Why is musician Roger Waters being witch-hunted in Germany?

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Rock musician Roger Waters ended his successful tour of Germany with a concert in Frankfurt on May 28. While tens of thousands of fans cheered him on, politicians and the media organized an unprecedented witch-hunt. All parties represented in the Bundestag (federal parliament), from the Left Party to the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), and the majority of the media participated. No slander was too inappropriate, no lie too absurd to be hurled at the 79-year-old co-founder of the band Pink Floyd.

Waters, who has made a name for himself not only as a brilliant musician, but also as an unyielding fighter against injustice, oppression, war and fascism, was denounced as a "Jew-hater" and his concert as a "breach of civilization" (Frankfurt Mayor Mike Josef, Social Democratic Party, SPD). Until now, the Holocaust was described as a "breach of civilization" in Germany. Israeli Ambassador Danny Danon denounced Waters as "one of the greatest Jew-haters of our time."

Waters repeatedly asserted that he was not an anti-Semite, but an opponent of every form of racism and oppression. However, the attacks against him became louder. A court ruling in his favour in Frankfurt, after the city and state government tried to ban his concert, did not deter his opponents.

The lies and distortions took on Kafkaesque traits. For example, public broadcaster Deutschlandfunk published a commentary by Sebastian Engelbrecht: "Deciphering an anti-Semitic worldview." He exposes the call "Resist capitalism! Resist Fascism! Resist the war!," which is displayed during Waters' show, as "fascist demagogy." His proof: "Waters offers the grossest simplifications as we know them from right-wing populists." According to this incredible logic, you can also "decipher" white as black and black as white.

The Berlin police even officially started an investigation against Waters based on suspicion of incitement, which was greedily exploited by the media. Waters' stage attire, according to police suspicions, violates the dignity of victims of National Socialism and glorifies Nazi rule.

The "suspicion" of the police refers to the leather coat Waters wears during the song "In the Flesh," in which he represents a crazy fascist demagogue. Waters has been performing this song for 43 years. It's from Pink Floyd's rock opera *The Wall*. In the film *The Wall*, musician Bob Geldof—now Sir Bob Geldof—took the role. In these 43 years, no one had ever thought that the song, which is directed against all forms of fascism, injustice and bigotry, was glorifying the Nazis rather than denouncing them. Only the Berlin police and their political patrons managed to reach this conclusion.

Waters' support for the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement is also not an expression of anti-Semitism. BDS is directed against the oppression of the Palestinians and is based on the methods of the South African anti-apartheid movement. In reality, Waters' opponents are concerned with suppressing any criticism of the Israeli government, in which open racists and right-wing extremists, such as police minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, set the tone.

Why is Waters so fiercely fought and attacked? Obviously, it's not just about his person. Waters is savaged, but the real target is the widespread opposition to war, fascism and social inequality.

The opinion makers in the ministries, the party headquarters and the editorial offices have watched with horror as millions in France rebelled for weeks against President Macron's pension dictate. They know that NATO's military rearmament and escalation of the war in Ukraine, despite non-stop, 24-hour-a-day

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propaganda, are met with skepticism and rejection. And they fear that the resistance to the massive, inflation-related real wage cuts will escape the control of the trade unions. They fear a social uprising.

Therefore, an example should be made of Waters. The fact that the soon-to-be 80-year-old has retained the rebellious spirit of his youth and—unlike many others of his generation who have made careers and become rich—is not ready to howl with the wolves stirs their anger.

The slander of Waters is intended to intimidate anyone who dares to take a stand or express a different opinion—especially in the cultural and scientific establishment and in the media, the most important ideological pillars of capitalist rule. Therefore, it is to Waters' credit that he refuses to give in.

Second, the campaign against Waters aims to trivialize the historical crimes of the Nazis and thus prepare for new crimes. The rearmament of Germany and its return to a militaristic great power policy require a reinterpretation of history and a revaluation of all values. Principles such as "Never again war, never again fascism," which formed a kind of basic social consensus since the 1970s, can no longer be tolerated.

That is why concepts such as breach of civilization and anti-Semitism, which are linked to the worst historical crimes in Germany, are completely gutted. The AfD's Nazis, who trivialize the Holocaust as "bird shit," are therefore not anti-Semites, but their opponents are. The anti-fascist Waters is labelled an anti-Semite, while real anti-Semites and fascists are rehabilitated.

This is most evident in Ukraine, where the German government works closely with the Zelensky regime, erecting monuments to Nazi collaborators and mass murderers such as Stepan Bandera and naming numerous streets after them. Radical right-wing units such as the Azov battalion, adorned with SS symbols, are being armed and glorified as freedom fighters.

In Estonia, the German embassy is a co-organizer of a summer school run by the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, which aims to condemn as war criminals leaders of the Red Army that liberated Europe from Nazi terror.

The Socialist Equality Party has been fighting for many years against the rehabilitation and return of fascism. We recommend to our readers the book *Why are they back? Historical falsification, political conspiracy, and the return of fascism in Germany* by SGP Chairman Christoph Vandreier, who traces this development in detail. It was published in October 2018 by Mehring Verlag and provides an important basis for understanding today's events.

It is significant that hardly anyone in the media and petty-bourgeois milieu is willing to defend Waters or even represent him objectively. The *taz*, the house paper of the Greens, denounces him as "Putin's British night wolf."

The Greens, emerging from the anti-fascist and pacifist milieu, have become the worst warmongers. They represent urban middle classes enriched by the stock and real estate boom and "free market" economic policies, while the standard of living of the broad masses has declined. They have inseparably linked their fate with the notoriously predatory aims of German imperialism.

The return of militarism, war and fascism can only be stopped by an international movement of the working class fighting for the overthrow of capitalism.

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