

Student parliament demands Humboldt University rescind support of Baberowski

Our correspondents
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The Humboldt University Student Parliament (StuPa) in Berlin overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning the university administration for issuing a public statement declaring criticism of right-wing Professor Jörg Baberowski to be “unacceptable.” The StuPa demanded that the university administration withdraw its public statement of support for Baberowski.

The motion, titled “For freedom of expression at Humboldt University,” was introduced by Sven Wurm, the spokesman of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality at Humboldt University. The motion was formulated in response to two incidents in which security personnel ordered IYSSE members to stop distributing leaflets at the university.

Wurm reviewed Baberowski’s political positions, which include the relativization of the crimes of the Third Reich. In 2014, Baberowski stated in an interview published in *Der Spiegel*: “Hitler was no psychopath, and he wasn’t vicious. He didn’t want people to talk about the extermination of the Jews at his table.” Wurm also cited Baberowski’s right-wing attacks on the admission of refugees into Germany, which parallel those of the extreme right-wing Alternative für Deutschland (AfD).

Other IYSSE representatives called attention to the growth of opposition to Baberowski among student groups throughout Germany, including in Bremen, Hamburg, Lüneburg and Heidelberg.

The reading of passages from Baberowski’s writings was met with indignation by the student representatives. A member of the Queer-feminist LGBT*I *Q list said that Baberowski is a right-wing extremist and proposed that the IYSSE resolution be strengthened to demand that the Humboldt administration explicitly withdraw its support for the

professor. The IYSSE group accepted this amendment. The resolution, as voted upon, read:

The Student Parliament demands that the university administration clearly condemn right-wing and anti-refugee positions. In flagrant contrast to the university’s alleged policy welcoming refugees, the administration is hiding behind supposed scholarly freedom and is thus tolerating right-wing propaganda. We demand that the university administration publicly withdraw its statement solidarizing with Professor Baberowski.

A long list of speakers supported the resolution, including representatives of the Left list and the Secular Humanist list. The motion was adopted by a majority of 40 votes in favour and four against, with six abstentions. Apart from the Association of Christian Democratic Students and the Power of Science list, all other representatives voted for the motion.

The vote of the Student Parliament took place against the backdrop of a ferocious campaign in the capitalist media defending Baberowski and denouncing the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartie (SGP), the IYSSE and the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Articles in the major capitalist newspapers, including *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Welt*, *Die Zeit* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, have resorted to the crudest slanders against the SGP and the WSWS in a blatant attempt to whip up right-wing public opinion.

But this coordinated right-wing campaign has had precisely the opposite effect of what the reactionary witch-hunters intended. Opposition to Baberowski’s

views is hardening among students, not only at Humboldt but at universities throughout the country.

In yet another significant development, *Der Berliner Tagesspiegel*, one of the German capital's major newspapers, published a lengthy article in its Friday edition reviewing positions of Baberowski that have been attacked by the SGP. The conclusions of the *Tagesspiegel* were highly critical of both Baberowski and Humboldt University's attempt to suppress public debate.



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