Covid-19 - Statements

The pandemic is a symptom of capitalism's sickness: Workers should look to their own survival

5 April 2020, by Socialist Democracy

As we face into a catastrophic viral pandemic the question many are asking is how is it that while the world is fabulously wealthy the funds are not available for a first class health care system? Everything is in short supply!

Profits come first for capitalism. Systematic privatisation drives and funding cuts have left public health services in the leading capitalist states in no position to respond to a health emergency and money is constantly funnelled into private health care providers who now expect to make a fortune on the back of the crisis. Medical production companies profiteer from the crisis themselves and production is hampered further by the profiteering of their suppliers.

The sick and dying economic system that systematically degraded the global environment has taken a life threatening seizure. They are trying to manage that collapse in their own interests no matter what the cost to the old, the poor and the oppressed of the world. The capitalists, fearing for the security of their inhumane system, cynically attempt to turn this disaster to their own advantage so they can ensure that any money spent today can be extracted from the workers when the virus subsides.

The global impact of the COVID 19 virus is a product of late capitalism, the dominant economic system on the planet. Humans share their environment with endless other organisms. Many of these are pathogens that cause sickness and death. Because of this, epidemics are a natural feature of human history and pandemics, by their very definition, become all the more consuming as a result of globalisation.

Much of production is now on a global supply chain. Remote areas, once reserves of native plant and animal species, have been invaded and the local ecosystem destroyed. Forests and local food chains are decimated. Animals are forced out of their habitat and into close contact with other species that normally don't share their environment allowing viral infections to jump from one species to another and on to humans. Native populations are forced to turn to bush meat and in some cases logging companies employ hunters to feed the loggers with cheap bush meats. In the case of this outbreak it appears that the taste for this meat among the expanding capitalist class allowed peasant bush meat producers to enrich themselves by at first marketing and then employing intensive breeding of wild species to supply the carnivorous tastes of the new bourgeoisie.

This contact between humans and rare animals, especially bird and bat species, was predicted in Mike Davis' 2006 book; "The monster is at our door". This contact enormously accelerates the movement of viruses across species and the mutation makes them more dangerous and virulent. These mutations have been a regular feature of late capitalism. MERS, SARS and Ebola were all deadly illnesses. All had limitations that enabled outbreaks to be halted but with Covid 19 the random shake of the evolutionary dice has produced a virus to which we have no immunity and which is contagious even before symptoms have developed.

This pandemic is not by itself overwhelming. China, South Korea and other Asian countries, using different approaches, have successfully contained it. However, for many decades capitalism has grown increasingly parasitic. As profit rates fall in the manufacturing sector, capital becomes increasingly financialised and extracts wealth, not directly from production, but from the realisation of capital, adding extra charges to the costs of day to day living through bank charges, rents, privatisation of public services, and so on.

In poorer countries the cost of debts swamp the public purse and prevent the development of adequate health services. In advanced capitalist countries that purse has been

simultaneously squeezed and raided, with a gradual privatisation of many sectors. Nowhere are the health services adequate to the task.

Britain and the US responded by denying the crisis. The British State advanced the social Darwinist theory of "Herd immunity", that would have allowed the virus to run largely unchecked until the majority had been infected, a policy still being pursued by default in much of the US. The British made a sharp turn when their scientists told them the death toll would be in the millions. The Trump administration cannot hide its disinterest in the survival of the workers and its determination to preserve capital no matter how many die.

Most countries now call for a "flattening of the curve" and produce mathematical models that appear to be based on the propagation of the virus but which are in reality based on trying to manage the demand on collapsing health services. It would of course be possible to ramp up the health sector - if China can build two new hospitals in a few weeks, why not Europe? To do so would be to reverse the long running process of privatisation and governments are struggling to avoid that. During a crisis, as in war, the capitalist State imposes what appears to be a form of socialism on a chaotic system, prioritising the production of necessary supplies. If it does so now, if it socialises health, it may prove very difficult for them to dismantle the system later. However, it should be understood that greater involvement by state in the economy or an expansion of public spending is not socialism (a confusion that owes much to reformism and Stalinism). These interventions - such as the one that is unfolding now - always favour capital. A recent example of this are the emergency measures introduced in response to the financial crisis of 2008 (many of which remain in place) and the decade of crushing austerity which followed. In any crisis the capitalist class will to seek to burden the working class with the cost. Given that those costs associated with the current pandemic crisis are potentially much greater the offensive waged will be even fiercer.

The US is the outlier, a glimpse into the future of other capitals. The unfolding tragedy there is rightly blamed on the incompetence and insanity of Trump, but that is far from the whole story. As one expert remarked, the US does not have a health service, it has a health sector whose main function is to generate profit. Federal public health services have shed tens of thousands of jobs since 2008, before Trump dismantled the leading bodies. How can big Pharma, that deliberately launched the opioid epidemic on US workers, now act to protect them? How can the Democratic Party, busy strangling proposals for a public health system, offer an alternative to Trump?

But the problems of the US economy are wider than health alone. Anne Case and Angus Deaton, economists who first exposed the scandal of big Pharma and opioid addiction, have now produced a new study; “Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism”. They point out that;

"(the health sector) was 5% of GDP in 1960 and it’s 18% of GDP today. It’s eating the economy from the inside out” .

The claim is that Covid 19 has caused an economic crisis but the crisis was already unfolding and in fact is simply the continuation of the 2008 credit crunch. We have had over a decade of austerity, where working people paid the debts of the banks and central banks have provided a flow of cheap money to business. The result has been anemic growth and a recovery that has been marked by growing inequality and concentration of wealth while the mass of the population struggle to survive.

The Marxist economist Michael Roberts dismisses attempts to see the economic crisis as a result of the pandemic;

“the profitability of capital is low and global profits are static at best, even before COVID-19 erupted. Global trade and investment have been falling, not rising. Oil prices have collapsed, not risen”.

The truth is that the debt crisis of 2008 has never been resolved. The financialization of the economy means that many activities rest on fictional capital and are concentrated on the realisation of capital. Gouging the workers at every turn, capitalism is kept afloat by cheap money, the interest rate is now zero, giant tax breaks are handed out to major corporations who then buy back their own bonds and the US Federal Reserve has promised no limit to buying worthless bonds as the music in the stock exchanges is about to stop. The dollar is weaponized against the rest of the world, but its credibility falls as the trillions in debt accumulate. Increasingly military power is used directly to intimidate opponents, but the US is about to be forced out of Afghanistan and seems to rely on sanctions, assassination and bombardment as the main policy tools. The latest act of barbarism is the blockade of medical supplies to Iran, a war crime of the highest order.

Global capitalism is in decline. The US has failed in its attempt to conquer the world. It has torn down the pretence that the UN is any sort of independent mechanism to protect the world’s population. The fiasco in Europe shows that an organised international coordination of capital does not exist even on a regional level. There has been a wide retreat to the nation State. This is not viable in a globalised world and can only lead to further disintegration. In the US itself even national unity has proven impossible and separate States are working independently.

The outcome of all of the above is not the burying of class antagonism, but a more intense triple attack on the working class. In the background is the unfolding of the pandemic itself. The capitalists hold back on the provision of necessary resources to the health service and defend the creeping privatisation. Some propose herd immunity. Others believe that the death toll would lead to their own destruction and want to flatten the curve, that is, to limit the rate of infection by isolation techniques so that the tottering health provision can cope.

Recommendations are made to the working class. Recommendations cost nothing! As the crisis unfolds the

recommendations become directions, and it then becomes inevitable that the State offers recompense to workers. The class struggle in this area is made more intense as the capitalist system quietly collapses in the background. We face chaos as one section of capitalism advocates a mass die off and another section asks us to imprison ourselves and wait in line to suit the needs of a totally inadequate health service.

Both factions agree that billions should be poured into the stock exchange and banks at our expense. Massive sums are pumped into the stock exchange and another portion is given to big business. Relatively small amounts, focused on just a few areas of deprivation, are offered to maintain the workers. It should be remembered that the workers are expected later to pay the full bill for capitalist bailout with more decades of grinding austerity. The sums allocated to capital are for its own day to day survival and the sums allocated to the workers are based on the ruling class fear of mass uprisings - a very real fear if capitalism fails to contain the virus.

The demands of the workers are very simple . The needs of the masses must come first!

Our lives and health must be preserved. All public health care must be guaranteed as free and accessible. Billions must be poured in to ensure a full service and money and human labour diverted to create a system equal to the size of the Covid 19 challenge.

Workers' incomes must be preserved! Payment of full wages to those prevented from working.

No layoffs and sackings! Many employers have made billions from their workforce only to sack them or offer them unpaid leave at the stroke of a pen. Workers will remain on the payroll until industry is set up again.

No one left behind! The unemployed, the elderly and the ill must receive a living income alongside the employed workers.

A safe shelter for all! Mortgage payments and rents should be frozen, evictions should be banned and unused property expropriated to provide appropriate shelter for the homeless.

Most importantly, the workers must be in charge! It is not the case that the emergency can best be organised by government commands, by emergency laws, and by the police jackboot! There is plenty of room for direct communication via the internet and at a neighbourhood level. The western media present China's curbing of the virus as the actions of a police State. They merely make excuses for their own inaction and callousness. Those inside the country report that it was united action by all, acting together that proved effective. The collective power of the working-class working in solidarity will achieve a great deal more than the State. Rather than run the risk that emergency legislation will be used to crush the workers movement, we can prepare for a future where the working class will take a direct role in the management of the economy and society.

In responding to the pandemic crisis it is essential for workers to organise independently of the state. An element of this will be be the establishment of mutual aid groups within working class communities. However, it has to be recognised that the resources at the disposal of these forms of organisation will be limited. It is only within the sphere of production where workers possess the power to marshal the huge resources that are required to respond effectively to the crisis. The working class movement must chart an independent course that rejects the ruinous capitalist strategies of carrying on as normal or shutting down the economy. This means raising demands that point workers towards exercising some agency and power - whether those are minimal demands for safe working conditions or transitional demands over how production and distribution is managed.

We need an international response and international solidarity. South Korea, Japan and other countries sent medical delegations to China and copied the methods used there. Chinese doctors paused amid the crisis to provide a detailed report to the World Health Organisation. In contrast the US has used Covid 19 supplies as a weapon of war against Iran. Large areas of Africa, Latin America and Asia are being left to rot. Not only is this utterly inhumane, it also guarantees large reservoirs of illness that will allow endless cycles of reinfection.

The workers are not yet on the stage. Governments are panicking about what may come rather than about what is. Socialists can act now to build up communication at a regional and global level and hammer out a common programme of action in preparation for the titanic struggle to come.

28 March 2020

Political statement on the COVID-19 pandemic emergency

31 March 2020, by PRT, Mexico

The civilizational crisis caused by capitalism, which has worsened in recent years, has shown us another of its fatal faces with the appearance and subsequent expansion of COVID-19, the first cases of which were detected in the last days of 2019 in Wuhan, China. Promoted through the various vehicles of capitalist globalization

itself, in which only the health of Capital matters and not that of human beings, this disease is now classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the most serious pandemic of recent times.

Beyond the debate on the origins of this pandemic, COVID-19 has put the entire world on alert for its rapid and easy spread as well as its mortality rate. Expert epidemiologists and WHO advisers estimate that a high percentage of the world population will become infected with this virus, between 40% and 70%, of which 4% will face the possibility of losing their lives, thus imposing an indelible mark of suffering and death on humanity.

Although COVID-19 has impacted the entire planet, its rapid and massive spread is not only a phenomenon of globalization or the result of the lack of timely attention at the start of outbreaks (starting with China), but is the expression of the current state of the public health and social protection systems that, during the disastrous neoliberal period, have been dismantled, if not privatized, to favour the interests of capitalists who promote the commercialization of all health system services (prevention, treatment, care and so on) to make a profit through hospitals and insurers, as well as pharmaceutical companies or laboratories that seek to patent medicines and then sell them at high prices. All of this denies, of course, the human right to health of millions of people who suffer from chronic or degenerative diseases, in many cases more lethal and extensive than COVID-19 itself.

Lacking public health prevention policies and adequate vaccines or medicines, many governments took hasty measures, such as border closures, social isolation and the stoppage of economic activities, regardless of the social costs for workers or the most vulnerable social groups (the poor, migrants, racialized populations, indigenous peoples, the elderly or the sick, girls and boys). For example, in northern Italy, the most seriously infected area of that country, workers are forced to attend factories despite their risks and protests. In Brazil, the nefarious President Jair Bolsonaro tried to legitimize the dismissal of workers, something that the no less infamous President Piñera plans to do in Chile. In the United States, the lieutenant governor of Texas suggested the sacrifice of older people for the good of the economy while President Trump acts with that logic. Capital's voice is heard through its most cynical personifications.

These measures, which have stimulated a further contraction in economic activity, accompanied by the global drop in oil prices, also fuelled by geostrategic conflicts, have caused a severe and profound economic crisis, with serious implications for the entire world population and for all workers.

A contractionary strategy in an economy that works for the profit of a few without securing employment rights, without attending to those who dedicate themselves to the informal economy, the poorest and those who have had to migrate, is to condemn millions of people to misery and death. The ILO has estimated that almost 25 million jobs will be lost worldwide due to this pandemic. Without a massive global rebellion of workers, the failed and discredited neoliberal economic policies will reign with the mechanism of increasing debt and imposing structural economic and social adjustments, which imply more misery, precariousness, dispossession, disease and death.

Mexico faces COVID-19

In the case of Mexico, a country with a dependent economy, neo-colonized and fully integrated into the imperialist economy of the United States, which does not have the same socioeconomic conditions as the most affected countries in Europe, COVID 19 not only represents a mortal danger for the elderly, with previous conditions, or for pregnant women, it can also be this for the 60 million poor who suffer from hunger, lack of basic services (drinking water, drainage, electricity, health), and malnutrition, as well as many diseases that make them more vulnerable to this virus.

The measures adopted by the Mexican government contrast with those of other European and Latin American countries, in which, with manifestly political intentions, quarantines or states of emergency have been declared, establishing temporary curfews, measures that limit or cancel individual and collective guarantees, limiting the activities of all social life and militarizing territories, thus trying new forms of social control and discipline.

In Mexico, a gradual social isolation has been chosen, starting with the suspension of classes at all educational levels, as well as massive events for up to a month. Likewise, it has been attempted to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on economic activity, but without guaranteeing the employment rights of workers, or the needs of migrants, precarious workers and those who work in the informal economy.

Now we are already entering the second phase of the health emergency, this means that the cases of contagion will multiply and there will be no certainty of its source, which will lead the authorities to tighten health security measures and implement the Plan DN-III, headed by the Ministry of National Defence (SEDENA) and the Navy (SEMAR), militarizing the country and limiting individual and collective rights. In the next few weeks, thousands of workers are very likely to lose their jobs, health and even lives.

In this context, the opportunist right-wing opposition to the AMLO government calls for tougher measures to halt all economic and social activity, accuses it of negligence and, through pressure on public opinion and its media, encourages a deepening of the economic and governance crisis to prepare the ground for them to return to power at the expense of the health of the population or the worsening of their social situation

The interests of the working class

and women at the centre

Our position goes beyond this polarization between those who defend this government and the right that attacks it, because we place at the centre the interests of the people, women and the working class, which at the moment means the unrestricted defence of life against the effects of the pandemic and the economic crisis that are already affecting the country. Although self-care, class solidarity and mutual support are measures that can prevent and mitigate some effects of this pandemic, it is necessary to analyse this social problem as a political problem, with its challenges and tasks.

For us and us it is of vital importance to guarantee free and quality access to health services for all the population that is in the national territory. For this, it is necessary to reorganize and strengthen the health system, increasing its budget, acquiring medical equipment, medications and tests to detect the disease, incorporating all the installed capacity, public or private, for free care.

Faced with the possibility of reducing economic activities, it becomes essential to defend employment rights, demanding full payment of wages and respect for union organizations and benefits while the stoppages caused by the health emergency.

For all in "informal employment" we demand that they be given an extraordinary income that is borne by the government and that does not represent the acquisition of loans or credits. It will also be essential to demand shelters, food and, where appropriate, care services for impoverished people and migrants who live from day to day.

A radical measure to obtain the necessary resources to face this national emergency is the immediate suspension of the payment of the foreign debt indefinitely, as well as the repudiation of illegitimate debt.

During the emergency, it is necessary to allocate sufficient resources to guarantee the right of women to a life free of violence and all their human rights. Recall that the "Fourth Transformation", in the current legislature, eliminated or reduced the budget in at least 20 national programs to support girls, adolescents and women, such as children's stays; and it has not yet released the indicative budget for shelters and care services against gender violence, which represents a greater risk in this quarantine.

As the past 8 March revealed on the streets, violence against women is a serious public and social health problem, to which the state has been unable to respond as a priority or eradicate. For this reason, in the face of this double pandemic (feminicidal violence and the coronavirus), in addition to the option of calling 911, Planificatel, Maternal Line, Life Line or psychological line, in case of violence or emergency, public policies are urged with a budget to really prevent, attend to, sanction and eradicate all types and modalities of violence. This becomes more pressing because the isolation and social confinement (gradual or forced) brought about by the pandemic can exacerbate and put women, adolescents and girls at even greater risk of experiencing violence within their homes by their partners and/or family members. . It should be remembered that the home is one of the spaces where a high degree of violence is exercised against women and girls, including sexual violence and feminicide (93% of cases of violence against women have a family member as an aggressor).

It is essential that in this emergency situation our care system does not fall on women and girls, who have historically served as caregivers, free of charge and precariously, by whom crises are cushioned at the cost of their physical, emotional and psychological health, deepening gender inequalities. We demand that the state and all levels of government promote the collective distribution of the tasks of social reproduction, housework and care of girls, boys, adults and the sick.

We reject the presidential discourse that stigmatizes and re-places the burden of social reproduction and care on women and girls. We demand that the state be responsible for guaranteeing measures to care for the population at this time, but we also call on society to commit to collective and fair care. It is urgent that the federal government's plan to deal with the COVID-19 emergency contains a specific gender perspective, since confinement measures will bring women a greater burden of work at home and care for sick people and a greater risk of losing employment or income due to their precarious, informal and unequal conditions, which is why public policies are urgently needed that truly respond to the problem of thousands of women being left without income, facing unemployment and extreme poverty.

The appeal to the employers' conscience to support women workers is insufficient, because we know that their economic interests and earnings are above our lives. In addition to the fact that a large part of the working population in precarious conditions, like domestic workers or those who live from informal or underemployed work, cannot protect themselves and stay at home, since they have to go out every day to earn a living, putting their health and life at risk. There are also no government programs to protect those living on the streets, or people affected by the 2017 earthquakes who have been living in overcrowding and homelessness for 30 months.

In other times of emergency, such as earthquakes, solidarity, fraternity and sorority organized from below has been presented as the way in which we recognize ourselves as equals, helping each other to get out of catastrophes. Now more than ever, we must prevent imposed social isolation from preventing this from flourishing.

The fight is against capitalism

Imperialism, business and right-wing groups are only concerned that, despite the health crisis, this economic system continues to benefit a few (less than 1% of the population)

and see the rest of the people as expendable and expendable. However, it is the workers who produce all the economic wealth, and satisfy our needs, social reproduction and the care that maintains social life. The working class is the productive force of society and we should not allow a few, taking advantage of this pandemic, to try to sacrifice us so that they continue living from our jobs and our lives. It is necessary to defend our lives, jobs and all our rights. No person should be left without a livelihood, suffer hunger, or be helpless, and that women and girls should not suffer more macho violence in the midst of this pandemic.

It is essential to maintain solidarity among the working class. In this economic and health crisis we must fight for a free public health system for all people, as well as for social justice against the inequality that prevails socially. If businessmen intend to continue expropriating the wealth we produce and take away our jobs, let us fight to expropriate the expropriators to organize an economy and a society that does not work for the profits of a few but to preserve and improve the lives of all.

Let's reject the classist, sexist, colonial, xenophobic, homophobic and racist discourses that recirculate social Darwinism or eugenics to strengthen authoritarian and fascist groups. Our fight to save and care for our lives is a fight to defend and improve our living conditions without inequality, exploitation or oppression.

If capitalism is attempting a planetary restructuring in the face of the current crisis, it is urgent to develop an anti-capitalist strategy, that is, a feminist, ecosocialist, anti-racist and anti-imperialist alternative.

28 March 2020

Translated by ***International Viewpoint*** *from PRT.*

Let's act for self-organization and against the coronavirus and the authoritarian temptations of the regime!

30 March 2020, by National Secretariat of the PST (Socialist Workers Party) Algeria

While the coronavirus pandemic is in full swing, with its daily share of new deaths, newly infected people, shortages and rising prices of food and sanitary products, the illegitimate and authoritarian regime, embodied by a president designated by the high hierarchy of the army, is taking advantage of this situation of pausing of the *Hirak* to impose on us, in the wake of the confinement, restrictions on our democratic and social rights, accentuating repression and imposing its political agenda on the Algerian people.

For the immediate release of all political detainees!

The unacceptable sentencing of political activist Karim Tabou, in conditions so terrible that he is said to have contracted a serious illness, is simply appalling. The continued imprisonment of political detainees, at a time when the people's *Hirak* incessantly demands their release, is another proof of the political bankruptcy of the regime which cannot tolerate freedom of expression or freedom of demonstration, or the reappropriation by the Algerian people of their sovereignty.

The police and judicial harassment of recent days against political activists, trade unionists and other activists, such as Yanis Adjlia and his comrades in Béjaia, or journalists like Khaled Derrarni, reflect the absolutely repressive nature of the current de facto regime. In the context of today, this escalation provides information about its true future intentions regarding our democratic freedoms and our economic and social rights. This is all the more reason to recall not only the imperative resumption of our *Hirak* as soon as possible, but also the need to qualitatively consolidate the popular revolutionary process of 22 February 2019.

Against the future constitution of Tebboune and his experts, let us impose a Sovereign Constituent Assembly!

Tebboune's reception of the constitutional amendments concocted by his commission of experts is just another attempt at strong-arming after the historic masquerade of the presidential election of December 12. Mimicking Bouteflika's anti-democratic process and his "3issaba" regime, Tebboune entrusts an eminently political question, such as the content of the future constitution, to a commission of constitutional law experts whom he has appointed himself. Excluding the Algerian people from any debate on this subject, the authoritarian and illegitimate de facto regime will use the illegitimate, rump and corrupt parliament of Bouteflika to approve these amendments. Then, if there is a referendum, the Algerian people will just have the right to say, under the control of the electoral commission which validated the farce of the last presidential election, "yes or no" to this future constitution which will be tailor-made for the class interests of those who dominated yesterday and imposed disastrous neoliberal policies on us, that is to say the employers, the oligarchs and the multinationals.

As for our aspirations for freedom, dignity, equality, social justice and sovereignty over our national wealth

and our socio-economic choices, we will have to continue the fight to enshrine them in another constitution. The one imposed by workers, young people, women and all the oppressed through Hirak and social and democratic struggles. Another constitution which will be drawn up, after a national, democratic and unhindered debate, by a Sovereign Constituent Assembly representative of our democratic and social interests and aspirations.

Let's act for self-organization and against the pandemic and the authoritarian temptations of the regime!

In these times of pandemic, workers and the poor, young people and women, forced to work or fend for themselves, to divert their wages or their annual vacation, to keep the children in cramped and precarious housing conditions, we must demand the closure of all businesses and services which are not strictly essential. Containment must apply to workers or it makes no sense. Wages must be maintained and the free distribution of basic food products in our neighbourhoods and villages. Trade unions and workers' collectives must exercise the right of withdrawal to protect their health. Protective equipment must be provided for ordinary people and especially for workers on the front line. Requisition of the private sector must be accelerated (hospitals, textiles, hotels, pharmaceutical industry and so on.)

Also, in this context of pandemic, containment and restoration of the curfew, it is more than ever imperative to intensify, in particular within the framework of solidarity and mutual aid against the coronavirus pandemic, the establishment of frameworks of self-organization and struggle initiatives, even if symbolic, through alternative actions to demonstrations and mass gatherings.

It is about keeping the flame of our popular *Hirak* lit for the defence of our freedoms and our social rights. It is about fuelling our new collective dream for the construction of a new democratic, social and egalitarian Algeria!
25 March 2020

A Medical, Economic and Social Crisis

25 March 2020, by Solidarity National Committee

On a global level, it seems highly likely that the panoply of viral diseases that human beings confront — from the old ones like the common cold, seasonal flu and measles to the newer H1N1 flu, SARS, MERS, HIV, Ebola and now "novel coronavirus" originated — either in the distant past or recently, with viruses jumping from animal to human hosts. In today's world system, the intrusion of human populations into animal habitats is ever increasing — in Asia, in Africa, in the Amazon and in North America too. This reality, along with the rapidity of international travel, makes such transfers more frequent and their dispersal much faster.

These facts throw into sharp relief the deadly deficiencies of existing medical systems. We can begin of course in the USA, with tens of millions of uninsured people and many more inadequately insured who can't afford co-pays and deductibles (especially when they're suddenly thrown out of work). It's entirely true that the choice, as a new slogan puts it, is "healthcare for all or coronavirus for all." The absolute minimum that's required to meet such a crisis is single-payer universal health insurance. In the absence of Medicare for All and guaranteed paid sick leave, hastily improvised half-solutions are being announced or legislated that inevitably have all kinds of gaps and inadequacies.

In reality, though, the global crisis reveals deeper shortcomings in medical systems. Even in countries with universal health care — take for example the cases of Italy and Canada — all too often their systems, however vastly superior to the mess in the United States, are embedded in a regime of "neoliberal" capitalism where social budgets and services are slashed.

This means that medical systems are inadequately funded, and in particular that "excess capacity" is to be avoided like the plague (forgive the expression). But excess capacity is exactly what's essential to meet medical emergencies — a surplus of beds, ventilators, surgical masks and other essential resources beyond what's normally required, because (unlike auto parts, for example) they can't be conjured up at the moment when suddenly needed. South Korea's efficient and massive testing system stands out as an exception to a generally dismal pattern.

Equally important, a "surplus" of trained medical personnel is also required, instead of doctors and nurses being overworked in "normal" times and overwhelmed when emergencies erupt. And funding for research, both basic and applied, needs to be ramped up without regard for a monetary payoff

That's why it's essential that not only health insurance, but health care itself be decoupled from the capitalist profit imperative. The development of therapeutics, for example, can't be entrusted to a private pharmaceutical industry that chooses whether or not to create a vaccine depending on whether it will be a sufficient moneymaker. Big Pharma should be nationalized so that the amazing fruits of publicly funded research are available to all, not treated as market commodities (e.g. whether treating a rare disease saves enough people to be "worth it").

Another sickness in a diseased system is the lying dishonesty of governments to protect their own interests. We've all witnessed the spectacle of Donald Trump talking about a "Chinese hoax" and then the "Chinese virus" (language endangering Asian

Americans on the street). The ultimate obscenity, perhaps, was Trump's attempt to contract with a German company to develop a vaccine for U.S. use only. But it's not only about Trump's antics and his complacency at the outset of the crisis. The Chinese regime, for its part, initially hid the outbreak from its population, targeting whistleblowers who tried to warn about it, before turning to mass coercive quarantining in Wuhan city and Hubei province. We don't even know the death toll from that practice. The existence of powerful governments that treat their citizens with cynical contempt is a global recipe for disaster.

On top of all this, we've only begun to think about the absolutely horrific potential impact of a pandemic on the most vulnerable populations. The million or so Uighurs held in "re-education" concentration camps in China provide one example. Countries like Iran and Venezuela, where crippling U.S. sanctions magnify the effects of government irresponsibility, are another. Massive refugee populations — think of northern Syria, or Rohingya camps in Bangladesh after the expulsion from Myanmar — could be utterly devastated. The entire continent of Africa, where the coronavirus is just now appearing, could be at risk. But right here at home, think about prison populations where social distancing is impossible, or the conditions in immigrant detention centers, or hundreds of thousands of homeless people without access to clean water let alone the capability of "self-isolation."

Associated with the Covid-19 outbreak, of course, is a global economic shock whose depth and duration can't be predicted. Going into 2020, the world economy was slowing down and primed for a recession. The circumstance that touched it off, the coronavirus explosion, has created a unique combination of both supply and demand crises at the same time. The "external" nature of the trigger makes the situation difficult to measure by conventional means.

For example, the massive boost that was supposed to result from the Federal Reserve's full one percent (100 basis points) interest rate cut seemed to turn into its opposite on Monday, March 16, when the Dow fell by an unheard-of 3000 points and the U.S. stock market as a whole is off by 12 percent. Was this the market's panicky no-confidence vote in the Trump administration, or a calculated expectation of how deep the downturn will become? It will take a while for any clear answer to emerge.

What does seem evident is that the Fed's tools for interest-rate manipulation have been exhausted, partly as rates had already been kept low to keep the stock market pumped up during Trump's reelection bid. What remains is "quantitative easing" — the Fed's purchase of Treasury bonds — on a scale that dwarfs what was done during the Obama administration (which the Republicans bitterly denounced at the time). Also pending are desperate government efforts to inject liquidity into the economy, perhaps with checks mailed to each household, or payroll tax deferrals (which would also be a stealth attack to starve Social Security).

Might the Trump administration be tempted to use a state-of-emergency national lockdown as a pretext to launch massive anti-immigrant raids or other extreme anti-democratic actions? Right now, there haven't been signs pointing toward this in the United States. But it's good to remain alert to all possibilities in times like these — remember the abuses under the pretext of the USA PATRIOT Act?

What kind of campaigns and demands are possible in this situation, when rallies, marches and organizing meetings are generally impossible and many activist communities are effectively in lockdown? One good list can be found in the Michigan Covid-19 Community Response policy demands and can be applied or adapted to specific local circumstances.

These are good immediate demands that the movement can unite and build around. It's also important to understand that the coronavirus is another urgent example of deeply interlocking and mutually reinforcing crises — along with the climate change catastrophe, the threat of nuclear annihilation, the contagion of authoritarian ethno-supremacist politics from the USA to India to Israel, extreme violence against women and Indigenous peoples — that require fundamental change. We have a world to lose — but one to win too.

18 March 2020

Source Solidarity.

Coronavirus threatens the lives of billions

25 March 2020, by James Fortin, Jeff Mackler

The World Health Organization's (WHO) tabulations as of March 18 indicate that more than 221,000 individuals in over 150 countries, spread across all continents, have contracted the disease. While over 9,000 deaths have been reported worldwide the actual number of people who have contracted the virus and remain asymptomatic is unknown, as is the actual number of deaths.

In addition to China, one of the hardest hit nations is Iran, where scientists estimate the rate and number of infections won't peak until May and by which time some 3.5 million people could die. Officially, Iran has reported just under a thousand deaths, but WHO officials believe the actual death toll could be five times higher.

Italy reported 375 new cases in the last 24 hours, with the death toll topping 3,000. A record 475 of these were reported in a single day, March

18!

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, addressing a mostly empty parliament last week, stated that 533 had died among nearly 12,000 confirmed cases. Spain, like an increasing number of nations, is under a nationwide lockdown.

All schools in the United Kingdom have been closed as Prime Minister Boris Johnson has discarded his previous spectacularly unscientific position, partially echoed by Donald Trump, wherein Johnson proposed allowing COVID-19 to take its "natural" course, as with the common flu, without government intervention — a moronic thesis that the contagion would soon burn out leaving behind a "naturally" immunized population!

In Latin America, where just a few days ago zero cases were reported, the Guatemalan government has temporarily suspended the arrival of U.S. deportation flights transporting Central American asylum seekers as part of an asylum agreement with the U.S. Needless to say the current racist ICE raids and mass deportations conducted against some 19 million undocumented immigrants must be stopped immediately, if for no other reason than to allow all afflicted people full and free access to treatment and to eliminate the need of immigrants to lead lives in a semi-underground manner.

In Africa, at least 30 nations — covering more than half the continent — have confirmed COVID-19 cases. Tunisia's president ordered a 12-hour nightly curfew. Ivory Coast has closed schools and joined other West African nations in barring flights from affected countries.

In the U.S. as of March 17, where some 5,000 cases have been reported as well as 108 deaths, researchers have warned that left unchecked COVID-19 could kill one to two million people in the months ahead.

Germany's Angela Merkel reported last week that as many as 70 percent of the entire German population could be afflicted.

At an estimated fatality rate of one to two percent, tens of millions could die in a relatively brief period of time. In a single month, October 1918, 195,000 Americans died during the worldwide influenza pandemic, the deadliest month in U.S. history. Some 500 million worldwide fell sick during this 15-month horror, which reduced the earth's population by 3.5 percent.

Epicenter of the health crisis

The epicenter of the viral contagion, the city of Wuhan in south Central China, has been the focus of ongoing urgent research by Chinese and international health authorities. At the onset of the epidemic, efforts by the Chinese government to unlock the genome of the virus – the virus's complete set of genetic instructions found in its DNA – were successful. In the spirit of international cooperation, China provided their findings to the entire scientific world. This will ultimately allow for the development of a vaccine, a likelihood still 6 to 12 months away. Seeking to corner the market on profits from the pandemic, however, President Trump is reported to have met with officials from a leading German research corporation to entice them to move to the U.S., where their expected vaccine profits would be under the exclusive control of the U.S.

Many unanswered questions remain regarding the virus and its spread. Data so far supports an incubation period of 5 to 14 days before infected parties show symptoms – a major challenge to keeping the disease contained. The viral impact and its mortality rate are greatest among older adults, the obese, and those with underlying conditions such as diabetes, cancer or other diseases that impair one's immune system.

After initial hesitation, the Chinese government began a mobilization of doctors, government workers, Communist Party members, and units of the Peoples Liberation Army and local police to carry out widespread screening of the population in the heavily impacted zones of Wuhan and its province, Hubei. Simultaneously, an initial quarantine of the town and province was implemented followed soon after by a near lockdown of the entire nation.

A prioritized, unprecedented effort began to construct hospitals for quarantine and treatment purposes using prefabricated sections. A workforce approaching 10,000 has been mobilized to work 24 hours a day. In this effort the 1,000-bed Huoshenshan Hospital was constructed and made operational in just 10 days. At another site 25 miles distant the Leishenshan Hospital with 1600 beds was built in two weeks. Numerous additional hospitals ranging from 50 to 1,000 beds have been built or are under construction. Hundreds of other public spaces across China have been converted for quarantine purposes as well.

So exhaustive has been the response to keep the virus contained that the head of the WHO has praised China for having "bought the world time" and that other nations should make the most of it. To date the reported number of new cases has been slowed to the point where a number of the new hospitals have been closed for lack of patients. The graphic "curve" registering the initial rapid rise in reported COVID-19 cases in China has been "flattened," according to some reports, but a crisis of major proportions remains.

Slanted coverage, revisited tropes in mainline news and right-wing social media.

Despite the massive campaign by the Chinese government to stop the spread of the virus, its efforts were met by the U.S. mainstream media with bias and derision. Day after day New York Times and Washington Post reporters criticized the Chinese government's strict quarantine measures as authoritarian. Yet a few weeks after pillorying China for these "draconian" measures, the U.S. government itself along with virtually all fifty states, if not the entire world,

has recommended and is increasingly implementing similar measures.

Nature of the current virus

At this moment, the WHO reports that the new coronavirus is a "close cousin" of viruses previously found in bats and likely transferred to small animals. The WHO thinks the current contagion in China possibly originated from people who came into contact with such animals being sold in a food market in Wuhan, and who in turn became transmitters of the virus to other humans. Still other evidence suggests that the earliest infections were in people not associated with the market and the viral jump from animals to humans occurred elsewhere.

This places the COVID-19 outbreak within the category of zoonotic diseases–those that can be transmitted between animals and humans. Scientists estimate this class of disease represents three-quarters of the newly emerging diseases currently affecting people. As with the Avian Influenza, HIV/AIDS, SARS, and Influenza H1N1, the new coronavirus spreads rapidly in an era of globalization and its accompanying travel and trade.

World science does not yet fully grasp the underlying causes of virus formation. It is suggested that ongoing deforestation around the world, including China, has been the result of the expanding need of capitalist-based industrial agriculture to find sufficient lands to grow crops profitably in that mode of production. The deforestation in turn, combined with human encroachment, has altered the existing ecosystems and displaced numerous species. This greater interaction between animals and people is occurring and with it a more serious opportunity for disease transmission.

At the same time a connection is being made between the origin and spread of infectious diseases and an international agribusiness that has bent science to its quest for greater, faster profits. Millions of industrial animals – poultry and pigs, particularly — are being produced with altered genetics, cramped into factory-like quarters, and then slaughtered and shipped long distances in ever-shorter periods of time. Accompanying these industrial farming practices of contemporary capitalist agriculture are the deadly pathogens that mutate and come out of the agri-factories. Today, science has already linked some of the most dangerous viral diseases in humans to modern day food systems, notwithstanding efforts by the U.S. government, which rushed to conceal such evidence during the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, shielding American agribusiness from charges of complicity.

Capitalist agribusiness has shown no interest in alternatives to its profitable production models. Only small segments of modern-day farming operations have experimented with alternatives promoting safety firewalls around our food supply. These include integrated pathogen management, mixed crop-livestock environments, strategic re-wilding and other tactics intended to keep pathogens from developing in the first place.

And Big Pharma, the giant largely monopolized conglomerates that dominate agribusiness and pharmaceutical manufacturing, has no interest in participating in efforts to find healthy and sustainable environmental solution when antiviral vaccines provide a handsome profit in their own right with orders from captive buyers such as governments, hospitals, and drug store chains. Big Pharma's need to advertise for customers, as they do with all sorts of other ailments identified on television, would be minimal with regard to COVID-19-like pandemics where expected profit rates can be expected to rise to unprecedented heights.

Cuba sets the example and leads the way

Most noteworthy, Cuba, even with its resources severely constrained by the U.S. embargo/blockade, can justly claim the moral high ground for cooperation and solidarity with victims of the coronavirus. Several years ago Cuba entered into a joint Chinese-Cuban effort to produce antivirals, a class of drugs that fight a virus's ability to replicate, while awaiting the development of actual vaccines. Sharing their technology with the Chinese a jointly operated facility was built and opened in China. One of the drugs, IFNrec, is now being employed by the Chinese National Health Commission to fight the coronavirus based on its effectiveness shown previously against viruses with characteristics similar to those of the COVID-19. Cuba's biomedical technology and social goals, unlike so much of the pharmaceutical world, is focused on the need to help viral victims, not the drive to make a profit.

Science at the service of society

In a socialist society, government institutions such as a National Institute for Health in the U.S. would gather and coordinate research scientists under its own roof. Scientific research would be conducted for the common good, not capitalist profit. All discoveries would be immediately made known to the scientific community worldwide. International collaboration and coordination as opposed to competition would be the norm. Patents and related measures to protect "intellectual property rights" would be deemed absurd and inimical to the interests of society. Funding and coordinating research would be public and massive with the resulting solutions and vaccines the common property of all humanity.

Free vaccines would be available to all via hospitals and clinics, workplaces, schools, and community centers. Gone would be the televised advertising bombardment for high-priced drugs from the U.S. pharmaceutical cartel where critical breakthroughs are sometimes suppressed because a healthy population is not conducive to profits!

In the past week alone reports from officials at the prestigious medical

research institutions at the University of California San Francisco and Stanford University indicated that the concerted and coordinated efforts of scientists there had managed to test some 50 known and approved drugs as to their possible effectiveness on COVID-19 in a matter of days, as opposed to a project that in the past would have taken over one year. While the axiom, "Necessity is the mother of invention" seems to apply without qualification in this particular instance, its operation in a profit driven capitalism system, where war and disease are good for profits, is flouted daily.

Growing national and international economic impact

In addition to the human tragedy widely unfolding, the domestic economy of China, and now the entire world, is taking major hits. The quarantines and lockdowns across Hubei province are preventing business-related travel as well as the movement of goods and workers. Areas where there has been infection, or the possibility of exposures, have kept people in their homes. Restaurants, amusements, shopping malls, transport providers and virtually most other establishments are experiencing a major negative impact. Within weeks China's experience has been increasingly replicated worldwide.

China is the world's largest manufacturer, and because of this role the entire world supply chain is being impacted, often in complex ways. With the globalization of capitalism many international companies are doubly affected, first by reduction of products being made for them in China where wages are lower, and then by reduced sales of finished goods to the up-to-now burgeoning Chinese domestic markets. China's exports range from parts and finished goods to the world's electronics sector, to every sort of part for the global motor industry, including assembled BMWs, to household furnishings and medical supplies, deliveries for all of which have been largely suspended.

Raw materials purchased overseas by China are being placed on hold as well causing additional disruption. Machine tool and construction equipment orders are significantly lagging. Oceanic transport has been stifled and air travel to and from China has been severely curtailed, with flights canceled by Delta, United, Lufthansa and British Airways.

Trump's March COVID-19 economic proposals

The various loopholes in last week's bi-partisan House of Representatives bill that supposedly provides extended relief for everyone, effectively excludes 80 percent from coverage. The aid package guarantees paid sick leave to less than 20 percent of American workers. It does not apply to companies with 500 or more employees, and workplaces with fewer than 50 employees can request to opt out. On March 17, the White House also ordered the suspension of evictions and foreclosures through April, although whether the president's decree has the force of law is questionable to say the least.

On March 18, now more aware of its previous passivity in the face of an imminent social disaster, the Trump administration announced a $500 billion proposal to grant all U.S. households a $1,000 payment, or perhaps two such payments. But Trump was quick to add that literally trillions of dollars more were in the government's immediate hopper in an effort to forestall what appears to be yet another great depression, exceeding in magnitude the financial collapse of 2008.

Economists are increasingly pointing to likely Eurozone, Japanese and U.S. recessions together with declining economies elsewhere. The U.S. casino capitalist stock market has taken its greatest hit since the Great Depression of 2008, with the Dow Jones industrial index losing some 9,000 points, or thirty percent, to date. The market's wild swings portend drastic declines in the world's GDP and massive layoffs of tens and hundreds of millions of workers.

The closure of all U.S. auto plants with no guarantees to laid off workers was met by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka with a demand that all laid off workers receive their full wages and benefits. Trumka's demand represented a substantial break with the AFL-CIO's past "partnership/collaboration" with the barons of industry that always subordinated workers' interests to capitalist profits. His new demand will undoubtedly be carefully scrutinized by union workers when future opportunities for effective fightbacks inevitably appear.

Ruling class bailouts continue with abandon

As with the Great Depression of 2008, governments worldwide, at the behest of their ruling classes have reduced borrowing interest rates to near zero. Allowing corporations to borrow virtually free money they reinvest once again in speculative financial ventures having little or nothing to do with improved infrastructure projects associated with job creation, hoping to pocket greater profits. Incredibly, these billions and trillions of dollars pumped into financial markets are matched by multi-trillion dollar bailouts and tax breaks to the same corporate elites. Each near-daily announcement of these government pledges to the rich, based on the issuance of computer-generated government bonds, is aimed to stem the panic of the elite whose paper fortunes evaporate to the tune of $trillions, sometimes daily. Meanwhile the most elementary aspects of survival for the vast majority from the pathogenic onslaught are largely absent – from the availability of protective gloves, to face masks, sanitizing hand swipes, and mass testing, to basic life-saving medical devices like ventilators.

The unpredictable future

The proverbial chickens have come home to roost. The international capitalist system has registered only minimal efforts to solve the problem of infectious viral diseases. In this century alone the planet has encountered over two dozen new strains and "near nothing real was done about any of them," according to Dr. Rob Wallace, author of the groundbreaking book, Big Farms Make Big Flu: Dispatches on Infectious Disease, Agribusiness, and the Nature of Science. Monthly Review Press, 2016.

How long it will take to bring the current pandemic to a halt is the major social, political and economic question posed before the entire world. It is doubtful that the world capitalist-imperialist behemoth will prove capable, amassing the resources to once and for all tame these terrible contagions. Indeed, the Trump administration cut funding for pandemics like COVID-19 to the tune of $15 billion! At a time when the combined scientific research capacities of the world are overwhelmingly allocated to endless varieties of military research, to the detriment of health and medical investigation, prospects for rapid progress are dim to say the least.

In the context of a highly monopolized military-industrial complex, endless wars are the most profitable of all capitalist enterprises. Mass destruction of nations' entire infrastructure in the ongoing seven wars presently waged by the U.S., along with drone wars, Special Operations death squad wars, privatized mercenary army wars, and militarily-enforced sanction wars, make for the highest profit rates on earth. The U.S. sanctions on Venezuela alone cost the lives of an estimated 50,000 Venezuelans. And this was before the present COVID-19 pandemic.

The U.S. trillion dollar annual military expenditures accounts for 68 percent of the all government discretionary spending. This undeniable insanity was recently evidenced when the Trump administration waited until just a few days ago to scale back on sending 30,000 U.S. troops to participate in European Union "war games," that is, practice for anticipated real wars to come. When most nations on earth are imposing absolutely necessary travel restrictions, the U.S. imperialist beast, ignoring the potential to expose additional millions to contamination of COVID-19, only recently and in the face of worldwide condemnation, decided to "scale back" its war games.

The right to be free from infectious diseases is a prime expectation of all humanity. When governments fail in this critical arena their excuses no longer find receptive ears. Anger, voiced rightful indignation, and civil outbursts begin to occur. How this pandemic will play out amidst the growing international radicalization is a question on the table for all of us.

Serious socialist activists and working class fighters will prioritize the following demands:

• **Free quality healthcare for all.**

• Nationalize the health care system and scientific research institutions and place them under the control of working people not the corporate profiteers.

• $Trillions now for critical medical supplies and equipment, free COVID-19 tests, food for the hungry and housing and care for the homeless.

• Bail out the working class not the corporate elite. $Trillions for full pay and benefits for all workers who lose their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

• A national moratorium on all evictions, foreclosures, rent, mortgage and utility payments and debt payments.

• Abolish ICE and close all deportation centers. No deportations. No human being is illegal.

• Empty the prisons. Rehabilitation, not racist and classist mass incarceration.

• Not one penny for imperialist war, deadly sanctions, embargos and blockades.

• $Trillions for a rapid conversion from the present deadly fossil fuel-based energy system to a clean sustainable nationalized system under workers control to preserve life on earth itself.

• Close all military bases and convert them to free hospitals for all.

• End racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, LGBTQI and senior citizen discrimination.

20 March 2020

*Source **Socialist Action**.*

Theses on the Left and the corona crisis

25 March 2020, by Jan Willem Stutje, Paul Mepschen, Willem Bos

2. Internationally, we are only at the beginning of the corona-pandemic. After China, the coronavirus mainly struck Western Europe, but its spread is rapid and as the infection reaches the refugee camps in the Middle East and Southern Europe, and the slums in Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America the consequences will be enormous. The health care system in these countries cannot cope with an explosive increase in infections, especially not in metropolises of ten to twenty million inhabitants, where people live in close proximity to each other.

3. The economic effects of this crisis

are enormous. We will be facing not only the economic impact of the pandemic in itself, which will be considerable, but also the fact that the pandemic is acting as a trigger for a recession/crisis that has been lurking for some time. A global increase in inequality and growing impoverishment is on the horizon. The most vulnerable groups will be hit hardest.

4. It is no coincidence that new viruses such as MERS, SARS, H1N1, Zika, Ebola have been appear-ing with an ever-increasing frequency in recent years. This has everything to do with neoliberal glob-alisation, with a sick and sickening system of food production dominated by agro-industry and the destruction of natural ecosystems, particularly of primary forests.

5. The pharmaceutical industry, dominated by 'big pharma', is focused on making profit. It is therefore more interested in developing drugs for relatively small groups of wealthy patients than in developing preventive drugs against diseases that affect large groups of poor people. Major cuts have been made in fundamental independent research at universities, including in the Netherlands. Promising research programs have been discontinued. As long as there is no outbreak, research into viruses is hardly a priority for the pharmaceutical industry. Long-term planning is necessary - but the market is not able to provide this.

6. The spread of the virus and its development into a pandemic was made possible in part by the heavy cuts in curative and preventive healthcare and by the wave of privatizations of recent decades. As a result, there is a lack of sufficient stocks of basic public health services, such as intensive care beds, respiratory equipment, testing equipment and even of mouth caps. Due to the lack of testing in the Netherlands, the rest of Europe and the US, an approach based on sufficient test data such as was applied in South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore was impossible. This led to further proliferation.

7. In the event of such a serious crisis, rapid and decisive action by the government is necessary. After forty years of austerity measures, privatization, market forces and political arrogance, governments are insufficiently prepared and equipped for a crisis of this magnitude. In addition, the government mainly protects vested interests. Support for corporations and industries is given priority over support for those who are least able to defend themselves: the homeless, refugees, migrant workers, the elderly living alone, self-employed, and precarious workers. Especially women and people of colour working in care, in cleaning and in domestic work will bear the burden of the consequences of the epidemic and the measures taken.

8. Government intervention in crises like this is necessary. A government ought to protect the population by promulgating certain regulations and distributing scarce resources. But, apart from the fact that the measures taken are selective, they often came too late. This was the case in the Netherlands with the closure of schools, with the start of test programs and with the measures that make 'social distancing' possible. Nevertheless, we have to face the fact that authoritarian measures can in the long run fundamentally change the relationship between citizens and the state. A crisis of this magnitude is an ideal opportunity to press ahead with all kinds of measures that would be impossible under 'normal' circumstances – measures such as extreme forms of control, security and surveillance. This is what Naomi Klein calls 'shock therapy'. It is important to protect society, to protect democratic and social rights. This requires a critical attitude and massive initiatives 'from below' in order to make new forms of solidarity, resistance and democratic control possible.

9. The coronavirus makes no distinction according to skin colour. Anyone can be infected by it. The severity of the disease depends on several factors: age, but also social class and individual condition and health. The corona virus is colour blind, but the societies which it afflicts are not. The virus hits people of colour especially hard because they are proportionally poorer, live in worse conditions, have fewer opportunities to distance themselves from others, and have less access to health care. With this crisis we are facing the reinforcement of racism and of xenophobia. The description of corona as 'a foreign virus' (Trump) and discrimination and violence against people with an Asian background are expressions of this. For right-wing populists and post-fascists, this crisis situation - with the fear and frustration that come with it - is an ideal breeding ground for their poisonous ideas about 'us' and 'the other', about the need for authoritarian leadership and for closing borders.

10. The left makes a mistake if it would think that all this is going to end sometime soon and that it can stick to its usual priorities and ways of working. The left must carefully analyse the specific links between this crisis and the DNA of the capitalist system. Both the direct causes - namely the profit-driven global agro-industry and the role of multinational and agro-industrial companies - and the causes of the spread of the epidemic, namely the breakdown of health systems and the role of 'big pharma'. The government's crisis policy must also be critically examined. It is clear that the danger of this virus has been underestimated and that measures came too late or were half-hearted. To face the crisis, insufficient medical and other capacity was freed up.

11. In the fight against the crisis, the left has to start from the interests of the afflicted and the most vulnerable - and not from safeguarding the political and economical interests of the rich. This implies the immediate transfer into community hands of the entire health infrastructure, the socialisation of private clinics, of medical supplies and of all facilities and services and personnel that can be deployed to provide assistance to the victims and prevent a further spread of the virus.

12. For the most vulnerable groups: refugees, homeless people, migrant workers, people with psychiatric problems, people (in particular women and children) who are victims of or at risk of (domestic) violence - and

vulnerable people from LGBTIQ communities - safe accommodation should be arranged, for example in vacant hotels, business premises and in other suitable places. Evictions or sanctions for rent arrears and the closure of facilities for non-payment must be prohibited. Irrespective of their health insurance, everyone should have free access to all necessary medical facilities, medicines and protective equipment. For people in prison and captivity, specific measures must be taken to protect their health.

13. All workers must be provided with sufficient protective means and be enabled to take the necessary precautions against contamination, as demanded by Dutch trade-union central FNV. Any workplace where this is not the case must be closed by the workers themselves, with their full wages being paid. The strike by Italian workers in the car industry is an example of such necessary social struggle. All workers in non-essential production and services should have the right to cease work without losing full pay.

14. Anyone who, as a result of the crisis or measures taken in the context of the crisis, becomes wholly or partially unemployed or loses income must be fully compensated in order to protect purchasing power. Salaries in vital sectors such as health and education must be drastically increased. This applies first and foremost to salaries of cleaners, nurses and ambulance staff and of other underpaid work.

15. Partly due to the need to keep a distance from each other, all kinds of socio-cultural institutions and even food banks have closed down and people are becoming isolated. We see the emergence of initiatives to help and support victims of the virus, to help people in isolation and care workers. By running errands, looking after children, taking over certain tasks or simply by maintaining contact. Such initiatives deserve all our praise and support. Civil society organizations, trade unions and social movements must work to defend society and to support and develop forms of self-organization that are consistent with the necessary precautions. Solidarity is our main weapon in this crisis.

16. There are similarities between the corona crisis and the climate crisis. The causes lie in an economic system driven by the hunger for profit and characterized by exploitation of labour and nature. It is a global economic system that produces a break between economy and ecology. A number of measures that should have been taken earlier are now being taken in an improvised fashion. Examples are restricting air traffic and commuting between home and work as well as the cancelling of spectacles that waste money and energy, such as Formula 1 races. At the same time, many of the measures necessary for the transition to a carbon-free and green economy have not yet been taken. We have to fight for a society in which such measures become systematic and structural, to make sure that - when the corona crisis is over - capitalism will not simply return to normal.

22 March 2020

Translated by Alex De Jong for ***International Viewpoint*** *from* ***Greenzeloos****.*

Statement by Socialist Resurgence on Covid-19

25 March 2020, by Socialist Resurgence National Committee

As of March 24, confirmed cases of coronavirus have skyrocketed to over 410,000 around the world. The largest case number is still in China, but whereas the increase in Chinese cases has slowed to the double digits, that of the United States reported more than 13,000 new cases on March 23 alone. The death toll in Italy has surpassed that of China, and already the rest of Europe is beginning to mirror the Italian situation. Germany, France, and the Spanish state are all right behind Italy in new daily confirmed cases, well over 3500 each and rising. The next country to approach these titans of commerce is Iran, with slightly over 1000 new cases each day at the time of writing.

Economic roots of coronavirus catastrophe

Capitalism is a system in which the whole body of social production is controlled on the one hand by a vanishingly small class of parasites, and on the other, broken up into an endless number of mutually competing companies, trusts, and states. Each of these actors is constantly doing everything in its power to have a higher rate of profit or return on investment than the others. The result of the fundamental workings of this system based on the class exploitation of workers by capitalists has had multiple effects that worsen the COVID crisis.

Pioneer evolutionary biologist Rob Wallace and Marxist author Mike Davis have both shown that the conditions for modern worldwide pandemic, whether coronavirus or flu, are greatly amplified by the fundamental processes of capitalism. Due to its drive to exploit nature to the fullest and maximize all of its investments, capital has destroyed a sizable portion of the world's forests, either by clearing space for agribusiness and livestock rearing or to utilize natural resources to their total depletion. Often these occur at the same time, meaning that livestock, whose living conditions mirror that of

the assembly line, are in closer and closer proximity to previously unheard of strains of animal diseases manifesting in what was previously deep in the forest. These factors, deforestation and high-density factory farms, create the conditions under which global pandemics are almost a certainty. They also happen to be drivers for the massive wildfires that the world has seen in the last decade.

Competition drives capital deeper and deeper into land that was previously geographically distant from the worldwide circuits of trade. This causes the outbreak of diseases like novel coronavirus and connects them to the world economy. Since the stock market depends on expectation of both short and long-term profitability, individual capitalists and capital as a whole purposefully blind themselves to anything that could cause a major slow-down in profits. That latter fact is the reason the response from virtually all governments has been slow and ineffective. Whereas the world outside China had several months to prepare for the spread of the disease, the dangers were downplayed in order to avoid the suggestion that production and commerce might have to be curtailed, thus precipitating a panic among investors in the stock market.

Slowing down the initial spread of COVID would have meant paying for massive testing campaigns in every country as soon as the virus was identified in China. In itself, this act would have meant large payments for doctors and equipment, not to mention the inevitable slowdowns in production as workers test positive and choose to self-quarantine. A rational response to the virus means workers and their dependents must not engage in productive activity while also being sustained in all of the necessities of life.

In normal conditions, capital begrudgingly pays workers a wage in exchange for a greater amount of labor than they pay for, which is realized as profit. In conditions that are either to prepare for a pandemic or in the midst of one, workers, and the whole of society, need to be supported without capitalists exploiting their labor. Instead, we have seen continuous lies, inaction, and hesitation in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. Even today, the countries that are being hit the hardest—especially the United States, Italy, the Spanish state, France, and Germany—are all keeping the factories and retail up and running while barring workers freedom of movement in public life.

Every demand that has a hope of creating a humane response to this pandemic directly contradicts the fundamental relationships at the center of capitalism. Food and basic necessities need to be distributed freely and on a door-to-door basis. Housing, utilities, and health care need to be funded out of the collective surplus produced by humanity rather than on an individual basis. These realities directly pose questions such as: What is the purpose of the landlord? Why are the banks in the service of the owners and not the great masses of working people? What class should be in control of directing the state?

The technical means of mitigating the crisis exist, but they are not profitable. All economies could be put on a war footing to produce new hospitals, medical supplies, and even use the opportunity to begin a massive build-out of green infrastructure. Workers made unemployed must have all their needs met. Workers still on the job need hazard pay, safety equipment, and guarantees for their families. Instead, the first discussions for bailout are oil and gas production and airlines. Automobile and weapons factories are still running, with thousands of workers in close proximity on assembly lines.

Capital responds by strengthening the nation-state

Despite the international nature of the crisis, a major response from all capitalist countries so far has been to invoke foreign travel bans. In a context that has seen Brexit and rising nationalism throughout Europe, not to mention the “Build the Wall” mantra of Trump and anti-Muslim pogroms in India, border closures are not so much a workable response to fight the virus as a method to target immigrants and national minorities. Virtually all scientific studies agree that border control and travel bans are incapable of stopping the spread of the virus. If anything, nationalist travel bans are slowing down coordinated international aid efforts.

Along with shutting down borders, COVID has also brought with it a frontal attack against immigrants and refugees. Since March 1, Greece has closed all land and sea entry from adjacent countries and is fostering both state and vigilante attacks against migrants. The incidences are getting quite extreme, with reports of beatings and live ammunition being used to attack asylum seekers. Detention camps are limiting their hours, supposedly to stop the spread of the virus but really increasing the likelihood of severe clusters appearing in migrant camps whose residents have no freedom of movement.

In the United States, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has continued raiding houses and detaining undocumented people. The government has said that it will even continue the practice of ICE entering into hospitals, although it will “try to avoid” doing so. Similarly, the Spanish state maintains its detention centers and keeps aid, unemployment, and other basic necessities out of the hands of undocumented workers. Every European country is maintaining these xenophobic practices that not only further penalize migrant workers but also threaten the health of the entire global community by denying millions of people access to medical infrastructure and treatment.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine continues through this crisis, and decades of bombing hospitals threaten to create a new explosion in the “largest open air prison” that is Gaza. The occupation has always targeted Palestinians’ ability to give and receive medical aid, and this pandemic is a ticking time bomb if that access continues to be denied. Similarly, the system of checkpoints in the West Bank and the lesser-status of “Israeli” Arabs means that Palestinians, and likely non-white Jews, who are seeking

medical service will be deprioritized.

Amidst its death throes as the single great power in the world, the United States has made its mark on the world through its terroristic use of sanctions. The U.S. government and its partners in Europe are actively keeping medical and other humanitarian supplies from Iran and Venezuela. The deaths in the former are piling up because of U.S. imperialism's desire for global geopolitical dominance. Instead of using their incredibly high levels of productivity to coordinate an international effort to make sure there are sufficient hospital beds and equipment everywhere in the world, the choice of the so-called "developed" countries is to crank up the death and suffering.

Whereas the capitalist countries are using COVID-19 as an excuse to strengthen nationalist postures, Cuba shows that an international crisis requires an internationalist solution. Cuba has responded not by shutting itself off from the world but by taking in a cruise ship for treatment and sending doctors to help other countries fight coronavirus. The Cubans realize that even with their relatively limited resources, solidarity is the key to winning the battle against this pandemic. Every country can follow the Cuban example by not shutting down its borders but exporting the maximum amount of aid. If coordinated on a global scale, this would also allow different countries to focus on producing specific implements and therefore allow benefits of scale and specialization take effect.

Capitalism in decay

Some 175 years ago, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels pointed out that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas." In the epoch of capitalism in decay, this means that despite dazzling heights of scientific achievement, even basic science is ignored and marginalized. Concretely, governments have been defunding institutions of research, meaning that disease prevention is in the hands of big capital and finance. The total unpreparedness, and even unreality, being shown by capitalist governments is a reflection of this fact.

In the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson took the position of fostering "herd immunity" until quite recently. Johnson's vision of infecting a majority of the population right now, so that the virus' peak would pass and business could restart at a normal level sooner, is shared by a whole section of capital. The "herd immunity" plan of action would lead to multitudes of more deaths than necessary and overburden the British National Health Service in an almost unfathomable way.

Capital justifies this view by arguing that only the weak will die. We see that people deemed unprofitable—such as pensioners and disabled people—are worthy of death in its eyes. A complete humanitarian catastrophe is worth the price if capitalist accumulation can have even a slight hope of a faster return to normalcy.

Years of cuts to scientific research, aided by monopolization of vaccine production by a handful of giant companies, has left capitalist medical science in a situation of continuous deterioration. As physical production is atomized more and more in the line of the just-in-time model, so too is intellectual production. Anything that does not have to do with the immediate problem at hand for capital, always this or that immediate question of increasing profitability, does not deserve to be studied. Hence, even amidst the coronavirus crisis the French university system is facing giant funding cuts and the US Center for Disease Control continues to have its budget slashed.

The United States and the Spanish state have been closing down hospitals en masse as finance capital takes ever greater hold of their medical systems. Capital in France, the Spanish State, Italy, the UK, and the United States, the first four despite their universal healthcare systems, have been unwilling to roll-out the massive testing and public information campaigns necessary to slow the virus without lockdown. All countries will find that after years of cuts and privatizations to social services, their medical systems will be totally overwhelmed. Italy is already showing this fact even in Lombardia, which has one of the best medical infrastructures in the world.

Homelessness, migrant camps, and informal housing have all grown up with increasing rapidity over the last half-century of neoliberal attacks on the global working class. The situation is especially combustible in the United States, Greece, and around the continent of Africa. Immediate freeing and housing of all non-violent, political, and medically compromised prisoners and the closure of immigrant detention centers must happen to protect these victims of the capitalist state. The homelessness crisis can be solved in the short term through requisitioning state property and hotels, as is shown concretely by what is happening in California. In the longer term, there must be a massive program to create green infrastructure and housing for all homeless people.

Austerity caused the crisis

Relatively fast responses from South Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, and Thailand have shown that what is really causing the severity of the pandemic is not the virus itself but the international class forces acting on the social structure.

To take one quick example, South Korea's response has been shaped with the living memory of the democratic and workers' upsurge in 2015-2016 known as the "Candlelight" movement and the historically high level of class struggle in the country. The latter factor, entailing a long history of strikes and especially combative trade unions, is the reason that even amidst an IMF bail-out in the late 1990s, South Korea achieved a universal health-care system and one of the highest general standards of care in the world. The Candlelight movement was a broad mass movement supported by the traditionally militant Korean

Confederation of Trade Unions. Ultimately, the South Koreans unseated President Park Geun-hye through their mobilizations. The movement was against government corruption in general, but one of the particular sparks that led to its explosion was the mishandling and state cover-up of the MERS infection. If conditions were only slightly different, the situation in South Korea in 2015 could have been very similar to that in Italy today.

Care by the Korean National Institute of Health, along with other more meager benefits, are allotted to the working class partially due to fear from the capitalists of a new wave of combativity, and partially as a concession to maintain the extreme levels of precarity that many workers face. The current president, Moon Jae-In, is himself a physical representative of this supposed compromise, coming into office after the Candlelight movement on a promise of designating "irregular" workers as regular in return for labor peace. So far, the workers have been relatively calm, but they are still "irregular."

The political situation in South Korea is the reason why they have been able to meet the pandemic on more or less firm ground. Fearing an explosion and loss of legitimacy on a much larger scale than what followed the MERS outbreak, the government has been forced to act quickly and resolutely to combat the spread of COVID. It is surely looking to keep productivity as high as possible while the rest of the world is in crisis, hence seeking an aggressive alternative to lockdown.

Private property impedes response

Although the world is largely still at the beginning of this pandemic, capitalist control of production is already showing itself to be a brake on fighting the coronavirus. On an international level, different national capitals are attempting to monopolize production of therapeutics and the eventual vaccine. One of the most promising palliatives (drugs that can reduce or eliminate symptoms but not a "cure") that is being tested is called remdesivir, whose production is currently patented by the U.S. pharmaceutical company Gilead. A double fight has broken out in China as a local biotechnology firm, BrightGene Bio-Medical Technology, has been stopped from mass-producing the drug. The reasons for BrightGene's cease and desist orders are that they do not hold a patent and have not been approved by the state. For its part, BrightGene had the same plan as any other capitalist company, to patent the medicine where it can and maximize its own profits.

A secret bidding war of sorts emerged between the German and U.S. governments over the German company CureVac, which is hoping to develop an experimental vaccine ready for trials by July. The United States government is funding multiple pharmaceutical companies in relation to the crisis but is not making all of them public.

As in pharmaceuticals, so in machines. The British firm Intersurgical refused to give specifications on desperately needed respirator parts to Italian engineers who had found a way to mass produce them through 3D printing. The story is the same with much medical equipment, in which the last decades of strengthening intellectual property rights have meant that respirators and other life-saving tools are impossible to fix due to proprietary software locks and the like.

Climate destruction

The coronavirus pandemic cannot be separated from the general environmental crisis that we are experiencing. Deforestation, factory farming, and destruction of traditional relationships with land are contributing factors of the first order to both processes. At the same time, it is important to realize that the worst possible impact of a total non-response to the virus would pale in comparison to the climate catastrophe that we know is coming within the next decade if decisive action is not taken. Of course, to say this is not to call for inaction in fighting COVID-19; instead we must learn from capitalism's response to both of its crises.

In the first place, this pandemic shows that capitalism is fundamentally incapable of preparing for international crises, much less ones on the scale of the coming disasters. Entire fields of study are devoted to detailing the reality of pandemics, involving huge international commissions like the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, which gave warnings about the effects of climate change and other environmental dangers for decades. Yet despite a wealth of warnings, including ones that displayed full awareness of the inevitable impact of either global pandemic or climate change, the capitalist response has been reactive and largely carried out on the scale of individual nation states rather than the necessary international scale.

Secondly, the measures put in place to fight coronavirus—tragically delayed but still far more rapid than the response to climate change—has shown that humans are fully capable of restructuring the whole of our productive activity to try to meet a crisis. The tepidness and fear with which most countries have responded to COVID-19 show only that capitalism fears any slowdown of its expansion more than it fears massive death and suffering. Still, the response as it is unfolding includes retooling production, massive upscaling to produce medical supplies, and shutting down "unnecessary" aspects of the economy.

Lastly, quarantined areas, some of the most industrialized in the world, have seen emissions drop between 25-50%. Along with the fact that people are not generally starving in the fallout of the pandemic, there is no more dramatic proof that the climate crisis is fundamentally a crisis of capitalism. Simply focusing our lives away from the maximum production of profit has already made a dramatic change in the human impact on climate change.

The moment must be seized for a massive build-out of green and renewable infrastructure. Keep the airplanes down; replace them with

domestic and international high-speed rail. Nationalize the energy sector with no compensation, and use it only to fuel the immediate construction of wind and solar fields to replace all oil, natural gas, and coal power within five years. These actions must be taken to allow the drop in pollutants to continue to reach a sustainable point.

Authoritarian tendencies are augmented

In response to its own initial non-response, the capitalist class is being forced to take measures through its state apparatus that necessitate a severe curtailing of movement by working people. Already, Trump is setting the tone for all bourgeois states by suspending union elections and continuing ICE raids into the pandemic. Israel and Singapore are using the crisis to expand their already extensive systems of spying. Instead of providing medical aid for the population, capitalists are taking the opportunity to roll back civil liberties for working people and extend "anti-terrorism" initiatives. Bolivia's post-coup "president," Jeanine Añez, announced on March 17 that police and military troops will use force on citizens in order to enforce restrictive measures against the virus.

Even on its own terms, the turn towards authoritarianism does nothing to slow the virus. While monitoring the movement of the working class, shutting down meetings, and carrying out a heavy program of repression against people who venture out of their house for personal reasons, the capitalist state is forcing workers into sectors that are totally inessential in this time of crisis. In Italy, where the confirmed spread of the virus is highest after China, industrial production is just now (March 24) being slowed down, a full 20 days after the initial orders to "lockdown" the country.

Anti-Chinese racism

While COVID emerged in China and the Chinese government was negligent in its initial response to the disease, this has absolutely nothing to do with the ruling-class weaponization of the coronavirus scare against people of Asian descent. In fact, similar viruses have emerged in North America, South America, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. These cases through pure luck did not become global pandemics. The fundamental causes of these diseases are due to factory farming, deforestation, and capitalist inaction. Despite this, capitalist politicians have launched campaigns to divert anger away from themselves and toward people of Chinese and more broadly Asian descent.

The tactic of spreading racial hatred is present in the capitalists of all countries, but the most emblematic example is Donald Trump. Trump, who lied about the virus' severity in order to protect himself and capital's short-term profits, is now scrambling to find a response to the crisis. Confused and exposed, he is constantly trying to shift the fault behind the U.S. situation to both the Chinese government and the Chinese people. Amidst an ongoing trade war with China, the scapegoating comes after a year-long build-up of U.S.-aligned ruling class animosity towards the Chinese. While the real conflict is between capitalist powers, the effect has been to divide the working class. Workers have no stake in the inter-imperialist rivalry, and we must reject every instance and attempt of using the coronavirus to turn us against each other.

This is labor's fight to win

Without militancy, the working class stands to have more and more of its rights trampled on under the guise of preventing the spread of coronavirus. On the one hand, clear delineation needs to be made by trade unions, working-class parties, and social movement organizations about what is really scientifically necessary to fight the pandemic. On the other, every opportunity to fight the bosses for better conditions, higher wages, and bold programs of action must be taken to not lose momentum or get stuck in an unnecessarily defensive posture.

Capital is attempting to get every last ounce of surplus value out of the working class, coronavirus be damned. Big car manufacturers all over the world have been attempting to stay open with virtually no safety measures. In the U.S., most plants shut down in mid-March, though the giant BMW SUV factory in South Carolina plans to keep production humming until April 3, when the company expects that a shortage of parts will cause it to become idle. In Italy, the Spanish State, and the U.S., auto workers struck against being forced to work in dangerous positions at plants producing FIAT, GM, Ford, Mercedes, and other major brands. These actions are being mirrored in retail trade, transportation, and many other sectors. They show that even in this desperate situation, the working class holds the solution to capitalism's insanity.

Trade unions and workers' parties around the world have the opportunity to show clear leadership and vision in this time of crisis. Where the capitalists force workers into unsafe factories, buses, and stores, workers have taken their own initiative to say no and go on strike. Now is the time for the unions to organize coordinated inter-sectoral strikes against unsafe conditions and for workers' rights. Instead of waiting for the government to order retooling to meet medical needs, the trade unions can begin to call for massive social works projects to meet the crisis, and where capital is reluctant, begin to organize for it. The labor movement also has the ability to be the center of education through multimedia projects and campaigns that share workers' stories internationally, give regular updates from unionized medical professionals, and inform the whole labor movement about victories and solidarity campaigns against the bosses and their states.

The unions must become defenders of the entire working class—organized and unorganized. An urgent task

facing the workers movement is the building of mass organizations of the unemployed to demand housing, incomes, an end to foreclosures, and a national health-care system.

Ultimately, the needs of the working class cannot be met under capitalism. The workers' movement must put forward a militant class-struggle program aimed at rallying working people to replace the current governments of the bosses and their parties with revolutionary anti-capitalist governments that are fully representative of the working class and its allies, and that act directly to fulfill their needs.

A program of action and solidarity

Capitalism stands totally disgraced. Even amidst a global pandemic and the coming ecological collapse, the ruling class in every country is trying to save its own profits at the expense of humanity. Workers have nothing at all to gain from supporting the capitalists, their programs, or their parties. Instead, working people must put forward our own solutions to the crisis and struggle with every weapon we have to achieve them. We call for:

•Â Centralized, international commissions of doctors and engineers to coordinate a global response to the pandemic!

•Â Retool all non-essential production to provide medical and safety equipment and begin a massive build-out of green infrastructure!

•Â No bans, no walls, amnesty for all immigrants and refugees, with full citizenship rights now!

•Â Democratic decision-making carried out through public discussion on all restrictions of movement!

•Â Free housing, food, and medical care throughout the crisis! Pay for it through the military budgets, with 100% tax on all income over $250,000!

•Â Hazard pay of at least 200% for all workers and full implementation of workplace safety measures! Completely free child care now! Stop all foreclosures, freeze all rents and mortgages, and stop all evictions for the duration of this crisis!

•Â Evacuate the prisons! Free all non-violent, immuno-compromised, and elderly prisoners, and provide quality housing!

•Â Drastically increase funding for domestic violence resources and education! No one stuck in quarantine with an abuser!

•Â Decrease hours without a decrease in pay for all who must work! All the necessities for those who are not working!

•Â Abortion is an essential service! Free and safe access for all who need it!

•Â Aid, not sanctions! Reparations for colonized countries now! Cancel all imperialist debt!

• Removal of all imperialist troops from the neo-colonial world; re-assign them for immediate use in aid efforts!

• No bailouts for big business or the banks! Nationalize production and finance under democratic workers' control!

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*Source **Socialist Resurgence**.*