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By Editor Workers World
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Time for the next great leap

Was capitalism ever progressive? Well, yes — compared to feudalism. The revolutionary struggles that overthrew feudal landlords, starting centuries ago in many parts of the world, did away with land slavery. They also uprooted reactionary institutions and ideology.

This opened the way for the development of science and technology after centuries of Medieval superstitions, especially in Europe.



That was a long time ago. Long enough for capitalism to have grown rotten ripe, having outlived any usefulness it once might have had. It is a system now controlled both politically and economically by multimillionaires and billionaires of the Trump ilk, often hereditary. In place of calls for reason, we have the daily tweets of a president who attacks science and even medicine — in the middle of a pandemic.

COVID-19 has put a glaring spotlight on the inability of the existing capitalist institutions — both public and private — to mobilize an effective response to this growing health

crisis. Those impacted the most are of course the poor, Black, Brown and Indigenous communities, people in overcrowded prisons and migrant detention centers, workers in packinghouses and farms, orderlies and janitors in hospitals and low-income senior housing. But no one is safe.

Making it even worse is the federal government's know-nothing response. For example, the Trump administration is now withdrawing the U.S. from the World Health Organization, right when global cooperation to stem the pandemic is more important than ever.

And speaking of medieval thinking, this government is desperately trying to hide what is really happening. One of Trump's favorite targets is Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The White House has ordered — yes, ordered — hospitals to bypass the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and send all COVID-19 patient information to the Department of Health and Human Services which has hired a privately owned database in Pennsylvania.

By July 15, information about how many hospital beds were occupied by patients with the virus was no longer available to the public. With this heightened ruling-class focus on its own narrow interests, knowledge is being thrown out the window. It's politically too dangerous to let the people know how bad things really are.

What to do about this horrendous situation? Thankfully, there is a growing progressive movement in this country that is in the streets every day, from Portland, Ore., to cities and rural counties in North Carolina. It is reviving the spirit of struggle that grew strong in the 1960s and 1970s fighting racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and imperialist war.

But those movements, as great as they were, left the power of the super-rich intact. The consequences are all too obvious. Of all the capitalist countries, the U.S. is the worst when it comes to funding public services that should be free. Yet the money could easily come from Wall Street, which continues to pile up ever greater fortunes for the few.

Let's take the demand for free, universal health care into the streets! Along with the demand for a well-funded, science-based public health service!

And let's aim our fire at the ruling class and the system of capitalism itself, which must be replaced by workers' power and control over the economy. Socializing the wealth — all of it created by workers of all nationalities but expropriated by capitalists — is the only sure way to make the next great leap forward for humanity.