

Coronavirus outbreak at children's summer camp in Germany

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Last week, a children's summer camp of the youth association "Roter Baum" near Dresden was cancelled after a counselor and several children infected with the coronavirus were hospitalized. The case is symbolic of the federal and state government's policy of mass infection and their propagation of "living with the virus."

The summer camp in Karl May Village near Dresden, in which around 50 children from Berlin took part—most of them from socially poorer backgrounds—was originally scheduled to last 10 days. However, as early as Monday, July 11, a counselor had to be hospitalized with coronavirus symptoms.

The following day, July 12, a child likewise had to be hospitalized with coronavirus symptoms and three other children tested positive for the virus. The health department was informed about the outbreak and paid a visit to the camp the same day. Despite this visit, it decided to let the camp continue and only ordered a few basic hygienic regulations, such as regular testing and a mask requirement for camp counselors.

After yet another child had to be hospitalized the following day, July 13, the health department paid a second visit and again decided to let the camp continue. This time, too, only a few additional hygienic requirements were issued, "the implementation of which was to be monitored in a timely manner."

It was not until the night of July 13-14 that a doctor acting on behalf of the health department called the camp director, telling him to close the camp. As of Friday afternoon the camp director had not received a written order, according to media reports.

Reports about the case have mainly focused on the question of the culpability of the camp management and the health department. Their complicity is indisputable: While the health department did not shut

down the camp even after learning of the outbreak, the camp management is trying to downplay the situation.

For example, the managing director of the youth association, Tilo Kießling, a member of parliament for the Left Party in the Dresden City Council, spoke after the fact of only four or five positive cases, whereas counselors spoke of as many as 20 infected. Two counselors told the *Sächsische Zeitung* that the organizers initially refused to close the camp and only intervened after an emergency medical doctor advised to do so: "It is clear that the situation here is to be swept under the rug."

This outbreak casts a spotlight on the criminal coronavirus policies of the federal and state governments, which are deliberately designed to allow the population to be infected. "Living with the virus" is the mantra in politics and the media, which is now being implemented with all its consequences so as not to diminish the profits of banks and large corporations.

When the Infection Protection Act expired in mid-March, the German government decided that in the future only "basic protection" would be required, essentially limited to wearing a mask in public transport, in clinics and old people's homes. At the time, this was hailed by leading politicians as an "important step towards normality."

In the following months, all parties in the Bundestag (federal government) and the state parliaments worked to abolish even the last measures. In April, for example, mandatory vaccination was rejected in the Bundestag; in May, quarantine was reduced to five days; and at the end of June, free testing for the coronavirus was ended.

The federal government is doing nothing about the rising summer wave of infections, which is already putting clinics under pressure with increasing infection and death rates. Federal Health Minister Karl

Lauterbach (Social Democrats, SPD) only called for a recommendation to wear masks indoors and a fourth vaccination. Faced with a harsher wave in the fall, the federal government's current plans do not include any measures beyond mandatory masks, social distancing recommendations and contact restrictions for those infected.

The fact that 50 children can come together in a camp for 10 days without having been tested even once beforehand is an expression of the new reality of "living with the virus." The outbreak in the summer camp and its consequences are not only an indictment of the capitalist policy of mass infection, they also disprove the myth that the Omicron variant is "mild," especially for children.

In reality, new infectious vaccine-resistant and deadly variants will continue to emerge if the virus is given free rein and is not eliminated. Dr. Eric Topol, founder and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, recently stated, "Omicron subvariant BA.5 is the worst version of the virus yet. The already pronounced immune escape has increased even more."

In Germany, BA.5 is now dominant, with increasingly dramatic consequences. Every week, around 10,000 people are hospitalized, including an increasing number of young people. About 6 percent of those hospitalized are under 14 years old, and another 9 percent are between 15 and 34 years old. Deaths from coronavirus are likewise on the rise, most recently reaching more than 600 deaths per week. Every week at least one of them was still shy of adulthood.



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