

Germany's Coronavirus Commission of Enquiry aims to criminalise protective measures

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After the federal and state governments lifted all coronavirus protection measures and allowed the virus to run free, proclaiming the myth of the “end of the pandemic,” they are now moving to criminalise the protective measures taken in the past. This is what is behind the debate about setting up a Commission of Enquiry.

A year ago, representatives of all the parties in the Bundestag (federal parliament) discussed such a commission and were in favour of it. The most recent trigger for the revival of the debate was the complaint by the right-wing conspiracy theorist blog *Multipolar*, which led to the publication of the protocols on the coronavirus pandemic established by the public health body, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI).

It is quite clear that such a commission would not serve the purpose of serious scientific evaluation, but rather the criminalisation of life-saving measures taken in the past. This is made clear by the very fact that the call for such a commission of enquiry comes directly from the repertoire of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which was the first to make this demand. In the meantime, all other parties in the Bundestag have adopted these or similar demands.

The Liberal Democratic Party (FDP) in particular has been vociferously in favour of a commission of enquiry since the publication of the RKI report. Its chairman, Christian Lindner, told the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger*: “Today we know that many decisions made by the previous federal government caused great social and economic damage. ... School closures, contact restrictions, curfews and access bans were in some cases completely disproportionate encroachments on civil liberties.” A commission of enquiry was “the means of choice” to analyse these measures.

FDP Secretary General Bijan Djir-Saraj complained that “rational criticism” had been “likened to coronavirus deniers” with the demand for relaxation. And FDP Vice Chairman Wolfgang Kubicki, who had previously boasted that he had not adhered to some safety measures, claimed in the jargon of coronavirus deniers that the RKI had “probably served as a scientific facade for political decisions.”

All the other parties in the Bundestag also support these

demands. A year ago, the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) health policy spokesperson Tino Sorge called for a commission of enquiry to “systematically analyse the coronavirus policy.” Lockdowns, school and daycare centre closures had caused “devastating collateral damage.” In Saxony-Anhalt, a commission of enquiry has already been set up under CDU Minister President Reiner Haseloff on April 4.

Although the Social Democratic Party (SPD) criticised the specific call for a commission of enquiry, it is in favour of establishing comparable bodies with the same goal, such as the “Health and Resilience” expert council set up at the Chancellery. The fact that this also pursues the goal of criminalising any protective measures is made clear by the statements of Federal Health Minister Karl Lauterbach (SPD). He explained: “The biggest mistake was that we were too strict with children in some cases and probably started easing measures a little too late.” A year ago, he described the closure of schools and daycare centres as a mistake.

The BSW (the party founded by former Left Party leader Sahra Wagenknecht) has gone even further in its demands and is calling for an investigating committee. Sahra Wagenknecht told the news agency dpa that a commission of enquiry would not be enough. An investigating committee was necessary “to shed light on the period with the greatest restrictions on fundamental rights in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany.” Otherwise, only the AfD is calling for an investigating committee.

The Left Party's support for the Commission of Enquiry is particularly cynical. Shortly before its parliamentary group was dissolved, it submitted its own motion in favour of setting up a commission of enquiry. Its health policy spokeswoman Kathrin Vogler justified this by arguing that many measures had “had a negative impact on the poorer people in particular.” Left Party leader Gregor Gysi cited measures that had led to school cancellations and the “isolation of children” as examples, as well as the issue of compulsory vaccination. In the past, Vogler herself has described school and nursery closures as “incomprehensible.”

This argument is as mendacious as it is false. The fact that the

school and nursery closures were a physical and psychological burden for children, young people and their families was primarily a result of the fact that they took place without any state support programmes. In addition, it would have been possible to eliminate the virus worldwide in just a few months through the global deployment of all available measures to combat the pandemic.

It is the height of criminality when the same government politicians and parties that rejected this now look back and demonise all lockdown measures. It is a scientifically proven fact that there would have been many times more deaths without the measures taken. For example, a study published in the journal *Nature* in June 2020 concluded that without the initial lockdown measures in the spring, 3 million more people would have died in Europe alone.

The problem was not the protective measures, but the fact that they were not enforced consistently and were ended prematurely in order to keep the capitalist profit economy going. Those politicians who now cynically cite the welfare of children when arguing against the closure of schools and nurseries also completely ignore the fact that the consequences for children are far more serious if they lose a relative or live in constant fear of losing a relative due to a lack of protective measures.

An international study published in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, concludes that in the period from March 2020 to October 2021 alone, 2,400 children in Germany lost a parent or guardian. As the total number of deaths at that time was half as high as it is today, it can be assumed that the number of children who had lost one parent caused by the pandemic has also roughly doubled since then. In addition, 126 children and young people have fallen victim to the virus themselves. The number of children and young people who have lost grandparents or other second-degree relatives is not recorded. However, it is clear that this number far exceeds that of direct parents.

The Left Party has played a leading role in the implementation of the murderous “profits before lives” policy. Wherever it has been a member of a state government, it has sent workers and pupils back to coronavirus-infested companies and schools as quickly as possible. Thuringia in particular, where the Left Party has Bodo Ramelow as state Prime Minister, was notorious for its herd immunity policy and its glorification of the so-called “Swedish model.”

The Left Party was least concerned with the welfare of the “poor.” While it exposed workers and young people to a deadly virus and did not provide them with any significant, appreciable aid throughout the pandemic, it rubber-stamped the trillion-euro giveaways to the banks and corporations and combined this with massive social attacks wherever it shared government responsibility.

In fact, the majority of the now 182,000 coronavirus deaths in Germany come from the working class. Most of them could

have been avoided if the virus had been eliminated with a rational and scientifically sound policy. The fact that the ruling class is now moving to criminalise all protective measures makes one thing clear above all else: when the next pandemic hits, it will take no such measures whatsoever and accept significantly more deaths.

It is this murderous “profits before lives” policy of all the bourgeois parties that needs a thorough reappraisal. To this end, the *World Socialist Web Site* initiated a Global Workers’ Inquest in November 2021 with its call “For a global investigation into the COVID-19 pandemic by workers.” The statement announcing this enquiry, which has since been carried forward by the WSWS, states:

The pandemic is an event of historic magnitude. Its impact on the course of the twenty-first century may well prove to be as far-reaching as that of the two world wars on the twentieth century. Therefore, the origins, causes and consequences of the pandemic must be thoroughly investigated and understood. This disaster was neither an “act of God” nor the result of a malevolent conspiracy in a Chinese laboratory. The time has come to decisively refute the lies in which the pandemic narrative has been enshrouded by governments and the corporate media.

This Inquest is necessary to break through the cover-up, falsifications, and misinformation that have been deployed to justify policies responsible for the avoidable deaths of millions since the initial detection of SARS-CoV-2. The Inquest will gather and make available to the public ample evidence of socially malign and even criminal indifference to human life.



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