

Roger Waters faces attacks by Zionists, Labour and Tory politicians as tour hits UK

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Attempts to censor Roger Waters, the acclaimed 79-year-old music artist and co-founder of Pink Floyd, have continued on the British leg of his farewell *This Is Not A Drill* tour.

Labour Party politicians have led the way in demanding that Waters' concerts are cancelled.

Christian Wakeford MP, elected as Conservative MP for Bury South, Greater Manchester, before joining Labour last year, called in parliament for cancellation of the June 10 Manchester show.

He slanderously claimed that in Berlin Waters had “used the name of Anne Frank to stoke division, performed while dressed as an SS soldier and used the Star of David on a giant pig to insinuate that Jewish people run the world.”

Noting that Waters had been condemned by Manchester's Jewish Representative Council (JRC)—the body involved in witch-hunting a local museum head last year, asserting that “To claim that Israel is a colonial enterprise is antisemitic,”—Wakeford appealed to the Leader of the House, Tory MP Penny Mordaunt, to agree that “such concerts have no place in our society and should not go ahead.”

Mordaunt replied that “This House has made great efforts, particularly in recent years, to ensure that the scourge of antisemitism is addressed and stamped out from our country”, adding “I shall make sure that all relevant Departments have heard the hon. Gentleman's concerns.”

In London, Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan sent representatives to the operator of the O2 arena venue “to express the concerns and issues raised by the Jewish community,” lending support for a Zionist pressure group's call to cancel shows taking place on June 6-7.

Waters has been subject to a systematic campaign of harassment based on lies and intimidation. There were repeated attempts to cancel his six German shows based

on false accusations of anti-semitism. When these failed, criminal investigations were opened by the Berlin police department on charges of “incitement of hatred.”

For the German and British ruling class, Waters' “crimes” are that he has repeatedly expressed opposition to the US-NATO-instigated war against Russia in Ukraine—for which he has been smeared as a propagandist for Putin—and his vocal support of the Palestinian people in the face of criminal attacks on them by the State of Israel, for which he is denounced as an anti-Semite.

Waters has consistently denounced the Putin regime for its military operation in Ukraine, but steadfastly pointed to the hegemonic aims of US imperialism that are driving a conflict that threatens escalation into nuclear annihilation.

Former colleagues have joined the smear campaign. Polly Samson, wife of Pink Floyd's guitarist David Gilmour, tweeted in February that Waters was a “Putin apologist” and “antisemitic to your rotten core.” Gilmour described the attack as “demonstrably true.” He and fellow former Pink Floyd member Nick Mason have both been drawn into the pro-war propaganda barrage in support of right-wing Ukrainian nationalism and the US-backed NATO provocation against Russia. It is significant, therefore, that Mason remained sufficiently critical to sign a petition against the attempted cancellation of Waters' Frankfurt show.

The slanders levelled against Waters are vile. Waters' whole life and career have been touched by the dangers of a third world war, and informed by demands for an end to the production and proliferation of nuclear weapons. In the current shows, when introducing his anti-war song *Two Suns in the Sunset*, he has said, “We're closer to a nuclear confrontation than ever before.”

A child of the Second World War (b. 1943), Waters has always been acutely sensitive to the resurgence of repression and political reaction, through his time with

Pink Floyd (he left in 1985) and since. Pink Floyd's album *The Wall* (1979), with its portrayal of an unhinged rock star hallucinating of fascist rallies, was a visceral reaction against the resurgence of the far-right.

This Is Not A Drill, as WSWS reviewers have noted, features a powerful performance of his 1987 song *The Powers That Be*. Accompanied by howling sirens and shots, images are screened of armed police units and fascist thugs, along with some of their victims. These include Sophie Scholl and Anne Frank, murdered by the Nazis, shown alongside words explaining they were killed for "being Jewish." Another image shows, to the hatred of his detractors, the face of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh assassinated by the Israel Defence Forces for "being Palestinian."

Predictably, this outraged those responsible for the murderous policies and their defenders. When efforts to cancel shows in Munich, Frankfurt and Berlin failed, Waters was subjected to a campaign doubling down on the anti-semitism slurs by accusing him of trivializing the Holocaust and sympathizing with Nazism during a performance of *In the Flesh* (from *The Wall*).

An investigation has begun centred on his wearing a "Nazi-style" costume during this performance. As Waters pointed out, "the depiction of an unhinged fascist demagogue has been a feature of my shows since... 1980." The iconography was a major part of Alan Parker's 1982 film version of *The Wall*.

This history makes Samson and Gilmour's attack, particularly, all the more revolting. At what point did Gilmour decide Waters was supporting, not attacking, fascism? When they recorded *The Wall* together? When they toured it in 1980-81? When Alan Parker filmed it in 1982? When it had sold more than 30 million copies? When Gilmour guested on Waters' solo tour of the album in 2011?

Waters has acted with great personal bravery in response to this witch-hunt. He responded to the "bad faith attacks" on his Berlin show from "those who want to smear and silence me because they disagree with my political views and moral principles." The elements of the performance singled out for attack, he wrote, "are quite clearly a statement in opposition to fascism, injustice, and bigotry in all its forms," and attempts to portray them otherwise "are disingenuous and politically motivated."

His powerful statement continued:

"I have spent my entire life speaking out against authoritarianism and oppression wherever I see it. When I was a child after the war, the name of Anne Frank was

often spoken in our house, she became a permanent reminder of what happens when fascism is left unchecked. My parents fought the Nazis in World War II, with my father paying the ultimate price.

"Regardless of the consequences of the attacks against me, I will continue to condemn injustice and all those who perpetrate it."

He told his show in Birmingham that the British right-wing press were trying to destroy him for supporting human rights in Palestine. He denounced a "hatchet job" in the "f***** *Telegraph*" which tried to "rip my balls off." "They're trying to cancel me like they cancelled [former Labour leader] Jeremy Corbyn and [WikiLeaks founder] Julian Assange," he told the crowd. He said in defiance, "I will not be cancelled! Especially when it's all lies. I'm fighting back, Mr *Telegraph*!"

He concluded his remarks by thanking the audience, and almost in tears said, "I'm f***** dying here."

Outside of the political gang-up between Labour, Tory and Zionist scoundrels, the slander campaign against Waters carries little weight. His tour has shown instead his massive popular following, and widespread sympathy and support for his principled stand.

This is demonstrated by press coverage that is forced to acknowledge him as a significant artistic figure. His show was described as "powerful and provocative" by Scotland's the *Herald*, "majestic" but only "if you can ignore the rants" by the *Times*.

Perhaps most significantly, the *Telegraph's* own chief music critic Neil McCormick headlined his 5-star review of the Birmingham show, "An agitator at his best, showing Britain can't cancel the sublime".

McCormick wrote "Anyone who has followed Waters' career knows that he is not a closet fascist, indeed, arguably quite the opposite, he is an extremist peacenik agitator who tours the world staging huge rock shows espousing views opposing, well, 'authoritarianism, oppression, fascism, bigotry and injustice in all its forms,' as Waters put it."



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