal about Trump, China and the virus

By Deirdre Griswold

May 4 – The Trump administration is trying to deflect anger at its dangerously neglectful attitude toward the COVID-19 pandemic by blaming China. No surprise there.

It has been known from the beginning that the virus most likely came from a live animal market in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where it jumped the species barrier.

But Trump, counting on the impact of decades of anti-communist propaganda generated by both capitalist parties in the U.S., has stated that the virus originated in an unidentified “weapons lab” in Wuhan—a story first concocted by right-wing radio’s Rush Limbaugh back in February. Trump is even talking about suing the Chinese government for damages.

This president is certainly not known for either honesty or accuracy, but his political base doesn’t care. Racism and xenophobia are his “trump cards.” And he needs to blame someone for what has become the biggest U.S. medical disaster in decades.

Why blame China? Among other reasons, China’s success in containing the virus puts the U.S. to shame. And Trump can’t have that.

The latest figures on the spread of COVID-19 show that as of May 4, the U.S. has by far the largest number of cases—over 1 million worldwide. By contrast, China has 81,877 reported cases. Yet China’s population is almost four times that of the U.S.!

What this boils down to is that a person living in the U.S. has been almost 57 times more likely to get the virus than a person living in China—even though China was the first country to have to figure out how to deal with this new threat.

In the U.S., there is another big factor affecting the rising toll taken by the virus: racism. African-American and Latine people are dying from the virus at a higher rate than white people. This reflects the kinds of jobs that people of color are forced to take, as well as inferior medical coverage and dire health conditions caused by poverty.

The number of U.S. cases reported is undoubtedly an undercount in oppressed communities. It is also becoming clear that many people can be carrying the virus without severe symptoms. Additionally, there is no apparatus set up in the U.S. on a national level to test everyone in order to confirm and curb the spread of the disease.

The truth about China and COVID-19

A more accurate picture of the differences between the U.S. and China can be seen by comparing fatalities from the disease in both countries.

China has had just three coronavirus deaths per million people. The U.S. has had 206 deaths per million. (worldometers.info/coronavirus/#news)

As the pandemic really got worse in this country because there are 17,144 new reported cases in the U.S. right now, and only two new cases in China.

When COVID-19 first broke out in Wuhan, the Chinese government was able to move quickly and shut down the whole area. Those in the epicenter were ordered to stay at home while necessities like food were brought to them. Emergency hospitals to care for and isolate the sick were built within days.

China critics in the U.S. called these measures “draconian” in stereotypical anti-communist language.

Instead, Chinese strategies against the pandemic saved countless lives. This was made possible by the character of China’s socialist system—and the confidence of the population in the decisions made by their leaders.

With a centralized leadership in control of the economy, instead of a hodgepodge of private owners competing for profits, decisive and timely action was possible. In addition, because of government policies, those living in the affected area didn’t have to worry about losing their jobs or being unable to pay rent during the quarantine, even if it lasted for months. By the weekend of May 2–3, China had begun opening up its economy again, very carefully.

Trump and the right wing are guilty of many crimes. China bashing is one way they hope to divert attention as economic conditions continue to deteriorate in the U.S. More than ever, people’s lives depend on knowing the truth.

By Betsey Piette

The distribution of government funds in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has torn away any facade of the U.S. as a “democracy,” with equal access to wealth. Even as unemployment, poverty and hunger reach levels not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s, banks and corporations look to their puppets in Congress and the White House for giveaways of massive proportions.

In early April, the federal government passed an economic stimulus package called the Paycheck Protection Program with $349 billion in forgivable loans to small business owners. In addition, some 43,000 U.S. millionaires, billionaires, and energy companies other major corporations have succeeded in pocketing billions in “emergency aid” to large U.S. corporations.

Under CARES, some 43,000 U.S. millionaires, who made too much money to qualify for Trump’s earlier coronavirus rescue plan, got $2 million in aid. New York City’s $89 million, received $10 million in funds. And millionaires, who made too much money to qualify for Trump’s earlier coronavirus rescue plan, got $2 million in aid.

The latest figures on the spread of COVID-19 show how huge this giveaway was—far greater than even Trump’s 2017 $1.5 trillion tax breaks.

In just five weeks from March 18 to April 22, as nearly 50 million workers lost their jobs, the government awarded an additional $538 billion from government handouts—a wealth increase of 10.5 percent, according to the Institute for Policy Studies.

Some billionaires, including Amazon boss Jeff Bezos and his former spouse MacKenzie Bezos, Zoom founder Eric Yuan, Tesla founder Elon Musk and former Microsoft chief Steve Ballmer saw their net worth surge by over $1 billion each. (Guardian, April 27)

In early April, the federal government passed an economic stimulus package called the Paycheck Protection Program with $349 billion in forgivable loans to help small businesses cover payroll. Now it appears that billions of dollars from this program went directly to major chains or indirectly as fees to banks. Around 150 publicly traded companies received a combined $47.8 billion in loans.

It is estimated that banks received over $10 million just for processing these loans.

With national hotel and restaurant chains receiving millions of dollars in grants, the program was basically drained of funds. Genuine “small businesses” saw their jobs cut or contracts either refused or failed to process them. Major companies that received mega-millions include Ruth’s Chris Steak House, a $250 million chain with 150 locations which received $20 million. The Potbelly

chain, with over 400 locations valued at $800 million, received $10 million in mid-April.

Off the coast of Miami, the members-only resort Fisher Island, where residents’ incomes average $2.2 million, received $2 million in aid. New York City-headquartered Shake Shack, valued at $1 billion, got a $5 million grant, which it subsequently returned after news of it surfaced.

Many of the more than 70 publicly traded corporations, which had little difficulty securing federal funds, got assistance from JP Morgan Chase to secure their loans. A statement from the Wall Street bank acknowledged that it commercial banking unit, serving larger clients, was able to assist in completing the applications. (Washington Post, April 20)

$1,200 for workers, $1.6 million for millionaires

On April 24 Trump signed the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act to provide additional funding for small business loans, health care providers and COVID-19 testing. It also contains provisions for direct corporate payouts under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Under CARES, some 43,000 U.S. millionaires, who made too much money to qualify for Trump’s earlier coronavirus rescue plan, got $2 million in aid. They instead get an average of $1.6 million each. The act lets owners of businesses taxed on their individual income, rather than corporate income, claim an unlimited amount of deductions against non-business income, including capital gains. (Washington Post, April 27)

But it does not stop there. Now public capitalists are holding out their hands for more, this time without any of the strings or limitations contained in previous stimulus legislation. On April 28, the Federal Reserve, along with the Department of the Treasury, announced an upcoming program to provide billions in “emergency aid” to large U.S. corporations. The Fed is not requiring that companies use the funds to save jobs. It has put no limits on payments to executives or shareholders.

Under the plan the Fed will buy up to $500 billion in bonds to cover the debt of large corporations which will be required to pay it back with interest. According to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, the agreement has congressional approval, even though all previous corporate bailouts were based on funds from using funds for dividends, while placing limits on executive compensation.

Energy companies line up for their share

No corporate feeding trough would be complete without energy companies demanding a portion of the spoils. With oil and gas prices plummeting due to overproduction and shoddy investments, even before the impact of COVID-19, the Independent Petroleum Association of America wants the Fed to give energy companies their maximum $25 million loans to offset their previously existing debt. (Reuters, April 20)

Oil and gas companies and energy utilities provided Trump extensive favors. With close ties to Trump, they have already benefited to the tune of $22 million from the “small business” loan program. Prior to the $500 billion tax break, taxpayers were already subsidizing energy companies with around $20 billion annually.

On signing an executive order in late April, invoking the Defense Production Act to mandate meat and poultry processing plants stay open, Trump stipulated that plant owners should not be held liable if workers sicken and die on the job. Now Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is following suit, asking that the next COVID-19 stimulus package provide for a “right to work” protection for U.S. corporations against pending COVID-19-related claims from workers and consumers.

All these come amid a mounting push by right-wing, neo-fascist and white supremacist groups to reopen businesses, despite evidence that the limited lifting of stay-at-home restrictions has already caused a spike in COVID-19 cases.

Under threats that refusal to resume work could result in the loss of unemployment benefits that many are still struggling to receive, pressure is also mounting on workers to return to jobs that have proven to be deadly. But will workers submit to this pressure without a fight?

Months of struggle to win concessions from bosses for hazard pay and vital personal protective equipment has shown workers the power they hold in their collective hands. Unionized workers have won major concessions.

The Transport Workers in New York City fought for and won a guaranteed $500,000 death benefit for families of members who died after contracting the virus on the job. Even non-unionized workers at Amazon, Whole Foods and other major corporations have succeeded in extracting concessions from their employers.

Once the power of the workers is shown workers the potential power they hold in their collective hands. Unionized

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Hikers observing COVID-19 social distancing and masking precautions on the Muny Bean section of the Great Wall on May Day, the beginning of a five-day workers’ holiday in China.
The emergence of fascist vermin from under their rocks to demand "reopening" economic life as demands of rich capitalist rulers—makes it imperative for the left to develop a blueprint for countering the fascist threat, a threat that has constantly reappeared in U.S. history.

On April 30, hundreds of right-wing protesters—some armed with automatic weapons—stormed the State Capitol building in Lansing. They demanded that state protections against COVID-19 be lifted and businesses be reopened. Police allowed them to overrun the capitol, not even inside the building and into a visitors' gallery overlooking state legislators in session. Some legislators sent media posts saying they feared for their safety; others donned bulletproof vests.

Over the May 1 weekend, similar reactions to protests were held throughout the U.S. by a mix of white supremacist militias, religious fundamentalists and groups funded by right-wing foundations like Coors and Koch. On May 1, President Trump tweeted support for the Michigan armed fascists, calling them "very good people"—praise he previously bestowed on similar groups working in 2017 with Nazi symbols and Confederate flags in Charlottesville, Va.

The bankers and billionaires who back the Trump administration have been demanding workers risk their lives and get back to work—and quickly resume putting money in the bosses' pockets. They manipulate the fascists to promote this program.

Fascists do bosses’ dirty work

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Taking advantage of pandemic
Israel moves to annex more Palestinian land

By Susan Abulhawa

Speaking to students at Tel Aviv’s Bar Ilan University in November 1989, Benjamin Netanyahu, at that time the Israeli deputy foreign minister, said: “Israel should have exploited the repression of the demonstrations in China [at Tiananmen Square], when world attention focused on that country, to carry out mass expulsions among the Palestinians.”

In other words, Netanyahu was lamenting a missed opportunity to carry out more war crimes against the Palestinians. In fact, committing war crimes in the chaos of international confusion and/or dis- traction has been Israel’s modus ope- randi since its inception. That came to fruition with the terrorizing, massacring and expelling of indigenous Palestinians under the cover of Europe’s holocaust and World War II.

Behind the popular romantic narra- tives of Israel’s existence is a reality of wanton murder, theft and unlawful misery and suffering. This malfeasance is not merely the strategy of a settler-colo- nial state built on ethnocratic purity. Rather, it is the national supremacist mindset of a government and citizenry that prop el the genocide of land theft and settlement, complete with fine-tuned tools such as military occupation, mass imprisonment, home demolitions, property confiscations, murder, daily harassment and humiliation, control, cul- tural appropriation, bombing, night raids, day raids, school raids, kidnappings and propaganda. All to take the land, water, herds and the souls of the terrain’s true, native people.

Now, 31 years after Tianan- men, Netanyahu is the prime minister of Israel and is taking full advantage of the current imperial crisis to consolidate more power over the whole of what is Palestine. Israel is pushing to formalize its control over Area C in the illegally occupied Palestinian land area, inching closer to fulfilling the promise of its flag: A Star of David between the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. In 1948, Israel formalized its theft of 78 percent of Historic Palestine. After launch- ing its invasion of 1967, it then occupied all of Palestine and formally annexed Jerusalem. The Oslo Accords of 1993 allowed Israel to control approximately 60 percent of the West Bank in an is called Area C, osten- sibly as a trust that would be handed over to the future Palestinian state.

However, as the world finally under- stands the strategy behind Israel’s declaration in December 2020 to let go. Instead, they built breakthroughs at breakneck speed, importing Jews from other countries to help them populate, offering gener- ous economic incentives in order to cre- ate “facts on the ground.”

Now, Israel proposes to formalize its control especially at colossally lucrative West Bank, which includes the most fertile and resource-rich lands – of course. It has pur- sued a strategy of imperialism by the inch, exponentially to the point of land in normal times so as not to arouse international ire. And in times of upheaval or distraction, like a global pandemic, it takes bigger bites.

From a small gang of European colo- nizers at the turn of the 20th century, the Zionist went from owning less than 3 per- cent of the land they control and owning approx- imately 92 percent of Historic Palestine (including Area C) and 100 percent of all water resources— which they ration to Palestinians at three times the cost of water sold to Jews in the same area. They also totally control all commerce, food produc- tion, borders and movement.

Consistent with the government’s nefarious aims, illegal Israeli settlers are exploiting the pandemic lockdown, imposed in the occupied West Bank, to attack Palestinians in their homes and on the streets.

Destruction of Palestinian farms

In a single week in April, there were three incidents in which Israeli settlers destroyed Palestinian farms and paved the roads in the districts of Nablus, Bethlehem and Hebron. In one, a rate incident, settlers attacked olive groves, cutting down trees that are hundreds of years old and belong to Palestinian fami- lies who were able to tend on the land. Settlers have increased their vandal- ism of farms and property belonging to Palestinians, with the complicity documented in Madama, Burqa and Burein.

“We experience attacks from the settlers a few times a month,” Ghassan al-Najjar, a 55-year-old active settler, said. “The other three miles south of Nablus, told Middle East Eye. “But ever since we were put under lockdown because of the coronavirus, it has increased tenfold.”

In a legal case in late April, it was revealed that settlers, under the protection of Israeli police, have been raiding the village daily.

The Palestine Liberation Organization issued a statement against these abuses, as well as Israel’s recent desecration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, when Israeli settlers stormed the mosque under police protection.

“The escalation in settlement activi- ties coincides with the crimes of settler gangs who are wreaking havoc against our people by cutting down trees and attacking houses and vehicles in the streets, and starting to build roads for settlers, as is now taking place between the villages of Za’atara and Haswara for the use of settlers, which is an attempt to create the Bantustans and ghettoes for our people, believing that they can take advantage of the current situation to pass the so-called American deal of the century,” said the PLO in a statement after a meeting at Ramallah to discuss the latest developments.

The statement also rejected Israel’s recent excavations near the wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Israel has been bulldozing under the mosque and the Dome of the Rock since 1967, trying to find some trace of the Jewish Temple they claim is there. And 35 years murdered and expelling they’re still empty-handed, with no evid- ence to show in support of their romantic narrative.

Their colonial fairy tale of Israel being the destruction of an ancient soci- ety that has lived, loved, built, and sustained the Palestine and formally annexed Jerusalem. And is taking full advantage of the current imperial crisis to cover to take one more stab at erasing the Palestinians all the more.

A Palestinian-American writer and political activist, Abulhawa is the author of “In the Shadows of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.” She was born in Tel-Aviv, and is taking full advantage of the current global pandemic as a cover to take one more stab at erasing the Palestinians all the more.

Venezuela foils attempted invasion from Colombia

By Arielle Robinson

Workers World Party strongly condemns the attempted invasion of the sovereign country of Venezuela and planned attacks on its leaders by members of the Colombian Armed Forces. WWP expresses our solidarity with the Venezuelan people and their government, headed by President Nicolás Maduro.

The Venezuelan government foiled an attempt on May 3 by mercenar- ies to enter Venezuela on speed boats from Colombia and to commit terrorist attacks within the country. The group from Colombia arrived on a speed boat from the Port of Guaripo, the city approximately 20 miles from Caracas, early Sunday morning.

Due to Venezuela’s intelligence efforts, the Bolivarian National Armed Forces and the Special Actions Forces of the Bolivarian National Police attacked and killed two of them, reported the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of New York. Some of the mercenaries fled. Among the dead is Captain Robert Colina who used the alias “Pantera.”

As reported by Telesur on May 3, among items Venezuelan authori- ties seized from the mercenaries were 10 rifles, two machine guns, one glock, six trucks, one boat with two outboard motors, cartridges, satellite phones, uniforms and helmets marked with the U.S. flag.

Venezuela’s Minister for People’s Power, Justice and Peace Nestor Reverol said, “They tried to carry out an invasion by sea, a group of ter- rorist mercenaries from Colombia, in order to commit terrorist attacks within the country. The group from Colombia arrived on a speed boat from the Port of Guaripo, the city approximately 20 miles from Caracas, early Sunday morning.

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As reported by Telesur on May 3, among items Venezuelan authori- ties seized from the mercenaries were 10 rifles, two machine guns, one glock, six trucks, one boat with two outboard motors, cartridges, satellite phones, uniforms and helmets marked with the U.S. flag. Reverol said, “They tried to carry out an invasion by sea, a group of ter- rorist mercenaries from Colombia, in order to commit terrorist attacks within the country. The group from Colombia arrived on a speed boat from the Port of Guaripo, the city approximately 20 miles from Caracas, early Sunday morning.

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Gran parte de la culpa de esta crisis se ha atribuido a la pandemia de COVID-19. Sin embargo, el impacto del descenso de la demanda de gas natural y petróleo a partir de la fracturación hidráulica (fracking) se sintió mucho antes de la pandemia. La caída de los precios antecede a que llegara el coronavirus, un exceso de petróleo mundial, debido a la sobreexplotación, estaba afectando los mercados de inversión.

¿Por qué la caída del precio del petróleo?

A principios de marzo, la OPEP y Rusia acordaron reducir el precio del petróleo por barril. Ambas entidades disfrutan de bajos costos de producción que lo hacen posible. La OPEP anunció que también reduciría la producción. Arabia Saudita, miembro de la OPEP, vio una posible ventaja ya que los precios más bajos podrían dañar la producción de petróleo de esquisto bituminoso en los EE.UU., ahora un importante competidor de exportación de petróleo.

Rusia, que ya se vio afectada por las sanciones de Estados Unidos, anunció que mantendría la producción en los niveles actuales porque necesita los ingresos. Con la producción afectada por las sanciones de Estados Unidos, Rusia no tenía ningún incentivo para cargar con la responsabilidad de la desda energética de Estados Unidos.

Recientemente, más de 12 de los principales productores de petróleo han acordado limitar la producción a entre 10 y 15 millones de barriles por día, a partir de mayo. Sin embargo, incluso eso no fue suficiente para detener la caída histórica de los precios.

¿Cambios radicales en las perspectivas económicas?

Gran parte del petróleo y el gas natural producido en los Estados Unidos depende de las formaciones de esquisto bituminoso. El costo de producción estadounidense es mucho más alto que en los principales competidores productores de petróleo y gas. Durante más de una década, el petróleo y el gas de esquisto bituminoso de EE.UU. se basaron en dos factores: inversiones constantes de gigantes de compañías petrolíferas, banzos y firmas de inversión, y una creciente demanda del mercado mundial de petróleo y gas de EE.UU. Estados Unidos también usa sanciones contra las principales exportadoras de petróleo como Venezuela, Irán y Rusia para aumentar su ventaja en el mercado.

Desde el inicio, el fracking se ha basado en inversionistas de bolsillo que no están dispuestos a apostar en ventas futuras. Para poder cubrir el costo de las inversiones de la producción de petróleo y gas de esquisto se requería un rendimiento de al menos $48 por barril. Por el contrario, los costos actuales de producción de petróleo en Arabia Saudita rondan los $2,80 por barril.

En abril, el gigante energético estadounidense Halliburton, un importante productor de petróleo de esquisto bituminoso, informó una pérdida de $1,11 millones en el primer trimestre de 2020. Redujo drásticamente los costos de producción y despidió temporalmente a miles de trabajadores. Se espera una nueva disminución en los ingresos y la rentabilidad.

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