U.S. capitalism’s would-be savior, the “moron” President Donald Trump, sees his re-election prospects tied to a “re-invigorated” economy based on sending U.S. workers back to work close to the height of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

Over 62,000 Americans have died of this pandemic as of this writing. Another 2,000 more perish daily. Yet “back to work” is ever on the agenda of Trump and the ruling rich, whose statisticians hunt for a “safe” mathematical formula that factors in ever-changing rates of infections and deaths with corporate profits lost.

Few deny that whatever the calculations regarding the safety of a generalized return to work, they will soon after become obsolete when an inevitable second wave of this terrible disease, estimated to be far worse than the present horror, takes its toll.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) director Robert Redfield reported on April 21 that “There’s a possibility that the assault of the virus on our nation next winter will actually be even more difficult than the one we just went through… if the two respiratory outbreaks exist [COVID-19 and the seasonal winter flu] at the same time. This would strain the healthcare system in unimaginable ways.” In the absence of an immunizing vaccine, estimated to be 12 to 18 months away, yet another disastrous wave is on the horizon. And the first wave is far from over.

Many of the dead are low-paid workers, disproportionately Black, Latino, and Native American and often part-time, from whom predatory capitalism requires vital services to keep their warehouses, supermarkets, slaughterhouses, food processing plants, fast food chain conglomerates, etc., running as fast as possible.

The dead and stricken include health care workers, public transportation workers, as well as civil service personnel who repair damaged power lines and sewer systems, fight fires and provide many other vital services. All are victims of a system that has proved incapable of providing even the most modest critical preventative tools, like effective face masks and other PPE (personal protective (continued on Page 6)
Shipyard workers defy U.S. Navy

By James Fortin

Shipyard workers at Bath Iron Works (BIW) called-off from their shifts March 24 in response to company demands they work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 60% of the company’s workforce of 6,800 did not come in, according to Tim Suitter, a spokesperson for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Local 6, which represents the majority of BIW workers.

Bath Iron Works is a builder of guided missile cruisers and destroyers for the U.S. Navy. The shipyard has taken its controversial step to keep production going regardless of the health risk, even though two workers have tested positive for the coronavirus. Work on these ships requires significant amounts of close contact between workers in enclosed areas and small compartments, environments conducive to the spread of the disease. A tuberculosis outbreak at the shipyard infected nearly 600 workers in 1989.

The union previously has requested that company management close the shipyard and provide paid sick leave. The company refused, instead offering workers the option of either coming in to work or taking two weeks of unpaid leave. BIW management has refused to back down and has the support of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, James Geurts. Earlier this week Geurts wrote, “I understand that this national emergency presents a challenge and we are dedicated to working closely with you to ensure the safety of the workforce and the national security mission,” adding “If you work in a critical infrastructural industry … you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule.”

The spontaneous action at the Maine shipyard is one of many worker-led protests around the country. Workers everywhere are demanding the right to safe working conditions in light of the rapidly spreading COVID-19 pandemic. Retail workers at Office Depot and Target have been told they cannot wear masks prompting protests. Health workers demanding adequate protective equipment have staged infor- mation picket lines at hospital entrances. Amazon workers in New York have walked off the job in a protest on sanitized work environment. There are many more examples of working people demanding their bosses remove them from the list of workplace hazards.

BIW workers come from throughout the southern area of Maine to work at the Bath facility by bus. They also face some traveling as much as two hours to get to their jobs. If COVID-19 spreads at BIW the disease will likely be transmitted throughout the state. Union leaders wrote in a statement yesterday that “we go home every night to our families, husbands, wives and children. Some of us or they have pre-existing conditions that put us all at a greater risk of serious complications if diag- nosed with the COVID-19 virus.”

Another shipyard worker asked, “who will build their damn ships when we are all sick or dead?”

Bath Iron Works is wholly-owned by General Dynamics Corporation, the fifth-largest arms contractor in the U.S. making nuclear submarines, ships such as those produced at BIW, and military communications systems. In 2018 it had a net income after ex- penses of $3.34 billion. Workers at BIW have voiced resentment at the intransigence of BIW management and the U.S. Navy given the profitability of the company. Union labor there had to concede controversial national security negotiations. “We stuff their pockets and they stuff it to us,” explained one worker leaving his BIW shift.

As of this writing about 30% of the shipyard workforce refuses to come to work. BIW workers have secured sup- port from the entire bi-partisan Maine congressional delegation, as well as from the Maine Legislature’s House Speaker and Senate President. Labor union support for the workers is growing and is evident as expressed by letters to the editor of the local newspaper. Then again, it takes quite a bit for large corporate conglomerates, especially war industry conglomerates, toсолютly no conscience, to put people before profits.

Socialist Action

Socialist Action is a national organization of activists committed to the emancipation of workers and the oppressed. We strive to revitalize the anticapitalist movement, and other social movements with a militant action perspective. Recognizing the divisions that exist on the left and within the workers’ movement, we seek to form united front type organizations around specific issues where a wide range of groups have agreement. In this way we seek to maximize our impact and demonstrate the power and effectiveness of mass action.

In the process we hope to build alliances together from different bases into a revolutionary workers’ party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite – whose profit-based system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics – not alliances with bosses and parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a labor party based on democratic fighting trade union alliances in association with the oppressed and exploited.

We support the struggle of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism – women, LGBTIQ people, national minori- ties, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Black, Indigenous and people of color. We call for international solidarity. We stand with working people from every nation in their struggle. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. We maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International.

Socialist Action believes that the capitalist state and its institutions are instruments of the ruling class, and that therefore they cannot be used as tools of the working class but have to be abolished and replaced with institutions of direct working class rule. That is why we fight for revolution. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the process we provide a working class perspective to the establishment of a workers’ government and the fight for socialism. Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian class rule. That is why we fight for revolution. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the process we provide a working class perspective to the establishment of a workers’ government and the fight for socialism. Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian class rule. That is why we fight for revolution. 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they are bearing the brunt of the economic collapse and why more is not being done, and not being done quickly enough for them. At the same time, we are exposed to the daily scenes of exhausted nurses and other essential workers, many wearing protective gear that has not reached them from COVID-19. As of April 22, the U.S. is approaching a million infected with the virus over 55,000 dead. The conquests of spreading to new hot-spot death zones in Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans and to countless other places in between. Health care workers, too, are taking their demands public in labor actions coast to coast.

Socialism for the rich

These protests by segments of the working class have a context. Working people have been the target of austerity measures taken by Democratic and Republican admin. istrations alike over the past 40 years. These twin parties of U.S. capitalism have been ardent enablers of the ruling class whose mantra is to jettison union organizing campaigns in the name of profit, thereby exporting work to lower-paying overseas markets, while eliminating health insurance and benefits, and exacerbating all manner of retirement and health care benefits domestically.

Simultaneously, the social safety net in the U.S. has been shrunken with food programs slashed, public housing privatized, and hospitals closed. The greatest migration in history has seen workers to the ruling class has trimmed, the making the work class today less secure, more isolated, and more as unhealthy as it was when Jimmy Carter – the “liberal” who ushered in Ronald Reagan – was president, more than 40 years ago.

The current financial “stimulus” package passed by Congress is accelerating this trend. The massive sums of free money made available to the companies and banks of the ruling rich while paci fiers are given to everyone else.

In the package passed unanimously by Democrats and Republicans individuals are scheduled to get a one-time payment of $1,200, while banks and other hands of large corporations, like those of the propertied and corporate magnates of the Federal Reserve Bank – all of this while workers payments are delayed, food banks which they have been forced to rely on, go empty, and Trump is laid, food banks which they have been able to access from 10 years of record profits. Anarchy of capitalism

An April 8, CNN poll indicates that 55% of the American people now believe the government has not done a good job at fighting the COVID-19 contagion, 52% disapproving specifically of Trump’s pandemic performance. This stems in large measure to the highly publicized plight of health care personnel on the front lines of the pandemic decrying the lack of necessary test kits, masks, gowns, hospital beds, ventilators and adequately trained personnel.

As working people throughout the economy are beginning to realize that the system is stacked against them, health care employees are learning a deadly lesson as well: that the PPE and respirators needed to save lives are just commodities to the capitalist class, produced by private enterprise whose goal is profit, not saving lives.

Living by the economic mantra of “just in time” manufacturing developed in in the 1980’s it was not profitable for these companies to make and stockpile such commodities in volume, so it simply was not done.

And the public health and safety of its citizens was nowhere near a priority for the capitalist government protecting these enterprises, so it did not order or stockpile adequate medical equipment or supplies either.

In the health industry, workers are insisting that PPE be provided to keep them safe while working with COVID-19 pa tients and demanding that hospital management and the government step up to provide these items. National Nurses United (NNU), which has 150,000 members and represents nurses at HCA Healthcare, the country’s largest and wealthiest for-profit hospital conglomerate, held picket lines and speak-outs in front of 15 NCA hospitals across seven states earlier this month.

Over the past decade HCA made a profit of $2 billion. Yet, a recent survey only 7% of nurses at the health care chain say they have enough PPE to protect staff and patients during these times. Sixty-five percent of those polled said they did not have access to N95 respirators, perhaps the most significant items needed when treating COVID-19 patients. “For the wealthiest hospital corporation in the United States to show such disregard for the health and safety of its caregivers, is disgraceful and unconscionable,” said Jean Ross, President of National Nurses to fathom that nurses who have been exposed to patients with the virus are not tested for the virus, are being told to re- use protective gear, and are assigned care to COVID-19 patients without proper protections… I find it blatantly irresponsible and a dangerous practice. We see what is happening in other areas of the nation when doctors and nurses contract the disease and are unable to care for pa tients.” Similar comments were echoed by Stacy Chamberlain, International Vice President of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers in Portland, Oregon.

Objections to working under dangerous COVID-19 conditions is now evident from health and pharmacy workers, grocery workers, postal workers, transit workers, home aides, truck drivers, sanitarians, and farm workers – while offering absolutely essential services to the economy. Increasingly the nation is becoming a virtual war zone. It’s nurses and doctors and EMTs skirmishing with the established health response system, particularly the Trump failures to test lack of protection gear and the inability of workers to engage in social distancing on the job.

The lack of workplace safety measures to fend off the coronavirus have accelerated union organizing campaigns in a number of companies, including Trader Joe’s. In other cases, such as at the GE aviation division, workers have demanded that GE bring back laid off workers to make ventilators to fight the pandemic.

Clearly, not only is there growing awareness of the threat that COVID-19 poses to the working class, there is also a new militancy developing to protest and to demand action to stop bosses from COVID-19. As of April 22, the U.S. is approaching a million infected with the virus over 55,000 dead. The conquests of spreading to new hot-spot death zones in Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans and to countless other places in between. Health care workers, too, are taking their demands public in labor actions coast to coast.

Layoffs skyrocket, virus deaths soar, opposition grows

Safety issues have been the spark, and the lack of necessary test kits, masks and hospital after their management limited their access to personal protective equipment, including N95 masks.

This is a story about the fight for our lives,” said one nurse needing the mask. And at Chicago's Cook County Hospital health care workers at Chicago’s Cook County Hospital are staging mini sit downs, telling management to “come find me in the break room when you have an answer,” according to a report from Labor Notes.

At Detroit Medical Center, Sinai-Grace hospital and representatives nurses there told by management to leave the hospital after the group protested working conditions that jeopardized their health as well as their patients. Jamie Brown, President of the Michigan Nurses Association, responded in support of the workers saying they have “a tipping point… the best thing any RN can do for their patients, their families, and their coworkers is to speak out rather than remain silent.”

Edward Smith, Executive Director of the District of Columbia Nurses Association slammed hospitals there. “It is hard minorities against their employers and the capitalist system, demanding change and to demand action to stop bosses from COVID-19. As of April 22, the U.S. is approaching a million infected with the virus over 55,000 dead. The conquests of spreading to new hot-spot death zones in Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans and to countless other places in between. Health care workers, too, are taking their demands public in labor actions coast to coast.
Defend the indigenous peoples, afro-descendants and peoples’ organizations of Latin America

A CALL BY THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ABOLITION OF ILLEGITIMATE DEBT (CADTM) OF LATINOAMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

(List of endorsers and signatories on Socialist Action website)

The crisis that the COVID-19 has provoked globally presents a crossroads to the peoples of Abya Yala - Latin America. The popular organizations are the first line of resistance against the worst expressions of the decomposing system.

We are going through a complete crisis that threatens life in all its forms. The COVID-19 has become a pandemic at a time when the capitalist crisis is intensifying and the economic clamp is repeatedly trying to make the working class bear the onus of recomposing the corporate profit rate. This coincides with the weakening of the health systems, the deterioration of living conditions and the destruction of the public sector as a result of the neoliberal shift.

In an America where we refuse to accept structural adjustments and the imposition of new neoliberal policies, and where our peoples have first hand experiences of important popular uprisings in recent months, the pandemic has become a pretext to legitimize the presence of the armed forces on our territories and to implement adjustment measures and the deterioration of the living conditions of the working class. Likewise, this crisis has once again revealed the brutality of state violence against women and sexual dissidents, as well as the historical exclusion of indigenous peoples and people of African descent, who are forced to face the pandemic in conditions of extreme vulnerability.

In the best tradition of our people, we are the organization of the popular workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, feminists, Afro-descendants, and neighbours, who are putting their bodies, heads and hearts to the service of our responses, but also to project a way out of the scenario with very serious consequences.

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In this context, our alternative is life against those who offer us death.

Our alternative is...
was responsible for denying the loan.

Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro rejects drug-trafficking charges at March 30 press conference in Caracas.

In addition, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration document of December 2019 does not even mention Venezuela. It says 90% of cocaine comes from Colombia and 6% from Peru.

BY ANN MONTAGUE

As the news outlets are covering developments in the spread of the coronavirus 24/7 and there are daily press conferences with President Trump and the coronavirus Task Force, the State Department and the U.S. military are taking in Henry Kissinger's advice: "Never let a serious crisis go to waste.

While the novel coronavirus spreads throughout the world, killing over 200,000, the U.S. continues to be a terrorist state on Venezuela and its ongoing coup attempts, denying the country badly needed funds for its health system and sending U.S. Navy destroyers and Marines to the country’s coastline.

On March 19, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rejected a request for Venezuela for a $5 billion loan to help it fight the coronavirus pandemic. A spokesperson for the Washington D.C.-based IMF claimed that the reason it would not consider the request was that loans are "predicated on official government recognition by the international community" and it had "no clarity" as to who is Venezuela's rightful head of state: President Nicolas Maduro, who was democratically elected by the people of Venezuela, or Juan Guaidó, the U.S.-backed political shaman who continues a right-wing coup attempt who declared himself president in January.

Guaidó is the current figurehead of a years-long effort by the U.S. to overthrow the Maduro government, during which the U.S. has piled up endless sanctions, cost the country its economy, funded an economic war against the country, nearly wiping out Venezuelan oil production and export, and sent U.S. Marines to Venezuelan bank accounts around the world and turning the money over to Guaidó. Venezuela requested the loan from the IMF from a special fund designated to support countries' response to crises. The money would strengthen the capacities of the banking system in Venezuela. Maduro expressed to the IMF that he believed that working with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, the IMF, and other multilateral institutions would help restore Venezuela’s economy and encourage solidarity from other nations and social discipline they could defeat the virus.

This was the first IMF loan request from Venezuela in four years. Venezuela has also received medical aid from Cuba, which has sent a delegation of 137 doctors to the country to treat patients with Covid-19.

Days after the IMF rejected Venezuela’s request for funds, European Union stated that it was in favor of the request, making it clear that the U.S., which holds veto power over IMF decision-making, was forced to drop its no.

Following the IMF’s refusal of the loan to Venezuela, Juan Guaidó announced an offer of $1.2 billion in loans from inter-national financial institutions to fight the virus, only if the government agreed to enter an "emergency unity government" with Guaidó and his coup-makers, which would not include Maduro or any of the other 14 Venezuelan officials recently named in ridiculous drug trafficking charges fabricated by the U.S. Justice Department.

Cuba send massive medical aid

On April 22, Reinald Garcia, the Director of the Cuban medical mission in Venezuela announced, "Cuba has 23,600 health collaborators in Venezuela. Twelve thousand are researching possible cases in all Venezuelan communities. They have completed 350,000 rapid tests to detect the virus including house to house visits with the social isolation measures. Cuban doctors are also working in Comprehensive Diagnostic Centers assisting patients with other pathologies."

In the meantime, the day after Barack Obama broadcast his famous words: "It is possible. It is real. It is not utopian. It is not empty of social values. It is a system that dooms millions to live very different from the privileged few who are enshrouded in Shaker Heights, an enclave of the pale one percent with its stately brick mansions, four-car garages, century-old trees, manicured acres — all nestled midst the poverty of working class Cleveland.

BY DON HARMON

Why are so many working people in jail and always a disproportionate number of these imprisoned minorities? Here is the feedback narrative: America is a racist, classist nation, founded on the principle that billionaire and multimillionaire White men are creating wealth, and therefore should have equal opportunities to make super-profits from an exploited workforce of lesser humans, namely working people.

The capitalist class believes that this unexceptional nation, founded on the time-honored tradition of slavery and genocide, continues to oppress African American, Latino and Native American people as it sees fit.

A study by the Department of Justice released in February 2019, estimated that 34 million people are living in poverty.

The great majority of these millions to live very different from the privileged few who are enshrouded in Shaker Heights, an enclave of the pale one percent with its stately brick mansions, four-car garages, century-old trees, manicured acres — all nestled midst the poverty of working class Cleveland.

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But the treatment of COVID-19 prisoners is another matter.

Here’s a sampling of other Ohio prisons. At Pickaway County, as of late April, over 75% — or 1645 inmates — are COVID-19 positive. At Franklin Medical Center, as of late April over 3500 inmates have tested positive even more, 110 of 111 have tested positive. A report by Time magazine says, “Inmates sitting in soilied diapers or beds for hours. Feces in the showers. Urine caked on beds. These are just some of the conditions reported by inmates at the Franklin Medical Center, Columbus – conditions that were prob- lems well before coronavirus hit the facility.”

Belmont Correctional in St. Clairsville, Ohio has 30 inmates who have tested positive. A medical complaint by Derek Lichtenwalter asking for early release cited “COVID-19 quarantine due to COVID-19, says “Bed areas are so crowded that I am within three feet of at least twelve people and those twelve are in the same position. This means that there are 126 people in my ‘dorm’ that are within 3-4 feet of each other. The common areas are overcrowded and what this means is once it gets to the prison it will be spread quickly through the population.”

Cook County jail in Chicago now has over 800 cases of COVID-19 and 7 people have died. Inmates have been released. Without exception, of course and again, a disproportionate number are from the nation’s most oppressed nationalities.

These infection numbers will inevitably rise. More people will die. Is this the kind of nation we want to live in? Hell no.

ACLJ Study

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has recently published a study with a stark finding: the COVID-19 model finds “nearly 100,000 more deaths than current estimates, due to failures to reduce jail populations.”

(continued on page 7)
Tisan predecessors have been fully practiced under profit-first capitalism. The abject failures of scientific research isolated disease-carrying species – and U.S. first in the world in the number of change, his pursuit of a new generation nial of fossil fuel-induced climate humanity’s future now include his de - three unfolding cataclysmic threats to

Injecting bleach or highly concentrated health professionals sounded the alarm. Across the country on Friday, to ponder his suggestion that the U.S. had exited a National Security Council meeting, leaving those who remained had participated in a healthy state, unless the skyrocketing

Trump's Lysoyl or bleach cure A disclaimer here is partially in order. It was Trump's fired former Secretary of State and previously ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson who first privately attached the "f***"-moron" label to the president. He did so after Trump had exited a New York corporate Council meeting, leaving those who remained to ponder his suggestion that the U.S. increase its tactical nuclear arsenal 100-fold?

Trump’s reactionary views on the three unfolding cataclysmic threats to humanity's future now include his de - nial of fossil fuel-induced climate change, his pursuit of a new generation of nuclear weapon, and now his COVID-19 pandemic policies that placed the U.S. first in the world in the number of people afflicted and the number of those who have died.

Needless to say, Trump and his bi-par -
tisan predecessors have been fully aware that the origins of COVID-19 and similar viruses like MERS and H1N1 lie in the corporate plundering of the world's ecosystems – ever bringing hu-

manos in dinner contact with previously isolated disease-carrying species – and the abs -
ent failure of scientific research practiced under profit-first capitalism.

The statement with which the moron Trump – no quotation marks this time – ended the meeting and others and was April 23 during the president’s daily two-hour press confer -
cence for the press, suggested an "inject -

The F.D.A. added that "The drugs should be used only in clinical trials or hospitals where patients can be closely monitored for health problems." There is no evidence that the drugs are in any way effective at treating COVID-19.

Trump's medical idiosyncrasies were soon after covered up by his obedient media team; in the case of injecting deadly chemicals into one’s body they asserted that Trump was merely being sarcastic to the "fake media." The video of the media conference refutes this assertion. Mean -

While, in Chicago, tragic reports of people dying from ingesting such poisons have been broadcast on National Public Radio channels.

The real state of the U.S. economy The COVID-19 pandemic has brutally revealed that the U.S. economy was never in a healthy state, unless the stock manipulating casino stock market and related specu -

The 3.5 percent unemployment rate is closer to the worst years of the Great Depression, where half the workforce was either totally unemployed or working part-time jobs at less than pov -

Workers’ living on the edge “The coronavirus pandemic has shown how close to the edge many Americans were living, with pay and benefits eroding. Trump's medical idiocies were soon

Another provision in the new legisla -

The 3.5 percent unemployment rate is closer to the worst years of the Great Depression, where half the workforce was either totally unemployed or working part-time jobs at less than pov -

Casino capitalism indeed! A system 

In Washington State, officials urged people to consume laundry detergent caps. Across the country on Friday, health professionals sounded the alarm. Injecting bleach or highly concentrated rubbing alcohol ‘causes massive organ damage and the blood cells in the body to basically burst,’ said the medical director of the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System, Dr. Diane P. Ca -

The COVID-19 pandemic has bruta -

The 3.5 percent unemployment rate is closer to the worst years of the Great Depression, where half the workforce was either totally unemployed or working part-time jobs at less than pov -

Preatory capitalism unmasked Most instructive about all of the above is that its source is the nation’s “news-

6 SOCIALIST ACTION MAY 2020
...Prisoners (continued from page 5)

Their conclusion: “As society at large adopts better social distancing measures in places other than jails, jails mass-
ingly become a primary vector for infection. The takeaway is clear: social distancing measures can only be effective if we extend them to jails as well.”

The liberal ACLU focuses on jails because 64% of this population are pre-trial detainees, thus presumed innocent and not convicted of a crime. The study says, “Hundreds of thousands of people wait in jail, in some cases for months, while their cases are there because they cannot afford to post bail. The average time an individual spends in jail is 25 days.”

The ACLU study says: “As a result of the constant movement between jails and the broader community, our jails will act as accelerators of the pandemic in our communities. They will become veritable volcanoes for the spread of the virus.”

This follows two ways. The first they call “Chum of the jail population,” meaning that “individuals are arrested, sent to jail, potentially exposed to COVID-19, released on their own recognizance, post bail, or are adjudicated not guilty and are subsequently released.” Upon release, the virus will spread through their families and communities unless the individual is quarantined.”

The second is that “jail staff come to work each day and are exposed to COVID-19, then return home and infect their families and communities. This applies to jails, prisons, and detention centers. There are 420,000 people who work in jails and prisons in the U.S.”

Why does the ACLU limit its study to the jail population and the staff who attend them? Because two-thirds of this population have not been found guilty of any crime. The ACLU properly asks why their pre-trial lives should be risked by the obvious lack of social distancing? Shouldn’t they be released on parole, or not even charged? Shouldn’t they not contract the virus? But let’s take this issue one step further.

Rehabilitation, not punishment

What about the convicted felons who languish in America’s prisons, not to mention the over 80 percent of the prison population who are there for non-violent crimes? Should they be released? Or should they be condemned to their fate by allowing the virus to do its deadly work? Keeping them locked up is a forced experiment in “herd immunity,” the barbaric notion that some right-wingers call “culling the herd.” Aren’t we better than that?

Is our present-day mass incarceration punishment punishment working? Does it lead those who receive such treatment to become better citizens? Never! The evidence is clear. In the racist, classist society that exists today, a society without hope for tens of millions who live in poverty and despair, over 25% of today’s re- leased felons re-offend.

Consider this fact: The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. With only 4 percent of the world’s population but 21 percent of the world’s incarcerated, the U.S. locks up over 2 million people—more than every African American, Latino and Native American. Over 4.5 million more are on parole or probation, under the jurisdic-
tion of this injustice system.

As Michelle Alexander wrote in her book The New Jim Crow: “Once you’re labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimina-
tion—employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational oppor-
tunities, exorbitant fines and fees, loss of public benefits, and exclusion from jury service — are suddenly legal.”

This entire rotten racist and classist sys-

tem is not only not effective, but it is not even good therapy. The mobilizations point the way to storming the heavens and bringing a new and vi-

rant society into being. Join us!
By Joe Lombardo

Julian Assange’s struggle for free speech and press freedom has inspired the anticapitalist and antifascist movements around the world. In very short order we will have no reason to hold on to this claim because the Trump Administration has dug deep, and our antiwar conference will be an altar to the lives of the two children and two Iraqi civilians, including a board member of the LA area ACLU. Lafferty is the Executive Director Emeritus of the Los Angeles National Lawyers Guild and a board member of the LA area ACLU. Lafferty is the Executive Director Emeritus of the Los Angeles National Lawyers Guild and a board member of the LA area ACLU.

The right to the truth about U.S. wars

We reprint below two speeches from the webinar entitled “The Prosecution of Julian Assange: A Test for Free Speech.” Joe Lombardo is the National Co-Coordinator of the United Nations Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) and Jim Lafferty is the Executive Director Emeritus of the Los Angeles National Lawyers Guild and a board member of the LA area ACLU.

Assange is now facing 175 years in a U.S. prison if he is extradited back to the United States.

We must defend Julian Assange ...

On April 19, 2020, the United States charged Julian Assange with violating the Espionage Act, passed during World War I, for use of the United States under the old Espionage and Libel Act, passed during World War I, for use of WikiLeaks, Assange, Chelsea Manning and Manning did. They provided a necessity for the service of the people of the world. They told the truth. By classifying this video we were all de-nied our right to know what the U.S. did and continues to do around the world. The U.S. military, which today operates in 172 countries, has 20 times the number of foreign military bases than all other nations in the world combined. To the warmongers, the truth is a crime and a board member of the LA area ACLU.

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COVID-19 and ‘Shock Doctrine’

Said Richard Baker, a Republican Congressman from New Orleans, “We finally cleaned-up public housing in New Orleans. We couldn’t do it, but God did.”

The spread of Friedman’s capitalist fundamentalism was not at all confined to the U.S. In the early 90’s, following the ouster of the corrupt Stalinist regime, the U.S. government orchestrated, with the help of the “free-market” fundamentalism and the imperialist International Monetary Fund, a privatization drive that turned public economic institutions into private, often U.S. held, corporations. The “shock” of transition threw millions into poverty, bought off its labor leaders and hijacked the Polish economy.

South Africa’s epic transition from official apartheid in 1994 was a post-racial neo-colonial, neo-liberal society subservient to the U.S. dominated World Bank. That relationship was solidified by neo-liberal deals cut with imperialism by the Nelson Mandela leadership and the ANC. The double irony was the centrality of the South African Communist Party of which Mandela was a member. Today, the Black majority is in some ways worse off economically than it was under apartheid, where a white elite still ruled. South Africa’s Black President, Cyril Ramaphosa, is also a member of Mandela’s African National Congress (ANC) and is personally worth $4 billion. Black revolution, Black nationalism, was justifiably complain of an “economic apartheid.”

On the April 15 “Democracy Now” TV program, Klein urged the movements for change to seize the moment, “If there is one thing history teaches us it’s that moment when shock are profoundly volatile, we either lose a whole lot of ground, get fleeced by elites and pay the price for decades to come. We’ve witnessed victories that seemed impossible just a few weeks earlier. This is no time to lose our nerve. The future will be determined by what we do in the weeks and months to come. For the ideas they have to be around.”

Unfortunately, Naomi Klein endorsed last year’s US presidential candidates and is apparently willing to vote for Joe Biden as a “lesser evil.” Despite her ostensibly radical analysis and calls for moralGoodman

There are thousands of these workers, many who were able to survive a deep crisis such as this, the playing field changes. The system recovers via a vi villager workers and boss against another boss through the elimination of the weakest. Naomi Klein’s “The Shock Doctrine,” (Picador, 2007) is an eye opening and extraordinarily revealing thirteen years after its first publication. Klein’s central thesis was expressed simply by Rohm Emanuel, the one-time Chief of Staff to the Obama ad- ministration and former neo-liberal Chica- go Mayor, who once said, “Never let a crisis go to waste.” Its meaning, as Klein explains, is corporate leaders know from history the strategic necessity for, “using moments of collective trauma to engage in radical social and economic engineering.” Social “Trauma” can be defined as either ‘human made,’ i.e., a war (Iraq), the economic “shock” of the Manhattan Explosion, or the 9/11 or natural “phe- nomena like a hurricane, a Tsunami, or a pandemic. No matter the calamity, says Klein, cat- astrophes are fresh meat for capitalists. As Trump and both political parties showed, bailing out big corporations with over $500 billion in aid, virtually without oversight, 2020’s Covid-19 pandemic confirms Klein’s “Shock Doctrine” the- sis, but she also adds that it also can be an amazing opportunity for ordinary working people to force changes. In an April 6 interview with “The Inter- cept,” Klein attacked the stark inequal- ities of capitalism that COVID-19 revealed especially for the African American community.

It is more lethal for people whose im- mune systems are already weakened. Af- rican Americans and other communities of color have more stressful mune systems are already weakened. Af- American community.

The DR’s military, cops and civilian rac- cist goons viewed by Freidman’s school of eco- nomics as an outmoded relic of 1930’s liberal capitalism. The mood Friedman tapped into was a combination of capitalism in crisis as profit margins were being squeezed by inter- national competition and declining rates of profit. Capitalists shed all remaining moral hesitations and remnants of 1960’s altruism in the rally to bolster the “bot- tom line.” Naked capitalist greed was al- ways king, but its psychopathic, me first mantra was updated to give it an unde- served ideological graveness” by Fried- man & Co.

Klein’s book details how Friedman’s philosophy re-configured U.S. economic policy beginning with Ronald Reagan, George Bush I and II and with some modification, essentially became the reigning ideology of the Clinton admin- istration and, subsequent to her book’s publication, the Obama years too.

How low can you go?

Klein used these amongst many exam- ples of the “Shock Doctrine” in recent history.

• The 9-11 attack saw the creation of Homeland Security and the Patriot Act’s surveil- lance state, both bi-partisan meas- ures. In 2006, Bush II signed the De- fense Authorization Act, granting the president the ability to impose powers of martial law. With the repressive legisla- tion in place came torture and indefinite detention and all the horrors of Guanta- namo, much of which was performed by private contractors. With the repression also came the increased terror, harass- ment and deportation of immigrant workers (ICE), which meant increased profits for agribusiness and the service industry.

The Shock Doctrine —or to use Bush II’s Iraq battle-cry “shock and awe”— has been in full view in New Orleans in 2005, a city ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. En- couraged by a Democratic Mayor, real estate vultures descended upon Louisiana’s African American neighbor- hoods intent on “ethnic cleansing” via the gentrification of a city trau- mated by over 1,500 deaths and the crass racism of Bush II.

But, Klein’s first choice, Bernie Sanders, is leading his many followers back to the “radical Liberal Party” and “Shock Doctrine” politics. Trump, Biden and Sanders are represen- tatives of a capitalist system that writes the script for all of these players. Too bad for “pragmatic” socialists out there taking the bait, including Naomi Klein.

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By Barry Weisleder

World War 1 spawned the Russian Revolution, the Winnipeg General Strike, and sparked union recognition. Following World War 2, out of the debris of fascism and holocaust, the welfare state emerged. What will be the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic? Qualitatively enhanced social responsibility, or regression to capitalist austerity?

Some facts define the dawn of a new era. The current plague, the fourth in two decades, won’t be the last. It has plunged the world into a Great Depression. Stock markets tanked. Unemployment skyrocketed. As of April 18, six million Canadians have applied for emergency federal aid. It’s unprecedented.

The reflex of the vast majority of people is to turn to private insurance. Giant corporations? Big banks? The Business Council of Canada? No. People expect the government to act, to cushion the blow, to immense so that lives may be saved.

Reform-minded journalists, like Erica Hill and Louis St. Heron writing in The Hill Times, separately intoned: “Market fundamentalism is dead. We are all socialists.” It is a gross exaggeration, to be sure. So then, why does it resonate with millions?

Because capitalism is revealed as a feckless system that both exploits and represses nations and Indigenous peoples. Nearly half of Canada’s COVID-19 deaths occurred in nursing homes, where aged and vulnerable residents live and eat in close proximity to each other, and where staff have been carriers or become infected.

At one care center in Dorval, Quebec, provincial health officials forcibly entered to discover many seniors utterly abandoned, dehydrated, and laying in a fetal position on their own urine and feces. Quebec and Ontario requested the Cana-
dian Armed Forces to send medical personnel, in an effort to save imperilled folks from dying.

In late April, the Ontario Nurses’ Association won a temporary injunction at the Ontario Superior Court. It gives nurses the power to decide which personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed when working in long-term care homes with COVID-19, and the power to enforce infection control measures, such as keeping residents with COVID separate from those not infected, in places like Eatonville Care Centre in Etobicoke where dozens of seniors have died.

But questions persist. Why is the long-term care sector so deregulated? Why was inspection of facilities so radically reduced in recent years? Was the top priority profit maximization? Is that why most personal care workers are paid low wages, limited to part-time hours, without benefits, with insufficient protective gear, forcing many to labour in multiple settings, even at the risk of spreading disease?

Could this infernal arrangement be the result of political lobbying by the major shareholders of Katara Groupe Devel-
owners, which owns Masson Heron in Dor-
val, or Revera Inc., Extendicare, Central Health Corp., Sienna Senior Living, and Vigil Health Solutions, just to name a few of the largest players in the field? Moreover, why is the health sector any long-term care service in the hands of private, for-profit operators? The sick and the aged no longer produce surplus value. Does that make them expendable?

The demand for nationalization here is obvious. It coincides with the demand for public ownership of major enterprises, including the pharmaceutical industry, Big Oil and Gas, giant banks, and the tele-

ephone industry.

Urgently needed is democratic control of the land development and construction firms (to enable the creation of social housing on a mass scale), monopoly retail chains (for re-distribution of their super-

profits), and agri-business (to prioritize healthy food and ecological farming methods). Sharing the trillions in wealth that major banks have earned is an irreversible step towards planned produc-
tion to meet human needs, not private profit. Turn government subsidized research for a COVID-19 vaccine over to a publicly-owned pharmaceutical industry.

Demand permanent Basic Income for all, regardless of age or ability.

Homeless people are being allocated rooms in empty hotels. Free childcare is provided to frontline health workers in need. Why not just? Good quality hous-
ing, food, childcare, education and transit – we now know that these are rights and not privileges. Make them enhanced, made permanent. It’s time to organize in work places, unions, New Democratic Party (NDP) associations, so-
cialist movements and local communities to demand rapid progress, to insist on revolutionary change.

The prime directive is simple: We Won’t Go Back!


The working class lost two sincere, dedicated, social justice seekers in early April. Shirley Douglas, a leading public health care advocate, actor, and daughter of former New Democratic Party leader Mel Watkins, passed away at age 86. Mel Watkins, who co-authored the Waffle Manifesto in 1969 and led the left opposition in the history of the New Democratic Party (NDP), died on April 2 in his 87th year.

Both Douglas and Watkins belonged to a generation of left-wing social demo-
crats who eschewed the proclivity of NDP and Labour leaders to follow opinion polls rather than fight for socialist principles.

I knew Mel Watkins personally, and had the pleasure of engaging with his powerful intellect and enjoying his witty humour when we both served on the leading bodies of the Waffle Movement. Thus, his departure is more poignant for me. Like his friend and Waffle co-leader James Laxer, whose untimely death in February 2018 is still felt, Mel was a mensch, a person of integrity and hon-
our. He campaigned selflessly for ideas, not ego. He showed the power of a po-

litical orientation to the working class and its labour-based party. Mel demonstra-
ted how a battle for public owner-

ship and industrial democracy inside the NDP could earn the attention and solidarity of hundreds of thousands. That is precisely why Stephen Lewis and the top brass threatened the Waffle with expulsion.

Sadly, nationalism overshadowed Mel Watkins’ socialism. Canada is an impe-

rative state and economy. It plundered

resources and peoples of less developed countries, not to mention its internal op-

pressed nations and Indigenous peoples. Thus, Canadian nationalism is reaction-

ary. It is far from being allied to the cause of anti-imperialism in the way that revolutionary nationalism was a moral force of working class and Indigenous liberation struggles in places like Cuba, Vietnam and Palestine.

Watkins, in the April 3 Rabble News, Karl Nerenberg observes that “The Waf-

te didn’t last.” But he doesn’t offer an explanation. It wasn’t just the Waffle’s misplaced Canadian nationalism, which increasingly came to the fore after Wat-
kins and Laxer set up the short-lived Movement for an Authentic Socialist Canada (MSC). It was the fact that the Waffle didn’t complete the struggle for socialist policies, for example, the Free Riders Agenda, inside the comparatively large NDP membership. The MSC cut the cord to the most politically aware
bour leaves no mar
under the capitalist system of wage la -

Nearly 60 per cent have no savings.

Twitter storms.

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The proof of the pudding was in the

the plague swings its deadly scythe

Canada are strangely quiet, waiting for

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lier, leaving patients, mostly older folks

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counterclockwise delivered on 8 March – a bombshell announcement that the King- dom was also no longer committed to the negotiated production cuts, and thus would seek to increase its oil supply to 12.3 million barrels/day in April (up from 9.7 million barrels/day in March) and then further boost its production capacity to 13 million barrels/day as soon as possible.

With the prospect of an additional several million barrels of daily supply about to hit world oil markets, the price of the key international benchmark for oil, Brent Crude, dropped more than 30 percent in the space of 48 hours. Global stock markets also plunged, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average falling a record 2000 points on 9 March, the largest ever intra-day loss. Regardless of the immediate conjunctural factors, the longer-term strategic motive behind the Russian and Saudi decision is clear. For several years, both countries had seen U.S. oil producers, unhindered by any production limits, continue to gain market share at their expense. By threatening to flood the world with more oil (and here, Saudi Arabia’s actions were all the more significant because they came on the heels of claims that many thought were exaggerated so as to buy time to bring their oil to where it could be stored safely away. Analysts have estimated that around three-quarters of the world’s storage capacity is already utilized, and that limits will be reached by the end of May.

By mid-March, leading pipeline companies in the U.S. were warning that oil producers might attempt to use their infrastructure to store oil rather than transfer it somewhere else, and thus began insisting on a bill of final receipt before they would accept any new oil. And because it is expensive to shut down or temporarily halt oil wells (and leaves sometimes contain clauses that require continuous production), oil companies may prefer to give away their product rather than halt work, indeed, in mid-March, traders were bidding for Wyoming Asphalt Sour (used mostly to produce bitumens) at negative 19 cents per barrel, effectively asking producers to pay them in return for taking the oil off their hands.

All of these presents enormous pressures across the entire oil value chain, from crude oil producers (companies and countries) through to refining and the petrochemical industry. Firm bankruptcies and the shutting down of oil wells are almost certain in the immediate weeks, and will likely be concentrated among those producers who rely upon relatively high oil prices, e.g. U.S. and Canadian companies that are active in oil sands and shale production. Indeed, this prognosis was confirmed in the Dallas Federal Reserve March 2020 Monthly Survey on Oil and Gas, where industry respondents commented that the prospect of “the domestic oil and gas industry has never been bleaker” – this is “a perfect storm of disaster” and “the single worst reset in energy prices in [a] lifetime.”

The net result will undoubtedly be a sharp increase in bankruptcies among such U.S. energy companies over 2020 and 2021. Indeed, the first of these casualties occurred on April 1 with the filing for Chapter 11 by Whiting Petroleum, the largest independent oil company in North Dakota (the second-biggest U.S. oil producing state). Whiting is almost certainly the first in a coming wave of energy company bankruptcies, indeed, Rystad Energy estimated on April 3 that if oil

Nigeria, for example, may depend on oil for a large proportion of government revenues – but more than half of these revenues are spent simply on servicing existing foreign debt.

sea unfold over the next 12-18 months. Goldman Sachs, for example, noted recently that while the current crisis will undoubtedly “be a game changer for the industry,” the probable outcome is that “Big Oil” – Exxon, Shell, BP and a handful of others – are much better positioned to survive this crisis than other smaller producers. They tend to be vertically integrated and when they are active across the entire energy value chain, including refining, and thus will have some of their losses in production offset by the injection of fuel inputs for their downstream operations. This scenario is precisely the one that leading financial firms are expecting to

continue to sit around $20/barrel then more than 500 firms would be pushed into Chapter 11 over 2020-21, the largest number of such filings in modern history.

Winners, Losers – and the Climate

It is certain that all parts of the fossil fuel industry will face a severe crisis over the remainder of this year and into 2021 – but what might this mean for our ecological future? Unfortunately – unless fossil capital is effectively rechannelled now – a likely scenario is that a significant wave of bankruptcies in the energy sector will further accelerate the rate of centralization of control by the largest oil majors. “Big Oil” – Exxon, Shell, BP and a handful of others – are much better positioned to survive this crisis than other smaller producers.

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trivial facilities – essentially allowing these polluters to ‘self-monitor’ their own pollution. According to a recent report in the New York Times, this new policy has been rolled out by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of addressing the COVID-19 crisis, but tellingly, it was also one of the first actions taken by the American Petroleum Institute in a letter sent by these Big Oil lobbyists to the Trump administration on March 20. It is not just the fossil fuel industry that is attempting to use this crisis to roll-back environmental regulations, large banks and financial firms similarly push for relaxation on climate change reporting requirements and a delay to climate change plans.

While oil prices are today at historically low levels, they will not remain there over the longer term. There is a strong possibility of a sharp rebound in prices as we emerge from this crisis – an outcome that will incentivize a renewed wave of investment and expansion in fossil fuels globally (much as happened through the recent history of U.S. shale production). Power of monopoly

The poorer oil exporters will face much more serious problems as a result of the current plunge in oil prices. These include Ecuador, Venezuela, and Iran – the latter two being oil-dependent states for whom possible im-pos ed sanctions. States such as Nigeria – which depends upon oil for 57 percent of government revenue and over 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings – find it exceedingly difficult to meet budgetary demands, a problem that will have deadly consequences in the midst of the current pandemic.

Similarly, for Iraq, where oil exports make up 90 percent of government revenue, a large proportion of the popula tion depends upon the public sector for wages or pensions, it is difficult to see how this unexpected shock will be addressed. The problems these countries face, however, should not be blamed on the oil prices; instead, long standing legacies of colonialism, the destruction wrought by Western-led wars and occupation, and the relations of debt and dependency that bind these countries to the centers of the global economy need to be placed upfront in tackling this pandemic.

Nigeria, for example, may depend on oil for a large proportion of government revenues – but more than half of these revenues are spent simply on servicing existing foreign debt. It is unlikely that such a deal would have any sustained effect on the price of oil given the vast destruction of demand that has occurred in recent years. Some observers have noted the irony of those seeking to eliminate the debt previously called for the dismantling of OPEC because of its ‘cartel’-like behav ior. OPEC is now likely to see an increase in pollution with Saudi Arabia and Russia over prices. There is certainly no doubt that the myopic reinforcing crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic downturn are indeed provoking a whole range of responses: increased environmental protests, strange bedfellows, and new openings for political change.

But this moment is also one where previ ously existing arrangements may be re worked and consolidated in the interests of the most powerful. We face the very real prospect of a fossil fuel industry already weakened by the current plunge in oil prices, with more serious problems as a result of the current plunge in oil prices...
Unknown history of class-struggle in the Caribbean 1919–1939

In 1926, the Third International moved from Mexico City to New York City, under the guidance of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), which had united in 1925, if not before. The CPUSA contributed to the development of the CP's in Puerto Rico period by the Communist Internationale of workers' parties, established in 1919 by Russia's revolutionary government led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

Role of Third International

In the Western hemisphere, the Third International was first headquartered in Mexico City by the Mexican Communist Party (MCP), which had united in 1925, if not before. The MCP contributed toward the unification of the Cuban communists in 1925; in Haiti in 1930 (others say 1934) and in Puerto Rico in 1935.

In 1926, the Third International moved from Mexico City to New York City, under the guidance of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), which had united in 1925, if not before. The CPUSA contributed to the development of the CP's in Puerto Rico period by the Communist Internationale of workers' parties, established in 1919 by Russia's revolutionary government led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

The English speaking islands however, Jamaica, Trinidad-Tobago, the Bahamas, St. Kitts, and St. Vincent, were shaken by powerful labor uprisings and mass protests by workers and workers' organizations. But they did not establish communist parties between WWI and WWII.

Spurred by the Communist International, the CPUSA played an outsized role in anti-racist campaigns throughout the Caribbean and the United States. The minds of several Black CP leaders, including black fighters of the Spanish Civil War, were captivated by the “anti-fascist” struggle for the defense of the USSR and the anti-fascist struggle in Spain, was the international movement to free the “Scottish Boys,” nine African Americans young men living in Alcoosa framed up on racist charges of raping two white women. Large international protests were organized in the U.S. but notably also in the mostly Black Orient Province of Cuba and Haiti.

Important also was the fight to free the Afro-Cuban, Junco Sandalio, a prominent Communist labor leader, who bore the nickname, “The Negro Champion.” Solidarity rallies were also organized by the CP in the U.S. Once freed, Sandalio was forced to flee to Mexico.

These major campaigns were supported by the influential American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC), International Labor Defense (ILD), and the All-American Anti-Imperialist League (AAAIL), all CPUSA aligned or CPUSA influenced organizations to one degree or another. Within Cuba, says Stevens, the CPUSA's Black leader, James Ford, played a prominent role in the rise of the 1926 Soviet-style Realagente 18 or Communist 18 in the mostly Black Orient Province in Cuba and in the 1933 Cuban revolution.

In Haiti, a struggle erupted to free Jacques Roumain, a founder of the Haitian Communist Party and author of the classic Haitian novel, “Masters of the Dew.” Roumain agitated for Black identity and solidarity with the Scottish boys and was arrested in 1933 in an anti-communist crackdown. After his release Roumain moved to Paris where he worked with well-known Cuban communist and poet Nicolás Guillemin, Harlem poet Langston Hughes and Spanish Civil War anti-fascist.

Haiti: Epicenter of struggle

As surprising as it may be to some, Haiti once loomed large on the U.S. Left. Of great importance was the opposition to the bloody U.S. Marine occupation of Haiti (1915-1934). Otto Huiswood, head of the CP USA's “Negro Department” told organizers, “To mobilize the party…to hold mass protest meetings and also to demonstrate against the action taken by the Hoover administration in Haiti.”

In response, on Dec. 14, the CPUSA organized an angry mass protest of an estimated 5,000 in New York's City Hall plaza against the occupation and the repression of mass strikes and protests. Among the 17 listed arrested at City Hall was CP leader James Ford. Among those brutalized by cops was Haitian CPUSA leader Henri Rosenau, knocked unconscious. Rosenau was perhaps the most prominent political leader in New York’s needle trade strike in early 1929. Utilizing his links between New York’s CP and immigrant communities, Rosenau mobilized his Haitian base within the Haitian Patriotic Union and the Anti-Imperialist League to launch a protest of some 5,000 women in Haiti in opposition to the arrest of a U.S. “Commission” to investigate “human rights violations.” The protests later grew up to 30,000.

The CPUSA's Daily Worker newspaper loudly proclaimed, “Stand by the Haitian Revolution!” In the month after the City Hall demo over 100 Haitians joined the CP branch in New York.

Of great importance for the CPUSA was the concept of a “Black belt” homefront against the hands of U.S. and British racism. Stevens argues, “fascists.” To deter revolution in the Western Hemisphere FDR announced his “Good Neighbor Policy” in 1933 to distract attention from the bitter memory of dozens of U.S. backed coups and military occupations, “legitimized” by Washington’s infamous “Monroe Doctrine” and “Platt Amendment.”

In the U.S., the CP embraced the liberal millionaire, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and his racist Democratic Party, in their own self-interest. Of note—“Black Belt”—dubbing it “anti-fascist.” To deter revolution in the Western Hemisphere FDR announced his “Good Neighbor Policy” in 1933 to distract attention from the bitter memory of dozens of U.S. backed coups and military occupations, “legitimized” by Washington’s infamous “Monroe Doctrine” and “Platt Amendment.”

Roosevelt: The ‘Good Neighbor’

As the author explains, the “Black Belt” was “back to Africa” movement of Marcus Garvey, seeking a new sens of identity, from the Caribbean, encompassing the Black American. Harlem’s “Harlem Renaissance” and the “Harlem renaissance” and the “Harlem Renaissance” were catalyzing struggles against the hands of U.S. and British racism. Anti-Imperialism was for the CP, led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

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The 50% law resulted in a chain of events that led to the horrific mass murder in 1937 of up to some 14,000 Haitians (Gallant), others say up to 30,000 Haitians.

The CPUSA and Communists across the Hemisphere were fighting very directly the leadership of the “Good Neighbors” in the White House and other ruling elites in the region.

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By Adam Hanauer

The COVID-19 crisis has led to a huge drop in the price of oil globally. In this article, Adam Hanauer looks at what this might mean for the global economy. The article has been edited for space. For the complete version, see International Viewpoint online.

The ecological dimensions of COVID-19 have become increasingly prominent in recent years, with several important contributions exploring the pandemic in relation to capitalist agribusiness, widespread loss of biodiversity, and the destruction of natural ecosystems.

There is, however, a further element to COVID-19’s "ecology" that deserves much greater attention: the ways the escalating pandemic intersects with, and is simultaneously acting to accelerate, a profound shock to the fossil fuel industry. Global oil markets are undergoing unprecedented disruption in a manner redolent of 2008. And just as energy markets mean for the future of the global financial crash, this ‘Oil War’ has pushed global oil prices to multi-decade lows, and left oil companies for 2020, analysts to forecast a record number of bankruptcies among oil companies for 2020, analysts to forecast a record number of bankruptcies among oil companies for 2020, and eventually peaked at around US$4/bbl and Russian oil around US$10/bbl. These comparisons need to be interpreted with care, as Saudi Arabia and Russia are states not companies, and they depend heavily on oil and gas revenues to meet their budgetary needs – in this sense, the ‘break even’ price of oil for these states is much higher and fluctuates according to levels of government spending. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that consistently high oil prices through most of the first two decades of the new millennium helped to attract large investments into shale field development and drove significant improvement in extraction technologies for these non-conventional supplies.

Beginning in the early 2000s, world oil prices rose steadily on the back of the increasing global demand associated with the rise of China. Prices fell back sharply in 2008 with the global economic crisis, but soon resumed their upward trajectory and eventually peaked at around $114/bbl in mid-2014. This was a financial boon for most Middle East oil exporters (and carried major consequences for the political dynamics of the wider Middle East region), but the extended period of rising prices also benefitted producers globally. Remarkably, the U.S. became the world’s largest producer in 2013 – a position it has maintained until this day, and overtook Saudi Arabia to become the world’s largest producer in 2013 – a position it has maintained until this day, and the simultaneous shutting of large swathes of global manufacturing, transport, industry, and retail – the global shutdown of oil and oil products has dropped to historic lows. Indeed, it has been estimated that the reduction in U.S. automobile use alone has led to an astonishing 5 percent fall in global oil demand – about the same as the whole of Europe, Africa and the Middle East had simultaneously stopped driving.

The International Energy Association’s Executive Director, Fatih Birol, estimated on March 25 that global oil demand could fall by about 20 million barrels per day, a prediction that has now been revised up to 30 million barrels per day. This plunge will put analysts will see that the oil market is a complex web of factors, but some oil traders are actually now expecting producers to cut back on production even further. In the West, the U.S. government has announced plans to sell 30 million barrels from its strategic petroleum reserve. Will there be a significant improvement in extraction technologies for these non-conventional supplies?

This decision was swiftly met by a Saudi oil producers and the weakening of oil majors such as Exxon Mobil, Royal Dutch Shell, and British Petroleum bringing us closer to a transition away from fossil fuel use.

Such rosy scenarios, however, tend to abstract from the realities of a catastrophic capitalism that is inexorably tied to the extraction and exploitation of fossil fuels, and which has deep embedded ‘Big Oil’ in all facets of our lives. Like all moments of sharp change, the eventual outcome of this crisis will depend on whether we take out of these multiple, intersecting crises – an oil price crash, severe economic downturn, and virus pandemic – will depend on our capacities to build effective political alternatives to Fossil Capital. We need to pay close attention to the possible winners and losers that might emerge from this current moment, and be wary of equating the temporary (albeit severe) collapse of an oil-based economy with the demise of the system itself.

In the Middle East, Russia, and U.S. Oil

Beginning in the early 2000s, world oil prices rose steadily on the back of the increasing global demand associated with the rise of China. Prices fell back sharply in 2008 with the global economic crisis, but soon resumed their upward trajectory and eventually peaked at around $114/bbl in mid-2014. This was a financial boon for most Middle East oil exporters (and carried major consequences for the political dynamics of the wider Middle East region), but the extended period of rising prices also benefitted marginal producers elsewhere in the world.

Most significantly, investments in the development of so-called ‘non-conventional’ oil and gas supplies – resources that are difficult and significantly more expensive to extract than conventional fossil fuels – were strongly incentivized during this prolonged period of high oil prices. Of particular relevance here is U.S. shale oil that is held in shale or sandstone of low permeability and which is typically extracted through fracking the rock by pressurized liquid (hence the term ‘fracking’). There are a variety of ways of calculating the ‘break even’ cost of shale production and this figure changes depending on the particular oil field and the prevailing costs of technology, labor, taxes, and so forth – but a widely quoted figure is that most U.S. shale producers require a price of $45 or more to turn a profit. By contrast, Saudi oil has a production cost of around US$4-5/bbl and Russian oil around US$10/bbl.

These comparisons need to be interpreted with care, as Saudi Arabia and Russia are states not companies, and they depend heavily on oil and gas revenues to meet their budgetary needs – in this sense, the ‘break even’ price of oil for these states is much higher and fluctuates according to levels of government spending. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that consistently high oil prices through most of the first two decades of the new millennium helped to attract large investments into shale field development and drove significant improvement in extraction technologies for these non-conventional supplies.

This, of course, was an unmitigated ecological and social disaster, which rested on the delusional and self-defeating belief that ‘we could do it any way we wanted’ and that the world was powerful enough to overcome the limitations of existing technologies.

The Middle East, Russia, and U.S. Oil

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