

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)
Anti-Copyright



Coronavirus and Mutual Aid

Nowadays we are living in a common History

Sissy Doutsiou & Tasos Sagris

Sissy Doutsiou & Tasos Sagris
Coronavirus and Mutual Aid
Nowadays we are living in a common History
March 29, 2020

Retrieved on 2020-03-30 from voidnetwork.gr
Translation in English by Markos Bouketsides and Rodanthe
Scourtelli.

usa.anarchistlibraries.net

March 29, 2020

Contents

The Real Threat is Our Way of Living	5
And We All Wonder: “But, What sort of life is this?” . . .	7
Workplaces & Places of Consuming are Deadly Traps Now and Ever	8
Question Those Who Destroy Our Lives and Nature . . .	9
Our Life Belongs to Us	10
Mutual Aid – Let’s Offer Each Other Care and Power . .	12

everyone – for, everyone has the right to know whether they are sick or not. Let's be brave and think: Our living conditions are changing, today let us launch a new survival plan. Let society decide, not the rulers. Surely, from now on, anyone who talks about “private hospitals” will be considered a criminal. Surely, tenants must stop paying rent and bills until the crisis is over and demand a total rent reduction after the end of the pandemic. A huge rent strike is currently underway around the world. It is our duty to support it.

Let us express our deep gratitude and admiration to all medical staff, medical students, people working in welfare, those who participate in self-organized solidarity structures, and all those who will save human lives by risking their own, every single person in the neighborhoods who will help to alleviate the pain of others. Void Network as an affinity group promise that we will strive to be among those who will help in every possible way.

That's what we need – care and treatment.

Long Live Human Freedom, Equality, Mutual-help and Love.

Each of us carries a story, of our own pain. Now we all have a common History. Let's take these moments to get to know the world better. This whole adventure will be over, let us improve ourselves, let us create relationships and social structures for a more just and cooperative world – a world that stands against social injustice, inequality and the repression of liberties.

It takes patience; we need to look at life in a new way. We are sure we will meet again. Let's prepare our future plans solely on the basis of love and kindness.

We will hug each other again!

LOVE – POWER

Mutual Aid – Let’s Offer Each Other Care and Power

Could the coronavirus destroy world capitalism? I don’t know, I don’t think so. But let’s at least question its structures and their content, let us pose tough questions to those in power and demand immediate answers. What takes over all of us, regardless of geographical hemisphere, is the anxiety for our daily survival; it makes us sick. This panic and anxiety that underlies every aspect of our social life reveals the inadequacy of the exploitative and authoritarian regimes to manage effectively the evil that has come upon us and all the rest that have forced us to live!

We would feel safer if we knew that our country and other countries had not destroyed public health for years, if we knew that we had free electricity, water and telephone in our homes, if we did not have to pay 80% of our wages each month for rent and bills. We would feel safer if we knew we had adequate Intensive Care Units, if we knew we had a large number of doctors, teachers, nurses, cooks, artists, poets and happy grandparents whispering to our children fairytales. There are many questions about how a society ultimately manages every health, economic and social crisis – what we consider important and what is insignificant. How do we meet the medical and living needs of the population? How do we protect the weak, the poor, the elderly from the speculators, the opportunists, the exploiters? How do we heal this world from social injustice?

Confronting the upheaving coronavirus epidemic cannot be a matter of restrictions, but of research for medication and for vaccines and of their free distribution for all; a matter of equipping the Health Care with the necessary medicines and protective equipment and the requisition of the private sector clinics, by strengthening the health system with human resources and new public hospitals. We need to produce and hand-out a completely free test for ev-

We are facing a pernicious virus which terrifies the world. To comfort our anxiety, we say to ourselves, that if we take precautions, we will survive. In the meantime, we try to reduce the hours we watch television. In fact, watching the news has become an essential activity to get through the day. Our traumas from the fake news, and our lack of trust in the media, have been replaced by a deeper wound, that of the constant briefing on a pandemic affecting us all.

Each one of us, upon reflection, confronts his or her own fears, engages in a dialog with themselves and redefines the meaning of life under the current circumstances. We exchange thoughts and make an effort to find a solution, a way-out. A plethora of articles and analyses are getting written. No doubt, we are up against the limits of capitalism, the limits of the commercialized-consumerist world.

How can we manage our lives and help in the lives of our fellow humans? What steps need to be taken in the light of compassion and happiness? Besides the deadly virus, we ought to confront alienation and to accept the inability of the governments worldwide to provide love, health, care, warmth, healing. For, all of these are needed, when a person is scared, when one’s life is in danger.

In what way can we deter our fear, now that our world has changed abruptly in one day? When will this threat end? And when we go back to our jobs, will we be thankful that this system of exploitation and social inequality is working again until its next crisis?

The Real Threat is Our Way of Living

A global concern, a global fear daunts people. Fortunately, there is black humor and all those who continue to observe and reflect upon phenomena, come-up with texts and analyses, videos, independent news, social media comments and guidance, bottom-up in-

formation; all sources of communication beyond the establishment media.

When society is in a state of panic, individuals experience panic too. When society is in prosperity, individuals barely fulfill their basic needs. When society faces a virus, individuals get sick.

Looking at the past and the future through the eyes of a tree or a bird living on the tree's branches, we should only look for happiness, joy and health. Where is freedom in times of crisis? Society, institutions, laws, the lifestyle of the modern individual are reproduced in the consciousness and the sub-consciousness. What exactly is happening in the free market now that all we want is to live and all that matters is the health of our loved ones? The instinct of life and the understanding of death counterbalance, in our minds.

When a lifeline is destabilized and a living organism is weakened, then the feeling of insecurity and anxiety prevails. We must, by all means, protect our sense of harmony, our love for life, our ability to think and understand events. We need to make a decision: this is what we are living in now, and we are here united to face it and change it. It's not absurd. Capitalists have for centuries threatened the lives of all living beings – global capitalism has been making this threat increasingly more dangerous worldwide. The industrialization and destruction of nature, the pain of the war refugees, poverty, the competition and the daily struggle for survival have spread over our lives as an epidemic, for some time now; we must finally learn new ways to resist and support each other.

The Romantics envision a social uprising carried out by the plebeians, with expropriations and secret encounters in secret parts of the city. Radicals look forward to the collapse of capitalism, and social-justice analysts predict a militarized society, a totalitarian world.

The only suggestion that rulers dare to make to society is interior travel restriction. Enforcing upon us incarceration creates a sense of horror, vis-à-vis of the collapse of our personal freedom. What else does the future hold for us? Slavery cast upon all kinds, existing and non-existent enemies? Who is the one that chooses the enemies of this society every time?

Medical quarantine is necessary, at the same time though, it is a situation that is causing discomfort to an increasingly uncertain world. We are in a situation that perpetuates uncertainty and gives the government the right to decide on our every move.

We want a more humane civilization that respects our emotions. Mutual help can set us free from individualism and fear. It now becomes apparent that we are together in the same chapter of History, in the same boat, in the same stormy sea. We have to take on our responsibilities, protecting each other even staying away from each other for some time, until the cure and solution will be found. Let's use these days to challenge the dominant way of thinking, to think about how a society could have a fully free Health System with thousands of beds and ICUs operating per city and per village, to help vulnerable groups of the population, to communicate our message all over the world, learning to spend time with ourselves, not to jeopardize the health of our fellow humans with our actions and choices, to discover new skills (reading, writing, painting, sewing), to cook for our neighbor in need, to learn new names of ancient medicinal plants, offer therapeutic massage to our partner, make love and talk to our loved ones.

And as I'm all looking for what secret ritual will save my family and all of us from this pandemic. And I find only one:

Critical thinking is essential for all of us.

all hypocritical slogans inviting million-dollar investors and sharks who live off the grants. Should we not demand that all these funds be distributed at once to those suffering from the plague of coronavirus and to social structures so that we will be able to take care of each other more effectively? There is no other way to save our civilization but to do all we can to help and save our fellow humans.

As regards the management of the spread of the virus, and its treatment the following question arises: What kind of management do we want? What kind of management can we have? Who will make the decisions? Surely we all wish to live in a society of well-being and prosperity, where we all are healthy and well-off. Have the states, the rulers, capitalism in recent years been able to offer this well-being without a catastrophic tradeoff? Are they now able to protect the population? Are they now able to create a safer, less tormenting way to deal with the virus? Is it not a sign of the total failure of the world capitalist system, the constant production of humanitarian, ecological, economic and social crises and disasters? How much more “austerity and patience” will we endure? How much more obedience will we show to politicians who hinder mankind from moving towards a fairer world?

Our Life Belongs to Us

A more all-round view of reality is needed. Human beings are facing a major health crisis and when at the same times are at the threshold of a totalitarian regime. Those who govern us choose – the one and only way to deal with this abundant crisis – to give orders and impose bans. This way, they shift the responsibility to us for everything they did and didn't do all those years. Capitalism needs a state-suppressing machine to continue to destroy our lives. We need social structures of solidarity and mutual-aid; we neither need the state nor the capitalists.

And We All Wonder: “But, What sort of life is this?”

Those of us who are passionate with love for social justice – and not just our own individualistic survival – are constantly looking for the wrong, for the broken cog of the machine. We are looking for another way of living, a new language, new meanings, new relationships and ways to relate to one another and ways to fight against injustice. What we experience today will surely change us. Let us change for the best, be more compassionate and not phobic and racist towards our fellow humans. Let generosity become a way of living. Ecological awareness is essential in order to be able to breathe in a suffocating world that kills life and industrialises the Earth. Rediscovering ourselves is interlinked with the political world. What have we understood and what are we going to understand about the social conditions of our existence? What are we going to understand about ourselves? Personal difficulties, problems and stress can all provide an opportunity to understand that:

Harmony is gained by emancipation.

And what does 'emancipation' mean? Absolute self-determination – to make decisions for your own life and those decisions ought to be for the benefit of others – no one, after all, can be happy on his own. The purpose of helping one another, and attaining supreme joy, entails gratitude to nature and equitable cooperative relationships.

But what am I thinking of now? At the moment, the world is severely wounded, and I'm thinking about self-determination? Yes, because my body and soul are trying to fight this fear. I know that one relationship is necessary for our survival, the relationship between humanity and nature. Our body is the actual intersection between humans and nature. Now that our body is getting sick, the whole body of society has become ill; we must take care not to disturb our minds with thoughts that are utterly dystopian and

suffocating. I hope that dignity is safe-guarded and strengthened for it cares for the sick and the virus carriers and does not treat them like pests. My hope is that we do not treat coronavirus patients, the same horrible way, as we treated war-refugees; and the way we battle coronavirus will give us the opportunity to understand the pain of others including all others who are in pain and suffering.

Workplaces & Places of Consuming are Deadly Traps Now and Ever

How is it possible to achieve quarantine in a world where our basic needs depend on an economic system based on exploitation and the ownership of the means of production and the market supply of goods is owned by individuals, with a predominant profit motive? Getting our food right now requires a job and a supermarket. In the coronavirus regime, we are obliged – now and ever – to constantly throng around potential sources of virus-spread, work places and supermarkets – in any case, that is all we are allowed to do anymore.

To buy your food you are advised to wear gloves, keep a safe distance from other consumers and wear a surgical mask. But what if we all had a garden in our house, on our terrace, on our roof, in our neighborhood? How many of us have a small field, a farmland with vegetables, fruit, and spices – wasn't this, anyway, the reason for the democratic uprising in ancient Athens? The modern man – or better from the era of feudalism onwards – is forced to bind himself to a one-sided order of things, a one-dimensional activity – that of labor and consumption for the sake of private profit and the suppression of the infinite possibilities of each one of us separately, and of our collective strength.

Now we live in this swamp of profit and control. And now we have to get used to the interior travel restrictions as the best solu-

tion for our survival. We got used to our work being a tormenting suffering and bittering, money is scarce and never enough, the time is hard to pass – our work has now become a place that puts our lives at risk. There are no 'unnecessary strolls' and walks, there are many, far too many, useless and pointless jobs, all of which we are forced to do, just to keep the profit engine running, destroying our land and our lives.

Question Those Who Destroy Our Lives and Nature

It is not unreasonable at this moment to question the existing social system and seek the path to liberation. All of these virus protection measures the states are taking at a global level are cruel, coup d'état-like in some cases, frightening and incomplete on the other – since they do not cater for the care of those who are not considered first-class citizens (such as the homeless, the mentally ill, the poor, the prisoners, the refugees and the socially excluded), and work is repeated day after day within the boundaries of incarceration and insanity. Which are the people that are seen, by social institutions, as parasites, and for this are unable to access sanitary facilities and practices? Do they all have a house to stay in? Can everyone leave their work to stay at home or work remotely?

It is possible for all private and public sector workers, all freelancers and farmers to be protected from the virus. This can only be done if the state cuts down on all "unnecessary" spending, gives up "bullshit" jobs and allocates money – our money! – on the care and support of workers, young people, housewives, doctors, teachers, underprivileged artists and all who make up this society and their income is lost. There are European 'culture' programs – for example – that give millions and billions of euros to cultural enterprises and NGOs to implement 'innovative ideas', to promote 'European values' of 'solidarity' and 'gender and race' accessibility;