

„War” against teachers is a „war” against society in Latvia

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Latvian authorities continue to fight against people who are the basis of the State. They invent new financial and political mechanisms aimed to worsen the living and working standards of those who directly influence the future of young generation. The “war” against teachers has already led to protests and tensivity in Latvian society.

Thus, Latvian Education and Science Workers’ Trade Union (LIZDA) organized a major protest march in the capital of Riga on 24 April and went on a three-day strike until 27 April. The strike forced the coalition government to increase their wages. More than 26 000 Latvian teachers have signed up for the protest procession and three-day strike.

The government approved amendments suggested by the Ministry of Education and Science, allocating an additional amount towards the increase of teachers’ wages in order to satisfy demands of the teachers on strike. However, according to LIZDA, the decision for allocation of additional funding towards an increase of teachers’ wages have not completely fulfilled the union’s demands presented in the recent strike.

The new political campaign that will move teachers to despair and job loss is Latvian language proficiency tests. Authorities call it “the natural process of sorting”. And it has begun.

According to Kurzeme Television, since teachers in Latvia have had to pass the official Latvian language proficiency tests, 15 teachers have lost their jobs permanently or temporarily in Liepāja.

At Liepāja 3rd Secondary School, in which learning is bilingual, the official language tests launched by the State Education Content Center proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for seven teachers. The three teachers have been suspended from work right now, until July 5, they have been given time to improve Latvian language skills.

Unfortunately, the fact is that four more teachers themselves stopped their employment relationship on April 28, because they decided independently that they were better off not working at school than to learn. Four more teachers have also chosen the same way at Liepāja 7th High School. Another educator has lost her job in Liepāja's pre-school education institution "Liesmiņa" because of the official language test.

According to Pāvels Jurs, principal of Liepāja 7th High School, working legal relations have already been stopped with teachers who were not able to pass the exam.

Three teachers at the 7th High School have not yet passed official language proficiency tests. Two of them have been on sick leave for a long time. They have chosen a path called "the sick leave" being in despair. The long-standing absence of staff was suspicious to the principal, so he asked the Health Inspectorate to assess the validity of the issuing of sick leaves. Teachers are even accused of abusing the law.

Health Inspectorate spokeswoman Iveta Balode informed that at the beginning of April, the Inspectorate requested medical documents from the family doctors of these educators and three separate tests have been launched, the results of which could be known in early June. During tests, inspection doctors and experts will see records of patient visits, health complaints, referrals to investigations, and their results.

Unfortunately, the absence of teachers has affected the learning process.

Thus, Liepājas 3rd Secondary School principal acknowledged

that a tragic situation is with a math teacher: "It is sudden, especially now, in May, when there are exams, state tests, finding a math teacher who is willing to work full-time is almost impossible."

Liepāja City Education Board pointed out that the shortage of 15 teachers in the population of approximately 800 teachers was not a large number, so there is no reason to consider the situation as extreme. But it is really extreme and absurd and even catastrophic for children who will lose time and knowledge only because Russian speaking teachers are persecuted in the state and can not carry out their key duties and to educate children.

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