



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM

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How the Ruling Class Prepared for COVID-19

COVID-19: The Fear of the Ruling Class "To Lose Control"

COVID-19 in Sweden * Korean Translation of RCIT Book

English-Language Theoretical Review of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), New Series No.49, January 2021

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Picture on the cover: Anti-Lockdown demonstration in Canada; Source: Wikipedia, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/ff/f2/COVID-19_Vancouver%27s_largest_protest%2C_April_26th_2020_%2849823131178%29.jpg

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COVID-19: How Severe is the Pandemic in Sweden Really?

Once again, a comparison demonstrates that the mortality rate in 2020 is barely larger than in 2018

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 8.12.2020

Statistics Sweden, the country's official agency for statistics, has published its latest data for the development of its population. These data include, among others, the figures for total mortality.¹ Analyzing such data is important as it reflects the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. If the pandemic would be very severe and devastating, this would result in qualitatively higher figures of total mortality. This is even more the case as Sweden has been one of the few countries in the world which has neither imposed any lockdown nor mandatory mask-wearing.

As the RCIT has demonstrated in numerous works the claim of bourgeois governments and their supporters among the Lockdown Left about the supposedly "unprecedented and highly dangerous COVID-19 pandemic" is simply a propaganda lie. We have shown on the basis of official statistics and analysis of other pandemics in past decades that the current pandemic is serious but it is neither devastating nor unprecedented.²

In fact, the ruling class deliberately exaggerates the severity of the pandemic in order to justify the massive expansion of the police and surveillance state which goes hand in hand with a wave of repression and attacks on fundamental democratic rights of the popular masses. In fact, the policy of putting a whole society under curfew orders has not been seen in the Western imperialist countries since the end of World War II in 1945. This is why the RCIT has characterized this policy from early on as the *COVID-19 Counterrevolution*. While the virus has not been deliberately invented, the ruling classes around the world have prepared for such a kind of pandemic since a number of years. As we showed in a recently published study, several imperialist institutions have elaborated plans for utilizing such events for the expansion of the police and surveillance state (or *chauvinist bonapartist state* as Marxists call it).³

In a recently published article we have analyzed the effects of the pandemic to Sweden's mortality.⁴ We did show that the total number of death for 2020 do not show any dramatic rise. In this brief article we will not repeat

our theses but limit ourselves to report the latest figures from Sweden which confirms once again the validity of the Marxist analysis.

In Table 1 we reproduce the figures for the size of Sweden's population. As we can see, the country had a population of slightly more than 10.2 million people at the end of 2018. Since then, the population has slightly increased by 1.4% and accounts for a bit less than 10.4 million people in October 2020.

In Table 2 we reproduce the figures for total mortality. We compare the number of death for January to October 2020 with the figures for the same period in 2018. As we can see 77,069 people died within this period two years ago compared with 79,627 people in 2020. This represents an increase of the absolute number of death by 3.3%.

Finally, we compare the number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants per month for the period January to October in 2018 with that for 2020. Since *Statistics Sweden* provides such figures we can calculate not only the absolute number of death but also the development of mortality per capita. As reader can see, such mortality per capita has been only slightly higher this year compared with the same period in 2018 – concretely by 1.0%. (See Table 3)

We note in passing that the increase of total mortality figures in 2020 so far is not only low in Sweden but also in various other countries. However, Sweden is remarkable since the supporters of chauvinist state bonapartism claim that the only way to avoid the devastating effects of the pandemic would be the draconic Lockdown policy. Naturally, this has always been wrong as the RCIT explained from the beginning. However, the figures from Sweden provide overwhelming factual confirmation of the Marxist position!

Footnotes

1 See the links to the relevant tables published on the official website of *Statistics Sweden* at <https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/>. The Swedish journalist Emanuel Karlsten regularly covers the development of the pan-

Table 1. Sweden's Population in 2018 and 2020

Year	Number
December 2018	10,230,185
October 2020	10,377,781

Increase from 2018 to 2020: +1.4%

Table 2. Sweden's Total Mortality for January - October in 2018 and in 2020

Period	Total Number
January – October 2018	77,069
January – October 2020	79,627

Increase in 2020 (January-October) compared with the same period in 2018: +3.3%

demical and often provides useful analysis. Here is his latest article: Number of deaths in Sweden during the pandemic – compared to previous years' mortality, 7 December 2020, <https://emanuelkarlsten.se/number-of-deaths-in-sweden-during-the-pandemic-compared-to-previous-years-mortality/>

2 The RCIT has analyzed the COVID-19 counterrevolution extensively since its beginning. Starting from 2 February we have published more than 50 pamphlets, essays, articles and statements plus a book which are all compiled at a special subpage on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT Manifesto: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>. In addition, we draw attention to our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>. See also our very first article on this issue by Almedina Gunić: Coronavirus: "I am not a Virus" ... but WE will be the Cure! The chauvinist campaign behind the "Wuhan Coronavirus" hysteria and the revolutionary answer, 2 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/wuhan-virus/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20

July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class's plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>.

3 Michael Pröbsting: How the Ruling Class Prepared for COVID-19. A number of events before and after the beginning of the pandemic demonstrate the political nature of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution, 3 December 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/how-the-ruling-class-prepared-for-covid-19/>

4 Michael Pröbsting: COVID-19: Revealing Figures from Sweden. A comparison of the mortality rates of the first 9 months in 2020 with previous years confirm that this is a serious but not unprecedented pandemic, 23 November 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-revealing-figures-from-sweden/>

5 Statistics Sweden: Number of deaths per 100 000 inhabitants per month, 2015-2020, www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics/pong/tables-and-graphs/preliminary-statistics-on-deaths/. The figures for each month are reproduced from the official statistics. The sum of the figures of these ten months as well as the calculation of growth is our own. The actual statistics provide also data for the month November. The figure for November 2018 is 69.5 and the figure for the same month in 2020 is 70.5. However, we have not integrated this month in our table as this is most recent data and it is very likely that it will be corrected.

Table 3. Number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants per month, 2018 and 2020, Sweden⁵

	2018	2020
January	84.2	78.2
February	88.2	75.5
March	90.1	80.1
April	76.9	102.0
May	66.3	83.4
June	65.6	71.8
July	71.1	66.1
August	66.3	65.1
September	68.2	65.3
October	70.5	67.7
Total	747.4	755.2

Increase in 2020 (January-October) compared with the same period in 2018: +1.0%

COVID-19: The Fear of the Ruling Class “To Lose Control”

Two examples how the governments view the pandemic as a political and not as a health issue

By Michael Pröbsting, International Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist International Tendency (RCIT), 6.12.2020

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis in early spring 2020 our tendency has explained that the ruling classes in East and West are exploiting the pandemic in order to advance the political and economic interests of the capitalist class – in particular of the top layer, the monopoly bourgeoisie. ¹ In more than 60 documents – including one book and several pamphlets – the RCIT demonstrated that while COVID-19 is a serious pandemic, it is by no means unprecedented nor does it justify the public hysteria which has been instigated by the governments and the bourgeois media. The Lockdown policy, the systematic attacks on democratic rights, the expansion of the police and surveillance state is not caused by considerations for public health but rather by the desire of the ruling elite to increase power and profit. ²

In our most recent essay we showed that the ruling class has prepared for such a pandemic for quite a number of years. Furthermore, we demonstrated that it considered such a pandemic as a threat for “public order” which could cause “social unrest”. As a result, it developed plans to deal with such crisis, among others, by deploying the military against their own population and effectively controlling the media. ³

In this article we will not repeat our extensive analysis. Instead we will limit ourselves to give two actual examples how the governments fear the political explosive potential of the COVID-19 crisis and how they view it from a class point of view.

A revealing interview with a German government adviser

The first example is a highly interesting interview with Sigrid Graumann – a professor for human genetics and philosophy – which was published in mid-November. ⁴ What is special about the interview is, first, that Miss Graumann is not only an academic (as it is known many of this species talk a lot but say very little). She also serves since 2016 as a member of the “German Ethics Council”. This council is an official advisory body of the government in Berlin. In other words, she is someone with access to the inner circles of the ruling elite and who is representative for their thinking.

The interview was published by the TAZ (“Tageszeitung”) – a kind of German equivalent to *Libération* in France or *Il Manifesto* in Italy. It started as a left-wing paper in the late 1970s and has become a mainstream left-liberal publication since then.

Furthermore, the interview was conducted by Hannes Koch, a journalist who fortunately had the courage to ask “tough questions” (as Professor Graumann lamented in the course of the interview). This has probably contributed to push her making statements which might be more blunt than the Merkel government – a coalition of the conservative party with the social democrats as junior partners – would have preferred.

What is interesting about the interview is not so much that she repeated the usual propaganda which the bourgeois governments is spreading in order to justify the reactionary Lockdown policy and the draconic restrictions of democratic rights. What is rather interesting is the following.

First, the journalist asked Professor Graumann how the government can justify the drastic restrictions of personal liberties when the Corona Virus has been much less deadly than other diseases. He said “Until now about 12,000 people have died in this country because of Corona. Usually, the total mortality is about 940,000. (...) Total mortality has only increased by 1.3%.” To this the government adviser replied: “The issue is not the absolute figures. They are indeed not high in relation to total mortality. The decisive question is: what happens in the case of exponential growth, i.e. a multiplication of infections and fatalities? Will we still be able to treat the sick people in a human way and to avoid unnecessary deaths? The situation can get quickly out of control. Medicine and politics are rightly afraid of this.”

“The issue is not the absolute figure of deaths”

These are of course the usual arguments which shall blind people. However, the journalist was not impressed by this and continued to ask: “In 2017/18 about 25,000 people died in Germany because of flu. Every year about 30,000 people die because of lung cancer. High mortality caused by such diseases does not ruffle our society. Why is this different in the case of Corona?” Professor Graumann replied again that if many more people would die because of Corona this would have dramatic consequences for the health system. And she adds: “Once again: the issue is not the absolute figure (of deaths, Ed.) but the fear that we can not treat the sick people humanely.”

Of course, this answer is total nonsense. First, why is it possible to treat people who are dying because of flu or cancer “humanely” but not those of Corona?! Secondly, if the problem is the lack of hospital capacities, the government just needs to build additional hospitals, additional ICU’s and recruit more doctors and nurses. However, as the RCIT has pointed out many times, the capitalist governments have no interest to respond to the pandemic with the expansion of the health sector. That would not be profitable and would undermine their whole strategy of utilizing the pandemic as an excuse to expand the bonapartist state apparatus and to create huge business opportunities for big corporations in drugs, IT, bio-tech, retail and other sectors.

The government advisor attempts to justify the Lockdown policy by referring to the fear among the population. “The danger of exponential growth is real and this makes us afraid.” Of course, this is a cynical argument. People have not become afraid by themselves but because the ruling elite – the governments, business leaders and media – spread horror stories on a daily basis! The German Chancellor

Angela Merkel famously said in March that “60 to 70% of the total population will get infected by the Corona Virus” and, as a result, many will die.

And Austria’s Chancellor Kurz said on 30 March in a public speech: “We will have soon a situation in Austria where everyone will know somebody who has died because of the Corona Virus.”⁵ In fact, as leaked minutes of internal meetings revealed, the Chancellor was worried that the population “does not take the danger of the virus seriously enough”. He concluded, according to the leaked minutes: “Kurz makes clear that the people should be afraid of being infected respectively should be afraid that their parents or grandparents could die. On the other side, we should allay the fear of the population about food shortage, blackout, etc.”⁶

Naturally, these are only examples from Germany and Austria. The same policy was implemented in many other countries in Europe and globally. Everywhere, it was not the people who suddenly panicked but it were the governments themselves which consciously and deliberately created fear in order to justify the anti-democratic Lockdown policy. In countries like Sweden, where governments refrained from creating a public hysteria, no such widespread fear exists.

“... then society might accept higher figures of deaths”

Professor Graumann then said something which reveals an important element of the policy of the ruling elite. She says: “Politics and society fear the loss of control.” When politicians in Germany and Austria use the category “politics” as an abstract (in the context of “politics believe”, “politics thinks”, etc.) it has a specific meaning. It always means the political establishment or the elite. Similar with the category of “society” when it is used in a similar context. We note in passing that this just one example of the camouflaging language which the bourgeoisie uses in order to disguise the class character of their policy. Other examples are “peace enforcement” when the Great Powers wage a war (e.g. against Iraq in 1991) or “to make the workforce redundant” when capitalists sack workers.

So when Professor Graumann explains that “politics and society fear the loss of control”, she expresses the worries of the ruling elite that the popular dissatisfaction and social unrest could result in massive political instability. In other words, if “politics loses control”, it could result in mass protests and popular uprisings!

There is also another interesting statement in this interview. The journalist asks her: “Might it be possible that we will tolerate higher mortality caused by Corona if we get used to it and know the risk?” Professor Graumann replies. “Later, if the danger gets reduced because of vaccination, better therapies, knowledge about infection routes, and specific protection measures, society might accept higher figures (of mortality, Ed.)” When the journalist adds the smart question “In this case 20,000 or 30,000 Corona deaths would be tolerable as it is the case with flu?”, the government adviser realizes that she has entered dangerous territory and wisely limits herself to a facile remark: “I don’t want to call such absolute figures.”

Nevertheless, this remark is also revealing as it points to the future strategy of the governments. If they will provide mass vaccination (with huge profits for the drug monopolies) and still many people will die because of the virus, governments will say that this is “deplorable” but at least

“we have the virus under control.”

A decadent ruling class searching for the “elixir of life”

These remarks point also to another important element in understanding the Lockdown policy of the ruling class. To a certain degree, there exists a real panic among their ranks fearing for their personal health. As it is well known, the Corona Virus is most dangerous for people older than 65 years. In addition, it is also widespread in Western imperialist countries – the self-proclaimed “cradle of civilization”. Hence, it is not surprising that the monopoly bourgeoisie in Western Europe and North America – a layer dominated by white old men – feels threatened by the virus since there exists no vaccine until now.

Naturally, this is particularly worrying for the small layer of billionaires who hope to expand their lifetime as long as possible and who invest a lot of money into bio-technology for such a purpose. So, unsurprisingly, the richest of the rich – like Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, Tim Disney, Michael Bloomberg, Richard Branson, Peter Thiel, the Duke of Bedford – are making huge investments in bio-tech enterprises. This decadent elite is desperate to overcome the laws of biology and wants to live as long as possible. Hence, to put it in the words of a business publication, “they are all probably searching for the elixir of life.”⁷

So as soon as a vaccine is available, the ruling elite might declare that “the virus is under control.” A high number of people might still die but this is not a real problem for the rich and wealthy since they will certainly be able to afford all kind of vaccine.

“... then the system will be shattered pretty quickly”

The fear of the ruling class to “lose control” by popular outrage is also confirmed by another interview which was published one week ago. The “Wiener Zeitung” – a semi-official daily paper owned and controlled by the Austrian government – published an interesting interview with Ludwig Adamovich.⁸ Adamovich was the long-time President of Austria’s Constitutional Court (1984-2002). Since 2004, he has worked as an advisor for the country’s Presidents.

In other words, Adamovich is also deeply involved in the ruling elite. And if we add the fact that this interview was conducted by the chief editor of the official state newspaper, we are certainly not wrong in assuming that this interview is thoroughly representative for the viewpoint of the ruling class.

Unsurprisingly, one important issue of the interview is the COVID-19 pandemic. The journalist asks “We often see only little basic trust (of the people, Ed.) in politics. What went wrong?”. Adamovich replies: “This problem has not been created from one day to the other. We just see the consequences of this more dramatically now because of the Corona crisis. There is a sentiment among the population which assumes a priori that the government and public administration wants to harass and irk people. This becomes evident in different ways, partly by simple ignoring of rules and regulations, but partly also by active resistance – fortunately not that much as we saw recently in Berlin when police had to operate with water cannon vehicles against protestors who demonstrated against the Corona policy of the government. This develops into a very nasty situation be-

cause if there does not exist a minimum of trust in politics then the system will be shattered pretty quickly."

Here, a representative of the ruling elite expresses the fear of his class even more bluntly than the German government advisor did. As it is well known, Austria is not a country with a high level of class struggle. Nevertheless, even in such a country the ruling class is fully aware that it is sitting on a bubbling cauldron. How much more must other governments fear popular mass protests?!

Conclusion

All these developments do not come as a surprise for Marxists. The RCIT has explained numerous times that the global response of governments since the beginning of the pandemic was not driven primarily by public health considerations but rather by political interests (plus fear for their own lives as long as no vaccine is available). Faced with the worst depression of capitalist world economy since 1929⁹ and a global wave of popular uprisings¹⁰ – events, which both started in autumn 2019 – bourgeois governments from China to France and from Chile to South Africa were desperate to consolidate their position by increasing control of the popular masses.

The quotes from these two interviews confirm that the Lockdown policy is motivated by the rulers' fear to "lose control" which could result in a situation where "the system will be shattered pretty quickly." It is only logical that governments all around the world are expanding the *chauvinist bonapartist state apparatus* and massively restrict democratic rights.

It is only the silly fools of the opportunistic Lockdown Left who fail to recognize the political nature of the ruling class' response to the pandemic. Such social-bonapartist "left" clings to the coat-tails of the liberal bourgeoisie and praises the reactionary and anti-democratic Lockdown

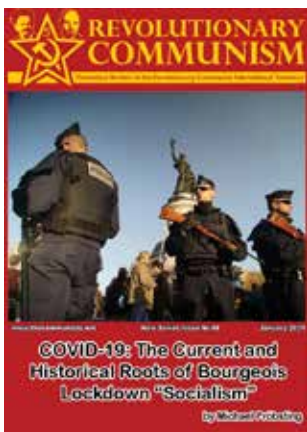
policy.

In contrast to these opportunists, revolutionaries must tell the truth. They should help the vanguard to understand the nature of capitalist politics in the present period and to elaborate a strategy to mobilize the masses towards a popular uprising.

Footnotes

1 Our very first article on this issue has been written by Almedina Gunić: Coronavirus: "I am not a Virus"... but WE will be the Cure! The chauvinist campaign behind the "Wuhan Coronavirus" hysteria and the revolutionary answer, 2 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/wuhan-virus/>

2 All RCIT documents on the COVID-19 crisis are compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT Manifesto: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counter-revolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>. In addition, we draw attention to our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counter-revolution/>. See also Michael Pröbsting: The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class's plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/>.



Publications of the RCIT

COVID-19: The Current and Historical Roots of Bourgeois Lockdown "Socialism"

Police State, Universal Basic Income & a new version of "War Socialism" of 1914

By Michael Pröbsting, January 2021

Introduction * 1. An Overview of the Policy of the Lockdown Left * 2. A Marxist Critique of Lockdownism and Universal Basic Income * 3. The Bourgeois Ideology of the "Caring State" (The Capitalist Handout State) * 4. The Objective Basis for Lockdown Socialism: Changes within the Political and Economic Physiognomy of Capitalism * 5. A Historical Analogy: The Mobilization of the Imperialist State for World War I * 6. War Socialism in 1914: The Social-Chauvinist Lensch-Cunow-Haenisch Group in German Social Democracy * 7. Lenin and other Marxists Declare War on War Socialism * 8. The Lockdown Left: A Worthy Successor of Social-Chauvinist War Socialists * 9. Once Again, the State Question: Marxism versus the Opportunist Left

A RCIT Pamphlet, 32 pages, A4 Format

3 Michael Pröbsting: How the Ruling Class Prepared for COVID-19. A number of events before and after the beginning of the pandemic demonstrate the political nature of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution, 3 December 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/how-the-ruling-class-prepared-for-covid-19/>

4 Ethikrätin Graumann zu Maßnahmen: „Furcht vor dem Kontrollverlust“. Warum gibt es bei 11.000 Coronatoten einen Lockdown, während 25.000 Grippe-Opfer und 30.000 Sterbefälle durch Raucherkrebs in Kauf genommen werden? Das Interview führte Hannes Koch, 15.11.2020, <https://taz.de/Ethikraetin-Graumann-zu-Massnahmen!/5726067/> (all quotes are translated by ourselves).

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6 All quotes are taken from ORF: Aufregung über kolportierte Angststrategie, 27 April 2020, <https://orf.at/stories/3163480/>; ORF: Regierungsprotokoll: Angst vor Infektion offenbar erwünscht, 27 April 2020, <https://orf.at/stories/3163435/> (our translation). See on this also Michael Pröbsting: COVID-19 Crisis: Internal Document Reveals Austrian Government Plan to Spread Fear A telling revelation on the political calculations of the ruling class, 28 April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/europe/covid-19-crisis-internal-document-reveals-austrian-government-plan-to-spread-fear/>

7 Family Capital: Why family offices love biotech...their owners want to live longer, 26th April 2018 <https://www.famcap.com/2018/04/why-family-offices-love-biotech-their-owners-want-to-live-longer/>; see also Sissi Cao: 6 Billionaires Whose Fear of Death Is Fueling a Boom In Biotech Startups, 04/30/2018, <https://observer.com/2018/04/bill-gates-jeff-bezos-invest-biotech-startups/>

8 “Gewissen spielt jetzt besondere Rolle”. Ludwig Adamovich über den Hass auf die Politiker, das Gewissen in Corona-Zeiten und die Zukunft des Christentums. Interview von Chefredakteur Walter Hämmerle, 28.11.2020, <https://www.wie->

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9 See on this e.g. chapter I of the book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It; Michael Pröbsting: No, the Corona Virus is not the Main Cause of the Global Economic Slump! Bourgeois Media Officially Recognize the Beginning of another Great Recession, 3 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/corona-virus-is-not-the-main-cause-of-global-economic-slump/>; RCIT: World Perspectives 2020: A Pre-Revolutionary Global Situation. Theses on the World Situation, the Perspectives for Class Struggle and the Tasks of Revolutionaries, 8 February 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/world-perspectives-2020/>; Michael Pröbsting: Another Great Recession of the Capitalist World Economy Has Begun. The economic crisis is an important factor in the current dramatic shift in the world situation, 19 October 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/another-great-recession-of-the-capitalist-world-economy-has-begun/>; see also Michael Pröbsting: The Next Looming Great Recession. Observations on the Latest Stock Market Slump and the Structural Crisis of the Capitalist World Economy, 12 October 2018, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-next-looming-great-recession/>

10 For an overview and a characterization of these events see, in addition the relevant statements on the individual countries, Michael Pröbsting: Are We Nearing a New “68 Moment”? A massive upsurge of global class struggle in the midst of a dramatic shift in the world situation 22 October 2019, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/are-we-nearing-a-new-68-moment/>; See also by the same author: Confirmation by the Class Enemy. A new IMF report discusses the global class struggle and its relationship to the COVID-19 crisis, 14 October 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/confirmation-by-the-class-enemy-imf-report-on-global-class-struggle-and-covid-19-crisis/>; A Powerful Confirmation. A bourgeois study on the revolutionary character of the current historic period, 12 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/confirmation-of-revolutionary-character-of-historic-period/>.



Publications of the RCIT

The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution

On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance

By Michael Pröbsting, July 2020

Introduction * The localized version of Lockdown policy is spreading * New information concerning severity (or not so severity) of the pandemic * Telling figures for Europe, Sweden and Ischgl * The worst pandemic in Africa? Really? * Capitalism and care homes as deadly traps for old people * The real nature of the ruling class bonapartist offensive under the cover of COVID-19 * Why is the ruling class opting for a local lockdown strategy? * Excuse: A crisis characteristic for the present period of capitalist decay * The nature and inner contradictions of the local lockdown strategy * Preparing for a new counter-revolutionary offensive * The Lockdown Left: a never ending embarrassment * The shameful example of the PSTU/LIT-CI * The imperialist aristocratism of the Lockdown Left * Building a Revolutionary World Party * Footnotes

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How the Ruling Class Prepared for COVID-19

A number of events before and after the beginning of the pandemic demonstrate the political nature of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution

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Introduction

There will be hardly any political observer who would deny the historic significance of the COVID-19 crisis. Hence, it is only natural that since the beginning of the pandemic a widespread debate has begun about its origins as well as about the nature of the response by governments. Unsurprisingly, myriads of theories on these subjects are circulating and heatedly debated.

The RCIT has published more than 60 documents – including one book and several pamphlets – on the COVID-19 crisis.¹ Since early February we have explained the nature of the pandemic and how it has been exploited by the ruling class on all continents in order to advance building a police and surveillance state, to restrict democratic rights and to expand the domination of capitalist monopolies.²

In contrast to various obscurantists of the Trumpian kind we never denied the existence of a pandemic. However, we emphasized that while this is a serious pandemic it is neither unprecedented nor does it justify the public hysteria which has been instigated by the governments and the bourgeois media. We explained that similar diseases and pandemics have taken place in the past decades – resulting in the global death of one or several million people a year (e.g. the 1957-58 *Pandemic*, the 1968 *Pandemic*, AIDS/HIV, Ebola, severe influenza, etc.). Add to this that about 2.6 million people die of respiratory infections each year world-wide, 1.4 million people died of tuberculosis in 2019, etc. In addition, we have demonstrated that the degree of excess mortality so far this year does not justify in any way to characterize COVID-19 as a qualitative worse pandemic than similar events in the past decades. At this point we will not repeat listing all the numbers, facts and arguments which we have presented in various works in the past months.³

Furthermore, we explained that the global response of governments since the beginning of the pandemic was not driven primarily by health considerations but rather by political interests in order to strengthen the position of the ruling class in the midst of the worst depression of capitalist world economy since 1929⁴ and a global wave of popular uprisings – events, which both started in autumn 2019.⁵ In addition, the ruling classes of all imperialist states are struggling to keep their stakes in a period of a decaying world order and an acceleration of Great Power rivalry.⁶

It is such a background which pushes the ruling class to utilize this pandemic as a cover in order to build up or to expand a *chauvinist bonapartist state apparatus* which goes hand in hand with massive attacks on democratic rights of the popular masses. As a result we see an intensification of repression in already existing dictatorships (e.g. China, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates) or authoritarian regimes (Russia, India, various states in Africa and Asia) as well as the expansion of the police and surveillance state

in countries with long-standing parliamentary democracies (e.g. in Western Europe).

The supporters of the notorious Lockdown policy with all its facets of restrictions of the popular masses usually defend the governments' response by claiming that everyone was surprised in spring by the dimension of the pandemic and that there was no alternative to such a policy. Shamefully, most of the so-called left – social democrats, Stalinists, pseudo-Trotskyists, etc. – have joined the camp of their ruling class. They defended – and still defend – the Lockdown policy in one way or another and limit their criticism of the governments that they have not imposed the restrictions earlier or not long enough and that such policy should be accompanied with the expansion of the health sector. In other words, such *Lockdown Left* has capitulated to the monopoly bourgeoisie and became *social-bonapartists*, i.e. supporters of capitalist state bonapartism under the cover of "socialist" phrases.⁷

In this essay we will demonstrate with a number of facts that the claims of the capitalist governments and their media are simply lies. We will show that the ruling circles – or at least important factions of it – in the imperialist states were prepared for such a pandemic and had their plans to respond to such a crisis. We will also explain that the current policy of the same governments during the "second wave" proves that their measures in spring were not an improvised reaction on short-term notice but corresponded to these plans. The Lockdown Left which still repeats the lies of the capitalist governments and defends their bonapartist policy are silly fools who objectively play the role of treacherous servants of the bourgeoisie.

The WHO Study in 2005

As a matter of fact, leading institutions of global capitalism have discussed and planned for major pandemics since decades. In the following we will provide several examples for this. However, we want to emphasize that these are just some examples and that our list is far from comprehensive. According to a World Bank expert, a study published in 1999 "calculated that, based on the disease patterns of post World War 2 pandemics, a new flu pandemic could lead to between 100000 and 200000 deaths in the US."⁸ This is, we note in passing, pretty close to the mortality of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In the year 2005, the *World Health Organization* (WHO) published a major study called "*Avian influenza: assessing the pandemic threat*". In this study the WHO warned about the next pandemic might be close. "*The world has moved closer to a pandemic than at any time since 1968. The ecology of the virus has changed in ways that increase opportunities for a pandemic virus to emerge. Based on the recurring pattern of past pandemics, the next one is overdue.*"⁹

The study also reported about the numbers for excess mortality of past pandemics. It estimates that the global

number of death of the 1968 pandemic was one million people and that of the 1957-58 pandemic more than 2 millions.¹⁰ Readers need to bear in mind that the world population at that time was only half of today, i.e. the mortality per capita was much higher than that of the current COVID-19 pandemic!¹¹

In the same study, the WHO calculated that a future global pandemic could cause millions of death. *"The mortality of the previous century's three pandemics varied enormously, from less than 1 million to more than 40 million deaths. Best-case scenarios, modelled on the mild pandemic of 1968, project global excess deaths in the range 2 million to 7.4 million. Other estimates that factor in a more virulent virus, similar to that responsible for the deadly 1918 pandemic, estimate much higher numbers of deaths. Both scenarios are scientifically valid. The differences arise from assumptions about the inherent lethality of the virus, which past experience has shown to vary greatly."*¹²

We note in passing that the WHO characterized a pandemic causing 2 million to 7.4 million deaths as "mild". However, today, when about 1.3 million people have died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments call this an "unprecedented pandemic worse than anything else before" and use this as a pretext for draconian anti-democratic restrictions putting many millions of people under curfew!

In any case, this study of the WHO demonstrates that a pandemic like the current one has been predicted by the leading global health institution already 15 years ago.

The US "National Security Strategy" of 2006

The leading institutions of the US repression apparatus have also considered pandemics since many years as a major threat to "national security". A study on U.S. national security issues conducted by the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University unequivocally states, *"American national security in the 21st century... is likely to be threatened by pathogens as much as people. New diseases and antibiotic-resistant strains of old ones are on the rise."*¹³

The 2006 "National Security Strategy", an annual publication issued by the U.S. President, also warned about future pandemics. It stressed that the Department of Defense, i.e. the Pentagon, considers pandemics as one of the important threats. *"The Department of Defense has completed the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, which details how the Department will continue to adapt and build to meet new challenges. (...) The Department is transforming itself to better balance its capabilities across four categories of challenges: (...) Catastrophic challenges involving the acquisition, possession, and use of WMD by state and non-state actors; and deadly pandemics and other natural disasters that produce WMD-like effects."*¹⁴

The same report also emphasized the danger it could cause for "social order", i.e. the political system of the capitalist class. *"Globalization has exposed us to new challenges and changed the way old challenges touch our interests and values, while also greatly enhancing our capacity to respond. Examples include: Public health challenges like pandemics (HIV/AIDS, avian influenza) that recognize no borders. The risks to social order are so great that traditional public health approaches may be inadequate, necessitating new strategies and responses."*¹⁵

Unsurprisingly, the White House resp. the pentagon did not go much into detail what will be the exact nature of "new strategies and responses" in place of the "inadequate

traditional public health approaches". However, it is clear that since the White House did not consider pandemics as an issue solely of the Department of Health but also of the Pentagon that such "new strategies and responses" must have been of military nature.

The OECD Project "Future Global Shocks" (2011)

A few years later, in 2011, the OECD conducted another major study. (To be more precise the study was the summary of a series of separate studies which were conducted as part of this project.) This project was called "Future Global Shocks" which dealt with several threats (pandemics, financial crises, cyber risks and geomagnetic storms). The study analyzed also the consequences of such "shocks" for the risk of "social unrest" by the popular masses.

This was an important project as reflected by the composition of the "Steering Group". The document states: *"At the beginning of the project on "Future Global Shocks" a Steering Group was set up to provide overall advice to the OECD Project Team. It was composed of high-ranking experts and decision makers from public and private entities involved in the public safety, homeland security, insurance and financial sectors that contributed financially to the project."*¹⁶

It is not surprising that governments of the imperialist Great Powers instructed the OECD to conduct such a study at that time. In 2008/09, the capitalist world economy was shattered by the worst recession in the post-war period. Shortly after, the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic took place which killed several hundreds of thousands of people. And in January 2011 the Great Arab Revolution began which resulted in overthrowing of several dictators – a revolutionary process which continues until today.¹⁷

As already mentioned above, the OECD stated that a pandemic is one of the major threats for "future global shocks". It referred to the above-mentioned WHO study of 2005 which predicted millions of death in such a case. It is highly interesting that this study also reported that there is "a trend" to deal with pandemics as an issue of "national security" which would necessitate the integration of the army in the "risk management". *"Looking towards the future, a trend in the environment of risk governance is the increasing treatment of potential global shocks within the framework of national security doctrines. Many experts hold that pandemics and certain cyber attacks could be set off intentionally with economic impacts more akin to armed conflict than natural disasters, and argue for integrating military expertise to bolster prevention efforts and surge capacity for response as the logical next steps of integrated risk management. Clearly the military personnel in many OECD countries can contribute much-needed scientific and technological skills in this regard. Critics of this trend prefer stricter delineation between military defence and protection of civilian populations and assets. They contend that civilian police and public health workers are more familiar with protection of privacy and confidential information, and that a lack of trust between different national defence authorities is more likely to limit international co-operation to established alliances."*¹⁸

The report also mentions a number of measures which could be imposed in case of such a pandemic. *"The effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical interventions to stop or slow the spread of infectious disease tends to be time-sensitive. Policy makers may put in place restrictions with a broad range of invasiveness/constraint and eventual drag-on economic activity.*

Among the measures available are closing border crossings and international trade; human and animal quarantines; school closures and prohibitions of large meetings.”¹⁹ These measures are repeated later in the report. “The impacts of policy responses such as restrictions on travel and trade, quarantines, school closures and bans on public gatherings may serve to isolate a virus or disruption, but they create obstacles to commerce that risk prolonging the phase of economic recovery to follow.”²⁰ In other words, we see that the Lockdown policy and all the restrictions which the governments on all continents imposed in spring 2020 did not come out of the blue and were no spontaneous improvisation. They were rather part of an elaborated set of measures discussed and advocated by ruling circles long before.

The OECD report also stresses the necessity that the ruling class creates a monolithic “public opinion” so that it can make the population compliant to the instructions. “Failure to convince the public that it faces a genuine risk may have serious consequences. Thousands of people die every year from influenza-related illness (...). During the 2008-09 H1N1 pandemic, the low level of vaccination rates in many countries indicated a failure of risk communication. (...) In future, public officials need to clearly explain the relative benefit and risk of vaccines to the public, and their general safety should be emphasised.”

The OECD report emphasizes that it is crucial for the governments that they ensure a “single public voice” in order to silence dissenting forces as much as possible. “All media sources, including television, Internet, print and radio media, are potential platforms for disseminating information that is essential to successful emergency management, but there is broad scope for conflicting messages to find their way into the public domain very quickly. Communication must be accomplished without comprising the clarity of the message or undermining the authority of its source. The public needs a single, credible voice to provide clear and accurate answers to questions that divergent sources may raise and to resolve any confusion. Formal pandemic declarations and alerts issued by governments in 2009 faced scepticism and achieved only limited success. In several OECD countries a vocal minority of medical doctors had publicly questioned the severity of the outbreaks and denounced state efforts at mass vaccination. While censorship of a media platform is not a policy option for democratic societies, holding individuals accountable for unprofessional behaviour is. Some governments have trained technical risk specialists (e.g. hydrological engineers) to conduct public relations during large scale disasters.”²¹

The report also warns of the danger of mass protests and insurrections (“social unrest” in the language of the bourgeois politicians). “If a sufficient percentage of the vulnerable population is unable to cope with the effects of a shock event, the stress on social stability can reach a tipping point and lead to social unrest.”²² The study even reproduced a map of the U.S. which identifies those regions where the “risk of social unrest” is highest. “Figure 5.3 superimposes a social vulnerability index onto a map of the United States using census data from 2000, aggregates socio-economic factors and weighs them all equally. This index contains potential insights into the extent to which a major disruptive event will have an effect on the population of a region, with highly vulnerable groups most likely to exhibit behavioural changes or unrest.”²³

In other words, the OECD 2011 report as well as the above-mentioned Pentagon report confirms that the rul-

ing class has viewed a pandemic since many years not only as a health issue but also as a political-military issue which could provoke “social unrest” and endanger “political stability”. As a result, they prepared for such crisis not only by public health measures but also by concepts for restricting freedom of movement for the population, for controlling public opinion and for mobilizing police and army in order to suppress popular protests. Hence, what we have seen in 2020 is not a new, improvised invention of imperialist governments but has been pre-planned long in advance.

The 2019 Study of WHO and World Bank

A few months before the COVID-19 crisis became the dominating issue of global public, the *Global Preparedness Monitoring Board* (GPMB) published another study about the danger of a pandemic. The GPMB is a joint project of the WHO and the World Bank. Its 15-person board includes not only leading health politicians of major powers (Ministers resp. leading government advisors of the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, India, etc.) but also representatives of multinational corporations (like the *Wellcome Trust* (behind which is *GlaxoSmithKline*) and the well-known *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*). In other words, the GPMB is not an obscure Think Tank but rather a representative institution of the world bourgeoisie.

We will limit ourselves at this point to a few comments as the RCIT dealt already with this study in March this year in more detail in a special article by Almedina Gunić.²⁴ The report, published in September 2019, warned: “The world is not prepared for a fast-moving, virulent respiratory pathogen pandemic.”²⁵ Such a pandemic, the GMPB warns, could kill 50 to 80 million people. “While disease has always been part of the human experience, a combination of global trends, including insecurity and extreme weather, has heightened the risk. Disease thrives in disorder and has taken advantage – outbreaks have been on the rise for the past several decades and the spectre of a global health emergency looms large. If it is true to say “what’s past is prologue”, then there is a very real threat of a rapidly moving, highly lethal pandemic of a respiratory pathogen killing 50 to 80 million people and wiping out nearly 5% of the world’s economy. A global pandemic on that scale would be catastrophic, creating widespread havoc, instability and insecurity. The world is not prepared.”²⁶

Of course, such a “warning” did sound strange at that time and does sound so even more today. Whom did the GPMB board warn? The world public? But these were not impotent scientists but members resp. leading advisors of governments of the most powerful states as well as representatives of the richest people on the globe! Who could implement a policy against a pandemic if not these very governments?! This is like Trump, Modi, Xi and Putin “warning” that the world faces the risk of global war!

No, this warning was not directed to the world’s governments. Its purpose was rather to alert the popular masses and to prepare them for the inevitability of coming attacks on democratic rights and social life in general as well as for the necessity of big business contracts for major corporations in the drug, high-tech, security, retail and other sectors sector (resulting in massive profits)!

This character of such “warning” is also reflected by the following statement in this report. The Great Powers and

business leaders also deplore the fact that “the society” (i.e. the popular masses) do not longer trust them. “Trust in institutions is eroding. Governments, scientists, the media, public health, health systems and health workers in many countries are facing a breakdown in public trust that is threatening their ability to function effectively. The situation is exacerbated by misinformation that can hinder disease control communicated quickly and widely via social media.”²⁷

As a consequence the GMPB report urges a “‘whole-of-government’ and ‘whole-of-society’ approach”. “Efforts on national and local preparedness planning too often lack an effective “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach. Other parties that must be engaged include national agencies beyond the health ministry, local governments, traditional and religious leaders, civil society, the research and security communities, the private sector, the media and operational experts. Preparedness-specific and preparedness-sensitive activities need to be included in sector specific strategies and systems-strengthening plans, such as those for universal health coverage; animal health in agriculture and livestock; transport and security; and disaster risk management.”²⁸

This word creations from the world of diplomatic speak (‘whole-of-government’ and ‘whole-of-society’ approach) mean – when translated in blunt language – that the political leaders urge the governments to put all sectors of the society under control so that they all follow the state leaders’ instructions. And in fact, this is what we have seen in spring 2020: “local governments, traditional and religious leaders, civil society, the research and security communities, the private sector, the media and operational experts” were all united in implementing and advocating the Lockdown policy (“Stay home”).

The Event 201 and other warnings

More or less at the same time when the GMPB report was published, the *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation* (yes, the same institution which is on the GMPB board!), the *Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security* and the *World Economic Forum* conducted the, meanwhile famous, *Event 201*. This has been, in the words of the organizers, “a high-level pandemic exercise on October 18, 2019, in New York, NY. The exercise illustrated areas where public/private partnerships will be necessary during the response to a severe pandemic in order to diminish large-scale economic and societal consequences.”²⁹

In this simulation a virus, called CAPS (Coronavirus (sic!) Associated Pulmonary Syndrome) spread globally. Three months in, the hypothetical illness had caused 30,000 illnesses and 2,000 deaths. The scenario ended after 18 months with 65 million people dead.³⁰

Needless to say that the organizers recommended the implementations of the policy GMPB. This includes the “unselfish” advice to governments to lend a larger role to “private sector leaders” and to award more contracts to the capitalist monopolies. “Governments should provide more resources and support for the development and surge manufacturing of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics that will be needed during a severe pandemic.”³¹

Likewise, the organizers recommend the creation of a unified bloc of the ruling class in order to “countering misinformation” and to “suppress false messages though the use of technology”. “Governments and the private sector should assign a greater priority to developing methods to combat mis- and dis-

information prior to the next pandemic response. Governments will need to partner with traditional and social media companies to research and develop nimble approaches to countering misinformation. This will require developing the ability to flood media with fast, accurate, and consistent information. Public health authorities should work with private employers and trusted community leaders such as faith leaders, to promulgate factual information to employees and citizens. Trusted, influential private-sector employers should create the capacity to readily and reliably augment public messaging, manage rumors and misinformation, and amplify credible information to support emergency public communications. National public health agencies should work in close collaboration with WHO to create the capability to rapidly develop and release consistent health messages. For their part, media companies should commit to ensuring that authoritative messages are prioritized and that false messages are suppressed including though the use of technology.”

Finally, we want to draw attention to the fact that predictions and warnings about the pandemic have played a central role among the state repression apparatus of various countries. Here is just one example. The annual report of Austria’s army warned in late 2019 about the “increasing likelihood” of a severe pandemic (like “MERS-CoV (Middle East Respiratory Syndrom Coronavirus) and SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)”). Such a pandemic could have “devastating consequences for the whole society. In addition to many people in need of treatment and death it can also result in the standstill of public service and the economy. A collapse of the health service, bottlenecks in food supply, restrictions in export and transport, animal epidemics etc. can result in unmanageable stresses and strains for the state and its bewildered society.”³²

Leaving aside the telling language (“the state and its society”, expressing the hierarchy as it is the typical point of view of military brass!), this statement reflects that the Austrian army command was fully aware of the possibility of such a pandemic and its consequences.

One could counter that the Austrian army command is not a particular relevant institution from the global point of view. This is of course true. But the point is that if even the military of such a small imperialist country like Austria with no history of massive domestic repression in the past decades, if even such a state apparatus is fully aware of a coming pandemic and the “necessity” of the army to intervene, it is very obvious that the state apparatus of larger and more aggressive imperialist states must have been at least as much aware of such developments. In other words, if even small and politically backward Austria viewed the pandemic as a priority for the army, we can fairly assume that all relevant imperialist states were also prepared for such scenarios!

Finally, we want to emphasize that all these studies which we mentioned above have not been conducted by some maverick scientists or obscure think tanks but rather the most important and prestigious institutions which have always played a central role in world politics.

As it is well known, institutions like the World Bank, the WHO, the OECD etc. are not independent bodies but rather organizations which are dominated by the imperialist Great Powers. Their leading personal is appointed by these powers and has to follow their instructions. The leaders of these organizations are only “independent” insofar as conflicting interests between the Great Powers

might allow them a certain room to maneuver. However, such space is pretty limited and, in any case, they always operate within the realm of the total interests of the ruling class.

In summary, we have demonstrated that during the past 15 years, leading institutions of the imperialist powers discussed the big danger of severe pandemics with millions of death and massive risks for public order. They warned about the risk of “social unrest”, i.e. popular mass protests and uprisings. Consequently, these imperialist institutions developed concepts how the governments should respond to such events. They stated the need to restrict democratic freedoms of people, to involve the bourgeois repression apparatus in such a policy and to work towards controlling public opinion. In short, they prepared for the event of the COVID-19 crisis.

The “Second Wave”: Continuation of the repressive Lockdown policy

If the advocates of the bourgeois governments (and their “left-wing” supporters) would be right that “the world was caught by surprise” in spring by the severe pandemic, than it would be only logical that these governments would operate differently now when the “second wave” of the pandemic arrived half a year later. But as everyone can see there has been no significant change in the governmental policy. When there are a few infections in a Chinese city, large parts of the population are put under curfew and are obligated to undergo mass testing. In Europe and other regions, the governments have again imposed lockdowns and massive restrictions of personal freedoms. They are also increasingly ordering the military to “help” with mass testing of the population.

If the ruling class would be really so concerned about public health, why did they not use the past six months to massively expand the public health sector, recruit large numbers of new doctors and nurses, improve the working condition and raise the wages of hospital workers, massively increase the number of ICU’s, etc.?! As everyone knows, nothing of this has happened! Instead, the answer was and remains state repression. At the same time the governments console the people to wait (and hope) for the miraculous vaccine against the Corona Virus – for which, of course, people have to pay and which will be a gigantic business opportunity for the drug corporations!

Nevertheless, the governments and their propagandists already talk about a long period where such restrictions will remain in place. They also advocate the introduction of apps which could help to surveil all movements as well as the state of health of the population (like China’s Xi regime is already doing). Unsurprisingly, many leaders of the Western bourgeoisie are impressed by the successful methods of their Chinese rivals in monitoring and controlling the popular masses. Hence, an increasing number of these rulers want to introduce similar methods in their own countries.

The *Handelsblatt* – the daily paper representing the point of view of Germany’s monopoly capital – has started a series of articles which warn that “we are in danger of missing many interesting ideas which have been already realized in China.”³³ Leading government advisers like the German virologist Drosten already warn cynically that after COV-

ID the next pandemic will inevitable come.³⁴ Likewise, an increasing number of governments are imposing decrees which allow the army to operate domestically under the pretext of “combating the pandemic”. Naturally, they all claim that COVID-19 has been such a dramatic and unexpected event that they need to take such emergency measures. But, as we did demonstrate above, it is neither an unexpected event (it was discussed already 15 years ago!) nor is it a pandemic which is more dramatic than the rulers expected in their prognoses. And, as we also showed above, they had already planned since many years to respond to such an event with the help of the repression apparatus.

The Macron government in France is working hard to create a police state. It has not only imposed draconic Lockdown measures, it is also waging a war against Muslims and tries to implement a new ‘police state’ law which would make it criminal to film police in action.³⁵ The Austrian government is copying such a chauvinist-bonapartist policy.³⁶ Shamefully the reformist and centrist left ignores or denies the connection between the Lockdown policy, the state repression under the cover of Islamophobic racism and other measures to expand the powers of the bureaucratic military state machine.³⁷ But as a matter of fact, all these measures have been taken by one and the same governments within the recent period. All these measures result in one and the same consequence:

* *Deflecting public attention from the deep economic crisis and the accelerating class antagonism;*

* *Dramatically restricting democratic rights for the popular masses;*

* *Massively expanding the powers of the police, army, courts and whole state bureaucracy.*

In short, only the most ignorant fool can deny that all the measures are *related with each other* and are part of one and the same political project: *creating a chauvinist bonapartist state in the service of the ruling class.*

In summary, governmental policy in autumn 2020, during the “second wave”, is basically identical with their policy during the “first wave” in spring. This demonstrates that the Lockdown policy was not an improvised emergency measure. No, it was and remains the preferred policy of state repression – utilizing the pandemic as an excuse for the massive expansion of the chauvinist bonapartist state apparatus!

It does not take a conspiracy!

Does this mean that we believe that COVID-19 is a kind of conspiracy by the global ruling class? Well, certainly not in the literally sense. The ruling classes of China, the U.S., the European Union and other powers are too much enmeshed in a struggle against each other. This excludes any far-reaching joint conspiracy.

Did one of the Great Powers deliberately release the SARS-CoV-2 virus? Well, Washington has accused China of doing this and pointed to the *Wuhan Institute of Virology* and its links to the Chinese military. Likewise, pro-Chinese circles have speculated that an US athlete might have imported the virus during the 7th CISM Military World Games which took place in Wuhan in October 2019. Likewise, the timing of the above-mentioned *Event 201* did provoke suspicion (and forced the organizers to publish

a disclaimer).³⁸

We are not in a position to judge about such theories. Naturally, Great Powers and big monopolies are prepared to do anything in order to increase power and profit. They have launched wars with millions of death in order to increase their power and profits. So it is certainly not out of order to imagine them doing other evil things! However, we have not seen any serious evidence which would confirm such a theory.

Furthermore, we want to point out that pandemics are not such an exceptional event. As we mentioned at the beginning of this essay, there have been a number of pandemics in the past decades, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands or even millions of people. The WHO was not wrong in stating that the next pandemic "*is overdue*". Ecological destruction, dramatic turning points in the relation between nature, animals and human beings, the negative influence of deteriorating living conditions for the immune system of people, the worsening quality of food etc. – all this improves the conditions for spreading of a virus resp. for its harmful consequences. It does not take a conspiracy for such an event.

Our point is not that the ruling class conspired in the literate sense for the COVID-19 counterrevolution. But highly influential circles in the ruling class in many states have desired for years to expand the bonapartist state apparatus and to massively restrict democratic rights. And in those states where authoritarian regimes have already existed for some time, the rulers are intensifying the repression. Only ignorant fools can deny that there has been a global trend towards intensification of state repression and expansion of bonapartist rule. Just look around the world and you see the same shift to reactionary authoritarian rulers. Xi abolished the eight year limitation and made himself President for lifetime. Putin did the same in Russia. We have seen similar trends with Trump in the U.S., Johnson in Britain, Modi in India, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Netanyahu in Israel, Mohamed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Zayed in the United Arab Emirates and Erdoğan in Turkey. True, some of them are dysfunctional to represent the interests of the ruling class – in particular if they are clowns with the IQ of a 10-year old (Trump and Bolsonaro come to one mind and Johnson is also a candidate for such a title)! But in the case of such imbeciles, they either subordinate to the "adults in the room" or they get removed (as Trump is just experiencing).

This trend towards bonapartism is not the result of a conspiracy. It is rather the result of the objective laws of capitalism. As this system has entered a period of decay, contradictions between classes and states are accelerating inevitably. Hence, the Great Recession in 2008/09 and now the Third Depression which started in autumn 2019. Hence, the acceleration of the rivalry between the Great Powers but also between regional powers (e.g. in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean and Eastern Africa). Hence, the global wave of popular uprisings since one year. How can it be otherwise that in such a period the ruling classes turn to "strong leaders" and bonapartist power structures?! This is even more the case since influential circles among the ruling classes started to coquet with such concepts already after 9-11 in 2001!

The same is the case with the top monopolies. The biggest corporations in drugs, high-tech, artificial intelligence,

bio-tech, security, retail, etc. have waited for long for an opportunity to increase their profits and to expand the domination of the market. That's why Gates has invested so much in the WHO. This is why Google, Microsoft, Alibaba, etc. try to collect as many personal data as possible. This is why such corporations advocate the digitalization of many aspects of business and social life. When COVID-19 appeared, they quickly understood that this is their chance to dramatically advocate their business interests. As a result, a number of big monopolies experienced a massive increase of their profits since the beginning of the pandemic in spring.³⁹

So, in summary, influential circles in the ruling class have prepared for some time for a shift towards bonapartism. The above-mentioned studies on "future global shocks" demonstrate that they planned to utilize events like a pandemic to implement such shift. These studies also show that the rulers have been aware of the explosive potential with looming "*social unrest*" and "*lack of public trust*". When the COVID-19 pandemic began and in particular when they saw in February and March how China's regime successfully utilizes the virus to intensify its rule, a political dam break among the ruling classes in the rest of the world took place. The influential circles convinced other sectors of the ruling class – or pushed them aside – that this is the time to act and to open a new era of bonapartism as well as a new era in business world. Hence, both pro-bonapartist circles in the ruling class and well as monopoly capitalists have been highly interested that governments and media present COVID-19 as an "unprecedented and very dangerous pandemic which will change our lives".

Conclusions

Let us finally point out the most important conclusions of our study.

1) The COVID-19 pandemic is not an unprecedented event. There have been a number of pandemics in the past decades with similar or even worse consequences for human lives.

2) In the past 15 years, leading imperialist institutions elaborated studies on future pandemics which calculated that such events could result in a similar or even higher number of deaths. Did the governments not take seriously such studies – as many of the Lockdown advocates claim today? This is absurd. If the ruling circles did not care about such warnings why did they instruct major imperialist institutions like the OECD and the WHO to study future pandemics and how to respond? Why did they show such an interest in this issue? Obviously they were aware about the significance of such an event. Hence, it is only logical that they elaborated plans how to respond.

3) In their studies preparing for such events, the ruling elite planned to respond not only by public health measures but also by intervening with their police and military apparatus and by controlling public opinion.

4) These studies also show that the ruling class has been aware of the dangers of "*social unrest*" and "*lack of public trust*". They knew that their system rests on a highly instable and explosive fundament. This is even more the case in the current period as the capitalist system faces the worst depression of the world economy since a century and, at the same time, as it is shattered by a global wave of

popular uprisings. Hence, the necessity for them to introduce a more authoritarian rule.

5) We have also seen that big corporations have shown a high interest in studies about pandemics and utilized it in order to advocate their interests. When COVID-19 appeared they saw their chance and grasped it. Consequently, they were able to make huge profit gains in the last 9 months.

Socialists are only capable of finding a correct orientation in the current period if they understand the political and economic interests of the ruling class behind the COVID-19 counterrevolution. They will fail in this task if they believe the lies of the bourgeois governments and their supporters that the Lockdown policy and the expansion of the bonapartist state is driven by public health considerations.

The RCIT has advocated a Marxist analysis of the COVID-19 crisis since the very beginning and elaborated a revolutionary program for the struggle against the counterrevolutionary offensive of the bourgeois governments. At the beginning, we were only part of a very small minority which had to swim against the all-powerful stream of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. But in the recent period we have seen important changes as smaller and larger popular protests are taking place against the Lockdown policy.⁴⁰ In addition there are also a growing number of medical scientists who withstand the pressure of the governments and who criticize the panicking COVID hysteria and the anti-democratic Lockdown policy.⁴¹

Times are changing and the ruling class increasingly gets

nervous! They know – as we know – that the cold winter of COVID-19 Counterrevolution can easily explode and open a hot summer of popular uprisings! We call all socialist organizations and activists to join forces so that we can build a Revolutionary World Party capable of providing the coming struggles with program and leadership!

Footnotes

1 All RCIT documents on the COVID-19 crisis are compiled at a special sub-page on our website: <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/collection-of-articles-on-the-2019-corona-virus/>. In particular we refer readers to the RCIT Manifesto: COVID-19: A Cover for a Major Global Counterrevolutionary Offensive. We are at a turning point in the world situation as the ruling classes provoke a war-like atmosphere in order to legitimize the build-up of chauvinist state-bonapartist regimes, 21 March 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/covid-19-a-cover-for-a-major-global-counterrevolutionary-offensive/>. In addition, we draw attention to our book by Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution: What It Is and How to Fight It. A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle, RCIT Books, April 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/theory/the-covid-19-global-counterrevolution/>. See also Michael Pröbsting: The Second Wave of the COVID-19 Counterrevolution. On the ruling class strategy in the current conjuncture, its inner contradictions and the perspectives of the workers and popular resistance, 20 July 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-second-wave-of-the-covid-19-counterrevolution/>; Michael Pröbsting: The Police and Surveillance State in the Post-Lockdown Phase. A global review of the ruling class's plans of expanding the bonapartist state machinery amidst the COVID-19 crisis, 21 May 2020, <https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/the-police-and-surveillance-state-in-the-post-lockdown-phase/>.

Books of the RCIT

Michael Pröbsting: The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution

What It Is and How to Fight It

A Marxist analysis and strategy for the revolutionary struggle

In *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* Michael Pröbsting analyses the dramatic events in spring 2020 which have opened a new historic era. A triple crisis has shocked the world. The Third Depression has begun, characterized by a devastating economic slump of the capitalist world economy which is certainly no less dramatic than the crisis which started in 1929.

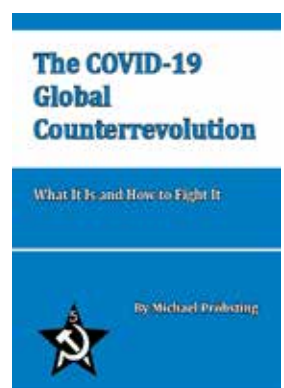
In addition, there is a wave of anti-democratic attacks of a scale which has not been seen in the imperialist countries since 1945. This has triggered a global turn towards Chauvinist State Bonapartism and the creation of a monstrous Leviathan-like state machinery.

And finally, the world faces COVID-19 – a pandemic which endangers many lives and which is exploited by the ruling classes in order to spread fear, to deflect attention from the capitalist causes of the economic crisis and to justify the turn towards chauvinist state bonapartism.

The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution also shows that large sectors of the reformist workers movement and the

so-called left fail to understand the meaning of this triple crisis. Similar to the situation in 1914 after the beginning of World War I we can observe a gigantic wave of opportunist capitulation by many self-proclaimed socialists as they support or at least do not denounce the global lockdown and the suppression of democratic rights which the ruling classes are imposing in the name of combat against the pandemic. *The COVID-19 Global Counterrevolution* offers a Marxist analysis of this historic crisis and elaborates a revolutionary perspective for the struggles ahead.

The book contains an introduction and 6 chapters plus an appendix (176 pages) and includes 5 figures and a diagram.



[thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/](https://www.thecommunists.net/worldwide/global/police-and-surveillance-state-in-post-lockdown-phase/).

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Preface of the Korean Translation of “Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry”

By Michael Pröbsting, 30 April 2020

I am very pleased to see the publication of the Korean translation of our book on the Great Power rivalry. This is already the second language – after Portuguese – in which this book has been translated after its original publication in English language a bit more than a year ago. It does not need many words to explain why the issue of Great Power rivalry is a highly urgent subject for socialists on the Korean Peninsula. It is literally located in the midst of four of the world's five Great Powers – Japan, China, Russia and the U.S. (due to its strong military presence in South Korea itself as well as in other East Asian countries). Hence, the acceleration of rivalry between these imperialist powers can not but has direct consequences for the Korean people.

The recent events of the global triple crisis will no doubt further accelerate the antagonisms between the imperialist powers. Faced with the *Third Depression*, i.e. the worst economic slump of the capitalist world economy since 1929, a global anti-democratic turn towards *chauvinism* and *state bonapartism*; and the *COVID-19* pandemic, the ruling classes all over the world are determined to strengthen themselves at the expense of their rivals.¹ The escalating exchange of chauvinist accusations between Washington and Beijing in the context of the *COVID-19* crisis (racist slur of “*the Chinese Virus*”, speculations about the US resp. the Chinese military being responsible for the creation of the virus, demands for financial compensation, etc.) demonstrate that the rivalry between the imperialist Great Powers – in particular the two strongest, U.S. and China – will be one of the most important feature of world politics in the coming period.

However, there is also another reason which is mentioned in this book but not elaborated in much detail. South Korea itself has become an imperialist state in the 2000s. As the Korean comrades of the RCIT have emphasized – and the author of these lines also contributed a pamphlet on this issue² – the capitalist class was able to strengthen itself to such a degree that it could overcome its traditional semi-colonial position and became a monopoly bourgeoisie. Hence, South Korean corporations have become major players on the world market and participate in the imperi-

alist super-exploitation of poorer nations.

A political expression of South Korea's rise in the league of imperialist states has been the trade war with Japan which began in summer 2019.³

These developments demonstrate that the fundamental programmatic conclusions elaborated in “*Anti-Imperialism in the Age of Great Power Rivalry*” are highly relevant not only for the five Great Powers but also for smaller imperialist states like South Korea. In summary, these conclusions are that South Korean revolutionaries must not lend any support to their own imperialist bourgeoisie (or any other like that of China). In any political, economic or military conflict with other imperialist states, socialists must act on the old maxim elaborated by the German communist Karl Liebknecht: “*the main enemy is at home*”. Hence, the Marxist principles which are valid in other imperialist countries are also relevant for South Korea: Any concession to the domestic monopoly bourgeoisie, any adaption to Korean nationalism is paramount to social-chauvinism.

And there is also another issue which makes the analysis of this book relevant for Korean Marxists. As the Peninsula is divided in two states since the devastating war in 1950-53, socialists need to take a clear stance on the long-standing conflict between the U.S. respectively the ruling class in Seoul and North Korea. In contrast to the South, North Korea is not an imperialist state. Since the Stalinist regime implemented the restoration of capitalism, North Korea has become a poor semi-colony. Hence, Marxists have to duty to defend North Korea against the aggression of the U.S. as well as other imperialist powers. Hence, revolutionaries oppose the sanctions against North Korea and call for the military defeat of its enemies in case of a war. Naturally, such defense must go hand in hand with resolute opposition against the bureaucratic, state-capitalist dictatorship in Pyongyang. Such tactics are part of the strategy for the revolutionary unification of Korea and the struggle for the overthrow of the South Korean bourgeoisie as well as of the North Korea Stalinist-capitalist ruling class.

We conclude this brief preface by expressing our hope that the analysis and conclusions of this book will stimu-



Publications of the RCIT

The Origins of the Jews

By Yossi Schwartz, July 2015

Chapter I: What are the origins of the Jews?

Chapter II: The Rise of Anti-Semitism

Chapter III: Anti-Semitism and Zionism

Chapter IV: The Russian Revolution:

Bolshevism, the Bund, and Stalinism

late a fruitful discussion among socialist activists in South Korea. We are aware that due to the traditional strong influence of the Stalinist “National Liberation” current, large sectors of the left oppose the idea that South Korea has become an imperialist state. They rather continue considering the state as a semi-colony (or neo-colony) oppressed and exploited by the U.S. and Japan. However, the dangerous consequence of such a wrong position is – as the recent trade war with Japan demonstrates – that such leftists support the Korean monopoly bourgeoisie. As we have repeatedly emphasized, in practice, such an approach is equivalent to social-imperialism. Korean socialists must break with such a treacherous position and take a firm, internationalist and anti-imperialist stance!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to comrade Hong Su-Cheon who is not only an excellent translator but also a Marxist theoretician in his own right who has already published two works on the issue of imperialism.⁴

Footnotes

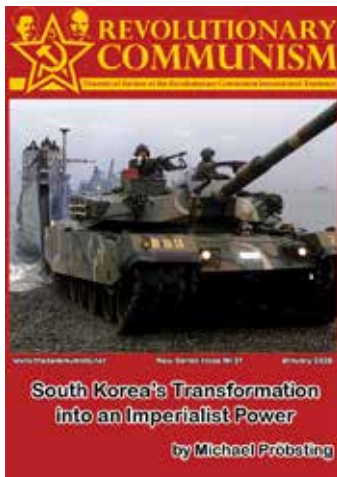
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Publications of the RCIT

South Korea's Transformation into an Imperialist Power

On the nature of South Korean monopoly capital and the ensuing programmatic tasks of the workers vanguard

By Michael Pröbsting, December 2019

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