

# Open Letter to the Red Pens Facebook group administrators: End censorship of articles on the COVID-19 pandemic!

Socialist Equality Party (France)  
8 November 2021

The Socialist Equality Party (PES) of France and the *World Socialist Web Site* call for an immediate end to the censorship of articles about the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic by administrators of the Red Pens Facebook group. The group, created in December 2018, includes more than 70,000 teachers in France. With COVID-19 cases once again accelerating across Europe and thousands of students being infected each week, it is essential that teachers have the democratic right to freely discuss and share information on the spread of the virus in schools.

On October 9, a Red Pens member shared an article to the group entitled, “Macron lifts mask mandates in French primary schools.” Numerous WSWs articles, many with interviews and statements by teachers themselves, have been regularly shared to the group over the past 18 months, some receiving hundreds of “likes” and comments. However, while the latest post was initially approved, it was deleted by administrators two hours later.

When asked to clarify why the article had been removed, a Red Pens group administrator stated that it was part of a policy of promoting “as a priority posts concerning our wages and articles which deal with the death of Samuel Paty,” a high school teacher slain in an Islamist terror attack in October 2020. Two subsequent follow-up messages to the administrators appealing their decision have remained unanswered.

The censored article discussed the danger posed to teachers, students and their families by Macron’s “herd immunity” policy in schools. Its analysis was based on data provided by Public Health France and modelling by the Pasteur Institute. It also cited Dr. Malgorzata Gasperowicz, from the University of Calgary, whose

work has shown that COVID-19 can be eliminated within two to three months of stringent scientific measures.

The actions of the Red Pens Facebook group raises many troubling questions. What other articles on the pandemic, its impact within schools, its effect upon children, including in France and internationally, have been rejected by administrators? Why has a decision been taken to prevent teachers from having access to this critical information?

The claim that information about the coronavirus pandemic is less relevant to teachers’ lives than information about their wages or the danger of Islamist terror attacks is absurd on its face. The deadly virus continues to rip through schools, infecting thousands of children and teachers each week. Since the reopening of French schools, tens of thousands of pupils have been infected with COVID-19, and thousands of classes have been closed. At least nine children in France have died from the virus already. Dozens remain hospitalised.

The number of teachers who have died after contracting the virus in classrooms is unknown. This information is covered up by government authorities and goes unreported by the trade unions.

Administrators of the Red Pens Facebook group may claim that the COVID-19 pandemic is irrelevant for teachers, but it is a basic democratic right that teachers be able to decide this for themselves. Without such information, how else are teachers to wage a struggle in defense of the safety of their students, themselves and their loved ones?

This is all the more critical as the virus has begun to quickly rebound in France over recent weeks. The

7,360 cases reported on October 30 was the highest since September 21.

In the past, the Red Pens has sought to provide teachers with information about the pandemic. On its website, there is a COVID-19 information page for teachers and supporters to keep track of outbreaks across France. Teachers have shown strong interest in this information, with the page being viewed over four million times since May 2020. Why, then, amid a new surge of the virus in France and across Europe, have the administrators decided to censor teachers' access to scientific information about the pandemic from the WSWS?

Regardless of their own individual views or intentions, the administrators' actions objectively support the efforts of the Macron government to enforce unsafe conditions in schools. Since the end of the initial lockdown that began in March 2020, the Macron government has insisted that in-person schooling must continue at all costs, regardless of the impact upon the spread of the virus. As teachers are aware, this has not been aimed at protecting the psychological well-being of children but ensuring that their parents are able to continue to go to work.

This has been the centerpiece of Macron's policy of attempting to reach "herd immunity" through mass infection, allowing the virus to spread and tens of thousands to be killed in order to prevent any restriction on corporate profit-making operations.

Teachers have played a major role in the fight against this murderous policy in France. In November 2020, educators organized wildcat strikes at dozens of schools to close classes and oppose the unsafe reopening of schools in the midst of the second wave of the pandemic.

This movement remained isolated only because the teachers unions opposed any broader mobilisation. The administrators' actions are serving the bureaucracy of the Sud Education and CGT trade unions, which have supported and enforced the Macron government's unsafe education policy from the beginning of the pandemic.

Opposition in the working class is rapidly mounting to the ruling elite's policy of mass death. We again demand that the administrators of the Red Pens Facebook group allow the free circulation of information, without which there can be no talk of a

successful struggle by teachers to defend their interests. We encourage members of the Facebook group to write to the group administrators and demand that they end the censorship of articles on the pandemic. Letters should also be sent to the WSWS here: <https://www.wsws.org/en/special/pages/contact.html>.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**