

Stop the attacks on the IYSSE's anti-war campaign at Berlin's Humboldt University

IYSSE at HU Berlin
3 July 2023

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) is running in the student parliament (StuPa) elections at Humboldt University to build a socialist movement against militarism and war, social inequality and the rise of the far-right. We want to prevent the universities from being transformed into state-run propaganda centres for right-wing and militaristic ideology, as they were before both world wars.

In recent weeks, our election campaign has come under a massive attack. Our election posters were systematically torn down or destroyed, making it difficult for students to find out about the IYSSE program or attend our events. The basis for a free and equal election hardly exists.

The sabotage of our election campaign is directed against all those who oppose militarism and war, which is the vast majority of students. This is also why the campaign against us is so aggressive. We will not be intimidated by this and will intensify our anti-war campaign in the coming days. Register here for our election campaign and become a member of the IYSSE to stop the right-wing and militaristic activities at our university.

The campaign against us is a deliberate and orchestrated political action. For example, the well-connected, Ukrainian nationalist activist Elisabeth Bauer bragged to the IYSSE about regularly destroying the posters. Bauer writes for the Christian Democratic Union-affiliated Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, for the Green-aligned *taz* newspaper and other pro-war publications. She is a student assistant in the Chair of East Slavic Literatures and Cultures at Humboldt University.

In recent days, a self-proclaimed “Ukrainian Society HU Berlin,” which has never appeared before, has also

begun to post over and destroy our posters. It accuses the IYSSE of “Russian imperialist propaganda” and calls for a “no vote for the IYSSE.”

The accusation is obviously absurd. The IYSSE has strongly condemned Putin’s reactionary invasion of Ukraine in its flyers and at its events. However, we show that the war is the result of the systematic encirclement of Russia by the NATO powers and that they continue to escalate the war in order to assert their geostrategic interests in Ukraine and Russia. In doing so, they accept the risk of the nuclear annihilation of mankind. In Germany, the greatest rearmament since Hitler is taking place and every area of social life is subordinated to the logic of militarism.

The “Ukrainian Society” therefore accuses us on its leaflets of treating Ukraine “only as an object and not as a subject of politics.” In fact, it is the imperialist powers that see the Ukrainian population as a pure object and, even worse, as cannon fodder. Hundreds of thousands of young men are being slaughtered on both sides for the interests of the NATO powers and Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs. That is why the opposition to the escalation of war is also growing in Ukraine itself.

Together with our groups in Ukraine, Russia and around the world, we are building an international movement of youth and workers against this madness. When the “Ukrainian Society” raves about an alleged “will of the Ukrainian people,” which apparently consists in destroying an entire generation so that the country can join NATO, it has nothing to do with the catastrophic situation facing the people in Ukraine. Rather, it is a repetition of the German government’s war propaganda, which is intended to obscure its own geostrategic interests in the war.

The “Ukrainian Society’s” tract is directly linked to the far-right and militaristic propaganda before the two

world wars, which accused every opponent of “enemy propaganda” in order to suppress the enormous opposition to the war. Karl Liebknecht was thrown into prison for calling for the end of the First World War through an international movement of the working class, which in each country must oppose its own warmongers.

The fact that this perspective of international socialism is being combated once again is not simply the work of a small group of whipped-up nationalists. It is the official policy of the government and, here at our university, the result of the university leadership’s systematic policy of endorsing right-wing attacks on left-wing students. This has created a climate of intimidation.

Three years ago, the right-wing extremist professor Jörg Baberowski systematically destroyed IYSSE posters on the boards provided specifically for election advertising. When our StuPa deputy Sven Wurm caught him, Baberowski struck the student from his own institute and threatened: “Should I punch you in the face?” The president of the HU refused to condemn these crimes and even defended them as “understandable from a human point of view.”

In this way, the university management not only participated in the intimidation of critical students, it also effectively endorsed the violent professor’s political arguments. Baberowski is a central figure in the return of German militarism. He beats the drum for brutal wars, fuels nationalism and trivializes the crimes of the Nazis. He described Hitler as “not vicious” and declared that the Holocaust was “essentially the same thing” as shootings in the Russian civil war.

The IYSSE has exposed and criticized this major falsification of history and the militaristic positions of other professors at HU and has been elected to the StuPa for eight consecutive years with up to 7 percent of the vote. Since then, the right-wing cliques have been increasingly aggressive against us with the backing of university management. This has now culminated in an attempt to sabotage our election campaign.

While the university is being placed more and more directly at the service of German militarism, students are to be prohibited from criticizing these positions. At the same university where the Nazi war of extermination was prepared and planned, and where the

first book burnings took place, opponents of war are again being prevented from hanging up posters, conducting their election campaign and promoting events.

This is a serious warning. All the evils of the past are returning. In Ukraine, German imperialism cooperates with the heirs of the Nazi collaborators and sends masses of German tanks to impose a military defeat on the nuclear-armed power Russia. With the veneration of the fascist and anti-Semite Stepan Bandera in Germany and Ukraine, the whole importance of the trivialization of Hitler at the Humboldt University also becomes clear. The crimes of German imperialism are whitewashed in order to commit new crimes. The Bandera statues in Ukraine will be followed by the erection of statues in honor of Göring and Hitler in Germany.

We will not tolerate this and will expand our fight against fascism and war. We made an official complaint to the university management and asked them to exercise their legal oversight over the elections and to condemn Baberowski’s and Bauer’s actions and hold them accountable. We call on all readers to support this complaint by sending e-mails to the Presidium (praesidentin@hu-Berlin.de, CC to iysse@gleichheit.de). Support our election campaign and vote next Tuesday IYSSE, list 4! Come on Monday to our last election event on “The Growing Strike Movement in Europe and the Perspective of International Socialism” and become a member of the IYSSE.



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