Department for Education Captured by Israeli Interests: A Musician's Account of Political Influence and Cancelled Speech

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> A British musician and member of the band Bob Dylan claims the Department for Education, led by Secretary of State Bridget Phillipson, cancelled their Manchester Academy show under pressure from pro-Israel donors and lobby groups, arguing this represents political capture that threatens British freedoms and artistic expression.

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This account describes the alleged cancellation of a scheduled performance by the band Bob Dylan at Manchester Academy in November 2025, attributed to intervention by the UK Department for Education. The speaker alleges that Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, acted at the behest of major pro-Israel donors and lobbying organisations with financial ties to her and other cabinet members. The speaker identifies three primary sources of influence: Stewart Roden of Hetz Ventures (an Israeli venture capital firm), who donated over £1 million to Labour and funded the Zionist educational initiative Ignite; Trevor Chinn, a prolific donor to pro-Israel lobby groups and think tanks, who also funded other cabinet members including Wes Streeting, Rachel Reeves, Lisa Nandy, and David Lammy; and the European Leadership Network (ELNET), which funds parliamentary tours to Israel. The speaker frames the show cancellation as symptomatic of broader political capture of the education sector and argues it exemplifies restrictions on free speech and artistic expression in service of a foreign state's interests. The account also discusses the speaker's views on the Israel-Gaza conflict, characterising Israeli military actions as genocide and arguing that artists and citizens face disproportionate consequences for speaking against the conflict compared to those who participate in Israeli military operations.

KLJUČNE PORUKE

- The band Bob Dylan's scheduled performance at Manchester Academy on 5 November 2025 was cancelled following reported intervention by Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, communicated to the venue on 23 October 2025.
- Stewart Roden, chairman of Israeli venture capital firm Hetz Ventures, has donated over £1 million to the Labour Party and funded Ignite, a Zionist educational initiative; Hetz Ventures was co-founded by Judah Taub, an IDF officer.
- Trevor Chinn, described as one of the most prolific individual donors to the British pro-Israel lobby, has funded Labour Friends of Israel, Conservative Friends of Israel, Labour Together think tank, and Keir Starmer's leadership campaign; he was awarded the Israeli Presidential Medal of Honour in 2024.
- The European Leadership Network (ELNET) funds propaganda tours to Israel for MPs, peers, and parliamentary staff, including a £3,000-funded trip for Bridget Phillipson's adviser Thomas Crick in 2023, who is now senior adviser on assessment and curriculum review at the Department of Education.
- A Freedom of Information request to the Department of Education regarding the show cancellation was denied; the department stated that communication details were provided in confidence.
- The speaker argues that the cancellation represents political capture of the education sector by pro-Israel interests and characterises it as a threat to British freedoms, artistic expression, and the right to protest against the Israel-Gaza conflict.
- The speaker contrasts the treatment of artists critical of Israeli military operations with the lack of consequences for British citizens who volunteer with or support the IDF, characterising current restrictions on speech as 'the new McCarthyism'.

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The Cancellation and Political Capture

This is the shocking story of how the British Department for Education has been captured by Israeli forces. Bridget Phillipson, the Secretary of State for Education, has attempted to cancel me, my band, and even our shows. We have never been found guilty of any crime. We have not been charged for anything. We are a punk band carrying on years of British tradition by playing punk music. Yet the Department of Education is going to war against us. Bridget Phillipson is not only going to war with

punk bands and British art, but British citizens as a whole, supporting changes in law that take away our right to protest—British freedoms that we hold dear.

Why is a country of 10 million people currently engaged in a genocide and a war that could destabilize the entire world dictating British freedoms, democracy, and policy? It is probably time to ask ourselves who our politicians actually work for. Has Bridget Phillipson, the Secretary of State for Education, been compromised by pro-Israeli money?

Stewart Roden and Venture Capital Influence

Stewart Roden is chairman and partner of Hetz Ventures, an Israeli venture capitalist firm that specializes in AI and cyber security. Hetz Ventures was co-founded by Judah Taub, an IDF officer who served in an elite classified unit. Roden has donated over £1 million to the Labour Party and funded Ignite, a Zionist educational initiative that frames Israel in a positive light for children.

Trevor Chinn's Extensive Political Network

Another major donor to Bridget Phillipson is a man by the name of Trevor Chinn, one of the most prolific individual donors to the British pro-Israeli lobby. Chinn has been a major donor to both Labour Friends of Israel and Conservative Friends of Israel, as well as funding the notorious think tank Labour Together, a think tank known for targeting Jeremy Corbyn and independent media that were supportive of him. Labour Together even went so far as to investigate journalists who reported on the organization illegally failing to disclose donations of £730,000. Chinn also donated £50,000 to Keir Starmer's leadership campaign, which was only declared once he had won.

Other cabinet members funded by Chinn include Wes Streeting, Rachel Reeves, Lisa Nandy, and David Lammy. In 2024, Trevor Chinn was awarded the Israeli Presidential Medal of Honour.

The European Leadership Network and Educational Tours

The lesser-known donor to Bridget Phillipson is the European Leadership Network, also known as ELNET. ELNET funds propaganda tours to Israel for MPs, peers, and parliamentary staff, offering them the opportunity to see the Iron Dome, receive briefings by the IDF, and meet with Israeli officials. ELNET US is headed up by a man named David Segal, who said there was no starvation in Gaza and boasted about ELNET being distinct from AIPAC in that it works with an entire continent—meaning Europe.

Particularly worrying is a £3,000 donation to fund a trip in 2023 for Phillipson's adviser, Thomas Crick. Crick is now the senior adviser on assessment and curriculum review at the Department of Education. This raises the question: has the Department of

Education been co-opted by pro-Israel money? It certainly brings into question Phillipson's actions when she ordered an inquiry into Bristol Brunel Academy after members of the National Education Union raised concerns about a pro-Israel MP, Damian Eagan, visiting their secondary school. Phillipson stated that she would not rule out further action.

The Manchester Academy Show Cancellation

It is no surprise that when our show was due to be played at a venue peripherally connected to a university, the Secretary of State for Education was deployed to make sure that did not happen and to serve the interests of her donors. Bob Dylan, the band that I am one half of, was due to play Manchester Academy on November 5th, 2025. Manchester Academy is a venue run by the Students Union and operates independently from the University. Communication the band received from Manchester Academy on October 23rd stated that this morning the University had to brief the special adviser Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, confirming that the show would not be taking place in November.

When a Freedom of Information request was submitted to the Department of Education, it was, of course, denied. In their denial, they stated that some of the detail that informed internal discussions was provided to officials in confidence. As of today, we are still unaware of the communication around our show being cancelled. But this is not about our show. This is about what little integrity is left of our government. If even our education sector, which is in charge of shaping the future minds of this nation, cannot be free from Israeli influence, then what hope do we have at combating the growing Zionist influence here at home?

Punk Music and British Freedoms

Punk music is a distinctly British music genre, born out of rebellion and a subculture of nonconformity. Why is it being cancelled for the interests of a foreign state? You would expect so-called patriotic free speech warriors would have something to say, but they find themselves too busy trying to drag British soldiers into a war with Iran on behalf of Israel. I am normally incredibly nervous about intervening in foreign wars, but I believe this is the right one, and I find the actions—or the inactions, perhaps I should say—of our Prime Minister frankly pathetic.

If you, as a British citizen, leave this country to go and fight for Israel and take part in the ongoing genocide and slaughter of Palestinian people and return to this country, you may be held up as a hero. You will face no criminal charges. You will face no cancellation. But God forbid you step on stage and use your voice to challenge that genocide.

The IDF, Genocide, and Civil Rights

Contrary to belief, the IDF is not a protected group of people. They are a genocidal army, taking part in some of the most horrendous crimes against humanity that we have ever seen. You do not have to agree with the views and opinions of Bob Dylan. You do not have to agree with the statements that we made at Glastonbury. But why are we policing artists and creatives on behalf of a foreign state in order to defend a genocide and the expansion of Israel and the Greater Israel Project? Our civil rights are being infringed upon, and artists and creators are being offered as extremely visible targets for the consequences that you will face as a British citizen for speaking up against this.

This is the new McCarthyism, with British freedoms under attack and perpetual war. It is now more important than ever to support independent media that will bring you a true and clear picture. Double Down News is one of those platforms. Stories like mine will not be told on mainstream media, so if you can, please support Double Down News on Patreon.

#Political influence and lobbying in UK education policy #Israel-Gaza conflict and advocacy #Artistic freedom and censorship #Pro-Israel donor networks in British politics #Free speech and civil liberties in the UK #Concert cancellation and government intervention #Accountability and transparency in government

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