

Racism + COVID = death

written by Stephen Millies
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In 2020, under-equipped nurses at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital had to use trash bags for protection.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. declared that “of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

The COVID-19 pandemic is more proof Dr. King was right. Death rates from the virus are at least double in Black, Indigenous and Latinx communities.

Zip code 11369, which comprises the East Elmhurst neighborhood in Queens, New York, is a shocking example. Dr. King was a student preacher there at the First Baptist Church at 100-10 Astoria Blvd. Malcolm X and his family lived at 23-11 97th St.

[One out of every 119 people](#) in this Black and Latinx neighborhood have died of the coronavirus. That’s over three times the U.S. average. It’s equivalent to 2.8 million people having died of COVID across the United States.

Diseases don’t discriminate, but capitalism does. The capitalist world market was born with the African Holocaust and the holocaust of Indigenous peoples in the Americas. The number-one job of the \$4 trillion U.S. medical-industrial complex is producing profits, not healing.

In 2020, nurses at Mount Sinai’s flagship hospital in New York City had to wear Hefty garbage bags to protect themselves against COVID-19. Meanwhile, Mount Sinai’s CEO Kenneth Davis was enjoying his [\\$12 million pay package](#).

Ten nurses at the Providence St. John’s Medical Center in Santa Monica, California, [were initially suspended](#) for refusing to work in COVID wards without personal protective equipment.

Big pharmaceutical outfits like Pfizer don’t foresee vaccinating a billion Africans until 2024. That’s vaccine apartheid, similar to the denial of retroviral therapies for HIV/AIDS to Africans for a decade after they were being used in the U.S.

Millions of people died as a result. Andrew Natsios – head of the U.S. Agency for International Development under President George W. Bush – thought it was useless to provide help to Africa. The drugs were to be taken at certain times of day and [Natsios claimed in 2001](#) that Africans “don’t know what Western time is.”

Poverty and oppression kills

COVID-19 has acted like a killing machine in overcrowded housing and among essential workers. Black, Indigenous and Latinx people are concentrated in both.

High rents force families to live in cramped apartments. Families that are evicted often move in with relatives. Now the bans on evictions have been lifted and landlords want to throw millions of people onto the street.

Who is more crowded than the 2.2 million people in the prisons? As of Feb. 9, 564,451 prisoners have been infected with COVID and [2,814 have died](#). Why isn’t Donald Trump locked-up?

Prisons are concentration camps for the poor. In Wisconsin, Black people account for around 6% of the population but 46% of the prison inmates. In the same states Black babies are five times more likely to die than white infants.

The entire United States was stolen from Indigenous nations. In the Navajo nation there have been [1,626 deaths](#) from COVID.

Over 59,000 meatpacking workers were infected with COVID. At least [269 workers died](#). Just at the JBS plant in Greeley, Colorado, six workers died. The vast majority of these workers were Black, Latinx and/or immigrants.

In the New York City area, [over 150 transit workers died](#) of the coronavirus. The Metropolitan Transit Authority there at first refused to allow workers to wear masks, claiming it was a violation of dress codes.

Socialism vs. capitalism

While the United States has a little bit more than 4% of the world's population, it has accounted for [almost one-fifth of all COVID-19 cases](#).

Uncle Sam accounts for about the same percentage of the world's prison inmates. Both statistics show what U.S. capitalist "democracy" really amounts to.

One of the reasons so many people have died of COVID-19 has been the binge of hospital closings in the U.S. This has gone hand-in-hand with the thousands of factories being shut down.

Twenty thousand of the hospital beds thrown away were in New York state, according to the New York State Nurses Association. Among them was Harlem's Sydenham Hospital, which was closed in 1980 after a bitter struggle to keep it open.

Some of the closed health facilities, like the Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia, are being turned into luxury housing.

Thousands of nursing home patients died of COVID. A big cause was that elderly hospital patients with the virus were shoved into nursing homes due to the shortage of hospital beds.

Despite the cruel U.S. economic blockade of Cuba, not a single hospital or school has been closed in the socialist country. For every 1.9 hospital beds available in Brooklyn and Queens, there are 5 available in Cuba.

Pfizer and Moderna sold the overwhelming amount of their life-saving vaccines to richer countries. Socialist China and Cuba are sharing their vaccines with the world.

China will distribute 2 billion vaccine doses to Africa, Asia and Latin America. Cuba

has already sent 10 million doses to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and plans to distribute another 100 million doses.

No parents in Cuba have to wait eight hours with their children in crowded emergency rooms before seeing a doctor. No one in that beautiful country is turned away from a clinic because they don't have insurance.

That's because health care in Cuba is considered a human right, not something to make a profit from. Cuba has what we need: socialism.

