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The IYSSE at Humboldt University

17.05.2025

Berlin: Humboldt University student parliament condemns deportations of political activists



The faculty of justice of the Humboldt University is pictured in Berlin, Germany. [AP Photo/Michael Sohn]

Last Tuesday, the student parliament (StuPa) of Berlin's Humboldt University passed a motion by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) condemning the deportations of political activists in Germany and internationally. The passage of this motion is an important step in the fight against the deportations and the ruling class's turn towards authoritarian forms of rule.

The motion reads:

The Student Parliament condemns the planned deportation of Shane O'Brien, Roberta Murray, Kasia Wlaszczyk and Cooper Longbottom. The four activists are to be deported because they took part in pro-Palestinian protests. None of the four have ever been convicted of a criminal offense, and a court ruling by the Berlin Administrative Court has already made it clear that the action against them lacks any serious legal basis.

The attack on the four activists is an attack on all critical students. It sets a dangerous precedent that attacks the democratic rights of all students and attempts to introduce Trump's methods in Germany.

The planned deportation of the four students is in line with massive attacks on student anti-genocide activists worldwide: In the USA, students such as Mohsen Mahdawi, Mahmoud Khalil and Rümeyza Öztürk are being illegally arrested and are to be deported because of their political views. Other students, such as Momodou Taal, are forced to leave the country to avoid a similar fate.

In the UK, a student at SOAS University was recently charged under the Terrorism Act for her Palestinian activism and another was arrested. They face up to 14 years in prison. Many others have been investigated, suspended and expelled from the country for their activism—well over 100, according to the human rights organization Liberty.

The student parliament also declares its solidarity with students affected by repression in the UK, the USA and worldwide.

Tamino Wilck emphasized its importance when presenting the motion:

All four are being condemned solely for their political positions and activism. As time goes on, it is becoming more and more obvious what a legally reactionary basis the deportations are founded on. In the case of Shane O'Brien, the immediate execution of the deportation was stopped by the court because the court had to recognize that basic principles of constitutional procedures were not observed ...

The planned deportation of the four students is an attempt to introduce Trump's methods in Germany. Under Trump, it is now commonplace in the USA for students and other political activists to be arrested and abducted to deportation camps without being convicted of criminal offenses. They are only abducted because of their political stance and activism. If in Germany the Berlin4 can be deported, it will set a dangerous precedent for the introduction of these methods in Germany.

The motion was passed with an overwhelming majority. Only the student associations of the Social Democrats (the Jusos) and liberal Free Democrats (the LHG) voted against, while the conservative Christian Democratic Party's student group (RCDS) was absent from the vote. This comes as no surprise: their parent parties are complicit in the genocide in Gaza. Both the previous coalition government of Social Democrats, Greens and Free Democrats and the new government under Christian Democratic Chancellor Friedrich Merz support and finance the crimes of the Israeli regime.

At the StuPa meeting a week earlier, the Jusos introduced a motion defaming a pro-Palestinian occupation at Humboldt University as “antisemitic.” When they realized that their resolution would not pass, they forced the termination of the meeting by determining that there was no quorum present and then withdrew their own motion for the following meeting.

The adoption of the IYSSE resolution came at a critical moment. Originally, the four activists had been given an April 12 deadline to leave Germany. Around a week before this deadline, the Berlin Administrative Court stopped the immediate deportation of one of the four activists, and last week also stopped the deportation of a second activist.

The court made this ruling because there were “serious concerns about the material legality” of the planned deportations. However, the danger of the deportations has in no way been averted. While the immediate execution has been halted, a decision will now be made on the deportations in the main proceedings.

It would be wrong and dangerous to rely on the courts and take a wait-and-see approach. There are political issues behind the deportations: an attempt to forcibly break the opposition to war, genocide and armament. Whether the deportations can be carried out or not depends on whether resistance against them is organized.

At the end of April, the IYSSE and other student groups held a rally in defense of #Berlin4 in front of Humboldt University. Katja Rippert explained there on behalf of the IYSSE:

How can the deportations be prevented? Not by putting pressure on governments and university administrations or appealing to the capitalist parties! That is a dead end, because in these wars they are pursuing objective economic and geopolitical interests.

We say: students must orient themselves to the working class, the only revolutionary force in society. The struggle against genocide and war will not be decided here on campus, but in factories, ports and other workplaces around the world.

The IYSSE are fighting to build a mass movement among workers and students against deportations and the turn to war and dictatorship. This is now the crucial task. Contact us and join this struggle!