Washington Post calls for a COVID-19 cover-up

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On Tuesday, the *Washington Post* published an editorial endorsing the creation of a "9/11-commission-style national panel that would examine the pandemic and help prepare the future." In fact, the proposed panel, comprised of leading representatives of the US state apparatus, would serve to cover up the real causes of and responsibility for a pandemic that has killed more than one million people in the United States and 15 million globally.

A bill to create the panel was introduced on November 4 by four senators: Democrats Dianne Feinstein and Kirsten Gillibrand and Republicans Roger Marshall and Joni Ernst. The commission would consist of 10 members, five Democrats and five Republicans.

Explaining the themes of the commission, the *Post* wrote, "One vital area of inquiry is public health systems, which were overwhelmed during the pandemic. The commission would examine the 'structure, coordination [and] management' of all levels of government, scrutinizing performance in a host of areas."

Another part of the investigation would "focus on the virus origins," including, according to the language of the bill, the possibility of "a laboratory-associated incident involving experimentation, animal handling, or sampling by the Wuhan Institute of Virology."

In other words, the inquiry will have two purposes: Covering up the criminal actions of US politicians and blaming China for the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the *Post*, the second part is particularly important. With blood on its hands, and facing growing social unrest at home, the American ruling class is desperate to scapegoat China, on the basis of lying and disproven claims that the virus originated in the Wuhan lab. The *Post* has taken up the task of promoting these lies as aggressively as possible.

It laments that a "recent US intelligence community report on the virus origins was inconclusive." The intelligence report was "inconclusive" only to the extent that it did not arrive at the conclusions favored by the *Post* because evidence for this conclusion could not be manufactured. Four out of five US intelligence agencies concluded that COVID-19 was "not developed as a biological weapon" and "not genetically engineered."

However, the *Post* goes on, "A commission with time and resources could get closer to the truth." In other words, it will have more time to concoct a narrative that conforms to the interests of the American ruling class.

The entire framework of the commission is aimed at avoiding any examination of the social and political forces actually responsible for mass death, as this would point to the capitalist ruling elites in the United States and their political servants in both the Democratic and Republican parties.

To this end, absent from the bill or the *Post* editorial is any reference to the policy of "herd immunity," under which Trump administration officials deliberately promoted the mass infection of the population with the aim of minimizing the impact of the pandemic on the stock market.

Likewise excluded is any discussion of the financial interests that led the White House, Congress and the media to attempt to "play down" the COVID-19 pandemic in January and February of 2020 in the hopes of avoiding a stock market sell-off. The bill and the *Post* editorial exclude any mention of the sale of stock by members of Congress who were briefed about the dangers of the pandemic. (Feinstein was herself one of the members of Congress who sold stock ahead of the March 2020 market crash.)

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Regardless of the origins of the pandemic, it was the American ruling class and its political representatives that decided to reopen factories and workplaces, fueling the spread of the pandemic. It was they who declared that "the cure can't be worse than the disease." And it was they who orchestrated a massive, multitrillion-dollar bailout of Wall Street that continues to this day.

Democratic members of Congress, no less than their Republican counterparts, failed to warn the public about the looming disaster, and Democratic governors throughout the country abandoned social distancing measures even more rapidly than suggested by guidelines adopted by the Trump White House. The Biden administration has completed the return of US schools to in-person instruction and has sought to ensure that workers stay on the job even as the COVID-19 pandemic spreads unchecked.

An "investigation" that excludes these massive crimes is nothing more than a cover-up. And this "investigation" would be delivered in some two years, by which time the death toll will by far eclipse one million.

The Democrats and their fascistic "colleagues" in the Republican Party are preparing this cover-up as they dismantle all remaining restraints on the spread of the pandemic, while tens of thousands of Americans are dying every month.

The model for the commission is itself revealing. The *Post* called for the commission to base itself on the work of the "Covid Commission Planning Group," headed by Philip David Zelikow, the former executive director of the 9/11 Commission. The *New York Times* has likewise published two articles, on June 2 and June 16, endorsing the formation of a commission of inquiry based around Zelikow's group.

Zelikow, a former aide to Bush's National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, held secret back-channel discussions with Bush administration officials during the 9/11 inquiry and based much of the conclusion's findings on evidence extracted through torture. Its conclusions have been overwhelmingly contradicted by subsequently released material.

The "commission" proposed by the *Post* would be a commission comprised and directed by those who are actually responsible for the disaster they are supposedly investigating.

A serious inquiry into the policies that led to mass deaths in the COVID-19 pandemic, which is absolutely necessary, will be possible only to the extent that it is led by the international working class and conducted independently of and in opposition to the Democratic and Republican parties.

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