

# PEGIDA MUNICH ?

»Saving the Occident« with Race-baiting

„PEGIDA“ (the name stands for „Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident“) was founded in 2014 as a radical anti-Muslim organization in Dresden (Saxony). Right-wing activists in a number of German cities imitated its strategy and formed local PEGIDA offshoots. On January 15th 2015 PEGIDA Munich, which at that time called itself BAGIDA („Bavarians against the Islamization of the Occident“) staged its first demonstration in the Bavarian state capital. Among the 1.500 participants, supporters of right-wing populist organizations, Christian fundamentalists, right-wing hooligans and activists from neo-Nazi groups marched side by side.



Pegida-Rally at the Marienplatz July 2018, Foto: Marcus Buschmüller

From the beginning PEGIDA's activism has never been about the fight against a supposed 'Islamization of the Occident' or a challenge to militant Islamism. The group instead rallies against immigration, Muslims and refugees on the grounds of cultural racism. The federal government in general and chancellor Merkel in particular are targets of PEGIDA's

hatred as well. The group also rallies against the media, which it calls „Lügenpresse“(a term used by Hitler and his fascist cohorts in the 1930s to villainise and slander the press which translates to 'lying media') and people it considers leftists such as supporters of refugees or antifascists.

PEGIDA Munich, a registered association under German law, is under surveillance by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution because of its 'right-wing extremist character'. The chairman of the association, Heinz Meyer, has been charged with incitement after he allegedly urged ‚leftist female students‘ to let themselves be ‚raped by refugees‘ during a rally in Augsburg in September 2017. (Augsburger Allgemeine, March 1st, 2018) The Federal Public Prosecutor is investigating Meyer since 2012 for allegations of founding of a terrorist organization.

Heinz Meyer is also the chairman of the ‚Bavarian Shooting Sports Association Munich‘. By way of this association, the PEGIDA activists have secured themselves legal access to at least a dozen firearms. The Bavarian Minister of the Interior voiced his concern, that the group aims to realize the anti-constitutional goals of PEGIDA aggressively, for instance through attacks on minorities like refugees and Muslims‘ and identified the association as the ‚armed wing‘ of PEGIDA. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, September 4th, 2017)

Parallel to the start of the PEGIDA demonstrations the number of violent acts against refugees and migrants has risen sharply throughout Germany. Racist bigotry and inhumane brutalization mark the political discourse on social media. Online as well as offline, PEGIDA spurs hatred, fuels a climate of exclusion and provides the ideological backdrop for attacks on the people targeted.

The number of participants showing up for PEGIDA’s rallies and self-styled ‘political strolls’ through Munich has declined steadily in the past because of, among other factors, the vocal protest of the civil society. What remains of PEGIDA is a continuing presence in the public space with incessant racist provocations and an open-air stomping ground for the local right-wing extremist scene.

We protest against this defamatory and bigoted propaganda against people of Muslim faith, refugees and other groups!

**No racist propaganda on Munich’s streets and squares!**

**Enough with PEGIDA’s marches and rallies!**