Workers and youth in Berlin: “What is taking place in Ferguson is war”

Our reporters
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The German media has prominently featured the recent events in Ferguson, with a number of papers noting that the source of unrest in Missouri is growing social inequality. The media and leading layers of the political elite are concerned that the civil war-like response of the US police forces, which have trampled on democratic rights, has brought the true state of class relations in the United States and internationally to the fore.

On Tuesday, Germany’s leading business paper *Handelsblatt* wrote that the racist form of police violence was in fact an expression of social conflicts. Scenes similar to those in Ferguson could be replicated throughout the United States. “The war began in Ferguson,” the newspaper writes. “If counter measures are not taken, then it is only a question of when, before Ferguson is replicated everywhere.”

Workers and young people in Germany were shocked at the news from Missouri. “I have followed the news from Ferguson on television,” said Mark, who is studying mathematics in Berlin. “I always had an image of America as a land of democracy and press freedom. After all that I have now seen, this image is destroyed or at least profoundly shaken. When one reads the reports on the activities of the secret services then it is clear that the risk of an authoritarian police state is very real.”

Markus expressed his hope that the move towards a police state could be prevented by pressure on the government, while Alex, 28, a self-employed worker, regarded the situation as much more advanced. “The media reports from Ferguson show that a police state is already in operation in the United States,” he said. “If this continues, then we will even see the emergence of fascist tendencies. I am by no means anti-American, but hope that Obama intervenes to stop it.”

Fubgena, a textile worker from the Berlin district of Neukölln, saw the situation differently: “Even if Obama is the first African-American president, he has not changed anything. He has done nothing to change the situation for blacks .He has not changed anything in Iraq, where it is worse than it was under Saddam Hussein, and also not in Libya, where everything is also worse. Obama has changed nothing and he cannot change anything because the rules are made by others.”

The military deployment in Ferguson reminds Fubgena of the actions of the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip: “What is taking place in Ferguson is war. You cannot use weapons against the people. And it’s happening everywhere. This is the war of the rich against the poor. The rich do what they want; the police do what they want. This is not a democracy. In a democracy such things could not take place and this is happening in America, the land of democracy.”

Another young worker from Berlin told the WSWS that the events in Ferguson recalled the wars in the Ukraine and Iraq, saying, “I’m afraid that this crisis could lead to a third world war. I have talked to my friends about it, who are of the same opinion. “

Twenty-six-year-old Sahila from Azerbaijan, who is currently studying in Poland and is in Berlin in connection with her studies, declared that the people in Ferguson were no longer prepared to tolerate the way they are treated by the authorities. The events make clear that the United States, which is often portrayed as particularly democratic, is indistinguishable from other powers. “If they (the elite) want to achieve anything they use every means to get their way,” she said.

Jonas is 20 and studying culture and technology at the Technical University of Berlin. He is sure that scenes similar to those in Ferguson could erupt in Berlin. “Police brutality is on the agenda in Berlin,” he told

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WSWS reporters. Some of his friends had been assaulted by police merely because they had made disparaging comments about some officers.

There have been a number of cases of police brutality in Berlin during the past few months, in particular in connection with demonstrations against the deportation of refugees. In June, a number of videos were released showing police brutally beating up participants on demonstrations. During the same period the police established a no-go area and cordoned off entire streets surrounding a building occupied by refugees in order to prevent protests and prepare their deportation.

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