

Greetings from LabourNet Germany to the participants of the meeting of the Transnational Social Strike Platform in Paris

Dear friends and comrades in struggle,

We greatly appreciate being invited to participate in the meeting and wish you both a success and a good time!

The political response to a project like „Fortress Europe“, with its closed borders and authoritarian domestic regimes, can't be addressed adequately at the national level. Transnational networking is critical when it comes to struggling against the continuous attacks on our living conditions. With this meeting, social and political struggles from all over Europe come together, and we're glad to support this any way we can. However, despite our plans and contrary to the meetings in Frankfurt and in Poznan, due to a lack of financial resources and staff we unfortunately can't take part in Paris.

Partly due to a long time planned meeting with alternative unions in Japan (railwayworkers, freeters) and South Korea (truckers, migrant union).

But mainly due to a new campaign we are currently organizing, and to which we want to draw a little bit of your attention, because it is a campaign against recent developments that have dire consequences for the rest of Europe – as, for example, the so-called Hartz laws (2005) had – by breaking the resistance of many workers and strengthening Germany's lead in the effort at driving down or “dumping” wages.

With this campaign we want to target a development that may be little known internationally: The German Trade Union Federation (DGB) and all of its 8 affiliated member unions are once more engaged in bargaining with the two most important employers' associations of temporary work agencies – which we call slave labor agencies. The scandal for trade unionists is that the federation is participating in the employers' goal of destroying the “equal pay” standard, in Germany and eventually elsewhere in Europe.

This is possible through an amendment to the German law on temporary work that allows regulations to be altered through collective bargaining. The German government is currently considering a new law that they say will better regulate temporary work – another lie, because this new law would allow exceptions to stay in place against equal pay and equal treatment (even after 18 months of employment, which seldom happens). All time since such laws exist, member unions of the DGB have participated in lowering them by using this option to bargain – and we have struggled against this without success. All of the 8 trade unions participating in this round of bargaining have official positions in favor of „equal work, equal pay“ – and all of them blame the expansion of temporary work and criticize that it increases precarious work in general, puts pressure on workers and weakens them in labor

struggles. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to stop the DGB from bargaining around temporary work. Our position is that collectively bargaining agreements should never be below the standard set in the law. In our campaign – already supported by more than 400 trade unionists – we demand a stop to bargaining, cancelling immediately all existing agreements and a massive mobilization against additional concessions in the new law. A similar campaign, which also demands the prohibition of temporary work, has already won the support of nearly a thousand people. Increasing temporary work and sinking wages even further in Germany will have an international impact, because the deregulation of the German labor market will only deepen the European crisis. Therefore, we call on you to sign the open letter of protest (<http://www.labournet.de/?p=100678>) and to draw attention to this development and to mobilize in your respective countries against this broken solidarity of the DGB!

***With comradely, brotherly and sisterly greetings, the staff of LabourNet
Germany, october 2016***

PS: And, of course, we will continue to publish about the transnational social strike at <http://www.labournet.de/?p=100851>

LabourNet Germany: <http://www.labournet.de/>

The meeting point for all left-wing trade unionists, both waged and unwaged