

Stop the terror directed against refugees in Germany!

Ulrich Rippert
11 May 2018

The night-time raid last week by hundreds of police on a refugee camp in Ellwangen was a deliberate state provocation aimed at intimidating anyone who dares to oppose the aggressive and often illegal deportation measures of the German state.

At the beginning of last week, around 50 residents of a refugee shelter in the small town of Ellwangen in the state of Baden-Württemberg protested against police seeking to apprehend and deport a young refugee from Togo who lived in the home. According to the unanimous opinion of eyewitnesses, no violence was involved.

Three days later, five squads of heavily armed and hooded police and special forces stormed the shelter. In Gestapo style, they kicked in the doors of the property early in the morning, roused the surprised residents, handcuffed them, and forced them outside.

Photos, video clips and statements made by those affected made clear that the brutal police operation was primarily aimed at spreading fear and terror. The images of masked stormtroopers wrestling helpless refugees to the ground were not only directed at deterring asylum seekers but also at intimidating the millions of people expressing their solidarity with the most vulnerable members of society.

Resistance to the brutal deportation policy of the federal and state governments remains substantial despite the waves of xenophobia propagated by the media. Demonstrations, protests and blockades to defend refugees are increasingly common. At Frankfurt Airport alone, 237 pilots refused to carry out deportations last year.

There have been a series of spontaneous initiatives opposing deportations. Last year, 300 students in Nuremberg confronted police seeking to deport one of their classmates. Last month, defiant neighbours in

Witzenhausen, Hesse, prevented a surprise police operation from arresting and deporting a refugee whose asylum procedure had not been decided upon.

Resistance to the government's restrictive asylum policy and brutal deportation practices is growing, along with opposition to the government's military policy and its moves towards massive rearmament. The overwhelming majority oppose the government's planned drastic increase in defence spending and associated cuts in the social sphere. Extended protest strikes in the metal and electrical industry and in the civil service are indications of intensified class struggle.

This growing resistance is now to be intimidated and nipped in the bud. This is the significance of the state operation in the Ellwangen refugee camp. The message is, "Civil disobedience is no longer acceptable, let alone more militant forms of protest and resistance. Anyone who expresses his solidarity with the victims of state violence and does not obey the orders of the authorities will be hounded without mercy."

The detention of the 23-year-old asylum-seeker from Togo was illegal—his case had not yet been decided by the Administrative Court in Stuttgart. This was made clear by his lawyer in Stuttgart, who plans to file a constitutional complaint against the state of Baden-Württemberg.

This, however, has done nothing to prevent the media and politicians of all parties from supporting the police terror in Ellwangen and hysterically calling for a powerful state while ignoring basic democratic rights.

The head of the Christian Social Union (CSU) in Bavaria, Alexander Dobrindt, has denounced refugee workers and their lawyers as part of an "anti-deportation industry, which threatens social harmony and undermines the rule of law." Germany's Interior

Minister Horst Seehofer (CSU) described the protest by refugees as a “slap in the face for law-abiding people,” and announced it was no longer acceptable that “almost every second asylum case ends up in court.”

The Interior Minister is striving to accelerate the construction of so-called “anchor centres” where asylum seekers are concentrated together and incarcerated. Such camps already existed in the early 1920s in the Weimar Republic, as the newspaper Freitag reported three years ago. At that time, they served as “deportation camps for Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe” and were officially called “concentration camps.” The subsequent use of such camps by the Nazis is well-known.

The Greens, who lead the government in the state of Baden-Württemberg, the Social Democratic Party, the Free Democratic Party and the Left Party have all campaigned against refugees in a manner similar to that of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD).

As has often happened in German history, this development reveals the limits of the country’s thin democratic facade. Faced with the slightest opposition the ugly face of the authoritarian state becomes visible.

The days when students were encouraged to express solidarity with the weak and schools were named after opponents of fascism, such as Sophie Scholl, are over. Even Mahatma Gandhi and his policy of nonviolence are out. If this trend continues, not only will Bertolt Brecht soon disappear from the curriculum, but also Friedrich Schiller. Anyone who, like Schiller’s Wilhelm Tell, does not bow down to the dictator Gessler, is to be treated as a criminal.

The slander and persecution of refugees across Europe and in the United States is being used to jettison all basic democratic rights. In Austria, the conservative People’s Party has brought the right-wing extremist FPÖ into the government to this end. In Germany, the ruling grand coalition is taking over the politics of the AfD.

The reason for this shift to the right is the profound crisis of capitalist society. The same government that expends so much energy in sending refugees back to their war-torn villages and towns is working hard to acquire new weapons systems to be used in the next round of military destruction.

Militarism and growing social inequality are incompatible with democracy. As resistance to this

reactionary policy grows, a police state is being erected to target not only refugees but the entire working class.

The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) in Germany defends the rights of refugees and opposes all attempts to divide the working class. Regardless of nationality, skin colour or religion, workers must unite in a joint struggle across national borders to oppose capitalism and war.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact