

# Pandemics and Profits--How the Covid-19 *exceptions prove the rule*

Covid-19 is **contained** in Taiwan and Singapore. There is no “lock down”, no mass unemployment, no rising death rate. Factories, schools and businesses are **open**. Contrast this with Europe and the US where the plague of Covid-19 is devastating the lives of millions, with “lock downs”, unemployment, isolation and death. What explains the differences? Why were the doors to death wide open in Europe and the US but quickly closed in Taiwan and Singapore?

How did Singapore become the “gold standard of near perfect detection”? Simply put, they learned from the SARS 2003 epidemic which had killed people and damaged the economy. Their answer was to invest heavily in building health care infrastructure: building 1,000 public health clinics, free aggressive testing and hospitalization, contact tracing, and quarantine with financial support, consistent public education and social distancing. The virus was contained.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6914e1.htm>

In Taiwan, their first case was detected 1/20/20, the same day as the first case in the US. Due to Taiwan’s “robust public health network” they were able to rapidly prevent transmission, detect and isolate infected people. After the SARS epidemic they improved their infection control within a universal health care system for all citizens. Their hospitals had screening booths and isolation wings with an inventory of negative pressure isolation rooms, Personal Protective Equipment and test kits. . A centralized data base was created with mandatory reporting and quarantine. This allowed for excellent disease surveillance and detection. Temperature check points were set up across the nation combined with consistent public education.

[https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/7/20-0574\\_article](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/7/20-0574_article) Sadly these two countries are the **exception**. Most countries have so far failed to contain Covid-19.

The US and Europe have witnessed *decades of cuts to Public Health and Disease Prevention programs* demanded by Wall street, Corporations and Bankers. The drive to privatize health care and maximize short term profits has driven this economic process. “Reductions in prevention spending were almost universal”. <https://ilcuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Public-Health-in-Europe-in-the-Austerity-Years.pdf> The doors to death have deliberately been shredded and left wide open.

The few exceptions seem to prove the rule that Capitalist economies are driven by the drive for short term profits. Such economies are now sacrificing millions of working people on the altar of profits. This catastrophe reveals how urgent it is to build a society motivated by, and dedicated to, the health needs of the people.

4/3/20 Dr. Nayvin Gordon writes about health and politics and can be reached at [gordonnayvin@yahoo.com](mailto:gordonnayvin@yahoo.com)