

5 years of the COVID-19 pandemic: The response of the *World Socialist Web Site*

WSWS Editorial Board

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We urge our readers to review the comprehensive timeline accompanying this statement, which is part of the World Socialist Web Site's commemoration of the five-year anniversary of the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. To get involved in the fight for a socialist public health program, fill out the form at the bottom of this article.

Five years after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, the disease continues to spread worldwide, compounding the immense suffering and death already incurred. Roughly 30 million people have died globally from COVID-19 and its myriad health impacts, with hundreds of millions more now suffering from Long COVID. This catastrophe was not inevitable but resulted from deliberate policy decisions by capitalist governments that prioritized profits over human lives—a form of social murder on a massive scale.

From the earliest days of the pandemic, the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), which publishes the *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS), warned that without an immediate and coordinated global response, COVID-19 would exact a devastating toll on human life. Our reporting and analysis were based on a careful study of scientific research conducted by epidemiologists, virologists and other experts, whose warnings were systematically ignored by capitalist governments.

Throughout this period, the WSWS has fought for a scientific approach to end the pandemic, based on the strategy of global elimination, which entails the universal deployment of all available public health measures to cut off viral transmission.

This article traces the development of our perspective and programmatic response to the COVID-19 pandemic, from its beginning to the present. The WSWS' unparalleled record stands as an irrefutable indictment of the capitalist response to the pandemic, and a testament to the fact that had a socialist public health program been pursued from the beginning, the vast majority of death and debilitation from COVID-19 could have been prevented and tens of millions of lives saved.

Initial crisis, Zero-COVID and “herd immunity”

The opening months of the pandemic, from late December 2019 to early April 2020, clearly defined the two dominant strategies towards the pandemic: elimination and “herd immunity.”

On January 23, 2020, facing growing pressure from a restive working class, Chinese authorities initiated the first Zero-COVID elimination policy in the world, with 13 million people in Wuhan beginning the first mass lockdown in human history. This policy expanded throughout Hubei province and was combined with a program of regular mass testing, rigorous contact tracing, the safe isolation of infected patients, travel

restrictions and universal masking, a comprehensive suite of public health measures designed to stop viral transmission. Seventy-six days later, all of Chinese society exited from these lockdowns and largely resumed normal life.

The WSWS recognized early on that these measures were necessary to contain the virus. In a January 24, 2020 article, we first reported on the emerging outbreak and the initial response in China. In a January 28, 2020 Perspective, we warned about the dangers of the new coronavirus and called for a scientific response. In a February 28, 2020 statement of the ICFI, we called for “a globally coordinated emergency response to the spreading coronavirus pandemic” and stressed:

The solution must be global. Scientists from all over the world must be allowed to share their research and technology, unencumbered by the “national interests” and geopolitical conflicts that serve only to delay the development of effective countermeasures to contain, cure and ultimately eradicate the coronavirus. All trade war measures and economic sanctions, such as those imposed on Iran, must be immediately lifted. No human being should be denied urgently needed medical treatment on account of their national or ethnic origins.

By contrast, the Trump administration and other capitalist governments adopted a policy of “malign neglect” which soon morphed into the fascistic “herd immunity” policy of deliberate mass infection, clearly based on eugenicist and Malthusian conceptions. As was later revealed, the Trump administration was informed in January 2020 of the immense dangers posed by COVID-19 but systematically misled the public about the dangers of the disease, allowing COVID-19 to spread undetected.

For all of January, as the disease was spreading globally, no testing was conducted in the United States, despite the widespread availability of COVID-19 testing in China. Cases continued to mount throughout February, and by March, hospitals and morgues had filled to capacity. Workers began to launch wildcat walkouts at factories in the American Midwest, forcing the closure of workplaces and schools.

Almost immediately, sections of the ruling elite and their pliant media began demanding an immediate reopening. On March 22, 2020, the *New York Times* published an Op-Ed by Thomas Friedman that coined the new mantra for the back-to-work campaign: “The cure cannot be worse than the disease.” This campaign gained steam the following week after the passage of the CARES Act, which initiated the funneling of trillions of dollars to the rich while thousands of workers and retirees were soon dying every day.

Similar policies were implemented across Europe. In the UK, Boris Johnson initially advocated for “herd immunity” before being forced to

implement a national stay-at-home order. In Sweden, the government pioneered the policy of deliberate mass infection, keeping schools and restaurants open, a policy which they exported throughout the world. In Brazil, far-right President Jair Bolsonaro dismissed COVID-19 as a “little flu” while the virus ravaged the country’s working class neighborhoods.

The ICFI’s theoretical analysis of these developments was grounded in a Marxist understanding of the state and class relations. In a March 17, 2020 Perspective, we explained:

Two irreconcilable interests of two classes stand opposed to each other. For the capitalists, it is a question of securing their profit interests and ensuring that their property and wealth remain untouched. No measures are to be taken that impinge on their interests. The working class is concerned with the interests of the broad mass of humanity, proceeding not from private profit but from social need.

This analysis would be confirmed continuously throughout the pandemic.

The back-to-work campaign: Wall Street feasts on death

From the beginning of the pandemic, in those countries where elimination was not pursued, every action taken by the ruling class was dictated by the interests of the financial aristocracy. After taking no measures to safeguard the lives of the population, the Trump administration, with the backing of the entire political establishment, engineered the largest government bailout of the rich in history.

In his speech opening the WSWS’ 2020 International Online May Day Rally, WSWS International Editorial Board chairman David North characterized the pandemic as a “trigger event” in world history, which is “exposing the economic, political, social and moral bankruptcy of capitalist society” and “laying bare the unbridgeable chasm that exists between the corporate-financial oligarchs who control and determine the policies of capitalist governments and the needs and interests of the working class.”

Explaining the underlying economic forces driving the back-to-work campaign, then in full-swing, North stated:

In the new version of quantitative easing, the asset purchases of the Federal Reserve have been increased to \$80 billion *per day*.

The revenue required to service the Federal Reserve’s vast expansion of debt demands the extreme intensification of the exploitation of the working class. It is this necessity that has generated the campaign instigated by the media, for a return to work, even under conditions that threaten the lives of workers.

The handing out of trillions of dollars to the ruling elite not only evokes widespread disgust and anger. It undermines the entire economic and ideological foundation upon which the legitimacy of the capitalist system rests. The capitalist, as is endlessly proclaimed, provides the capital and takes the risk. Neither of these claims holds water. The financial resources are provided by society, and risk is eliminated with the promise of endless bailouts.

The back-to-work initiative quickly spread globally. As US workers

were forced back to work, Wall Street demanded that Latin America further speed up production. In a July 15, 2020 Perspective, we noted:

Now, the back-to-work initiative is in full swing in the US and widespread outbreaks have transformed North American workplaces into death traps, including auto plants, meatpacking facilities, produce farms and warehouses. As US workers are forced back to work, Wall Street is demanding that Latin America further speed up production.

In Europe, similar criminal policies were implemented. In Germany, the government pushed for reopening despite warnings from scientists. In Italy, the epicenter of Europe’s initial outbreak, workers were forced back into factories, leading to new waves of infections.

In response, the European sections of the ICFI—the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Germany), Socialist Equality Party (UK), Parti de l’égalité socialiste (France), and Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu (Turkey)—issued a joint statement titled, “For a general strike to halt the resurgence of COVID-19 in Europe!” The statement exposed the deliberate policy of mass infection across the continent and outlined a fighting program for the European and international working class.

While forcing their populations back to work and facilitating the spread of the virus, the ruling elites internationally concocted the Wuhan Lab Lie to try to deflect blame onto China for the mass infections and deaths they knew would ensue from their criminal policies.

Initially formulated by Trump’s fascist adviser Steve Bannon, this far-right conspiracy theory falsely claimed that Chinese scientists working with colleagues internationally like Dr. Peter Daszak bore responsibility for unleashing COVID-19 on the world. On the five-year anniversary of the pandemic, this thoroughly debunked conspiracy theory is once again being revived by the *New York Times* and internationally to suit the needs of US and European imperialism in their preparations for war with China.

Vaccine nationalism and pandemic profiteering

The development of effective vaccines against COVID-19 by late 2020 was a scientific triumph. However, the distribution of these vaccines revealed the brutal logic of capitalism and imperialism.

The ICFI consistently advocated for the abolition of patent protections on COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, while stressing that the development, production and distribution of vaccines must be taken out of the hands of the pharmaceutical companies and placed under public ownership and democratic control. We exposed how pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca were profiting immensely from the pandemic while billions of people were denied access to life-saving vaccines.

The WSWS analysis of vaccine nationalism was grounded in a Marxist understanding of the global capitalist system. We explained how the pandemic had intensified imperialist exploitation and how the fight for global vaccine equity was inseparable from the fight against capitalism and imperialism.

The catastrophic Delta wave in India

The consequences of the profit-driven approach to the pandemic were most tragically demonstrated during the catastrophic Delta wave in India in March-June 2021, where the “herd immunity” strategy overseen by the fascistic Modi government led to an estimated over four million excess deaths in the span of just three months.

As the crisis deepened, the WSWS published articles daily documenting the horrific scenes unfolding across India: overwhelmed hospitals, oxygen shortages, mass cremations, and a government deliberately concealing the true state of crisis. In an April 23, 2021 Perspective, we wrote:

The catastrophe in India, it must be emphasized, is a global catastrophe in the face of a virus that respects no national borders and needs no passport. The decision of the world’s governments, led by the United States and the other imperialist powers, to abandon any systematic effort to halt the spread of the pandemic has created conditions in which COVID-19 has been able to mutate and develop more virulent, potentially vaccine-resistant strains. Unless and until there is a coordinated global, science-based effort to eradicate COVID-19 predicated on protecting people’s lives, not capitalist profit, this process will continue. Sparks from the current pandemic wildfire in India will cause blazes around the world. Indeed, cases of the Indian double-mutant [B.1.617.2 Delta] variant are now being reported in North America, Europe and the Middle East.

The Delta wave in India also underscored the issues of vaccine nationalism and pandemic profiteering. While wealthy countries hoarded vaccines, India and other developing nations were left without adequate supplies.

ICFI spearheads the fight for global elimination

From the beginning of the pandemic, the ICFI has advocated for a strategy of global elimination, based on the scientific understanding that COVID-19 relies on a human host to propagate and the only way it can be suppressed is by cutting off all avenues of transmission.

In an August 21, 2021 Perspective, the WSWS argued:

[The] only viable strategy is eradication, based on the policies advanced by the foremost epidemiologists, virologists and other scientists throughout the pandemic. Eradication entails the universal deployment of every weapon in the arsenal of measures to combat COVID-19, coordinated on a global scale, to stamp out the virus once and for all.

This critical statement also critiqued the various “mitigationist” programs then in place in various countries, which it defined as “an amorphous collection of measures that tries to negotiate between the realities of the virus and the financial interests of the ruling elites,” noting that this amounted to “the epidemiology of the golden mean.”

The statement stressed:

Mitigation is to epidemiology what reformism is to capitalist politics. Just as the reformist harbors the hope that gradual and

piecemeal reforms will, over time, lessen and ameliorate the evils of the profit system, the mitigationists nourish the delusion that COVID-19 will eventually evolve into something no more harmful than the common cold. This is a pipe dream totally divorced from the science of the pandemic.

In reality, as long as the virus spreads it will continue to mutate into new, more infectious, lethal and vaccine-resistant variants that threaten all of humanity. Unless it is eradicated on a world scale, the embers of COVID-19 will continue to burn and create the conditions for the virus to flare up anew.

The WSWS’ advocacy for elimination was not based on utopian thinking but on scientific evidence that this approach could succeed. The elimination strategy proved highly effective in China, a mass society with over 1.4 billion people, as well as in Atlantic Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, and a host of other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. These successes took place in March-April 2020 and thereafter, well before the development of vaccines. After eliminating COVID-19, these countries successfully fought off repeated outbreaks of the Delta variant and others imported via international travel.

Our scientific approach was further developed through the October 24, 2021 webinar “How to End the Pandemic,” which brought together leading scientists and the WSWS to discuss the elimination strategy. This was followed by the Global Workers’ Inquest into the COVID-19 Pandemic, launched on November 22, 2021, to expose the criminal policies that led to millions of preventable deaths.

The Global Workers’ Inquest was a groundbreaking initiative that documented the crimes of the ruling class during the pandemic. It collected testimony from workers, scientists, and medical professionals, compiled evidence of government negligence and corporate malfeasance, and exposed the deliberate policies that led to mass death. As we explained in the statement announcing the Inquest:

This Inquest is necessary to break through the cover-up, falsifications and misinformation that have been deployed to justify policies responsible for the avoidable deaths of millions since the initial detection of SARS-CoV-2.

Biden administration pioneers “forever COVID” policy

As the pandemic continued, capitalist governments increasingly abandoned even the pretense of trying to control the virus. Instead, they launched a massive propaganda campaign to normalize mass infection and death.

In the Introduction to Volume 1 of *COVID, Capitalism and Class War: A Social and Political Chronology of the Pandemic* published on September 20, 2022, we wrote:

The propaganda campaign has had a profound impact on mass consciousness, disarming hundreds of millions of people throughout the world by encouraging them to stop wearing masks and abandon their vigilance against the ongoing threat of COVID-19. The mantra guiding this policy, repeated ad nauseam by politicians globally, is that society must “learn to live with the virus.” In effect, this cheap slogan aims to normalize perpetual mass death and debilitation.

The Biden administration continued and deepened this approach, culminating in a policy of “forever COVID” which remains in place today. In a July 26, 2022 article, we noted:

The American people have not “learned to live with COVID”; they have been coerced into it. They have been lied to, as they elected a president who claimed to “follow the science” but has actually followed the money. The measures necessary to fight the pandemic are in complete conflict with the profit interests of the financial elite, so public health will be sacrificed to private wealth.

This abandonment of public health measures accelerated in 2023, culminating in the WHO’s May 5, 2023, ending of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). In effect, the world’s leading public health agency sanctioned the universal claims that “the pandemic is over.”

The dismantling of all public health measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 coincided with stepped-up attacks on science and the normalization of eugenicist conceptions in the entire ruling class. The 2024 New Year statement of the WSWS International Editorial Board summarized this process, in these words:

The universal adoption of “forever COVID” has necessitated a revival of eugenicist conceptions within all sections of the ruling class. In order to justify perpetual waves of mass infection, debilitation and death, the elderly and most vulnerable had to be deemed worthless by official society...

The fight against the pandemic has been undermined by an unrelenting assault on the scientific community, including physical threats against the lives of scientists like Peter Hotez, a campaign to which the Democratic Party has adapted itself. At the same time, public education is in a state of free fall after decades of budget cuts, which are now being compounded as all additional pandemic funding dries up. Every progressive development since the Enlightenment, including all the core principles of public health, are being clawed back by a ruling class tobogganing towards fascism and nuclear war.

A critical aspect of the “living with COVID” propaganda campaign has been the deliberate downplaying of Long COVID, the complex of debilitating symptoms that can persist for months or years after initial infection.

The WSWS has consistently fought for recognition of Long COVID as a mass disabling event requiring a comprehensive public health response. In an October 26, 2020 article, we were among the first to report systematically on “COVID long-haulers” and the emerging evidence of Long COVID affecting children. We have advocated for expanded research, medical support, and economic assistance for Long COVID sufferers, while exposing how capitalism’s drive to “normalize” the pandemic has abandoned tens of millions to suffer in isolation globally.

The catastrophic lifting of Zero-COVID in China

The ICFI’s analysis of China’s Zero-COVID policy and its abandonment in November 2022 was based on a principled Trotskyist

understanding of the bourgeois class character of the Chinese state and the contradictions of “socialism with Chinese characteristics.”

The WSWS was the only socialist publication in the world to continuously support China’s Zero-COVID policy and advocate for its extension globally. The December 2021 Inquest submission, “The misunderstood—and misrepresented—Zero COVID policy in China” provided a detailed scientific analysis of China’s approach, explaining how it had successfully contained the virus while capitalist countries allowed COVID to spread unchecked.

In an article published on November 15, 2022, we were the first news outlet to correctly identify that China was initiating the end of Zero-COVID, a policy which we stridently opposed and warned would be disastrous.

In a December 16, 2022, Perspective, the WSWS condemned the criminal role played by the Western imperialist powers and their media, as well as the Chinese Communist Party, in imposing this policy of mass death. We stressed:

It is not the Chinese population that has demanded the lifting of Zero-COVID, but international finance capital and its mouthpieces in the Western media. They brayed for this and did everything possible to poison international public opinion against China’s public health measures.

In a two-part series published in March 2023, we exposed how the middle-class pseudo-left political tendencies internationally had joined the chorus demanding that China abandon Zero-COVID.

This marked a continuation and deepening of the pseudo-left support for “herd immunity” throughout the pandemic. The earliest indication of their deeply reactionary approach was *Jacobin*’s September 2020 publication of a favorable interview with Martin Kulldorff, one of the co-authors of the Great Barrington Declaration, which the WSWS aptly characterized as a “manifesto of death.”

Our opposition to the lifting of Zero-COVID in China was based on the Marxist understanding that in the modern imperialist epoch, all social and democratic problems can be fundamentally resolved only through world socialist revolution. As we wrote in the series on the pseudo-lefts’ support for China’s lifting Zero-COVID:

The Zero-COVID public health strategy is, in itself, not even a revolutionary policy, as shown by the experience in China, New Zealand and other countries. However, as Leon Trotsky made clear in his exposition of the theory of permanent revolution, in the modern imperialist epoch all social and democratic problems can be fundamentally resolved only through world socialist revolution.

The working class response to the pandemic and the ICFI’s intervention

Throughout the pandemic, the trade union bureaucracies in every industry and every country have refused to take any action in defense of workers’ lives and livelihoods. They have facilitated the homicidal back-to-work campaign and embraced the anti-scientific “forever COVID” propaganda of the ruling elites and their media, doing nothing to educate workers about the ongoing dangers of COVID-19 and Long COVID.

In opposition to these corporatist agents of the capitalist class, the

WSWS and ICFI have sought to arm the international working class with a revolutionary socialist program to fight for public health and to defend their lives and social interests. In one of the earliest examples of this, an SEP (US) statement published on March 14, 2020, titled “Shut down the auto industry to halt the spread of coronavirus!” was read by thousands of autoworkers and helped precipitate wildcat strikes in the Detroit metropolitan region which soon shut down the auto industry.

A critical initiative taken by the ICFI to mobilize the independent strength of the working class has been the fight to build the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). The April 23, 2021 founding statement of the IWA-RFC stressed the central significance of the pandemic, declaring:

The IWA-RFC will work to develop the framework for new forms of independent, democratic and militant rank-and-file organizations of workers in factories, schools and workplaces on an international scale. The working class is ready to fight. But it is shackled by reactionary bureaucratic organizations that suppress every expression of resistance.

It will be a means through which workers throughout the world can share information and organize a united struggle to demand protection for workers, the shutdown of unsafe facilities and nonessential production, and other emergency measures that are necessary to stop the spread of the virus.

Our party has directly intervened in numerous workers’ struggles against unsafe conditions throughout the world. In May 2020, at the height of the back-to-work campaign, we issued a statement calling for the building of rank-and-file factory and workplace committees to prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus and save lives. This led to the formation of committees in auto plants, schools, and other workplaces across the US and internationally.

In the education sector, the SEP (US) played a leading role in organizing teachers against the criminal reopening of schools—recognized early on as a major vector for viral transmission—under Trump and then Biden. Our September 8, 2021 statement, “All US schools must be closed as part of a strategy to eradicate COVID-19!”, provided a scientific basis for teachers’ opposition to in-person learning during the pandemic. The Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee, initiated by the SEP, organized educators across the US to fight for remote learning and safe working conditions, with over a dozen local or statewide educators’ committees forming across the US.

In Australia, the SEP opposed the dangerous abandonment by state and federal governments of partial lockdowns and border closures in late 2021, calling for the formation of rank-and-file committees to oppose the unsafe reopening of schools and workplaces, and to join the global struggle to eliminate COVID-19.

In the UK, the SEP supported educators fighting against school reopenings and helped establish the UK Educators Rank-and-File Committee. Similar committees were built in Germany, Canada, Brazil, and internationally.

The SEP’s intervention in the class struggle during the pandemic has been guided by a Marxist understanding of the role of the objectively revolutionary character of the working class. As we explained in an August 1, 2020 resolution:

The COVID-19 pandemic is a trigger event in world history that is accelerating the already far-advanced economic, social, and political crisis of the world capitalist system. It is creating

conditions for an immense intensification of the class struggle on an international scale. The working class is confronted with a crisis for which there is no progressive solution, apart from a revolutionary struggle against capitalism, leading to the conquest of state power, the establishment of democratic control by the working class over the economy, the replacement of the anarchy of the market with scientific planning, the ending of the nation-state system, and the building of a global socialist society dedicated to equality, the elimination of poverty and all forms of oppression and discrimination, a massive rise in the standard of living and the level of social culture, and the protection of the environment.

Trump’s return escalates war on science and public health

The return of Donald Trump to the White House has escalated the war on science and public health as a core component of his fascist agenda. In a January 23, 2025 Perspective, we wrote: “The initial architect of the horrific ‘herd immunity’ mass infection policy towards the COVID-19 pandemic, Trump is picking up where he left off four years ago and escalating far further.”

To carry out this agenda, Trump has selected as Health Secretary the most notorious anti-vaccine conspiracy theorist in the world, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. To say that the fox is now guarding the henhouse would be a gross understatement. Prior to taking the helm of what were once the world’s preeminent public health agencies, Kennedy made millions filing lawsuits against vaccine manufacturers and the very agencies he now oversees, while selling books that inculcate vaccine hesitancy and anti-science conceptions.

In close collaboration with billionaire Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Kennedy and Trump are setting out to completely destroy the last vestiges of public health in the US, which will have vast global ramifications.

Just in its first two months, the Trump administration has withdrawn from the WHO, imposed an unprecedented gag order on all 13 agencies within HHS, fired over 5,000 employees at HHS agencies, proscribed research on revolutionary mRNA vaccines and technologies, and forced the scrubbing of thousands of pages on the websites of the CDC, NIH, FDA and other agencies.

In a February 10, 2025 article, we noted:

The Trump administration’s war on public health is a deliberate strategy to dismantle science-based governance, suppress medical research, and impose an extreme ideological agenda on American society and, by extension, on the rest of the world. The suppression of public health research, the erosion of scientific integrity through right-wing think tanks, and the funding of ideological publications that masquerade as academic journals all point to a coordinated effort to weaken public trust in science.

The February 8, 2025 Perspective, “Trump’s assault on public health and the growing threat of an H5N1 bird flu pandemic,” warned that the dismantling of public health infrastructure is occurring precisely as new pandemic threats emerge, creating the conditions for even greater catastrophes. The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has made abundantly clear that when the next pandemic starts, or if a far more deadly variant of SARS-CoV-2 evolves, the capitalist ruling elites will not tolerate any public health measures, let alone the limited lockdowns that

were forced upon them by workers in March 2020 and which saved millions of lives globally.

Conclusion

As we enter the sixth year of the pandemic, with new threats such as H5N1 bird flu on the horizon, the ICFI's fight for a scientific approach to public health based on the principles of global elimination and eradication remains as urgent as ever. This fight is inseparable from the broader struggle against capitalism and for the socialist transformation of society.

The coming shocks of the Trump administration in the domain of public health will further destabilize American society and accelerate the radicalization of the working class. The ICFI will continue to fight for the independent mobilization of workers internationally to end the pandemic and build a society that prioritizes human life over profit.

In the coming period, the ICFI and WSWS will deepen the fight for a globally coordinated strategy to eliminate COVID-19 based on the following principles:

- **For an immediate end to the “forever COVID” policy and the implementation of science-based public health measures!** This requires the universal deployment of all required public health measures, including mass testing, contact tracing, the safe isolation of infected patients, masking, and the safe installation of HEPA filters and Far-UVC in all indoor public spaces.

- **For a massive investment in research and development of next-generation vaccines and treatments!** This requires the expropriation of the pharmaceutical industry and the free distribution of vaccines and treatments globally.

- **For workers’ control over workplace safety through rank-and-file committees and the building of the IWA-RFC!** The pandemic has made it abundantly clear that the trade union bureaucracies will do nothing to protect any of our social rights, including the most basic right to life itself.

- **For a vast expansion of public education, not its destruction!** Science and public health can only be defended and developed through the cultivation of the next generation in fully-funded, fully-resourced schools.

- **For a fundamental reorganization of society based on socialist principles!** This is the only way to ensure that public health is prioritized over private profit and that the needs of all people are met.

Five years after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world stands at a critical juncture. The pandemic has accelerated all the contradictions of global capitalism: the growth of social inequality, the intensification of imperialist tensions, the assault on democratic rights and the radicalization of the working class. It has confirmed the Marxist understanding that capitalism is incompatible with the most basic requirements of human life and social well-being.

The ICFI's programmatic response to the pandemic—based on the independent mobilization of the working class through rank-and-file committees, the fight for a global elimination strategy, and the struggle for socialism—provides the only viable way forward.

We call on workers and youth around the world to join this struggle. Only through the building of a mass socialist movement of the international working class can humanity put an end to the COVID-19 pandemic and prevent future catastrophes. Join the Socialist Equality Party and take up the fight for a world free from disease, exploitation and war—a socialist world based on human need, not private profit.

To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:



wsws.org/contact