

Student Parliament at Berlin's Humboldt University passes resolution against militarism and budget cuts

IYSSE Humboldt University
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Last week, at the initiative of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), Humboldt University Student Parliament passed a resolution condemning the massive cuts being planned at universities. The result of the vote is an expression of growing opposition to the militarisation of German society and the cuts with which it is to be financed.

In the past few weeks, thousands of people have protested in Berlin against the planned cuts by the Senate (state executive), while thousands of autoworkers took part in warning strikes at Volkswagen. Just one day after the Student Parliament meeting, a general assembly of 1,500 students took place at Humboldt University, which agreed important demands against the shift to the right in official politics, repression by the police and university administrations, and against right-wing teaching and support for war.

The resolution adopted by the student parliament after an amendment was proposed, stated:

The Berlin state government is planning a cutback at the universities: 280 million euros are to be saved in the budget for science and health, almost ten percent of the previous budget. Of this, 100 million euros are to be cut from university contracts and over 10 million from urgently needed renovation and construction measures. The Charité [hospital] alone will lose 8.5 million euros, almost half of the money earmarked for the purchase of new technical equipment.

The Student Union, which is responsible, among other things, for BAföG [student

financial aid], student dining halls, cafés, student housing, daycare centres and counselling for mental health issues, is to have its budget cut by about a third, or 6.5 million euros. This is a direct attack on the fundamental rights of students to housing and food. These announced austerity measures will have disastrous consequences for us students.

The cuts are also a sign of the militarisation of society as a whole. In the federal budget, the war budget is being massively increased, while education, housing and health are being cut. In the Berlin state budget, the only areas not affected by the cuts are, significantly, the police and the judiciary.

We call on all students and teachers in Berlin and across the country to join forces with workers in other sectors and fight together against social austerity.

The adoption of this resolution is of great political significance. It makes the connection between social cuts and the arms build-up, and calls on students to join forces with the working class in the fight against these cuts.

Gregor Kahl, spokesperson for the IYSSE, said in his speech presenting the motion:

The reason for the social and educational cuts is the criminal policy of war of the ruling class and the breathtaking military build-up, which is supported by all parties in the Bundestag

[parliament]. Just yesterday, for example, Social Democratic Party (SPD) member of parliament Joe Weingarten called for an additional €200 billion for the Bundeswehr [Armed Forces] on top of the existing €100 billion armaments package. While the federal government is considering sending German ground troops to Ukraine and is already waging a proxy war against nuclear-armed Russia, everything that does not directly serve the logic of war is to be eliminated. The universities, schools and public institutions, like the economy, are to be completely geared towards war.

The brutal budget consolidation serves to finance the war debt and make Germany financially fit for a third world war. The costs of rearmament and arms deliveries to Israel and Ukraine are to be passed on to students, teachers, young people and working people as a whole through massive social cuts, according to the will of those in power. We must not allow this!

In the debate on the IYSSE motion, three other slates in the student parliament tabled a joint amendment to the draft resolution. While adding some current figures and further examples of the cuts, the amendment sought to weaken several paragraphs in which the involvement of university president Julia von Blumenthal in the cuts was highlighted and the German arms deliveries to Israel and Ukraine were criticised.

After this amendment was adopted, against the votes of the IYSSE faction and with one abstention, the amended resolution was unanimously adopted by the Student Parliament. The IYSSE will take the resolution of the student parliament as a starting point for building a movement against the billion-euro cuts, militarism and war policy.

At the request of the IYSSE, in addition to the resolution, the Student Parliament also decided to convene a student general assembly “to discuss and organise further action against the cuts at universities and in Berlin.” The IYSSE will be intensively involved in the preparation of this meeting.

We call on all students to come to the general assembly and also to participate in the preparations.

The struggles against cuts, war and fascism cannot be separated from each other but can only be waged through the methods of class struggle. We want to discuss this perspective with all those who are interested. Spread this call and get in touch with us!



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