

The Courage to Dissent...From the Left

As the COVID-19 pandemic moves into endemic mode throughout the world, we need serious introspection upon and analysis of the public health response.

The unprecedented public health response to the pandemic; lockdowns, the censorship by Big Tech of dissenting medical voices and treatment options along with conflicting views on masking, vaccine, school closures, and social-distancing policies have all contributed to deep and potentially irrevocable distrust of public health and government.

Many of the most vocal [medical](#), epidemiological, and [legal skeptics](#) of these policies have come from the American political left. Sadly, their criticisms are largely viewed as betrayals by the left. Similar feelings of political homelessness are also rife on social media, with accounts like [Sarah Beth Burwick](#), and [Angry Brooklyn Mom](#), both disaffected former Democrats.

Anger over school closures in particular spurred many traditionally Democratic moms to disavow the Democrats and express their political nomad status, often using the #HowTheLeftLostMe hashtag.

[Dr. Eileen Natuzzi](#), a physician and public health epidemiologist from California, worked in her local county department of public health when the pandemic first hit. She proposed categorizing symptoms in order to see how viral virulence or the population behavior was changing. That suggestion was nixed.

She later expressed concern about her county's heavy-handed Public Health Officer Order letters that called for citizens to isolate, and literally terrified them into thinking police

would be coming to their doors to arrest them. She talked about [the discriminatory nature of vaccine mandates](#) and the [non-scientific nature of California's public health policies](#) and was once again ignored.

"The straw that broke the camel's back for me was when I had finished working up a nursing home outbreak. Every resident was screened including the residents dying on hospice. Two of the hospice patients tested positive, and when they died a day or two later of their advanced Alzheimer's, I was sent their info to sign off on as a COVID death. I told my supervisor I would not classify them as COVID deaths and wrote a long note to that effect in their charts. Despite my efforts, the cases were counted as deaths anyway. I resigned a month later," she says.

Dr. Natuzzi also questioned the safety of the vaccine early on in the rollout campaign.

"I did an analysis of temporal time to death following vaccination in people over 65. It was pretty amazing how many died within 48 hours of receiving the vaccine (48%). While not a causative link, the temporal association should have raised questions," she adds. When Natuzzi raised the issue with her supervisor, she was told she was undermining the vaccine campaign.

As a result, Natuzzi, a life-long Democrat says, "I quit working for the government on our public health effort and will never do so again."

In March 2020, [Dr. David Bell](#), a Texas-based Australian-trained public health physician started writing letters to media and academic journals concerned with how "basic precepts of public health like cost vs benefit, poverty reducing life expectancy, "and obvious stuff [like reducing cancer screening](#) resulting in increased cancer death were being ignored." It was clear to him that COVID

overwhelmingly [affected older people](#) (“of whom sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, has relatively few), but nobody would publish him. He realized that “there was a large reporting bias in favor of catastrophe over reason.” Bell says that many of his peers agree that the public health responses of their various organizations were not based in good practice but they are resigned to following their organization’s instructions.

“Almost none will state anything publicly unless it is in line with their organizations’/funders’ perceived opinions. So people who still claim to be ‘left’ are pushing pharmaceutical-based vertical approaches to a low-burden problem over community-based approaches. Essentially, pushing colonialist approaches over self-determination. The numbers (e.g. [over a quarter million dead children from lockdowns in 2020 in South Asia](#) (Unicef) become abstract, and people find ways to ignore them and grasp terms like “vaccine equity” that fit their stated political positions,” says Bell.

Bell, who considered himself ‘more solidly anti-Trump than anyone I ever knew’ was nonetheless shocked at what he sees as the “low value given to truth.”

“I am not interested in personalities but values. So I have not changed, the problem I have with the Covid response is the abandonment of truth, and what flows from that...I consider that I have been relatively abandoned by previously left-leaning colleagues who have gone with the flow of authoritarianism and corporatism that the Covid response reflects.”

“Fascism,” he says, “has previously come from the left (contrary to popular belief) and I think the last two years have shown more clearly why. I have come to see restrictions of central authority, and maintenance of individual rights to defend and control [one’s] own property – as an insurance policy against despotism – which allows the rights of the masses to be overridden completely,” he adds.

“Left and right are redundant now, it’s something much deeper. We have to understand that to fix it, obviously.”

According to Bell, restoring trust will require transparency throughout, and pushing back the “massive overreach” of large private corporations that are shaping society for profit. Dr. Natuzzi suggests a restructuring of public health in America to emphasize education and information, “not control” and ensuring that no one private entity (“think Gates and WHO”) should be able to dominate it both financially or through dictum.

[Alex Washburne](#), a Montana-based mathematical biologist and statistician who has published in ecology, evolution, epidemiology, and finance, tried to sound the alarm bell on the massive collateral damage of lockdowns very early on. His background in finance and economics led him to believe that “the COVID response was greatly imbalanced and risked causing harm in the service of public health.”

Politically independent, but greatly concerned about conservation, climate change, and social liberties, he says it was the COVID response that made him realize the limits of left-liberalism. Nobody would publish him. He became a scientific outcast and learned a number of life lessons from the treatment he received from the scientific community and what he saw as public health policy disasters.

“Covid showed me ways in which socioscientific inefficiencies...can lead to an insular expert class that mismanages critical risks our society faces and, without checks and balances, they can weaponize their myopic expertise (e.g. epidemiology) to mislead society and cause harm...”

As a result of the backlash he faced, Washburne eventually left academia and founded [Agora](#), a new scientific startup and incubator ‘safe space’ for scientists of different backgrounds and divergent political views to collaborate.[.](#)

[The New York Times recently questioned if public health can be saved](#). It may be too soon to say. But for now, a number of politically homeless experts from various fields are at least starting a healing process in America [by speaking up publicly and identifying the problems](#) and the scope of [the disaster](#).

Hopefully, their efforts mark the beginning of a new and desperately needed age of transparency, honesty, and civility on the public health policy in America and throughout the world.

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