

In appeal to far right, Cornel West adopts Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s anti-vaccine platform

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27 August 2024

On August 25, independent presidential candidate Cornel West released a short video statement affirming his support for Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s anti-vaccine and pandemic denialist policies.

In the video posted on his X account, West called for a “truth commission” to investigate “not just the vaccine but the role of the pharmaceutical companies in shaping public policy.”

West added that his “truth commission” would also investigate alleged “censorship” of “various voices” that “would help us understand what’s really going on when it comes to healthcare policy vis-à-vis vaccines.”

Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-vaccine zealot and Trump supporter Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has claimed that social media companies and the various intelligence agencies worked in conjunction with both the Trump and Biden administrations to unfairly “censor” him and his anti-vaccine propaganda.

In reality, the anti-vaccine and profit-driven policies championed by Kennedy Jr. have been promoted in major newspapers, television shows and have, in fact, been adopted by virtually the entire ruling class.

There is widespread censorship on the internet, and the billionaire-owned social media platforms. However, this censorship is not directed against the far-right and millionaires like Kennedy, but against left-wing workers and students voicing opposition to imperialist war, police violence, and capitalism.

At the same time that socialist and Zero-COVID advocates have been banished from major programs, newspapers and censored on social media, RFK Jr. has been interviewed by Elon Musk on X and welcomed on popular television programs, podcasts, and even in

Congress to promote his right-wing politics that increasingly overlap with the fascistic “Make America Great Again” agenda of aspiring dictator Donald Trump.

Responding positively to West’s embrace of his right-wing talking points, RFK Jr. tweeted to West on August 25, “So grateful to you Cornell (sic), for commitment to ending the corruption.”

The following day, Kennedy retweeted West’s video and commented that he was “So happy to see a prominent leftist say this.”

Employing the identity politics organic to the Democratic Party Kennedy and West both supported in the very recent past, Kennedy said, “Medical mandates and lockdowns did the most harm to ... [t]he working class, small business owners, and especially Black people were devastated—41% of Black businesses closed, never to reopen.”

Seeking to erase the class divide and encourage a “red-brown” alliance between workers and fascists, Kennedy added, “Traditionally, it is the left that resists corporate profiteering and authoritarian policies, but during the Covid era, such resistance was branded ‘right-wing.’ Entrenched powers try to split us into left and right in order to fragment our resistance.”

Kennedy concluded, “It worked for a while, but now we are coming together again. Kudos to Cornel West for speaking out. That takes courage. If you’re not careful, soon they’ll be calling you a right-wing anti-vaxxer too!”

In response, West retweeted Kennedy and said, “Thank you my dear brother @RobertKennedyJr—we must fight against all forms of corruption, greed, hatred and genocide! God bless you and your precious

family!”

That same day, August 26, Roger Stone, a high-level Trump operative who played a leading role in organizing Proud Boy, Oath Keeper and other fascist militia elements that stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021, also replied positively to West’s tweet: “Something significant is happening in American politics when I wholeheartedly agree with @CornelWest.”

This is not the first time West has appealed to far-right conspiracy theorists, many of whom have promoted positions advanced by Steve Bannon and other fascists eager to blame the massive loss of life and continued infection from COVID-19 on China in furtherance of US imperialist ambitions, in order to deflect from the criminal profit-driven “let it rip” pandemic policies championed under Trump and fully implemented by the Biden-Harris administration.

In an interview of West on “The Jimmy Dore Show,” Dore pointed to a statement titled “We Say No to Mandates” issued by the National Black Caucus of the Green Party, which claimed that “lockdowns, mandates and passports” were “the major issue of the day.”

Asked if he agreed with the platform, West replied, “the kind of concerns that you and RFK Jr. and others have, certainly are well grounded in that sense.” West added, “I resonate with the spirit of what my Green Black brothers and sisters are saying,” and “If I had another chance, I would be much more leaning with the Black caucus.”

After West left the Green Party to launch an independent campaign, Jill Stein has continued to placate far-right anti-vaccine and pro-pandemic elements. At the “Freedom Fest 2024” debate last month in Las Vegas, Nevada, Stein lent her support to the “Wuhan Lab Lie” and agreed with the libertarians and far-right conservatives that further investigation into the origins of COVID-19, more than five years after it first emerged, is warranted.

“I would especially like to see a special commission to investigate the potential lab leak as the origin of COVID,” said Stein. She added that this commission “does not require going over to Wuhan, although that could be part of it. But, there are records right here that could go a long way to clarifying exactly how did this virus originate, and it’s important to know, not only

how that happened, but also to know what’s coming, if the US is sponsoring this change-of-function research, this is potentially extremely dangerous going forward.”

After Stein spoke, Randall Terry, a deranged anti-abortion fanatic, called for “executing people publicly” as a form of punishment “on the guilty parties of this COVID lockdown and the fake vaccines-hiding people dying telling people they can’t have ivermectin.”

Terry added that he got a strike on his YouTube show for promoting ivermectin. Provided an opportunity to respond, Stein sympathized with Randall: “You were talking about how it’s not ok you almost lost your TV show because you couldn’t talk about COVID and this kind of a general theme right now, we can’t talk about things and you are getting shut down for all kinds of stuff.”

In the 2024 presidential elections, the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) candidates, Joseph Kishore and Jerry White, are the only candidates who are continuing to treat the pandemic seriously. For over four years, in opposition to the “herd immunity” policies promoted by the ruling class and disoriented petty-bourgeois elements, the SEP has advanced a socialist scientific program aimed at protecting the health of all workers and their families by eliminating the virus through a globally-coordinated public health program, paid for by expropriating the financial oligarchy.

In a statement posted on X yesterday, after Kishore spoke in defense of West’s democratic right to appear on the Michigan ballot, a decisive intervention that influenced the Board’s 3-1 decision, Kishore wrote:

To emphasize, the SEP’s defense of democratic rights has nothing to do with political support for West, who is now praising his “dear brother,” anti-vaccine COVID-denier RFK Jr. (who has endorsed Trump). The SEP masks indoors because COVID isn’t over.



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