

Urgent action is necessary to stop the US Delta variant surge!

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The United States is in the midst of a major new upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic that has already taken the lives of 624,000 people. Over the past month, daily cases have increased 250 percent, driving a rise in hospitalizations and a significant increase in the daily death rate.

“The Delta (4th) wave in the United States is already showing it to be on a path to its the worst yet” in major hotspots, noted Eric Topol, a professor of molecular medicine at the Scripps Research Institution.

The surge is concentrated in the poorest sections of the country, including Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Florida and Nevada, where vaccination rates are lowest. In Missouri, the tenth-poorest state in the country which has one of the lowest vaccination rates, hospitals are at the highest occupancy at any point of the pandemic. “We only get beds available when someone dies, which happens several times a day,” Terrence Coulter, the critical-care medical director at CoxHealth, told the *Atlantic*.

The rise in cases is caused by the Delta variant of COVID-19, which not only spreads more rapidly, but reproduces much more aggressively inside infected people. A study published earlier this month noted that the viral load of people infected with the Delta variant was 1,000 times greater than those infected by the initial variant of the disease.

The surge in sections of the country with the lowest vaccination rates has been accompanied by a troubling growth in so-called “breakthrough” infections among vaccinated people. According to official figures from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 791 fully vaccinated people have died from COVID-19 in the US so far, and 5,000 have been hospitalized.

Three fully vaccinated athletes inside the Olympic village in Tokyo and one staff member tested positive over the weekend, raising the threat of new outbreaks at

the world’s premier sporting event. In recent days, three fully vaccinated members of the Texas House delegation in Washington, D.C., tested positive after traveling maskless on a chartered airplane.

Moreover, less than half of the population in the US is fully vaccinated. While the media blames this fact on people who do not want to get the vaccine, the ruling class has been unwilling to organize the type of public education and mass distribution program that is required.

In recent days, it has become clear that the US government expects the upsurge that has already taken place in southern states to be merely the prelude to a new wave of the pandemic.

“This is just going to spread through the population,” Trump’s former FDA director Scott Gottlieb told CNBC on Friday. He pointed to an internal CDC model showing “an increasing epidemic, a wave of infection from this Delta variant moving through the population over the next two months.”

“The assumptions built into those models is no mitigation, no mandates for masks, no closures of businesses,” Gottlieb added. “I think that’s likely to be the norm.”

What Gottlieb is describing is the deliberate mass infection of the American population, allowing tens or hundreds of thousands more to die. The Trump-appointed FDA director was not describing some ideal world that would exist if the COVID-19 denier Trump was still in power, but the actual policies of the Biden administration.

On May 13, the CDC, under pressure from the Biden administration, announced that it was no longer recommending that vaccinated people wear masks, triggering the effective abandonment of all social distancing measures by businesses, states and municipalities throughout the country.

The *World Socialist Web Site*, in a position consistent with the World Health Organization and leading public

health experts, opposed the CDC's decision, warning that it would lead to a new resurgence of the pandemic. Less than two months later, these warnings are being confirmed.

Facing the disastrous outcome of the White House's policies, Biden's CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, was asked last week, "Is there any consideration, any scenario in which you might want to reverse yourself on reopening schools?"

Walensky replied, "I remain emphatic that our schools need to open in the fall. They need to open for full, in-person learning." When asked again, "CDC is not recommending people who are fully vaccinated wear masks?" Walensky responded, "We are not."

The Biden administration's open opposition to masking and the end to all social distancing measures is virtually indistinguishable from the policies of former US President Donald Trump, whose disastrous handling of the COVID-19 pandemic was a major factor in Biden's victory.

"220,000 Americans dead," Biden said in his opening remarks at the second presidential debate. "Anyone is responsible for that many deaths should not remain as president of the United States of America." He added, "I will take care of this. I will end this."

But since Inauguration Day, a further 196,000 people have died of COVID-19. That is, almost as many Americans have died under Biden as had died when Biden proclaimed "anyone responsible" for such mass death had forfeited his right to be president.

The president who pledged to "follow the science" is rejecting the demands of scientists, discouraging mask-wearing and peddling pseudo-science that children cannot be infected with COVID-19 and that schools are not centers for the transmission of the disease.

Tens of millions of people voted for Biden in the belief that he would take the measures necessary to stop the pandemic. But these promises were empty, because Biden, like Trump, represents the interests of the financial oligarchy that has massively enriched itself as hundreds of thousands have died.

It is urgently necessary to draw the lessons of the year and a half that has elapsed since the start of the pandemic. Under the banner of "herd immunity," capitalist governments throughout the world made the calculated decision to sacrifice millions of lives because saving them would have impinged on the profit interests of the financial oligarchy.

With more than four million deaths, the mass of

humanity is no closer to eradicating the pandemic than it was in March. Rather, the uncontained spread of the disease has led to the development of ever-more-dangerous variants.

Stopping the pandemic requires a radically different approach. This means the closure of schools and nonessential businesses, with full compensation for all those who lose any wage or small business income. This must be combined with the allocation of vast social resources to ensure that every case of COVID-19 is meticulously tracked and that every infected person is given a safe and comfortable place to quarantine—with full financial compensation—until they are no longer infectious.

It is a fundamental fact that, despite the unanimous consensus of scientists on the measures necessary to contain COVID-19, there is only one political party in the United States calling for the stopping of nonessential production: the Socialist Equality Party, affiliated with the International Committee of the Fourth International that publishes the *World Socialist Web Site*. That is because the Socialist Equality Party does not accept the economic prerogatives of the capitalist class.

If COVID-19 is to be contained, it will only be through a mass mobilization of the working class to demand urgent measures to stop the pandemic, whatever the cost to the wealth of the financial oligarchy. The ill-gotten gains made by America's billionaires while hundreds of thousands died must be seized and used to fund the measures necessary to stop the pandemic.

As the disease rips through workplaces, workers will form rank-and-file committees to demand the closure of non-essential production and the enforcement of critical safety guidelines. Teachers must and will resist the efforts to reopen schools for in-person learning under conditions in which the pandemic is still spreading.

The inability of the capitalist system to stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear the incompatibility of capitalism with the social needs of society. The struggle to save human lives in the pandemic is inseparable from the struggle for socialism.



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