

Supporters of the “Last Generation” climate action group held in preventive detention in Bavaria

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According to “Last Generation,” 27 supporters of the climate action group have been placed in preventive detention in Bavaria once again, and the group is taking legal action against this. The arrests are related to the IAA International Motor Show, which took place in Munich September 5–10.

Last Generation, like other activists, had announced protests and actions against the exhibition in advance. Now the climate protesters are being suppressed by the same brutal measures that were used against them in Bavaria in autumn 2022. It became only a matter of time before Bavarian Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann’s (CSU) statement to broadcaster ZDF that preventive detention “must remain the absolute exception” would prove to be a lie.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) condemn the renewed police terror against the Last Generation. We warned at the time of the earlier attack that the campaign against the climate activists was designed to “build up a police state where the security forces put oppositionists in preventive detention and the judiciary punishes legitimate protest with years in prison.” The aim is to criminalise and intimidate peaceful protest, civil disobedience and other forms of resistance.

The Last Generation activists are currently being held in Munich’s Stadelheim prison, as well as in Memmingen, located southwest of the Bavarian state capital. According to the climate protesters, 16 of them would remain in custody until September 10. For the other 11 supporters, the Munich District Court ordered preventive detention until September 30. The human rights organisation Amnesty International described the

procedure as “inhumane.”

Preventive detention is made possible by Article 20 of the Bavarian Police Tasks Act (PAG). In no other federal state is the maximum duration of up to two months detention as high as in Bavaria, although such measures have been tightened nationwide in recent years. With a massive expansion of the Bavarian PAG in 2017, it was initially even possible to extend preventive detention indefinitely. After fierce protests, the Bavarian state government rowed back somewhat to the current law in 2021.

State Interior Minister Herrmann already threatened preventive detention in the run-up to the IAA: “We will not tolerate any criminal offences! Anyone who coerces people in traffic, damages other people’s property or even becomes violent towards other people or obstructs the emergency services must expect consistent intervention by the police.” All “peaceful demonstrators,” on the other hand, were welcome in Munich, Herrmann said cynically.

Following the same tune, the Munich police tried to justify their actions against the Last Generation in a post on X, formerly Twitter, saying, “The aim is not to stop people from protesting, but to prevent announced crimes.”

It is legally disputed whether the peaceful actions of the Last Generation—including protesters gluing themselves to the streets or sit-in blockades—constitute a punishable act (coercion) at all. The Berlin Regional Court recently ruled that a street blockade in the capital did not constitute coercion.

Politically, the actions of the Last Generation are harmless and mainly aim to attract as much attention as possible. The activists seek to pressure the the federal

government, appealing to it in an effort to force it to act. At the same time, the Last Generation advocates very limited political goals such as speed limits on motorways. In doing so, they do not question the cause of climate change—the capitalist profit system.

Nevertheless, the agitation against them by official politics and the media is massive. One main accusation is that the activists were blocking rescue routes and thus endangering human lives, a completely baseless statement in view of the already daily traffic chaos in major German cities. The aim of the ruling class is to create further precedents to criminalise any kind of protest in the future—be it demonstrations against right-wing extremists or factory occupations by workers.

In essence, this course is supported by all bourgeois parties. Significantly, there is a deafening silence on the current measures against the Last Generation from the leading “opposition” candidates for the Bavarian state elections on October 8. And their criticism of the Bavarian PAG is nothing but hollow phrase-mongering. In the federal states where the Social Democrats (SPD), Left Party and Greens are in government, they are also tightening up police laws and increasing the powers of the security authorities. Their toothless legal manoeuvres in Bavaria—the SPD, Greens and Left Party have filed a lawsuit against the PAG—cannot hide this fact.

The nationwide tightening up of police laws and the renewed preventive detention of Last Generation climate activists in Bavaria are part of the sharp turn to the right by the ruling class.

This is currently made particularly clear by the case of Bavarian Deputy Minister-President and Economic Affairs Minister Hubert Aiwanger (Free Voters) and his extreme right-wing past. Minister-President Markus Söder (Christian Social Union, CSU) is sticking with Aiwanger and seeking a renewed coalition between the two parties after the state elections. The SPD and the Greens are also considering cooperation with the CSU.

The election posters put up by the CSU in Bavaria, showing party founder and long-time chairman Franz-Josef Strauss, along with his statement, “We want nothing to do with right-wing extremist fools and extremists,” could have come from a cabaret. The right-wing extremist tendencies that are now openly revealed by the Aiwanger case are no accident and go back to Strauss himself. Among his speechwriters was Armin

Mohler, a leading representative of the New Right.

The measures against the Last Generation are reminiscent of the darkest times in German history. Not far from Munich, the Nazis opened the first concentration camp in Dachau in 1933, initially to imprison their political opponents under the pretext of “protective custody.” It is significant that Bavaria was already at the centre of events at that time, when SS chief and newly appointed Munich police chief Heinrich Himmler announced the new measures in the Bavarian penal system.

When Bavarian security forces stormed the homes of leading members of the Last Generation at gunpoint in May, we noted that such scenes were “otherwise known mainly from military dictatorships and fascist regimes.” We warned:

The massive crackdown on climate change activists is a serious warning. It shows how quickly and aggressively the ruling class implements its agenda under conditions of war and the intensification of the international class struggle. The SGP will step up its fight to build an independent mass movement against capitalism, war and dictatorship. We call on workers and youth to defend the climate change activists against state repression.



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