

COVID-19: New Battle in Capitalism's War on the Black Working Class

By [Black Alliance for Peace](#)

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"No Retreat, No Compromise: Defeat the War Against the African/Black Working Class," announced the campaign of the Black Alliance for Peace before coronavirus, before the collapse of the global economy, before the lockdowns and calls for militarization of our communities, before the "discovery" by the country that African Americans had healthcare outcomes even more disastrous than colonized peoples in the global South.

BAP understood then, as we understand today, that structural violence is a permanent feature of the colonial/capitalist system. That understanding helps us to avoid the reformist fantasies held by many that the human rights crisis facing Africans in the U.S. can be resolved through piecemeal adjustments in state policies and expansion of "opportunities" by capitalism in its neoliberal form.

That is why we are not confused or demoralized by the circumstances we face at this COVID-19 moment. For BAP, and the Black Left in general, the moment reaffirms the strategic prioritization of developing the capacities of the Black left in the U.S. There will be no radical change in the United States without an independent organized Black left.

NO RETREAT, NO COMPROMISE: BAP on the Frontlines of Struggle

There are close to 400,000 cases of coronavirus in the U.S. with over 12,000 deaths. Fear is pervasive and the material deprivation unmistakable with the lines for food pantries and the stories of desperation being shared as people are out of money and food. But as [Glen Ford pointed out](#), it is not the coronavirus that is the culprit but the disease of capitalism that is responsible for the absence of a national healthcare system and the insecurity of millions living paycheck to paycheck, that is if they had a job.

But there is resistance.

BAP individual and organizational members are involved in deep base-building work from Washington D.C. and Baltimore to Oakland, California. Those efforts at building community assistance programs and providing educational materials have been curtailed by the restrictions on movement and travel, but they continue in places like Baltimore where BAP member organization and BAP-Baltimore collective, the Ujima Peoples Party for Progress, is involved in support work with public housing residents in Douglas Homes.

Cooperation Jackson, a BAP member organization, has taken the lead in calling for a general strike for May 1st. "[A Call to Action: Towards a General Strike to End the COVID-19 Crisis and Create a New World.](#)" provides the rationale and the broad demands that Cooperation Jackson says must ground the strike. The overall principle and strategic goal of the action is

that the people must “make demands that will transform our broken and inequitable society, and build a new society run by and for us – the working-class, poor, oppressed majority.”

BAP and Political Education:

Liberals use the diversionary presence of Trump to place the blame for system failure on the mercurial leadership of that one individual. This is a position that oppressed people cannot afford to embrace.

On April 11 and 12th, the Black is Back Coalition for Peace, Social Justice and Reparations will host a national Zoom-based Webinar to build resistance to both the short-term COVID-19 crisis and the longer-term struggle to defeat the colonial/capitalist system that reproduces the conditions and relations of exploitation and oppression generation after generation.

BAP is a member of the BIB, and our National Organizer, Ajamu Baraka, will be a featured speaker. The event will be over two days and will begin at 10am EST on April 11th and 12th. You can find more information [here](#) and [here](#).

Ajamu Baraka, BAP’s National Organizer, [argues](#) that COVID-19 has stripped away all pretenses to U.S. exceptionalism. For Baraka, millions are starting to see that the capitalist “emperor has no clothes.” That the coronavirus triggered the latest and most profound systemic failure and has in the process exposed that the interests of the rulers are very different from the interests and needs of the majority of the people.

The message that the interests of Black workers are very different than those of the rulers has not been lost on Black workers. They see the phony and hypocritical appreciation white America is supposed to have for its “essential workers today,” the majority of whom are Black, when before the virus they were being treated like disposables.

In her piece “[I Mind Dying](#),” Erica Caines, BAP member and writer at Hoodcommunist, calls attention to the objective realities of those “heroes” who are out of necessity forced to work and face constant danger for themselves and their families as a result.

Pan African Community Action (PACA) and BAP Coordinating Committee member Netfa Freeman [explores an important issue](#) that BAP has been raising since the beginning of the current crisis. “Expect Police-Military Repression Amid the Crisis of COVID-19 and Its Aftermath” examines the likelihood that the state will use the coronavirus emergency to further strengthen its repressive capacity.

BAP continues to make the connection between the national or domestic and the international or global. In fact, an understanding of domestic issues and politics are impossible without contextualizing those issues and politics within that interconnected framework.

Margaret Kimberley, from Black Agenda Report (BAR) and member of BAP’s Coordinating Committee, keeps the focus on the deadly consequences of U.S. sanctions on the people of Venezuela and Iran in her piece, “[Standing with Venezuela and Iran](#).”

The fact that these measures constitute crimes against humanity as collective punishments against the civilian population of those countries matters very little to the Trump Administration and its supporters in the Democrat Party because non-European lives have

never “mattered.”

But BAP will never abandon the people of Iran and Venezuela. See the BAP statement on Venezuela [here](#).

No Retreat, No Compromise

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