

“It is fair to say that there is a continuity of fascism in Germany”

Frankfurt Historical Museum suspends Gaza protest encampment spokesperson as a guide

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The campaign to suppress the truth about the Israeli mass murder in Gaza is international in scope.

In Frankfurt, Germany, for example, Daniel Shuminov is facing reprisals for taking part in a protest encampment in May against the Gaza genocide. The WSWS covered the event.

Shuminov has been working as a visitor attendant and guide for Frankfurt’s Historical Museum for four years. It was only when he became involved in the protest encampment that museum management expressed “concerns” about him and withdrew all his assignments.

Shuminov explained to the WSWS:

I started working at the Historical Museum about four years ago, at the end of 2019: first as a visitor attendant, helping people find exhibits in the museum, and since 2021 also as a guide. It started with our temporary exhibition at the time, which covered the topic of “Frankfurt and Nazism” for a year. Because I already had experience with workshops and was also politically active as an anti-fascist, I was offered the opportunity to work as a guide in this field, especially in conveying the history of fascism.

This went well for several years, until this spring, when Daniel became involved in the “Hind’s Garden” encampment (named after Hind Rajab, the five-year-old Palestinian girl murdered along with six other family members by Israeli forces in January 2024), at the Goethe University. The protest lasted from May 20 to 26, and Daniel was elected spokesperson. At the time, Daniel told the WSWS: “We felt it was absolutely necessary to speak out against the genocide in Gaza.” The protest was part of a global movement of over 200 such encampments.

Shortly after the encampment was closed down, the museum effectively stopped placing contracts with Daniel. Since then, it has not given the sociology student any new assignments, thus putting him in a difficult financial situation shortly before he completes his master’s thesis. Daniel reports:

It started immediately after the camp. We are freelancers at the Historical Museum. That means we sign up when we have time. And I had signed up again immediately after the encampment. Then I received a phone call on June 12, saying that there were now “concerns” on the part of the management about me because of my political activity as a spokesperson at the encampment, as well as because of statements I was said to have made a week later at a demonstration.

What these statements were, or what exactly the concerns were, was not said. There were internal discussions about this, in which I could not participate. I had planned at least one tour, but on June 12 I was already removed from all assignments. I was supposed to wait until June 18 to get more information. I made it clear that I did not find this at all acceptable and that I would like to express my views about everything that was said against me.

This was flatly rejected. On June 18, I was informed that I would not be able to receive any more assignments for the time being. This was clearly related to the encampment. The board of directors would now decide on this, and I would not be allowed to work until August. I also objected to this by telephone. I also sent the museum the video of my speech at the aforementioned rally. I really wanted to create transparency and asked to receive their reasoning in writing by email.

During the phone call, it already sounded to me as if the cards had been stacked against me—because at the very end of the call, they added the reason that there was currently no demand [for guided tours]. To this day, I still receive emails that staff are urgently being sought.

(...) I never received written confirmation of the suspension. It seems that they were very careful not to give me anything in writing about the real reasons. It was only at the end of July that I was finally offered a meeting after I had written several protest emails. But as soon as I asked if a colleague could come with me and if we could take minutes of the meeting, I was uninvited again.

At this point, doubts about the quality of Shuminov’s tours were suddenly raised. Regarding this, he says:

The narrative that my tours were somehow inadequate only emerged five or six weeks after the suspension. The whole thing seemed very calculated, as they never referred to the encampment or the conversations we had about it in their e-mails. Before that, it had been quite clear over the phone that the whole thing was encampment-related.

Shuminov is convinced that his suspension cannot have anything to do with the quality of his work as a tour guide. Since then, he has offered tours again, this time in front of the museum, to prove the opposite. He is very knowledgeable about fascism in Frankfurt. The “concerns” are

apparently due to targeted defamation from Zionist circles. He explains that

although it must be said that there was defamation against me even before the protest, namely that I am said not to have named Jewish women as a victim group during my fascism tours. You can't talk about fascism at all without naming Jewish women as a victim group. It's absurd, also because I myself have a Jewish family background.

He explains that he has a Jewish father, but does not consider himself Jewish, "because I am no longer religious and see it as a religion, not as an ethnicity. But that's a different discussion that I don't find important in this context." Out of "respect for the religion," he also participates in Jewish festivals: "That said, I already have a lot of points of contact and also know a bit about it. That's kind of my background."

Meanwhile, however, more and more people were being influenced by the defamations, Daniel explained, and continued:

It's really absurd. And I told my boss that I consider this to be defamation. And that I would like the management to check it out. They could also ask previous visitors if it's true. People are also welcome to join my tours unannounced. But unfortunately, none of this is being followed up.

He reports that pro-Palestinian individuals are systematically denounced to their employers and anonymously slandered:

There really is a system to it, and there are people who call the employers of pro-Palestinian activists and make wild claims: that we are violent, that we are anti-Semites, and so on. This even happened at my father's former place of work (he is now retired) because they confused the two of us. Someone just Googled or somehow researched where a Shuminov might work and then accidentally called the place where my father used to work. They said terrible things about me there, too.

Daniel finds it particularly painful to be slandered as "anti-Semitic." "That hurts, because anyone who accuses me of anti-Semitism is actually accusing me of hating part of my family. ... It also distracts a lot from the real anti-Semitism that exists in Germany."

He points out that the present Hesse state anti-Semitism commissioner, Christian Democrat Union (CDU) member of parliament Uwe Becker, a State Secretary in the Hesse Ministry of Finance, strongly expresses Zionist views. "I have not yet witnessed any political activity by Becker as anti-Semitism commissioner that was not in the context of Zionism." The deplorable thing about it is:

This leads to the growing fascist movement in Germany being completely ignored. And major parties like the [far-right Alternative for Germany] AfD, which openly work with anti-Semites, are completely out of the line of fire. Because the scapegoats are now we pro-Palestinian activists. And even if we have a Jewish family background, that is completely irrelevant. We are still being fired from our jobs.

The fact that Jewish voices are very heterogeneous is overlooked. In almost every Jewish family, there are different assessments of this genocide. This is perfectly human and normal...

Jews are massively overrepresented in terms of repression! Of course, there is no such thing as perfect data collection. But the figures that the activists have compiled show that about 30 percent of the activists are Jewish. And the proportion of the Jewish population in Germany is 0.2 percent. That is a massive overrepresentation, quite clearly.

Due to his involvement against fascism and his work on the exhibition "Frankfurt and Nazism," Daniel is well informed about the history of fascism in Frankfurt:

I had incorporated a lot of information from the temporary exhibition into the concept for the tours, which was later no longer on display. It went so well that I was asked if I would like to help revise the tour concept. I did a lot of tours with young people. Most of the bookings come from high school classes that are studying the subject in their advanced courses. And once you start dealing with this history, it's bound to become politicised.

In the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial [1963–1965], just 20 of the 7,000 perpetrators of the Auschwitz concentration camp were convicted. In fact, no one who held particular responsibility in Frankfurt during the Nazi era was actually convicted in court. Of the 3,000 Gestapo employees in Frankfurt, only one, [the head of the Frankfurt Gestapo] Heinrich Baab, was convicted.

Here in Frankfurt, if you count the camp with Sinti and Roma, there were three concentration camps, and all camp leaders were acquitted after the war, or the proceedings were discontinued. Even the Lord Mayor of Frankfurt, Friedrich Krebs, who, according to the so-called "Fuehrerprinzip" (leader principle) bore the most responsibility, never came before the court and was classified as a "follower." He remained in the city parliament until 1958 and was later allowed to work as a lawyer again.

Initially, 23 members of the supervisory board of IG Farben [manufacturers of the Zyklon B gas used by the Nazis in the death camps] were indicted, but only 11 were convicted. Others were allowed to become board members of Deutsche Bank at a later date, such as Hermann Josef Abs. And auditoriums and buildings were named after them.

All 11 members of the I.G. Farben supervisory board who were convicted were released after a maximum of six years. That is almost the same length of time that Communists had to serve when the KPD [German Communist Party] was banned in Germany [in 1956]. The KPD members were tried again by the same judges as under fascism. And these judges, who had also sentenced Communists in the Nazi era, argued that the KPD members were "repeat offenders" and that they could therefore not receive a suspended sentence.

And so it happened that in Frankfurt, people who had built the concentration camps—because the IG Farben concern, of course, maintained its own concentration camp at Buna-Monowitz near Auschwitz—they were in prison for just as long as those who had fought against it. And as for the shareholders of these responsible corporations: they were never even brought to court.

It is fair to say that there is a continuity of fascism in Germany.

An open letter to the Historical Museum Frankfurt demanding that Shuminov be allowed to return to work and that the incident be critically reviewed has been signed by more than 1,500 individuals and 45 organisations by the end of October.

On the question of how to fight against the return of fascism today, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) and its publishing house Mehring-Verlag organised an event with David North, chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site*, at the recent Frankfurt book fair under the title: “Back to the Future. War, Fascism and Class Struggle in the 21st Century.” North’s speech can be viewed [here](#).



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