

*Workers of the
world, unite!*

che fare



**The patient zero has name and surname:
it's the globalized capitalism!
National unity is a virus that threatens
the physical, social and political health of workers!**

The government and the media speak about "coronavirus" as a "natural event". They tell us that only if we understand that we are "all in the same boat" (the financier and the unemployed, the businessman and the worker, the ruthless stock exchange trader and the immigrant) we may defend ourselves. And this means passively accepting the "emergency measures" adopted by government and institutions.

At first sight the proposed solution may seem logical and useful. Actually, it is not at all! For at least four reasons.

Point one: This situation is not a "stepmother" nature's fault.

For weeks they told us that everything had started from China. Now other hypotheses begin to emerge. For example, it is not excluded that the virus was brought to China by a group of US soldiers hosted in October 2019 in Wuhan; they had participated, together with 10,000 other military athletes from 140 countries, to the "Military World Games".

We don't know what really happened; we don't know if this virus originated "spontaneously" in the Wuhan animal market or if, instead, it comes from some "careless" research laboratory.

One thing is certain, however: the virus, once born, developed rapidly in China, then quickly migrated to Iran and Europe, now landed (got back?) over-Atlantic. This could only happen because it found an environment favourable to its diffusion.

That is: gigantic metropolises where millions of human beings live piled up without a healthy contact with nature; polluted rivers and seas; air plagued by fine dust and petrochemical poisons; garbage left for days in working-class neighborhoods and hazardous waste disposed of without complying with the minimum safety conditions. Consequent damage to groundwaters and food-producing land; fields flooded with herbicides and other chemicals; the pace of work and life marked by the frenetic rush of companies towards profitability, dominated by stress and fatigue...

This system invisibly undermines the ability of the human organism to resist to viral agents, thus offering an endless prairie to the new covid-19.

This ecosystem does not fall from the sky: it is the product of a society (the capitalistic one) that is dominated by the laws of the market and profit. Its categorical imperative is (can only be) to exploit and strip workers and nature, in order to increase corporate profits and "beat competitors".

The plague-spreader is the globalized capitalism. It's the multinationals system (whether they are "green" or not "green"), of big finance, of banks, of stock exchanges. Together with its diversified governments.

Point Two: The corona virus is "only" the tip of the iceberg.

The effects of the coronavirus add up and amplify other social wounds that already affected human health. These plagues have the same social origin and only the political weakening of the proletarian movement allowed exploiters and governments to hide them: on average in Italy every day more than 3 workers are killed in factories and construction sites and more than 1600 are permanently injured; in Italy, between 2013 and 2017, an average of 90 people died each day during the winter due to the direct or indirect effects of the common seasonal flu; In Italy and the West, the psycho-physical balance is undermined by the mass consumption of psychopharmaceuticals, painkillers and (legal or illegal) drugs consumption due to the need to always be "at the top" and to "hold the pace". And how much does this "lifestyle" weigh? How much does such an unhealthy ecosystem contribute to increase cardiovascular diseases and cancers - which, in Italy alone, kill respectively 600 and 500 people every day, many of them under the age of 60?

The coronavirus is "only" an additional bloody "load" to this general situation. If it does not find a political response from the workers, it will be used by the government and the masters to strengthen their exploitation machine and aggravate the devastating effects on the social health of humanity. This humanity includes millions of people in the countries of the South of the world, who die every year from malnutrition or the lack of the most elementary forms of medical and pharmacological assistance. In these countries, "defeated" diseases such as measles or whooping cough kill hundreds of thousands young lives every year. And this only happens because there, this situation is more convenient for the profit regime.

Point Three: The collapse of the health care system has very specific culprits.

Even the collapse of the Italian health system in the face of the spread of the virus, which helped to create and multiply the emergency, is not the result of chance or a natural event.

According to official figures, at least 400,000 beds have been cancelled in Italian public hospitals in the last 40 years, 60% of those available in 1980. Intensive care beds have been scaled to low levels, 5000 across Italy, of which only 1000 are reserved for emergencies. Preventive medicine has been increasingly neglected, despite of the advances made in the 1970s on the exclusive merits of the struggles of the labour movement. The health staff, which were significantly undersized, were forced even before the arrival of the new virus in grueling shifts, which were dangerous for their health and that of the inpatients: official figures from the Ministry of Health speak of 49,000 (!) deaths caused in 2016 alone by infections contracted by patients during hospital stays and surgeries.

The situation in the Italian health system has reached such a point that during the current emergency (before China's aid, passed by the official media as marginal news) even masks for hospital staff and respiratory devices (decisive to save the lives of those in acute crisis) have been scarce.

And who is responsible for all this? The immigrants? The Moon?

No, those responsible are on Earth, have white skin, dress well and sit on the high floors of the buildings that matter.

Responsibility lies with the various centre-right or centre-left governments, regional councils, municipal administrations that have succeeded over the years and with their (albeit diversified) policies which, "in the name of cost containment and efficiency", have increasingly destroyed the public health protections gained over the last century thanks to the struggle of the workers.

Responsibility lies with the privatization and regionalization measures carried out for decades by the right and the "left", in the name of federalism and the so-called self-regulatory efficiency of the markets.

Responsibility lies with the Italian and international strong capitalistic powers, both financial and industrial, which have been dictated and dictate to the governments in their service this set of health policies, in parallel with those on raising the retirement age, on increasing insecure employment, on intensifying the oppression against immigrants and on deploying "humanitarian" military missions against the resistance of the people of the Middle East to the blows inflicted on them - and on their health! - by Western companies and institutions. Just not to forget: how much has the health of the Iraqi people been trampled on by the virus of our depleted uranium bombs and our embargoes?

Everything is held: if you allow the masters and their institutions, national and supranational, to open a hole on one front, it is easier for them to strike on others later.

Point Four: the government's decrees do not aim to remedy the causes of this situation.

But one could say: "Given the emergency, the government's measures must be accepted and that is it. They are the only way to stem the contagion".

The logic of this reasoning apparently does not make a turn, but it does not stand from the point of view of proletarian interests. This is not a question of whether the "red zones", the obligation/invitation to stay at home and the other restrictions can effectively contain the spread of the virus. It might as well be. The problem is another.

For working people, to supinely and uncritically accept these measures means to accept to be pushed into complete individual isolation, to see a potential plague-spreader and a danger in every other worker. Staying passively "closed" may have some effect on coronavirus, but it brings other dramatic effects such as increased depression and anxiety, or even greater isolation for those who are victims of domestic violence.

Passively relying on the hands of the Italian government and the institutional summits means entrusting the management of the emergency and the solution of the problem to those responsible for it. The silence of the Conte government on the fate of the factory workers was not a "forgetfulness". This silence arises from the fact that the government puts profit first, as well as the management of factories. It means that for the government and the owners of the companies the health of workers must be subordinated to market competition, that is, to the mechanism behind the ongoing health emergency. The measures taken by the government are only aimed at putting some transient and localized patch, to relaunch as and more than before the underlying mechanisms of what is happening.

Profit and health don't get along.

At the moment, it is not a question of forcing the "red zones", but of beginning to reflect among proletarians how disastrous it is to trust in the action of the government and of the powers that dictate its actions. We need to begin to understand that, in the name of the emergency national unity, the coronavirus will cause more social and political disasters than it is procuring at the medical level.

Companies will take advantage (they are already doing so) of the government's emergency and measures to erode contractual protections, to increase job insecurity, to introduce in factories and offices - without the constraint of the bargaining capacity of workers - the 4.0 technologies required by the so-called "ecological" restructuring of the capitalist industry. The government and the great capitalist powers are taking and will take the leap of these emergency days' experiment of "distance teaching" to reshape the educational system even more deeply than before (see for example the Gelmini "reform" and later the Renzi "reform"), so that schools train a workforce that can be flexible and prone to the gospel of market workforce, as required by the restructuring of globalized capitalism.

The only way for the workers to minimize the damage to social health caused by the capitalist system and by the Covid-19 emergency, the only way to prepare for the political offensive that the masters and the government are planning in parallel with the management of the emergency, is the one suggested by the factory strikes against the "forgetfulness" of Conte and the bosses' cynicism, against the decision to leave workers exposed to contagion risk: even in this very difficult situation, it is urgent to prepare the ground for a collective and class force capable to impose the stop of industrial production (with guaranteed wages) and the rehabilitation of the most unhealthy among the working environments, the one inside the factories; to denounce the real social and political responsibilities of what is happening; to impose "basic" health measures such as the organization of home care for the disabled and elderly forced to stay at home, the free and general distribution of masks and other tools suitable for prophylaxis, the effective requisition of private hospital beds; and also to carry out medical care and examinations suspended in recent weeks as non-urgent.

Only with such **force** will it be possible to impose the prompt, continuous and secure provision of wages to those who are losing their jobs (including the many informal workers, who would otherwise be excluded from any protection). Only with such force will it be possible to impose (**impose!**) a real change in the government's management of health policy and it will be possible to prevent institutions from continuing to manage the waste cycle as it is now. It is only in this and with this battle that the urgency of the only real countermeasure that can protect the health of workers and humanity can be brought out: a programme and an organization capable of **radically** fight the capitalist system, the patient zero of the viruses that plague bourgeois society. In the perspective of a society in which the achievements of science and technology are not criminally subject to the laws of profit, but are used for the protection of the human species and for the satisfaction of its real needs.

ORGANIZZAZIONE COMUNISTA INTERNAZIONALISTA

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