

Werner Rügemer



Imperium EU

Labor Injustice

Crisis

New Resistances



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Labor Injustice,
Crisis,
New Resistances



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Introduction

Corona pandemic in the EU

Pre-diseased systems: Health, economy, government

How fragile, in some places, and at the same time (seemingly) steadfast the US-led West is, can be seen in the Covid-19 pandemic. This also applies to the EU, with differences in the Member States. The dependent employees, and among them again the weakest, the low-wage workers, the mini-jobbers, the temporary workers, the single mothers, the small self-employed and the pseudo self-employed, the migrant workers and refugees - they were and are hit the hardest - health-wise and economically. By contrast, the plummeting “people's” parties with their emergency regime were able to take refuge in their ability to take action, initially. And BlackRock, Amazon & Co, with the complicity of the EU and national governments, are becoming even more powerful than before.

Pre-diseased health systems

“EU health policy focuses on protecting and improving health, giving equal access to modern and efficient healthcare for all Europeans, and coordinating any serious health threats involving more than one EU country.” Thus proclaims the EU.¹ That sounds good, doesn't it?

However, via the internal market, the EU promotes the access of private investors. In Germany, groups such as Asklepios, Rhön-Kliniken, Helios/Fresenius, Sana, Aneos and the rehab group Median have not only formed large hospital chains, but also sell numerous medical services

throughout Europe via subsidiaries. The largest hospital in Europe, Berlin's Charité, may be a public corporation, but it is radically privatized.²

Health became a commodity on the capitalist market. Nursing positions were cut, the number of treatments increased. Local care, treatment of common ailments - unimportant. There were no reserves when Covid-19 arrived. Not even the cheapest test kits, protective masks and protective clothing were available, not even for hospital staff.

The scarce, overworked nursing staff are poorly paid. Other employees in the health care system are paid even less: As many positions as possible are outsourced to precarious jobs at subcontractors, for patient transport - also within the clinics - for cleaning, kitchen, laundry, warehousing, processing of medical records, sanitation, janitorial services, as Charité has done with the help of McKinsey.³ Superficial cleaning under time pressure, even now with corona - hygiene especially in hospitals? Not so important.

Then, up to half of the beds in the hospitals are empty - as a pool for corona patients, who did not exist in this quantity. Short-time work was prescribed. This is the logically absurd consequence of shortage: demand increases, but the shortage is exacerbated. To that end, 1.6 million planned treatments and surgeries were interrupted or canceled in Germany for the seven weeks between the start of the pandemic measures on March 13 and May 4, 2020 alone.⁴ According to estimates by the ten external corona experts at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, as many as 2.5 million treatments were canceled for the period mentioned.⁵ How many people died and will subsequently die earlier because of this than if they had been treated?

How many there really are in total to date remains unexplained - that does not interest the Minister of Health and the responsible health authority and the state and private mainstream media, nor the oh so caring Chancellor. They remained fixated on "corona" with half-empty hospitals and GP surgeries and on expensive, unused intensive care beds for corona patients. There were also fewer screenings, fewer admissions to emergency departments, fewer doctor visits, for fear of infection. Alongside the corona hype, people were dying, unrecognized and uncounted.⁶

EU adopts flat rate per case from the USA

One element of the profit orientation is the flat rate per case, Diagnosis Related Groups (DRG). It was developed at the elite private US university Yale and introduced into the US healthcare system in 1983.

This does not reward remedial activity, but rather the most short-term and technology-intensive treatment of individual ailments. Every bed must be emptied quickly for the next operation. This was part of the neoliberal program of US President Ronald Reagan. This former Hollywood actor was ex-press spokesman of General Electric - the leading US manufacturer of medical equipment - and promised to cut costs. But the US health care system became the most expensive and antisocial in the world. It excludes a large, the poorer part of the dependent workforce and the unemployed, African Americans and Native Americans from medical treatments.

The EU funded the *EuroDRG* project. Smaller US-affine states, such as Ireland and the Netherlands, were the first to adopt the system. In Germany, the CDU/CSU/FDP government under Chancellor Helmut Kohl, during this time also advised by McKinsey in the Treuhandanstalt for the privatization of GDR companies, pushed through the Health Structure Act in 1993. This replaced the cost-covering principle with “performance-based remuneration”. In the meantime, flat rates per case now apply throughout the EU.⁷

Many sick people never make it to hospital

In 2004, the SPD/Green government under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder added further measures to the flat-rate payments as part of Agenda 2010; Tony Blair with New Labour had shown the way in Great Britain. These include the relief of employers from social security contributions, also for health insurance, and the multiple burden on dependent employees through co-payments for medicines, screenings, treatments and hospital stays.

The upshot, even in normal times: many ailments remain undetected and untreated. The ardent corona crusaders are not fundamentally interested in the health of dependent employees, pensioners, unemployed. You are poor - you do not need all the teeth in your mouth, you can die earlier.

Privatized, bought science

Moreover, the EU is lulled into a sense of security by the top scientific authority on health, the Johns Hopkins University (JHU). The health institutes of this private US elite university are funded by the private foundations of multi-billionaires such as Michael Bloomberg, Stavros Niarchos and William Gates. It has far more funding than the World Health Organization (WHO) and the EU.⁸

This university produces the Global Health Security Index. It evaluates the health systems of all 193 UN states. The systems in the USA and Great Britain are ranked first and second: They are considered “best prepared” against pandemics! And the healthcare systems in EU countries such as France, Italy, Spain and Germany, in the upper rankings, are considered to be “well prepared” for all epidemics and pandemics!⁹

This is one of the reasons why not only the US government under President Trump, but also the EU and the governments of the EU states lulled themselves into a sense of security. The German Minister of Health, Jens Spahn, also claimed as late as the end of February 2020: No danger! They took the countermeasures firstly unprepared, secondly too late, thirdly incorrectly.¹⁰

After the 2007 financial crisis: Even more untreated illnesses

The health care systems in Italy, Spain and Greece have been below normal EU standards for a decade. On top of this, after the financial crisis, came the measures of the European Commission (COM), the IMF and the ECB (Troika): they demanded drastic cuts to save the indebted domestic banks: Not in the military budget, however, but in the social and infrastructure sectors. In the health sector alone, the Troika demanded 63 cuts from these states between 2011 and 2018: Lay off doctors and nurses, sell hospitals!¹¹

The cuts in (contractual) wages, unemployment benefits and pensions demanded in addition by the Troika also mean that more and more medical treatments can no longer be afforded by dependent employees, the unemployed and pensioners.

EU: Eastern Europeans do not have to be healthy

In Eastern EU-influenced regions such as Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, the two-tier system was expanded even more brutally than in the West: The nouveau riche turn to private clinics for care. At the same time, the public health care systems fall into disrepair and remain underfunded. Monthly salaries for doctors and nurses here range from EUR 400 to 1,200 - with a cost of living similar to that in the rich EU states. Younger people emigrate, older staff in particular hold out, overstretched.

The recurring strikes by doctors and nurses in Poland and Croatia, for instance, are ignored by EU bodies. Meanwhile, the German health minister had younger employees poached from there to the hospitals of the richest EU state, for example from Kosovo. Eastern Europeans don't need to be healthy. European solidarity?

Collective self-blinding of virologists and epidemiologists

Virologists and epidemiologists at Johns Hopkins University, the Robert Koch Institute and the Charité are probably not subjectively corrupt. They do not have to be handed envelopes with wads of money under the table. They have risen in the privatized health and research system, have state-related, systemically important functions. They are showered with praise, well paid, their institutions are financed by the state and at the same time receive private donations.

Mutual endorsement over decades, as with the mainstream economists. This is how the collective self-blinding of the ruling elite, its accomplices and its support staff comes about, in the scientific establishment as well. They are socially and scientifically blind and yet feel in possession of the truth: this possession is not called into doubt even by the ritual but nonbinding invocation of scientifically necessary doubts.

Socially and environmentally blind pandemic science Consequently, Western governments assume: The virus spreads evenly through the population, whether in the underfunded (still) public hospital or in the well-equipped private clinic, in the sprawling villa district of Hamburg-Blankenese or in the cramped mass accommodation of Romanian meat cutters exhausted by 16-hour shifts at the Tönnies slaughterhouse.

People are viewed by the leading virologists merely as biological beings, the virus infection as merely a biological event. Therefore, the pandemic measures have a universal character, affect (ostensibly) all citizens equally - i.e. as far as possible everyone, instead of giving special protection to those particularly at risk, testing them as a priority, setting up additional treatment facilities and employing additional personnel for this purpose, as is done, for example, in South Korea and especially in China.

For this reason, in late March 2020, the Robert Koch Institute argued that “corona deaths” should not involve forensic medicine. This is in breach of current law: in the case of deaths, unusual ones certainly, an official death certificate must be issued: What is the main cause of death? That is: What role did the virus play? Is it the cause of death or just random by-catch or something in between?

A small number of forensic physicians, such as those in Hamburg, who nevertheless examined the “corona dead”, found only a small amount of the virus in the vast majority of old patients, who also had chronic preconditions, and furthermore: This new virus variant acts differently than previous, already known variants. It attacks not only the lungs, as previously assumed, but also other organs, such as the kidney and brain. Therefore, the treatments of the infected would need to focus not only on intensive artificial respiration, but also, for example, on palliative measures.¹² It was not until the end of May that a few more forensic doctors ventured to examine the dead on their own initiative.¹³

The government and capitalist virologists admit at best on the biological level: Yes, the elderly, those over 80 with their two or three preexisting conditions, are a high-risk group. But it is precisely in the nursing homes that testing was not done in the first year. And the reality is still quite different.

Highest risk groups: The multiple subclasses

Age is only one risk factor. And still the unasked question: Where do age-related pre-existing conditions come from, how are they amplified in one place, in one social milieu, and not in another? Are obesity, diabetes and

heart disease equally distributed among rich and poor? No - but the Robert Koch and Charité virologists did not investigate this either. Among some medical sociologists, an insight germinated on the fringes of the scientific community - but it did not reach the government.¹⁴

Several of the corona dead are *young*. This was also evident in the US. African-Americans are much more likely to have chronic illnesses early on, are much more likely to be unemployed, live in more cramped quarters, are less likely to receive medical treatment, are underpaid and shunned in menial jobs, and live shorter lives. They are physically and emotionally battered - they were six times more likely to die with corona in the first US hotspot, New York - but were even less likely to be tested than whites.¹⁵ Moreover, that is why the underreporting rate is high. Many young Americans are ill: The average age at death due to and with the new virus was 48, about two decades lower than in Europe.¹⁶

Working poor and working sick

Exploited African-Americans, “illegal” Latinos, migrants from Nepal and Bosnia at Smithfield Foods, Tyson Foods & Co meat plants were disproportionately infected and died at particularly high rates. In the first count, 16 percent of the 3,700 workers at Smithfield's three-shift meat plant in South Dakota turned out to be infected.¹⁷ Working poor is linked to working sick: extremely exploited, extremely sick.

Similarly, poor African-Americans, Latinos, and poor whites in the overcrowded mass incarceration facilities. The highest rates of infection and death, however, hit Native American communities. Among them, too, were many young people. “Decades of contempt, discrimination, exclusion” determined the physical and mental health status here, combined with unemployment and a particularly poor health care system.¹⁸ About half of US cities with average annual household incomes below USD 35,000 have abysmal hospitals and no intensive care beds, and mortality rates are high.¹⁹

An evaluation of 17 million patients during the pandemic in the UK, which was not commissioned by WHO, JHU or the Gates Foundation, showed that infections with fatal consequences primarily affect

underprivileged, poorly paid people with deficient health care, and these include many immigrants from Africa and Asia.²⁰

By the way, what the so knowledgeable New York Times then does not report after all: BlackRock & Co are the main shareholders of the largest US pig slaughtering company Tyson. And incidentally: BlackRock & Co are also the main shareholders of the New York Times. Criticism of the otherwise so environmentally active and media-sensitive BlackRock CEO Lawrence Fink and the health missionary and co-financier of the Global Health Security Index, William Gates, was not disclosed.²¹

Germany: Denial of infection backdrop

If the fight against the pandemic had been scientifically conducted, it should have been done as follows:

- Immediately identify at-risk groups with underlying health conditions at the onset – according to work, living, environmental, age, and health conditions;
- test these groups as completely as possible;
- deploy forensic medicine on a broad scale;
- then align the measures with treatment, protective measures, quarantine. Instead of setting up additional treatment facilities, the German government paid hospitals premiums of EUR 500 per day for beds kept empty.

But that is exactly what was not done. In old people's homes, meat factories, social hotspots, etc., no tests were carried out in the USA or the EU - or only when the infections spread catastrophically from there to the surrounding area, as in the case of the Iduna Center in Göttingen, a run-down prefabricated building in which 700 migrants, the unemployed, the homeless and drug addicts were crammed into a very small space by official order.²²

Or, for example, in the case of the hotspot Tirschenreuth, a Bavarian district with the highest proportion in Germany of infected (1,136) and dead (134, both figures as of May 25, 2020): a malt liquor festival was claimed to be the springboard of the infection, according to Bavaria's populist prime

minister, Söder (CSU). But: 1. in the middle of the district, in the small town of Mitterteich with 6,500 inhabitants, the Schott AG glass factory with 1,250 employees, which belongs to a worldwide group and is the largest company in the district, emits invisible glass dust that can settle in the lungs; 2. In this apparent idyll on the border with the Czech Republic - or precisely for that reason - an economically supra-regionally important interim storage facility is still being operated for nuclear waste from laboratories, hospitals, industry and nuclear power plants: But that remains outside the interest and investigation methods of the government virologists. The Bavarian prime minister had a *tropical* physician investigate the situation - methodologically exactly missing the possible source of danger!²³

Or the unemployed, for example: a study by the Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse AOK and the University Hospital of Düsseldorf, not commissioned by the German government, proved: unemployed people had an 84 percent higher risk of Covid-19 than the average population.²⁴

Working poor and working sick

Thus, in Germany as in the USA, suppressed risk groups only came to light catastrophically, “surprisingly” and late: This was also the case with the numerous deaths in some old people's homes and the frequently infected migrant workers in the meat industry: Within the space of a few days, high infection rates were revealed: At the Westfleisch Group in NRW, at Müller Fleisch in Baden-Württemberg, at Vion in Schleswig-Holstein.²⁵ And then, with a particularly long delay, at the market leader Tönnies in Europe's largest pig slaughterhouse, in Rheda-Wiedenbrück, on June 24: 1,500 infected.²⁶

Only then did the authorities have the workers tested. Before that, like President Trump in the US, federal and state governments had declared meat production to be “systemically important”. Migrant workers were forced to work even more extra shifts, uncontrolled and unprotected. Clemens Tönnies, owner of Tönnies Holding, could proudly announce: “My employees” are now doing additional 16-hour shifts on weekends.²⁷

Actually, the EU, the federal government, the state governments are fully aware: Meat workers with the lowest status under labor law as contract workers often work shoulder to shoulder. The chilled air promotes infections. The work is exhausting, the time pressure is extremely high, shifts can last 16 hours and sometimes even longer. The bodies are weakened, their health is affected. Breaks are not always taken. That's why most of the Eastern European contract workers can only endure the stress for between two and four years and are then sent back by the intermediaries to Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Moldova and Ukraine, whether sick or healthy. This has been going on for two decades and is public knowledge.²⁸

A virological study had already been published back in 2017, which showed that slaughterhouses are hotspots for bio-aerosols: They damage workers' lungs and favor the transmission of bacteria and viruses.²⁹ But such pertinent findings - they come from the University of Shiraz, i.e. a hostile or, for the West, scientifically non-existent state, namely Iran. This does not reach Western government virologists. And they themselves do not hit upon the idea to pursue this obvious question.

Synergistic threat: Migrant meat workers

The particular risk of infection arises from a combination of factors. For example, meat workers are usually also housed in cramped shared rooms. Six to eight workers in 30 square meters, with a communal small kitchen and shared sparse sanitary facilities. Because the subcontractors who rent out the accommodation want to rake in as much as possible, the standard of furnishings and hygiene remains derisory. Even during the pandemic, meat workers sat by the hundreds cramped together at narrow tables in the canteen at Tönnies - with no checks by the state. They are transported daily in overcrowded buses from their lodgings to work and back again.

Thus, several practices synergistically endanger the health of the at-risk group. The legal instrument is the contract for work. It enables further breaches of the law, exploitation and health hazards. And it increases profits at Vion, Westfleisch, Müller Fleisch, Wiesenhof, Anhalter Fleischwaren,

Danish Crown, Tönnies. This has also been shown with similarly exploited migrant workers in Ireland, the Netherlands, the UK, Poland, Italy, France.³⁰

The pandemic measures also reveal the class character of the EU: It organizes labor migration at the expense of the impoverished, economically underdeveloped Member States and at the expense of the unemployed and underemployed there, in favor of the companies in the rich EU founding states in the West. The populace here also gets a few nuggets of this with cheap meat and also with cheap services in the cheap brothels supplied with young Eastern European women.³¹

No corona rules for companies

The police, who control with high precision social distancing rules in parks, streets, playgrounds and stores in Germany's urban public spaces and impose fines - they do not control any slaughterhouse. Likewise, the customs, the trade supervisory authority (responsible for industrial safety), the health offices – no one comes. None of the dozen EU agencies responsible for labor rights comes. Instead, they see to it that labor migration continues even under corona conditions: not only in the meat industry, but also in construction, haulage, private care for the elderly, seasonal agricultural work. Unions have to strike, for example, against the health hazards in Amazon's US and also European fulfillment centers to get a minimum of health protection - no national or EU health and safety agency steps in.

The German government also did not issue a rule for 'normal' companies until August 2020, five months after the supposed general lockdown. It was only in July that the Ministry of Labor produced an initial draft of an occupational health and safety rule. The business lobby with BDA and Gesamtmetall even called for “a reduction in existing documentation requirements”. It was not until August 20, 2020, that the Ministry of Labor announced the SARS-Covid-19 occupational health and safety rule: only a “rule”, i.e. not a law, only non-mandatory provisions, no controls, no sanctions for violating the rules.³²

Although the lockdown is not being implemented in companies, no further infections or indeed deaths have been reported - except in hotspots such as the meat industry. The Robert Koch Institute stated at the end of August 2020: 5,824 infections were known in companies, almost exclusively in the meat industry - the Tönnies site in Rheda-Wiedenbrück alone with 1,500 infected persons.³³ Whether any of them fell ill or died - unknown. There are two possible explanations: Either there were virtually no infections, sick people or deaths in the companies, or there were and they were hushed up. Both variants expose the “corona” management as a lie.

Immediately after the start of the lockdown, the German Ministry of Health commissioned the PR agency Scholz & Friends to design and advise on corona communications, with an initial fee of EUR 22 million (#wirbleibenzuhause). The contract runs for four years, until 2024.³⁴

Pre-diseased economy and “Reconstruction Europe”

The border closures ordered because of the pandemic, the shutting of stores, restaurants, schools, kindergartens, universities and cultural institutions caused “the economy to crash,” it was said. In fact, it was mainly temporary workers, low-wage workers, small self-employed and freelancers who became unemployed. In some businesses, work tailed off or came to a temporary standstill, such as in catering/hospitality, retail, aviation, the public transport system, and tourism.

Hyped-up crisis – “legal windfall gains”

In addition, a few million employees were dispatched to home office. The vast majority of employees in Germany, however, continued to work, contrary to the public staging by governments and Scholz & Friends that “we all stay at home”. Even at the peak of the second lockdown, in January 2021, no more than 24 percent of employees were working from home, i.e. only about 10 million of the 44 million employees. And many of those who work from home often have to go in to work occasionally.

The number of people employed had stood at 45.1 million in February 2020, before the pandemic. At the end of July, after 18 weeks of corona

lockdown, the number had fallen only to 44.5 million: only 1 percent more unemployment. The business rag FAZ reported this figure correctly, while otherwise bemoaning the dire corona consequences.³⁵

One emergency measure is the short-time allowance. This exists in several EU countries. Because of the crisis, it was extended and slightly increased in Germany. But it is lower than normal earnings and is not enough to live on, especially for the lower wage groups, and many temporary employees and 450-euro jobholders do not receive it at all.

Companies had applied for short-time benefits for 10 million employees for May 2020 - but only 1.06 million were actually on short-time work, including fraud: Companies put people back to work when the stores opened, but pocketed the short-time allowance. “Companies sent parts of their workforce on short-time work, and it turns out afterwards that they worked anyway”, notes the employment agency, but to its own regret it does not have the staff to check the majority of applications; the companies calculate on this.³⁶ These are “legal windfall profits”, is how one business lawyer glosses over such fraud.³⁷

Pre-diseased policy

Not only is the sick health care system being propped up, but also, with billions in state aid, the sick economic system. In so doing, the sick political system of the plummeting “people's” parties also wants to seek refuge in its role as crisis manager.

Breach of the constitution: State aid for shrinking economies

The debt brake, which was ostentatiously incorporated into the German constitution, was immediately suspended when corona arrived. In a manifest breach of the constitution, the government has borrowed an additional EUR 450 billion for 2020 and 2021 - in one fell swoop, that's a quarter more national debt than before. To be sure, the one-off modest payments of EUR 300 per child are welcome to single mothers and parents.

And the EUR 2,000 to 15,000 for the self-employed and up to EUR 150,000 for SMEs provide short-term help in times of need. Lasting solutions look different. Raising the minimum wage to at least a paltry EUR

12? - not even that. Abolition of rolling limited contracts? None of that. Expansion of the public transport system, also as a contribution to saving the environment?

Subsidies for innovation-hostile companies

By contrast, the large corporations are being subsidized in the long term. EUR 9 billion to rescue Lufthansa, initially until 2023: In the process, jobs are being cut or switched to part-time work, pensions slashed, unpaid vacations extorted - while multi-year guarantees take effect for the new Lufthansa shareholders such as multi-billionaire Heinz Hermann Thiele and investment bank Morgan Stanley, who only bought into the company speculatively at the beginning of the “corona crisis”. Technically, it would be no problem to convert Lufthansa and the car factories to the development and production of collective local transport systems.³⁸

But none of it. Repairing the 40,000 bridges, the majority of which are in poor condition? Repairing the leaky sewer systems that allow untreated sewage to seep into groundwater? Repairing the dilapidated school buildings?

Drosten, Gates&Co: Privatize health care systems even more!

And oh, the health care system: No expansion of capacities. Higher wages for hospital nurses? More nurses? None of that. But a few billions for digitization, that's also the solution for the health minister - and multimillionaire - Spahn, slotted timely into place as a privatization and digitization fundy. Google & Amazon had their offers ready, which the German, the French government and the COM (apparently) can't refuse.

Around EUR 500 billion are needed to improve healthcare in the EU by 2030, according to calculations by the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies WIIW. But the EU's EUR 750 billion rescue package does not include any funds for this. And the hunt by private hospital operators in the rich EU states for cheap doctors and nurses from Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia continues.³⁹

And, the foundation of the largest private media group in the EU, Bertelsmann, in complicity with the state government of North Rhine-

Westphalia, repeats it: The 1,900 hospitals now left in Germany are to be slashed to between 600 and 400 mostly private super-hospital factories. This plan, already published in 2019, has now been reaffirmed. It overlaps with the plan of the Charité Institute Global Health, its virologist Prof. Drosten, the Gates Foundation and the Boston Consulting Group: By privatizing the hospital system even further, Germany is to be among the leaders in world health, alongside the WHO, according to the intention.⁴⁰

Innovation on the environment front? Deferred

The economic crisis had already begun insidiously long before “corona”.⁴¹ It was precisely in the three years 2017, 2018, and 2019 that DAX companies in Germany distributed by far the highest profits, i.e. during the looming crisis.⁴² Or, more correctly, high profits that were not invested, and the innovations neglected as a result, fueled the crisis.

This was most visible in the leading German and Western industry, car production. Diesel engines had continued to be built fraudulently, innovation ignored for the benefit of profits. Car sales, starting in the USA, had been gradually declining for years. Orders for suppliers in Baden-Württemberg as well as in Mexico, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland were cut. Only production and sales in China, albeit with restrictions, kept and keep car companies like VW in the black, in 2021 as well.⁴³

Such companies are now being “rescued” with the “corona” sticker. Conditions for jobs and labor rights? Requirements against tax evasion? None of it.

Cars with gasoline and diesel engines and hunky SUVs are still allowed to be produced - if equipped with an electric motor, then the state chips in with an additional EUR 6,000: Something for higher earners and their eco-conscience. The state also pays this subsidy for hybrid cars, i.e. for the backward-looking, environmentally harmful hybrid: gasoline engine with battery add-on. Now at least a speed limit on the highways? No. And criminal proceedings against the fraudulent VW board members are dropped in exchange for a few million in fines. The criminal proceedings

for “gang fraud” against bankers who cheated the state out of billions for the benefit of the wealthy are at risk of being time-barred - because of “corona”.⁴⁴

Renewed state doctrine: State economy to excess

The coal, lignite and oil companies are not subjected to any conditions to speak of either, but receive billions in subsidies.⁴⁵ The business lobby has succeeded in ensuring that the state, even if it becomes a co-owner in order to save a company, as in the case of Lufthansa, retreats into a “silent partnership”: paying heavily, giving guarantees, but the decisions remain with the previous innovation refuseniks and crisis perpetrators.

While in the USA and the EU the largest state programs are launched to bail out private companies, criticism of China as a “state economy” is intensified - China does not know such direct state aid at all, moreover without environmental and labor law requirements.

The neoliberal lie that the state must “stay out of the economy” is once again being reduced to absurdity, as it was with the bank bailout in 2008, and elevated to the status of open state doctrine, on an even larger scale: Without the state, this capitalist economy would be doomed.

EU also breaching the constitution: “Reconstruction” and overindebtedness

Together with the COM, the governments of Germany and France have pushed ahead with an EUR 750 billion rescue program for the “reconstruction of Europe”. Here, too, “corona” is the sticker. Poland, the EU's fossil-fuel monster - 80 percent of energy from coal, biggest importer of old used cars, 33 of Europe's 50 most air-polluted cities are in Poland - gets whopping subsidies.⁴⁶

And because the largest capital organizer in the Western world, the US investor BlackRock, has already advised the European Central Bank so well so far - in order to make itself and its super-rich, anonymous clients the largest owners of the largest stock corporations in the EU - that is why BlackRock is again advising not only the US Federal Reserve Bank during “corona”, but also the ECB. The ECB wants to buy up more than EUR 1

trillion in bonds from states and companies (Pandemia -Emergency Purchase Program, PEPP) and thus plunge itself, that is the EU states, into new debts. And because the COM itself does not really know how the EU's ambitious Green Deal program can be realized, none other than BlackRock again got the consulting mandate.⁴⁷

Deadly EU-style state economy

For the EUR 750 billion, the EU is taking out loans, against current budgetary law, i.e. also in breach of the constitution - until now, the budget has been financed by contributions from the Member States. These new loans will also be paid out in part as non-repayable grants to the states. But the 750 billion must be repaid at some point by the same EU states, in addition to their current contributions. But this is being concealed from the citizens - repayment is not to begin until 2028, with the next EU budget, and is to be concluded by 2058. But how will the German state, for example, repay its share of these EU loans, in addition to the 450 billion loans taken out directly at national level?

In this regard, a basic observation: a state can incur debt comfortably if

- it ensures new revenues, for example through taxes on those who have so far been the biggest tax evaders,
- it raises mass purchasing power or promotes it, for example through its own investments and through increased labor income and pensions,
- it ensures innovation and new good mass products by imposing conditions on private companies.

But neither the EU nor the Federal Government is doing any of this. This leaves only the dependent employees as debt redeemers.

Thus, an even larger, EU-wide “austerity” or cutback program looms, for decades to come: deadly EU-style state economy.

Digital colonialism

With “corona”, the EU finally wants to achieve “European sovereignty” in digitization as well. This populist wish will not come true. Unfortunately, the German-French cloud and digitization initiative is getting entangled in the already established clouds and medical algorithms of the “apocalyptic

horsemen of the Internet”, Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, Apple, abbreviated GAMFA.⁴⁸

It started with the “corona” app: Google and Apple were able to blackmail the German and other governments. Then came the further digitization and robotization of healthcare. Amazon added 82 new planes to its transport fleet during the crisis and 175,000 new employees, mostly low-wage workers. On their “corona” roll, GAMFA have bought up numerous companies, in the EU, in the USA, in Asia.⁴⁹

Digitization of disenfranchised labor

The digital and platform corporations with their BlackRock&Co major shareholders continue to shrink national economies: the steady decline in the number of hours worked in the West has been evident since 2005, accelerated in 2019 and further since 2020 with “corona”. But this does not distribute work equally in a fair way, rather it increases the number of unemployed, gig workers, precarious workers and unsecured solo selfemployed, mass poverty grows, as the ILO sums up in its Covid-19-Monitor of January 25, 2021.

It continues with cashless payment, and then it really starts: Homeschooling and home office; state and business administration; driverless car and traffic systems; civil, military and intelligence surveillance and, last but not least, the further digitized fragmentation of work in the direction of gig- and crowdworking.

German state governments used the Microsoft Teams conferencing system for homeschooling. US intelligence agencies thus now have access to the data of students, teachers, parents. “Microsoft is required under US laws such as FISA (Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act) and the Cloud Act to release the data to the US government.”⁵⁰ The same is true, for example, for the most widely used video conferencing provider, Zoom.

GAMFA “are the winners of the corona crisis” and “with their enormous financial resources they are further expanding their power”. This is “digital colonialism,” even the business newspaper Handelsblatt says.⁵¹ What Handelsblatt does not reveal: Where do “the enormous financial resources”

come from? They come from the GAMFA major shareholders such as BlackRock, Vanguard, State Street & Co.

The alternatives

In order to draw the right consequences for public health from “corona” as well as from the catastrophic “normal state”, others must take action, trade unions and health initiatives that have formed during the pandemic.⁵²

Detachment from the USA!

With GAMFA, BlackRock & Co are also the winners of state and EU corona management. They are an active part of “America First”, were already before President Trump, having risen under his predecessors Clinton, Bush and Obama and with the elated approval of, for example, the long-time COM President, Jean-Claude Juncker: He was previously the creator of the largest financial haven in the EU, Luxembourg, which is particularly popular with Amazon & Co.⁵³

They cooperate with the US intelligence services and the US military. And no matter how vehemently the liberal milieu repeated its cheap criticism of former US President Trump, the EU, acting somewhat less militantly, tagged along with Trump's media-military-intelligence aggression against Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Cuba, Syria and, above all, against the People's Republic of China. Under the new US President Joe Biden, the aggression against China and Russia will be intensified - militarily, economically, politically, and via the media.

One of the EU's “corona” measures, in the wake of the military policy demanded by the US, is the “European Peace Facility” (EPF): in future, this title will accommodate spending on EU military missions and for training and upgrading “friendly armies”.⁵⁴

Europe must free itself from this dependence!

“America's declaration of bankruptcy”

In the process, “corona” is debunking the USA's role as a model state even for its very last few fans: with the most expensive and antisocial healthcare system in the world, it is proving to be a deadly hotspot in the pandemic.

These victims come on top of the victims of shooting sprees and police violence.

The Western model and leading state produces the most deaths, at home, but also abroad. Suicide and the killing of others are part of the same social model: the many private gun owners kill not only other citizens, but above all themselves.⁵⁵ The USA leads the world in the suicide rate among children and young people.⁵⁶

The US model produces the most unemployed by Western standards and also the poorest, amplified in the pandemic. The US also produces the most severe economic collapse. The US is the most indebted state and is sliding ever deeper into debt for the “corona” bailout. This suicide-prone and homicidal state is expanding its military budget, already by far the highest in the world, is sending even more warships with 6,000-man crews off the coast of China. Even during the pandemic, it is pouring billions of dollars into the largest wall ever built by a state against other states - highly equipped with Israeli security technology and militarized border police. It is proving to be the world leader in racism and in violating human rights and international law. And the richest US capitalists, like Amazon's Bezos and Microsoft's Gates, got even richer during the crisis.

“America’s declaration of bankruptcy,” it is said even in business circles: “High mortality figures, economic collapse, political failure.”⁵⁷ Admittedly, the impetus to part company with the crashing, dangerous colossus is unlikely to come from these circles.

BlackRock: Crisis advance of the “shadow banks ”

BlackRock, the largest unregulated “shadow bank”, headquartered in New York (and legally domiciled in the US state of Delaware, for which current US President Biden spent 40 years as a senator helping to expand its role as the Western world's largest financial haven), advises not only the EU and the ECB. BlackRock organizes the de-industrialization of the US and EU economies by buying up and merging companies.

BlackRock made itself the biggest monopolist in German housing, playing the vanguard in driving up rents and utility costs. The second-

largest housing group in Germany, Deutsche Wohnen AG, owned by BlackRock & Co, was promoted to the DAX, the elite club of the 30 most important companies in Germany, in the middle of the pandemic - after the largest housing group in Germany, Vonovia, also owned by BlackRock & Co, had already achieved this promotion three years ago.⁵⁸

This shadow bank - and it is only the largest of the several hundred US shadow banks that operate similarly - is also helping to Americanize labor relations in the EU.⁵⁹ And it is advising the EU on the Europe-wide introduction of private pensions. In the “corona” crisis, BlackRock CEO Fink, as spokesman for this new Western capitalist phenomenon, sees “tremendous opportunities”; Fink is also spokesman for the privately organized Great Reset of Capitalism at the World Economic Forum/Switzerland.⁶⁰

No going back to “normal”! New beginning! Re-founding of the EU!

Europeans only have a future in economy, democracy, prosperity, peace, human rights including social and labor rights: they must break away from the multi-tentacled imperium of “America First”.

What governing politicians are promising as a return to “normality” after “corona” cannot and will not and must not be allowed to happen, from any perspective. BlackRock, Google & Co as well as the COM and the federal German government and the French government do not want that either, in their way.

And we, the majority of the population, the dependent employees, the colorful bunch of the working class, we cannot want this out of our own, completely different interests either. Because: The present neoliberal “normal state”, which has become even more pronounced since the financial crisis of 2007, has led to the current health, political, economic, media and also global security crisis, including the labor injustice described in this book.⁶¹

Stirrings against exploitation and disenfranchisement

No return to “normal”! The prevailing corona management is a new, acute reason for the reversal of the status quo, for the democratic,

peaceful re-founding of Europe based on human rights.

In the second part of this book, people, activists, trade unionists and authors from a dozen EU Member States and candidate countries have their say. They have been fighting for human rights at work, against exploitation and disenfranchisement long before “corona”. The reports date from the first quarter of 2020. Initiatives that have since grown in strength, such as the international organization of Amazon workers, of health workers in several EU countries, and many others, could not be included here.