


Der Wendepunkt



Socialists and other activists at the University of Cologne

Empty bellies don't like to study: Student funding (BAföG) for all instead of bombs

 Student parliament elections from December 9 to 13, 2024

"That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed; (...) For these reasons, the States Parties to this Constitution, believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives."

Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), adopted November 16, 1945.

The Constitutional Court has dismissed a fellow student's claim for a student grant (BAföG) that provides a decent living wage. The court thus justifies the absence of the BAföG reform still planned in the coalition agreement of the just failed coalition: nothing has remained of the announced increase in BAföG rates, the expansion of eligibility and steps towards parental independence apart from

crumbs. The money is being squandered on armaments, but the urgently needed improvement in the social situation of the population is not to take place due to pressure from capital associations, the CDU/CSU, FDP and AfD.

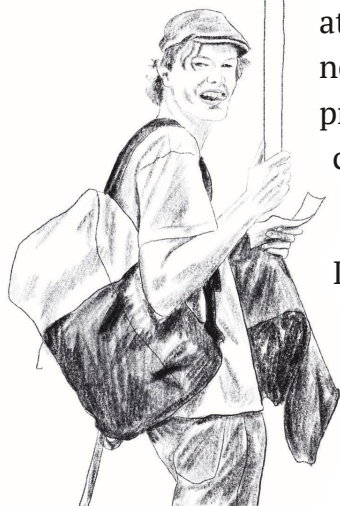
In times of the so-called "military turnaround", social progress should be considered naïve, and a student grant for

all should be considered dreaming, while sabre-rattling and social brutality should be considered "normal". A humane BAföG for all — nothing but a crazy idea?

Looking back for future

Throughout history, more and more social groups have fought for access to education and science – from the original privilege of the clergy, access to education has been extended to the middle classes and increasingly to the working classes. The BAföG is evidence of this. It was fought for by the student movement of 1968. Universities should be made accessible to all and the sciences should be used for the benefit of the

SOLIDARITÄT
STATT
KONKURRENZ



Thursday, December 12, 2024

8 p.m., Lecture Hall C, Hörsaalgebäude

US medium-range missiles in Germany: peace through first strike capability against Russia?

Arguments and lessons from history for a renaissance of international disarmament and détente

An information and discussion event with:

- **Andreas Zumach**, journalist and correspondent at the UN, specializing in arms control
- **Volker Ossenkopf-Okada**, I. Physikalisches Institut, University of Cologne

whole of society and never again, as under fascism, be misused for the aims of an inhuman political and economic elite.

The neoliberal devastation of recent decades has been directed precisely against the achievements of '68. In some cases, such as tuition fees, they have had to be withdrawn due to protests; this has not yet happened with the increasing restrictions on BAföG: Whereas in the 1970s almost one in two students received BAföG as a full grant, today it is just one in seven – and now half of it is usually in the form of a loan. At the same time, more than half of students are poor and well over half have to work “on the side”. The social pressure and the resulting forced, rushed cramming harms everyone: It makes university a risk to mental health, leaves little time for reading and for social and political engagement and superficializes studies. Putting an end to this is important for everyone beyond the university: it is about a university where no one is left behind and everyone can work together to shape society in a sensible and humane way.

The problem of the socially brutal cramming factory known as the university affects everyone and is not a “self-responsible” failure of individuals, but can only be solved collectively and for everyone.

Decision on direction: production instead of destruction

UNESCO and its founding charter of 1945 quoted above are also a response to fascism. The systematic use of science for war and genocide

went hand in hand with its elitist isolation and an unprecedented decline in student numbers even before the beginning of the Second World War.

Conversely, educational expansion and science in which everyone can actually participate are central to ensuring that the results are in everyone's interest: Rational argument based on scientific analysis as the foundation of democratic social development must be systematically learned, further developed as well as practiced and advocated throughout society. Asking otherwise unasked questions as well as student work results and critical interventions shape the direction of science – at least if the claim of the unity of teaching and research is taken seriously. Since '68 at the latest, student movements have also repeatedly been the starting point or decisive pillar of movements for peace, for social reform or revolution.

We need to develop this productive claim more against attempts to appropriate universities for geopolitics and war policy, against the acceptance of increasingly hard times with a lack of solidarity, in which fences are supposed to suggest security, develop them against social ignorance and elitist isolation. This is how BAföG for all makes sense, this is how it becomes realistic.

To achieve this, we need each other as fellow strugglers for a better world and not as precariously driven people. That is why we are fighting for BAföG for all and are also part of the nationwide alliance of the same name. Join us!



**Student parliament
elections from
December 9 to 13, 2024**

"Studierendenparlament":

Wendepunkt – Sozialist*innen und weitere Aktive an der Uni Köln

"Senat" and "Engere Fakultät der Philosophischen Fakultät":

Liste Linker Aktiver – Bündnis für eine soziale, zivile und demokratische Hochschule

The Wendepunkt is a student group in which left-wing social democrats and other activists are involved.

We meet every Tuesday at 19:30 in lecture hall VIIa, main university building.

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