

Communist British scientist dubbed 'Stalin's nanny' given top job at World Health Organization

Connor Boyd

A British communist scientist who wanted face masks to be worn forever has been handed an influential role at the [World Health Organization](#).

Professor Susan Michie — a longstanding member of the Communist Party of Britain and Labour donor — was yesterday made chair of the WHO's behavioural advisory group.

She will advise the organisation on how to boost compliance with vaccine rollouts and other interventions that help shape national health policy.

Her appointment raised eyebrows on social media, given Professor Michie's hardline views during the Covid pandemic.

She famously called for masks and social distancing to remain 'forever' in an interview with Channel 5 last year and regularly spouted alarmist predictions on BBC News, which sparked questions about the broadcaster's objectivity.

There were concerns about her conflict of interests when it emerged she was simultaneously a member on the Government's SAGE committee and a leading figure in an independent pressure group that called for Chinese-style lockdowns.

Ms Michie was said to have been nicknamed 'Stalin's nanny' by her contemporaries at Oxford University because of her radical views.

-
-
-
-
- Copy link to paste in your message
-

Professor Susan Michie — a longstanding Communist Party member and Labour donour — has been appointed chair of the WHO's behavioural advisory group

-
-
-
-
- Copy link to paste in your message
-

The appointment was announced on Twitter on Monday by University College London's psychology department, where she is a professor. The news was met with a mixture of fury and astonishment

SAGE scientist says Covid measures should stay forever



0:00 / 0:00

Loaded: 0%

Progress: 0%

0:00

LIVE

Michie's appointment to the WHO was announced on Twitter by University College London, where she is a professor in health psychology.

The news was met with a mixture of fury and astonishment.

One Twitter user said: 'I thought the WHO was an appalling discredited organisation before this announcement. It is now even worse if that was possible!'

Another wrote: 'Oh look, you just happened to choose a 40-year member of the British Communist Party and advisor to UK SAGE's nudge unit on Covid.'

WHO IS SUSAN MICHIE?

Susan Michie has been a member of the Communist Party of Britain for almost 50 years.

It was at Oxford University, where she obtained a BA Honours in experimental psychology in 1976, where she forged a reputation as a fervent Communist.

A man who claimed to have known Michie at the time told the Spectator in 2019: 'Michie was famous when I was at university for being a no-holds-barred Soviet sympathiser known as "Stalin's

nanny”.'

In March 2018, she spoke at a public meeting saying that communists should be 'working full tilt' for the election of Jeremy Corbyn as prime minister.

She made a £14,000 donation to Labour under Corbyn's leadership.

In 2009, Michie became a member of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and convened its subgroup, the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Behaviour group.

In 2020, she became a participant in the COVID-19 SAGE's Scientific Pandemic Insights group on Behaviour (SPI-B).

The subcommittee was responsible for feeding advice to Government about how to boost compliance with Covid rules and how people would react to certain measures.

She also sits on the Independent SAGE committee, a hard-left pressure group that used to endorse the Zero Covid strategy that has left China trapped in an endless cycle of lockdowns.

A third user said: 'Surely this is satire? Please let this be satire. Please please pretty please.'

Her new brief will be to advise the WHO 'on how to adopt behavioural insights and science perspectives' to support its health policies.

It is unclear whether her new role will be paid or voluntary.

The Technical Advisory Groups on Behavioural Insights and Sciences for Health was set up in February 2020 at the start of the pandemic.

So far it has produced two reports — looking at ways behaviour affects uptake of Covid vaccines and compliance with pandemic restrictions.

The appointment will cause further anger among critics who have accused the WHO of being too 'China-centric'.

The global health agency initially heaped praise on China's communist party for its response to the Covid outbreak, despite stripping away the freedoms of its citizens.

At the same time it regularly criticised governments in the UK and US — two of its biggest donors — for their responses to the pandemic.

Former US President Donald Trump retaliated by cutting off \$400million (£324m) of annual funding in 2020 — a move that was reversed a year later by the incumbent President Joe Biden.

The UK donated about £114million to the WHO in 2020-2021.

Professor Michie made headlines last year after pushing for a 'maximum suppression' Covid strategy.

Speaking about the need for face masks and social distancing, she told Channel 5 on June 5, 2021: 'We'll need to keep these going in the long term.'

'And that will probably be good not only for Covid but to reduce other diseases at a time when the NHS is...'

She was cut off by presenter Claudia-Liza Armah, who asked her: 'When you say the long term, what do you mean by that — how long?'

Professor Michie replied: 'I think forever, to some extent.'

Later in the programme she likened the social restrictions to wearing seat belts and said masks should become an every essential.

She said: 'I think there's lots of different behaviours we've changed in our lives. We now routinely wear seat belts, we didn't use to.'

'We now routinely pick up dog poo in the park, we didn't use to.'

'When people see that there is a threat and there is something they can do to reduce that... themselves, their loved ones and their communities, what we see now over this last year is people do that.'

'And I think we can just begin to adopt routines. When we go out of the house we check we've got our phone, we've got our keys, we've got tissues, we've got a face mask in case we need to use it.'

'It's not going to be a huge big deal the kind of changes we're talking about and I think we also need to think about the way we plan our cities, our transport our lifestyles.'

'Instead of going back to huge long commutes, have more local working hubs where people don't have to travel so much — good not only for the health, but the environment.'

Months later she caused an uproar when she appeared on BBC News on November 27, criticising the Government for not making masks mandatory in all public buildings or reintroducing social distancing.

Scientists at the time accused the BBC of lacking objectivity on the issue and questioned why a behavioural scientist was interviewed about microbiology.

She is a member of the Independent SAGE pressure group that called for a Christmas lockdown.