

Resolution in Germany: “Close schools and day-care centres and organize safe education!”

Network of Action Committees for Safe Education
30 November 2020

The following statement was adopted by the Network of Action Committees for Safe Education at its meeting Friday in Germany. A report of the meeting can be found here.

The coronavirus pandemic has long since run out of control in Germany as elsewhere. New infections, deaths and positive test results are at record levels and still rising. Scientific evidence clearly shows that workplaces and schools are major hotspots of the pandemic. If no immediate action is taken, premature death and the serious illness of hundreds of thousands of people is inevitable.

But governments of all stripes refuse to implement even rudimentary safety measures, such as alternating in-person and at-home classes, digital learning and air filtration. Schools and day-care centres are being kept completely open so as not to endanger the ability of parents to work and thus ensure the flow of profits to the corporations. While banks and big business have received hundreds of billions in support, even €100 per student is too much for governments to spend on air filtration systems.

We strongly oppose this policy, which places the interests of the rich before the health of the people and call on students, teachers, educators and parents to take their safety into their own hands. At all schools, Action Committees for Safe Education, independent of the establishment parties and the trade unions, must be set up to determine safety at their schools and decide on the necessary measures. If these are not met, schools must immediately go on strike and be closed. The same applies to day-care centres and other facilities.

The pandemic is an international phenomenon and requires an international response. We express our

solidarity with school strikes and protests in Greece, Poland and France and welcome the creation of Rank-and-File Safety Committees in many cities in the United Kingdom and the United States. These must work closely together and prepare a European-wide school strike.

The dangerous situation in schools and day-care centres cannot be separated from the problems in public transport and workplaces. While nurses, bus drivers and meat-processing workers put their lives at risk every day under the most adverse conditions, at the same time, the largest mass sackings in German history are being carried out and wages cut. Government and corporations are using the pandemic for an unprecedented social redistribution of wealth from the bottom to the top.

Therefore, resistance in schools must be linked to workers' struggles for safe workplaces and to defend jobs. It must be part of a broad mobilization for a general strike that places the needs and health of the people against the profit logic of capitalism. Instead of transferring billions to the corporations, the following demands must be implemented:

Close schools and day-care centres and prepare safe education! Only if the incidence rate is below 50 per 100,000 should lessons take place in small, fixed learning groups that are physically separated and safely accommodated. Those in risk groups must be specially protected and immediately exempted from in-person attendance at classes.

Invest billions in safe and good education! To ensure safe conditions in the face of falling infection rates, billions of euros must be invested in schools and day-care centres, especially in the recruitment of

thousands of new teachers and educators. Their wages must be increased significantly.

Full wage compensation for parents who have to care for their children! Parents must receive their full wages for undertaking the care of their children. Workers, the self-employed and small business owners must also be compensated for any loss of income. Poorer families must be given special support and receive high-quality equipment to enable digital learning at home.



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