



As coronavirus spreads

Profit system spins into crisis

By Gary Wilson

Wall Street has been on an unprecedented roller coaster ride, with big swings in both directions every day for weeks, a volatility not seen since November 1929. The stock market had the largest one-day point drop in history on March 16, 2020, nearly a 13 percent drop.

The fall hits not just the big investors — big banks, corporations and hedge funds — it also hits 401(k) retirement plans and savings tied to the market.

Businesses have started laying off workers or cutting work hours. “Some 18 percent of adults reported that they had been laid off or that their work hours had been cut,” the Los Angeles Times reported on March 17.

Oil prices plummeted to nearly \$20 per barrel on March 18, down from about \$60 only three months ago.

The Covid-19 pandemic is being blamed. Thousands of people have lost their lives and hundreds of thousands have been infected.

But the pandemic is an event that revealed the crisis in the capitalist system — it didn't cause the crisis. From the point of view of the economy, the virus exposed the underlying economic instability.

The stimulus packages being offered up almost daily by President Donald Trump and Congress as well as the Federal Reserve Bank are meant to keep the economy afloat. But the effects of these measures will be limited without a public health response that could contain the virus.

Large parts of the service sector — restaurants, bars, movie theaters — as well as hotels and airlines — are all severely hit as people stay away from places of public gatherings and stop travel. Normal life is grinding to a halt, with schools and places of worship closing, concerts and conferences being canceled and sports leagues suspending their seasons.

The so-called casual workforce, service workers and the gig workforce have been hit especially hard, with no paid time off, no health care coverage, no guarantee of a job, food or housing.

The coronavirus pandemic's economic devastation will continue until the coronavirus is contained. But containment has been slow to nonexistent in the U.S. after decades of cuts to the health care systems. In May 2018, then-National Security Adviser John Bolton fired the entire U.S. Pandemic Response Team and at the same time President Trump cut funding for the Centers for Disease Control's global disease outbreak prevention efforts.

In fact, the coronavirus crisis in Europe and the U.S. is now worse than at the worst period in China. Indeed, the failure of the capitalist countries to contain the virus has produced a disaster. In proportion to the population, the speed of spread of the virus in Europe is now faster than at any period in China. The number of new daily cases in Germany was three times as high as the peak in China, in France five times as high, in Spain 12 times as high and in Italy 21 times as high.

The true rate in the U.S. is unknown as testing is still mostly unavailable or limited. Yet testing is the only way to start the measures needed to control the spread of the virus.

Trump reportedly had testing limited as much as possible “because more testing might have led to more cases being discovered of coronavirus outbreak, and the president had made clear — the lower the numbers on coronavirus, the better for the president, the better for his potential re-election this fall.” (NPR, March 12)

No economic crisis in China

In terms of the global situation, sharp declines in the number of new coronavirus cases in China confirm that the coronavirus outbreak there, while not over, has been brought under control. Therefore, production and supply chains both in China, and from China to the global economy, will begin to improve.

The virus first hit China very hard in December. China responded with a social mobilization of the people, as in a war, to fight the virus. Now Covid-19 has largely been contained in China itself, thanks to the mobilization that was made possible by China's socialist base.

No layoffs. No evictions. Yes, the economy slowed down, as it must when production is shut down, but there was no crisis involving loss of jobs, of homes, of food.

Yet in the U.S., already 1 in 5 have been laid off. Many, many workers may lose their jobs — perhaps millions — all supposedly because of the coronavirus. But if that didn't happen in China, then we have to look at other factors that are pulling down the economy.

Capitalist crisis of overproduction

In the period before the present Wall Street crash, the U.S. economy was stagnating, economic growth had come to a virtual halt, and the appearance of global overproduction of vital commodities stood out. In particular, there were the reports since 2018 of an oversupply of oil, with barrel prices sliding downward.

After World War II, the U.S. was the world center of industrial production and the top economy based on that. Today, industrial production has moved to China, India, Bangladesh and Vietnam. Imperialist capitalism continues to extract profits from the rapidly expanding industrial working class of the Asian countries, the lion's share of which goes into the pockets of the capitalists of the U.S.

Meanwhile the U.S. has become an economy based on services and “information,” that is, computer software and operations. The U.S. economy has gone through a steady de-industrialization over the last few decades.

The response has been an attempt to make the U.S. the world's leading carbon-based energy producer through the development of North America's vast reserves of fossil fuel. In effect, the old U.S. industrial monopoly would be replaced by a new energy monopoly based on carbon-based fuel extracted through shale-rock fracking.

The U.S. and its Canadian satellite have become the chief suppliers of fossil fuel — oil, coal and natural gas — in the world. That has been the basis for the economic rise since the 2008 Great Recession.

An article titled “U.S. Is Overtaking Russia as Largest Oil-and-Gas Producer” in the Oct.

Continued on page 2



PPA members and others distribute food at Douglas Homes public housing in Baltimore, March 25.

SL PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

‘Condemn all forms of racism, pledge to stand in solidarity’

The Peoples Power Assembly strongly condemns the racism emanating from the highest levels of the U.S. government, which seeks to demonize and blame China during a world pandemic.

Targeting of Chinese and other Asian people constitutes a hate crime; it has led to horrific attacks on Asian people, both physical and verbal.

The virus is not the “China or Wuhan virus” any more than it is the “Italian virus” or anywhere else in the world that has been impacted. It is both shameful and cruel during a world crisis to use racism to divert workers and poor people from building badly needed solidarity.

One should remember that the “Spanish Flu” epidemic a century ago never originated in Spain but rather in the United States; it was first publicly recognized by Spain.

RACIST NEGLECT

We also condemn the racism inherent in the disregard of those who are most vulnerable, who are mostly Black and Brown people, including prisoners, who already are disproportionately impacted by an unjust incarceration system referred to as “mass incarceration”; and immigrants who are locked up in horrific detention camps, rightly referred to as concentration camps by many Jewish groups.

We continue to call for the release of prisoners, especially older prisoners, those who have not been tried and are languishing because of lack of bail, and all prisoners convicted of nonviolent crimes. Iran, a country demonized by the Trump regime as repressive, released all of its prisoners. We continue to call to shut down all detention centers and end deportations.

SOLIDARITY NEEDED

The antidote to racism is solidarity both at home and abroad. It is clear that, with most of the world's people impacted, we live in an interconnected global world that calls for new solutions and global cooperation.

The U.S. sanctions and blockades have created hardship and suffering of people all around the globe, from Iran to Venezuela, from Cuba to Zimbabwe, and many other countries, especially during this pandemic. The occupation of Palestine and continuing war in the Middle East intensify death and destruction.

END SANCTIONS

Sanctions and blockades work in two ways — not only creating terrible hardships in the targeted countries, including death — but also preventing workers and poor here in the United States from benefiting from the successes of blockaded countries like Cuba. The immune-boosting antiviral drug Interferon alpha-2b developed by Cuba was used in China and now Italy to help save coronavirus patients. Nothing has been done by the U.S. government to work with Cuba to bring this medicine to patients in U.S. hospitals.

The trillions spent on the Pentagon war machine could pay for health care for every single person in this country. It's time to end all sanctions.

If you witness or are a victim of racism, please call or text us at (410) 218-4835. 📞

Never forget Vincent Chin

Trump spurs racist attacks on Asian Americans

By Stephen Millies

"It's not fair." Those were the last words of Vincent Chin outside a McDonald's in Highland Park, Mich., a suburb of Detroit. The 27-year-old was beaten to death by two white racists on June 19, 1982, because he was Asian American.

Chrysler supervisor Ronald Ebens hit Chin with a baseball bat while Ebens' stepson, Michael Nitz, held Chin down. Vincent Chin's skull was fractured and he died four days later on June 23, 1982.

The United States was in a deep recession that year and the official unemployment rate reached 10.8 percent. It was worse in Michigan, with the jobless rate there climbing to 16.5 percent by the end of 1982.

Banksters and billionaires like the Ford family had already shut down hundreds of factories, warehouses and offices. They wanted people to blame Japan for deindustrialization. Their media and politicians repeated this big lie.

The result was that laid-off Chrysler straw boss Ebens yelled at Vincent Chin, "It's because of you little m—s that we're out of work!" and killed him. That Vincent Chin was Chinese American made no difference.

Ebens and Nitz were clearly guilty of premeditated murder but were only convicted of manslaughter. These killers who robbed Lily Chin of her only son were sentenced to a mere three years probation and a \$3,000 fine by Judge Charles Kaufman.

Thirty-eight years later, Trump wants us to blame the People's Republic of China for the coronavirus. The racist pig in the White House



Marchers in San Francisco's Chinatown demand justice for Vincent Chin, 1983.

calls this deadly disease "the Chinese virus."

That's not fair. Viruses don't have a nationality. There's been over 150 attacks on Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans since the pandemic started.

Every one of those attacked could have been another Vincent Chin. Trump's rhetoric helps fuel this racist violence.

Hate epidemic

Blaming peoples and countries for disease is genocidal. Nazis claimed that Jewish immigrants from Poland were spreading tuberculosis in Germany.

Radio fascist Michael Savage claimed immigrants, particularly those from Mexico and Central America, were spreading tropical diseases in the U.S. That was the subject of his first hate show on March 24, 1994, broadcast from San Francisco.

The same year, California's Proposition 187 was on the ballot. It would

have kicked immigrants out of hospitals and public schools. Savage was put on the radio to promote this segregationist referendum.

Savage is now blaming the People's Republic of China for the coronavirus and Chinese Americans in San Francisco for spreading it.

That doesn't stop Vice President Mike Pence from calling into Savage's radio program. Donald Trump has welcomed the hate monger aboard Air Force One.

It's easy to dismiss Savage, who once touted coffee-filled enemas as a cure to kick cocaine addiction. But almost the entire capitalist media attack the People's Republic of China for its handling of the coronavirus.

That's not fair, either. China reported cases of pneumonia that had occurred in Wuhan to the World Health Organization on Dec. 31, 2019.

The next day, health officials closed the Wuhan seafood market that was linked to some of those who

were ill. By Jan. 7, Chinese scientists had identified the new coronavirus.

The Trump administration and the \$4 trillion medical-industrial complex squandered the advance notice given the United States by China. Trump and the airheads on Fox News belittled the new coronavirus. Radio bigot Rush Limbaugh dismissed it as the common cold.

It wasn't China that shut down 135 hospitals across the U.S. since 2015. Capitalist greed and budget cuts got rid of the thousands of hospital beds that we now need.

China didn't create dangerous shortages of masks and other protective equipment for medical workers. New York Gov. Cuomo is now begging for thousands of life-saving ventilators.

Elderly patients may be forced to die because there's not enough of them. Chinese factories are working around the clock making ventilators for the U.S. and Italy.

It's because the People's Republic of China is a socialist country that it was able to organize society to beat back the coronavirus. Tens of thousands of health care workers, including doctors, volunteered to go to Wuhan and the surrounding Hubei province.

Last year, the capitalist police in the U.S. killed at least 1,004 people. The unarmed socialist police in Wuhan would deliver food to people who were quarantined.

China gave the world, including the U.S., a vital breathing space to push back the pandemic.

Blaming the People's Republic of China for the coronavirus is war propaganda. Don't believe it. It's not fair.



Dockworkers respond to Covid-19

WEST COAST

By Lallan Schoenstien

Once again, in a powerful act of solidarity, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) is organizing to protect its members and to support the surrounding community in the coronavirus pandemic. The union has issued a list of demands striking out against unsanitary, life-threatening conditions. The union members can withhold labor in the shipping ports that control commerce to back up their demands.

The ILWU held a press conference along with local leaders from the Bay Area's Filipino community during the third week in March to demand that contaminated waste from the Grand Princess cruise ship, quaran-

ted in San Francisco Bay, be safely disposed of. Also, they demanded adequate medical treatment for all workers still aboard the vessel and a safe repatriation of the staff.

Port companies had planned to expose both dockworkers and community members to the coronavirus by trucking the waste through the East Bay community. The ILWU demanded that the contaminated waste from the ship be disposed of safely through water-side offloading and barge removal. After the press conference, the port bosses backed down and agreed to union and community members' demands.

While the dockworkers on the West Coast continue to fight for sanitation standards, the ILWU is using

its power to support the thousands of workers they represent in industries "on the other side of the gate," referring to workers outside of the port terminals. From the nearly 400 workers laid off at Powell's Books in Portland, Ore., to the workers at Anchorsteam Brewing in San Francisco, to education, veterinarian and warehouse workers, the ILWU is working to ensure that inland workers have safe working conditions and enough cash to survive.

It is courageous for the ILWU to make these demands while it is under intense union-busting pressure from legal proceedings. In Portland, a judge awarded the terminal operator ICTS a \$96-million settlement against the ILWU for a slowdown action which began in 2012. Although the original award to ICTS was later reduced by \$19 million, it is still more than twice the ILWU's total assets, threatening the dockworkers' union with bankruptcy.

A union spokesperson says: "The ILWU has been hit with this massive fine that will have a chilling effect not only for the longshoremen's union, but for workers far beyond the waterfront if we don't act. Now is the time to organize in the face of this terrifying disease.

"And as the saying goes, an injury to one is an injury to all. That's never been more true than right now." □

As coronavirus rate spreads Profit system spins into crisis

Continued from page 1

3, 2013, Wall Street Journal reported: "U.S. energy output has been surging in recent years, a comeback fueled by shale-rock formations of oil and natural gas that was unimaginable a decade ago. A Wall Street Journal analysis of global data shows that the U.S. is on track to pass Russia as the world's largest producer of oil and gas combined this year — if it hasn't already."

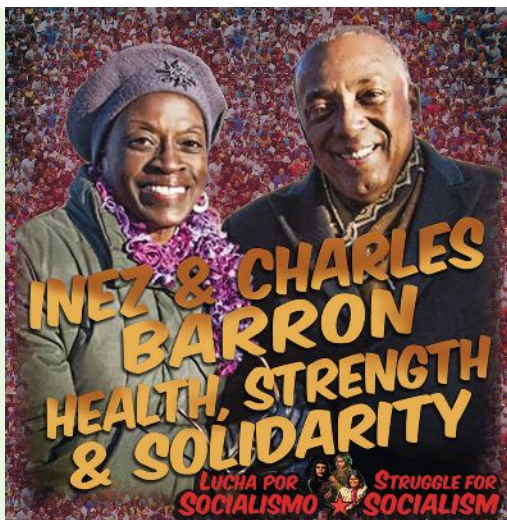
The U.S. produced 18 percent of the world's oil last year, compared with Saudi Arabia's 12 percent, Russia's 11 percent and Canada's 5 percent.

As far as natural gas alone is concerned, the U.S. and Russia are the dominant producers, with Russia's flow of natural gas to Europe going through Ukraine. A cutoff in Ukraine would force Europe to depend on oil or U.S.-produced natural gas transported in liquid form by ship. Is there any wonder Trump and Biden are contending in Ukraine?

As the U.S. and Canada developed their profitable fossil fuel industry, whether natural gas or shale oil, the U.S. economy has become increasingly dependent on selling carbon-based energy products. Is

Continued on the next page

Struggle★La Lucha sends solidarity to Charles Barron and Inez Barron, who are both recovering from Covid-19 infection. For many years, Charles Barron, a member of the New York State Assembly, and Inez Barron, a member of the New York City Council, have used their elected positions in a principled, revolutionary way to fight for interests of the people, against racism and capitalism.



People's War against coronavirus: Why Washington fears China's example

By Scott Scheffer

Gleaning the news, anyone can find articles acknowledging that China's "People's War" against the Covid-19 epidemic is on track for total victory. The sacrifices by the Chinese people and the confidence they have in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have resulted in gaining control over the enormous health crisis.

The Trump administration's miserable profit-before-people response to the arrival of the virus in the U.S. has stripped capitalism naked. Thousands are losing their livelihood, unable to get needed supplies and unable to get real medical help. The Democrats' emergency bill provides only some help to a small section of the population.

The contrast between socialist China's great work and the cruelty of U.S. capitalism threatens a sea change in the way workers think about the two social systems.

The Trump administration is trying hard to erase that possibility by slandering China. The official line is that China concealed the danger of a pandemic, punished people who sent out early warnings, rejected help from the U.S. and caused a three-week delay in the response that they claim would certainly have been underway in the U.S. if only they had known.

Yeah, right.

The notion that China had bought time for the rest of the world is often asserted by health officials. Some nations that had the resources took their cue from China and were pre-

pared when the virus spread internationally. The blame for the lack of resources in much of the world belongs on the doorstep of U.S. imperialism. Vicious U.S. economic sanctions, International Monetary Fund austerity programs and sapping of resources have left countries vulnerable.

pared when the virus spread internationally.

The White House tightened sanctions against Venezuela, Iran and Cuba in recent days. The virus has reached Gaza and countries in Africa where sanctions and imperialist domination have broken the economies. Long ago, Trump cut the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) budget and efforts to prevent outbreaks in China, Pakistan, Haiti, Rwanda and Congo.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) budget and efforts to prevent outbreaks in China, Pakistan, Haiti, Rwanda and Congo.

U.S. punishes while China helps

China, meanwhile, is sending medicine and all forms of aid that it can to other countries, including France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Iran, Iraq and the Philippines. The Chinese people's humanity and solidarity are so threatening to the U.S. that the headline of a March 25 Foreign Policy article cries, "How China is Exploiting the Coronavirus to Weaken Democracies."

The World Health Organization (WHO) was given reports by China even before the potential for a pandemic was certain. WHO shared the information with the U.S. CDC and spoke of the danger repeatedly. There was plenty of timely warning!

The U.S. also had a direct line of communication through Dr. Linda Quick — a CDC staff person stationed in China until July 2019. According to a March 22 Reuters report, Quick's job was to work with epidemiologists to zero in on viral outbreaks and report to the U.S.

She "was in an ideal position to be the eyes and ears on the ground for the United States and other countries." Her position was eliminated by the Trump administration.

This shows what a spurious claim it is that China rejected help from the U.S. They welcomed this liaison and it was Trump who eliminated the position.

It was Dec. 31 when China first reported everything it knew and didn't know to WHO. A Jan. 21 WHO Situation Report indicates that the city of Wuhan reported 45 cases being treated for pneumonia, but caregivers weren't yet certain of the cause. The earliest patient they knew about fell ill on Dec. 12.

Through research over the recent months, Chinese scientists and others learned that this coronavirus is different from its six known cousins. This one can be contagious while there are mild or no symptoms, but it is potentially deadly — a recipe for a terrible epidemic or even a pandemic.

China mapped the genome and shared it with the world just 12 days after their first report to WHO — an incredible scientific feat and a big step forward for the world. At the same time, China reported the connection to a seafood market in Wuhan. Although they still hadn't confirmed human-to-human transmission, Chinese officials were concerned

that not the reason the president of the U.S. is a climate change denier or that near-military force has been brought down on opponents to pipelines across Native lands in the U.S. and Canada?

The U.S. oil and gas production is done by the expensive and environmentally horrendous method of extraction known as fracking. The price of oil has to be kept pretty high to make fracking profitable.

Now oil has been hit by a crisis of overproduction and the oil industry is on the verge of collapsing.

The overproduction crisis has plagued Big Oil since at least 2018 and is not related to the drop in demand during the coronavirus epidemic. Oil prices have been falling steadily since a high of about \$75 a barrel in 2018. Three months ago, it was \$60 a barrel. Today, it is near \$20 a barrel. This is well below what it costs to produce oil from fracking. Shale oil can't produce a profit when prices drop this low.

This is capitalist overproduction. More is being produced than can be sold for a profit.

The continuing fall of the stock market reflects the general instability in the capitalist mode of production for profit. The economy was already slowing, contracting in a cyclical capitalist crisis. Capitalists call it a profit crisis as the produced commodities cannot be sold at profit. That's the crisis that triggers a major economic downturn, a full-on recession or even a depression. ☐



Chinese medical team arrives in Belgrade, Serbia, March 21 to help combat Covid-19 pandemic. European countries had rejected Serbia's appeals for help.

PHOTO: XINHUA

enough to close the market and restrict travel to and from Wuhan.

On Jan. 23, the number of confirmed cases had doubled from the previous day to 570, and 17 people had died. Wuhan and three other cities in Hubei province were immediately locked down.

Soon the lockdown was expanded so that 100 million people sheltered at home. Food deliveries, medical treatment, thousands of hours of research, millions of coronavirus tests, "pop-up" test sites throughout China, drones spraying disinfectant in Wuhan and making public announcements, hospitals being constructed at blazing speed — all of this commenced under the leadership of the CCP.

Anti-China slander ramps up

As criticism of Trump has mounted, the anti-China narrative has been employed more often and has been augmented even by liberal and progressive media.

A Feb. 10 Vox article cites an epidemiologist using newer statistics to contradict the information that was supplied by China before those statistics were available. His deceitful argument is easy to see through. No statistics on an epidemic are accurate until there has been time to compile and study. Cases may have existed earlier, but China reported what it knew and was honest about what it didn't know on Dec. 31.

On Dec. 30, Dr Li Wenliang, an ophthalmologist at Wuhan Central Hos-

pital, had become aware of a number of pneumonia cases and communicated it to physicians at another hospital in Wuhan. He assessed it to be a coronavirus. He was then summoned by Wuhan authorities and reprimanded.

The central government of China had good reason to want information to be centralized. Many party officials and scientists were working day and night to learn more about the illness and how to prevent its spread. Still, the central government felt that the action of the police in Wuhan was inappropriate, and to their credit, apologized. They are investigating how the protocol was misapplied.

But the Trump administration has seized on this incident and has used it as another battering ram against China. Howls of condemnation from media outlets have bolstered the China-bashing, Cold War attacks.

Even as the possibility of the U.S. becoming the global epicenter looms, the White House is hinting at reversing course and directing the country to go back to work by mid-April. That bit of news is currently being cheered by Wall Street as investors try to climb back from some of the worst days in the Dow Jones' history.

The contrast between a socialist system whose goal is humanity and a decrepit, violent capitalist system based on the greed of billionaires is evident. The billionaires and their lackeys are right to be worried. ☐

Stop U.S. attacks on Venezuela and President Maduro!

By Brandon Harris

The recent accusations of drug trafficking against President Nicolás Maduro and other top Venezuelan officials are utterly false.

Donald Trump and Attorney General William Barr reportedly plan to add Venezuela to the list of "state sponsors of international terrorism." Many media reported March 26 that the United States also plans on filing drug trafficking charges against President Maduro and issuing a \$15 million bounty for his arrest.

These are nothing but lies and fabrications. There is no evidence that Venezuela supports international terrorism or is involved with drug trafficking.

On the contrary, it is the U.S. that

has carried out terrorist attacks against Venezuela by supporting coup attempts, attacking their electrical power grid, and through the inhumane sanctions that have prevented the people of Venezuela from getting lifesaving medications for Covid-19, diabetes, heart disease and other illnesses.

Sanctions are a form of economic warfare and economic terrorism against a country that has never been a threat to the U.S. nor has ever done anything to harm people here.

All progressive groups and people in the U.S. should stand with Venezuela against the threat of imperialist war and all sanctions aimed against that country.

U.S. imperialism, hands off Venezuela! ☐

Por qué el sistema de ganancias está entrando en crisis

Por Gary Wilson

Wall Street ha estado en una montaña rusa sin precedentes, con grandes oscilaciones en ambas direcciones todos los días durante más de una semana, una volatilidad no vista desde noviembre de 1929. El mercado bursátil tuvo la mayor caída en un día el 16 de marzo de 2020 — casi un 13 por ciento— algo histórico.

La caída no solo afecta a los grandes inversionistas— bancos grandes, corporaciones y fondos de cobertura— sino también a los planes de retiro 401(k) y ahorros ligados al mercado.

Los negocios ya empezaron a despedir trabajadores y reducir horas. “Alrededor del 18 por ciento de los adultos informaron que habían sido despedidos o que sus horas de trabajo se habían reducido”, informó el Los Angeles Times del 17 de marzo.

Los precios del petróleo cayeron a casi \$20 por barril el 18 de marzo, por debajo de los \$60 hace solo tres meses.

Están culpando a la pandemia del Covid-19. Miles de personas han perdido la vida y cientos de miles han sido infectadas.

Pero la pandemia es un evento que ha revelado la crisis del sistema capitalista—no causó la crisis. Desde el punto de vista económico, el virus lo que hizo fue exponer la subyacente inestabilidad de la economía.

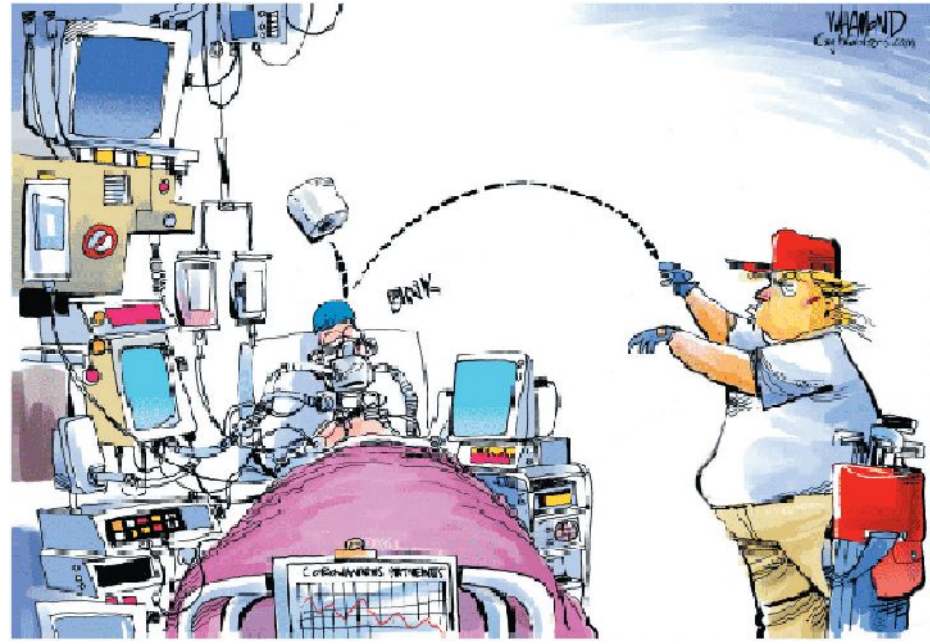
Los paquetes de estímulo que ofrecen casi a diario el presidente Donald Trump y el Congreso, así como el Banco de la Reserva Federal, están destinados a mantener a flote la economía. Pero los efectos de estas medidas serán limitados sin una respuesta de salud pública que pueda contener el virus.

Gran parte de los sectores de servicio—restaurantes, bares, teatros— como también hoteles y aerolíneas— se ven gravemente afectados ya que las personas se mantienen alejadas de los lugares de reunión pública y dejan de viajar. La vida normal se está deteniendo al cerrar escuelas y lugares de culto, con la cancelación de conciertos y conferencias y la suspensión de las temporadas de las ligas deportivas.

La llamada fuerza de trabajo informal, trabajadores de servicios y la fuerza laboral por encargo [gig en inglés] se han visto especialmente afectados, sin tiempo libre remunerado, sin cobertura de atención médica, y sin garantías de trabajo, comida o vivienda.

La devastación económica de esta pandemia continuará hasta que el coronavirus sea contenido. Pero la contención ha sido lenta y casi inexistente en los EUA después de décadas de recortes a los sistemas de salud. En mayo de 2018, el entonces asesor de seguridad nacional, John Bolton, despidió a todo el Equipo de Respuesta a Pandemias de EUA. Al mismo tiempo, el presidente Trump recortó los fondos para los esfuerzos de prevención de brotes de enfermedades globales del Centro para el Control de Enfermedades.

De hecho, la crisis del coronavirus en Europa y EUA ahora es peor que en el peor momento en China. De hecho, el fracaso de los países capitalistas para contener el virus ha producido un desastre. En pro-



porción a la población, la velocidad de propagación del virus en Europa es ahora más rápida que en cualquier momento en China. El número de casos nuevos diarios en Alemania fue tres veces mayor que el pico en China, en Francia cinco veces más, en España 12 veces más y en Italia 21 veces más alto.

El número real en los EUA es desconocido ya que las pruebas aún no están disponibles o están limitadas. Sin embargo, las pruebas son la única forma de poder comenzar las medidas necesarias para controlar la propagación del virus.

Según los informes, Trump tenía las pruebas lo más limitadas posible “porque más pruebas podrían haber llevado a descubrir más casos de brote de coronavirus, y el presidente lo había dejado claro: cuanto más bajos sean los números de coronavirus, mejor para el presidente, mejor para su potencial reelección este otoño”.

En China no hay crisis económica

En términos de la situación global, la caída consistente en el número de nuevos casos de coronavirus en China confirma que el brote de coronavirus allí, aunque no ha terminado, ha sido controlado. Así que la producción y las cadenas de suministro tanto en China como desde China hacia la economía mundial comenzarán a mejorar.

El virus golpeó a China fuertemente por primera vez en Diciembre. China respondió con una movilización social del pueblo como en una guerra, para combatir el virus. Ahora el Covid-19 se ha contenido en gran parte en la propia China, gracias a la movilización que fue posible por su base socialista.

Sin despidos. Sin desalojos. Sí, la economía se desaceleró, como ocurre cuando se cierra la producción, pero no hubo crisis que implicara la pérdida de empleos, de hogares ni de alimentos.

Sin embargo, en los Estados Unidos, ya 1 de cada 5 personas ha sido despedida. Muchos, muchos trabajadores, quizás millones, pueden perder sus empleos, todo supuestamente debido al coronavirus. Pero si eso no sucedió en China, entonces tenemos que mirar otros factores que están haciendo caer la economía.

Crisis capitalista de sobreproducción

En el período anterior al colapso actual de Wall Street, la economía

de EUA se estaba estancando, el crecimiento económico se detuvo virtualmente y se destacó la aparición de una sobreproducción global de productos vitales. Particularmente, los informes desde 2018 de una sobreoferta de petróleo, con los precios del barril cayendo a la baja.

Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, EUA era el centro mundial de producción industrial y la principal economía basada en eso. Hoy, la producción industrial se ha trasladado a China, India, Bangladesh y Vietnam. El capitalismo imperialista continúa extrayendo ganancias de la clase obrera industrial en rápida expansión de los países asiáticos, la mayor parte de la cual va a los bolsillos de los capitalistas de los Estados Unidos.

Mientras tanto, Estados Unidos se ha convertido en una economía basada en servicios e “informática”, es decir, programas y operaciones de computadoras. La economía de EUA ha sufrido una desindustrialización constante en las últimas décadas.

La respuesta ha sido un intento de convertir a Estados Unidos en el principal productor mundial de energía basada en el carbono a través del desarrollo de las vastas reservas de combustibles fósiles de América del Norte. De hecho, el antiguo monopolio industrial de los EUA sería reemplazado por un nuevo monopolio energético basado en el combustible a base de carbono extraído a través del fracking de esquisto bituminoso.

Estados Unidos y su satélite Canadá se han convertido en los principales proveedores de combustibles fósiles (petróleo, carbón y gas natural) en el mundo. Esa ha sido la base del crecimiento económico desde la Gran Recesión del 2008.

Un artículo titulado “EUA está superando a Rusia como el mayor productor de petróleo y gas” en la edición del Wall Street Journal del 3 de octubre de 2013, informó que: “La producción de energía en Estados Unidos ha aumentado en los últimos años, un auge impulsado por las formaciones de petróleo y gas natural de esquisto bituminoso que era inimaginable hace una década. Un

análisis de datos globales del Wall Street Journal muestra que Estados Unidos está en camino de pasar a Rusia como el mayor productor mundial de petróleo y gas combinado este año, si es que aún no lo ha hecho”.

Estados Unidos produjo el 18 por ciento del petróleo mundial el año pasado, en comparación con el 12 por ciento de Arabia Saudita, el 11 por ciento de Rusia y el 5 por ciento de Canadá.

En lo que respecta al gas natural, Estados Unidos y Rusia son los productores dominantes, y el flujo de gas natural de Rusia a Europa pasa por Ucrania. Un corte en Ucrania obligaría a Europa a depender del petróleo o el gas natural producido en Estados Unidos transportado en forma líquida por barco. ¿Hay alguna duda de por qué Trump y Biden están luchando en Ucrania?

A medida que EUA y Canadá desarrollaron su rentable industria de combustibles fósiles, ya sea gas natural o petróleo de esquisto bituminoso, la economía estadounidense se ha vuelto cada vez más dependiente de la venta de productos energéticos basados en el carbono. ¿No es esa la razón por la que el presidente de los EUA niega el cambio climático o que fuerzas casi militares hayan sido desplegadas contra los opositores a las tuberías a través de tierras nativas en los EUA y Canadá?

La producción de petróleo y gas estadounidense se realiza mediante el costoso y ambientalmente horrendo método de extracción conocido como fracking. El precio del petróleo debe mantenerse bastante alto para que el fracking sea rentable.

Ahora el petróleo se ha visto afectado por una crisis de sobreproducción y la industria petrolera está a punto de colapsar.

La crisis de sobreproducción ha afectado a la industria petrolera desde al menos 2018 y no está relacionada con la caída en la demanda durante la epidemia del coronavirus. Los precios del petróleo han estado cayendo constantemente desde un máximo de aproximadamente \$75 por barril en 2018. Hace tres meses, era de \$60 por barril. Hoy, está cerca de \$20 por barril. Esto está muy por debajo de lo que cuesta producir petróleo a partir del fracking. El petróleo de esquisto bituminoso no puede generar ganancias cuando los precios caen tan bajo.

Esto es sobreproducción capitalista. Se está produciendo más de lo que se puede vender para obtener ganancias.

La continua caída del mercado de valores refleja la inestabilidad general en el modo de producción capitalista con fines de lucro. La economía ya se estaba desacelerando, contrayéndose en una crisis capitalista cíclica. Los capitalistas lo llaman una crisis de ganancias ya que las mercancías producidas no pueden venderse con ganancias. Esa es la crisis que desencadena un importante descenso económico, una recesión total o incluso una depresión. ■

STRUGGLE ★ **LA LUCHA**
for Socialism | *por el Socialismo*