

Protest in Munich against attacks on refugees, poverty and war

Our reporters
1 August 2018

Despite pouring rain, tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Munich on July 22 against right-wing agitation, increased military spending, poverty and war. Participants gathered in four of the city's squares and marched in an ever-expanding demonstration, which eventually led to the Königsplatz, where more than 50,000 people came together, according to the organizers.

More than 130 organizations had called for the demonstration under the motto "Incited against—together against the politics of fear." In addition, the call was supported by numerous celebrities, such as the cabaret artists Max Uthoff, Claus von Wagner and Urban Priol. The Munich Kammerspiele and the Volkstheater also supported the call.

The Christian Social Union (CSU) faction on the Munich city council wanted to ban the two companies from supporting the demonstration, referring to the neutrality obligation of city institutions, but were unable to prevail. The party then put up posters throughout Munich on Saturday that accused the demonstrators of lacking decency.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Greens and the Left Party, which had signed the call for the demonstration, were barely visible at the protest. The event was dominated by home-made banners, many of which attacked not only the CSU, but also the right-wing politics of all parties: "Agitation [against refugees] and let them drown—is this your leading [German] culture?," "Sea rescue is not a crime." There were also signs reading "No wars in my name," and bearing slogans against growing state surveillance.

Participation in the demonstration exceeded all expectations. Workers, students, retirees, doctors and especially young people had come because they no

longer want to accept the shift to the right by the political establishment. They showed clearly that the agitation against refugees, the war policy and austerity are rejected by the bulk of the population.

"I'm here because I believe that it is not illegal to rescue people who face drowning in their attempt to escape," one protester said. "And I'm also protesting today against the police law." The new state law came into force on May 25, providing the police and judiciary with extremely broad powers.

Tobias came not only because of the CSU's policy. The refugee crisis is being instrumentalized to enforce the shift to the right, he said. "They are acting like we're being flooded [with refugees], which I think is not the case at all. So, we just let people drown in the Mediterranean, of course, without justification, actually against all human rights."

Max, a 23-year-old student, came to the demonstration because he can no longer stand domestic German politics. That applies to refugee policy as well as to social policy, he said. "There should be enough money, if you look at the economy. But there are so many expenditures on the military, which are incomprehensible and could be much better used for the benefit of society."

Oskar is 17 and came to the demonstration from Munich-Großhadern. He was particularly shocked when federal Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (CSU) had joked about deportations. But he also no longer wants to accept social injustice and the turn to the right. "The right-wing are whipping up stupid fears about refugees, but they do not talk about the arms exports, which lead to people seeking to flee."

The issue of militarism and wars in the Middle East concerned many participants. Alexander, a 74-year-old retiree, came to protest for these reasons. "Germany

must stay out of war because it's always about the interests of those who want to grab power," he said. He was pleased that socialist views were being discussed again, including in the US.

Asked about the role of the SPD, the Greens and the Left Party, many reacted dismissively. "I have more and more problems voting every time," Stephanie Regensburger, a family doctor said. "I've thought twice about not voting, because I don't know who to vote for, because they've all adapted and because I no longer believe it is a democratic process."

In fact, all the parties represented in the Bundestag (federal parliament) are involved in the right-wing policy of deportations, state rearmament and war. That is why many demonstrators responded very positively to the statement "Refugees ensnared in European dragnet," distributed by representatives of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP, Socialist Equality Party).

The SGP leaflet explained that the brutal crackdown on refugees is an expression of the deep crisis of capitalism and is directed against all workers.

"These criminal policies of the capitalist parties stand in stark contrast to the humane sentiments of workers and young people throughout the world," it stated. "The task now is to connect the humane and democratic sentiments of workers all over the world with a political program that expresses their social interests. The defense of immigrants and refugees must be connected to opposition to war, social inequality, declining wages and the assault on social programs."



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact