

Anthony Fauci, the Wuhan Lab Lie, and the bipartisan war on public health

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Monday's hearing of the Republican-led House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, featuring testimony from Dr. Anthony Fauci, marked a new low in the bipartisan war on science and public health by the entire American political establishment.

Exemplifying their fascistic politics, the Republicans brazenly promoted the Wuhan Lab conspiracy theory, claiming that Fauci worked with the Chinese government to engineer the COVID-19 pandemic and then orchestrated a cover-up of his own complicity in the deaths of over 1 million Americans. This McCarthyite show trial, replete with wild accusations and denunciations, was aimed at intimidating scientists and all those who advocate for public health measures against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the threat of future pandemics.

In a blatant provocation, two well-known fascists implicated in Donald Trump's January 6, 2021 coup attempt were seated directly behind Fauci so as to be visible on screen while he testified. These were Brandon Fellows, who was recently sentenced to three years in jail for participating in the coup, and Ivan Raiklin, a coup plotter and associate of Trump, who once stated, "I have a deep state target list, and I'm coming for all of them."

In the course of his testimony, Fauci noted that he and his family have been the target of credible death threats. Among those who incited such threats were Steve Bannon, who in November 2020 called for Fauci's beheading. Bannon was also the original purveyor of the Wuhan Lab Lie, a xenophobic conspiracy theory which blamed the Chinese government for the pandemic in order to ideologically prepare the grounds for war.

Monday's hearing took place just over one year after the Biden administration scrapped the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) declaration—the final nail in the coffin of any official response to the pandemic—and against the backdrop of a developing new wave of mass infection in the US, driven by the latest immune-evasive KP.2 and KP.3 variants. According to models based on wastewater data, somewhere from 190,000-440,000 Americans are currently being infected with COVID-19 each day, leading to tens of thousands of daily new Long COVID cases.

At the same time, H5N1 "bird flu" is spreading among dozens of species globally and threatens to spill over into the human population, potentially causing a pandemic whose societal impacts would dwarf those of COVID-19. Bird flu has historically had a

case fatality rate above 50 percent in humans.

None of this contemporary reality was raised at the hearing, as both capitalist political parties have united to enforce the "forever COVID" policy of perpetual mass infection, debilitation and death. Rather, the goal of the subcommittee, accepted by the Democrats, is to rewrite the history of the pandemic in order to undermine the ability of public health to prevent future pandemics.

The bulk of Monday's hearing was devoted to questioning Fauci about the validity of every limited public health measure implemented to slow the spread of COVID-19, including mask and vaccine mandates, social distancing guidelines, temporary school and workplace closures, and more. In each case, the "economic costs" of these measures were deemed unbearable, while their life-saving effects were completely denied, despite ample scientific studies proving the contrary.

Much of the media coverage about the hearing has focused on Fauci's acknowledgement that the six-foot social distancing guidelines put in place at the start of the pandemic in schools and workplaces were "an empiric decision that wasn't based on data."

This was perhaps the only valid criticism of pandemic policy in the entire hearing, though as Fauci himself noted this policy fell under the purview of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which he did not oversee.

In fact, the six-foot rule was the product of antiquated conceptions about droplet transmission of respiratory pathogens and a deliberate cover-up of the science of airborne transmission at the highest levels. At the very beginning of the pandemic, in April 2020, the world's leading aerosol physicists and other scientists explained clearly to the World Health Organization (WHO) that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is airborne and spreads through aerosols which accumulate in poorly-ventilated indoor spaces.

Despite ample and continuous warnings by these scientists, the WHO and other public health agencies refused to educate the global population on the science of airborne transmission or demand that corporations renovate infrastructure to provide clean indoor air in all buildings. This was among the greatest real crimes of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the Republicans' unhinged statements and provocations, the House Democrats meekly defended Fauci, whom they view as a valuable political asset. They did nothing to oppose the Republicans' denigration of public health measures and provided no left-wing critique of Fauci's genuine social crimes

committed during the pandemic. This is because the Democrats are in fundamental agreement with the Republicans that private profit must take precedence over public health.

Throughout the pandemic, Fauci has played a central political role in legitimizing every major policy decision, first under Trump but in particular under Biden, justifying the latter's complete scrapping of all official responses to the pandemic. In January 2022, amid the second-largest wave of mass death fueled by the Omicron variant, Fauci blithely stated, "It is an open question as to whether or not Omicron is going to be the live virus vaccination that everyone is hoping for."

Fauci retired from government at the end of 2022, amid the third winter of the pandemic. When Biden ended the COVID-19 PHE five months later in May 2023, Fauci issued no criticism whatsoever. In an August 2023 interview with the BBC, Fauci stated that older people, the ill and disabled "will fall by the wayside" from COVID-19, the latest in a string of eugenicist statements from leading pandemic officials.

Fauci has always been a political persona, whose purpose has been to provide a veneer of legitimacy to the utterly criminal pandemic response of American capitalism.

Perhaps the most vile moment during Monday's hearing was when Fauci stated his agreement with last month's decision by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to suspend funding to, and debar EcoHealth Alliance, a non-governmental organization which works to prevent future pandemics.

EcoHealth Alliance and its leader, Dr. Peter Daszak, have been the central target of the Wuhan Lab conspiracy theory, which asserts that the group engineered SARS-CoV-2 with Chinese scientists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

There is not a shred of evidence to substantiate any of the wild claims made about EcoHealth Alliance or Daszak, and all major papers published in credible scientific journals indicate that SARS-CoV-2 began spreading among humans through a spillover event at a wet market in Wuhan, China.

Last month, Daszak was brought before the same subcommittee and subjected to savage bipartisan vilification and scapegoating, prompting the HHS decision to cut off funding for EcoHealth Alliance. In voicing his support for this retrograde action, Fauci has thrown to the wolves his former colleague Daszak and dozens of principled and courageous scientists still working at EcoHealth Alliance.

The bipartisan attacks on Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance are particularly ominous under conditions in which the H5N1 "bird flu" has been spreading widely among dairy cattle across the US over the past three months. Last week, a farm worker in Michigan tested positive for bird flu with respiratory symptoms, an indication that the virus is evolving and could develop the capacity for human-to-human airborne transmission.

More so than ever before, organizations like EcoHealth Alliance must be fully funded in order to closely monitor and respond to the threat of emerging infectious diseases, which will only accelerate as climate change deepens in the years ahead.

In the 2024 US elections, the only presidential candidate who has even commented on the Fauci hearing, let alone advanced a left-wing opposition to the bipartisan assault on science and public

health, is Socialist Equality Party (US) presidential candidate Joseph Kishore. In a statement posted to Twitter/X, Kishore noted:

The fight for a society that prioritizes lives over profit is the fight for socialism. Capitalism is based on the subordination of everything to private profit, to the wealth and privileges of the capitalist oligarchy. And as they have normalized mass death during the pandemic, the ruling elites are now normalizing genocide in Gaza and nuclear war against Russia.

The Socialist Equality Party fights for socialized medicine, as part of the socialist reorganization of economic life in the US and throughout the world. Health care is a social right that must be available to everyone free of charge. The giant medical corporations must be placed under democratic control. The parasitic insurance industry—which exists solely to deny people access to health care—must be abolished and replaced with universal health care...

And the SEP fights for a policy of global elimination—of Covid-19 and other viruses. The public health measures necessary to eliminate and eradicate deadly pathogens are well known. What prevents their implementation is the capitalist system and the interests of the ruling oligarchy.

The same capitalist ruling elites that have overseen the needless deaths of over 27 million people worldwide during the pandemic have now plunged humanity into a Third World War. Instead of addressing COVID-19 and preventing future pandemics, all of society's resources are squandered on war and on the personal enrichment of a tiny financial oligarchy. This descent into barbarism can only be stopped through the socialist overturn of capitalist society, led by the international working class.



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