



# American Musicians Are Scared Their Careers 'Will Be Destroyed' If They Speak up for Palestinians — Roger Waters

Par [Philip Weiss](#)

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*For years now we have admired Roger Waters's moral courage, his refusal to back down from his criticism of Israel even if his career is torched by his witness. And I have heard rumors of that career-blackmail being levied at the legendary musician who never met his father or grandfather (because they died freeing Europe) and who burst into rock and roll fame without even wanting that when he was in his early 20s because he was political before he was musical.*

Those rumors are confirmed; now this committed soul has burst out in the English press with a description of the vicious smears the Israel lobby has used against him, which he has overcome, in an effort to get others to join him in speaking out against Israeli apartheid. Pointing out that British musicians have supported BDS- Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign- Waters says that American artists are "scared sh\*\*less" against such actions because their careers "will be destroyed." But we need them desperately, as we did in Vietnam days.

Here are [some of Waters's statements](#) to the Independent:

"The only response to BDS [] is that it is anti-Semitic," Waters told The Independent, in his first major UK interview about his commitment to Israeli activism. "I know this because I have been accused of being a Nazi and an anti-Semite for the past 10 years.

"My industry has been particularly recalcitrant in even raising a voice [against Israel]. There's me and Elvis Costello, Brian Eno, Manic Street Preachers, one or two others, but there's nobody in the United States where I live. I've talked to a lot of them, and they are scared s\*\*less....

"If they say something in public they will no longer have a career. They will be destroyed. I'm hoping to encourage some of them to stop being frightened and to stand up and be counted, because we need them. We need them desperately in this conversation in the same way we needed musicians to join protesters over Vietnam."

"My father died fighting the Nazis, my mother [a strong Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Labour supporter] devoted her life to doing everything she could to create a more humane world.

“We are asking questions that have never been asked until the last couple of years, which are bringing the wrath of the Israeli lobby down on people like me and all the others who dare to question and criticise.

“[The Israeli lobby] is determined not to let that conversation develop into one that people can listen to and that is why they accuse us of being Nazis. This idea that BDS is the thin end of some kind of genocidal Nazi wedge that ends up in another Holocaust – well it isn’t.”

This is the sort of brave testimony we have come to expect from Waters. Four years ago I saw him at the Russell Tribunal patiently describing Palestinian conditions. Last week I saw him speaking at a Palestinian solidarity event in lower Manhattan. He has freely extended his fame and his most famous work, The Wall album, to the Palestinian people– as I know that he would be doing for Jews if it was my people being persecuted.

Remember that Nebraska Senator Chuck Hagel let a bit of this truth slip out a few years ago– the Jewish lobby intimidates people on Capitol Hill, [he told Aaron David Miller](#) — and he was dragged through every sewer in Washington by the Israel lobby, and damaged. But that tactic is wearing out, and by standing tall, Waters is helping to defeat it. Let’s hope his latest bravery inspires and frees others. Like what about Stevie Van Zandt, who helped to lead the South African artistic boycott movement, but who has defied calls on him as a member of Bruce Springsteen’s band to stay away from Israel this summer. [Van Zandt wrote](#):

“You and the other Israel boycotters are politically ignorant obnoxious idiots... Israel is one of our two friends in the Middle East. In addition to the fact that a boycott in that case would accomplish nothing. Go get educated.”

Roger Waters is providing a moral education. Every age brings fresh injustice, which calls on those of conscience who have strong spines to stand up. Waters and others have beaten a path. Let more and more join them.

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