

Roger Waters in Hamburg: A tremendous start of German tour amid media smear campaign

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Pink Floyd co-founder Roger Waters opened his German tour at the Barclays Arena in Hamburg on Sunday. A few minutes before the concert began, Waters' voice echoed through the arena: "Just so everyone knows: A court in Frankfurt has determined that I am not an anti-Semite. Splendid."

He then added: "To be clear, I condemn anti-Semitism in the strongest possible terms. And if you're one of those 'I love Pink Floyd, but I don't like Roger Waters' politics' people, maybe it would be better if you disappeared to the bar now."

This was followed by minutes-long applause. From the outset, it was clear that not only a great musician was celebrated here, who recalled the mood of the early seventies with the classic Pink Floyd songs. The applause was directed at the artist in particular, who, at close to 80 years of age, is standing up to mendacious capitalist propaganda and NATO warmongering.

Waters' current tour "This Is Not a Drill," which is now coming to Europe and Germany after a successful first leg in the US, is not only a musical, but also a strong political statement. As the WSWs commented in its review, almost every song "addresses the 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 assault on democratic rights, and the threat 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'm trying to do with my new music recordings, my statements and performances is that those in power are ending the war. I mean, would

we choose to continue slaughtering young Ukrainians and Russians if we had the power to end it?"

In Germany, Waters' tour came under heavy attack from the outset. On February 24, the Frankfurt magistrate, in agreement with the Hesse state government, canceled the concert with the completely false and groundless accusation that the musician was an anti-Semite. A coalition of Social Democrats, Greens, Free Democrats, Christian Democrats and Volt claimed that Waters was "one of the anti-Semites with the broadest reach in the world."

Waters filed a lawsuit against this vicious political and artistic censorship, and on April 24, the Frankfurt Administrative Court granted his request and lifted the ban. Waters saw the court decision as a victory for democracy and freedom of art.

In a social media post, Waters discussed his stance on the Zionist state and its dealings with the Palestinians. He wrote that following "this enlightened court decision," he wanted to clarify a few things:

"Can we please stop equating criticism of the policies of the government of the racist apartheid state of Israel with anti-Semitism?"

"Can we please agree to abandon the IHRA's (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) absurd definition of anti-Semitism? The only possible use of this worthless piece of paper is to disguise the real meaning of the term.

"Can we congratulate the German people for having laws that protect the freedom of art? And urge them to continue to influence their government to stop banning and forcibly crushing peaceful BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions] demonstrations in support of our oppressed brothers and sisters in Palestine by

militarized police.”

The warmongering German media, which spread the propaganda of the “unprovoked Russian war of aggression” day and night, denouncing any peace initiative and advocating the largest rearmament of the German army since Hitler, feel challenged and threatened by Roger Waters’ concert tour.

They reacted to the Hamburg opening concert yesterday with a vicious smear campaign. Deutschlandradio opened its reportage in the morning with a few bars from “Wish you were here,” the legendary Pink Floyd song, and the presenter commented: “Roger Waters will perform in Cologne tomorrow evening. Many will say, “I wish you were not here’.” The fact that there were no counter-protesters at the opening in Hamburg was very strange to him, the moderator continued.

Question to the correspondent: “So Waters says a Frankfurt court found that he was not an anti-Semite. Is that right?”

Answer: “No, one can even say that it was a pure invention.” The court did not make such a ruling, the correspondent continued. It merely referred to the freedom of art and made it clear that there were no signs of criminal acts at the concerts.

Moderator: “There were really no statements or symbols that would have justified a ban.”

Answer: While there was “a lot of confused stuff” and oversized slogans in bright colors, “a mixture of overwhelming aesthetics and brainwashing,” nothing directly criminal. US presidents from Ronald Reagan to Obama to Joe Biden were called war criminals and, as Waters always does, the Holocaust was relativized by mixing images of victims of US police violence with images of Anne Frank. Waters is a rebel against the establishment, but makes it a “well-functioning business model.” This is very frustrating.

Under the headline “More mud than Pink Floyd allowed,” the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* suggested that Waters spread the “cheapest truths” in a big show.

On stage, the images and signboards, in which Waters depicts “a terrible present,” “flicker, chirp and explode.” “Visions of war and surveillance, police violence, authoritarian machinery, and the miracle of civil disobedience,” the newspaper continues. It is a “truly colorful collection of trigger words and stimulus motifs, political mud, agitation and good human rights love, often covered in demonstratively angry red.” A spectacle like “in a shooting film,” the newspaper concludes.

Roger Waters has so far not been intimidated by this smear campaign by journalists, whose political views have been laid down by the Chancellor’s Office and intelligence agencies. He is a staunch opponent of all injustice and oppression. He is against war and defends the Palestinian people against the attacks of the Israeli government.

He “does not present a systematically developed political perspective, let alone the program of a particular tendency,” as the WSWS wrote in its review of the US tour. “What is expressed in ‘This is Not a Drill’ is a deep indignation against injustice, against war, against official hypocrisy and lies.”



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