

City of Munich  
The Mayor

Dieter Reiter

**On the 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Oktoberfest bomb attack, held on 26 September 2022, at 9.30 am, at the Memorial Site on the Theresienwiese**

The memory is alive. And so, once again today, we remember those killed in the Oktoberfest bomb attack of 26 September 1980, the most serious right-wing terrorist attack in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany – we remember Gabriele Deutsch, Robert Gmeinwieser, Axel Hirsch, Markus Hölzl, Paul Lux, Ignaz Platzer, Ilona Platzer, Franz Schiele, Angela Schüttrigkeit, Errol Vere-Hodge, Ernst Vestner and Beate Werner. And we feel for the many injured, for the relatives and the bereaved.

Today, we think of those who were violently torn away from us at that time, at a single stroke, here at the main entrance to the ‘Wiesn’, and of others who survived but still suffer from their severe injuries or who had to come to terms with the loss of loved ones. We stand here together today to remember and at the same time to express our solidarity with all those for whom this day will always be associated with the brutal attack perpetrated.

Among these names we are now able to include Jim Evans from Michigan in the USA, who was a soldier stationed in Germany at the time. Together with some of his comrades he was also seriously injured in the bomb attack and has never been back to Germany since then. Just two years ago he heard about our research project in the Department of Arts and Culture and got in touch. I am very pleased that you, Mr. Evans, accepted the city’s invitation to attend today’s commemoration ceremony and are here today. You are most sincerely welcome!

From Jim Evans we also know that practically nobody in the USA has any recollection of the Oktoberfest bomb attack. That is not surprising: after all, even in our country, it was hardly present in the collective memory here for a long time. The Trade Union Youth Organisation – very much to their credit – campaigned to change this from the very beginning. Together with others, they vehemently fought the closure of the case by the Federal Public Prosecutor in 1982 who, without further ado, had classified the attack as the act of a ‘non-political lone perpetrator’ and, as such, considered the situation ‘done and dusted’.

Since 1983, the commemoration of the Oktoberfest bomb attack has largely been organised by the Trade Union Youth Organisation – this year for the 40<sup>th</sup> time. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the committed young people in the youth organisation most sincerely for their work. Their continuing efforts to remember and keep the bomb attack in the public eye were by no means only met with goodwill. Instead, over the course of time, they were also confronted with an increasing disinterest and declining public interest. And not only more recently, comments such as ‘sometime enough has to be enough’ could be heard.

That the young, of all people – who had not experienced the bomb attack themselves, in fact had not even been born at that time – that these young people have campaigned so passionately and vigorously against forgetting and for solidarity with the injured and relatives of the victims and for a proper clarification, and continue to do so with unbroken energy, that deserves the greatest respect and the biggest thank-you.

And it gives cause for hope. Hope for the future. Because one thing is clear: the fight against right-wing extremism must be continued with all the powers at our disposal. And this must also be done by future generations. It is also very important to recognise acts of violence motivated by right-wing extremism as such, and to call them that clearly. Only recently, the perpetrator of Idar-Oberstein, who cold-bloodedly shot a young man at a petrol station who had pointed out to him that he was obliged to wear a protective mask, was found guilty of premeditated murder for base motives. In this case, the court clearly established the man's right-wing extremist leanings as the main motive. That was not the case at the time with the perpetrator who carried out the bomb attack at the Oktoberfest. As is well known, the Federal Prosecutor only classified this as a right-wing terrorist act two years ago.

This clear classification was certainly long overdue. Above all also because the survivors and the bereaved families of the victims of the bomb attack have a right that their demand for answers, for a thorough clarification, for help and support is not only taken seriously but also met, as best as possible – as a sign of recognition for the suffering experienced and as an expression of our solidarity.

And something else is very important to me with respect to the bomb attack and the people affected: that we perseverant draw the public's attention to the bomb attack and its consequences and, in this way, firmly anchor it in the collective memory of our city and of society. Two years ago an important contribution to this was made with the new 'Oktoberfest Bomb Attack Documentation'. And we have discerned that the interest is great, the documentation site has been very well received and the feedback positive all around.

On the occasion of this year's 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Oktoberfest bomb attack, the documentation site has now also been expanded to include a new installation of video contributions. The new media station is called 'Voices of the Survivors'. It shows 2–5 minute video clips in which 10 survivors recall the events of 26 September 1980 and give poignant insights into their lives after the bomb attack. Their urgent voices will always be a reminder to us and an appeal to the obligations of society as a whole and to our own personal social responsibility.

I would like to thank most sincerely all who have contributed for your willingness and courage to share these very personal and, above all, painful experiences with us. And I can assure you that we will remain in close contact with you. We will continue to value your concerns. And, together, we will set the course for a dignified commemoration in the future.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks once again to the Trade Union Youth Organisation Munich and the Department of Arts and Culture for organising today's event and, of course, to all the guests who have come to today's act of remembrance.

Thank you very much.