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## **Pandemic (Im)Possibilities**

### **It's the end of the world... as we know it**

The last capitalist pandemic?

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The world is undergoing what will probably be a transcendent change. Capitalism has been getting deeper into its civilization crisis and the current pandemic is just its latest development [1]. The 2008 crisis was a premonition of the crisis of the Capitalocene. The geologic era of the domination of Capital is coming to terms with Earth.

This is not just a health crisis, not just another pandemic. It is fundamentally a crisis of care work and social reproduction. What is at stake now is how we take care of each other, how we attend to the fact that we are fragile beings. Life on earth as we know it is on the brink of radical transformation.

We need to understand the political economy of disease. This is a capitalist pandemic. It is for sure the first full blown pandemic provoked by the uncontrolled development of capitalist-patriarchal-racist relations of production. It is the crisis of the current stage of the transnationalization of capital [2]. This virus is the byproduct of capital's destruction of the natural environment to the end of its own reproduction as dominant social relation [3]. It is the result of the displacement of animals from their natural home and the annihilation of plants, and the result of a way of living that crowds people in megalopolis, stuffed in subways and busses, confined in factories, offices and prisons.

Across the World, governments have responded in an uncoordinated fashion. In fact, the pandemic has put into crisis all pre existing infrastructure and institutions. The post-WWII world has been wounded to death, as is the so-called (post-Reaganite/Thatcherite) New World Order. Lockdown after lockdown, worldwide capitalist production and distribution becomes impossible. Capital valorization falls into the abyss of general devaluation. Global value chains, already strained by increasing tensions, are mortally disrupted [4]. Financial markets receive the full blow of the crisis, as do countries on the lower end of the chains of unequal exchange. Regions

exporting primary commodities and basic manufactures see the clouds of capitalist depression closing in fast.

“We are all Keynesians again” is the tag of war of governments all over. Talk of War Keynesianism abound [5]. Mass government intervention-cum-estatization in the health system and all critical industries, expansive monetary policy and cash transfers and subsidies for almost everyone, have become part of the new economic policy toolbox. There’s no more talk of austerity. There are even increasing pressures for increasing taxation on the rich, and of a more or less general debt jubilee for countries. A theoretical battle is being fought between the neoliberal and developmental camps. Critical theory has gained places in the front seats of current issues. Platforms of conservative ideas (such as the Financial Times newspaper or the Economist magazine) cuddle with radical reformism.

Latin America will be heavily hit by the crisis. In the aftermath of the Pink Tide, a new wave of authoritarian politics has consolidated in the region. Progressive politics has been tainted by conservatism, although disguised in a renewal of neodevelopmentalist ideas [6]. The pandemia has become the perfect excuse for increasing social control, especially in ‘hotspots’ in popular neighborhoods. Security forces everywhere have regained control of the streets and social movements after a couple of years in which popular resistance had gained momentum. Struggles against tariff hikes, against adjustments in social security and wages, struggles to stop megamining and femicides have taken another tempo, they have all gone underground as mandatory quarantine bans open mass mobilizations. Democracy has all but lost its essence, particularly in Latin America. Now, political debate and political participation have gone under with the plague.

As we said, this crisis is most of all a crisis of care and reproduction. It has put in the fore the need for a revolution in the organization of the provision of these fundamental activities. The eco-feminist movement has long put reproductive work at the center of its most radical thinking. As civilization seems to fall into a crack, social movements need to push forth the need for a radical transformation in social organization [7]. Less work, more pay, less consumption, more free time, are keys to the constitution of a new social articulation that can put in at the political center the reproduction of life free from alienation and violence. Social movements, people organized on the ground, on their living territories, have long developed alternatives to capitalist organization of reproduction and care. We need to put these practices in the front line of the debate. Collectives are part of the solutions, while Capital and its State clearly part of the problem.

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- [7] Requena Aguilar, Ana (2020), "Amaia Pérez Orozco: 'Es el momento de garantizar ingresos con una renta mínima, pero a futuro la renta básica no es lo más potente'", April 3rd. [https://www.eldiario.es/economia/Amaia-Perez-Orozco\\_0\\_1011399352.html](https://www.eldiario.es/economia/Amaia-Perez-Orozco_0_1011399352.html)