

YouTube deletes viral video of far-right Berlin professor Jörg Baberowski's assault on students

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On July 17, YouTube deleted a viral video from an account belonging to the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) showing Professor Jörg Baberowski destroying posters for a student election at the Humboldt University in Berlin and assaulting students who observed him doing so. This is an act of political censorship that is closely related to the development of NATO's war against Russia and the efforts to rehabilitate the right-wing radical and violent professor.

We call on all readers to send emails to YouTube (press@google.com, CC to iysse@gleichheit.de) and protest against this censorship! Demand that the video be restored immediately, and that the censorship of all left, socialist and anti-war content be stopped!

To date, the company has not responded to an official complaint sent to YouTube by SGP Chair Christoph Vandreier. The complaint stresses that Professor Baberowski is “clearly a person of public interest given his numerous talk show appearances, newspaper interviews and political statements,” who in the video, “attacks, insults and threatens a student of his institute for engaging in political activity.” There is “quite obviously a considerable public interest in publishing these facts, to which any personal rights of Baberowski take second place.”

Baberowski's attack occurred in January 2020 on the day of the elections for the student parliament (StuPa) and he is still supported by the university administration today. The video, which has been deleted from YouTube but is still available elsewhere, clearly documents the course of events: with masses of torn posters in his arms, Baberowski entered the foyer area of the refectory and marched to the student body

notice board to destroy more posters there in front of the camera. Caught in the act, he turned on StuPa deputy Sven Wurm, threatened him (“Do you want me to punch you in the face?”) and knocked the mobile phone out of his hand.

As a follower of the radical right-wing historian Ernst Nolte and the Nazi jurist Carl Schmitt, Baberowski has long been known for minimising the crimes of the Nazis and relativising the Holocaust. He combines this with agitating against refugees and calling for German rearmament, which he broadcasts on talk shows and in major bourgeois newspapers. Baberowski's lies—reproduced in *Der Spiegel* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*—that Hitler “didn't want to know about Auschwitz” and was “not cruel” are particularly notorious.

His longstanding actions against critics of his falsification of history and his right-wing networks finally culminated in the physical attack on Wurm, a student at Humboldt University and spokesperson for the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE). The Trotskyist youth and student movement had criticised Baberowski's trivialisation of Hitler and mobilised support for other students who were subjected to threats, insults, and lawsuits by Baberowski.

After his attack on Wurm, Baberowski stood trial in April 2022 for assault and damage to property. There he paid 4,000 euros for the case to be dropped. On the basis of the facts of the case, it is unlikely that legal action against the video would have any chance of success. As a result, neither Baberowski nor his lawyers or co-workers have tried to take this route since then. Instead, YouTube has now been asked to take down the

video on its own.

The deleted video had been viewed over 36,000 times on YouTube alone and commented on around 200 times. Countless students and users of the platform were stunned by the professor's physical attack and demanded the university administration take action. Student representatives from Bremen to Vienna supported calls for this by the IYSSE and a resolution by the StuPa of Humboldt University to this effect was passed unanimously.

To this day, the HU presidium has ignored the StuPa resolution and has not taken any disciplinary action against Baberowski or even condemned the attack. On the contrary, the university president at the time, Sabine Kunst, backed Baberowski's attack and described it as "humanly understandable" in a private meeting of the academic senate. Her successor Julia von Blumenthal (formerly of the Military University of Hamburg) also refused to condemn the attack, calling Baberowski's "political statements" "justified" in an address to the StuPa.

Accordingly, if a professor calls Hitler "not cruel," beats the drum for war and agitates against refugees, as Baberowski does, this is "justified", and attacks on students who criticise this are "humanly understandable." However, if these students document the attack and make the evidence available to the public, this violates "personal rights" according to YouTube and must be censored. The anti-democratic character of these proceedings is obvious.

As a subsidiary of Google, YouTube is a pioneer in the field of internet censorship. In 2017, the *World Socialist Web Site* proved that under the codename "Project Owl," a wide range of left-wing, socialist, and anti-war websites were being systematically demoted by Google and suppressed in search results. The censorship offensive, which was coordinated with the highest government circles in Germany, coincided with calls from politicians and the media to suppress criticism of Baberowski's right-wing viewpoints.

In fact, the deletion of this important video can only be understood in the context of the development of the war and the return of German militarism. While the NATO powers are waging war against Russia in Ukraine in order to subjugate and plunder both countries, the German state is rearming more massively than at any time since the fall of the Nazi regime.

Under these conditions, Baberowski, who has discredited himself because of his falsification of history and his anti-democratic actions, is to be rehabilitated as an influential ideologue and political propagandist.

In an interview with the notoriously right-wing *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in April 2022, for example, Baberowski declared that the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) had "in fact been disarmed in recent years" and hailed the biggest rearmament of the German military since the fall of Nazi rule as long overdue and "sensible." In July this year, Baberowski went on the WDR programme "Zeitzeichen" to slander the revolutionary socialist Leon Trotsky, who advocated uniting the working class against Hitler and was at the forefront of the left opposition to Stalinist terror.

YouTube's censorship is aimed at suppressing criticism of this militarist and extreme right-wing agenda. We again call on all readers to protest against this and send emails to YouTube (press@google.com, CC to iysse@gleichheit.de).



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