

UK COVID Inquiry reveals how Johnson government planned mass murder

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The official UK COVID Inquiry has lifted the veil on discussions within Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government that were intent on a policy of mass infection and the death of hundreds of thousands, before being forced to retreat from the "herd immunity" strategy out of fear of the explosive response in the working class. Johnson's own belief was that Covid was "just nature's way of dealing with old people."

During Tuesday's hearing, Lee Cain, then Downing Street's Director of Communications, was questioned on evidence made available in the notebooks of Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK government's chief scientific adviser during the pandemic. In one entry, in December 2020 dealing with Johnson's opposition to impose a further lockdown, Vallance wrote, "He [Johnson] says his [Conservative] party 'thinks the whole thing is pathetic and Covid is just nature's way of dealing with old people – and I am not entirely sure I disagree with them'."

A diary entry from five months earlier, in August 2020, reports that Johnson favoured "older people accepting their fate and letting the young get on with life".

Johnson went on national TV to publicly promote herd immunity on March 5, 2020, declaring on the *This Morning* show, "One of the theories is, that perhaps you could take it on the chin, take it all in one go and allow the disease, as it were, to move through the population, without taking as many draconian measures."

The government was forced to change course just 18 days later, on March 23, 2020, and impose a national lockdown amid massive public anger at the growing numbers of COVID deaths and fears that the National Health Service (NHS) would collapse. But less than two months after the lockdown was imposed, on May 10, 2020, Johnson announced that restrictions would start to be lifted. Imran Shafi, a former private secretary to Johnson attributes to him the statement, made in March 2020, that there are "Large ppl [large numbers of people] who will die, why are we destroying economy for people who will die anyway soon?"

Johnson is a political criminal who should be put on trial

for what he did during the COVID pandemic. But his position was dominant not only within his government but among its leading advisers, including Vallance, and England's chief medical officer Sir Chris Whitty, and the top civil servants involved.

Another entry in Vallance's diary, written after a Cabinet Meeting in Downing Street in December 2020, notes: "Chief whip [Mark Spencer] says 'I think we should let the old people get it and protect others'."

Vallance himself said at a press conference alongside Johnson on March 12, 2020, "It's not possible to stop everyone getting it and it's also not desirable because you want some immunity in the population to protect ourselves in the future."

Sir Christopher Wormald, who remains the most senior civil servant in the Department of Health and Social Care, in early 2020 felt it his responsibility to stiffen Johnson's resolve in pursuing herd immunity. Then Civil Service head Mark Sedwill sent a message March 12 to Wormald, "I don't think PM [prime minister] & Co have internalised yet the distinction between minimising mortality and not trying to stop most people getting it." Wormald replied, "Indeed presumably like chickenpox we want people to get it..."

To this roll call of shame must be added the Labour Party, which under Jeremy Corbyn and his Blairite successor, Sir Keir Starmer, pledged only "constructive" opposition to the government. Corbyn admitted that he was briefed on the government's herd immunity strategy in early 2020 but said nothing publicly until August.

Similar discussions would have taken place in the United States, Germany, France and in government circles around the world. In every country measures to contain the pandemic were opposed by a ruling class that prioritises profits over lives.

The only reason why so much is known of official criminality during the pandemic in the UK is that Johnson's chief adviser Dominic Cummings became a whistleblower. Much of what is known about this homicidal policy would never have come to light had Cummings and his ally Cains

not been sacked from government by Johnson in late 2020. A right-wing fanatic who led Johnson's successful Brexit campaign to leave the European Union, Cummings responded by going public amid bitter factional infighting within the government.

He was involved in every major discussion on the pandemic response. Among his revelations was the detailed testimony he gave before Parliament's Health and Social Care Committee and Science and Technology Committee in May 2021. This included showing a series of slides, and pictures of whiteboards in Downing Street, featuring a Public Health England exercise outlining scenarios based on up to 800,000 people dying of COVID-19.

The architects of social murder in Downing Street worked on a Plan B, assuming over a quarter a million would die, in Cummings' words by "choking to death," after being forced to discard this Plan A.

The evidence uncovered by the UK inquiry has confirmed every word written by the *World Socialist Web Site* on the actual policy of mass death represented by anodyne appeals for a strategy of "herd immunity".

A March 24, 2020 Perspective, "Message from big business on coronavirus pandemic: Save profits, not lives", stated:

"From the beginning, the ruling class has viewed the pandemic not as an issue of public health, but as a potential impediment to generating profit. Its sole concern has been how the crisis will impact its bottom line. Now that it has secured a massive government bailout, the ruling class wants to ensure that business returns to normal.

"This form of socially sanctioned euthanasia has a distinctly fascistic character, not dissimilar to the argument by the Nazis that the disabled were "undesirable" elements who should be eliminated. In the face of the greatest crisis facing American capitalism, the ruling class is revealing itself to be not just parasitic, but homicidal."

The mass deaths of the elderly, as Johnson makes clear, was considered a positive economic boon serving to reduce pension obligations and other social welfare spending. *Telegraph* columnist Jeremy Warner wrote at the pandemic's outset, "Not to put too fine a point on it, from an entirely disinterested economic perspective, the Covid-19 might even prove mildly beneficial in the long term by disproportionately culling elderly dependents."

The human cost of the refusal to implement the measures

necessary to curb and eventually eliminate the pandemic is staggering. Britain has to date seen over a quarter of a million deaths. Over 92 percent were aged over 60. Less than a year after the first lockdown was put in place, the Office for Budget Responsibility reported that the amount the government would have to spend on state pensions was to fall by £1.5 billion by 2022.

The pandemic was a turning point in the decay of the world imperialism as the ruling class everywhere responded to a staggering level of indifference to mass deaths and human suffering. The pandemic has cost over 27 million lives globally and left many millions more suffering the debilitating impact of Long COVID.

The WSWS outlined the fundamental implications of this embrace of social murder in a perspective published on September 23, 2021:

"American capitalism's ability to accept and 'normalize' mass death must be treated as a warning. All arguments that a nuclear war is inconceivable because society is not prepared to accept the loss of millions of lives have been refuted by the response to the pandemic. If the American ruling class is prepared to accept the loss of a million lives from a preventable disease, it will accept the deaths of tens of millions in a nuclear war."

The prescience of this analysis became clear with the breakout of the US-led NATO war with Russia just months later, which has seen the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. That the ruling class is wholly indifferent to mass deaths is clear in the universal support of the major imperialist powers for Israel's genocidal offensive against the Palestinians in Gaza.

This war against society can only be stopped through the mobilisation of the international working class in a struggle against the capitalist system. It requires the fight for the socialist programme of the International Committee of the Fourth International, in which workers assert their political independence from all the political representatives of the ruling class.



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