

The hypocrisy of Anthony Fauci's graduation remarks at the University of Michigan

International Youth and Students for Social Equality at University of Michigan

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The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan hosted a mass gathering on May 7 that served as a propaganda event in the campaign of the Democratic Party to declare the COVID-19 pandemic to be over. Dubbed the "Comeback Commencement Ceremony," the event was held for those students who graduated in 2020 and 2021, when social distancing measures prevented large commencement ceremonies.

As indicated by the title, the theme of the event, held at Michigan Stadium, was the lie that society had emerged from the pandemic and that measures to fight the spread of COVID-19, such as lockdowns and masks, were things of the past.

Provost Susan M. Collins apologized to the graduates for not being able to celebrate their graduation at a mass event during the two prior years. Interim President Mary Sue Coleman lamented the "disruption" in education as an "unusual experience for all of us."

No mention was made of the over 1 million confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the United States to date, or the estimated 20 million excess deaths worldwide since the outbreak of the global pandemic.

Nor was there any mention of the Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) strike in the autumn of 2020, when graduate student instructors walked out to demand the right to remote learning, improved COVID-19 tracing measures, economic support, and the demilitarization of the campus. This "disruption" was brought to an end after the administration sought a court injunction and Michigan Federation of Teachers President David Hecker intervened in the negotiations. The union sold out the strike and the student instructors failed to win the basic demand to work remotely. In the fall of 2021, the university ended its infection tracking system.

Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), who was a member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force under Trump and is currently the chief medical adviser to President Biden, delivered the main address to the graduates. Its

purpose was twofold: to whitewash the role of the Democratic Party in the disastrous response to the pandemic and to promote the deadly lie that the pandemic is over.

Expressing either an astonishing lack of self awareness or unbridled hypocrisy, or a combination of both, Fauci urged the graduates to combat the "cacophony of falsehoods and lies," without specifying the falsehoods and lies to which he was alluding. There are examples aplenty he could have cited, one of which is the infamous declaration by Biden on July 4, 2021 that the United States was "declaring our independence from a deadly virus."

The previous month he said, "Take your mask off. You've earned the right."

These completely reckless, unscientific and treacherous statements were made to justify the lifting of mitigation measures and, above all, the forcing of students and educators back into unsafe classrooms so that parents could be driven back into virus-infected factories and workplaces.

In the 10 months since Biden declared "independence" from the virus, 400,504 more Americans have died from the disease, according to the Worldometer COVID tracker.

"Do not shrug your shoulders and accept the normalization of untruths," said Fauci.

In truth, his appearance at the ceremony signified his acceptance of the normalization of the distortion of science.

Anthony Fauci came into conflict with Trump's open promotion of the anti-scientific "herd immunity" program of mass infection. Without naming the former president and would-be dictator, Fauci urged the graduates to give "leadership ... through example," in contrast to "certain elected officials."

As he spoke, there were intermittent sounds of blaring horns from a small group of "Trump train" protesters who circled the stadium before and during the ceremony.

Fauci's indirect allusion to Trump and the Republicans was meant to contrast the current administration to its predecessor. But the event itself served to highlight the basic continuity between the two.

Biden and the Democrats have embraced the fiction that

COVID has become “endemic,” along with the murderous corollary that the population must “live with the virus.”

The superficial differences in style and presentation do not alter the fact that in both cases genuine science, public health and human life are subordinated to the dictates of the corporate oligarchy, which vetoes the measures—such as mask mandates and the temporary closure of schools and non-essential workplaces—that could contain and ultimately eliminate the virus and save countless lives.

Or, to put it more bluntly, the struggle against the pandemic is inseparable from the struggle against the capitalist profit system.

What did Fauci mean by “leadership through example”? Was he offering his own handling of the White House Correspondents Association dinner one week prior to his speech in Ann Arbor as an example?

The 81-year-old Fauci declined to attend the superspreader event, citing “[his] individual assessment of personal risk,” but making no additional comments on the safety of the event for its 2,500 participants, including the 79-year-old president. Dozens of participants at the dinner have since tested positive for COVID-19, according to press reports.

That the pandemic is over is a foregone conclusion in the corporate media, where COVID-19 and the meager mitigation measures taken by governments are placed in the past tense. Noting the presence outside Michigan Stadium of a small number of right-wing protesters, the Bridge Michigan website “looked back” on the pandemic:

Fauci’s presence was yet another reminder of the conflicting experiences and sentiments among Michigan residents during the pandemic. While most embraced masks and vaccines, others viewed the mandates and emergency orders as an effort by government officials—with Fauci and Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer as chief villains—to weaken personal freedoms.

“It was a full-out party atmosphere,” the *Detroit Free Press* effused, “with graduates running up to each other all over the field, offering huge hugs and many exclaiming loudly: ‘You made it! I didn’t know if you were coming.’”

The *Free Press* went on to quote a speech by Anne Curzan, dean of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. “Two years later and how beautiful to be here with you,” she gushed.

Recalling the online graduation day in 2020, when the campus was empty, Curzan told the audience, “It was bone

sad. ... We were all discombobulated.”

With over a million Americans unnecessarily dead from COVID-19 and as many as 15-20 million dead worldwide, Curzan’s remarks indicate both the irresponsible insularity of the commencement and the disorientation of the upper-middle class layers who were behind it.

The event itself will most certainly cause many COVID-19 infections. More than 4,000 graduates were in attendance, the overwhelming majority without masks. Before the ceremony, these graduates were corralled into a chaotic queue to enter the stadium. One graduate reported a crowd crush, with excited graduates pushing to get to the front of the line. There were no serious measures to ensure social distancing.

Several more thousand people entered Michigan stadium to watch the ceremony, bringing together unmasked individuals of all ages.

The UM “Comeback” commencement and other mass events taking place across the country contrast starkly with the realities of the pandemic. Ann Arbor is situated in Washtenaw County, where the rolling 7-day average of COVID-19 cases is currently 215.6, according to the Mayo Clinic tracker. In Michigan, as elsewhere in the country, cases have been increasing sharply since late March, attributable to the introduction of the Omicron B variants into a population that has been encouraged to take off their masks and resume life as normal.

As the WSWS reported Monday, the White House’s own estimates project that over the coming fall and winter, the US will see another 100 million infections from the Omicron variants. This staggering number of cases can be expected to result in an additional 500,000 deaths. This information, first reported in the *Washington Post* on Friday, was certainly known to Fauci as he stood on the stage looking out over a sea of faces at Michigan Stadium and validated the ongoing “normalization of untruths.”



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