

Spain Morenoite CRT denounce China's "Zero COVID" strategy

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Spain's pseudo-left Morenoite Revolutionary Workers' Current (CRT) is continuing its campaign to demonise China's "Zero COVID" policy and call for the ending of all necessary pandemic restrictions on a global scale.

In a March 28 article in its web site *Izquierda Diario* titled "China locks down half the megacity of Shanghai as a result of the increase in coronavirus cases," the CRT inadvertently reveals the reasons for its opposition to a strategy of eliminating the virus. The Shanghai lockdown, it writes, is "the largest confinement of a population in an urban centre since the start of the pandemic." It worries that as the city is "the financial centre and important logistical centre," there could be "strong repercussions not only on the Chinese economy but the world."

The CRT then cites without criticism comments from anti-lockdown "experts" in China, who voice concerns about the impact of a lockdown on corporate profits. The CRT states: "Only one day before the announcement of the zonal confinement of the city, experts leading the prevention efforts against the pandemic in the city declared that Shanghai 'could not lock itself down because of its important function in the economy and development of China and its global impact.'"

The CRT is far more concerned with the consequences of a lockdown for the bank balances of big businesses than with the health and lives of workers in China and internationally. Throughout the pandemic, it has consistently agitated against lockdown measures and aligned itself with the policy of the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government, which refused to follow a scientifically guided policy to eliminate the virus, instead prioritising the interests of Spain's banks and big business.

The results of this policy have been mass death and contagion, with over 100,000 people dying of the virus in Spain alone, with nearly 12 million infections recorded—around a quarter of Spain's inhabitants. In

China, by contrast, a mass society with a population of over 1.4 billion, fewer than 5,000 people have died.

Falsely presenting the Chinese government's recent lockdown measures in the city of Shanghai as an authoritarian infringement on social liberties, the CRT exposes itself yet again as a proponent of the anti-scientific and murderous "herd immunity" policy pursued by all major capitalist governments. It states:

"The 'Zero COVID' policy promoted by the Chinese government involved from the start an increase in *repressive and liberticidal policies against the population in general* [emphasis added]." It continues: "However, up to this point it has not been able to fight the significant increase in infections in some of the main cities like occurred last month, and in the midst of a complicated economic situation ... which they thought they would begin to get out of this year."

While the health policy being followed by the Chinese government is not "liberticidal," that promoted by the Morenoites is frankly homicidal. If the Chinese government were to abandon efforts to eliminate the virus or even to limit its impact, millions would die.

According to a report by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which modelled different pandemic scenarios in the southeastern Guangdong province, there would be 500 deaths in Guangdong alone over the course of 2022 should a "mitigation" strategy be adopted in place of the current "elimination" policy. Extrapolated for all of China, 600,000 people would be infected and over 5,500 would likely perish this year.

Under the CDC's "coexistence" scenario, comparable with the "herd immunity" policy being followed in Spain, Europe, the US and elsewhere, roughly 1.35 million people would die of COVID-19 in China before the end of the year.

The CRT's article comes as countries across the world have ended all or almost all of their pandemic-mitigation

measures, even while coronavirus cases remain high or are beginning to trend upwards again. In Spain, roughly 10,000 people are being infected with the virus every day, figures that are known to be a significant underestimate given the Spanish government's ending of systematic testing and tracing.

Last month, the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government waived the requirement for the testing of all suspected coronavirus infections. Since March 28, tests are only recommended for vulnerable people, in serious cases or in health and social care settings, and it is no longer mandatory to isolate if infected with the virus.

In a separate piece published on April 11, the CRT continues its denunciations of China's elimination strategy as "repressive." It focuses on reports that factory workers have been made to live on-site in order to keep their workplaces operational and that other essential workers are working under difficult conditions. It begins:

The "Zero COVID" policy of the Chinese Government, which includes total closures of cities and greater repression, is generating discontent in centres like Shanghai. While millions are confined in their buildings and apartments, industrial workers live in their factories to continue producing, delivery workers sleep on the street and work all day and medical staff die from overwork.

Rather than criticising as a reactionary concession to big business the fact that workers in non-essential factories are forced to continue working under dangerous conditions, the CRT denounces it as part of its broader attack on public health measures. It does not demand that these workers be allowed to shelter at home until it is safe to return to work. Instead, it implies that shelter-at-home policies must be lifted, allowing *all* workers to be dragged back into factories and other workplaces to be infected by the potentially lethal virus.

As for medical workers, the CRT does not state what the impact on this section of the workforce would be should lockdown measures be lifted, which would allow the virus to rip uninhibited through China's vast population, causing widespread infection and overwhelming hospitals.

While it has written two articles in the last fortnight denouncing China for implementing a scientifically

guided strategy to combat COVID-19, the CRT has all but ignored the pandemic in Spain, Europe and the rest of the world. In this they are not alone: Spain's bourgeois press has virtually ceased all reporting of the impact of the virus, while devoting column after column to condemning China's "Zero COVID" strategy.

Recent pieces in the corporate press include "Protests and fights reveal the weariness of Chinese people with the Zero COVID policy" from *La Voz de Galicia*. The PSOE-aligned *El País*, meanwhile, headlined a 30 March article "Discontent rears its head within Shanghai's population at the ironclad lockdown against COVID." And an article from the right-wing *El Mundo* on the same day proclaims: "The Chinese Omicron wave intensifies anti-COVID measures: sensors at the door of the house to prevent quarantine evasion."

The timing of the CRT's agitation against China is also significant. It comes amid relentless efforts by the ruling class in the imperialist countries to whip up anti-Russia war hysteria to promote a massive military buildup whose ultimate target is China as well as Russia. By backing the ruling elite's reactionary campaign against China's "Zero COVID" policy, the CRT is not only demonstrating its disregard for workers' lives and health, but also aligning itself with the anti-China warmongering of the imperialist powers.

The war that must be waged is not against Russia or China, but against COVID-19. Such a fight requires workers to decisively break from the PSOE-Podemos government and its props, such as the CRT.



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