

The explosion of new cases of COVID in the Northern Hemisphere will fuel massive social unrest

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On Wednesday, the world saw more than 507,000 cases of COVID-19 in 24 hours, bringing the worldwide total to 45 million cases. As of this writing, there are 485,418 new cases of COVID-19 with several hours before the clock on the Worldometer dashboard resets, implying that tomorrow this record will be shattered.

It was only six days ago that there were 400,000 new daily cases, and 22 days since new daily cases surpassed 300,000. Europe has seen more than a tenfold rise since the summer lows and now accounts for almost half of all global cases, as cases in the Southern Hemisphere appear to be receding. Meanwhile, the seven-day moving average in the US has reached over 75,000 new cases a day, a dramatic rise in just a few short weeks.

As predicted, deaths have begun to follow this massive surge. Yesterday saw once again more than 7,000 deaths worldwide. Since the beginning of October, the seven-day moving average has been steadily climbing from a low of 4,993 to its present high of 6,095 deaths per day.

The last time such an average in deaths was seen was back in April, when the world witnessed the calamity of COVID pandemic ravage health systems in numerous nations across the globe as country after country shut down schools and nonessential businesses and implemented stay-at-home orders to bring the epidemic under a modicum of control. The Dow Jones plummeted more than 10,000 points over a few weeks from a high of 29,000 in February, leading President Trump to echo Thomas Friedman's slogan, "the cure can't be worse than the disease," thereby inaugurating the policy of reopening the economy regardless of the

cost in health and lives.

Every world leader, prominent political figure, government agency, as well as crucial financial sector, had been briefed early in the course of the pandemic that the virus was highly contagious and virulent and the significance of its airborne route of transmission was made clear. This makes the Democratic Party leaders in Congress complicit in this massive betrayal of the population.

Instead of heeding the advice and counsel of epidemiologists and public health officials to formulate an international response to protect the global population's lives and livelihoods, the pandemic was used to further to enrich the financial oligarchy and their political defenders.

Health care systems were left to flounder as hospitals and morgues filled with the recent dead. Health care workers fell ill and paid with their lives for caring for the sick and infirm. The entire project to develop therapeutics and material supplies for combating the pandemic was politicized and financialized.

In light of these recent experiences, Trump's claim that "ending the COVID-19 pandemic" was one of his significant accomplishments must not be taken only as a mere provocation and brazen disregard for the population's safety. Like his previous comments—"it will just go away," "like a miracle it will disappear," or "we have turned the corner"—Trump's bald-faced lies means that despite the massive health crisis there will be no future shutdowns. He is essentially attempting to assure the markets that the pandemic will no longer impact their financial interests.

In this regard, the White House chief of staff's comments last week on CNN's *State of the Union*

program openly corroborated this fact that there is no intention to bring the pandemic under control.

The health crisis posed by the pandemic is on a catastrophic trajectory that poses a severe threat to the working class. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases as well as a member of the White House coronavirus task force, offered a more sobering perspective, stating, “Unfortunately we’re right now in the middle of what’s going to be referred to, I think historically, as the mother of all outbreaks over the last hundred years. And we’re not even close to being finished with it yet.”

The number of states seeing record cases has been climbing, and reports from numerous regions worldwide are seeing health care systems reach or surpass capacity. According to the World Health Organization, a strategy of mitigation without bringing the pandemic under control is a recipe for disaster.

To state the matter bluntly, there is no approved vaccine at the present moment, and to deliver hundreds of millions of doses when one proves efficacious and safe will take several more months. Trump’s claims that a vaccine is “imminent” is just another lie, timed for the election. There are no other therapeutics proven efficacious outside of oxygen, dexamethasone and supportive care by health systems.

Even remdesivir, recently approved by the FDA, has failed to decrease mortality or the need for a ventilator, or reduce hospitalization, according to trial results. The only proven measures are those related to public health: to maintain social distancing in combination with robust testing and contact tracing. There are only two purposes for testing: to accurately diagnose a person to treat them and to assist in tracing contacts. Yet, these comprehensive strategies have been wholly abandoned if they were ever really attempted.

During a University of Melbourne panel discussion, Fauci said he hoped that a vaccine would be available in the next few months but cautioned that “a substantial portion of the people” would not see a vaccine until late next year. “I think it will be easier by the end of 2021, and perhaps even into the next year, before we start having some semblances of normality,” he said. Five companies in the final phases of their trials won’t have data until December.

According to CNN medical analyst Dr. Jonathan Reiner, a professor of medicine at George Washington

University, “If we continue our current behavior, by the time we start to go down the other side of the curve, a half a million people will be dead.”

Across the US states, budget shortfalls have amounted to \$434 billion, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, a sum greater than the total K-12 educational budget in 2019. Under the pressure of the pandemic, cuts to all aspects of state functions that include education, as well as the furloughing of state employees which include teachers, firefighters and other emergency workers, and cuts to their pay, retirement and benefits, the political impact will be to fuel social unrest.



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