

Finding Common Solutions: Precarious Labour and the Lack of Diversity in German Higher Education



Joint Workshop of GEW Hessen and Academics for Peace
Germany in Collaboration with the Department of Sociology
Goethe University Frankfurt

24 – 25 May 2019, Frankfurt am Main

Dear Colleagues,

Academics for Peace Germany (AfP-Germany) was founded in October 2017 by the academics who signed the now well-known 'Peace Petition' in Turkey in January 2016 and the colleagues who supported the values of academic freedom, freedom of speech and struggle for peace. AfP-Germany organizes campaigns for the solidarity with peace academics and raises awareness and support with colleagues who have been threatened, targeted, lost their job, and banned from working in public service. Their aim is to function as an international "hub" for human rights organizations, NGOs, academics, as well as international press seeking information on the repression against the Academics for Peace in Turkey.

The GEW has supported teachers, scholars facing persecution by the Turkish state in general, and the Academics for Peace in particular. This is part of the tradition of international solidarity of the German trade union movement. When teachers and scholars who have fled from Turkey are confronted with the challenge of establishing themselves in Germany, however, the focus shifts from expressing international solidarity to finding common solutions for new problems such as precarity and lack of diversity in the higher education system.

This is the purpose of this workshop. We want to bring together scholars, activists and unionists from different backgrounds and facilitate discussion about the situation of precarious knowledge workers, common problems and common solutions. We as differently positioned university workers have been facing precarity in different ways during the last decades due to neoliberal crisis, austerity regimes, and persistent hierarchies of class, race and gender in the higher education system, and most recently the struggle against the scientific truth-shadowing of the extreme right.

Due to autocratic regimes, a good number of us have had to leave our students, families and communities behind. It is true that in parallel with trade union struggles, new forms of resistance are emerging in many countries. What can we learn from them? How can the exiled academics as the new members of the precarious workforce of German academia and *Mittelbau* cooperate to revitalise the critical position in the universities and respond to the rise of right-wing policies? How do we respond to existing structures and policies that erode employment rights, drag down long term / permanent contracts, weaken diversity of opinions, strengthen sexism, and welcome racist discourses to campus?

We would like to exchange views and experiences for a micro as well as a macro understanding of these common issues with colleagues of AfP-Germany. This workshop will hopefully be the igniter for further cooperation of GEW and Academics for Peace.

Registration

Participation is free of charge. Snacks and refreshments will be provided. Please register via e-mail to geschaeftsfuehrung@gew-hessen.de by 3 May and indicate whether you want to apply for funding. Funding is available to reimburse traveling and accommodation costs for 15 participants. Maximum number of participants is 35. Please book a train and hotel for yourself soon if possible.

We want to thank the GEW Hauptvorstand, GEW Landesverband Hessen, GEW Regionalverbände Hochschule und Forschung Südhessen, Mittelhessen and Nordhessen for funding as well as the Department for Sociology at Goethe University for hosting this workshop.

Birgit Koch
(Chairperson GEW Hessen)

Latife Akyüz
(Academics for Peace Germany)

Kira Kosnick
(Goethe University)

Frankfurt am Main, March 2019

Programme

// **Friday, 24 May 2019** // Seminarhaus SH 4.109

- From 1:00 p.m. Registration, Tee and Coffee
- 1:30–2:30 p.m. **Greetings and Introductions**
Birgit Koch | Chairperson of GEW Hessen
Latife Akyüz | Academics for Peace Germany
Kira Kosnick | Goethe University Frankfurt
- 2:30–4:00 p.m. Panel Discussion
Exiled Academics, Precarious Labour and Lack of Diversity in German Higher Education System
Tobias Cepok | GEW Hessen
Vanessa Thompson | Goethe University Frankfurt
Zeynep Kivılcım | Academics for Peace Germany
Moderation: Eylem Çamuroğlu Çığ
- 4:00–4:30 p.m. Tea and Coffee Break
- 4:30–6:30 p.m. Panel Discussion
Struggles against Precarity and Lack of Diversity: Shared Experiences, Best Practices, and Challenges in Germany and Turkey
Nina Ulbrich | GEW Hessen
Aslı Telli Aydemir | Academics for Peace Germany
Britta Ohm | Netzwerk für Gute Arbeit in der Wissenschaft
Moderation: Tobias Cepok
- 7:00–8:00 p.m. Dinner
- From 8:00 p.m. Informal Get-Together

// **Saturday, 25 May 2019** // Seminarhaus SH 3.109

- 8:00–9:00 a.m. Breakfast at the Hotel
- 10:00–11:30 a.m. Panel Discussion
International Solidarity within the Academic Community: The Difficult Case of Turkey and Germany
Birgit Koch | Chairperson of GEW Hessen
Steffen Käthner | Bund demokratischer Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler
Aysuda Kölemen | Academics for Peace and Off-University
Moderation: Melehat Kutun
- 11:30 a.m.–
12:00 p.m. Tea and Coffee Break

12:00–2:00 p.m. Plenary Discussion
Finding Common Solutions
Feedback and Arrangements for Future Cooperation
Moderation: Latife Akyüz and Kira Kosnick

End of Workshop Snack “to go”


Registration

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Venue

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Impressum
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Titelbild: Academics for Peace
 März 2019