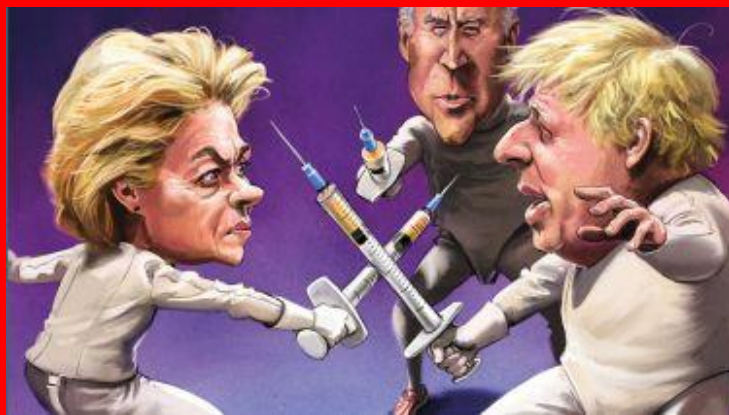


Vaccine Wars and the Capitalist Virus



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The corona pandemic continues to cast its ominous shadow over society. The coronavirus is wreaking havoc with its third wave of socioeconomic devastation, killing about 3 million people worldwide. The bubble of peace has been broken in the most advanced and modern capitalist cities of the metropolis; the savagery of capitalism has shown its naked face. In the cradle of bourgeois civilization, in France, footage has been circulating on social media, showing long queues of people waiting to receive food parcels, having lost their jobs due to the corona pandemic [1]. In peripheral capitalism, conditions are more inhumane than in metropolitan capitalism, and searching through rubbish in order to stay alive has become a painful reality.

The fact is that, for years now, the austerity policies of the dirty capitalist system have plagued healthcare, not only in peripheral capitalism but also in metropolitan capitalism. A shortage of personnel and medical equipment etc. in the most developed countries is clearly evident. The coronavirus and similar viruses are not the product of mismanagement by some officials of this or that country, but are a product of the capitalist virus.

We remember the war of the masks at the beginning of the corona pandemic. The most civilized, most cultured bourgeois governments tried to dismantle the mask of civilization and morality and, like bandits and gangsters, got into fights and tried to steal from one another and plunder the spoils. The same civilized barbarians have already started a vaccine war.

As the bourgeoisie is aware of its gangsterism, in order to reduce the consequences of the vaccine war and give all countries access to the vaccine, a COVID-19 vaccination initiative was set up by the World Health Organization under the name of COVAX, with more than 180 countries joining the COVAX project. Of course, the United States has not joined the COVAX plan and is pursuing vaccination independently. In fact, the COVAX programme aims to ensure “equitable” access to the corona vaccine for all countries, especially poor ones. But COVAX has been as “fair” as the upside down of the world of capitalism will allow.

The EU had ordered 600 million doses of Pfizer but recently announced that it was reducing its supply of vaccines to Europe. Certainly, the supply of Pfizer to Asian countries, Latin America and Africa will be much worse than to Europe. The EU has accused AstraZeneca of prioritizing Britain. AstraZeneca reduced the number of doses to be delivered to the EU and stated that it would only be able to deliver orders if Britain itself had enough vaccines. The EU has only been able to vaccinate about 14% of its population, while Britain has vaccinated about 44% of its population, which is more than half of the total adult population. The Indian government has temporarily suspended exports of the AstraZeneca vaccine [2]. India has promised to produce about one billion doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine for middle- and low-income countries by 2021. France, Germany and Italy support imposing restrictions on vaccine exports to Britain. The Italian Prime Minister, Conte, called the delay in providing the corona vaccine by Pfizer and AstraZeneca unacceptable and threatened to take legal action against the two companies [3]. Poland has promised similar legal action over the delay

in providing the corona vaccine. The number of vaccines ordered by Canada is five times that of its population. This list goes on.

A small group of wealthy countries, which make up only 14% of the world's population, have purchased more than half (53%) of the corona vaccines [4]. This is the justice of capitalism; this is the civilization and culture of capitalism! In peripheral capitalism, vaccination (if it can be called that) is more catastrophic than in metropolitan capitalism, and it is paid for by the working class and the lower strata because the bourgeoisie and the affluent classes in these countries are able to be vaccinated through private healthcare and according to their financial ability.

The vaccine war has been so disgusting that it has even raised the voice of the Secretary-General of the World Health Organization. Mr Tedros has said that rich countries have been prioritizing themselves with a “me first” approach, regardless of global needs, while poor countries have been unable to get vaccinations. The coronavirus will lead the world, he said: “I need to be blunt[;] the world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world's poorest countries.” [5]

Immunizing society is no more than an illusion, given the vaccine wars in capitalism. Vaccinating one country and only securing 70 to 80 percent of a country without vaccinating other countries will not work as mutations of the virus will spread from unvaccinated countries to vaccinated countries. Unless this pandemic is controlled globally, no country will be safe, so the struggle against the pandemic must also be global.

The corona vaccine, given the important role it can play, could become an important tool in the imperialist interests of governments. Therefore, having this tool plays a very important role in global power. It was in this context that the United States, Britain, Russia and China etc. entered the competition for production of a corona vaccine and to gain a monopoly on the distribution of corona vaccines around the world. Their agenda is not a humanitarian one but rather an economic, political and utilitarian one. Contrary to those who believe that governments should put pressure on pharmaceutical companies, the undeniable fact is that production of the corona vaccine obeys capitalist laws – in other words, profitability.

It was in this context that China announced that it will donate vaccines to 69 developing countries and plans to export to 43 countries too [6]. China, in pursuit of its imperialist interests and to increase its influence, is set to export the corona vaccine to Africa and Southeast Asia. China's policy on the corona vaccine has worried its regional rival, India. India is trying to pursue a similar policy. For example, Nepal and Bangladesh have become a battleground between the two countries. Russia is also stepping up its influence by accelerating production and exports of the Sputnik vaccine, especially in the Balkans, which is close to the EU.

The coronavirus pandemic is not a natural disaster but the product of a brutal capitalist system; a system in which the goal is not to meet human needs but to maximize its profits at

any cost. It is not the coronavirus that kills humans, but capitalism that massacres humanity. Unlike the coronavirus, for which it is possible to get a vaccine, there is no vaccine for the capitalist virus.

In the face of the vaccine war waged by civilized barbarians, only the working class can offer the greatest class solidarity and the highest level of human civilization. Only the working class can eradicate the virus of capitalism through class struggle. Only the working class can offer a future for humanity, in which the goal of production and services is not profit but meeting human needs.

The coronavirus pandemic has now imposed a kind of social isolation, not only on the working class but also on humanity. In the very exceptional circumstances of the present, the material conditions for workers to protest are very limited. Will the working class turn the devastation caused by the corona pandemic into an opportunity for the labour movement to advance? Will the working class, by intensifying the class struggle, widen the horizon of the world revolution and put an end to the misery of billions of people on this planet? The future of the class struggle will clarify the answers to such questions.

Capitalism smells of blood, dirt and sludge. If the working class does not follow its historical decree, that is, the overthrowing of capitalism through communist revolution, the destruction of humanity is inevitable. The destruction of humanity must not only be achieved through world war but also through the brutality of capital, the virus pandemic and environmental catastrophes. To put an end to the barbarism and savagery of capitalism, the alternative of the internationalists is more valid than ever:

Communist Revolution or the Destruction of Humanity!

M. Jahangiry
10 April 2021

Notes:

[1] Long queues for free food packages can be seen not only in France but also in other rich countries such as the United States and Switzerland etc.

[2] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56513371>

[3] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-55780431>

[4] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-55795297>

[5] <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/18/coronavirus-vaccine-rollout-worlds-moral-failure-who-says.html>

[6] https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1859985.shtml