

As pandemic accelerates in US, young people made the scapegoat of ruling elite's malicious return to work policy

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On June 27, the number of COVID-19 cases surpassed 10 million cases. It has taken less than six days for another 1 million cases to be tallied with the cumulative death toll rising to 521,000 globally. Yet, international health organizations continue to warn that it is still not too late to employ an all government approach to public health in containing the devastation being wrought primarily on the working class. However, the “worst is yet to come” if the world continues to dismiss these admonitions.

Yesterday, more than 200,000 new cases were reported among more than 200 nations with the United States, by itself, contributing an unprecedented 57,236, a one-day high that will undoubtedly be surpassed as the pandemic becomes more deeply entrenched in the country, with almost every state reporting a rise in new cases. By comparison, Europe had only 13,507 new cases and 413 fatalities. Concerningly, the number of new cases is beginning to rise again throughout the continent and it may very well see another surge of cases.

With Independence Day weekend coming up, it seems certain that celebrations will fuel the raging pandemic. Even the *New York Times* writes in disbelief that 30 days of rising new cases show the US outbreak spiraling out of control, citing that the US has set a single-day record five times in little over a week. Officials have been warning their communities to celebrate at home as the health systems in the hardest-hit states are reaching capacity.

Florida has had a single-day high of over 10,100 cases. Texas recorded 8,240 new cases yesterday. California, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee and the Carolinas have registered more than 1,000 new

daily cases. Additionally, Ohio and Kansas had seen single-day highs recently when, by all accounts, things were “going well.”

Since reaching its ebb on June 7 after the initial peak on April 10, the number of new cases has returned to its previous accelerating trajectory. There is a clear correlation between the poorly conceived reopening of the economy—the lifting of restrictions and the mandatory return to work, policies agreed to and supported by the entire political establishment—and the lack of any well-organized concrete public health initiative such as contact tracing, testing, isolation of contacts, and care of those infected. The situation is brazenly careless as the country is flying blind through this second surge, ignoring all the lessons of the last few months.

By all accounts, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been instrumental in signing off on this deadly policy at the behest of the ruling classes. Furthermore, they have used their position to enrich the companies tasked with producing therapeutics, vaccines and non-pharmacologic interventions. They have wholly refused to listen to the alarms being sounded by health care facilities and workers who are overwhelmed by the massive surge of new patients as personnel, equipment and stamina run short again.

Repeatedly, governors and state officials have thrown the blame for these surges on the backs of young people citing irresponsible behavior, admonishing them for their reckless actions and endangering the lives of others and their own. At the coronavirus task force brief last week, Vice President Mike Pence said, “Younger Americans have a particular responsibility to make sure

that they're not carrying the coronavirus into settings where they would expose the most vulnerable."

Texas Governor Greg Abbott noted, "At this time, it is clear that the rise in cases is largely driven by certain types of activities, including Texans congregating in bars."

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, said, "I don't think we reopened too soon, our numbers were very good. The problem is that people are not wearing masks. You go out, and everywhere you look, they're not wearing masks."

Even House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told NPR, "I totally agree with Joe Biden. As long as we're faced with this crisis, masks should be mandatory. In fact, the reason the CDC hasn't made it mandatory is because they don't want to embarrass the president." Such is the content of these statements where the division between the Democrats and Republicans centers on mandating vs. suggesting the wearing of a mask, as they both celebrate the unprecedented rise in the stock markets.

There is no call to return to lockdown, save lives, or bring the pandemic under control. An opinion piece in Bloomberg by Justin Fox encapsulates the ruling elite's intention: "The choice now isn't between opening the economy and letting Covid-19 rage. It's between implementing a few targeted policies (indoor mask-wearing; restrictions on bars and other indoor settings most conducive to transmission; investments in contact tracing and other public-health efforts) that could probably bring the disease under control, and just letting it continue to spread like this—dragging down the economy the entire way until we have vaccines and better treatments."

Behind these sentiments is the weight of the recent jobs report that is couched in nervous exuberance. The Bureau of Labor Statistics said that US employers added "a much larger than expected 4.8 million workers" to the payroll, bringing the unemployment rate down to 11.1 percent. They also noted that the jobless claims for the week ending June 27 fell for the 13th week in a row to 1.43 million.

Robert Frick, the chief economist for the Navy Federal Credit Union, said, "Another surprisingly strong job report released today showed Americans were hired back by the millions last month, but as with last month's report, it came with major caveats. The

biggest is the surge in COVID-19 cases in many states across the country that may slow hiring significantly this summer."

In a new ABC News poll, the majority of Americans feel the economy has opened far too quickly. Though the population, after adhering to the necessary restrictions imposed for several weeks, were more engaged in public activities, they have grown more concerned with the rising number of coronavirus cases. The percentage going to church has declined from 57 percent to 49 percent. Those willing to fly has decreased from 44 percent to 36 percent. Even the *Wall Street Journal* took note that restaurant seating in several large cities was down, and credit-card spending had slackened.

According to a labor economist at the University of Tennessee, Marianne Wanamaker, "We're at the beginning of a slow recovery. I think the recovery will stall out if we don't get control of the virus."

The passing holiday will be used as another excuse to decry American irresponsibility as the surge will continue unabated. "Let it rip," the corporate bosses said, and the state and local officials have dutifully acknowledged their orders and "let it rip." Yet, the catastrophic rise in the number of cases is bound up with the drive to push workers back into the factories, assembly buildings, and plants where the virus has begun to infect people in astronomical numbers. At the same time, the US stock market ended a phenomenal second quarter, mounting a triple-digit gain on Wednesday.



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