

Nazis against Nazis – Wunsiedel turns neo-Nazi march into a charity run.

Wunsiedel, 15/11/14 – On today's November 15th, 2014 neo-Nazis walked through the streets of Wunsiedel, Upper Franconia, as they do every year. But the small town defended itself. Not with violence, but with an idea: the neo-Nazis march against themselves and for their own exit from the right scene.

Under the motto "Nazis against Nazis" – the most involuntary walkathon in Germany took place today. The place? Wunsiedel in Upper Franconia. In spite of numerous protests by citizens and complaints to the Federal Constitutional Court, neo-Nazis from across Europe flock to the Upper Franconian town as a "place of pilgrimage" due to the fact that the grave of Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess was located here from 1988 to 2011. The memorial march has become one of the fixed institutions of the extreme right-wing scene.

This year, Wunsiedel decided to take a different approach and turn the funeral march of the neo-Nazis into the most involuntary walkathon in Germany. Without the knowledge of participants, posters, banners and ground markings were put up all along the demonstration route, giving it the look of a sporting event, complete with motivational sayings and typical competition elements such as start and finish lines. "Donate, walk!" or "Final sprint instead of victory!" on cheerful confetti-strewn posters were intended to motivate nearly 200 demonstrators, because walking was the very idea behind it all: for every metre walked, €10 went to Nazi opt-out programme EXIT Deutschland – money that was collected from private persons, companies and NGOs beforehand. The result? €10.000 and a lot of surprised right-wingers.

Ever since 2000, the initiative EXIT Germany has helped right-wingers to escape from the scene and build a new life for themselves. This work is dependent on donations. This is why a charity walk was organised with the help of numerous local supporters for the march registered to take place on 15/11/14. It had the effect of turning the neo-Nazis into donors who ended up unwittingly protesting against right-wing extremism with every step they took.

“Nazis against Nazis” is an initiative by the ZDK Gesellschaft Demokratische Kultur gGmbH and was supported by project against right-wing extremism, Bayerischen Verein für Toleranz, Demokratie und Menschenwürde e.V., Aussteigerhilfe Bayern e.V., DGB and Wunsiedler Bündnis gegen Rechtsextremismus.

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