

Capitalism's coronavirus catastrophe

written by Stephen Millies
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Philadelphia-area nurses are preparing to strike to demand safe conditions for patients and health-care workers.

[Wall Street's war machine](#) includes 11 aircraft carriers and 5,800 nuclear weapons. Yet the capitalist government in the United States is helpless to combat the latest coronavirus surge.

Daily cases have soared to 180,000 with over a thousand deaths per day. Hospitals throughout the Midwest are being overwhelmed. New York City is close to closing its public schools again.

None of this was inevitable. Donald Trump has blood on his hands. By sabotaging absolutely necessary public health measures — like wearing masks and practicing social distancing — Trump guaranteed thousands of more deaths.

The Trump regime follows decades of cutbacks and privatizing government programs. Hundreds of hospitals have closed with tens of thousands of hospital beds lost. Now they're needed.

Some of the closed hospitals — like St. Vincent's in Manhattan's Greenwich Village — have been turned into luxury housing. Real estate profits are more important than human lives.

Contrast the tragedy unfolding in the U.S. with how socialist countries are fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. [Twenty-two new cases](#) of the coronavirus were reported on Nov. 12 and Nov. 13 in the People's Republic of China.

That's 10,000 times fewer cases than in the U.S. How has socialist China been able to control the pandemic?

People's health comes first under socialism. China's government, led by President Xi Jinping, didn't hesitate to temporarily shut down the economy in order to save lives.

No consideration was given to private profit. That's unlike the capitalist U.S., where President Trump issued an executive order keeping the meatpacking plants open without safety guarantees.

Tyson Foods and other big meatpackers demanded it to shield themselves from lawsuits. Trump complied on April 28, which was Workers' Memorial Day.

Talking about his billionaire friends in the dead-animal industry, [Trump said](#): "They're so happy. They're all gung-ho, and we solved their problems."

No thought was given to the problem of thousands of meatpacking and poultry workers getting sick and dying.

Socialism vs. COVID-19

In socialist countries, people are encouraged to be organized. Members of communist parties volunteer for duty in the war against the coronavirus.

So do members of women's associations and youth groups. Unions are mobilized to enforce safe working conditions.

Police kill an average of three people per day in the U.S. At least half are Black, Indigenous or Latinx.

When the Chinese metropolis of Wuhan was shut down to fight COVID-19, unarmed socialist police delivered meals to people's homes.

Thirty-five people have died of COVID-19 in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, a country of 97 million people. North Dakota's 762,000 people suffered 732 deaths from the virus as of Nov. 13.

The Pentagon killed at least three million people in Vietnam, using napalm and phosphorus bombs to burn children to death. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese

people suffer from the effects of Agent Orange, dropped by U.S. planes, as do thousands of U.S. veterans.

Another million people were [killed in neighboring Laos](#). The U.S. killed over three million people during the Korean War.

Today, both the socialist Lao People's Democratic Republic and the socialist Democratic People's Republic of Korea have reported no deaths from COVID-19.

For 60 years, socialist Cuba has been economically blockaded by the U.S. Its socialist health care system has become world famous. Cuban medical workers have gone to Italy to help during the pandemic.

Cuba, with 11.3 million people, has had 131 deaths due to COVID-19. The 11.7 million people in Ohio have had at least 5,700 deaths.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is also beating back the coronavirus, despite Trump's cruel sanctions. Venezuela's 28.4 million people have suffered 844 COVID-19 deaths. The 29.5 million people living in Texas have had at least 19,917 deaths from COVID-19.

Africa fights back

Africa has been pillaged for over 500 years by European and U.S. capitalists. Yet African countries have been able to tackle the coronavirus much more effectively than their colonial exploiters.

With four times the population of the U.S., all of Africa has had [less than one-fifth of the cases](#) of COVID-19.

The people of Zimbabwe have been punished by the U.S. and the European Union for daring to take back their land from white settlers. These capitalist governments

are trying to strangle Zimbabwe's economy.

With around 15 million people, Zimbabwe has had 257 COVID-19 deaths. Pennsylvania, with around 13 million people, has had at least 9,353.

More than a vaccine is needed

People are hoping for the rollout of vaccines against the coronavirus. Capitalists see dollar signs.

After Pfizer and the German firm BioNTech announced a potentially effective vaccine, \$44 billion [poured into U.S. stock markets](#).

U.S. billionaires have [grabbed another trillion dollars](#) during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, 15 million workers are scheduled to [lose their unemployment benefits](#) the day after Christmas. Temporary moratoriums on evictions and home foreclosures are set to expire.

We have to demand the reinstatement of the \$600 weekly supplemental unemployment benefits that ended in July, with the missing weeks paid in full. A complete ban on evictions and foreclosures must be enacted.

This won't happen automatically even if Trump is kicked out of the White House. We have to organize the power of the people to win it.

