

Frankfurt city authorities censor Roger Waters concert under false accusation of anti-Semitism

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In a disgraceful act of political and artistic censorship, the Frankfurt municipal administration, known as the Magistrat, decided on Friday to ban Roger Waters' concert scheduled for May 28. The Magistrat, led by a coalition of the Social Democrats, Greens, and Free Democrats, who are in a coalition at the federal level, and the pro-EU Volt party, instructed the Frankfurt Messe venue to terminate Waters' concert "immediately and for good cause."

The governing parties in Frankfurt were effectively ordering themselves to carry out the ban. The hall is jointly owned in a 60-40 split between the city and the state of Hesse, whose Christian Democrat/Green government also approved the decision. The order will be implemented, emphasized the press spokesman for the Frankfurt Messe, Markus Quint, to the Frankfurter Rundschau.

This aggressive act is justified by brazen and baseless accusations of anti-Semitism against Waters. "The background to the cancellation is the persistently anti-Israeli appearances by the former Pink Floyd front man, who is considered one of the anti-Semites with the largest reach in the world," stated a report on the official website of the Frankfurt municipality on Friday.

The denunciation of Waters as an anti-Semite is a brazen lie that he has repeatedly firmly rejected. "I am not, never have been and never will be," he wrote on Facebook last autumn, when the campaign against his concerts in Germany—including in Frankfurt, Hamburg, Cologne, Munich and Berlin—took off. "I am known as a passionate supporter of peace movements in general and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in particular, and I stand up for equal human rights for all

my brothers and sisters around the world, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or nationality."

In a recent interview with the *Berliner Zeitung*, Waters once again rejected the attempt to defame him as an anti-Semite by Frankfurt city authorities, who accused him of using anti-Semitic symbolism on a previous tour. The fact that during the song "Goodbye Blue Sky" during "The Wall" show, an inflatable pig with a Star of David flew over the stage, had "nothing anti-Semitic either intended or expressed" about it.

The real message was absolutely clear in the context of the show. Waters explained, "And to explain the context, you see B-52 bombers, on a circular screen behind the band, but they don't drop bombs, they drop symbols: Dollar signs, Crucifixes, Hammer and Sickles, Star and Crescents, the McDonalds sign—and Star of Davids. This is theatrical satire, an expression of my belief that unleashing these ideologies, or products onto the people on the ground, is an act of aggression, the opposite of humane, the opposite of creating love and peace among us brothers and sisters. I'm saying in the wrong hands all the ideologies these symbols represent can be evil."

Waters also supported the BDS campaign (boycott, divestment and Sanctions) against Israel, which has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. The musician explained that he is concerned with the struggle for the rights of the oppressed Palestinians and for democracy in Israel itself. "Yes, Israel could change its laws. They could say: We have changed our mind, people are allowed to have rights even if they are not Jewish. That would be it, then we wouldn't need BDS anymore," he told the newspaper.

The method employed against Waters by the

Frankfurt magistrate with the support of the state and federal governments is as filthy as it is well-known. Under the false accusation of anti-Semitism, any opposition to the brutal and essentially fascist policies of the Israeli government, in which openly right-wing extremist forces set the tone, is to be silenced.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has repeatedly made it clear that criticism of Israel's oppression of the Palestinian population has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. On the contrary, the claim that the Zionist regime's violent action against a largely defenseless population is carried out in the name of Judaism has a decidedly anti-Semitic character.

In addition, the accusation of anti-Semitism is used above all in Germany by the same extreme right-wing and militarist forces from which the real fascist and anti-Semitic danger emanates. Significantly, the so-called "anti-Semitism resolutions" adopted by the German Bundestag (federal parliament) in recent years have all been supported by the fascist AfD (Alternative for Germany), a party whose leaders trivialize the Holocaust and glorify the Nazi Wehrmacht.

It is the height of cynicism for the city of Frankfurt, in its communication against Waters, to recall that "after Kristallnacht 1938, 3,000 Jewish men from Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main area were brought to the Messe, mistreated and later deported to concentration camps." It is not Waters' art that draws on the fascist traditions and crimes of the Nazi era, but the ruling class in Germany.

90 years after Hitler took power, the ruling class is pursuing the declared goal of making Germany the leading military power again and sending German battle tanks to fight Russia. Not only does it openly court and strengthen fascist forces in Ukraine, but also in Germany itself. Waters is a thorn in the side of the ruling parties above all because he is one of the few artists to bravely confront this dangerous development and the politics of war.

Waters' current tour, "This Is Not a Drill," which is now coming to Europe and Germany after a successful first leg in North America, is not only a musical but also a strong political statement. As the WSWS commented in its review, almost 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."

In particular, Waters places the fight against the escalating NATO war against Russia in Ukraine at the center of his current work. Speaking to the *Berliner Zeitung*, he said:

"All I am trying to achieve with my new recordings, my statements and performances is that our brothers and sisters in power stop the war—and that people understand that our brothers and sisters in Russia do not live under a repressive dictatorship, any more than you do in Germany or I do in the US. I mean would we choose to continue to slaughter young Ukrainians and Russians if we had the power to stop it?"

The cancellation of Waters' concert in Frankfurt is a serious warning. The turn of the ruling class towards war and militarism is accompanied, as in the past, by massive attacks on democratic and social rights and the suppression of any opposition at home. The WSWS, the Socialist Equality Party and the IYSSE strongly condemn the action against Waters and will lead a campaign in his defense. The fight against censorship is an elementary part of building a new powerful international anti-war movement of the working class and youth.



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