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THE TRUMP CORONAVIRUS PLAN: CORPORATE PROFITS FIRST, LIVES LAST



PHOTO: KEVIN DIETSCH

The conduct of the U.S. government since the beginning of the global coronavirus pandemic has been nothing short of criminal. The Trump administration had plenty of advance warning that the virus was making its way to the United States before the first U.S. death was recorded on Feb. 29, and yet absolutely no national plan of any kind was formulated ahead of time.

Testing for coronavirus infection was virtually non-existent, and no serious efforts were made to compel the mass production of these tests. Millions of workers continued to go to their jobs while they were sick because they could not afford to lose a paycheck. No considerations were made for those who were facing homelessness, incarceration in the prison system or detention in ICE facilities.

On March 11, Trump appeared on national TV to speak about emergency measures. Up to that point he had downplayed the seriousness of the virus, claiming it was similar to the flu. The flu mortality average is 0.1 percent, while the coronavirus mortality rate is as high as 3 percent in many places.

No hesitation to bail out Wall Street

The pandemic triggered a stock market crash and raised fears of a long-lasting recession based on the already-existing

weaknesses in the economy. Financial institutions went into a state of panic. But for the big banks, relief was massive and swiftly delivered.

Shortly after the pandemic reached the United States, the Trump administration along with Democrats and Republicans alike in Congress started preparing to bail out big corporations. While some plans included more concessions to workers who are bearing the brunt of the crisis, such as (limited) paid sick leave and the expansion of food stamps, there is a clear ruling-class consensus that hundreds of billions of dollars should be injected into the coffers of big business with virtually no strings attached.

On March 12, the Federal Reserve announced a \$1.5 trillion bailout program in the form of short-term loans. An additional \$700 billion of aid in guaranteed asset purchases was announced on March 15. Interest rates were slashed to zero to facilitate free money flowing into the coffers of the Wall Street financial institutions.

When it comes to social programs like Medicare for all, wiping out student debt or combating climate change by transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy, the media and establishment politicians scoff and say it is impossible to pay for. But the ruling class had no problem finding trillions of dollars for the big banks and corporations as soon as assistance was needed.

Fight the virus, not the people!

While the Chinese people and their government battled the virus with remarkable success, a U.S.-led disinformation campaign fostered anti-Chinese racism. Stories proliferate the print and electronic media of racist signs and verbal abuse of Chinese people and other Asian people perceived as Chinese.

In California high school students assaulted a classmate, accusing him of being infected. College students have tweeted racist messages about dropping classes that have Asian students enrolled. In Los Angeles, a flyer with a World Health Organization logo was posted in an area neighborhood telling people to avoid Asian American establishments to avoid being exposed to coronavirus.

Blaming a particular group of people for a medical crisis is not a new phenomenon in the United States. The history of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a historically recent example of how the government and societal institutions were quick to first blame Africans, then Haitians, and then when the epidemic disproportionately hit the LGBTQ community, gay men in particular.

The socialist plan: lives over profit

Society does not have to be organized this way. The Party for Socialism and

Liberation and the La Riva/Peltier presidential campaign are calling for a people's program to fight the disease and the inequality that makes it so much worse.

Every worker regardless of immigration status or tax classification should be entitled to full sick pay and 100% unemployment insurance. A nationwide moratorium should be declared ending evictions and foreclosures. War time emergency production measures should be implemented to compel the production of life-saving equipment and health system infrastructure.

Vacant housing owned by real estate speculators should be seized to house the homeless. Emergency networks for the distribution of high-quality food and supplies for free must be immediately created. All health care should be free, guaranteed as a human right and as an essential element of the fight against the coronavirus. Prisoners at particular risk should be freed, ICE raids should end and all detainees at detention centers released, and sanctions should be lifted on Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea and all targeted nations.

The people of the United States and the people of the world can unite and defeat the virus. But that will require a struggle against the greed of Wall Street and the criminal negligence of the Trump administration.

Socialist presidential candidates:

Relief for the people, not Wall Street!

The Party for Socialism and Liberation is running Gloria La Riva for President and Leonard Peltier for Vice President in the 2020 election. Both candidates are lifelong fighters for the rights of working people and the oppressed.

The coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the need to build a political movement independent of the two main ruling class parties. Regardless of what measures are ultimately passed, de-facto Democratic Party leader Nancy Pelosi in her negotiations with Trump's Treasury Secretary has expressed her willingness to agree to a deal that leaves 80 percent of employees without sick pay. There is no substantive disagreement between Democratic and Republican politicians over spending huge sums of the public's money to bail out the biggest corporations and their major investors.

As socialists, Gloria and Leonard believe that the needs of the people should take priority over the profits of the big banks and corporations. Massive programs need to be initiated right away to distribute food and supplies for free, strengthen healthcare infrastructure and make it free to everyone and guarantee that no worker will be left without an income, a home or utilities. ICE detention centers should be closed and huge numbers of incarcerated people should be released, and the racist neglect of Black, Native, Latino and other oppressed communities during times of crisis must end.

A more extensive list of measures supported by the La Riva/Peltier campaign is detailed on the following page.

Meet Gloria La Riva

Gloria La Riva, 2020 Presidential candidate, is a labor, community and anti-war activist based in San Francisco, California. In 2016, as the presidential candidate of the Party for Socialism and Liberation and the Peace and Freedom Party, Gloria received the most votes of any socialist presidential candidate since 1976.

Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Gloria attended Brandeis University where she was active in affirmative action struggles. Gloria has been a key organizer of many

mass demonstrations and other actions opposing the wars and occupation in Central America, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, Palestine, Yugoslavia and elsewhere.

Gloria has worked for decades to defend Cuba's sovereignty against the U.S. blockade. She was awarded Cuba's Friendship Medal in 2010 for her many years of Cuba solidarity, and was the coordinator of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, unjustly imprisoned in the United States.

Gloria has traveled to Venezuela many times since the presidency of Hugo Chávez in 1999. As the U.S. government's aggression against Venezuela intensified in early 2019, Gloria traveled there from February to March, conveying the Venezuelan people's resistance to the U.S. economic blockade and military threats, via video and articles.

Gloria is active in the struggle for immigrant rights. In November 2018, she accompanied the refugee caravan of 7,000 Hondurans for eight days in their march through Mexico to reach the U.S. Gloria organized support for the Black Fire Fighters Association in their struggle to end racist and sexist discrimination. A longtime supporter of LGBTQ rights, Gloria participated in the first National March in 1979 and subsequent national marches. She is a strong supporter of women's right to free abortion on demand.

A longtime union activist, she is First Vice-President of the Pacific Media Workers Guild, CWA Local 39521 in San Francisco, where she lives.

Meet Leonard Peltier

Leonard Peltier, a champion for the rights of Native and all oppressed people, has been in prison for 44 years, persecuted by the U.S. government for a crime he did not commit. Since his arrest in 1976, an international movement has demanded his freedom while Peltier continues to speak out for justice from behind prison walls. The Party for Socialism and Liberation is honored by his participation in our 2020 presidential ticket as Gloria La Riva's running mate.

Leonard Peltier was born on Sept. 12, 1944 on Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation, in Belcourt, North Dakota,



GRAPHIC: RACHEL SILANG

Gloria La Riva and Leonard Peltier

of the Anishnaabe, Dakota and Lakota Nations. He became a member of the American Indian Movement in 1972, and engaged in community struggles for Native sovereignty from Seattle to South Dakota.

The U.S. government waged an all-out war against AIM. Leonard Peltier was falsely accused of killing two FBI agents and has been held as a political prisoner by the U.S. government since 1976.

Peltier's case has drawn support from renowned political and cultural figures such as Nelson Mandela, Alice Walker, Desmond Tutu, Jesse Jackson and the governments of many Native nations. Through our presidential campaign, the Party for Socialism and Liberation aims to raise the profile of the fight to free Leonard Peltier and all political prisoners, including Mumia Abu-Jamal, Mutulu Shakur and many others.

Leonard Peltier has dedicated his life and sacrificed enormously to the fight for a world free of exploitation and racism, where all people can determine their own destiny and have the social rights they need to live in dignity. For more information about the fight to free Leonard Peltier, visit the website of the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee at www.whoisleonardpeltier.info.

Don't fight alone – Join a revolutionary organization!

JOIN the PSL

The Party for Socialism and Liberation is comprised of leaders and activists, workers and students, of all backgrounds. Organized in branches across the country, the PSL brings together a new generation of revolutionaries alongside veterans of the people's movements with decades of experience.

The PSL is involved in a wide range of struggles, from local battles over affordable housing and racist police brutality, to the fight for a higher minimum wage and union rights, to the global issues of imperialist war and environmental destruction.

We are united in our belief that capitalism – the system in which all wealth and power is held by a tiny group of billionaires and their state – is the source of the main problems confronting humanity today.

It must be replaced by socialism, a system where poor and working people have power, and the wealth of society is used in a planned and sustainable way to meet people's needs.

Our mission is to link the everyday struggles of oppressed and exploited people to the fight for a new world.

Join us!

Visit us on the web at PSLweb.org/join

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From the La Riva/Peltier presidential campaign and the Party for Socialism and Liberation

A people's program to fight the virus

The Party for Socialism and Liberation and the Gloria La Riva/Leonard Peltier presidential campaign call for an immediate emergency program to combat the Coronavirus crisis involving the following measures:

Full sick pay and 100% unemployment insurance for every worker, no evictions or foreclosures

Bail out the people, not the banks!

Expand unemployment insurance to cover 100 percent of wages lost due to closings, layoffs, illness or if a worker is caring for a sick person. This unemployment insurance should be provided indefinitely for the duration of the pandemic and associated economic recession. There should be an immediate moratorium on utility shutoffs, evictions and foreclosures. No debt should be accumulated over this period to landlords, utility corporations or banks.

All these measures should apply to undocumented workers and independent contractors as well. Financial assistance should be provided by the federal government to compensate small businesses for their losses.

War time emergency production and distribution measures

Organize the compulsory mass production of critical goods

Produce COVID-19 test kits, ventilators, protective equipment and medical equipment at cost to meet the urgent need. The government has the power to compel companies to produce critical goods, requisition certain types of property and expand production, impose price controls and allocate raw materials for the "national defense." The government must use these powers now and end shortages of all critical goods needed to defeat the coronavirus pandemic, including those to protect front-line medical and social services personnel.

No profiteering in this crisis!

A centralized system of free distribution should be created to guarantee that everyone has safe access to high-quality, nutritious food and other essentials. Building on existing programs like meals-on-wheels and emerging grassroots community networks, a system must be established to provide all the necessary supplies free of charge to everyone who has been medically quarantined, is especially at risk or has been instructed to remain in their homes.

Free health care

Free testing only works with free treatment

Health care must be provided for free to all. If you cannot afford a test, how can you afford treatment? The profits of the insurance companies, pharmaceutical industry and all other predatory businesses that grow rich off of the current health care system should be discarded in the interests of preserving life and defeating the virus. Co-pays, deductibles, and any other barrier standing in between people and medical treatment should be suspended.

Special attention should be paid to populations that have been discriminated against and neglected by the U.S. healthcare system. Native reservations, Black, Latino and other oppressed communities must be guaranteed equal access to treatment. There should be a massive increase in the number of medical staff in prisons, who must be provided with modern, high-quality equipment.

Secure housing for all

Empty dwellings should be seized to provide shelter for all people without housing.

How can you quarantine if you do not have a home? There are roughly 16 million vacant dwellings in the United States. Most of these units are owned by speculators and real estate firms that are essentially gambling on the housing market and fueling the gentrification boom in the process. Their financial interests must not be allowed to imperil public health.

Likewise, as many housing units as needed should be provided for victims of domestic violence. No one should be forced to stay in an abusive situation due to the pandemic. Immediate emergency shelter and financial support should be provided to all people in need of shelter for any reason.

Strengthen the public health system

Requisition vacant commercial property for medical use

Re-open closed clinics and hospitals, and build new medical facilities. Expand sanitation efforts. Any and all vacant commercial, industrial and residential space should be utilized to meet these needs. Follow China's example and rapidly construct makeshift hospitals and medical centers using eminent domain against big businesses and landlords as necessary.

The government can coordinate and provide resources for the mobilization of



PHOTO: LIU CHAN/XINHUA

Heroic health care workers can help stem the pandemic.

the medical community. Retired medical professionals, medical residents and medical students should be organized to help strengthen our healthcare infrastructure.

Strengthen and expand sanitation in mass transit and public places. Provide appropriate protective gear for workers in these sectors. Initiate a large-scale public education campaign alongside community organizations to inform the people about what precautions they should be taking to slow the spread of coronavirus.

Relief not repression

No one should have to deal with the pandemic while fearing the repressive actions of the police, prisons or ICE

Sanitary conditions should be guaranteed in all prisons and jails. Massive numbers of prisoners should be released outright to alleviate the overcrowding that would make it impossible to contain the disease. The movement against mass incarceration has raised demands for the release in particular of elderly inmates, those with chronic health conditions, and those convicted for non-violent offenses or those who have not been convicted at all.

Stop all ICE raids and deportations. Shut down ICE detention centers, which are notorious for unsanitary conditions and providing inadequate medical attention. Immediately release all detainees. All emergency assistance of any type offered by the government during the crisis should be available regardless of immigration status.

Anti-Asian racism has been stoked by politicians and the media, who have referred to the pandemic as the "Chinese virus" or a "foreign virus." Rather than promoting racism, public education campaigns should combat these reactionary and anti-science myths. Assure that people historically neglected by the government such as Native nations, African American

and other oppressed communities have their needs addressed without delay or discrimination.

International cooperation and solidarity

End the devastating economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. government on Iran, Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea

Sanctions are blocking the governments' ability to acquire the supplies needed to combat the pandemic. The cruel effects of the Trump administration's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran have been on full display as the country is among those with the highest rates of coronavirus infection and fatalities in the world. Cuba has done groundbreaking medical research and is world-renowned for its acts of international solidarity in the field of health. End the blockade of Cuba so the world can benefit from the country's scientific expertise.

The United States should adopt best practices implemented by countries that have effectively dealt with the pandemic, such as China, rather than demonizing these governments in the pursuit of imperialist foreign policy goals. If travel restrictions are determined to be necessary from a public health perspective, they must be implemented in consultation with all affected countries and in a manner that protects the rights of all visitors and immigrants.

Extend support to countries in need of assistance and coordinate supply chains around the world to ensure the most efficient production and distribution of medical goods possible. Zero tolerance for efforts by pharmaceutical corporations to secure intellectual property rights or in any way profit from the production of a coronavirus vaccine.

IN THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC...

FUND PEOPLE'S NEEDS | NOT WALL ST. BAILOUTS

**1. FREE TREATMENT
FOR ALL**

**2. UNEMPLOYMENT
BENEFITS AT 100%
PAY WITH NO CUTOFF**

**3. STOP ALL
LAYOFFS,
DEPORTATIONS,
EVICTIONS,
AND FORE-
CLOSURES**

**4. FEDERAL
AID TO
SMALL
BUSINESSES**

