

Right-wing extremist Professor Jörg Baberowski physically assaults socialist student

Our reporters
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Right-wing extremist Professor Jörg Baberowski physically attacked Sven Wurm, a deputy in the student parliament at Humboldt University (HU) in Berlin, at lunchtime on January 30. Wurm had just caught Baberowski in the act of removing International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) election placards from a bulletin board and tearing them to pieces. The aggressive actions of the right-wing extremist were captured on video.

Wurm is the spokesman for the IYSSE and was the lead candidate for the group in the student parliament elections, which took place on the same day. He was in the process of distributing election material with a fellow student when the attack took place.

The video shows that Baberowski came into the entrance of a wing of the HU main building with several destroyed IYSSE placards in his hand. He went to a blackboard where students can hang placards and announcements and tore down a further six IYSSE election placards. They bore slogans such as, “Stop the attacks of the far-right on critical students,” “No to the trivialisation of the Nazis’ crimes at HU,” and “Socialists in the StuPa (student parliament).”

When Baberowski realised that his vandalism was being filmed and Wurm asked him why he tore down the placards, the professor turned violent. “You are not filming me,” Baberowski bellowed at Wurm, who studies at the same historical institute where Baberowski occupies the position of chair of Eastern European history. Baberowski then lashed out and violently struck the telephone from Wurm’s hand.

A fellow student stepped between Wurm and Baberowski and attempted to calm the professor down. “Should I smack you in the face?” Baberowski

threatened with a raised fist. Wurm asked Baberowski to stop his attack, to which Baberowski responded, “Get out of here now, and quickly. Just one step further, my friend!” Baberowski then rapidly left the scene. The incident was not only captured on video but confirmed to the WWSWS by several witnesses.

Baberowski’s vandalism, his vulgar threats and physical attacks represented a serious disruption to the IYSSE’s election campaign. The student group’s placards have been torn down and its work hindered for some time. It is now clear that Baberowski, a university employee, is a direct participant in this.

Baberowski’s actions are not only an attack on the basic democratic rights of students and the autonomy of student government. They are also criminal in a number of respects. Along with the destruction of material, he also sought to use assault and intimidation to prevent students from campaigning for their list in the student election.

“Baberowski was out of control,” Wurm told the WWSWS. “With his attack on me, he has escalated his persistent activities against his political opponents. He is not merely now acting as a right-wing ideologue and Nazi apologist, but directly as a right-wing extremist activist prepared to commit acts of violence. He wants to suppress anyone who opposes his right-wing extremist agenda and throw them off the campus.”

Baberowski has in fact been well known for some time for his agitation against refugees, advocacy of military violence, and trivialisation of the Nazis’ crimes. In 2015, he founded the “Baberowski Salon” (*Die Zeit*), at which everyone with standing in the New Right community meets at least twice a year. He rehabilitated the Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte in *Der*

Spiegel in 2014, and added by way of justification, “Hitler was not a psychopath, and he wasn’t vicious.”

Two students from other election lists have already filed lawsuits against Baberowski over the past year because he severely verbally abused them. “We will also inform the university administration about this incident and call upon it to initiate disciplinary measures against the right-wing extremist professor,” stated Wurm. “Students have the right to hold their elections and discuss politics without being threatened and assaulted by university employees.”



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