

Anti-Vax Leaders Use Anne Frank, MLK to Push Misinformation | Rolling Stone

By Kara Voght

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When thousands of protesters gathered on the National Mall on Sunday morning to protest Covid vaccine mandates, they did so, they insisted, to preserve personal freedoms. “No more mandates!” they shouted as they marched, serpentine and coiled, like the snakes on the “Don’t Tread On Me” flags hoisted above their heads. “This is not about vaccine or anti-vax,” JP Sears, a comedian known for spreading conspiracy theories through sarcastic comedy, told the crowd. It was, he asserted, as Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.”

But it was, very much, about vaccines. Children’s Health Defense Fund, the political wing of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.’s anti-vax organization, hosted the event. Kennedy, who has been vocally spreading false claims about vaccine safety for decades, addressed the crowd to offer unsubstantiated warnings of the Covid-19 vaccines’ dangers. So did several doctors, wearing their physician whites, who also touted ivermectin to prevent Covid (it won’t) and rehashed long-debunked studies suggesting vaccines cause autism (it doesn’t). Just days after the CDC released its first study showing vaccine boosters help protect patients against hospitalization from Omicron, Dr. Robert Malone, a virologist and well-known vaccine skeptic, falsely told the crowd: “The science is settled: they’re not working.”

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