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150,000 dead in the US and no end in sight

By the end of this weekend, more than 150,000 Americans will have died of COVID-19.

The pandemic is raging out of control. On Friday, the United States shattered another record, recording 78,000 new cases in a single day. More than 1,100 more people succumbed to the disease.

The Centers for Disease Control now predicts that the US death toll will hit 175,000 by mid-August, and Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the former director of the Food and Drug Administration, says the death toll could double by the end of the year to 300,000. “I certainly don’t think we’re near the end of this,” Dr. Anthony Fauci told *MarketWatch* on Friday.

Dozens of hospitals in California, Texas and Florida are at capacity, and some have begun sending away patients they deem least likely to survive. Morgues in Mississippi and Texas are filling up, and hospitals around the country have rented refrigerated trucks to store the bodies. Referring to these states, White House Coronavirus Task Force Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx commented, “What we have right now are essentially three New Yorks.”

This disaster is the direct product of the campaign by the Trump administration—with the assistance of the Democrats and the media—to force workers back on the job while the pandemic rages on, with the sole aim of enriching the financial oligarchy.

Far from fighting the disease, every action taken by the White House has contributed to worsening the disaster. Trump’s actions have led to the preventable deaths of nearly 150,000 people, and, if he has his way, hundreds of thousands more will die.

Totally indifferent to human life, the White House is demanding an acceleration of the back-to-work process, seeking to force teachers and school workers back into schools that will serve as death traps. At the same time, it is doing everything possible to ensure the elimination of the \$600 supplemental unemployment benefit that has been the sole lifeline for tens of millions of people thrown out of work.

The figures within the US oligarchy who have contributed the most to the spread of the pandemic have benefited the most. Elon Musk, who illegally reopened the Tesla plant in Fremont, California in defiance of health authorities, has been rewarded with the biggest payout ever given to a CEO, \$2.1 billion. Musk has tripled his net worth this year, to \$75 billion.

Public health experts are pleading with the White House to back away from its homicidal policies. In a letter published this week, over 250 medical professionals urged the United States to “Shut down, start over,” while Fauci reiterated his call for states to slow, or reverse, their reopenings.

But Trump is doing the exact opposite: The White House is doubling down on its campaign to get workers back on the job. Toward that end, it is demanding that students return to school within a matter of weeks so their parents can get back to making profits for US corporations.

On Thursday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidelines for reopening the schools that read like they were drafted by Trump’s personal speechwriters. Meanwhile, the White House has declared teachers to be “essential” workers. Trump’s reckless drive to reopen the schools will endanger the lives of hundreds of thousands of teachers and students, not to mention their family members.

America’s death toll from COVID-19 stands as an unanswerable indictment of every aspect—economic, social, political—of American capitalism.

The White House, the Democrats and the media were all silent as COVID-19 spread throughout the country in January and February.

This silence was deliberate. As whistleblower Rick Bright made clear in congressional testimony, “Public health officials were fully aware of the emerging threat of COVID-19 by early January 2020.” Yet lawmakers’ only response was to sell shares in stock, having been tipped off in advance that a major selloff was coming. They did nothing while the pandemic spread throughout the country.

Washington's only response was to pump \$4 trillion into the stock market through the Federal Reserve and carry out a massive bailout of major corporations in March through the \$2 trillion CARES act, which contained a mere pittance in funding for measures to stop the spread of the disease.

With the bailout secured, the media immediately began to demand that businesses reopen, with the *New York Times* declaring that "the cure" of lockdowns was "worse than the disease." The next day, Trump repeated the phrase to justify a premature return to work. Small demonstrations led by neo-Nazi elements aligned with the White House were promoted by the media as expressing a popular demand to reopen businesses.

Both the federal government and the states quickly abandoned even the most minimal efforts to contain the pandemic, with more than half of governors reopening businesses in defiance of the CDC's own guidelines, including the governors of Maine, North Carolina, Kansas and Colorado—all Democrats.

This bipartisan campaign to get workers back on the job has now produced a catastrophe, with over 40,000 people dying just in the past two months.

The disastrous response to the pandemic reveals the ignorance, greed, stupidity and criminality of the American capitalist class, personified by Donald Trump, the billionaire huckster vomited up by the Manhattan elite.

What Trump, speaking for the US ruling class, is most afraid of is the growth of popular opposition to this corrupt and criminal government and the capitalist system it represents.

In response to some of the largest mass protests in American history, condemning the administration and its promotion of America's fascistic police forces, Trump is seeking to turn the United States into a presidential dictatorship, deploying federal police and paramilitary forces to major American cities.

Even after Trump's attempted military coup in June and his current deployment of what one former general counsel for the Department of Homeland Security called a "goon squad" to crack down on protests against his administration, no section of the political establishment is calling for his removal.

The Democrats, who spent the better part of the past year seeking to impeach Trump based on fraudulent allegations of "foreign collusion," are now silent as he kills people by the tens of thousands and turns America into a police state.

The Democratic Party and its apologists are staking everything on the election of Joe Biden, a right-wing corporate shill who agrees with Trump on almost everything. This is despite the fact that Trump has made clear that he intends to disregard the outcome of the November presidential election if it goes against him and is making preparations to stay in power through police state means.

For the ruling elite, ensconced in their condominiums and mansions, with their stock portfolios soaring from the government bailout, the pandemic has been a gift from heaven. For the workers forced to work in factories that are hotbeds for COVID-19, and for teachers encouraged to write out their wills before returning to the classroom, stopping the pandemic is a life-and-death question.

The working class, already engaged in a series of strikes across the country and around the world, must develop a unified struggle against the homicidal back-to-work campaign by the ruling class. The fight against the disease on the medical front is inseparable from the fight on the political front: to drive out the fascist in the White House.

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