

Protect! Resist! Transform!

Coronavirus: solidarity update 28 March

Saturday 28 March 2020, by [JOHNSON Mark](#) (Date first published: 28 March 2020).

Mark Johnson's selection of news and analysis from around the world

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Impact on poor and social movements

Europe

Italy is the European country hardest hit so far. The SI COBAS labour union is [calling for widespread action](#). [Antonello Zecca](#), an organizer with the [Sinistra Anticapitalista](#) (Anticapitalist Left) provides an [overview of the crisis \(22 March\)](#), and [David Broder](#) reports on the [beginnings of a strike wave](#) demanding closing down of protection not essential for the population, and adequate protection for all those still working (12 March)

From **Spain** Dani Ramos reports on strike [protest at the Mercedes-Benz factory](#) in Vitoria-Gazteiz. [Laia Facet](#) explains how the [Socialist Party and Podemos government is handling the crisis](#).

Britain The government seems to be abandoning its ['mitigation' strategy](#) of letting the old and sick die, but this has cost valuable time and will cause extra deaths, says [Phil Hearse](#). The National Health Service was already [weakened by years of austerity and the reduced EU migration](#) following Brexit, explains Siva Anandaciva. The crisis also requires [nationalisation of empty houses](#) and a new commitment to state housing.

South Asia

India's Coalition for Environmental Justice is arguing for [limited and people-centred public health](#), rather than the authoritarian and anti-science fumbling of the Hindu fundamentalist government. [Jean Drèze](#) analyses the [impact of the lockdown](#) on the poor. Statements have also been issued by People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism ([PADS](#))

Pakistan [Ammar Ali Jan](#) and Zahid Ali propose a detailed [left strategy for fighting the pandemic](#).

The [Haqooq-E-Khalq](#) movement is [calling for a people-centred response](#).

South East Asia

Philippines: The National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL) warns that [President Duterte is claiming excessive emergency powers](#).

East Asia

From South Korea, the People's Health Movement explains the [success and limits of Covid-19 containment](#) and the challenges for labour and social movements on the peninsula. (19 March)

[China Labour Bulletin](#) explains how women in **China** bear [most of the burden](#) of pandemic response, in emergency services and on the home front.

Americas

Brazil's President Bolsonaro is a [dangerous liability](#), warn [Forrest Hylton](#) activists of the [PSOL](#). There is a [strong mobilisation](#) of social movements in **Chile** writes Javier Pineda of the Convergencia de 2 de Abril.

In the **USA**, [transport workers in Detroit are striking](#) for better protection, writes [Jane Slaughter](#)

Africa]] South Africa trade unions are demanding pro-people policies - see this [statement](#) by [SAFTU](#) and [this article](#) by NUMSA President Andrew Chirwa. [Community Health Workers](#) are also on the front line.

***Middle East & North Africa**

In Algeria, the pandemic seems to be blocking the [weekly hirak protests](#) for justice and democracy.

How to resist

There are increasing strikes for worker safety and closing down non-essential production. This includes international coordination among [call centre](#) workers (see also this [declaration](#) of CGT (ES), SUD (FR) and other radical labour unions) and at [Amazon](#).

In Canada, Gary Kinsman takes inspiration from the strategy and tactics of [AIDS activism](#).

In the long term

[Cedric Durand](#) and Razmig Keucheyan look at [the four interlocking crises: health, economy, ecology, finance](#). [Niel Faulkner](#) (UK) predicts the Tory strategy to [use the epidemic](#) to force through unpopular reforms (16 March)

Understanding the science

Daniel Tanuro summarises the origin and impact of the pandemic and its implications for social movements.

Dr **Jeyakumar Devaraj** of the **Socialist Party Malaysia** explains the **difference** between the ultraliberal 'mitigation strategy' of letting the old and sick die, as opposed to the costly eradication strategy followed by China, South Korea and some other countries.

We're also reading...

Namibia 30 years after independence: a series of articles commissioned by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (DE) **Teivo Teivainen** and Pauli Huotari unpick the **prejudices and assumptions in 'western' thinking** about this global crisis. **Ammar Ali Jan** identifies the **authoritarian mechanisms** that the capitalist elite uses in times of crisis.

From our archives

Swee Kheng Khor identified the **negative impact of privatisation of health in South-East Asia** in January 2020. Its worth re-reading these key articles on the **Ebola** pandemic