

Attac leader bars World Socialist Web Site speaker from addressing Berlin anti-war rally

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At Saturday's mass anti-war rally in Berlin, a member of the executive of the anti-globalization organization Attac refused to allow Uli Rippert, the national secretary of the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party) of Germany, to address the crowd. Rippert, who is also a member of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site*, was scheduled to speak on behalf of the WSWS. The ban against him was an overt act of political censorship.

Two days before the demonstration it had been agreed at a meeting of the organisation Axis for Freedom, which jointly organised Saturday's demonstration together with Attac, that Rippert would speak from the platform. There were to be three speakers at the closing rally: a representative of students opposed to the war, Green Party deputy Hans-Christian Ströbele, and Rippert.

A few minutes before the speeches were scheduled to be given, a member of the Attac executive declared that Rippert would not be permitted to speak. The reason he gave was that the leaflet being distributed at the demonstration by WSWS supporters ["Build an international working class movement against imperialist war"] did not correspond to the political views of Attac.

In particular, the Attac spokesman said it was "irresponsible" to compare the war being conducted by the US with the blitzkrieg carried out by the Nazis against Poland in 1939. The comparison was "completely exaggerated," he said, could only serve to discredit Attac if it were made from the platform of the demonstration. "It would also send a completely wrong signal to the US," the Attac official added.

The remarks of Hans-Christian Ströbele provided confirmation that rally organisers had deliberately

chosen to avoid any criticism of the position of the German government. Although the main demand of the march was a ban on the use of German airspace and bases for the US war against Iraq, and although Ströbele stood directly in front of a banner which proclaimed this demand, he made no mention in his speech of the decision by the Green Party executive a day earlier to express its solidarity with Social Democratic Party (SPD) Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and vote for the full use of German airspace and US bases in Germany for the war. When challenged by WSWS reporters to clarify his position, Ströbele refused to make any comment and strode away.

The speech that Rippert had prepared but could not deliver will be published by the *World Socialist Web Site* on March 25, together with a statement by the WSWS International Editorial Board.



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