

Editor of German right-wing daily FAZ slanders Roger Waters as an anti-Semite

Johannes Stern
11 November 2022

If one still required proof that the campaign against musician Roger Waters is deeply reactionary and aims to silence any opposition to oppression and war by deploying the false accusation of anti-Semitism, Jürgen Kaube, editor of the right-wing daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), has provided it.

In a commentary with the cynical title “A right to nonsense,” Kaube insults the well-known rock musician as “crazy” and an “anti-Semite,” and works himself up into a rage over Waters’ critical attitude to the war in Ukraine. Then the FAZ columnist rejoices that after Berlin, Cologne and Munich, the demand is now also being made in Frankfurt “to cancel the concert of the musician and BDS supporter Roger Waters.”

Kaube knows that his demand is thoroughly anti-democratic and authoritarian. “But anyone who would try to forbid the appearances of the moon worshiper [Waters] would clash with freedom of art and freedom of expression,” he states with palpable anger.

He proposes to enforce censorship nonetheless: The City of Frankfurt and the State of Hesse, as shareholders of the Messe, where the concert is to take place on May 28, should “insist that appropriate points [i.e., the prohibition of any critical remarks] be included in future contracts with artists. Or the Messe should simply not conclude such contracts.”

The chairman of the international editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site*, David North, has already stated in a tweet that denouncing Waters as an anti-Semite is “not only a lie.” Especially coming from the mouth of Kaube, this accusation is “also utterly cynical.”

Kaube is internationally known as the defender of the right-wing extremist Humboldt University professor Jörg Baberowski. At the beginning of 2014, Baberowski stated in *Der Spiegel*: “Hitler was not a psychopath, and he wasn’t vicious. He did not want to talk about the extermination of the Jews at his table.” In the same

article, Baberowski, a supporter of the now deceased Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte, declared: “Nolte was done an injustice. Historically speaking, he was right.”

In terms of foreign policy, Baberowski beats the drums for war operations and methods that are contrary to international law. In October 2014, he spoke at a panel discussion in the German Historical Museum (DHM) on the topic “Germany, an interventionist power?” on the Western military operations in Central Asia and the Middle East: “And if one is not willing to take hostages, burn villages, hang people and spread fear and terror, as the terrorists do, if one is not prepared to do such things, then one can never win such a conflict and it is better to keep out altogether.”

When the *World Socialist Web Site* and the Socialist Equality Party criticized these shocking statements and thereby expressed the enormous opposition of workers and students to fascism and war, Kaube intervened. On December 1 that year, he published a filthy article in the FAZ’s cultural section entitled “Trotskyist bullying,” which portrayed the criticism of Baberowski’s right-wing extremist and militarist positions as “defamation.” In fact, it was Kaube who “defamed.” As the SGP pointed out in its rebuttal, Kaube made use of a derogatory language, forgeries and outright lies.

Using the same method, Kaube now rails against Waters. The claim that Waters is an anti-Semite is just as brazen a lie as the claim that he is a supporter of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“I am neither of those things,” Waters wrote in a Facebook post. “Never have been and never will be.

“I am however well-known for being a passionate supporter of peace movements in general and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights ... in particular,” Waters continues. “I support equal human rights for all my brothers and sisters all over the world irrespective of their ethnicity or religion or nationality.”

Waters' current tour *This Is Not a Drill*, which Putin will not be "deterred by wind turbines and come to Europe and Germany in spring 2023 after many successful performances in North America, is a political statement. As the WSWS wrote in its review of the tour, "Virtually every song is directed toward pressing issues of our time: imperialist war, fascism, the poison of nationalism, the plight of refugees, the victims of state oppression, global poverty, social inequality, the attack on democratic rights and the danger of nuclear annihilation."

This is precisely the reason for Kaube's agitation. Waters opposes all that Kaube, the FAZ and ultimately the entire ruling class stand for. Parallel to the sharp development of official politics to the right, the traditionally right-wing conservative FAZ has also developed into an aggressive mouthpiece for militarism, war and far-right ideology under Kaube's editorship in recent years. If Kaube is looking for examples of anti-Semitism and hate speech, he only needs to read his own newspaper.

Here are some selected examples, some of which the WSWS has already commented on:

On September 14, 2015, Baberowski attacked in the pages of the FAZ "the chatter about a welcoming culture" and the refugee policy of the Merkel government from the right and set the tone for the smear campaign that led to the growth of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). He refused to accept refugees on the racist grounds: "The integration of several million people in a short time disturbs our traditional continuity which provides social stability and consistency."

On October 6, 2018, the FAZ published a guest article by the then AfD chairman Alexander Gauland, who largely relied on a speech given by Adolf Hitler to Siemens workers in Berlin on November 10, 1933. Wolfgang Benz, an authority in the field of Nazi and anti-Semitism research, warned after reading the guest article that one must "probably suspect that the same spirit is blowing as in 1933."

The FAZ regularly advocates for Germany obtaining nuclear weapons in its pages. The last article on this topic was published on October 29 under the title "Does Germany also need the bomb?" The author of the article and FAZ co-editor Berthold Kohler answers the question with a clear "yes." If the US turns its back on Europe, Germany would have to "acquire its own nuclear shield ... like its neighbour" France. "The German bomb would eliminate the credibility problem of extended deterrence because it would no longer be dependent on the sacrifice of friendly nuclear powers," he continued. After all,

which Putin will not be "deterred by wind turbines and shut down nuclear power plants."

The FAZ plays a particularly foul role in advocating war against Russia. Hardly a day goes by without Kaube, Kohler and Co. demanding German arms deliveries to Ukraine and a more aggressive NATO mobilisation against Moscow. The campaign goes hand in hand with anti-Russian racism and the promotion of far-right forces. The FAZ repeatedly gave the former Ukrainian ambassador to Germany Andrej Melnyk a platform. Melnyk is an avowed admirer of the Ukrainian fascist, anti-Semite and Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera.

The rehabilitation of openly fascist and anti-Semitic forces by the FAZ is not limited to Germany and Ukraine. In recent weeks, the paper promoted the new Italian government led by the fascist Giorgia Meloni. "Meloni is not the devil," the FAZ commented in its first article on the September 26 election. Rather, with the election, Italy "returned to political normality."

Kaube and the FAZ couldn't be more explicit. For the ruling class, fascism, war and authoritarianism are "normality." Anyone who does not accept this—especially if they do it as expressively and massively as Roger Waters—is an opponent who must be silenced. It speaks for Waters' courage that he is not intimidated by the right-wing media mob, but is going on the offensive.

At the end of his aforementioned Facebook post, he writes: "Your ruling class and your media want to ban me from bringing my message of love and peace and revolution in order to enrich your lives. Well, I'm coming, and together we will raise the roof on this charade." The WSWS and the SGP will also continue to defend Waters and mobilise the enormous opposition of workers and young people to the right-wing campaign in the media.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact