

# European workers issue statements of support for Chicago teachers

Our reporters  
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Educators, students and parents in Britain, Belgium and Germany have sent messages of solidarity to teachers in Chicago in the United States, who are refusing to return to work in unsafe conditions.

This follows the publication on the *World Socialist Web Site* Thursday of a resolution by the rank-and-file education safety committees in Germany and the UK in support of the Chicago educators. The resolution states, “If there is to be a struggle against the reopening policy, it must be organized independently by educators, students and parents. That is why the struggle developing in Chicago is of the utmost significance. It points the way forward for workers and students internationally.”

We call on WSWs readers to spread the word and to contact us with messages of support for the Chicago teachers.

**Tim**, a secondary teacher in the UK, said, “I fully support the action of the Chicago teachers and educators. The pandemic has triggered the action of workers internationally against the criminal herd immunity policies of the ruling class. Here in the UK, we share the same challenges and dangers and need to take independent action free of the stranglehold of the trade unions, which do nothing but endorse the criminal policies of the bourgeois government. We are following your action with anticipation for the struggle to come!”

**Emma**, who lives in Britain has a severely disabled husband and her two young children have been kept out of school throughout the pandemic to protect the family. This is because the conditions in schools are unsafe and play a major role in spreading the virus. Her message, which she asked to be passed on to the Chicago teachers, was straightforward: “The situation is dire. You must do what you need to do to protect your lives and those of your students. Stay strong.”

**Linda**, who is clinically vulnerable and whose three school-age children have had COVID-19, said, “I totally agree with the stand the Chicago teachers are taking. I don’t think any schools should be going back anywhere in the world. Schools are being used as holding pens for children and for that reason I am keeping my children off school until I have had the vaccine. I don’t care what they say or threaten me with. Boris Johnson is putting profit before lives.”

**Lisa**, 35, who works in a UK lettings agency said, “I firmly agree with the European rank-and-file committees’ resolution. There is so much evidence that schools are transmitting the virus and the unions won’t do anything to protect teachers, so they have to take the safety of themselves, students and society at large into their own hands. The rank-and-file committees should be expanded throughout schools and workplaces internationally. Coronavirus is a global problem and needs a global solution.”

**Frankie**, a teaching assistant from Lancaster, England said, “I applaud the Chicago teachers fighting against school reopenings, which would cost countless lives. In every country, the capitalist class have put schoolteachers and pupils on the front line of the pandemic, to keep parents in workplaces squeezing out profits no matter the human cost.

“Teachers have been under the most vicious attack in this class battle, but I am glad to see the Chicago teachers are now leading a fight back! Your fight can and will be won, because it is the fight of every worker, no matter what industry and no matter what country, and that social force is stronger than anything the Democrats or trade unions can throw in your path.”

**Gina**, a stay-at-home parent in western Belgium, whose three children have all contracted the virus, said: “I think they [Chicago teachers] are right! We are

really disappointed schools are open in Belgium and we would support them if they would strike and say no! We firmly believe that school is one of the worst causes of contamination! But they keep schools open only to keep the parents at work! If they close the schools, they are going to have to find a solution for the children who have working parents. So, instead, they keep opening schools and put the children and their families at risk.”

A **33-year-old teacher** from Berlin and a member of the network of rank-and-file education safety committees in Germany stated: “I am shocked to learn how the media and also politicians in the USA are acting against striking school staff. After all, the colleagues in Chicago are not expecting miracles, but simply and above all safety at work for the students and themselves. That’s not asking too much. It’s their right. It’s the least they can do.

“Chicago teachers have my full respect. Don’t let them force you into mortal danger. You are not alone. It’s not just you. It looks like Germany has a lot to be prepared for in the coming weeks as well. Again, the federal and state governments are trying to open the schools as quickly as possible. We can’t let that happen, and we need to organize ourselves into independent action committees and network internationally to assert our interests.”

**Anda** is from Romania and works in Berlin as a primary-school teacher. She contracted the coronavirus in December. On the struggles of teachers in Chicago, she said: “Of all the systemic professions, educators are the least protected. We have to bring performance in a pandemic without material and moral support. We stand with you!”

**Mehmet** works at the stainless-steel manufacturer Outokumpu in Krefeld. “The teachers in Chicago are doing it right, they should hang in there,” he said. “Corona is not an invention, but a serious danger. The disease can be very dangerous, even for young people. A 32-year-old colleague had such problems that his lungs had to be transplanted. He is currently undergoing rehab treatment. Another, older colleague of mine, has been weakened by his coronavirus disease for months. He now wants to quit early and retire.

“And now we also have the mutations, so it’s becoming more and more dangerous and unpredictable. Teachers in Chicago must persevere, form networks and bundle actions—preferably internationally. Capital

works globally. We workers, on the other hand, are still in the Stone Age. The WSWS and the Fourth International are the only ones working to unite workers internationally.”



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