

New slander campaign against Roger Waters amid growing mass global opposition to Gaza genocide

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The slander campaign against rock musician and political activist Roger Waters has intensified. *Variety* reported Tuesday that German media giant BMG (Bertelsmann Music Group) had severed ties with the internationally acclaimed artist and co-founder of the English progressive rock band Pink Floyd.

In a piece of yellow journalism based on unnamed “sources,” the *Variety* article by Jem Aswad and K.J. Yossman was headlined, “BMG Splits With Roger Waters Over Pink Floyd Co-Founder’s Comments on Israel (EXCLUSIVE).”

However, the text of the *Variety* piece merely asserts that BMG is “preparing to separate entirely from the veteran musician.” Meanwhile, there has been no statement from BMG itself about cutting ties with Waters or its view of his public statements on the ongoing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Neither did *Variety* obtain a statement from the musician on the subject.

In 2016, Waters signed a music publishing agreement with BMG—a division of Sony and the largest music publisher in the world—and there had been a plan by the company to release his new rerecording of Pink Floyd’s seminal 1973 album *The Dark Side of the Moon*. In the end, as Waters has explained, due to a conflict over BMG’s promotion of the 50th anniversary of the original recording, the company backed out of the deal and the project was issued through the UK record company Cooking Vinyl.

The purpose of the *Variety* article is to ramp up the slander campaign against Waters, falsely and maliciously painting him as an antisemite. In pursuit of their goal, Aswad and Yossman string together purported “inflammatory comments [by Waters] about

Israel, Ukraine and the United States” that have caused controversy, with the claim that these uncited comments “arguably veered from anti-Zionism into antisemitism,” and the fact that BMG’s parent company Bertelsmann issued a statement on October 9 expressing solidarity with Israel.

Aswad and Yossman then admit that news of the separation of Waters from BMG came from the artist himself during an hour-long interview with Glenn Greenwald last November. During the interview, Waters explained that BMG “fired me” after the company succumbed to pressure from the Israeli lobby in Germany.

Again referencing “a source,” the *Variety* writers observe that “BMG does not agree with Waters’ version of events.”

The *Variety* headline was then picked up by numerous news outlets that have previously attacked Waters, such as *Rolling Stone* and the *Guardian*. Each repeated the claim that BMG had separated from the artist over his political statements about Israel and Ukraine.

The article in *Rolling Stone*, which notes that BMG declined to comment on the subject, remarks that Waters’ stance as a supporter of Palestine and a critic of Israel over the years has “led to claims that he is antisemitic.” The monthly publication, which is owned by the Penske Media Corporation and has a declining readership among music fans, then adds, “Waters has always denied these accusations.” However, the editors do not bother to explain who is claiming he is an antisemite, investigate why they are saying it or ask Waters to respond to the accusation.

In the case of the *Guardian*, journalist Adrian Horton

claims that BMG dropped Waters due to his “divisive rhetoric” and repeats the vile slander of the Frankfurt city council last year that Waters is “one of the most widely known antisemites in the world.”

The Frankfurt local government actually lost a lawsuit filed by Waters against it for smearing him, and its attempt to cancel his concert in the city was blocked. The *Guardian* also quotes accusations made by the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) in a contemptible film made last year, an hour-long dishonest assault on Waters.

In his most recent social media post on Friday, Waters responded to the 15-2 vote by the United Nations’ International Court of Justice that day that Israel must “take all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide,” as well as immediately allow for humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip.

Waters commented that the vote was “really, really going in the right direction, but ‘Cease Fire Now!’ OK, everywhere. On every street corner, in every meeting of every politician, ‘Cease Fire Now!’ today, this morning.”

In a post on January 2, Waters wrote, “Israel is committing Genocide. Its leaders, and any Western leaders who support it, should be prosecuted under the Genocide Convention. No ifs! No ands! No buts! GENOCIDE IS WRONG. Love R.”

The popular response on social media to the latest campaign against Waters has been overwhelmingly in support of his stance in support of the Palestinians and against the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza.

The growing international mass opposition to the ethnic cleansing campaign by the Israel Defense Forces and the Netanyahu regime, backed by the Biden administration, has provoked hysteria on the part of the pro-Zionist corporate media. This lies behind the renewed attacks on Waters and other artists who have spoken out against the war crimes.

As *World Socialist Web Site* International Editorial Board Chairman David North pointed out in an October 2023 lecture on the struggle against Zionism and imperialism, “Throughout his recent world tour, the legendary musician Roger Waters has been under relentless attack and accused of antisemitism because he has had the courage to defend the Palestinian people. And everyone who knows the work of Roger Waters

knows very well that he is one of the most significant artists at the forefront of the fight for human rights, and that his opposition to the policies of the Israeli regime has absolutely nothing to do with antisemitism.”



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