



Written by [Annalisa Pesek](#) on February 1, 2021

## “COVID-19 Jails” Open in Germany for Quarantine Offenders

The 19th-century philosopher George Santayana famously wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Shockingly, Germany seems to be suffering from a severe bout of historical amnesia. Taking extreme action to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the country is interning people in “camps” to punish those found “guilty” of subverting strict COVID-19 quarantine rules.

Opening today, February 1, 2021, in the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein, is Germany’s first “[corona prison](#).” Reporting by the [RAIR Foundation](#) uncovers that quarantine offenders will be held at the former Mortsfelde youth detention center. Inmates will be “policed by former law enforcement officials and prison wardens.” The crimes allegedly committed by these “dangerous” individuals include “refusing to quarantine after engaging in travel, after coming in contact with high-risk individuals, or after receiving a positive test result.”

Descriptions of the lockdown facility might be lifted straight out of a George Orwell or Ray Bradbury novel. The center is reportedly surrounded by barbed wire and a security fence. It permits up to six people; each convict is held in a 129-square foot cell. Metal bars cover the windows of inmates’ rooms, and meals are allegedly delivered through a food flap in the heavy steel room door.

American readers wondering how any of this is possible should be made aware of [Germany’s controversial Infectious Diseases Protection Act \(IfSG\)](#), which permits the state to imprison citizens who refuse to comply with the orders of the state. As [reported earlier this month in \*The New American\*](#), amended rules to the IfSG, initially passed by the German Bundestag in March 2020 and updated in November, give officials the ability to force obedience to harsh lockdown measures. These authoritarian procedures were designed to combat an alleged new variant of the COVID-19 virus said to spread more rapidly and to affect children and adolescents more severely. According to our report, this new virus variant appears to have originated in Great Britain and has now spread to continental Europe.

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In January 2021, German Chancellor Angela Merkel met with the 16 state premiers to consider the current COVID-19 lockdown guidelines expected to expire at the end of January. These decrees were comprised of “calls for a stronger mask requirement, newer ‘sharp’ lockdowns, a rapid vaccination



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program, and widespread gene-sequencing to detect new variants of the virus.”

However, such mandates clearly did not assuage the government’s need for absolute control, as hints of more extreme action by Ralph Birkhouse, the parliamentary leader of Merkel’s bloc in the Bundestag, have come to pass with the opening of the new detention centers. Said Birkhouse in defense of the tyranny the state is imposing in the name of safety: “We need to be very careful, especially of the British mutation of this virus.... We don’t know what further measures will be necessary in coming weeks.”

Responses from German citizens appear to be a mix of complicity in the state’s despotism and outrage at the new restrictions.

But wait, it gets worse. In addition to the detention center in Schleswig-Holstein, a refugee camp in the eastern state of Saxony is also being converted to detain citizens who have repeatedly broken quarantine rules. Moreover, similar facilities reportedly exist in the German states of Baden-Württemberg and Brandenburg.

German authorities state the facilities are “a last resort,” admitting they are a “restriction of the basic right of freedom,” and that imprisonment is only intended to last a few days and only for citizens who have “massively violated their quarantine requirements.” To think that Germany would resort to such actions is unconscionable. For many, these constraints only serve as a reminder of past atrocities that have contributed to Germany’s legacy during the early 20th century.



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