

# The pandemic isn't equal: Coronavirus hits the poor at most dangerous rate

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 5, 2020



The Covid-19 pandemic is devastating New York City. [Forty-five refrigerator trucks](#) are serving as mobile morgues to store the bodies. [As of April 3](#), 51,810 people have been infected.

Inmates in the Rikers Island prison [are being offered \\$6 per hour](#) to dig mass graves on Hart's Island off the Bronx. That's the site of Potter's Field, where a million

people too poor to afford a funeral had their bodies dumped.

What's happening in New York City is being repeated in Detroit, Chicago, New Orleans and Los Angeles. The coronavirus is ripping through the South with Black people suffering the most. [About one in ten deaths](#) has occurred in the adjoining states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

The Pentagon is seeking [100,000 body bags](#). The government's stockpile of personal protective equipment — a life and death matter for health care workers — is almost depleted. But the Immigration and Customs Enforcement gestapo conducting deportation raids [are guaranteed N95 face masks](#).

[A hundred racist attacks against Asian Americans](#) are occurring every day. Trump incited these attacks by calling the coronavirus "the Chinese virus." We should call it the Trump virus.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has taken advantage of the pandemic to [roll back bail reform and ram through Medicaid cuts](#) in the state's budget.

Cuomo calls the virus ["the great equalizer."](#) That isn't true even if his own brother, CNN host Chris Cuomo, caught it. It's certainly false with the [city's wealthy and powerful fleeing to the countryside](#).

### **It's not just density**

There's nothing equal about this pandemic. The coronavirus has been much worse for New York City's Black and Latinx communities. Orthodox Jewish communities in Brooklyn have been hard hit.

This writer lives two blocks from the Corona, Queens, N.Y., neighborhood where Louis Armstrong lived. Its 11368 ZIP code had 947 cases of the coronavirus as of April 1, the most of any in New York City.

Experts say New York City has been hardest hit because of its density. Nearly 9 million people live on about 300 square miles of land.

Corona, Queens, is crowded with [41,768 people living per square mile](#). Nine out of a thousand people there — nearly one percent — have been infected.

[Murray Hill](#) — ZIP code 10017 — on midtown Manhattan's East Side is even more crowded, with 51,775 people per square mile. Yet the neighborhood's infection is just a third of Corona's.

The difference is that while Corona's median household income is \$45,964, the figure for Murray Hill is \$100,652, over twice as high.

Adjoining Corona in Queens is Elmhurst (ZIP code 11373) with 831 cases and Jackson Heights (ZIP code 11372) with 492 people infected. The Elmhurst Medical Center is being overwhelmed.

[All these neighborhoods are immigrant communities](#) with many service and construction workers who had to continue going to their jobs while the pandemic was gripping the city.

Black and Latinx neighborhoods in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan have also been hard hit. [The eastern Far Rockways in Queens](#), home to four largely Black housing projects, have 436 cases.

The capitalist government is covering up the impact on Asian, Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities. [Maryland lawmakers](#) are demanding a breakdown of those who've caught the virus.

### **Social distancing an impossibility**

Medical experts recommend that people keep a "social distance" of six feet from

each other. How are the 2.2 million prisoners locked up supposed to follow that advice? Cook County Jail in Illinois already has [213 prisoners with the virus](#).

For thousands of prisoners across the country, the coronavirus will be a death sentence. Activists like those in the [Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression](#) are fighting to free the most vulnerable prisoners.

The hundreds of thousands in homeless shelters are also not able to keep six feet from each other.

Social distancing is also impossible for the hospital and other “essential” workers taking overcrowded buses and subways in New York City. Ten members of [Transit Workers Union Local 100](#) have died of the coronavirus.

Many essential workers who are risking their lives are among the lowest paid. The [3.6 million cashiers](#) have an average annual income of just \$22,430.

Experts are recommending that trips to the food store be [limited to once every two weeks](#). How many working-class families can do that? Not the ten million workers who have already been fired.

Density and lack of social distancing won’t account for all the deaths. We’re told to wash our hands, yet [141,000 Detroit families have had their water shut off](#) since 2014. Service hasn’t been restored for thousands.

It’s worse on the Indigenous reservations. [Forty percent of Navajo nation households](#) aren’t connected to a water pipe. They have to haul water to their home.

Overcrowded housing has skyrocketed because of rising rent. Many families are forced to move in with relatives.

Between 1980 and 2010, the number of these doubled-up families increased almost

four-fold, 1.15 million to 4.3 million. (2012 U.S. Statistical Abstract, Table 59). Social distancing is impossible for them.

Millions of housing units are kept off the market to keep the rent high. A people's movement is needed to seize them.

Homeless families in Los Angeles [have taken over over 12 empty homes](#). We need to follow their example.



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# **Webinar April 9: Cuba shows that international solidarity is the answer!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
April 5, 2020



# CUBA Leads In Global Fight Against COVID-19

Thur.  
Apr.  
9th

Join Us For  
International Cuba Solidarity  
Gathering VIA ZOOM Digital Platform

[\*\*Register for Thursday, April 9th Virtual Conference\*\*](https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2020/04/page/8/)

# **COVID-19 Pandemic: Cuba Shows That International Solidarity is the Answer!**

Please join us for a special solidarity webinar to learn about the example Cuba is setting of putting human needs ahead of profits in the fight against COVID-19. Panelists will discuss Cuba's history of medical internationalism; how Cuba is fighting COVID-19 on the Island based on providing health care as a right; learn how Cuba is developing effective new medications such as **Interferon Alpha 2-B**; and how Cuba is sending medical teams to Italy, the Caribbean and dozens of countries.

**Webinar 1: Thursday, April 9, 8:00 PM (Eastern), 5:00 PM (Pacific)**

## **Co-Chairs:**

**Alison Bodine** — Fire This Time, Movement for Social Justice, Vancouver, Canada

**Claudia de la Cruz** — Executive Director, The People's Forum, New York City

## **Speakers**

**Ambassador José Cabañas** — Cuban Embassy, Washington, DC

**Dr. Helen Yaffe** — Lecturer in Economic and Social History, University of Glasgow, Author, *Che Guevara: The Economics of Revolution; We Are Cuba!; Cuba's Contribution to Combating COVID-19* ([Yale University Press blog](https://yaleuniversitypress.yale.edu/2020/04/09/we-are-cuba-cubas-contribution-to-combating-covid-19))

**Dr. John Kirk** — Department of Spanish and Latin American, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canadian authority on Cuban Medical Internationalism. Featured on PBS Nova program "Cuba's Cancer Hope."

**Dr. Alexa Weber** — Circulo Bolivariana "Negra Hipolita"

On the current health care situation in Venezuela and opposition to the latest U.S.

threats and sanctions.

**Dr. Isaac Saney** — Co-chair, Canadian Network on Cuba. Prospects for a Campaign to Access Cuba's Interferon Alpha 2B Recombinant and other medical assistance to treat COViD-19.

*Approximately 45 minutes - 1 hour for presenters followed by 45 minutes - 1 hour for Q&A*

**For TechSupport contact:** [zoomsupport@us-cubanormalization.org](mailto:zoomsupport@us-cubanormalization.org)

In Solidarity,

Organizing Committee, International Conference for the Normalization of US-Cuba Relations

[us-cubanormalization.org](http://us-cubanormalization.org)

New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition

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**End All Economic and Travel Sanctions Against Cuba!**

**Return Guantanamo Territory to Cuba!**

**Stop US "Regime Change" Policy Against Cuba!**



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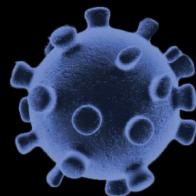
# **April 6: The current situation in Venezuela**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
April 5, 2020

# THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

*Series.*

## THE CURRENT SITUATION IN VENEZUELA



**The People's Forum is convening a recurring online space to hear and discuss current analysis and reports from leaders of people's movements and organizations in the US and across the world.**

Despite recent escalation of aggression from US against the Bolivarian Revolution, the Venezuelan people are successfully taking measures to protect their population from the COVID-19 pandemic. How has US imperialism conditioned possibilities for combatting the virus? Why is the US escalating against Venezuela now, in the middle of the pandemic? What can we learn from the leadership and example of the socialist project in Venezuela? Join us this week to hear from **Carlos Ron, Vice-minister for North America of the People's Power Ministry for Foreign Relations.**

[Join us via zoom!](#)

Date: April 6

Time: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

The People's Forum

320 West 37th Street

New York, NY 10018 United States

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# **New Orleans April 6: Motorcade Protest Around the Jails**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 5, 2020

THE NEW ORLEANS WORKERS GROUP

## MOTORCADE PROTEST AROUND THE JAILS *#FreeThemAll*



**APRIL 6  
1:30 PM  
1100 MILTON ST**

### URGENT: DONT LET CORONA VIRUS KILL INCARCERATED PEOPLE!

Local, State and immigrant prisons are reporting positive tests for COVID 19.

Prisons may soon become a center of death and horror for the thousands imprisoned there.

Many incarcerated people are ill, old or children.

We cannot let this happen.

Join the Public Defenders call for the release of all people in prisons,

except those convicted of violent crimes.

These are our community members, our youth and children. Bring them home! STOP ARRESTING PEOPLE! despite hundreds appealing for release, just one judge, who hates poor people, personally decided to sentence incarcerated folk to death by Corona virus by refusing their release.

WE WILL BE FOLLOWING SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES  
WHILE SHOWING SOLIDARITY WITH INCARCERATED PEOPLE  
***IF YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE,  
PLEASE EMAIL: NEWORLEANSWORKERSGROUP@GMAIL.COM***

Monday, April 6, 2020 at 1:30 PM CDT

1100 Milton St, New Orleans

We will be following social distancing rules.

Urgent: Don't let coronavirus kill prisoners!

Local, state, and immigrant prisons may become a center of death and horror for the thousands imprisoned there. Many prisoners are ill, old, or children. We cannot let this happen.

Join the Public Defenders call for the release of all prisoners, except those convicted of violent crimes.

These are community members, our youth, and children. Bring them home! Despite hundreds appealing for release, just one judge, who hates poor people, personally decided to sentence prisoners to death by coronavirus by refusing their release.

On [Facebook](#)



# Fighting racism during coronavirus crisis: April 4 National webinar / press conference

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 5, 2020



NATIONAL WEBINAR & PRESS CONFERENCE

On the anniversary of Rev. Dr. King Jr.'s assassination

# Fighting racism during the coronavirus crisis

Saturday, April 4

11 am West Coast • 1 pm Central Time • 2 pm East Coast

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## **S P E A K E R S   I N C L U D E**

- **Rebecka Jackson** Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Los Angeles
- **Jasmine Johnson** youth activist and recent high school graduate
- **Lee Siu Hin** National Immigrant Solidarity Network
- **Omowale Clay** December 12 movement
- **Pam Africa** MOVE Organization
- **Gloria Verdieu** Coalition to Free Mumia and All Political Prisoners
- **Reverend Annie Chambers** Baltimore housing activist, Peoples Power Assembly
- **Ron Gochez** Union del Barrio
- **Nana Gyamfi** Black Alliance for Just Immigration
- **Lizz Toledo** Latinx LGBTQ2S activist, Atlanta Socialist Unity Party and others including front-line health care workers.

[\*\*FACEBOOK EVENT PLEASE SIGN UP\*\*](#)

The coronavirus pandemic has been disastrous for the working class worldwide. But its impact on people of color, on Black and Brown communities has the potential of being labeled genocide especially in the the U.S. prisons and immigrant detention centers.

From Michigan to Louisiana, the death rates are staggering; the disparity between rich and poor, the Black and Brown working class neighborhoods in New York City, is equally obvious, with Queens being at the epicenter of the crisis.

Rep. Judy Chu reports that attacks on Asian Americans are now about 100 per day, mainly due to the jingoistic rhetoric against China, labeling the coronavirus as the China or Wuhan virus.

A large number of front-line workers who are without PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) or hazard pay are people of color, about a third of them immigrants, including food servers at fast food and carryout restaurants, bus and MTA drivers, warehouse, postal and grocery workers and especially hospitals.

Rather than lift the inhuman sanctions and blockades of countries like Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, Zimbabwe and many other countries or speed and prioritize the delivery of ventilators, the Pentagon is again threatening Venezuela with false charges against President Maduro, with U.S. warships now deployed off Venezuela.

On the anniversary of the assassination of Reverend Dr. King Jr. it is imperative that we denounce racism and white supremacy in all its forms.

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For more information call or text **410-218-4835** or **323-306-6240**



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# Gov't, bosses use pandemic emergency to escalate repression

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 5, 2020

Measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus are being used as a cover by officials of the U.S. capitalist government, from the federal to the state and local levels, to heighten their control and prepare to repress any protest or uprising of the workers and oppressed against the horrendous inadequacies of the for-profit health care system, the rapidly deepening crisis of unemployment and mass poverty, and threatened war moves by the Pentagon.

[In Albuquerque, N.M.,](#) police shot and killed a 52-year-old Latinx man in his home after his employer asked them to do a welfare check. As is all-too-common, the cops claimed after the fact that their victim was responsible because he had a rap sheet. In Baltimore, National Guard units rolled through the city's streets and set up roadblocks, but did nothing to provide food to hungry residents of public housing like Douglas Houses. The [Baltimore Housing Authority](#) even tried to ban activist groups and food banks from distributing food there.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, while sparring with President Donald Trump and running a thinly veiled campaign for the White House, has called on the racist New York Police Department to [get “more aggressive”](#) in enforcing social distancing rules on youth. He also introduced legislation to [roll back bail reform](#) that went into effect Jan. 1, threatening to keep many more poor and oppressed people in the state’s worst incubators of disease — the jails.

[California Gov. Gavin Newsome](#) floated the idea that martial law might be necessary. He backpedaled after an outcry, but the state and cities continue to tighten police measures. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) stormtroops have taken advantage of the situation to [escalate attacks on migrant workers](#) in that “sanctuary state.”

The worker who led a walkout of Amazon warehouse workers in Staten Island, N.Y., demanding greater health and safety measures, was fired by billionaire boss Jeff Bezos, supposedly for violating social distancing. Across the country, health care workers have been threatened with retaliation for speaking out on their desperate need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and the public’s need for mass testing for the virus.

The Trump administration’s Bureau of Indian Affairs chose the very day that U.S. coronavirus cases topped 100,000 to announce it was planning to strip the [Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#) of Massachusetts and Rhode Island of its official standing. On March 21, the [Department of Justice under Attorney General William Barr](#) requested that Congress enact legislation granting it sweeping emergency powers that would allow police to hold suspects indefinitely without charge and suspend other constitutional rights.

State governments have taken advantage of the public focus on the coronavirus crisis to heighten anti-women [attacks on abortion rights](#) and enact [anti-transgender measures](#).

After tightening deadly sanctions against Iran, which is fighting a major attack of Covid-19, Trump [threatened that country](#) with military aggression. Then, on April 1, Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo used a media briefing on the coronavirus to announce they were [deploying Navy warships](#) to threaten Venezuela, another country struggling under U.S. sanctions.

There are many, many more examples.

### **Defend the right to protest**

Working-class communities, their organizations and other progressive forces well understand the need for urgent measures to “flatten the curve” and try to slow the spread of the deadly disease, even though it is at great hardship to their lives and livelihoods.

At the same time, more and more workers classified as “essential” — most of them low-paid, and disproportionately Black and Brown — are walking off the job and engaging in other forms of protest against their mistreatment by the bosses.

It’s clear to everyone forced to work in dangerous conditions without necessary safety measures and equipment, adequate health coverage, sick time or job protections, that their “essential” categorization is seen by their employers as nothing but an excuse for greater exploitation and greater profits — the health of the workers, their families and communities be damned!

One of the first restrictions to be put in place in many cities, like San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C., were strict limits on gatherings. First gatherings of 100 or more were banned, then 50, then 10 or fewer. Now [any “non-essential gathering”](#) of any size is a no-no in New York. People are advised to social distance — put a minimum of six feet between them and another person — and stay in their homes as much as possible. (This advice is ludicrous, not to mention insulting, to the

hundreds of thousands of homeless people.)

Physical distancing makes sense from the point of view of limiting the virus's spread. At the same time, the Centers for Disease Control and other official bodies in the U.S. have resisted repeated advice from China and other countries that have successfully brought the pandemic under control to encourage people to wear protective masks when they leave their homes. Wearing masks has proved to be effective in limiting the spread of the virus, but the capitalist profit system was not able to produce the masks as needed, thus the policy to discourage use of masks, unlike socialist China, where masks were available for all.

Front-line workers have found creative ways to engage in protest while trying to respect the social-distancing guidelines. Nurses and food-processing workers have staged actions outside their workplaces while holding signs, carefully spreading out at a six-foot distance from one another. Immigrant rights and prisoners' advocates have [held car rallies](#), with protesters driving in vehicle caravans to detention centers and prisons to demand the captives' release from dangerous conditions.

[The firing of Christian Smalls](#), the African American man who led the Amazon walkout in Staten Island, N.Y., shows how the bosses and the capitalist state can use the emergency measures to punish workers who stand up to them. "It was blatant retribution," Smalls said.

In Bolivia, the right-wing coup regime brought to power last year with U.S. help has issued arrest warrants for six transportation workers who joined a [mass protest by hungry workers and peasants](#) in Riberalta, reported [independent journalist Ollie Vargas](#). The protest was viciously attacked by government troops for defying the country's quarantine measures. Of course, measures to stop the spread of the virus mean little if people starve to death.

With National Guard troops [already activated in 27 states](#) — mostly by Democratic

governors — and President Trump authorizing further mobilizations, it is not hard to imagine the possibility of similar scenes in the streets of U.S. cities in coming weeks and months as depression-level unemployment, and lack of adequate health care, potentially leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths, drive working-class communities to take mass action just to survive.

The deepening crisis and the repressive power-grab by capitalist politicians shows the urgency of initiatives like the national webinar sponsored by the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly and Harriet Tubman Solidarity Center of Los Angeles on March 28, [“Defending People During the Coronavirus Crisis.”](#) That online event brought together activists and organizations from across the U.S. to begin building a fightback network that can organize a united response to the crisis and mobilize to defend the workers and oppressed over the coming months.



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## A new humanity, a new world

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 5, 2020

*Owei Lakemfa is the former secretary general of the [Organization of African Trade](#)*

*Union Unity, (OATUU), a coalition of trade unions in all the 54 African countries, with a total membership of about 25 million.*

Imagine. Imagine you are on a cruise ship with 681 others and then discover that some of them have contacted a highly infectious virus that has neither cure nor vaccine. Even if there were a cure, it was not within reach as you are afloat in the ocean and no country wanted you to berth. So your ship becomes not just a prison but a virus-infected laboratory with no escape except to leap into the roaring waves. Therefore, you are condemned to wait and live in fear of the highly contagious virus spreading. It is a nightmare, but not one you can wake up from, as it is a reality running into weeks.

That was the nerve wracking experience passengers on board the British cruise ship MS Braemar underwent. The passengers were 668 from the United Kingdom and the rest from Italy, Colombia, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Japan. On board, five had coronavirus Covid-19 while 28 other passengers and 27 crewmembers had been isolated after experiencing coronavirus-like symptoms.

The ship was denied docking by the Dominican Republic, Barbados and the Bahamas. The mighty United States was not offering any assistance, but the small island of Cuba, which is also experiencing the virus, beckoned on the ship to dock at its port of Mariel as an act of solidarity.

The relieved passengers, throwing kisses at a country they were not scheduled to visit, were transported in a caravan of buses and ambulances to a Havana airport terminal and flown to the U.K.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab joined in the appreciation: "We are very grateful to the Cuban government for swiftly enabling this operation."

The Cuban action to the passengers and their loved ones is an unforgettable act of

bravery which saved lives. That, in international diplomacy, is called soft power diplomacy. But knowing the Cubans, that was not their intention. Rather, it is in their character and tradition to come to the assistance of people in need even if it would cost them lives. That was what they did in the anti-cholera fight in Haiti, and in 2014 during the Ebola scourge that threatened to wipe out countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone.

We Africans can also not forget that in the 1980s, when apartheid held South Africa and Namibia in a strangulating grip and marched across Angola to seize that country, it was only Cuba that came to our aid, pouring in some 55,000 troops, losing thousands of their youths in battle, but effectively crushing the apartheid military, leaving the racists with no option but to dismantle their evil system and grant Namibia and South Africa independence. In the last 56 years, Cuba has sent over 400,000 health professionals to work for free in 164 countries.

Italy is now the epicenter of the Covid-19 pandemic, with deaths in the past one week averaging four hundred. Almost all countries in the world are protecting just themselves and conserving their finances, health workers and medical supplies for their citizens. In contrast, tiny Cuba is mobilizing and sending thousands of its medical professionals to countries ravaged by Covid-19. Just this Saturday, it sent 52 doctors and nurses to Italy, a developed European country, to help battle the virus. Italy's Permanent Representative to the European Union (EU) Maurizio Massari, had complained that his country's cry to EU member countries for medical help to combat coronavirus had gone unanswered.

The Cuban deployment of its "armies of white robes" to Italy, was the sixth international medical brigade it was sending out to fight Covid-19. It had sent them to Grenada, Nicaragua, Suriname, Venezuela and Jamaica.

When the 140 Cuban medical professionals arrived in Kingston, Jamaican Health Minister Christopher Tufton greeted them thus: "In a time of crisis, the Cuban

government, the Cuban people ... have risen to the occasion, they have heard our appeal and they have responded."

The Cubans are dogged fighters who, no matter how bad the situation becomes in those countries, will not turn their backs. For them, no matter the battle field — military, medical or humanitarian — neither retreat nor surrender is an option.

Watching a video of the Cubans' arrival to the applause of grateful Italians, was quite emotive for me. It was a definitive statement that all human beings are one, irrespective of ideology and colour, and even level of development. The acts of the Cubans in rescuing the passengers of the British ship, MS Braemar and sending doctors to Italy, is also a lesson that a financially poor, underdeveloped country can come to the rescue of rich and developed countries.

It is instructive that Cuba, an island that is just 110,860 square kilometres with a population of 11.3 million, relying over the decades on raw sugar and tobacco export, has been under U.S. economic, commercial and financial embargo since Oct. 19, 1960. Yet, it has an almost 100 percent literacy and one of the most developed health systems in the world. In fact, one of the main medicines China used successfully to treat Covid-19 patients is Interferon Alpha 2b, a drug Cuba produced in 1981 to fight the dengue virus.

For many years, Cuba stood alone and isolated in the Organisation of American States. But through commitment, willpower, consistency and development paradigm, it won over most of the states to its side.

Cuba teaches us in Africa, particularly Nigeria, that there is no alternative to being self-reliant; to building basic institutions and investing in the people. It teaches the Nigerian elites who appropriate the country's resources to themselves and their Western masters, that there is no alternative to building local capacity. That if they had built the health system rather than think they can always go abroad for medical

treatment, they would not be patients in the dilapidated hospitals, now that the coronavirus has shut out the outside world to all Nigerians irrespective of status.

The Cuban example is no fluke. It is built on the foundations of its founding fathers, like the poet José Martí, 1853-1895; Gen. Antonio Maceo 'The Bronze Titan' 1845-1896; and the later generations like Fidel and Raul Castro, Camilio Cienfuegos, Haydee María and Celia Sánchez, who taught that humanity is one and that its resources must be deployed for common good, particularly in favour of the poor, the weak and marginalized.

The Cuban philosophy is embedded in the thoughts of a man like Ernesto Che Guevara, who taught that: "The life of a single human being is worth a million times more than all the properties of the richest man on earth." The Cubans are living Che's advice that: "We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force."



# **Letter from President Maduro as U.S. threatens Venezuela with war**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 5, 2020

To the Peoples of the World,

In greeting you, with affection, I take the liberty of addressing you on the occasion of denouncing the severe events taking place against the peace and stability of Venezuela, at a time when the concern of the States and Governments should be focused on the protection of the life and health of their citizens, due to the acceleration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As it is publicly known, last March 26, the government of the United States announced a very serious action against a group of high officials of the Venezuelan State, including the Constitutional President of the Republic, Nicolás Maduro.

This action consisted in the presentation of a formal accusation before the American judicial system, which is not only illegal in itself, but also seeks to support a false accusation of drug trafficking and terrorism, with the sole objective of simulating the alleged judicialization of the Venezuelan authorities.

This American performance includes the unusual offer of an international reward to anyone who provides information about the President and the high Venezuelan officials, leading to a dangerous moment of tension in the continent. I, therefore, consider it necessary to make an account of the facts, which reveal the perverse plot behind the accusations of the Department of Justice.

Just one day before, on March 25, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela denounced before national and international public opinion the development in Colombian

territory of an operation aimed at attempting against the life of President of the Republic, Nicolás Maduro Moros, his family members, and high State officials; as well as attacking civil and military objectives in our country, accusing Mr. Clíver Alcalá, a retired general of the Venezuelan armed forces, of being the military chief of that operation.

This denouncement was made with all responsibility, after a control operation in the road to the north of Colombia, near the border with Venezuela was announced on March 24, in which the police of that country captured a batch of war weapons in a civilian vehicle.

The investigations revealed that it was a sophisticated arsenal aimed at a group of former Venezuelan and Colombian military and paramilitary personnel who were training in camps located in Colombian territory.

On March 26, the aforementioned Clíver Alcalá, gave a statement to a Colombian media outlet -from his residence in the city of Barranquilla, Colombia- in which he confirmed his participation in the reported events, confessing to being the military leader of the operation and revealing that the weapons were purchased by order of Mr. Juan Guaidó, national deputy, who calls himself interim President of Venezuela and serves as Washington's operator in the country. He also confirmed that the weapons were intended to carry out a military operation to assassinate senior members of the Venezuelan State and Government and to produce a coup d'état in Venezuela.

Mr. Alcalá clarified that the weapons were purchased through a contract signed by himself, Mr. Juan Guaidó, U.S. advisors and Mr. Juan José Rendón, political advisor to President Iván Duque, and carried out with the knowledge of Colombian government authorities.

In the face of this confession, the unusual response of the United States government

has been the publication of the accusations mentioned at the beginning of this letter, with the extravagant inclusion of the name of Mr. Alcalá, as if he were part of the Venezuelan authorities and not a mercenary hired by the United States to carry out a terrorist operation against the Venezuelan government.

As a demonstration of this statement, I need no more proof than to mention the alleged capture of Mr. Alcalá by Colombian security forces and his immediate surrender to U.S. DEA authorities, in a curious act in which the prisoner, without handcuffs, was shaking hands with his captors, right in front of the stairs of the plane that would take him on a special VIP flight to the United States, which shows that in reality, this whole set-up is about the rescue of someone they consider a U.S. agent.

It must be stressed that the unsuccessful armed operation was originally designed to be executed at the end of this month, while all of Venezuela is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Actually, this is precisely the main battle that concerns humanity today.

A battle that our nation is successfully waging, having managed to stop the contagion curve, reinforcing health provisions and keeping the population in a massive quarantine, with a low number of positive cases and deaths.

For all these reasons, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela alerts our brothers and sisters of political organizations and social movements around the world about the reckless and criminal steps being taken by the administration of Donald Trump which, despite the frightening acceleration of the growth of COVID-19 affecting the American people, seems determined to deepen its policy of aggression against sovereign states in the region, and especially against the Venezuelan people.

During the pandemic, the U.S. government, instead of focusing on policies of global cooperation in health and prevention, has increased unilateral coercive measures,

has rejected requests from the international community to lift or make flexible the illegal sanctions that prevent Venezuela from accessing medicines, medical equipment, and food.

At the same time, it has banned humanitarian flights from the United States to Venezuela to repatriate hundreds of Venezuelans trapped in the economic and health crisis in the northern country.

By denouncing these serious facts, Venezuela ratifies its unwavering will to maintain a relationship of respect and cooperation with all nations, especially in this unprecedented circumstance that forces responsible governments to work together and put aside their differences, as is the case with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under such serious circumstances, I request your invaluable support in the face of this unusual and arbitrary persecution, executed through a new version of that rancid McCarthyism unleashed after World War II. At that time, they willingly labeled their adversaries as Communists in order to persecute them; today they do so by means of the whimsical categories of terrorists or drug traffickers, without having any evidence whatsoever.

Condemning and neutralizing today these unjustifiable attacks against Venezuela will be very useful to prevent Washington from launching similar campaigns against other peoples and governments of the world tomorrow. We must all adhere to the principles of the United Nations Charter, to prevent excessive unilateralism from leading to international chaos.

Brothers and sisters of the world, you can be absolutely sure that Venezuela will stand firm in its fight for peace and that, under any circumstances, it will prevail. No imperialist aggression, however ferocious it may be, will divert us from the sovereign and independent path that we have forged for 200 years, nor will it distance us from the sacred obligation to preserve the life and health of our people

in the face of the frightening global pandemic of COVID-19.

I take this opportunity to express my solidarity and that of the people of Venezuela to all the peoples who today also suffer serious consequences from the effects of the pandemic. If we are obliged to draw any lesson from all this difficult experience, it is precisely that only together we can move forward. The political and economic models that advocate selfishness and individualism have demonstrated their total failure to face this situation. Let us firmly advance towards a new World with justice and social equality, in which the happiness and fullness of the human being is the center of our actions.

I appreciate the solidarity that you have permanently expressed towards my country and my people, denouncing the criminal blockade to which we and many other nations are subjected. I take this opportunity to reiterate my respect and affection, and to invite you to continue united, plowing a future of hope and dignity.

Nicolás Maduro  
President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Source: [PopularResistance.org](https://www.popularresistance.org)



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# Marxism and the social character of China

written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 5, 2020

*From a June 9, 2013, talk by Fred Goldstein at the Left Forum, a yearly event in New York City. The talk was focused on socialism and China in the wake of the Great Recession of 2008. Although the details of what is happening now are different, the social and economic forces have not changed. The conclusion is also unchanged: there must be a firm defense of China against every scheme by imperialism to undermine the socialist foundation that still exists there.*

The issue of China is one of the most important questions of the 21st century for the working class and the oppressed peoples, as well as the hostile imperialist ruling classes of the world.

The progressive and revolutionary movements, especially in the U.S., have a great stake in arriving at a correct policy toward China.

First of all, China is a formerly oppressed country that achieved liberation from British, French, German, U.S. and Japanese imperialism in 1949 by making one of the greatest revolutions in history. At that time, one quarter of the human race was torn from the clutches of imperialism. As a formerly oppressed country struggling for national development, it must be defended against all varieties of imperialist military, economic and political aggression, regardless of what one thinks about its social character.

China today is a new, complex and contradictory phenomenon in history. It has fundamental socialist structures alongside capitalist development and imperialist penetration. The leadership calls it “market socialism” or socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Socialism is inscribed firmly as China’s foundation in its constitution. The international capitalist class is profoundly hostile to China and never ceases to try to undermine its fundamental socialist structures.

Yet workers in Chinese private industry are subjected to capitalist exploitation and the workers in the state industries have lost much of the economic support that once attached to their workplaces. Horrendous industrial accidents take place and environmental problems are severe.

### **Dual character of China’s economic foundation**

Only Marxism enables us to approach an analysis of China.

Marxism has shown that the character of any society is determined by its economic foundation and that the superstructure of society, its politics, ideology, etc., are determined by the economic foundation.

How can such an analysis be applied to China and how can it help to clarify how to view China?

To begin with, the economic foundation of China is not homogeneous. It is partly socialist and partly capitalist. The question for us and for the world working class is: Which is dominant? — the socialist foundation, or the capitalist enterprises seeking private accumulation of profit through the exploitation of the working class?

Similarly, the superstructure is not homogeneous. On the one hand, there are the Communist Party, the People's Liberation Army and the ideological doctrine that declares socialism to be the foundation of China. On the other hand, there is the relentless promotion of opening up to imperialism and capitalist market reforms. And, above all, there is a struggle over political reform, meaning the right for the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie to organize politically, either inside the party, outside the party or both. There is a steady drumbeat for "political reform" from the imperialists and their class allies inside China.

### **Economic crisis of 2008-2009 was a critical test**

How can we assess this situation? We should start by empirical examination of China, on the one hand, and the rest of the capitalist world on the other.

A critical test came when the Chinese leadership was forced to deal with the effects of the worst capitalist crisis since World War II.

When the crisis hit in 2008 to 2009, many tens of millions of workers in the U.S., Europe, Japan and across the capitalist world were plunged into unemployment.

China, which had dangerously allowed itself to become heavily dependent on exports to the capitalist West, suddenly was faced with the shutdown of thousands of factories, primarily in the eastern coastal provinces and the special economic zones.

More than 20 million Chinese workers lost their jobs in a very short time.

So what did the Chinese government do?

We described what happened in a pamphlet titled “The Suppression of Bo Xilai and the Capitalist Road — Can Socialism Be Revived in China?” in an article titled “Capitalist crisis versus planning.” The article, published on March 27, 2012, explained that plans drafted as far back as 2003, to go into effect in future years, were pushed forward and implemented.

We then quoted from Nicholas Lardy, a bourgeois China expert from the prestigious Peterson Institute for International Economics, who described how consumption in China actually grew during the crisis of 2008-2009, wages went up, and the government created enough jobs to compensate for the layoffs caused by the global crisis.

Said Lardy: “In a year in which GDP expansion [in China] was the slowest in almost a decade, how could consumption growth in 2009 have been so strong in relative terms? How could this happen at a time when employment in export-oriented industries was collapsing, with a survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture reporting the loss of 20 million jobs in export manufacturing centers along the southeast coast, notably in Guangdong Province? The relatively strong growth of consumption in 2009 is explained by several factors. First, the boom in investment, particularly in construction activities, appears to have generated additional employment sufficient to offset a very large portion of the job losses in the export sector. For the year as a whole, the Chinese economy created 11.02 million jobs in urban areas, very nearly matching the 11.13 million urban jobs created in 2008.

“Second, while the growth of employment slowed slightly, wages continued to rise. In nominal terms, wages in the formal sector rose 12 percent, a few percentage points below the average of the previous five years (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2010f, 131). In real terms the increase was almost 13 percent. Third, the government continued its programs of increasing payments to those drawing pensions and raising transfer payments to China’s lowest-income residents. Monthly

pension payments for enterprise retirees increased by RMB120, or 10 percent, in January 2009, substantially more than the 5.9 percent increase in consumer prices in 2008. This raised the total payments to retirees by about RMB75 billion. The Ministry of Civil Affairs raised transfer payments to about 70 million of China's lowest-income citizens by a third, for an increase of RMB20 billion in 2009 (Ministry of Civil Affairs 2010)."

He further explained that the Ministry of Railroads introduced eight specific plans, to be completed in 2020, to be implemented in the crisis. The World Bank called it "perhaps the biggest single planned program of passenger rail investment there has ever been in one country." In addition, ultrahigh-voltage grid projects were undertaken, among other advances.

The full article by Lardy can be found in "Sustaining China's Economic Growth after the Global Financial Crisis," Kindle Locations 664-666, Peterson Institute for International Economics.

### **Socialist structures reversed collapse**

So income went up, consumption went up and unemployment was overcome in China — all while the capitalist world was still mired in mass unemployment, austerity, recession, stagnation, slow growth and increasing poverty.

The reversal of the effects of the crisis in China is the direct result of national planning, state-owned enterprises, state-owned banking and the policy decisions of the Chinese Communist Party.

There was a crisis in China, and it was caused by the world capitalist crisis. The question was which principle would prevail in the face of mass unemployment — the rational, humane principle of planning or the capitalist market. In China the planning principle, the conscious element, took precedence over the anarchy of

production brought about by the laws of the market and the law of labor value.

But the institutions based on the remaining structures of Chinese socialism, which saved the masses from economic disaster, are the very institutions that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Wall Street and London want to reduce and eventually destroy. They are the state-owned enterprises, government planning and the control by the Chinese Communist Party.

One might say that the Chinese leadership did this to avoid unrest. Surely the capitalists in Europe and the U.S. also want to avoid unrest. But that did not cause them to put tens of millions of workers back to work, raise pensions, and raise stipends and social welfare payments. It only caused them to institute austerity to secure the profits of the bankers.

Coming back to Marxist analysis, it is clear from the way the Chinese leadership handled this crisis that the socialist side of the economic foundation is still dominant in China. And the same can be said for the political superstructure.

The enemies of socialism claim that capitalism is responsible for the great successes in China.

But that is a falsehood. China has succeeded in its economic development because the socialist sector has broadly contained domestic capitalism and imperialist investment within the framework of the national economic goals of the leadership.

Without that, China would look like India — which also has planning but is a thoroughly capitalist country.

In India, poverty is so deep that people live on garbage dumps, wash their clothes in polluted water, and the urban slums in Kolkata and Mumbai rival rural poverty. The masses of India are desperately poor — living on \$1 to \$2 a day — even as the glittering high-tech industry develops alongside the abysmal economic conditions

faced by hundreds of millions of Indians.

There is no comparison with China. But if the imperialists have their way, if they can destroy the socialist foundation and the Communist Party, they will turn China into another India. That is what is at stake in the struggle to stop the counterrevolution in China.

### **'Market socialism' a false and dangerous concept**

This analysis should not be understood in any way as support for the doctrine of "market socialism." In our view the anarchy of the capitalist market is antagonistic to the planning of a socialist society and socialist construction. Capitalist private property is antagonistic to socialist property and production for private accumulation is antagonistic to production for social use and human need.

There are historical circumstances of extreme underdevelopment which compel a socialist government to employ both private and state capitalist methods to promote development of the productive forces and the creation of the working class from the rural population.

It is one thing, however, to use these methods as a temporary expedient, to make a retreat from socialism in order to make socialism triumphant in the struggle against capitalist methods. That was Lenin's idea behind the New Economic Policy. It began in 1921 in the USSR, during the direst times after the civil war left the country in ruins and the working class that survived was going back to the country to get food.

But Lenin always regarded this as a retreat and a crucial struggle. The question, as Lenin put it, was "Who will win?"

China long ago developed economically after the capitalist reforms instituted by Deng Xiaoping. But what should have been a temporary retreat has become an enshrined policy of treating capitalism as a partner with socialism. Private capital

grows automatically and with it the economic strength and political influence of the capitalist class, its petty bourgeois hangers-on, as well as the petty bourgeois intelligentsia. This carries great long-term dangers for China.

The socialist component of the economic foundation is dominant at the present. But capitalism is continuing to erode that foundation and do damage to the workers. Furthermore, the new leadership of Xi Jinping and Li Kequang have sent signals that they want to move to the right in the economy. Expanding the opportunities for imperialist investment and moving more and more in the direction of bourgeois economic reforms is playing with fire.

### **Revive spirit of Mao, workers' power**

Bo Xilai, the former head of the party for Chongqing Province, is now languishing in detention. He has been held for over a year because he sought to revive the cultural and egalitarian spirit of Mao Zedong and because he had a program to retard the march down the capitalist road.

Bo represented a left resistance to the current policies at the level of top leadership. His defeat has paved the way for a further turn to the right.

What is really needed is a sharp turn to the left. The workers must reclaim the socialist rights first established by the Chinese revolution and deepened during the period of Mao. This is the only thing that can revive and secure Chinese socialism in the long run.

But in the meantime, there must be a firm defense of China against every scheme by imperialism and by the domestic capitalist class in China to undermine the socialist foundation that still exists there.



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# World's biggest drug pusher indicted Venezuela

written by Struggle - La Lucha

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On March 26, Trump's attorney general, William Barr, said that Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro Moros, was "flooding" the United States with cocaine. Three days later, [President Trump claimed that health care workers](#) risking their lives fighting the coronavirus were stealing face masks and reselling them.

Both statements are outrageous lies.

In the midst of a pandemic, [Barr announced a \\$15 million reward](#) for the capture of the democratically elected Venezuelan president. Ten million dollars was offered for the leader of the country's Constituent Assembly, Diosdado Cabello.

Barr heads the same Justice Department that refused to bring federal civil rights charges against the cop who strangled [Eric Garner](#), whose last words were, "I can't breathe."

Barr's news conference featured a wanted poster for President Maduro. The only thing missing on it were the words "dead or alive."

[Venezuela's leader denounced these "racist cowboy methods."](#) President Maduro said that his country "had record numbers of drug busts in the past 15 years, ever since we got rid of the [U.S.] Drug Enforcement Agency."

If the capitalist government was honest about who's flooding the U.S. with drugs, it would have indicted itself.

The 2017 hit movie "American Made," starring Tom Cruise as the number one drug smuggler, Barry Seal, missed a key detail. [When Seal was murdered on Feb. 19, 1986,](#) he carried the personal phone number of then vice president, George Herbert Walker Bush.

The son of a Ku Klux Klan member, Seal was a longtime pilot for the CIA and Trans World Airlines. As a teenager, he was in the Civil Air Patrol with JFK assassination figures Lee Harvey Oswald and David Ferrie.

Some believe Seal is seen with future CIA director Porter Goss in a famous picture of "Operation 40" members. This was a CIA unit that organized terrorist actions against socialist Cuba. (See ["Barry and the Boys" by Daniel Hopsicker.](#))

Barry Seal flew a plane equipped with CIA cameras into Nicaragua in an attempt to frame the revolutionary Sandinista government on drug charges. This scheme fell apart with the Wall Street Journal reporter Jonathan Kwitny showing there was no link between any Nicaraguan official and the staged drug shipment.

The current charges against leaders of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are just as phony.

### **Uncle Sam sells crack**

Barry Seal was conveniently rubbed out months before the Contragate scandal broke out. On Oct. 5, 1986, CIA mercenary Eugene Hasenfus was shot down over Nicaragua.

The plane was owned by the CIA front, Southern Air Transport, [whose employees included future Attorney General William Barr.](#)

Hasenfus confessed that he was dropping off supplies to Contra terrorists trying to overthrow Nicaragua's government. According to the late Father Miguel D'Escoto, who was Nicaragua's foreign minister, [the Contras murdered 30,000 people.](#)

Elliot Abrams was the Reagan administration's godfather for all the U.S.-backed death squads in Central America, including the Contras. Today, this war criminal is the point-person for Trump's undeclared war against Venezuela.

After Vietnam, people in the U.S. didn't want another dirty war. The House of Representatives prohibited aid to the Contras.

The Reagan administration ignored Congress and poured crack cocaine into Los Angeles to finance the Contras. A key player was Marine Col. Oliver North, whose own secretary, Fawn Hall, became addicted.

The crack epidemic devastated Black and Latinx communities. It served as an excuse for the prison population increasing seven times between 1980 and 2020.

Courageous journalist Gary Webb exposed this CIA drug pushing in his newspaper series [“Dark Alliance.”](#) Webb was run out of journalism for telling the truth and driven to suicide, as seen in the 2014 film [“Kill the Messenger.”](#)

## **Pusher man CIA**

In 1972, the CIA tried to block the publication of [“The Politics of Heroin of Southeast](#)

Asia" by Alfred W. McCoy. This classic work revealed the vast CIA drug running operations in Southeast Asia that flooded Black and Latinx communities with heroin. Transporting this poison was CIA front Air America with 20,000 employees.

This sordid history didn't prevent Attorney General Barr from also announcing drug peddling indictments against leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia/Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC).

The FARC has been leading a struggle against the death squad regime in Colombia for almost 60 years. Even after a peace agreement was signed in 2017, hundreds of labor and community activists have been murdered.

Colombia produces an estimated 43 percent of world cocaine production. That's a good reason why the government is receiving \$10 billion in U.S. military aid over 15 years.

The drug charges against President Maduro and the FARC leaders are phony but dangerous. They could serve as an excuse for U.S. military intervention against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. U.S. hands off Venezuela!

