

Workers Party government in Brazil joins pro-imperialist campaign against Roger Waters

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The slanderous campaign against Roger Waters, driven by the imperialist powers, has gained a new stage in Brazil, where the musician will be taking his “This is Not a Drill” tour beginning in October.

Last weekend, it was reported that the Minister of Justice of the Workers Party (PT) government, Flavio Dino, assured a member of the Supreme Court (STF) that Waters “will be arrested” if he “wears a Nazi uniform at a concert in Brazil.”

The conversation was reported to the *O Globo* newspaper by the STF justice Luiz Fux, who contacted Dino last Friday to pressure him to respond to a petition to prevent the musician from entering Brazil, signed by the vice president of the Israeli Confederation of Brazil (CONIB), Ary Bergher. It further demands that if Waters does enter the country, his concerts must be monitored by Federal and Civil Police agents ready to arrest him. According to *O Globo*, this is “apparently what will be done.”

The fraudulent motivation for this reactionary petition, which represents a virulent attack on free speech, was clarified by its author in an interview with another newspaper, *Folha de São Paulo*, in which Bergher stated that “[Waters] is a Nazi who must be contained and arrested.”

As in every other country where this vicious slander is being promoted, the persecution of Roger Waters in Brazil is based on a malicious attempt to turn reality inside out.

Throughout his long career, the 79-year-old founding member of the band Pink Floyd has consolidated his reputation not only as a brilliant musician, but also as a relentless campaigner against social injustice, war, and fascism. The use of a “Nazi uniform” in his performance—which was also the pretext for the opening of an abusive police investigation in Berlin in

late May—is part of the performance of the song “In the Flesh” from the 1982 album and film *The Wall*. His portrayal of an insane dictator wearing such a costume has been going on for 40 years without any doubts ever being raised about its character as a savage denunciation of all forms of fascism, bigotry and oppression.

The claim that Waters is “anti-Semitic” is likewise a lie, based solely on his criticism of the Israeli government for its oppression and violence against the Palestinian population.

Waters is the target of these cowardly attacks because he has aroused the fury of the imperialist ruling elites by exposing the fraud of the official US-NATO narrative about the war against Russia in Ukraine, and by turning his popular world tour into a form of antiwar protest.

This smear campaign, officially supported by the imperialist government in Washington, has intensified in tandem with the escalation of the war by NATO through its long-planned “Ukrainian counteroffensive.” The effort to demonize Waters is part of a desperate attempt to silence any voice of opposition to this highly unpopular war.

The development of the smear campaign against Waters on Brazilian soil further reveals the contradictions of this authoritarian offensive to suppress all opposition to the war.

Waters’ last tour Brazil in 2018, in the midst of the presidential elections in the country, became a landmark political event. His performances aroused controversy, but never because they were associated with “Nazism.” Quite the contrary.

Sections of the massive audiences at his concerts in major Brazilian cities booed Waters when he characterized the future president, Jair Bolsonaro, as a

neo-fascist and displayed the slogan “#EleNao,” chanted by supporters of the PT candidate, Fernando Haddad.

In an interview during his visit to Brazil, Waters explained his position on the Brazilian elections, saying, “I know it’s none of my business, but I am against the resurgence of fascism around the world ... I would rather not live under the rule of someone who believes that military dictatorship is a good thing. I remember the bad days in South America, and the dictatorships, and it was ugly.”

It is highly revealing about the nature of the movement against Waters that the protagonist of the petition to prevent his return to Brazil is a fierce supporter of the fascist former president. In 2018, Bergher was accused of breaking the bylaws of the Israeli Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Fierj), of which he was president, for declaring support for Bolsonaro on behalf of the group. He was also accused of having subsequently assaulted an 88-year-old member of the Federation who criticized his political misconduct.

Even more striking is the fact that the Lula government serves as a fundamental instrument for the advancement of this reactionary campaign. Dino’s statement about Waters’ potential imprisonment caused astonishment among many PT supporters, who had illusions in the “leftist” character of this party.

Under pressure to provide clarification, Lula’s Minister of Justice declared on Twitter that he had not yet received the “petition about the apologia for Nazism that would happen in a musical show.” Dino said that as soon as he receives it, he will analyze it based on the following premises: that “administrative authority cannot impose PRIOR censorship” and that “in Brazil it is a crime” subject to “imprisonment from two to five years” to use symbols “for purposes of dissemination of Nazism.” He concluded by stating that “these norms apply to ALL” and that determining what constitutes ‘dissemination of Nazism’.... OBVIOUSLY requires a case-by-case analysis.”

Dino’s evasive statement, in fact, only serves to intensify the threats contained in his conversation with Justice Luis Fux reported earlier by *O Globo*. He is basically warning that if Waters presents his well-known and acclaimed performance of “In The Flesh” in Brazil, he faces a serious threat of being hauled off the

stage and going straight to jail.

Many of Dino’s followers on Twitter, rubbing their eyes in disbelief at his answer, tried to explain to the former member of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) and current representative of the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) that Waters is no fascist. Unmoved, Dino tweeted again: “I know who he is, and I’ve known Roger Waters’ work for a few decades. I suggest you read the previous tweet... I think it’s quite clear about a serious position.”

Any political figure with the slightest democratic sensibility would immediately seek to clarify that the accusations against Waters are totally unfounded and that freedom of speech is a right guaranteed in his country. But this is not the case with Dino, or the Lula government as a whole, not to mention Brazil’s pseudo-left parties, which have remained totally silent.

This episode reveals the completely fraudulent basis of these political forces’ claims to oppose war and fascism. Lula postures as an advocate of peace between Ukraine and Russia, and a critic of the NATO powers that foster its continuation. His real cowardly position, however, is exposed in his government’s joining the noxious campaign of these same powers to vilify and persecute Waters, a leading international antiwar activist, going one better by threatening to jail him for his performances in Brazil.

The Socialist Equality Group (GSI) in Brazil calls on Brazilian youth and workers to take up the defense of Roger Waters. This struggle is central to the defense of the democratic rights of the working class, which are under attack in Brazil and around the world, and to the advancement of an international movement against imperialist war.

As the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (JEIS) stressed in its March 20 antiwar event in São Paulo, this movement can only be built on an international basis, in opposition to all bourgeois parties like the PT, and oriented towards the independent mobilization of the working class and the overthrow of capitalism worldwide.



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