

Baltimore Amazon workers call for the elimination of COVID-19!

Baltimore Amazon Rank-and-File Safety Committee
22 October 2021

The Baltimore Amazon Worker Rank-and-File Safety Committee calls for the widest attendance and participation in the Sunday event hosted by the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. The event is titled “How to End the Pandemic” and will explain the necessary scientific response to completely end COVID-19, once and for all.

Amazon workers have been placed on the front lines of this pandemic since day one. We have been forced to endure the full brunt of the pandemic in unsafe conditions. While the corporation deemed us to be “essential” workers, we were not given appropriate protective gear. Amazon claimed that this was because we had to “wait our turn” even while CEO Jeff Bezos and other company management worked from the comfort of their own mansions and made immense profits from our work.

Amazonians have been treated to the disgraceful spectacle of Bezos flying to space while leaving us in disease-ridden warehouses to build his fortune. In his own backhanded and insulting way, Bezos recognizes that we, the workers and our labor, are what make space exploration possible.

Amazonians deserve real information about COVID-19 and the state of the pandemic, which Amazon and the politicians refuse to provide. Every day at our job is like living in a war zone. There is no telling what the next day might bring us. Amazon refuses to give us up-to-date information about workplace infections. It has now been *over a year* since the company publicly admitted that over 20,000 Amazonians had been infected with COVID-19. How many more thousands has it been since that time?

Masks were discontinued in May and June of this year only to be brought back in August as the pandemic

again surged. The Baltimore Amazon Workers Rank-and-File Safety Committee wrote at the time: “this is a way for the company to put the blame for any continued spread of COVID-19 on the workers themselves, absolving itself and its reckless policies of any of the blame.”

The real reason for Amazon’s slow response to the pandemic is because fewer precautions equals more profit for the company. Figures published last year show that Amazon could have quadrupled our long-forgotten “hazard pay” which was retracted from us in May, 2020 and still made a profit. Amazon expects to profit by double digit percentages over last year’s earnings, which were already record-setting.

It is possible to stop this pandemic. This requires a deep knowledge of science. While Amazon and its executives lord their wealth over us and deny us basic lifesaving information such as how many coworkers have been infected and in which area of the warehouse they worked, the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees are providing us with a forum this Sunday in which an accurate, scientific understanding of what is required to end COVID-19 can be learned.

As the WSWS proclaims: “The working class cannot advance the fight against the pandemic without the aid of science, and the implementation of the scientifically necessary measures to stop the pandemic depends on the building of a movement in the working class.”

Science is necessary to combat the cynicism and misinformation that big business media outlets and political figures feed us, insisting that we must “learn to live with the virus.” This view is being promoted by the *Washington Post*, which former Amazon CEO Bezos owns. The day after the event to end COVID-19 was announced, an article published in the *Post* tells us “we

must first accept that covid-19 is here to stay.”

We need to hear from doctors who are more interested in saving lives than in protecting Jeff Bezos’ stock portfolio. We get enough of the latter at AmCare, the company-owned medical service which promotes unqualified medical advice designed to get us back on the floor as quickly as possible.

Amazon workers will be in a powerful position once we have been educated with such life-saving information. There are 1.3 million Amazon workers worldwide and we are the second largest workforce in the United States. It isn’t empty boasting to state that nothing in this society can be done without our participation.

Our fight must be linked to workers across the globe. As our statement endorsing the IWA-RFC earlier this year stated, “[t]he pandemic has revealed just how interconnected society is. Whether it is in schools, hospitals, factories, transportation, logistics, retail or food services, the pandemic has revealed how essential we are to one another.”

The medical professionals and epidemiological experts on Sunday can provide us with the science of the coronavirus, but we also need strategy and organization to support their findings. We workers “need a collective voice to speak through. Without it, we have nothing. We are vulnerable to whatever the capitalist system wishes to do to us.”

While the government of Democratic President Joseph Biden in the United States pursues a reopening policy which is creating mass infection of children at schools, it also claims to be supporting the building of trade unions at Amazon.

While many of our co-workers may be under the false assumption that the unions are our allies, the Retail, Warehouse and Department Store Union (RWDSU), Teamsters and other so-called “independent” trade unions trying to get into Amazon are opposed to the fight against COVID-19. They demonstrate their support of the company wherever they are present by keeping warehouses and other locations open during the pandemic.

The Baltimore Amazon Workers Rank-and-File Safety Committee encourages all workers, and especially our fellow Amazonians, to sign up both for our committee to become active in the fight against Amazon’s exploitation of the work force and to attend

the Sunday, October 24 event.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:
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