

Profits über alles: German ruling class ends “national pandemic situation” despite record infections

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With its criminal profits before lives pandemic policy, the ruling class in Germany has created a surge in cases that exceeds the catastrophe of last winter when tens of thousands died. In the last three days, a new record for incidences per 100,000 inhabitants has been reported daily: 201 on Monday, 214 on Tuesday and 232 on Wednesday. The number of daily new infections also reached a new all-time high of 39,676 on Wednesday. On Thursday, it even rose to 50,196.

The death toll is also rising massively, rapidly approaching the shocking mark of 100,000 coronavirus victims. On Wednesday, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) reported 236 new deaths and on Thursday again 235. This brings the total number of people who have died from COVID-19 to 97,198, according to the RKI. The actual number is likely to be far higher, as in other countries, and it could double in the coming months.

Speaking on the latest episode of broadcaster NDR's podcast Coronavirus Update, the chief virologist at Berlin's Charité hospital, Christian Drosten, warned Tuesday of another wave of mass deaths. If tougher measures are not taken now, he conservatively expects up to 100,000 more deaths coming to Germany. His projection is informed by the experience in the United Kingdom with a similarly high vaccination rate, but significantly more infections and deaths in recent months.

The situation in hospitals has already reached the limit. On Tuesday, 1,364 hospitalizations related to COVID-19 were reported, according to the RKI. A total of 2,687 COVID-19 cases were undergoing intensive care. In particularly affected states and districts, there are already virtually no vacant intensive care beds. According to the Divi Intensive Care Registry, intensive care units in 21 Bavarian municipalities are fully occupied. The situation is similarly dramatic in parts of Saxony and Thuringia.

In schools, the situation nationwide is catastrophic. Since the respective state governments, with the support of the

GEW education union, have reopened schools with virtually no safety and security measures, masses of students and teachers are being infected with the deadly virus. According to current figures from the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (federal states, KMK), there have been around 23,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus among schoolchildren and 1,800 among teachers in recent weeks. Last week alone, around 54,000 students were in quarantine along with more than 1,000 teachers.

In large parts of Europe, the situation is similarly dire. Nevertheless, the German ruling class is sticking to its plan to allow the declaration of a “national epidemic situation” to expire on November 25, eliminating the legal basis for uniform nationwide protective measures. Since March 2020, the Bundestag (federal parliament) had regularly extended the “epidemic situation.” That is now to be ended.

On Thursday, acting Finance Minister and Chancellor designate Olaf Scholz (Social Democratic Party, SPD) will present a new draft law by the coalition of the SPD-Green Party-Liberal Democrats (FDP) to replace the previous provisions. According to media reports, it includes plans for a 3G rule (vaccinated, previously infected, or tested negative) in the workplace, in addition to the possible reintroduction of free rapid tests. Even if these minimal measures were implemented, they would not interrupt the explosive spread of infections.

Due to the low vaccination rate of 67 percent, about 27 million people, including all children under 12, are completely unprotected against the virus. Compounding the problem is the growing risk of breakthrough infections among the vaccinated. According to the RKI's latest weekly report on Nov. 4, 145,185 probable vaccine breakthroughs have been recorded since February. Only 2.2 million people have received a third booster vaccination.

The main goal of the coalition's bill is to prevent the measures that would be necessary to contain the pandemic,

eliminate COVID-19 and save lives. “Very drastic measures—like a lockdown, like blanket school closures, like closing restaurants, like shutting down tourism—are no longer proportionate in our view,” explained Dirk Wiese, one of the SPD’s deputy parliamentary group leaders.

Wiese thus summed up not only the position of the “traffic light” coalition, but that of the entire ruling class. The push to end the “pandemic situation” originally came from the incumbent conservative health minister in the grand coalition, Jens Spahn. The plan is supported by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) as well as by the Left Party, which, wherever it governs with the SPD and Greens—as currently in Berlin, Bremen and Thuringia—actively promotes the policy of deliberate mass infection.

“In our view, a new lockdown must be prevented quite urgently,” said Dietmar Bartsch, parliamentary group leader of the Left Party in the Bundestag, at a press conference on Wednesday. He said he could only hope “that with the new government, there will be different actions. Some of the measures that are enshrined in the law are also to be welcomed on our part, especially when it comes to the rights of workers.”

Who is Bartsch taking for fools? The “traffic light” coalition represents the interests of workers just as little as the Left Party itself. This is particularly clear when it comes to pandemic policy. With their decision to officially end the “national pandemic situation,” the SPD, FDP and Greens are signalling to the ruling class that they will push through the interests of finance capital even more ruthlessly than the outgoing grand coalition did before.

The “traffic light” coalition makes no secret of the interests that determine their policies. The battle cry of the ruling class is: Profits über alles!

In their exploratory discussions on forming a coalition, the SPD, FDP and Greens have already committed themselves to sticking to the debt ceiling and setting themselves the goal of increasing the “competitiveness of Germany as a business location.” The “traffic light” coalition is thus setting itself the task of extracting from the working class the enormous sums that were funnelled to the large corporations and banks through the coronavirus bailout packages last year.

There are also geostrategic and economic goals at stake. They want to “ensure that Europe emerges from the pandemic economically stronger on the basis of sound and sustainable public finances,” as the “traffic light” coalition partners write. This includes “future German missions abroad,” as well as “increased cooperation between the national European armies.”

This agenda in the interests of finance capital and the world power aspirations of German imperialism leaves no room for the scientifically necessary measures to contain or

even eliminate the virus. This would mean comprehensive lockdowns—first and foremost for schools, universities and non-essential businesses—in conjunction with vaccinations, mass testing and the isolation of all infected persons and their contacts.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Committee of the Fourth International have emphasized from the beginning that the fight against the pandemic is not simply a medical question, but a political one. As early as April 2020, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP - Socialist Equality Party) warned in a statement:

The ruling class aims to make the pandemic the “normal state of affairs,” i.e., to accustom the population to the idea that death will continue for the foreseeable future. Workers are supposed to accept this as inevitable. That is why reports about the number of deaths in the news are increasingly shifting into the background.

There is a vicious class logic behind these efforts. Workers are treated as a kind of disposable commodity. Their deaths are regarded as a normal part of the generation of profits. Those who succumb to the virus can be replaced.

The working class will not allow mass death to be accepted as a social “normal state of affairs.” Worldwide, there is growing horror and resistance to a ruling class that walks over mountains of corpses in defense of the capitalist profit system. The Socialist Equality Parties are fighting worldwide to transform the growing strikes and protests into an international movement for socialism equipped with the necessary scientific, historical and political knowledge to end the pandemic.



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