Chinese worker writes on the coronavirus pandemic: “Disaffection is growing among the masses”

A correspondent
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A correspondent in China sent the following notes on the rising political and class tensions in that country produced by the worsening global COVID-19 pandemic and the repressive response of the Beijing regime.

1. China’s authoritarian government has blocked every city and even every street by brutal means. Every aspect of people’s lives has been affected. Not only are there travel restrictions. Daily supplies have suffered shortages, and the economy has been greatly affected. While emergency measures were needed to combat the pandemic, they were applied repressively, to defend the interests of the capitalists. Dissatisfaction is growing among the masses.

To curb this dissatisfaction, the Chinese bureaucrats strengthened social controls and waged war on public opinion. The newly-issued “Internet Information Governance Regulations” came into effect in March. They strengthened the government’s control over the media and the internet, and further suppressed the “revolution” of public opinion. They clearly stipulate that network information content producers must not produce, copy or publish content containing “illegal information,” including opposing basic principles of the Constitution, endangering national security, leaking state secrets, subverting state power and harming “national interests.”

2. At the same time, Wuhan bureaucrats demanded that people express their gratitude for the government’s response to the epidemic and even forced various institutions and schools to implement “grateful education.” This was met with popular opposition and dissatisfaction. An article circulated on the internet: “If you have a conscience, you will not ask the frightened Wuhan people to be grateful at this time.”(??????????????????????). In this article, the author wrote: “You are the public servant of the people, and your job is to serve the people. Now the people’s family you serve is ruined, the dead have just passed away and the tears of the living have not been wiped out. Sick people are unhealed and some of their dissatisfaction is completely reasonable. You should reflect and be ashamed because you and your team are not working properly, rather than accuse the people you serve in Wuhan of not being grateful.” This article has now been restricted from spreading on the internet.

3. A nursery rhyme has been criticized and resisted by people. The song, “Mobile cabin hospitals are so amazing”(???????), is considered a tribute to the government, ignoring the suffering caused by the plague and government failure. Some people described this as “dancing at a funeral” and some netizens commented: “I can’t agree with such publicity, the epidemic is not over, the responsibility has not been identified and there is nothing to praise.” Mobile cabin hospitals are medical isolation units set up by requisitioning existing facilities due to the coronavirus outbreaks and insufficient medical resources.

4. During the closure of the cities the government arrested those with different opinions. Three citizen journalists lost contact. The Chinese government did not announce their whereabouts, but a video uploaded by one of the citizen journalists showed him being arrested by police. These bloggers expose the real situation of the epidemic and the real living conditions of the people by uploading videos they have taken. This is not the first time they have said they have been threatened by the government and police:

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=np8ZOQATLGY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWrMZH9Xu6k

5. Due to the impact of the epidemic and the government's city closure policy, economic activities have been greatly impacted and small businesses and shops are under great pressure. Because of China's economic failure in recent years and the sudden outbreak of the epidemic, protests by shop owners asking for rent reductions have been held in many cities:

https://twitter.com/i/status/1240918014234513408
https://twitter.com/i/status/1240427844955668481
https://twitter.com/i/status/1236852059397210112

6. The Chinese government regarded the two hospitals built in the short term during the outbreak as government achievements, but the workers who built the two hospitals encountered difficulties. There are news reports that during the outbreak, workers were overloaded, but wage arrears and wage deductions often occurred. At the same time, after the completion of the construction, due to the closure of the city, the workers were not allowed to return home. The high cost of living and lost source of income put the workers in trouble, but companies and the Wuhan government were unwilling to assist with the workers' living problems.

7. Residents have protested across Hubei province that the cost of living and food prices have become unacceptable. A reporter exposed that the food donated to Hubei from various places was put in a warehouse and rotted and was not sent to the residents' homes. There are also news reports that the local government uses garbage trucks to deliver food to residents:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8S1ZS-Dpnns

8. On March 17, about a thousand Foxconn workers who had returned to work started protesting and striking because they could not get the promised subsidy. These workers are reportedly dispatch workers at Foxconn. The labour dispatching system is a common method of undermining labour rights in Chinese companies. Many workers dub it the "slavery dispatch system":

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CqhUrWlk3Q

This is just a typical example of recent strikes by Chinese workers to defend their rights. Similar incidents have occurred in many cities. Although the Chinese government claims that they have basically controlled the corona virus outbreak, conflicts have gradually erupted as workers return to work.

The economic failure caused during the epidemic will prompt the bourgeoisie to intensify its exploitation of the working class. The working class has made huge sacrifices in the fight against the epidemic. The epidemic has increased the pressure on their lives, and made workers want a more resolute voice for labour rights. Therefore, when workers return to work, the backlog of dissatisfaction will push workers to fight the bourgeoisie and inequality. Already we can see that when the city lockdown policy was gradually cancelled, the workers' movement began to reappear in various cities.

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