

COVID-19: ‘It’s the System, Stupid!’ Black Alliance for Peace

By [Black Alliance for Peace](#)

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The current disaster exists in large part because the U.S. healthcare system is the opposite of what is needed. It is fragmented, discriminatory and designed for corporate profits, not the well-being of the public. Even before the pandemic, the United States had the highest number of preventable deaths compared to other wealthy nations and a declining life expectancy.” —[Margaret Flowers](#)

While some U.S. lives may have been saved during the COVID-19 pandemic through a quicker and more coordinated action plan, the objective fact remains no plan could have been successfully implemented because a developed public healthcare infrastructure does not exist. Years of neoliberal austerity and privatization gutted public investment in healthcare for rural and urban working-class communities and led to thousands of hospital closings over the last few decades, decimating the already weak U.S. public healthcare system.

That, as well as capitalist environmental racism—where toxic industrial processing plants, waste dumps and pollutants from industrial agricultural operations produced the so-called “underlying conditions” of cancers, asthma and a whole host of upper-respiratory illnesses—translated into death sentences for many poor and working-class Africans.

Yet, the focus on Trump’s personality has shifted attention away from the structural violence of capitalist oppression and exploitation. In fact, it is not just Trump, but most of the capitalist class, pushing for a return to “normal.” That class consensus was reflected in opinion pieces and commentary in bourgeois rags ranging from the New York Times to the Wall Street Journal. While it was not openly echoed by Democratic congressional representatives, it helps to explain why the Democrats went along with the measly \$1,200 checks to workers. Those insufficient payments help to keep people desperate and ready to return to work, even if it means jeopardizing their health.

So, we must keep our focus on the system. That will ensure we are not confused by the diversionary politics of the rulers, who do not want us to notice their bipartisan collaboration to uphold corporate interests.

Press and media

The war being waged against the African/Black working class in the United States mirrors the anti-Black warfare being waged globally, thus producing [similarly devastating health outcomes](#) for Africans in Brazil.

BAP Coordinating Committee member Netfa Freeman [places into historical context](#) the U.S. state's use of direct military intervention in response to what it sees as potential threats to social order during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ajamu Baraka, BAP's National Organizer, argues the [changing class structure](#) of the African American population explains the questionable politics and policies of Black political representatives in response to the COVID-19 crisis. He gave this presentation as part of a two-day Black Is Back Coalition webinar.

Black public opinion has been whipped up against China while Black opinion makers have remained silent on the aggressive U.S. militarization of the African continent. Margaret Kimberley, [in her latest piece](#) in Black Agenda Report, uses a material, non-sentimental framework to understand how the U.S. state is using the COVID-19 issue to advance its commitment to confronting China.

If you were wondering why BAP launched the [2020 Candidate Accountability Pledge](#), BAP member Jose Monzon [explained](#) on U.S. Senate candidate Madelyn Hoffman's livestream.

Take action

[General Strike 2020](#) is calling for all workers to remain sheltered in place (in accordance with current medical guidance), encouraging participation in nationwide strikes (including rent strikes, debt strikes and labor strikes) on May 1, and asks workers to hang white sheets or towels outside of their homes as a sign of solidarity.

Sign the U.S. Peace Council's [Open Letter to the Government of the United States and the United Nations](#), demanding all U.S. and U.N. sanctions against the targeted nations be lifted, and all U.S. military threats and actions against them cease immediately.

No Compromise, No Retreat!

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