

Student parliament condemns right-wing attack on IYSSE meeting at Humboldt University in Berlin

Our reporters
17 December 2018

The student parliament at Berlin's Humboldt University passed a resolution unanimously on Thursday evening defending the International Youth and Students for Social Equality against attempts by the right-wing extremist Alternative for Germany to disrupt its meetings. All of the groups represented in the parliament voted for the following text:

“The student parliament condemns in the strongest terms attacks by the AfD and its aligned organizations against meetings held by HU [Humboldt University] students, including the IYSSE on 11 December in the HU main building. With their attempt to break up a student meeting, the right-wing extremists have escalated their targeting of student critics and anti-racist students. The student parliament decisively rejects all forms of racism, xenophobia, and right-wing extremism on the HU campus, and calls on all students to stand up to the AfD and its youth organisations.”

Sven Wurm, spokesman for the IYSSE group at HU and a representative in the student parliament, argued in favour of the emergency motion. Just two days prior to the parliamentary session, the IYSSE held a meeting at which the book “Why are they Back?” was presented. In the book, the author and deputy leader of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP), Christoph Vandreier, examines the return of the far-right in Germany, and explains in particular how these tendencies were encouraged at the universities.

“The seriousness of these issues was evident at the meeting,” said Sven Wurm. Almost 20 members of the

AfD, its youth organisation Young Alternative, and other right-wing extremist groups came to the meeting and sought to disrupt it with loud shouts and interjections. The right-wing extremists refused to leave the meeting even after they were explicitly asked to do so by the organisers. Instead, they photographed participants and attempted to intimidate them. Despite requests to do so, the right-wing extremists refused to delete their photographs.

“The fact that right-wing extremist youth organisations are disrupting left-wing meetings and threatening attendees sets a dangerous precedent and recalls the actions of the Nazis in the 1930s,” stated Wurm.

It was the second time in a few weeks that an IYSSE meeting at HU has been disrupted by right-wing extremists. On October 25, members of the Young Alternative, Identitarian movement, and the Gothia student league disrupted an IYSSE solidarity meeting with the student council with noisy interjections and insults.

The right-wing attack on Tuesday's IYSSE meeting was obviously long planned and carefully prepared by the AfD and its youth organisation Young Alternative. On December 2, the Campus Alternative Berlin boasted on its Facebook page that it had vandalised placards for the meeting and defaced them with right-wing slogans. Among the provocateurs who disrupted the meeting were not only Young Alternative and AfD members, but also leading figures in the party who had travelled long distances to participate.

One of the disrupters who refused to leave the room despite being requested to do so was Joel Bußmann, deputy leader of Young Alternative in the state of Berlin. He is also active in the right-wing extremist Identitarian movement and a member of the Gothia student league. Bußmann was a direct candidate for the AfD in the Berlin

state elections in September 2016 and, according to the TAZ newspaper, works for AfD federal parliament deputy Frank Pasemann.

Franz Dusatko, the deputy leader of Young Alternative in Brandenburg, travelled to Berlin for the purpose of disrupting the meeting and indicated on the event's Facebook page days in advance that he would be attending. This underscores once again that the disruption of the meeting was planned well in advance. Dusatko is an assistant to the parliamentary group leadership in the Brandenburg state parliament and participated in a blockade of the CDU party headquarters in September 2016 by the Identitarian movement, according to the *Tagesspiegel*.

Martin Kohler, Bußmann's colleague in the Young Alternative executive, also attended the meeting and repeatedly interrupted the speakers by shouting right-wing slogans. Kohler has been an AfD member since he was 15 and is an active member of the Brandenburg state party.

In arguing for the resolution at the student parliament, the IYSSE pointed out that the aggressive actions by right-wing extremists at Humboldt University could only be explained by the systematic encouragement they have received from university management.

SPD politician Sabine Kunst, President of HU, is currently suing her own university's student council in a case initiated by the AfD parliamentary group in the Berlin state senate. She wants to compel the student representative body to publish all names of those who have been active in the student council over the past 10 years. The AfD intends to use this list of names to intimidate and threaten political opponents.

Prior to this, Kunst backed the right-wing extremist Professor Jörg Baberowski. Even after the Cologne Court of Appeals confirmed that, given Baberowski's statements, it is legitimate to describe him as a "right-wing extremist," "glorifier of violence," and a "racist," Kunst stated that "attacks in the media" against the far-right professor were "unacceptable," and threatened student critics with criminal prosecution.

Baberowski is a central figure in Germany's right-wing extremist movement. Three years ago, he founded a right-wing extremist network, referred to as the "right-wing salon," which includes a number of AfD functionaries, among others. He consciously mobilises this right-wing network against IYSSE meetings and other left-wing events.

On November 27, he informed his followers via his Twitter account about the IYSSE meeting, and indirectly

called for the meeting's disruption with hysterical slanders. The IYSSE is "criminal, violent, and malevolent," claimed Baberowski. "Their leader is a psychopath."

In order to mobilise his far-right followers against the Trotskyist youth organisation, Baberowski blustered on his Facebook page, "Criminal Stalinists are not only permitted to spread their hate-filled tirades at Humboldt University. They are permitted to do so in the best lecture theatres at the best times. University management stays silent and refuses to help professors who are attacked by these criminals." The result of this incitement was the AfD's efforts to threaten and intimidate participants in the IYSSE meeting.

Through her persistent partisanship for and collaboration with Baberowski, Sabine Kunst has paved the way for the right-wing provocateurs. This is confirmed by the analysis in the book whose presentation the AfD sought to prevent with its attack. The book's foreword states, "The AfD neither enjoys mass support, nor does it possess combative units like the Nazi SA, which recruited uprooted soldiers from the First World War, ruined members of the petty bourgeoisie, and desperate unemployed workers. The AfD's strength arises exclusively from the support it receives from political parties, the media, government, and state apparatus."

This was made very clear at the meeting. Even though supporters of the right-wing extremists travelled from other German states, they remained in the minority. The students in attendance supported the meeting's organisers and thereby ensured that the meeting continued as planned. The unanimous defence of the IYSSE by the student parliament underscores that the AfD and Young Alternative represent a despised minority.



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