



COVID-19: Facts disprove U.S. charges against China

By Scott Scheffer

The U.S. campaign of slander against China regarding its response to the coronavirus can't be seen only as electoral damage control for Donald Trump, nor should it be interpreted only as friction between two economic rivals with billions of dollars at stake.

Not that those aren't factors. But, even with its historic concessions to the global capitalist economy, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party showcases the superiority of socialist planning in the fight against the coronavirus and points toward a future where private ownership can be eliminated.

The anti-China propaganda, along with Trump's trade war and growing Pentagon threats toward China, are all part of the global class struggle.

The danger for the U.S. ruling class is that literally millions of young people in the U.S. are already fed up with the capitalist agenda of racism, war and gaping inequality, and since the election campaign of Bernie Sanders the fear of uttering the word "socialism" seems to have evaporated.

Exposing the lies about China is an important part of building a fightback movement against rampant U.S. capitalism and imperialism.

China did not conceal anything about the outbreak.

On Dec. 31, 2019, China complied with International Health Regulations — the United Nations' system of monitoring potential epidemics — and notified the World Health Organization (WHO) that there were 27 cases of a mysterious pneumonia-like illness in Wuhan, capital of Hubei province. Nothing was known yet about its ability to spread pre-symptomatically or from humans to humans.

On Jan. 12, Chinese scientists shared the virus's genome via the internet. It was the fastest this was ever accomplished.

On Jan. 22, President Xi Jinping spoke personally with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron about the outbreak. Ma Xiawei, the head of China's National Health Commission, spoke with U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar on Jan.



A medical brigade from eastern China left Wuhan April 8 after helping to beat back the pandemic.

27, and senior Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi spoke directly with China's most rabid accuser — Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

In fact, according to a recent timeline published by China to refute the slanders being spread by the U.S., China briefed the U.S. on coronavirus epidemic prevention on Feb. 3 for the 30th time!

The novel coronavirus was not manufactured.

Scientists from Scripps Research Institute published the results of a study in the journal Nature Medicine on March 17. It is the most widely cited information on the origin of the virus that causes COVID-19. "Our analyses clearly show that SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus," they wrote.

They point to two pieces of evidence that they consider conclusive:

First, the virus's ability to attach itself to human cells so successfully indicates it happened through natural selection — not human engineering. And second, the molecular structure resembles viruses found in bats and pangolins more closely than it resembles any of the six other identified coronaviruses that infect humans.

"These two features of the virus ... rule out laboratory manipulation as a potential origin for SARS-CoV-2," concluded Kristian Anderson of Scripps.

There was no accident at lab in Wuhan that "leaked" the virus.

The Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) is one of about 50 high-security labs that study infectious microbes in the world. At this particular lab, they study coronavirus samples taken from bats. After the genome of SARS-CoV-2 was shared with the rest of the world by China, lab scientist

Shi Zhengli compared the DNA to every virus sample at the lab. All of the samples there were of viruses from previous outbreaks — too dissimilar to be the cause of COVID-19.

Viral samples at the WIV lab are handled with strict protocols, as they are in all Biosafety Level 4 laboratories. Some samples are chemically deactivated for study and all samples are frozen in liquid nitrogen and then kept in a freezer set to minus 80 degrees Celsius. All technicians wear double sets of personal protective equipment (PPE).

There have been accidents that resulted in shutdowns of similar laboratories. One such shutdown occurred at a U.S. lab at Fort Detrick, Md., in August 2019. But none have occurred at the WIV lab.

China acted to correct Wuhan authorities for the reprimand of Dr Li Wenliang.

Dr Li, an ophthalmologist who worked at Wuhan Central Hospital, noticed a number of cases of a pneumonia-like illness that presented similarities with the deadly SARS virus. He shared his observation with colleagues on an internal email network. On Dec. 31, Wuhan police reprimanded him for "spreading false information."

News of the incident spread across social media. When central leaders in Beijing learned of it, they, in turn, reprimanded the authorities in Wuhan. The mayor of Wuhan and police officials apologized publicly.

Sadly, Dr Li died from COVID-19 in February. But, Li was not a "whistleblower." The efforts to learn about COVID-19 and prevent a health catastrophe were underway in China before Dec. 31. In fact, that is the same day that the first notice to the WHO took place.

In the U.S., millions have lost their livelihoods overnight. The deadly virus has hit oppressed communities — where deep poverty blocks access to health care — the hardest. The racist prison system is now a massive network of death traps. Seniors trapped in nursing homes run for profit are dying in startling numbers.

This disaster can't be assigned just to Trump or to the Republican Party. The blame belongs on the doorstep of capitalism. The diversion created by slanders against China has to be exposed. ☐

MALCOLM X

Free them all now! National day of protest May 30

The recently refounded National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (NAARPR) calls upon all its members, comrades, friends and allies to join in a national day of protest on May 30, 2020, at 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

We as a movement have been agitated into taking mass, united action, not by the pandemic alone, but even more significantly by the federal government and the financial lords and barons of Wall Street who, driven by their own greed and lust for political power, are willing to sacrifice the lives, health, safety and well-being of the people; who deem their profits and their continuing plunder of the national treasury more important than the lives of the people.

We will be protesting to stop the racist murder and violence that this administration has willfully unleashed. Not only is the government standing by as COVID-19 ravages African American, Latinx and Indigenous communities — inciting mass Black death with its calls to reopen the economy — but the police and racist vigilantes continue to brazenly hunt and kill Black folks while they sleep in their beds and on open roads in broad daylight. We are protesting the murders of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Ga., and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Ky., because they are outrages that demand justice. This lynch-style, racist terrorism must stop, and perpetrators must be punished.

We are calling for this united action to protest genocidal government policies that have allowed city and county jails, federal and state prisons, juvenile detention jails and immigrant detention centers to become hotbeds for COVID-19 infections and death camps for millions. Who are the human beings incarcerated in these so-called correctional facilities?

They are overwhelmingly oppressed Black and Brown people, LGBTQ and Trans people and poor white, working-class people. They come to jails and prisons in large part from the 140 million poor people living in the U.S. They cannot voluntarily social distance themselves. Their confinement prevents them from taking action to protect themselves from death-causing infections. Their continued imprisonment under these circumstances is an act of genocide.

We must help them. The prisoners of Cook County jail in Chicago managed to write on one of the windows of the jail: HELP WE MATTER 2.

We are calling this united action to help protect all prisoners from COVID-19 infections and death by demanding that all prisoners be liberated from the death camps that U.S. prisons have become. We demand that the president, governors and mayors, prosecutors and judges take immediate steps to depopulate jails, prisons, immigrant detention centers and juvenile facilities.



PHOTO: NAARPR
Plea from prisoners of Cook County jail in Chicago.

Malcolm X: a human rights activist

By Gloria Verdieu

If not for the COVID-19 pandemic, as we mark Malcolm X's 95th birthday on May 19, 2020, hundreds and thousands of people would be marching and rallying in the streets, shouting "Justice for Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor!" as we did in 2006 for Sean Bell; in 2009 for Oscar Grant; in 2012 for Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, Ramarley Graham and Alan Blueford; in 2013 for Mariam Carey; in 2014 for Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Dontre Hamilton and Laquan McDonald; in 2015 for Freddie Gray and Donald Dontay Ivy; in 2016 for Alfred Olango; in 2018 for Aleah Jenkins; in 2019 for Dennis Carolino and on and on.

We would have signs listing our demands: Justice For Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, Stop police brutality, Community control of the police and Jail killer cops.

Similar demands were made by Malcolm X in 1957, when he intervened at a police station in New York. Johnson X Hinton, a member of the Nation of Islam, had been brutally beaten and arrested by two cops. Word of the brutality spread quickly across Harlem. Furious residents flocked to the police station demanding justice.

Malcolm X mobilized the self-defense unit of the NOI, the Fruit of Islam, who positioned themselves to maintain order. Malcolm was shocked by Johnson X's injuries and demanded that he receive immediate medical attention. An ambulance arrived and a crowd of over 2,000 followed it to the hospital on foot.

Once he was satisfied that Hinton was being cared for, Malcolm stepped out of the hospital and with a wave of his hand, the crowd dispersed. Witnessing his control of the crowd, a police inspector commented, "No

man should have that kind of power." What he really meant was, "No Black man should have that kind of power."

Johnson X survived, but had to have multiple brain surgeries and live with a metal plate in his head. He filed suit against the New York Police Department. An all-white jury awarded him \$70,000, the largest police brutality settlement in New York City at that time.

Roots in the struggle

Malcolm Little was born on May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Neb. In an interview, Malcolm's sister Ella Collins said, "When he was born we expected great things of Malcolm. I don't know if this influenced him, the fact that his family put him in a certain category."

His mother, Louise Norton Little, from the Caribbean country of Grenada, and his father, Earl Little, were outspoken supporters of Black nationalist Marcus Garvey. The family had eight children.

Earl Little's civil rights activism prompted death threats from a white supremacist organization called the Black Legion, forcing the family to relocate twice before Malcolm's fourth birthday. By age 13, Malcolm had seen his house burned down, been exposed to the violent death of his father by racists and seen the slow breakdown of his mother.

After spending years in foster homes, he went to live with his sister Ella Collins in Boston.

In January 1946, Malcolm was arrested in Boston, charged with

larceny, breaking and entering, and possession of firearms. That February, he began his prison sentence in Charlestown Prison. He started reading in the prison library.

Ella Collins said this about Malcolm's time in prison: "From a realistic point of view, I think all of the illusions that he may have adopted in his youth, from his environment, I think he lost it in prison. I think he really saw life for real. One of the most valuable assets that Malcolm did acquire in life, was courage."

In 1947, his conversion to the Nation of Islam began with the teachings of Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm was paroled in 1952 and received his "X" name from the NOI.

Malcolm X stood up for Black people when they were being beaten in the streets, publicly humiliated and killed. He understood that people living on the streets and in prisons had contributions to make. Like Mumia Abu-Jamal, he spoke for the jobless, the homeless and the voiceless.

Black unity

From 1953 to 1964, Malcolm X ascended as an NOI minister and successfully started new temples across the country. In early 1964, Malcolm X announced his split with the Nation of Islam.

At a news conference in March 1964, Malcolm spoke on Black unity: "Whites can help us, but they can't join us. There can be no Black-white unity until there is first some Black

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Cops practice viral profiling



PHOTO: JOHN FARINA

By Lallan Schoenstein

It is widely reported that New York City police are exploiting social distancing rules, meant to protect people from the coronavirus, to practice brutal "racial profiling."

The Brooklyn Paper reported on May 12 that "New Yorkers of color made up 93 percent of COVID-19 related arrests in the city since mid-March, according to newly released Police Department data.

"Between March 16 and May 10, cops made 125 arrests citywide that were in some way related to the novel coronavirus — and 116 were people of color, according to a May 12 release."

On May 11, some 50 people marched from Foley Square to New York Police Department headquarters at One Police Plaza in Manhattan to protest the bias. Anthony Beckford, president of the Brooklyn chapter of Black Lives Matter and a local City Council candidate, tweeted: "This does not happen to white people who violate social distancing. They are using the pandemic as a weapon for further brutality."

News reports on local TV and videos on social media show police using the pandemic rules as an excuse to conduct "stop and frisk" assaults, enforcing their violent authority. The videos show police placing Black and Brown people in grapple holds, forcing them to the ground and kneeling on their necks while striking them in the head.

One widely shared video shows four cops wrestle a woman to the ground and handcuff her in a Brook-

lyn subway station while her small child looks on. The police claimed that she was arrested for not wearing her mask correctly.

Another clip shows a member of the NYPD punching a man in the face during an arrest in Brooklyn on May 3, before threatening bystanders with a baton for not wearing masks. Three police tackled and arrested 21-year-old Stephon Scott. One of the cops strikes Scott in the head as the detainee lays pinned to the ground, before taking out his baton and threatening to arrest another man for failing to wear a mask — despite the fact that the cop's own mask does not cover his nose, and one of his fellow officers is not wearing a facial covering at all.

"City Hall and the NYPD need to seriously reconsider social distancing enforcement that leads to escalations involving the use of tasers and violent assaults," Tina Luongo of the Legal Aid Society said. "What is equally disturbing is that some of these officers — who were ostensibly enforcing social distancing laws — were in violation of those very same laws themselves by not wearing protective masks, endangering the lives of all New Yorkers around them."

"The arrests of black and Hispanic residents, several of them filmed and posted online, occurred on the same balmy days that other photographs circulated showing police officers handing out masks to mostly white visitors at parks in Lower Manhattan, Williamsburg and Long Island City," noted a report in the New York Times. 📍

Denver caravan protests ICE bosses

By Kevin Niemann

On May 3, a caravan protest in the Denver suburb of Aurora, Colo., demanded the release of all prisoners while drawing attention to the conditions at the GEO Group's Aurora concentration camp for migrants. The caravan passed through the neighborhoods of the GEO Aurora warden, Johnny Choate, and the regional Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) director, John Fabbriatore.

Signs on cars demanded "Free them all" and "Confront La Migra where they live."

The caravan was sponsored by Denver Communists and Abolish ICE Denver. An earlier protest march in the streets of Choate's suburban neighborhood was held last September.

Five guards at the private prison, under contract to ICE, have tested positive for COVID-19. However, the prison has not released information on whether or not inmates have been tested, or, if so, whether they have tested positive.

ICE has taken advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to push its illegal actions, and in doing so has caused the pandemic to spread. Twenty percent of all COVID-19 cases in Guatemala came from ICE deportations to that country. ICE is complacent and directly



PHOTOS: ABOLISH ICE DENVER

responsible for not only amplifying the COVID-19 crisis in the Denver area but also internationally.

Caravan members maintained social distancing at all times, honking their horns and drawing attention to the mistreatment of the inmates who have faced not only the COVID-19 pandemic, but also outbreaks of mumps, chickenpox and many other infectious diseases. The caravan drew interest and support from Black and Brown neighbors of Choate and Fabbriatore, who had been unaware of their crimes.

The Aurora Police Department stood by as counterprotesters in MAGA hats defied social distancing, attempting to assault members of the caravan and key their cars. The Aurora cops have recently been under fire for their racist actions against Latinx residents and other abuses. Luckily, no members of the caravan were harmed.

Denver metro residents have made it clear that they want ICE and their Gestapo tactics out of their communities. 📍

moving towards socialism

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unity. There can be no workers' solidarity until there is first some racial solidarity. We cannot think of uniting with others, until after we have first united among ourselves. We cannot think of being acceptable to others until we have first proven acceptable to ourselves."

Malcolm X left the U.S. on his first extended trip abroad in April 1964. He visited Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco and Algeria. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim seeks to complete, which entitled him to use the name El Hajj Malik El Shabazz.

He consolidated his relations with representatives of orthodox Islam, met with students, journalists, members of parliaments, ambassadors and government leaders, and never stopped talking about the race problem in the U.S. He encountered people of all races, and many fighters against all kinds of oppression. He spoke to whites as well as Blacks.

In one of Malcolm's letters from abroad — written in Ghana, which he called the fountainhead of Pan-Africanism — he said, "It is time for all African-Americans to become an integral part of the world's Pan-Africanists, and even though we might remain in America physically while fighting for the benefits the Constitution guarantees us, we must 'return' to Africa philosophically and culturally and develop a working unity in the framework of Pan-Africanism."

After his return to the U.S., on May 29, 1964, Malcolm spoke at a socialist forum in New York: "They say travel broadens your scope and recently I've had an opportunity to do a lot of it, in the Middle East and

Africa. While I was traveling I noticed that in most of the countries that have recently emerged into independence, they have turned away from the so-called capitalistic system in the direction of socialism. So out of curiosity I can't resist the temptation to do a little investigating wherever that particular philosophy happens to be in existence or an attempt is being made to bring it into existence.

"All of the countries that are emerging today from under the shackles of colonialism are turning to socialism. I don't think it is an accident."

Fighting imperialism

On June 28, 1964, Malcolm announced the formation of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), a non-religious organization designed to fight all the negative political, economic and social conditions that exist in our neighborhoods.

Later in 1964, Malcolm traveled to the Middle East and Africa for five months. He attended the second meeting of the African Unity Summit conference in Cairo in July. He was the only North American allowed to attend and submitted a paper on the plight of the 20 million African Americans in the U.S.

Malcolm had lengthy conversations with Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Milton Obote of Uganda, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sekou Toure of Guinea,

Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria, all of whom offered him official positions in their governments.

He was one of the first African leaders to meet with the newly created Palestine Liberation Organization and was a pioneer of the Black-Palestinian solidarity that continued with the Black Panther Party and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Earlier, in 1960, he famously met Fidel Castro of Cuba at Harlem's Hotel Theresa.

Malcolm X spoke in Alabama on Feb. 3 and Feb. 4, 1965, before traveling to Britain and France from Feb. 6 to Feb. 13. He was detained in France and put on a plane back to London. He returned to the U.S. on Feb. 14 to find his home had been firebombed.

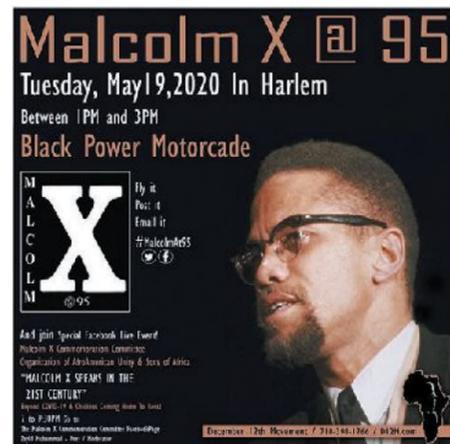
But after making sure his family was safe, he went to speak in Detroit.

There he said: "Colonialism or imperialism, as the slave system of the West is called, is not something that is just confined to England or France or the United States. The interests in this country are in cahoots with the interests in France and the interests in Britain. It's one huge complex or combine, and it creates what's known not as the American power structure or the French power structure but an international power structure.

"The newly awakened people all over the world pose a problem for what is known as Western interests, which is imperialism, colonialism,



Fidel Castro and Malcolm X at historic meeting in the Hotel Theresa.



racism and all these other negative -isms or vulturistic -isms," Malcolm said.

He was assassinated just a week later, on Feb. 21, 1965.

A life of transformations

Malcolm never claimed to be socialist. But his life was full of transformations.

When he announced the formation of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, Malcolm stated that it had the same aim and objective as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), "to fight whoever gets in our way, to bring about the complete independence of people of African descent here in the Western Hemisphere and first here in the U.S., and bring out the freedom of these people by any means necessary."

Malcolm, who referred to himself as a human rights activist, was on the path to socialism. By reading or listening to his speeches, especially his last speeches after his trips abroad, we see that Malcolm was in search of the truth and solutions to the issues making life so miserable for Black people in this country and around the world.

Malcolm made it clear that the system that he was attacking was one based on greed, exploitation of one race by another and one class by another, and that it is our duty not just to analyze it but to change it. [M]

Socialism and dignity: Seniors are not roadkill

By Stephen Millies

Why are so many people in nursing homes dying from the coronavirus? Over 28,000 people across the United States have died in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities.

Nearly 35 percent of the COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. have been in these places. In 14 states — including Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania — they have accounted for over half of those who have died.

That's shocking, since only around 2 percent of the U.S. population live or work there. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 13 million people are living in nursing homes. If you add the figures for skilled nursing and assisted-living facilities, there are maybe 5 million people living in these homes.

Health care workers in these facilities are also dying. In April, two workers at the Wildwood Health Care facility in Indianapolis died of COVID-19.

In the Buffalo, N.Y., area, hospital workers union 1199SEIU Vice President Todd Hobler reported that 131 nursing home workers have the coronavirus or its symptoms. At Sa-

fire Rehabilitation in Tonawanda, near Buffalo, 18 of the 41 members of 1199SEIU are infected.

Most of the 700,000 certified nursing assistants caring for patients don't have a union and earn less than \$15 per hour. Without union protection they're even less likely to have personal protective equipment and to be more vulnerable to becoming ill.

The coronavirus is more easily transmitted between people in any crowded area, like public transportation or schools. This is especially the case where people are warehoused, as in nursing homes and prisons.

Capitalists regard the people living there as disposable and a drain on their profits. They want people to work until they drop.

The Economist magazine, a capitalist mouthpiece, demands that the retirement age be raised to 70. American International Group (AIG) CEO Robert Benmosche, whose firm got a \$182 billion bailout from the U.S. Treasury Department, wants people to be on the job until they're 80.

Socialism and old age

The high death rate among seniors from the coronavirus isn't inevita-

ble. Nor is it just a case of many elderly people having weakened immune systems and chronic diseases.

Nearly 70 percent of the 15,600 U.S. nursing homes are privately owned and run for profit. Just to stay in business, the owners have to cut corners on safety. Smaller nursing homes don't have the room to isolate patients with COVID-19.

Publicly owned nursing homes have been hurt by budget cuts. Medicaid, which pays for most nursing home bills, will be slashed before the trillion-dollar Pentagon budget is threatened.

Longevity is incompatible with capitalist profit.

Unlike the capitalist U.S., socialist Cuba celebrates its older folk. Cubans are proud that more than 2,000 people living in the Caribbean country are at least 100 years old.

Even the World Bank admits that average life expectancy in Cuba rose 17 years between 1960 and 2017. This advance was achieved despite the cruel U.S. economic blockade that has made purchasing medicine much more difficult.

Cuba now has less than 20 new



Nursing home workers protest.

cases of the coronavirus per day. On May 12, the U.S. had 21,475 new cases.

That's how Cuba's socialist health care system matches up with capitalist health care in the U.S.

Members of the Young Communist League in Cuba help seniors. Youth learn from the old what life was like before the revolution, when U.S. corporations plundered Cuba.

Around 90 percent of Cuban seniors live with or close to their families. They are not a burden.

Socialist revolutions aim to raise living standards. Even as the Cuban economy is sanctioned by Trump, Cuban people have dignity. They're proud of Cuban health care workers who are helping people all over the world.

While over 20,000 children are homeless in New York City, there are no homeless children in Cuba. And seniors in Cuba are not considered to be roadkill. Cuba has what we need: a socialist revolution. [M]



City Waste Union members protest in New Orleans.

PHOTO: NEW ORLEANS HOSPITALITY WORKERS ALLIANCE



Striking migrant workers at Yakima Valley fruit processing plant.

Bosses bet on profits over workers' lives

By Greg Butterfield

Fruit processing workers are on strike at 13 plants in Washington state's Yakima Valley. "Hoppers" — sanitation workers who do the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs — are on strike in New Orleans. Retail workers and baristas at Starbucks and other coffee chains are organizing against efforts to force them back to work in dangerous conditions. The Minnesota Nurses Association plans to march on the state capitol in St. Paul on May 20 to protest the continued lack of masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE).

Members of the Oglala Lakota Indigenous nation have set up checkpoints to protect residents from infection since South Dakota's governor refuses to take public health measures. Armed Black and Latinx activists escorted a Black woman lawmaker, Sarah Anthony, safely to the Michigan Capitol after threats from gun-toting, pandemic-denying white supremacists. And at several other state capitols, health care workers in masks and scrubs have stood defiantly against similar fascist mobs.

This is a small sample of the heroic, defensive actions by workers and oppressed communities happening in cities, towns and rural areas as the reactionary, unscientific and profoundly dangerous "back to work" pressure grows. All of these struggles deserve whatever solidarity we can give.

Across the U.S., from the highest levels of power on Wall Street and the White House to the franchisee on the corner, bosses made a decisive shift in the first half of May toward forcing the reopening of the economy amidst the still-raging COVID-19 pandemic.

No conspiracy theories are required. This is the logic of capitalist exploitation, built into the system — bosses' profits come from workers' labor power; capital must expand or die.

'Not a crime at which it will scruple'

In his book "Capital," Karl Marx quoted economist T.J. Dunning: "Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as Nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 percent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 percent certain will produce eagerness; 50 percent, positive audacity; 100 percent will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 percent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged."

It was true in the 1800s, and it's true now.

In mid-March, panic over looming mass deaths and what that could mean for the fate of the profit system caused the bosses and their flunkies in Washington and statehouses to institute partial,

inadequate shutdown measures. This coincided with the long-impending crisis of capitalist overproduction, resulting in mass layoffs — now officially at 33 million, but believed to be much higher, given the deficiencies of state unemployment agencies.

The halting measures to slow the coronavirus exposed the utter inability of the system to provide even the basics of public health and security for the masses of people.

But once the shock passed and mass rebellion didn't immediately materialize, the illogic of the profit system quickly overrode the logic of protecting the lives of people. Almost immediately the bosses — egged on by Trump — clamored for an end to the safety measures.

Many bosses and state governments never shut down at all, claiming that forcing super exploited service workers to toil without proper PPE for low wages was "essential." Trump ordered meat processing plants to stay open as COVID-19 ravaged the mostly Black and Brown meatpackers — many of them the same migrants that Trump demonizes and terrorizes with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement gestapo.

Almost every day brings reports of mass infection outbreaks among food processing workers, like this incident reported by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution on May 16, where Eastern Virginia "district officials said they were able to test 1,380 people over two days on May 8 and 9. That testing was extended to workers at Perdue Farms in Accomac and Tyson Foods in Temperanceville, which revealed a count of about 510 [infected workers] combined between the two companies. ... Only 85 of the 510 cases have been included in the Virginia Department of Health's data so far."

By mid-May, most states had eased or eliminated stay-at-home orders and other measures meant to limit the virus's spread — even in states where the rate of infection is escalating, and as reports grow of a co-morbid toxic shock condition among children who've been exposed to the virus.

"Texas sets record for most coronavirus fatalities in state as reopening gets underway," Newsweek reported May 15. "Record number of COVID-19 cases reported Saturday in Wisconsin, with 502 infections," said the Appleton Post-Crescent on May 16, days after the state's Supreme Court struck down the governor's extension of a stay-at-home order. The following day, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune headlined: "Minnesota logs 699 new COVID-19 cases day before state relaxes stay-home rules. Minnesota to allow more businesses to open Monday."

Celebrity capitalist Elon Musk defied California's public health measures, ordering workers to

report to work at his Tesla auto plant in Alameda County and daring officials to arrest him. They didn't, of course; Tesla was reclassified as "essential" and its workers may now pay the price. Amazon boss Jeff Bezos, on track to become the world's first trillionaire thanks to the boost that the pandemic has given his profits, ordered all warehouse workers to report after May 1 or lose their benefits, and will end \$2 per hour hazard pay at the end of the month.

Rampant racism

New York and California, two epicenters of the pandemic, are moving to reopen. Even prior to the May 15 expiration of the statewide PAUSE order in New York, and long before New York City has met the state's criteria to reopen, many "non-essential" businesses have reopened, without consequences.

At the same time, the New York Police Department's enforcement of social distancing guidelines has been used almost exclusively against Black and Brown communities, including a Black mother and child who were attacked by cops in the subway for allegedly wearing their face masks "improperly."

Despite posturing as the responsible alternative to Trump, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo effectively ended the state eviction ban while claiming to extend it through August. Cuomo refused to even consider a rent freeze, leaving people who lost jobs and income on the hook for months of exorbitant rent.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, meanwhile, prohibited protests, siccing the cops on a social-distancing observant press conference by the Reclaim Pride Coalition, which opposed the city's cosy relationship with anti-LGBTQ2S "charity" Samaritan's Purse. Both officials have ganged up on the homeless, driving people out of the subways while refusing to open up the city's multitude of empty apartments and hotel rooms to those in need of shelter.

The wealthiest capitalist country on earth could easily provide an income for the entire population, including health care, housing and food, for the duration of the pandemic crisis. It could ensure measures are implemented to protect front-line workers and for a safe return to work by everyone afterward, as China and other countries are doing. All it would require is a fraction of the money lavished on the Pentagon war machine and bailouts for Big Banks, Big Oil and Big Business generally.

Instead, COVID-19 is being allowed to run rampant, causing veritable genocide on Navajo land. Black and Brown communities across the country,

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Palestine, marching toward return

Seventy-two years ago, the majority of the people of Palestine were expelled from their homes by terror, force and massacre. Thousands of children, women and men were executed in cold blood and 530 villages were destroyed so that the racist settler state of "Israel" could be created on their land. Today that state, which declared its so-called "independence" on May 15, 1948, directly occupies 85 percent of the land of Palestine and part of Syria.

For the corporate stooges in Washington, the racist state of Israel is part of the U.S. warfare state, a tool in their bloody struggle to maintain

the position of U.S. banks and corporations in the world economy. For the people of Palestine, however, the land between the river and the sea remains their homeland.

Palestinians and their allies around the world marked May 15-22 as a week of struggle for freedom and the right to return to their land. Millions around the world also marked May 22, the last Friday of Ramadan, as the International Day of Al Quds (Jerusalem), a global day of solidarity with Palestine. As part of this week several powerful webinars were held. Links to view them are available at Struggle-La-Lucha.org. 





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with the least access to health care and the most workers on the front lines, are being devastated, while people continue to be killed and brutalized by police and other white supremacists. The tide of racist attacks on Asian people is unstemmed as both Trump and presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden ramp up the war-mongering campaign against China.

Vast numbers of infections and deaths are still projected by federal agencies, as revealed in a report by the New York Times on May 4, still on the scale that first caused the capitalist establishment to panic two months ago. Now the numbers may get worse due to the premature reopening, especially among the most vulnerable sections of the working class: seniors, the disabled, those with pre-existing health conditions, and communities plagued by poverty and racist discrimination.

Trump and Senate leaders have dismissed the warnings of their own health experts, including the congressional testimony of Dr. Anthony Fauci and whistleblower Rick Bright, warning of a resurgence of the virus and the urgent need to prepare for a second wave of the pandemic, which could come as early as autumn.

A question of power

Make no mistake: The bosses are willing to sacrifice as many workers as it takes for them to keep turning a profit. Is it too late to turn the situation around?

It's a question of power. Which class has it?

Right now the capitalists, the boss class, feel themselves firmly in the saddle. The bosses will only take the safety of the workers and oppressed into account when they feel that their rule, and their profit-driven system, is threatened or could be challenged.

What's needed is a countervailing movement that challenges the bosses' ability to resume "business as usual" for fear of losing it all.

For that to happen, the workers — the class that makes the economy run, whose labor produces profits — have to expand their struggle. And the most conscious elements of the working class need to fight for a perspective that goes beyond defensive battles — to fight for socialism.

A political struggle is needed to complement and elevate the many heroic local and industry-wide battles being waged piecemeal across the country. Demands must be made on the federal government and the capitalist system as a whole, not just individual companies or localities. A return to "business as usual" will mean an end to unemployment compensation, rent freezes and other survival measures for the millions left jobless by the capitalist crisis.

Fight for guaranteed income, health care, housing and food for all — for as long as it takes to defeat the pandemic! Free, accessible vaccinations for all once a vaccine is available! End war and sanctions against other countries! Cooperate in the global fight against COVID-19!

Empty the prisons and detention camps! Community control of the police and pandemic emergency measures! Enforcement of social distancing and face coverings should be based on education and community engagement, not repression — and should not be thrown on the backs of low-paid retail workers who now face violent attacks for trying to enforce safety measures.

We can raise the demand for expropriation and workers' control of businesses that do not take necessary safety measures. If the bosses complain they can't afford it — then they should not be in business. The workers should take over the factories, stores, restaurants, delivery services and hospitals, and run them themselves. The bosses' bottom line must not be an excuse for profit-driven murder! 📌

J-1 workers speak out on exploitative labor program

By Bayani

"It all started with the sudden terminations of all J-1s," said Mary Lee Phylline Camello, calling in from Hot Springs, Va. "Instead of receiving termination letters, we were informed via phone call, video chat or from other coworkers." On May 13, the J-1 Workers Network held an online press conference with support from the National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON) and Migrante USA.

The J-1 visa is granted to young workers from outside the United States who have been sponsored by U.S. employers to be placed in temporary jobs in industries like hospitality, retail and food service. Camello is one of the many J-1 workers who spoke about the challenges they face under the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S.

These workers formed the J-1 Workers Network and launched the Support J-1 Workers campaign in response to the inaction and neglect from sponsoring employers and home and host country governments.

"Some of us still had three months left in our contracts," Camello continued. "Some of us just arrived, and only were able to work for a week." This leaves the J-1 workers jobless, having to spend their savings on rent, groceries and paying back the loans to their recruiting agencies — the same agencies that put them in this situation in the first place.

"We tried reaching out to our visa sponsors, and their only advice for us was to go home, or others got no response. We also tried reaching out to the Philippines Embassy, the host company and the community, but there was little to no support given."

The J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor Program is overseen by the U.S. State Department, and is touted to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the U.S. and the people of other countries by means of education and cultural exchange." In reality, it's a way for U.S. employers to hire workers from overseas for far below the federal minimum wage without shouldering any of the costs of travel, housing or insurance.

These costs are passed on to the workers themselves: sponsoring employers and recruiting agencies charge hundreds or thousands of dollars to register, which does not include the costs of travel, housing and insurance. These registration and sponsorship fees are completely unregulated and there is no limit to how much recruiting agencies can charge.

"We are liable to pay a program fee of \$5,500, which includes the \$500 registration fee, the fee for the sponsorship and the cost of health insurance," said Jorizza Garcia, a J-1 worker living in Dallas, attesting to the fees charged by her recruiting agency. "[After the registration fee of \$500], we are given 3 to 5 days to pay the first payment of \$3,000 for us to get our training plan. If we cannot pay within 3 to 5 days, the process will be cancelled and no refund will be granted."

After applicants pass their visa interview, they then have to pay the next \$2,000 within 3 to 5 days. If they do not, their process is cancelled without the possibility of a refund. Further, most contracts enforce a strict no-refund policy, even if the internship is terminated or the applicant departs the U.S. early.

Federally sponsored labor trafficking

The J-1 visa program is essentially a labor trafficking program, in which the State Department designates recruiting agencies to promise high



pay, professional job training and opportunities for cultural exchange. Of course, the young applicants find these promises empty, and instead are paid less than minimum wage in menial jobs and forced to live in overcrowded housing with other J-1 workers.

And because so many of these workers accrue debt in order to pay registration fees, they are forced to stomach wage theft, discrimination, sexual harassment and human trafficking — after all, they're not getting a refund if they leave the job placement, and have virtually no other recourse.

With neither recourse nor assistance from employers or governments, the J-1 Workers Network composed an open letter with the following demands.

"Given these conditions, we are calling on the Philippine government to:

- Support us with financial assistance through its Assistance to Nationals program for rent, purchasing plane tickets and reimbursement for those who have already bought a plane ticket;
- Provide legal assistance for taxes, immigration, labor rights and other areas of concern;
- Investigate and prosecute recruitment agencies accountable for neglect and corruption; and
- Declare cash bonds and post-dated checks unenforceable, and refund any cash paid.

"We demand our visa sponsors and recruitment agencies to:

- Take responsibility for the well-being and safety of J-1 workers;
- Communicate clearly and timely with us, instead of neglecting us;
- Assure us of our program's restarting or extension;
- Provide a full refund of our program fee, all miscellaneous fees and provide receipts for all payments, if program was not completed or was suddenly terminated;
- Provide damage compensation;
- Pay us in the full amount written in our contract; and
- Stop the harassment of J-1 workers and our relatives in the Philippines for payments.

"Finally, we call on the U.S. government to:

- Provide assistance for J-1 workers victimized and abused due to discrimination; and
- Protect J-1 workers during disasters and emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic."

To follow developments, visit and "follow" the Support J-1 Workers Facebook page. Please sign their petition to show support. 📌

JUSTICIA PARA AHMAUD ARBERY

Fin a la supremacía blanca y al asesinato racista

DECLARACIÓN DEL PARTIDO DE SOCIALISMO UNIDO

Las semejanzas entre los casos de Trayvon Martin, asesinado el 26 de febrero de 2012 y Ahmaud Arbery, asesinado el 23 de febrero de 2020, son peculiares. Ambos jóvenes negros estaban desarmados, ambos fueron acosados y asesinados en febrero, y en ninguno de los casos se presentaron cargos porque los asesinos reclamaron actuar en defensa propia. Ambos jóvenes cumplirían 26 años este 2020, Trayvon Martin en febrero y Ahmaud Arbery el 8 de mayo.

Lo que es alarmantemente diferente en el caso de Ahmaud es que el video estuvo en manos de la policía desde el primer día y fue lanzado públicamente el 5 de mayo, dos meses y medio después del asesinato. El video encendió una tormenta de indignación en todo el país. Lo que es sorprendente, pero también típico, son las diferentes interpretaciones del video: una como un asesinato a sangre fría y la otra, por el fiscal de distrito elegido George E. Barnhill, como un asesinato justificado de un corredor negro, asesinado a tiros por dos hombres blancos.

Como dijo la madre de Ahmaud Arbery, Wonda Cooper, y que hacía eco a lo que la mayoría de las personas que vieron el video comentaban: "Mi hijo fue asesinado en las calles cuando fue atropellado y perseguido por dos vehículos y nadie fue a la cárcel. Ellos pudieron llegar a su casa mientras que a mi bebé lo colocaron en una funda para cadáveres".

El inquietante video que apareció el 5 de mayo muestra a Ahmaud Arbery corriendo por una carretera estrecha en Brunswick, Georgia, a plena luz del día, cuando lo enfrentan dos hombres armados. Mientras Arbery sigue corriendo, se puede ver a Travis McMichael esperándolo en la carretera con una escopeta, y a



Ahmaud Arbery y su madre Wonda Cooper Jones.

Los manifestantes marchan para protestar por el tiroteo de Ahmaud Arbery, el 16 de mayo de 2020, en Brunswick, Ga.

incluidos los funcionarios de justicia penal, desde policías hasta jueces que ignoran los homicidios racistas, también deben ser acusados de criminales.

Sabemos que el sistema no puede satisfacer estas demandas a menos que sean forzadas por un movimiento poderoso y militante.

En 2013, provocado por el asesinato de Trayvon Martin, el Movimiento Malcolm X Grassroots publicó un informe anual del 2012

titulado "Los asesinatos extrajudiciales de 313 personas negras asesinadas por la policía, los guardias de seguridad y los vigilantes en los Estados Unidos", encontrando que una persona negra es asesinada cada 28 horas. Este informe inspiró más investigaciones que descubrieron que entre los años 2013 y 2018, la policía mató anualmente un promedio de 1,000 personas. Los hombres negros y los nativos americanos tenían el porcentaje más alto. ¿Ha cambiado este número?

Nuevamente, por ira y por rabia, nos movilizamos por la justicia para otro hombre negro brutalmente asesinado por un asesino retirado de la policía y su hijo, a quienes inicialmente se les dio un pase, fueron enviados a su casa para descansar y les dieron una palmada en el hombro por haber hecho un buen trabajo.

Si nuestro movimiento progresista, sus organizaciones y activistas que luchan por la justicia social y económica se unen en solidaridad con las personas de color que luchan por la liberación y la autodeterminación, podemos mover montañas.

Se necesitarán millones de personas que actúen contra este problema del terror policial, no solo cuando ocurran estos incidentes. Tenemos que estar listos en todo momento. En esta época de COVID-19, debemos buscar otras formas de involucrar a nuestras comunidades en la lucha para derribar este sistema de justicia penal existente y reemplazarlo con un sistema que realmente "proteja y sirva", no a los racistas ni al sistema que protegen, sino al pueblo.

Por: Gloria Verdieu, Rebecka Jackson, John Parker

su padre parado en la parte trasera de una camioneta con un revólver. Después de una breve confrontación, le dispararon a Arbery 3 balazos.

El video fue filmado por un tercer hombre blanco, William Bryan, cómplice del asesinato que hasta el 9 de mayo, aún no había sido acusado ni arrestado. La policía de Brunswick admite haber tenido una copia del impactante video desde febrero. Antes del 7 de mayo no se habían presentado cargos de ningún tipo contra los McMichaels, quienes afirmaron que persiguieron a Arbery porque "parecía un sospechoso de robo".

El asesinato de Ahmaud Arbery en el 2020, no solo nos recuerda el asesinato de Trayvon Martin en 2012, sino que nos recuerda el asesinato de Emmitt Till en 1955. Los tres linchamientos son lo que el prisionero político Mumia Abu-Jamal explica en su libro de 2017, "Have Black Lives Ever Mattered" [¿Han importado las vidas negras alguna vez?]

En el capítulo titulado "¿Proteger y servir a quién? ¿Reformas? O cambio revolucionario?", Mumia escribe sobre las soluciones propuestas por el Dr. Huey P. Newton, Ministro de

Defensa del Partido Panteras Negras. Newton escribió varios artículos proponiendo cómo podríamos transformar totalmente la "Policía estadounidense". Al final de la ardiente década de 1960 y la escalofriante década de 1970, los artículos de Newton siguieron años de organización en el terreno, exigiendo no "vigilancia comunitaria", sino "control comunitario sobre la policía".

Hasta que este sistema capitalista, que necesita herramientas como el racismo para mantenernos divididos a fin de facilitar la súper explotación de los pueblos negros y marrones sea descartado, estos linchamientos, desafortunadamente, continuarán.

Parte de la lucha para cambiar esta sociedad incluye luchar por nuestras demandas.

Deberíamos exigir a este sistema racista que cualquier comunidad de color que haya sido víctima de asesinatos policiales, tenga derecho y se le den los recursos para reemplazar la fuerza policial existente en sus comunidades por una de su propia creación, que puedan contratar miembros confiables de sus comunidades — una fuerza policial controlada y creada por ellos.

Además, para proteger a todas las personas de color, sin importar dónde vivan, las leyes que protegen a las víctimas del terrorismo y el asesinato racistas no pueden dejar de hacerse cumplir y deben cumplir con un conjunto de pautas más estrictas con respecto a la justicia penal. Debería haber arrestos inmediatos cuando personas de color sean asesinadas por racistas, por la policía o por el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas o cualquier otra agencia de justicia penal estatal o local.

Y los cómplices de esos delitos,

FREE THEM ALL NOW!

National day of protest May 30

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We are calling this united action to demand the immediate release of all political prisoners and the wrongfully convicted survivors of torture immediately. These prisoners can be released by pardons, commutation of sentences, paroles, furloughs, signature bonds, prosecutors dropping charges and judges granting probations. The federal and state governments have plenty of means for meeting our demands and no reason to deny them other than greed and profiteering off of private prisons and prison labor, the still-legal form of slavery under the

13th Amendment.

We will mobilize for car caravan protests and social distancing protests throughout the country. In united action, we will stand up, fight back and resist to exist. We will not now or ever stand in silence in the face of the crimes of the government perpetrated against oppressed peoples and the working class. We must make certain that there is resistance throughout the land in order to have a new and better world after we overcome this pandemic.

Struggle-La Lucha newspaper and the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido are members of the NAARPR. For updates visit NAARPR.org.

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