

People, Profit and Planned Economy

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The concept of an economic system that puts Profit over People has been explained and discussed many times and in many ways. It just took a tiny virus (COVID-19) to display the contradiction between People and Profit as an urgent national question. In this equation, President Trump, as the voice of most powerful capitalist country on earth (the "GREAT AMERICA") with his cheerleaders mostly at Fox News and in favor of PROFIT, suggests that "We have to get back to work" as soon as possible. Contrary to this idea, the scientists, medical community and people who are actually in the battlefield fighting this disease are representing the PEOPLE in this equation. Based on the ongoing and rapid escalation in the number of the infected and dead, they believe that the nation is not ready to go back to work.

Of course, those who serve the nation with their skill and hard work and genuine sincerity want to do their share and be productive members of society in these challenging times. Many small businesses in creative ways are helping their communities not for their own profit but as fellow human beings. From farmworkers to workers in food, transportation, social service industries and of course our professionals have been tirelessly working since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. However, the majority of these workers are not supported by their employers; such as sanitation workers whose basic demand to be equipped with the necessary protective gear has not been brought forward. In fact, the commercial media in these crucial times are censoring the news regarding Amazon and Whole Foods workers, who have been on strike, demanding a safe and protected work environment. These workers are risking their lives every day and just like medical staff without Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can become contaminated as well.



The question is not simply "get back to work". The question is during this public health catastrophe, what type of work is needed and how do we implement measures that guarantee the safety of all workers. We need to adjust and convert the lines of production in order to fulfill the vital needs of the people. During this deadly pandemic, do workers need

to “get back to work” and build luxury vehicles or with innovating engineering start producing lifesaving types of equipment such as ventilators? Of course, the answer is clear in reality. The “Great America” is suffering from a chaotic organizational syndrome. Not only was the government not quick to convert a section of its workforce to build ventilators; but it also produced an atmosphere whereby States need to compete against each other over ventilators. The insanity is in the DNA of the capitalist economic system. In a press conference, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (image on the right) shook the nation by informing us that “the price of ventilators had skyrocketed from \$25,000 each to \$45,000, as 50 states and the federal government all bid against each other for the vital oxygen device.” He truthfully admits that “We’re literally bidding up the prices ourselves”!

It is imperative to understand that the lack of decisiveness to resolve any problem at hand without delay is not because of the pathetic personality of some officials. The slow response, negligence, and sloppiness are not Democratic or Republican deficiencies; it is the nature of a government that functions only by the principles of market and profit and not the essential needs of people. The current system is not prepared to deal with extreme natural disasters and their ramifications. By tossing paper towels to the crowd during his visit to hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico, President Trump not only showed his inability to empathize with the distressed people, but he also illustrated the incompetency of the U.S. government in the time of crisis. Today, the slow response to the COVID-19 virus pandemic by the Federal government follows the same pattern of “leadership” that we have already witnessed during Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Although we are in a new and unprecedented situation, the conduct of the politicians to this crisis is the same. From the president down they easily justify the death of people in millions for their failed policies. The military intervention in Iraq which was based on the WMD hoax had killed thousands of young Americans overseas along millions of Iraqis who died in their own homeland. The unfortunate response of Secretary Madeleine Albright (a Democrat) to the indelible fact that because of the U.S. sanction, a half-million Iraqi children have died which is more than the children who died in Hiroshima; she calmly said, “We think the price is worth it.” Now we are in a different situation, this time the Americans are dying in their own homeland. President Trump at the end of March with the help of his Army Colonel Dr. Deborah Birx, is selling the projected death toll of 100,000 to 200,000 in the United States as “a good job” and the best-case scenario to the American people!

Indeed this is a global catastrophe and would resolve with transparent and unvarying cooperation between all nations on a global level. As we hear the news about the tragic situations in Italy, Spain and Iran and now in the U.S.; we also hear encouraging news that this outbreak with the right plan can be relatively managed and contained as in China and South Korea. Cuba’s Interferon Alfa-2B drug* which is effective against coronavirus is hopeful news for the people around the world. It is reasonable to be optimistic in believing that the COVID-19 virus pandemic will be controlled, unfortunately, with a high number of fatalities than we would like to envision, we will defiantly have a post coronavirus era. Considering all of these, what will this new social, political and economical reality look like?

American people have already experienced Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump’s leadership for many years. Both, in many ways, have shown their allegiance to Wall Street and the market economy. It is impossible to envision that either of these detached politicians would introduce any progressive economic plan for the post coronavirus epoch. They have no solution on how to reverse a high unemployment rate which is predicted to surpassed the

24.9% unemployment in 1933, following the Great Depression. The broken Healthcare and outmoded education system will even deteriorate faster after COVID-19 virus is contained. The post COVID-19 virus epoch will create the best opportunity for the gigantic corporations to break apart their rivals in a fierce and merciless competition both nationally and globally. That means the maximum exploitation of both human (workforce) and vital natural resources. It is the powerless majority who suffer the most post crises. The capitalists will ask the masses who are fearful, broke and penniless to sacrifice more so the Free Market can prosper, after all, "We're all in this together"! However, capitalists in any country are well aware of the possibility of social uprisings which have been the political ramification of post major crisis periods in history, such as the First and Second World Wars. Therefore capitalist states have a tendency to govern with the iron fist to prevent uprisings and revolutions.

In the time COVID-19 virus crisis, the President of the United States and the Ladies and Gentlemen of Congress like a generous caretaker unanimously decided to give a small portion of people's tax money back to them. Of course, a large portion of this financial aid has been allocated to bail out their own friends in corporations! This crisis especially gives Democrats an opportunity to play their pretentious "solidarity show" with the workers of America with empty promises! Already House Speaker Nancy Pelosi wants to move quickly to the Phase Four of coronavirus relief plan; while those who are struggling to feed their families are still looking for Phase one to arrive! Of course among the Democrats, the "Socialist" Presidential candidate, Mr. Sanders has introduced his own "Coronavirus Emergency Plan". Instead of exposing the ominous nature of the capitalist system which is on national display, Mr. Sanders proudly promotes himself as the true savior of the system and encourages the American workers to "Stand Up" and REFORM this outmoded system! However, the coronavirus crisis has ended any illusion that a system that strives for the highest stage in the centralization of capital is not reformable - never has been and never will be.

The ambiguity and application of "stimulus package" for the workers look more like a trap to pacify the workforce. A worker in the U.S. is giving false hope and perspective that a check of \$1000 or more will be sufficient enough until they come back to work! However, those workers who have been furloughed or laid off know very well that the weakened economy and high rate of unemployment of a post coronavirus period will make finding a job extremely difficult.

So what is the alternative solution to this insane capitalistic behavior in a time the nation is desperately gasping for oxygen to fight against COVID-19 virus? The answer is a PLANNED ECONOMY.

PLANNED ECONOMY? That is "SOCIALISM" cries the Free Market economist. Certainly, President Trump and his administration would not even entertain the idea and it would be blasphemy in the minds of the Christian Evangelists. However a PLANNED ECONOMY simply means a common sense economy - an economy that puts People above Profit. This perspective makes the system of production that is based on competition -the main characteristics of the "free market"- irrational and obsolete. Today the authorities in the government under the pressure of dire social and economical circumstances are forced to practice a version of a planned economy in disarray. They say the "essential" workforce must operate. But even the "essential" workforce is not defined as the current "leadership" is scattered, disconnected and above all is antagonistic.

The “Defense Production Act” is a federal law that gives the President the authority to direct private companies to meet the needs of the country. This capitalist plan, however, was meant to be for military equipment for the war against a “visible” enemy! Hence, President Trump, the self-proclaimed “wartime president” who is fighting the COVID-19 virus, the “invisible” enemy is reluctant to direct the companies to produce much-needed ventilators and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), which are life-saving necessities for all medical staff and their patients confined to the battlefields of any given hospitals during this deadly pandemic. He surrounds himself at his daily Press Conference, with a handful of CEOs of essential and non-essential firms (like the “My Pillow” man) to come up to the podium, one by one and praise his “leadership” without any meaningful commitment. Mr. Trump grossly exaggerated the number of existing ventilators and PPE and quickly accuses the hospital staff of “back door” operation as a reason for the shortages. Now that he is pleased with his “leadership” in the fight against coronavirus, he brings his military men to announce that his Administration is deploying more U.S. Navy warships to prevent “corrupt actors” (Venezuela) to smuggle narcotics and at the same time warns Iran, do not exploit the crisis coronavirus pandemic. More and more, the Trump administration finds a military solution as a real outlook to fight this disaster and impending social crisis; which historically has been the option for the capitalist countries facing a profound and deep crisis.

In Germany, Hitler introduced a new plan for the economy that simply was a program for the centralization of the economy in Germany. In reality, this capitalist program needed police supervision to be enforced! Hence Hitler appointed Hermann Göring – the founder of Gestapo (secret police of Nazi Germany) – to oversee this novel “centralized economy”!

Is the United States of America moving toward a controlled capitalist mode of production? Certainly, with any great crisis, the social and political contradictions that have been accumulated and suppressed for decades suddenly come to the forefront with great intensity. The coronavirus crisis has exposed the weakness of the United States as an incompetent government to manage peoples’ problems in a rational and effective manner in a time of disaster, while remains as the most powerful and dangerous military force with the huge nuclear and lethal arsenals in the world.

The working people in the U.S. with their international heritage and also their own struggles have sufficient knowledge to organize and offer practical solutions pertaining to a particular crisis. For example, today the GM workers with the help of their engineers and experts are able to produce ventilators as well as masks in a relatively short time while keeping their workplace protected against coronavirus. That simple conversion in production is applicable to all other factories around the country. Workers who become the main decision-makers in their workplace and are in charge of production, in coordination with the other branches of industries, can easily convert the production lines to respond and fulfill the vital needs of the nation. In other words, the production will be logically planned according to the need of the majority of people and not for the purpose of making profits for a few wealthy people. When the decisions are made in the boardrooms of the gigantic manufacturers and corporations such as General Motors, the production lines must follow the demand of the irrational competitive market even if it results in overproduction. However, under the pressure of exceptional circumstances like today’s coronavirus crisis, it is possible for the executive officers of a large company like GM to compromise and produce items that are vital and in-demand like mask and ventilators; but certainly, that would be a temporary and limited effort mainly to leave a good corporate image as a marketing objective.

The profit-driven economy, limits the potential of production. On the contrary, since the

purpose of production in a planned economy is to guarantee a decent living for all, naturally is unconstrained hence more efficient in utilizing the new useful and safe technology, faster and better with the least expenditure.

Certainly, the planned economy is not flawless. There will be errors during each cycle, but through a democratic process, corrections and improvements will be made. Capitalist economists by referring to the Soviet Union and Venezuela as a failed socialized economy reject the idea of the planned economy; but the disastrous Stalinist command economy and the current capitalist economy in Venezuela have nothing to do with the idea of a democratic, transparent and cooperative planned economy. In fact, the astonishing achievements of the Russian workers in a backward capitalist country, who survived the first global capitalist crisis and also the vicious attack by all major military powers right after the 1917 Russian Revolution and before the consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy, is a great source of information and aspiration for the American workers today which must be discussed. In the case of Venezuela, the resilience of the Venezuelan people as a sovereign nation is the main source of the U.S. government's hatred toward the country, not their economic system.

Here in the United States, for any honest person who is suffering to a different degree because of coronavirus crisis, the idea of nationalization of the health care system, pharmaceutical, and all other vital service industries sounds logical and necessary. What is a private hospital good for if their business administrators only think of making more profit from each bed during this crisis? At this crucial time, common sense suggests that all hospitals should be rescued from the insane profit-driven market to serve the infected patients with the best available doctors, nurses and medical equipment, free of charge! It is time to stop the profiteers from turning our hospitals into fancy mortuaries.

The American working people have already shown that their patience is wearing thin. Slowly their voices and demands are reaching the main media. There is no doubt that capitalists in the U.S. and around the world are failing to combat the COVID-19 effectively. In order to end this miserable and chaotic situation in short order, working people collectively have to introduce their own economic plan - that is a planned economy. The coronavirus crisis has forced the workers around the world to either take the lead or let the insane "leaders" destroy humanity and nature like barbarians in fancy clothes. The actual producers and creators must form their own independent revolutionary party and organization at their workplace and in unity with the workers and professionals around the world end the destructive capitalist system which has nothing to offer except deadly diseases, extreme poverty, hunger and homelessness, environmental disasters, creating hell on earth for the millions upon millions of immigrants and refugees and their children and never-ending destructive wars. Time is ripe for a radical change!

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