

Meeting of the Network of Action Committees for Safe Education **Support the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees! Attend the ICFI's May Day rally!**

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29 April 2021

The Network of Action Committees for Safe Education in Germany supports the International Committee of the Fourth International's (ICFI) and the Socialist Equality Party's (SGP) call for the formation of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). At its latest online meeting on Monday, the Network passed the following resolution with no votes opposed:

“The Network of Action Committees for Safe Education supports the ICFI's appeal for the building of an International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. The murderous coronavirus policies pursued by the capitalist class and their governments have led to a catastrophe around the world. Only through independent rank-and-file committees unified internationally can workers coordinate their struggles in various workplaces, industries, and countries against these policies and the corporatist trade unions.

“In Germany, all bourgeois parties, together with the trade unions, are enforcing the ‘profits before lives’ policy, which has already resulted in over 80,000 deaths. Despite high infection rates, schools are currently being opened in many regions, endangering the younger generation in particular. The only way to put an end to the mass death is the international mobilisation of the working class. We therefore call upon parents, childcare workers, teachers and students to participate in the International May Day Rally and support the building of the International Workers Alliance.”

The meeting of the Network of Action Committee for Safe Education was held amid a wave of unsafe school openings across Europe and overshadowed by the dramatic events in India, where the criminal “profits

before lives” policy of the BJP government has led to an horrific rise in infections and deaths. SGP member Katja Selin spoke in her introductory remarks of a “shocking situation,” with thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of new infections on a daily basis.

“While many hospitals no longer have adequate beds or oxygen, bodies in the national capital Delhi are being burned in the street because the city's crematoriums are totally overwhelmed. At the same time, with the so-called ‘double mutant’ B.1617, a new virus variant has emerged that could possibly be resistant to existing vaccines.

“The pandemic, which is a human tragedy for the working class, has been a goldmine for the ruling elites. The billionaires are literally feasting on the deaths of millions of people and increased their wealth by 60 percent last year. In Germany alone, 29 new billionaires have emerged. Masses of people increasingly understand that this catastrophe requires a global response.”

The significance of the International Workers Alliance is that it allows the “coordination of and pushing ahead with our struggles in the committees worldwide” and to fight for a socialist programme in the process.

“Only if the oligarchy is expropriated and the struggles against the pandemic, war and social inequality are unified in a fight against the capitalist system will humanity be able to make progress,” she concluded.

In a video message, Parti de l'Égalité Socialiste (PES) member and WSWs author Will Morrow delivered greetings from the SGP's French sister party to the meeting. He reported from widespread school openings in France and Italy, although more than 300 people are dying in both countries on a daily basis. Referring to the situation across Europe, Morrow stated, “The horrifying

figure of more than 1 million deaths is the product of the profits before lives policy pursued by the European governments since the outbreak of the pandemic. It is an indictment of European capitalism and the criminality of its ruling class.

“The parallel increase in deaths and the wealth of the corporate elite is not coincidental. The wealth of the billionaires is based on the rise of the stock market, which was caused by multi-trillion bailout programmes, as well as the maintenance of nonessential production amid a deadly pandemic. This in turn constantly requires that students remain in their classrooms and workers on the job, even though this means the further spread of the virus and a continuation of mass deaths.”

In struggle against this policy, continued Morrow, workers confront an all-party coalition, which is supported by the trade unions and resorts to mobilising the state apparatus and right-wing extremist forces. The threatening growth of fascist conspiracies in France, Germany, Spain and other countries shows in addition that the turn to dictatorship is being led by the entire capitalist class.

“There is no progressive faction of the political establishment. It is up to the working class to intervene as a unified, international and independent force to reject the policies of mass death, militarism and dictatorship. The ICFI is calling for the building of an International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees to offer workers a global platform for a counter-offensive.

“The fight for a scientific response to the pandemic must—on account of the nature of the virus—be international from the outset. And it must be independent of the trade union apparatus, which has imposed the policies of capitalist governments and serves as an appendage of the corporations. This year’s May 1st must be made the starting point for a global movement of the working class to combat the pandemic and the capitalist class’s drive to dictatorship.”

During the discussion that followed, the approximately two dozen participants responded with strong support for the perspective advanced in the speeches.

Max, a social worker from Rostock, referred to a statement by the ICFI which advanced an emergency programme of action for the working class as early as March last year to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. More than a year later, Max continued, the contradictions of world capitalism have sharpened significantly, which is posing workers with revolutionary tasks:

“The horrific consequences of the decades-long

destruction of the health care and social systems is being made especially clear in the current pandemic. The ruthless profits before lives policy is exposing capitalist mismanagement before the eyes of the people around the world and is showing them how criminally the politicians operate. At the same time, the coronavirus crisis is intensifying geopolitical conflicts and the international threat of war. I therefore think that the unification of the workers’ committees is really the central task.”

A young care worker, Magnus, from Bavaria, who could not participate due to a shift, sent a message that was read out at the meeting:

“I think the statement is necessary. Workers in the care sector are also totally unorganised. The residents of care homes for disabled people have been going to work again for a few weeks. The protective measures against the virus are either totally inadequate or are virtually non-existent. With infection numbers in the hundreds, it is extremely dangerous for workers and residents. It is currently only a question of time before further deaths occur. The first infections have already occurred in some departments.”

Further participants, including several students, drew a balance sheet of the destruction of the public health care system and the social welfare system and the decades of austerity measures for childcare and schools. Considerable emphasis was placed on the reactionary role played by the trade unions, and their effort to isolate and smother the widespread opposition among workers. The Education and Scholarship Union (GEW) recently advocated for the immediate reopening of schools in the state of Hesse despite increasing infection numbers.

Other speakers recalled the mass strikes by teachers in France, the United States and other countries, and the courageous struggle by airport ground staff at WISAG in Frankfurt, where strikers not only came into conflict with an influential company, but also with the trade unions and all parties in the Hesse state parliament.

At the end of the discussion, it was agreed to distribute the resolution as widely as possible among workers and to build the International Workers Alliance as a new instrument of struggle for the international working class.



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