



Speak Out Now

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Texas: Another Catastrophe of this System

For almost a week, millions of Texans have been without power, struggling to survive in below-freezing temperatures. Texas is one of the wealthiest states in the country — the state alone has the ninth largest economy in the world. But once again, just like with this pandemic, we see that the priorities of this society have nothing to do with keeping people safe.

People have been trapped in their freezing homes, with the streets covered in ice and the government doing next to nothing. Food distribution has collapsed — those who've made it to grocery stores have found empty shelves. Residential water pipes have burst, caving in roofs. Sewage pipes have exploded, dumping raw sewage into homes. Water treatment plants have shut down, and for those with running water, it has become undrinkable.

Dozens of people have frozen to death. And local governments are ordering refrigerator trucks and body bags in anticipation of the enormous death toll that will be revealed with warmer weather.

Hundreds of people have gotten carbon monoxide poisoning by trying to keep warm in their homes from small fires or barbecues. Thousands of prisoners have been freezing for days with broken toilets and nothing but a sheet to stay warm. Hospitals are evacuating patients and turning people away for lack of water and because they can't keep the hospitals warm.

What produced this nightmare for Texans is no mystery. Texas is the only state in the country to have its own independent power grid which exempts it from Federal oversight. As a result, if there is a problem, the Texas power grid is unable to draw power from other states while it fixes what's wrong.

Texas went through this in 2011, when freezing temperatures caused power outages. Federal agencies recommended upgrades to prevent future weather-related problems. But politicians refused to order power companies to spend the money to weatherize

the energy grid. Instead they chose to pass the profits from energy sales onto the wealthy stockholders.

We still see the same disregard for human life. While millions were freezing to death, Texas Senator Ted Cruz and his family escaped to a warm hotel in Cancun, Mexico. He tried to lie his way out of this. But no one believes him. He has made it clear that he has no concern for the lives of ordinary Texans.

Texas Governor Abbott's response to the crisis was to lie and blame the power outages on the failure of wind energy. Just like the rest of the power generating system of Texas, wind turbines weren't weatherized for freezing temperatures. But this had little to do with the crisis as Texas only receives about 10% of its energy from wind. Wind energy was not the problem.

The catastrophe in Texas is just a tiny glimpse of the future this system of capitalism holds out for us. This isn't the only climate-related disaster that has hit this year. The freezing temperatures, heat waves, massive fires, hurricanes tearing up the Gulf Coast, droughts, and more — are all connected to the massive climate disruption that we are experiencing.

Despite the decades of warnings from climate scientists that the burning of fossil fuels is the main source of global warming that causes these extreme weather events, the politicians have done next to nothing. And we can't expect them to. The disaster in Texas makes it clear.

This is a system that is destroying the planet and throwing our lives into chaos. This past year the pandemic has exposed the functioning of this capitalist system. The disaster in Texas is just another reminder of what's in store for us if we continue to leave our future in the hands of those who run a system guided by the drive for profits, regardless of the impact. Our future depends on our determination to come together and fight against this system — to fight for a world that represents all of our interests.