

German Socialist Equality Party campaign against reopening schools finds significant response

By our reporters
22 August 2020

Since the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP, Socialist Equality Party) published a statement calling for the establishment of action committees to prepare a general strike against the reopening of schools, support is growing. Given the rapidly increasing number of infections, teachers, parents and students want to prevent schools from becoming dangerous breeding grounds for the coronavirus.

The statement was shared hundreds of times on social media and found thousands of readers. A short video by SGP deputy chairman Christoph Vandreier has also met with great interest.

“Hundreds of thousands of teachers and millions of students are being exposed to a deadly risk in overcrowded classrooms, in run-down sanitary facilities and on crowded school buses,” Vandreier explains in the video. “Therefore, workers must organize independently in action committees, and fight for a general strike and a socialist perspective.”

Asked about this, Anna, a young teacher and mother from Austria, said, “I see it the same way. We are currently on holiday until mid-September, but Education Minister [Heinz] Fassmann wants to fully reopen the schools with normal class sizes. It’s all about the parents working, but not about their health or lives or those of their children—not to mention the teachers. If our trade union does nothing, then teachers must do something about the brainless politicians who want to drive us and children into being ill!”

Barbara, who lives in Bavaria with her two children, writes on Twitter, “I experience the reopening as a threat. If schools in Bavaria start up their regular operations, I will do everything I can to ensure that my little one doesn’t have to go. Therefore, I am looking

for like-minded people.”

Like Barbara, millions of people in Germany and Europe are affected. Many concerned teachers have told the *World Socialist Web Site* about intolerable conditions at their schools. “The infection figures are as high as in April,” says Anna. “Nevertheless, there will be no dividing pupils up into smaller groups—Education Minister Fassmann has already said that much.”

“Some school directors did not open up the IT suites in June because you simply cannot disinfect keyboards,” Anna reports. “Others left them open, without precise instructions. At our old school, there is not even hot water in the classrooms.”

“I have an inside view on schools,” a teacher from Hamburg, who wants to remain anonymous, told the *World Socialist Web Site*. “Teachers are forbidden to use fans or Plexiglas [screens] because of fire safety issues—individual initiative is not wanted.” Meanwhile, the occurrence of infection is “very much obscured by the press and politicians,” he adds.

Boris, a classroom teacher in Hamburg, confirms this. “I can corroborate this one to one,” he writes on Twitter. “The school board directs that employees may not talk publicly about the infection (sic!). And I don’t mean sensitive data, but even, ‘Yes we have positive cases.’ That’s crazy. Transparency and information: Nothing.”

Anna also reports, “In June, individual students tested positive, but the director did not tell teachers or classmates or their parents. It was kept secret! It wasn’t until report day that the headmaster mentioned it. That’s what the headmasters agreed on! All pupils and teachers in that class should have been tested!”

The SGP and its youth and student organization, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), will continue to advance the initiative for action committees against school reopenings. On Sunday August 30, they are inviting the public to an online meeting to discuss the next steps with students, teachers and workers. The event is entitled: “Stop the school reopenings! Prepare for a general strike” and will be streamed live at 3 p.m. (Berlin time) from this link.

We appeal to all readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* to participate in this important event and share it as widely as possible on social media. The Facebook page can be found here. You can register here to support the formation of an action committee.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>