

# Duisburg protesters demand resignation of mayor

Our correspondents  
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Since last Saturday's Love Parade techno music festival that claimed the lives of 21 people, anger and sadness has mounted in Duisburg. One of the posters placed at the entrance to the tunnel where the catastrophe took place reads: "Cultural capital 2010—we accuse: Prestige, craze for profits and cowardice".

On Thursday, a crowd of around 500 people gathered in front of the Duisburg city hall to demand the resignation of the mayor who had insisted that the festival take place despite obvious and serious security risks. Many of those present had taken part in the dance festival or had sons and daughters who were caught up in the death trap.

The protest had been called by individual citizens of Duisburg. Markus Schröder reported that he had celebrated on Saturday without knowing what was taking place. He later found out: "My niece was right in the middle, just a few meters away from the stairs."

On Sunday, he went to the press conference that took place in the city hall, but when he arrived he would have preferred, he said, "to wring the necks of the politicians in attendance". He decided at short notice to organise Thursday's protest via the Internet and with posters at the tunnel and in the city center.

Schröder told the *World Socialist Web Site* that a number of people bore responsibility for the death trap at the Love Parade: in the first place the organisers, who had only provided one point for both entrance and exit, and then the police. "They must have seen at an early stage what was happening", Schröder declared. "Why was the second ramp not opened? Why was the entrance that leads directly to the main station closed? That would have been the ideal entry point. But this was where the VIPs were lodged and VIPs are more important."

Several young people reported on their bitter

experiences last Saturday via a megaphone. Others demanded "answers to our questions at last!" The authorities had approved everything in the long run and silenced all those who expressed their opposition. Those who should be prosecuted include the city mayor, the Love Parade organiser Rainer Schaller, the entire town council and the police. The crowd cried out repeatedly for Mayor Sauerland to resign.

A young girl held a placard with the text: "Capitalism kills". When asked why she had drafted the sign, she replied that nothing would change if Sauerland merely resigned and then things went back to normal. Responsibility lies with the greed for profits, which was stronger than any doubts about security.

Some supporters of the WSWs also addressed the crowd via a megaphone. They pointed out that the Duisburg tragedy was a reflection of conditions prevailing throughout society. All of the political parties—not just the Christian Democrats, but also the social democrats (SPD), the Greens and the Left Party—had no interest in the well-being and security of the young people. "Such ruthlessness is typical for a social system, which does not proceed from the needs of people, but rather the profit interests of the ruling elite", declared Marianne Arens from the WSWs.

Some of those present expressed their opposition to political questions being addressed. In particular, SPD supporters were keen that criticism be directed at the CDU mayor and not the SPD-Green administration that was recently formed at a state level in the region.

WSWS reporters distributed a leaflet headed: "Love Parade disaster: 'Not a misfortune, but a crime' ", which addressed the broader social issues. It was warmly received and was the source of considerable discussion.

After reading the text of the leaflet, Renate from

Duisburg said: “I am pleased with what you write. You hit the nail on the head. These people go over corpses, and afterwards they do not even have the courage to stand up to their responsibility.” Renate has a son who was in the crowd on Saturday. “I could not reach him for hours”, she reported. “Fortunately he came home uninjured. I do not know what I would have done if anything had happened. He is my only son.”

Helmut Herbst from Duisburg Rheinhausen related that his nephew had suffered badly at the Love Parade. “He was with his friend in the middle and wanted to climb up the wall, but was then pulled down by security personnel”, he said. “As a result, my nephew was injured in the upper neck. There were evidently completely untrained security personnel in attendance. It is sad to think that young, untrained people were used as stewards, although they had no idea what they were doing.”

The Love Parade has “decayed into a money-making machine”, declared another. “The politicians are blinded by the prospect of prestige and big money; this applies to all parties. How can one organise a major event, without planning escape exits? The disaster could have been even greater.”



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