

RFK Jr, anti-vaxxers, and the descent into fascist contrarianism

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What would you say if the surgeon general of a state – the chief public health officer – advocated [using leeches](#) in medical treatment, denied the effectiveness of vaccines, and ignored a measles outbreak? You would expect that official to be dismissed and prosecuted for medical negligence.

Yet in the state of Florida, U.S., Surgeon General Joseph Lapado has done the above. Measles has [spread throughout](#) the community, and he has advised schoolchildren with measles to still attend school. Quackery is steadily replacing evidence-based medicine, and the public provision of health is being eroded. Lapado's pseudoscientific approach has resulted in an [entirely preventable](#) tragedy.

Lapado is a political protege of the ultrarightist Florida governor and pseudoscience peddler Ron DeSantis. The latter has a long track record of attacking publicly provisioned health care and education services. He has agitated for [book bans](#), particularly on those books that explore the history of racism and inequality in the United States. After denying the reality of COVID-19, he has peddled [Wuhan lab leak](#) conspiracy theories regarding its origins.

When public officials are abdicating their responsibility to uphold and enforce public health measures, then those officials should be held to account. In Australia, I can rely on the tap water for drinking and washing – there is no danger that I will be infected by [cholera](#). The latter is a waterborne disease, and there is strict water filtration and testing systems in place for the water supply in Sydney. Cholera has been basically wiped out.

On that basis, can health officials declare that the battle against cholera is over, and abolish the water filtration procedures needed to maintain the drinking water's hygienic condition? Can we now stop funding the medical research, stop teaching and research into virology and pathology needed to contain and eliminate cholera? Should we now declare the time has come to '[stop living in fear](#)' of cholera, and just get back to normal?

The example above is meant to convey a basic point; water quality is one of the outcomes provided by public and community governance. A healthier population means increased participation in the economic system, less disease means a better quality of life and improved community welfare.

Defunding and abolishing the publicly funded provision of health care – and its eventual privatization – is a long-term goal of the conservative Right. Its political allies in this regard are the libertarian ultrarightist forces.

What has all this got to do with the Left? Numerous left-wing writers and activists –

the term left wing being a broad brushstroke – have moved into the rabbit hole of COVID denial MAGA ultrarightism. Glenn Greenwald, Matt Taibbi, among many others, have [descended](#) into a contrarian position from the libertarian ultraright. It is no exaggeration to call it a fascist contrarianism.

Robert F Kennedy Jr. a long term [environmental](#) lawyer and activist, has metamorphosed into a MAGA supporting far right political figure. Starting with the respectable-sounding position of vaccine hesitancy, RFK has moved decisively to the far right.

His journey is [indicative](#) of a widespread phenomenon – leftists who move right wards on an anti scientific trajectory. They remain contrarians – fascist contrarians, ultra-libertarian opponents of publicly funded services, such as health care and education.

Starting with anti-vaccine tropes, RFK Jr has gradually moved into far-right and fascistic circles, expanding the swamp of anti-lockdown zealotry. It is not wrong to ask [questions](#) about vaccines. Doctors, nurses, paramedics, medical students, anyone [studying](#) the workings of the human immune system – all these people ask about vaccines.

Am I suggesting that we shout at people who are vaccine-hesitant, pounding the table with our fists? No, of course not. When vaccination programs, as RFK Jr has done, are smeared as methods of social control or falsely accused of causing autism, then that is the first step down into the dead end of ultrarightist contrarianism.

RFK Jr, upheld as a rival Democrat candidate to U.S. President Joe Biden, is rallying disaffected Democrat voters. From anti-vaxxer positions, RFK has gone on to recycle fictitious and slanderously false allegations that the COVID-19 virus is an [ethnically targeted](#) bioweapon. Avoiding Chinese and Jewish communities, the COVID-19 virus satisfies the political agenda of Jewish elites by reducing the numbers of Anglo

Americans, RFK Jr asserted.

While subsequently backtracking from this antisemitic and preposition claim, he has done his level best to assist the MAGA Republican side. RFK Jr has enthusiastically embraced the so-called free market as a solution to ecological and health issues in the community. His seemingly progressive stance [masks](#) a deeply conservative agenda. Promoting market solutions and attacking government expenditure on health care and the environment is [music](#) to the ears of the billionaires.

Speaking of billionaires, RFK Jr recently appointed Silicon Valley lawyer the ultrawealthy Nicole Shanahan as his running mate. A devotee of libertarian fantasies in the free market, Shanahan is a believer in the necrotic futurist vision of tech industry entrepreneurs.

Jeet Heer states that RFK Jr made a direct comparison between Shanahan's business acumen and that of his entrepreneurial grandfather, Joseph P Kennedy. The latter's [corrupt](#) business dealings, ties to gangsterism, antisemitism, and [fascist sympathies](#) were ignored.

RFK Jr's opposition to the misnamed 'big pharma' - which should accurately be called corporate pharma - [does not stem](#) from his motivation to make medicine cheaper for working people but from his recycling of antivaccine misinformation. A politician who is putatively anti war, he has never actually opposed any of the imperialist wars waged by the United States.

His candidacy is a serious misdirection of outrage and is more in line with the [ouroboros](#) - the serpent that eats its own tail.

[Source](#)

