

US death toll from COVID-19 heading toward 1 million

Andre Damon
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Today at 5:00 p.m., the US National Cathedral’s bell will ring 900 times, to mark 900,000 American dead from COVID-19.

It has been just 55 days—less than two months—since the bells of the cathedral rang to commemorate 800,000 deaths.

And, at the present daily death rate of 2,700, it will take just 37 more days for the United States to register a million dead.

This milestone, a source of pain to millions who have lost their friends and loved ones, was met with indifference in the media.

When the United States reached 100,000 deaths from COVID-19 in May 2020, the *New York Times* devoted its entire front page to a list of the dead. But with the figure nine times that amount, the *Times* published only a tiny blurb at the bottom of its front page, entitled “900,000 Dead, but Many Americans Move On.”

What unspeakable callousness. What does it mean to “move on”? This is a phrase that can be used when describing a decision to change jobs. The dead cannot “move on.” And for the survivors who must cope with the death of a family member or friend, they live with the experience of the loss for the rest of their lives, and all the more so when the death was sudden and unexpected, with little or no time to prepare and say one’s goodbyes. And to add to the tragedy of the survivors’ enduring grief, countless thousands died alone, in ICUs, without being comforted by their loved ones.

When the *Times* speaks of “moving on,” it is not grief-stricken individuals that it is referring to. The editors of the *Times* are describing the capitalist class for which it speaks.

What “moving on” means for the government’s policy makers, the financial-corporate elite and their

media apologists, is that they can act as if the pandemic is over. Federal and state governments are ending restrictions on the spread of the disease. It will not be long before the death toll passes a million.

As death is being normalized, reporting is being slashed in a massive coverup. States, one after another, are reducing the frequency of case and death reporting, shutting down their COVID-19 dashboards, and eliminating contact tracing programs. Earlier this month, the US Department of Health and Human Services ended its daily hospital death reporting metrics as part of an international effort to end case and death reporting.

The growing efforts to cover up the pandemic and “move on” coincide with the increasingly horrific reality confronting American society.

Each weekday last week, more than 3,000 people died from COVID-19 in America, according to BNO News. A staggering 18,578 people lost their lives in the past week alone.

More than 60,000 Americans died in January. It was the deadliest month since February 2021, when the percentage of the population fully vaccinated stood in the single digits. If the present rate of death continues, the month of February will be even worse than January, making it the third worst in the history of the pandemic.

Since the start of the pandemic, one in every 366 Americans has lost their life to COVID-19, including one in every 31 Americans over the age of 85. In the first year of the pandemic, 2020, 351,000 Americans died. Another 475,000 died in 2021. So far, more than 75,000 have died this year. If January’s death rate continues through 2022, the scale of death in the third year of the pandemic will be the highest yet, at 720,000.

It is almost impossible to communicate the scale of

death that has already occurred. The US COVID-19 death toll is between four and six times greater than the number of people killed in the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is roughly equivalent to the entire population of the state of Delaware, and greater than the populations of the cities of Detroit, Washington D.C., Las Vegas, or Seattle.

The number of deaths from COVID-19 is greater, by a significant amount, than the combat death toll of every war the United States has ever fought.

But even the official figures are a massive underestimation of the loss of life caused by the pandemic, with the *Economist* estimating that the real number of excess deaths in America stands at 1.2 million.

Among the dead are 1,244 children and an average of seven children are now dying each day, according to figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The number of dead, however, fails to capture the massive impact of the pandemic on American society. Dr. Charles Nelson, co-author of a study published last October on “COVID orphans,” told *Newsweek* last week that the number of children who lost a parent or primary caregiver to COVID-19 has now surpassed 200,000. The level of trauma that has been inflicted on an entire generation is incalculable.

The study noted, “Children’s lives are permanently changed by the loss of a mother, father, or grandparent who provided their homes, basic needs, and care. Loss of a parent is among the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) linked to mental health problems.”

“All of us – especially our children – will feel the serious immediate and long-term impact of this problem for generations to come,” the study concluded.

Alongside the growing death toll, millions of Americans now suffer from Long COVID, which includes an array of debilitating symptoms that can affect nearly every part of the body, including the brain, heart, lungs, and other vital organs.

While the media and political establishment seek to cover up the growing death toll and refuse to mount any serious response to stop the pandemic, they are braying for war with Russia and China. Having killed over 900,000 Americans, they are engaged in reckless provocations that threaten to escalate into a nuclear conflict that could destroy civilization.

New York Sunday, *Times* the proclaimed in its lead article, and NBC Nightly news in its lead segment, that 50,000 civilians would die in a Russian invasion of Ukraine, ignoring the fact that more than that number of Americans had died from a preventable disease the month before.

The ruling class has no intention of ending the pandemic. The 10 wealthiest men in the world have doubled their net worth over the past two years. The S&P 500 has surged more than 40 percent, and every form of financial and real property has soared in value.

The international working class is the social force that can and must stop the pandemic. On a world scale, workers are entering into struggle ever more consciously with this aim. Across the US and Europe, educators and students have conducted dozens of strikes and walkouts to demand a switch to remote learning. In Germany, over 100,000 students, parents and workers have signed a petition opposing the government’s reckless school reopening policies.

This growing movement of the working class must be armed with both a scientific and political understanding of the pandemic. The needless deaths of more than 900,000 Americans amount to a massive social crime that must be investigated and meticulously documented. Last November, the *World Socialist Web Site* initiated the Global Workers’ Inquest into the COVID-19 Pandemic to carry out this investigation and uncover the truth of who bears responsibility for the pandemic.

The pandemic has revealed before masses of people the true character of American capitalism: a social order devoted to the selfish enrichment of the financial oligarchy, equally indifferent to the fate of the working class in the United States and the whole world.

It is a cruel lesson, but one that must be taken to heart. Capitalism is fundamentally incompatible with the needs of modern society. The fight to end the pandemic is inseparable from the struggle to abolish this social order and replace it with socialism.



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