



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

My experience with COVID-19 in Los Angeles

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Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles: 'They are lying when they say that they are

not-for-profit and compassionate.'

February 24 — The number of COVID-19-related deaths in the U.S. has reached five hundred thousand and, although a little slower than in the last months, it continues to rise.

Unfortunately, here in the U.S. when the One Percent are in trouble, they get bailed out by the government. When someone who is not part of this group needs help, even if it is a life threatening situation like COVID-19, they better have the money or else they will have to deal with "not-for-profit" institutions like the Good Samaritan Hospital.

On its website, the Good Samaritan Hospital says: "Good Samaritan Hospital is a progressive, tertiary, not-for-profit hospital. Our mission is to provide accessible, quality, cost-effective, and compassionate health care services that meet the needs of our patients and their families, the community, physicians, and employees."

I can attest from my own experience that they are lying when they say that they are not-for-profit and compassionate. After falling ill with SARS-CoV-2 at the end of last year, I needed to go to the hospital. I went to the Good Samaritan Hospital in the Downtown Los Angeles area. Without having insurance, I asked them how much it would cost as soon as I got in but they said that they could not tell nor give an estimate. I thought it would cost around \$200-\$300 at most, but I was in for a huge and very unpleasant surprise.

After having the usual procedures done, the nurses sent me to the waiting room where they took a radiography of my chest and did an EKG. The doctor arrived after a long time, spoke to me for about ten minutes, prescribed three medications, and left. A few weeks passed and I received a bill of \$3,998 from the hospital. That wasn't all. I also received two other separate bills of \$40 and \$30, from different labs, for the electrocardiogram and the x-ray respectively. All this makes me wonder

about the people who were hit with hospital bills bigger than the ones I received and, like me, have no means to pay them but, unlike me, still have not recovered their health.

Capitalism kills!

As in all the unfortunate things that happen in countries where capitalists dictate the rules, the most vulnerable members of these countries suffer the most. Even when they have the luck to survive the COVID-19 infection, many will suffer with lingering symptoms — which can be physical, psychological, or both — and the financial burden that often follows those who need medical treatment, even when they are insured, in the richest country on Earth: the United States.

A country that somehow is able to afford a military budget that is greater than the next ten biggest military budgets combined, sends spacecraft to Mars, gives trillions of dollars to big corporations, but cannot end, or at least reduce, some of the socio-economic diseases of an economic system that puts profits ahead of the wellbeing of its people: capitalism.

If there is one benefit that is possible from the COVID-19 pandemic, I would say that it's the way it is making the working class realize that the system is rigged against them. Especially when they are suffering some of the symptoms of the capitalist virus like extreme poverty, homelessness, hunger, unemployment, lack of access to basic services, and no health care.

Although the symptoms of the capitalist virus seem to be the norm — like a regular flu — to most people in the United States, it is not common in some other countries that have adopted policies that put the needs of the people ahead of profits. This is why in countries like Vietnam, the DPRK, Cuba, and China the death toll in this pandemic has been among the smallest of all; even for a country with over 1.4 billion people, like China.

Cuba 308, Los Angeles 20,987

Just for comparison, Cuba, which has a population of 12 million people and is approximately the size of Los Angeles County, has a death toll of around three hundred people (308). In comparison to Cuba, Los Angeles County, with a population of approximately ten million people while being one of the biggest economies on the planet, has a death toll of over 20 thousand people (20,987) due to COVID-19 infections.

Such a disparity occurs because in one place, despite the lack of resources, the government prioritizes what is most valuable and essential, the lives of its people, and makes sure that medical treatment is not a luxury but a right. Money is not a necessity for those who need to see a doctor in the countries mentioned above, which cannot be said about the United States.

Another comparison that is very interesting is Vietnam and California. The former, with a population of approximately one hundred million people and with a land mass equivalent to eighty percent of the size of California, has a death toll of thirty five people due to COVID-19. Moreover, the People's Republic of China has lost about 4 thousand people (4,636) to this virus so far, despite being hit by the pandemic before any other country, thus not having all the information available today to fight it. It is important to note that the Chinese population is more than four times bigger than the population of the U.S., that a comparative death toll in the U.S. would be under 2 thousand. As for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it has no COVID-19-related deaths, whereas its neighbor in the South, the Republic of Korea, has 1,581 deaths according to the World Health Organization. Socialism saves lives.

