

## Anarchist Analysis of Corona Crisis: Spring 2020

“The spread of coronavirus reveals what we wonder about ourselves today—  
are we worth saving, and at what cost?” *(& who is “we”?)*

### Ask a Different Question: Reclaiming autonomy of action (or: “The Worst Virus Ever... Authority...”)

20 March 2020

“How do we target the way power is concentrating and restructuring itself around us? What interests are poised to “win” at the virus and how do we undermine them (think investment opportunities, but also new laws and increased powers). What infrastructure of control is being put in place? Who are the profiteers and how can we hurt them? How do we prepare for what comes next and plan for the window of possibility that might exist in between the worst of the virus and a return to economic normalcy?

Developing our own read on the situation, along with our own goals and practices, is not a small job. It will take the exchange of texts, experiments in action, and communication about the results. It will take broadening our sense of inside-outside to include enough people to be able to organize. It will involve still acting in the public space and refusing to retreat to online space. Combined with measures to deal with the virus, the intense fear and pressure to conform coming from many who would normally be our allies makes even finding space to discuss the crises on different terms a challenge. But if we actually want to challenge the ability of the powerful to shape the response to the virus for their own interests, we need to **start by taking back the ability to ask our own questions.**

Conditions are different everywhere, but all states are watching each other and following each others’ lead, and we would do well to look to anarchists in other places dealing with conditions that may soon become our own.”

From: <https://north-shore.info/2020/03/20/ask-a-different-question-reclaiming-autonomy-of-action-during-the-virus/>

Original: <https://nantes.indymedia.org/articles/49289>

## Italy: Solidarity doesn't go into quarantine

10th March 2020 by Dario Antonelli

“It is the institutions, parties and industrialists who have destroyed our health service, who have caused an increase in chronic respiratory diseases, who keep us in unemployment or nailed to work into old age, it is they who are now asking us to be responsible, to make other sacrifices and not to protest.”

“The responsibility that is pressing at the moment is not to wait, with discipline, closed in on itself, for the government to resolve everything, perhaps going to work anyway because the recession is just around the corner. Our responsibility is to keep alive and **strengthen the networks of solidarity** so that they can be tools for all the exploited and oppressed in this context, at health, social and political level.”

From: <https://www.vrijebond.org/solidarity-doesnt-go-into-quarantine/>

Original: <https://www.umanitanova.org/?p=11724> & more:

<https://crimethinc.com/2020/03/12/against-the-coronavirus-and-the-opportunism-of-the-state-anarchists-in-italy-report-on-the-spread-of-the-virus-and-the-quarantine>

## Italy: we don't forget which side of the fence we are on

21st March 2020

“We are in solidarity with all those who are currently risking their lives to save others, with all the staff in service in hospitals, with those who work and go on strike to ensure conditions of safety for themselves for others, with all those who do not they can afford to #stayathome because they don't have a home. We are in solidarity with those who are afraid because they fear for themselves and their loved ones. We are in solidarity with all those who have fallen ill and have been torn from home without having contact with loved ones due to the absence of protective devices, we are in solidarity with all those who are dying with palliative care for the absence of adequate emergency structures and we are also with those who have had to make decisions about the lives of others on who to intubate and who not in a desperate attempt to reduce the damage to a minimum when the damage is certain.” From: <https://www.umanitanova.org/?p=11756>

## **The coronavirus as a declaration of war**

18 March 2020

“Each society has its own diseases, and those diseases tell the truth about this society. The interrelationship between capitalist agribusiness and the etiology of recent epidemics is all too well known: runaway capitalism produces the virus that it itself later reuses to control us. The side effects (depoliticisation, restructuring, layoffs, deaths, etc.) are essential to impose a normalised state of emergency. Capitalism is murderous...

If the mobilisation unfolds as a war against the population, it is because its sole objective is to save the algorithm of life, which, of course, has nothing to do with our personal and irreducible lives, which matter little.

Dark and paroxysmal life, that which is incalculable in its ambivalence, escapes the algorithm.”

<http://autonomies.org/2020/03/the-coronavirus-as-a-declaration-of-war/>

Original: <https://www.elcritic.cat/opinio/santiago-lopez-petit/el-coronavirus-com-a-declaracio-de-guerra-52417>

## **USA: Global Inequality, Internal Social Divide, International Solidarity**

14 March 2020

“the unknown consequences of interactions with malnutrition and existing infections — should warn us that COVID-19 might take a different and more deadly path in the dense, sickly slums of Africa and South Asia. With cases now appearing in Lagos, Kigali, Addis Ababa, and Kinshasa, no one knows (and won’t know for a long time because of the absence of testing) how it may synergize with local health conditions and diseases.

socialists must take the next step and, with the health care and pharmaceutical industries as immediate targets, advocate social ownership and the democratization of economic power.

In addressing the pandemic, socialists should find every occasion to remind others of the urgency of international solidarity. Concretely we need to agitate our progressive friends and their political idols to demand a massive scaling up of the production of test kits, protective supplies, and lifeline drugs for free distribution to poor countries. It's up to us to ensure that Medicare for All becomes foreign as well as domestic policy.”

From: <https://jacobinmag.com/2020/03/mike-davis-coronavirus-outbreak-capitalism-left-international-solidarity>

## **The Capitalist Pandemic, Coronavirus and the Economic Crisis**

19 March 2020

The coronavirus pandemic is a serious public health problem and the human suffering caused by the spread of this virus will be enormous. If it massively affects countries of the Global South with very fragile public health systems that have been undermined by 40 years of neo-liberal policies, the death toll will be very high. We must not forget the critical situation of the Iranian population, victim of the blockade imposed by Washington, a blockade that includes medicines and medical equipment.

**Mortality Depends on the Class Differences:** mortality, due to the coronavirus pandemic, will affect human beings according to their income and wealth, and therefore, to the social class to which they belong.

the **financial crisis** been latent for several years - the continued rise in financial asset prices was a very clear indicator of this - but a **crisis in the production sector** had begun long before the Covid19 virus spread in December 2019. “

From: <https://www.cadtm.org/The-Capitalist-Pandemic-Coronavirus-and-the-Economic-Crisis>  
& <https://www.cadtm.org/No-the-coronavirus-is-not-responsible-for-the-fall-of-stock-prices>

## **Politics in times of catastrophe**

20 March 2020

The present catastrophe is not centrally the virus, but a system of social relations that transforms nature – and can only see value in nature as transformed – into capital, into commodities.

As regional economies slow, with parallel and exponential effects at the global level, a sort of “rewilding” begins to occur; new or more vigorous life shows itself, where before there was only statistical and unseen death.

increasingly large numbers of people, whole communities, are expendable. Mike Davis reminds us that it is the working poor, the colonised, the marginalised, who are cut down in plagues.

COVID-19, as a catastrophe, offers lessons for those able or desirous to learn: that we are all equal in our common fragility, that our creativity, ways of being in the world, are inescapably collective, that this collective is in no way exclusively human, and that human and natural communities flourish when a free equality flourishes as well.

**let the present “reversal” of things become a true reversal:**

**choose for the practices of collective mutual aid.**

<http://autonomies.org/2020/03/the-corona-virus-politics-in-times-of-catastrophe-9/>

## **BAT AND MEN: EPIDEMIC POLICIES AND CORONAVIRUSES**

21 March 2020

Would there be a kind of response to the coronavirus which would be protective, but which would not mean an increase of surveillance and control over populations?

That is what is at stake in the weeks to come: an effort of collective mobilisation that does not rest on military surveillance and State control, but on a sanitary vigilance and a sharing of information within the population.

<https://lundi.am/Des-chauve-souris-et-des-hommes-politiques-epidemiologiques-et-coronavirus> & <http://www.zones-sensibles.org/frederic-keck-les-sentinelles-des-pandemies/>

## **Italy: Feminist Protests, Factory Strikes, Prison Revolts**

17th March 2020

“women pay the price for containment measures: women who must stay home to care for their children with closed or senior schools; workers who are fired or forced to use up their vacations; the highly precarious and feminized care and reproduction sectors, forced into exhausting shifts; domestic and care workers, often migrants, who live with their employers and so on. Not to mention domestic violence. Forced quarantine and isolation for weeks at home run the risk of being a real-time bomb for cases of domestic violence, as the Chinese case shows . For some, staying home sounds more like a threat than comfort.”

From: <http://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6454>

## **Corona Crisis & Climate Crisis**

9 March 2020

There are many commonalities between the Covid-19 crisis and the climate crisis.

“The climatic danger is however infinitely more global and more serious than that of the virus. The same will obviously apply to its consequences if the exploited and the oppressed do not unite to bring down this absurd and criminal mode of production. The Covid-19 is yet another warning: capitalism, which leads humanity to barbarism, must be ended.”

From: <http://links.org.au/coronavirus-pandemic-eight-theses-covid-19>  
Original: <https://www.gaucheanticapitaliste.org/huit-theses-sur-le-coronavirus/>

## **The vital importance of social self-organization**

17 March 2020

The labour movement must fight for the cessation of all unnecessary production and transport, to ensure that the maximum health safety conditions are respected in the essential workplaces, and that workers' incomes and contracts be fully maintained in the event of total or partial unemployment.

Local organizations have an essential role to play on many levels. ... By combating racism, xenophobia, LGBT+phobia they can make sure that precarious, migrant, undocumented and discriminated minorities are not excluded from the protections to which they are entitled. They can help women for whom confinement means a deadly lock-up with a violent spouse. They can ensure that daily gestures of "social distancing" are respected.

Many instances of grassroots organization at the level of a neighbourhood, a block of flats, with those proposing to help and those needing help (elderly, disabled, in quarantine) making contact, often for the first time, exist in different countries,

Social movements must be able to rely on independent medical and scientific expertise to know which measures are effective and indispensable, and encourage international exchange. Doctors and researchers must engage with them.

Finally, the self-activity of the social movement is an irreplaceable democratic guarantee. The authoritarianism of the powers can be reinforced in times of health emergencies, in the name of efficiency. The broadest possible unitary mobilization front must be opposed to this dominant trend.

<http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6457>

## New fascism in Slovenia (Marina Grzinic)

21 Mar 2020

what we have in front of us is most dangerous than the virus; it is a form of fascism that I will name janš-ism, which is a drive for an all-over militarization of the Slovenian society.

A turbo post-socialist entanglement of old militarization fantasies, and political populist power.

<https://nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-2003/msg00067.html>

## Epidemiologist's Solutions for The End the Crisis

1. Find out if the distribution of virus like an iceberg, or a pyramid
2. Make a treatment that works, a vaccine or antiviral.
3. (make sure) large numbers of people—in particular nurses, home health care providers, doctors, policemen, firemen, and teachers who have had the disease—are immune; **and** we have tested them to know that they are not infectious any longer. And we have a system that identifies them, either a concert wristband or a card with their photograph and some kind of a stamp on it. Then we can be comfortable sending our children back to school, because we know the teacher is not infectious.”

<https://www.wired.com/story/coronavirus-interview-larry-brilliant-smallpox-epidemiologist/>



## The Invention of an Epidemic

26 Feb 2020

For balance, not “only” anarchists but the “philosophers” too have a critical view of the “plague”:

“ in a perverse vicious circle, the limitations of freedom imposed by governments are accepted in the name of a desire for safety that was created by the same governments that are now intervening to satisfy it.”

At the extreme of non-pathological relations, the chloroplasts in plant cells and the mitochondria in the cells of our bodies are ancient, well-settled cohabitations between different species. Above all, viruses and bacteria do not “intend” to kill their host, for it is not always in their “interest” to destroy that through which alone they could survive. In the long term—of millions of years of nature’s time—“everything learns to live with each other”, or at least obtain equilibria with one another for long periods.

everything can be thought in the model of the “pharmakon” (both poison and cure) if we take nature’s time.

unlike nature’s time, humans are concerned with this moment, which must be led to the next moment with the feeling that we are the forsaken: those who are cursed to ask after “the why” of their being but without having the means to ask it. “

<http://www.journal-psychoanalysis.eu/coronavirus-and-philosophers/>

## The Upsides of a Global Pandemic

19 March 2020

“Part of the human journey is — right now, at this very moment — about growing up. Becoming a mature species. One capable of acting a little bit more responsibly, with more grace, generosity, goodness, decency, courage, truth, beauty, when it comes not just to the planet, the future, democracy, civilization, but also each other and ourselves.

Coronavirus was born and spread because much of the world still lives in poverty and dehumanizing deprivation. Which brings with it a lack of sanitation and hygiene and healthcare, which breeds disease, which spread...everywhere.

One of the great challenges of this century is building global scale systems and social contracts for the first time. How are to give everyone on planet earth decent healthcare, food, sanitation?

we need to take care of all of us, or else we're all at risk, and that means building **global public goods**, like healthcare, food, housing, water systems, for the first time in human history.

We really are in it together. In a way that we are still learning about. That is the strange and beautiful gift in the terrible curse of existence. It's painful. It's hell. Just being here. We love, age, grow, lose, grieve. But when we get through it, together, then there's grace, intimacy, revelation, meaning, understanding, closeness. All the things we cherish and treasure so in moments like these, when the superficial is excised away. The upside of a world like the one I've described isn't just that it's healthier, saner, more prosperous, fairer. But also that it's fuller of meaning, happiness, purpose, truth, gentleness, love.”

<https://eand.co/the-upsides-of-a-global-pandemic-4dbb00be4a03>

**& What happens after Capitalism?** 11 March 2020

<https://eand.co/what-happens-after-capitalism-c990c111273d>

## **Collective Care Is Our Best Weapon against COVID-19**

“It’s what geographer Peter Kropotkin long called “mutual aid” in his book by the same title — a phenomenon that he saw repeated time and time again in his studies of various species, ecosystems, and societies: mutual aid allowed them to not only survive but also thrive! Or as Kropotkin put it, “Practicing mutual aid is the surest means for giving each other and to all the greatest safety, the best guarantee of existence.”

Thanks to your local radical healers, queers, feminists, anarchists, and like-minded others — who know that only we can love and protect each other — social solidarity and mutual aid pandemic care is blossoming in communities large and small around Turtle Island!”

<https://cbmilstein.wordpress.com/2020/03/13/collective-care-is-our-best-weapon-against-covid-19/> & UK: <https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups/>

## **Binary division: Domesticated vs Disposable**

“at least two new kinds of subjectivity have already begun to take shape... On the one hand, we have the domesticated/connected subject, who in being confined to their home is pushed to invent new ways to reconnect to and participate in a virtualized economy. On the other hand, we have the mobile/disposable subject that serves as the circulatory system of the pandemic, a subject that becomes increasingly vulnerable and precarious as it is compelled to move at ever greater velocities. In order for domesticated/connected subjects to materially sustain themselves, they must be coupled with the mobile/disposable subject that fulfills the minimum material needs of society while ensuring the social possibility of isolated yet networked domestic life.”

<https://www.ianalanpaul.com/the-corona-reboot/>

## **Care workers are key workers**

“Say what you like about nurses, garbage collectors, or mechanics, it's obvious that were they to vanish in a puff of smoke, the results would be immediate and catastrophic.” @davidgraeber

<https://www.strike.coop/bullshit-jobs/>

& <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/david-graeber-bullshit-jobs.pdf>

“So it turns out that the people who stock grocery stores, drive trucks, farm, and work in hospitals are actually the ones preventing civilization from collapsing.

Meanwhile the bankers, CEOs, and entrepreneurs can all stop what they are doing and no one even notices or cares.”

@existentialcoms , [existentialcomics.com](https://existentialcomics.com)

## **Bonus**

\* article on White Fragility & Colonialist Privilege in Dutch [activist / anarchist / hacker] scene:

<https://abeautifulresistance.org/site/2017/8/17/white-privilege-in-dutch-anarchism>

\* education as a practice of freedom, which Freire contrasts with education as a practice of domination :

<https://kwanj.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/freire-pedagogy-of-the-oppressed.pdf>

\* Down to earth: go work on the farm! [https://www.farminguk.com/news/call-for-brits-to-pick-fruit-and-veg-amid-coronavirus-outbreak\\_55237.html](https://www.farminguk.com/news/call-for-brits-to-pick-fruit-and-veg-amid-coronavirus-outbreak_55237.html)

\* Another world is possible: “The Dispossessed” by Ursula K. LeGuin

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Dispossessed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dispossessed)

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