

German coalition government adopts far-right AfD's coronavirus policy

Tamino Dreisam
11 April 2022

On the issues of militarism and rearmament for war, the coalition government of the Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and Liberal Democrats (FDP) has adopted the programme of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). With its €100 billion special defence budget fund, the coalition even surpassed the AfD's demand for armaments' expenditure of two percent of gross domestic product. Now, with the rejection of a vaccine mandate in a parliamentary vote, it is apparent that the government's pandemic policy also aligns with the AfD's demands.

Significantly, AfD parliamentary deputy Stephan Brandner praised the official coronavirus policy even before the vote, saying, "This time for coronavirus measures is over, if it ever was there. That you have recognised this—and respect for that—you have documented in the last amendment to the Infection Protection Act. People should be released back into freedom..."

In the Bundestag (federal parliament) debate before the vote on Thursday, AfD deputy Martin Sichert appealed, "I call on all of you: join us! Show that democracy is worth something to you and vote against vaccine mandates!"

His call was heard. In the end, a clear majority in the Bundestag voted against the motion from the ranks of the SPD and the Greens for vaccine mandates for those over 60. Some 378 deputies heeded the AfD's call and voted no. The Christian Democratic Union's (CDU) "Vaccination Prevention Act," to establish a vaccination register and possible compulsory vaccination in autumn, was also clearly rejected with 496 no votes.

In the debate, numerous government and opposition representatives repeated the narrative of the AfD and other far-right coronavirus deniers that a vaccine

mandate would be an unacceptable state encroachment into fundamental rights and personal freedom.

Christian Democratic Union politician Tino Sorge said, "It has irritated me for weeks that we always so succinctly pass over the question of encroachment, saying: Well, it is an encroachment on fundamental rights. We are talking about weighing up fundamental rights. We are talking about encroachments on bodily integrity."

Max Lucks of the Green Party justified his rejection of vaccine mandates by saying, "I'm worried that the exclusion of confinement for contempt of court won't stand up to constitutional challenges and individual health reasons may fall through the normative categories."

Well-known Left Party politician Sahra Wagenknecht called on the government to "stop patronising people! Coronavirus vaccination must remain a personal decision!"

To applause from the AfD, FDP deputy federal leader Wolfgang Kubicki claimed that the pandemic was now harmless, stating, "If we can agree on these points, there must be no vaccination mandates on constitutional grounds. After all, it is not the task of the state to force adults to protect themselves against their will."

In an earlier statement on the campaign against vaccination, the *World Socialist Web Site* noted, "It is always the most right-wing forces that oppose the protection of social rights by raising the banner of 'individual rights,' the most notorious of which is the 'right of profit.'" This is exactly the point: the deliberate mass infection of the population in the interests of capital.

The WSWS has always stressed that vaccination alone cannot stop the virus, but only in conjunction

with all other scientifically necessary measures. But it is an important tool to save lives. By rejecting vaccine mandates, the coalition government once again underlines that it is prepared to accept mass deaths. Since the SPD, Greens and FDP have formed a majority in the Bundestag, 33,800 people have already died of coronavirus—a result of the systematic dismantling of protective measures:

- On November 25, even before the coalition government was in office, the coalition leaders ended the designation of a “national epidemic emergency” and thus took away the legal basis for lockdowns, school and business closures, as well as other life-saving measures. At the same time, the president of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), Lothar Wieler, warned of 400 deaths per day and hospitals were already reaching occupancy rates of up to 95 percent.

- After presenting the government programme at the end of November, Chancellor Scholz (SPD) again explicitly spoke out against lockdowns and school closures. The only measure he proposed was a general vaccination obligation until the end of February. At that time, the death toll in Germany had just passed the 100,000 mark and hospitals were preparing to ration health treatments using a triage system.

- In its first months in office, the criminal inaction of the coalition government led to Omicron becoming the dominant variant, driving infection figures to record levels. Despite this, on January 7, the government reduced the quarantine period from 14 to 10, then seven, and then five days. Contact tracing and public testing were also greatly reduced.

- In early February, with 250,000 people being infected daily, the upper limit for spectators at major events was raised to 10,000 nationwide. Individual states began to lift the 2G rule limiting attendance at public venues/events to those who have recovered from COVID or are fully vaccinated.

- On February 16, at the height of the omicron wave at the time, the federal-state conference decided to lift the 2G rule as well as the compulsory wearing of an FFP2 mask to catering establishments and clubs from March 4, and to increase the maximum capacity at large events to 25,000. At the end of March, all “extensive protective measures” were to end.

- On March 18, the new Infection Protection Act was passed, reducing coronavirus measures to “basic

protection”—mandatory mask wearing on local and long-distance transport, as well as in nursing homes and hospitals.

- On April 4, Lauterbach announced that the quarantine obligation would be lifted completely. He later had to withdraw this proposal due to massive public outrage. This does not change anything about the “profits before lives” policy of the ruling class, which means between 200 and 300 COVID deaths every day.

The Left Party also supports the murderous herd immunity policies. Both the motion on vaccine mandates for those over 60 years old and the motion to create a vaccination register were rejected by a majority of their deputies. Numerous leading Left Party politicians, including Gregor Gysi and Sahra Wagenknecht, even supported Kubicki's motion, which explicitly opposed vaccine mandates, calling this an encroachment on fundamental rights, in the style of the AfD.

The rejection of vaccine mandates by the Bundestag illustrates once again that the struggle against the pandemic requires the independent mobilisation of the working class. Workers and youth must form rank-and-file action committees in schools and workplaces to take the fight for the necessary measures to eliminate COVID-19 into their own hands.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact