

# Covid-19 infections soar 500 percent: a social crime of the Dutch ruling class

Parwini Zora  
20 July 2021

Coronavirus infections in the Netherlands skyrocketed by more than 500 percent in early July, an unprecedented contagion rate for a European country. The reproduction rate (R0) remains at an all time high in the Netherlands at 2.91—indicating that each person infected goes on to infect nearly three people on average.

The surge in infections is the direct result of the scrapping of almost all remaining social distancing restrictions, driven by the bourgeoisie's campaign to fully reopen the economy after June 26. Now, an average of more than 11,000 recorded daily cases are announced by the Dutch Public Health Institute (RIVM), compared to approximately 500 daily infections in mid-June.

In line with an undeclared official policy of spreading the virus, the Dutch ruling class utilized the falling case numbers in June and the vaccination program in recent months as an excuse to dispense with social distancing measures. This included eliminating even the minimal mandated use of face masks in public spaces.

Only 43 percent of the Dutch population is vaccinated, though roughly two-thirds has had at least one of the two shots. However, around three-quarters of new cases in the Netherlands are occurring among young people, particularly among those who have not completed the two vaccination shots. More than half of infections involve the highly contagious Delta variant, which is now present in at least 104 countries.

As many as 1,000 COVID-19 infections were linked to the Verknijpt outdoor festival in Utrecht alone, a two-day festival that was attended by 20,000 and which required a “test for entry.” This only underscores yet again that official plans to prevent super-spreader events at mass gatherings are ineffective.

Eighteen months into the pandemic, the ugly reality

of Dutch society, with its colossal levels of social inequality, pervasive poverty and ruling class criminality, has been exposed. The Netherlands was classified as having the worst risk level for COVID-19 infections by the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. Faced with mounting social indignation, the Dutch caretaker government can no longer entirely conceal their complacency and indifference.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte felt compelled to officially “apologize” for the premature relaxation of social distancing, calling it “an error of judgment.”

Acting Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said at the same press conference that the late June loosening of restrictions combined with a lack of social distancing and the Delta variant “had had, of course, an accelerating effect. You can unfortunately see that with hindsight.”

Rutte followed up with a second “apology” for a “bad press conference” during which he and de Jonge had dismissed criticism that the government had eased restrictions too early. The ministers maintained the decision had been responsible, given the information they had at the time. In fact, it shows primarily that the government is in hock to the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, the banks, and their most vocal henchmen, the neo-fascistic far-right and affiliated anti-vaccination outfits.

While Rutte offers his cynical and empty “apologies,” the financial aristocracy is rejoicing that profits are surging due to the reopening of the economy. The economic bureau of ABN AMRO, the third-largest Dutch bank, stated in a communiqué last October that “the explanation for the decline in economic activity must largely be sought in the effect of the fear of the virus.” As of July 1, as infections

surge, the agency has tweeted: “Now that the fear of the virus has gone, the economic damage is also less.”

Despite months of warnings from epidemiologists of outbreaks across the continent, capitalist governments in Europe have lifted or are ending the last of their limited measures to tackle the virus. They are thus fueling a rapid rise of the more infectious Delta variant.

An open letter denouncing the British government’s murderous policy in *The Lancet*, now signed by over 1,200 scientists, warns of “a generation left with chronic health problems and disability.” Immunologists in the Netherlands are warning that inadequate vaccine coverage among youth, coupled with the lack of social distancing, is leading to the surge in cases. “It is not just because of the Delta variant. It’s also because most of these young people were not fully vaccinated,” Dr. Dimitri Diavatopoulos, an immunologist at the Radboud Centre for Infectious Diseases told Sky News.

The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment stated that from infections that could be traced to their source, 37 percent occurred in hospitality venues such as bars and clubs.

Dutch authorities are now scrambling to reintroduce minimal social distancing, bargaining with business owners on subjects like closing times of cafes and restaurants and fixed seating for diners or concert-goers. All dance venues and nightclubs will be closed. Also, festivals spread over several days would be canceled and large public gatherings restricted to smaller groups. The current ‘curbs’ went into effect on 17 July and, for now at least, are to remain in place until 14 August.

The concerted downplaying of risks, and the dead-silence about effects of Long-COVID among an officially infected record number of 1.7 million, approximately 10 percent of the entire Dutch population, accounting for nearly 18,000 official deaths in between, fits into the capitalist logic and calculation of herd immunity. In other words, anything that hinders business or potentially makes people reluctant to let money roll must be removed.

In the meantime, the Dutch ruling establishment, with the tacit support of the union bureaucracies and their political allies, are presenting the pandemic as largely a thing of the past and have ignored calls from scientists and medical personnel to take coordinated scientific public health measures. This is a politically-criminal

action, complicit with social murder as governments play Russian roulette with the health of millions.



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**