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Campaign Against Misrepresentation in Public Affairs, Information and the News

To: Jonathan Hall KC, via clerks@6kbw.com

25th June 2025

Dear Jonathan Hall

CAMPAIN invites you to deepen your understanding of pro-Palestinian viewpoints

I write at the behest of [CAMPAIN](#), an organisation that challenges false narratives in the public domain. My purpose in writing is to invite you to meet and converse with us as soon as possible.

We are a non-partisan group that welcomes people of different political persuasions, faiths and ethnicities. We are very concerned about truthfulness in the media, and in political and civic discourse, particularly in current circumstances in Israel, Palestine and the Middle East.

We support the campaign for Palestinian rights led by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, and which includes some very well-informed (non-Zionist) Jewish groups, Muslims, Christians and others. However, we are at the same time concerned with faulty information and media discourse on topics other than Palestine – from the Iraq War to the Health Service – that have damaged Britain’s ability to formulate coherent policies.

We note that you are the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism and State Threats legislation and that you will continue in these functions at least until 2026. You have a role to play in keeping us safe and ensuring that whatever penalties issued are just and not excessively harsh. Your frustration at being unable to review decisions to strip people of British citizenship show you are concerned about the latter (Byline Times, May 13th), as indeed we are.

However, we feel some disquiet with the speech you gave at [Policy Exchange](#) on May 19th.

While you were full of praise for Policy Exchange in hosting the event, we feel you might have found a less partisan body to host your speech. Policy Exchange is known for espousing controversial right wing views and policies^[1](see [Peter Geoghegan, 2023](#) and [Tom Griffin, 2023](#)). Being registered as a charity, Policy Exchange is not required to register the names of its donors. Griffin comments that “think tanks provide

wealthy donors with more direct influence over policy formation with less scrutiny than direct party donations". Geoghegan's information on American funding suggest that it may not be immune from foreign influence.

But what concerns us most is some of [the content of your speech](#). In your discussion of foreign threats and subversion, you focus on Russia, China, Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood, but have nothing to say about Israel and the United States. You may object that it is the role of the Government of the day to decide which foreign countries constitute a threat to our sovereignty, but this does not fit well with your interest in "saving democracy from itself". As we are most aware in the era of Trump and Netanyahu, countries that are nominally our allies may threaten our ability to govern our own affairs.

Our group has no particular affiliation with the Labour left or Jeremy Corbyn, but we observed with dismay how Israel lobbyists [systematically undermined them in the run up to the 2019 election](#). They did this by weaponizing spurious accusations of antisemitism which singularly failed to reference [peer-viewed statistical data](#) showing that such attitudes remained primarily anchored in the right of our political spectrum. And of course, Richard Dearlove, the former Head of MI6, sought to discredit Corbyn as a "security threat", while US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, threatened to interfere to prevent him being elected British Prime Minister.

As you will see in the first of these two articles, the strategy not only helped bring down Corbyn and his closest supporters, but it led to extraordinary post-Corbyn developments within the Labour Party whereby the Jewish Board of Deputies (BOD) virtually dictated a series of policies to the incoming leadership candidates.

This trend has continued to the present day as the Labour Government has followed the Conservatives in diplomatically and militarily supporting Israel's unprecedented belligerence towards native Palestinians and other countries within the region.

Former BBC Middle East correspondent Tim Llewellyn described this extraordinary episode as "perhaps the only moment when agents of a foreign power cooperated with British politicians to alter the course of our history". **In view of this, I put it to you that if we wish to "save democracy", we must not blind ourselves to the subversive manoeuvres of our "allies".**

In your talk of May 19th, you said that Britain may need anti-subversion laws to counter threats from states determined to undermine democracy. You tell us at around 26 minutes into your talk that the concept of counter-subversion fell out of favour because of disquiet over McCarthyism and some unjustified penetration of domestic protest groups by police officers. However, it does not seem to have registered with you that the antisemitism-in-labour scare was a re-run of the McCarthy episode, using the

word “antisemitic” instead of “communist”, but with similar consequences – including public denunciations and destroyed careers.

You point to the internet as offering hostile intelligence officers a "perfect way of directly recruiting, tasking and paying individuals" and you specifically cite:

- the possibility of their promoting antisemitism within politics
- sponsoring “contentious foreign policy issues such as Gaza[2]” and
- the idea that white people should be ashamed and non-white people aggrieved.

Russia or other powers can certainly try to stir up wedge issues for their own ends. However, I put it to you that there is little they can achieve with the pro-Palestinian protest movement which is already very strong. Indeed, your statement makes me wonder if you have any familiarity with it. Have you ever met leading figures such as the Director of PSC Ben Jamal, members of Jewish Voice for Labour, the Palestinian ambassador Husam Zomlot, journalists such as Peter Osborne and Richard Sanders, or Jewish historians such as Ilan Pappé, and Avi Shlaim?

As a long term supporter of the rights of Palestinians, I can say that pro-Palestinian activists are deeply aware of the history (the context in which October 7th occurred), going back to the origins of the Zionist movement in the 19th century, the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the British mandatory authority of 1922 to 1948, the Nazi holocaust, the Zionist insurgency against the British in the 1940s, the expulsion of the Palestinians and associated massacres in 1948, the moving of Jewish settlers into occupied Palestinian territory post-1967, the invasion of Lebanon and associated atrocities, the “intifadas”, the Oslo Accords, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli wars on Gaza, and the “Great March of Return”. Some CAMPAIGN members have served as “[ecumenical companions](#)”, observing facts on the ground in Israel and Palestine.

Your statements suggest that you are ill-informed about pro-Palestinian protest groups and have certain preconceptions that may prevent you performing your role with sufficient objectivity. I think you need to recognise that the campaign for Palestinian rights is a sophisticated home-grown movement with many sources of information, and is unlikely to be greatly influenced by misinformation from provocateurs trying to persuade us of an IRGC narrative, or that “Russia is the true defender of Western civilisation”, as you put it.

A particularly positive feature of the protest movement is that it brings together people of different faiths and ethnicities, rather than driving them apart. For example, if there are still some Muslims at risk of falling under the noxious influence of ISIS, they’ll learn a radically different ideology on marches where Christians, Jews, Muslims and others come together peacefully and supportively. Far-fetched religious ideologies gain little traction in a movement that seeks to end the ethnic cleansing, mass murder and starvation, and bring about lasting peace with justice.

Rather than viewing such protest movements as a threat, I suggest you recognise them as an expression of grassroots democracy, and as part of the process by which we build our nation and cement its values, just like the anti-slavery movement of two centuries ago and the anti-apartheid movement of a few decades back.

I also fear your declarations will provide succour to the Home Office and Police as they arrest journalists, activists and academics without due cause. In December I wrote [a blog on this topic](#) and followed up with a piece about [a British-Palestinian academic](#), Prof Makram Khoury-Machool, who was detained on return from a holiday in Paris. I would urge you to read these pieces carefully. Certain of these people have been arrested for as little as a tweet revealing that they hold opinions at odds with Government policy, notably that they are expressing support for a “proscribed organisation”, i.e. Hamas. The argument is paper thin; while said individuals support the right of Palestinians to resist occupation under illegal occupation, they do not support Hamas’s killing of civilians on Oct 7th, 2023.

Others are activists from Palestinian Action who have damaged equipment in factories making drones and quadcopters for the Israelis, and recently daubed red paint on RAF aircraft. This is doubtless illegal under the letter of the law, but given what is happening to the Palestinians, speaks of their bravery in doing what their consciences dictate and exposes government complicity with massive Israeli war crimes and clear breaches of international law.

The basic objective of the UK authorities seems to be to intimidate and silence all these people with a combination of arbitrary detention and/or arrest, the confiscation of communication equipment, fishing for contacts, rough handling, restrictive bail conditions and the threat of re-arrest. Even when people are charged with lesser offences, the Terrorism Act of 2000 is often used as a cover for authoritarian police behaviour, as it allows them to hold people for much longer periods. As Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, we would like you to demand the law be amended to prevent such abuse.

The police claims to arrest people “to ensure compliance with the law” but has shown no interest in implementing the International Criminal Court Act of 2001 which makes participation in, aiding, or being auxiliary to a genocide a criminal offence. The tail is wagging the dog, and the interests of Israel are taking precedence over our own national self-interest. We feel you should draw public attention to this failure.

When you speak of the risk of foreign powers “promoting antisemitism in politics”, I think you should consider the possibility that the main culprits are Israel and its extensive network of UK lobbyists and media allies, which have weaponised the concept of antisemitism against anyone who cares to criticise its ethnic cleansing, mass killing and starvation of Palestinians. Consider the many anti-Zionist Jews that the Labour Party has thrown out or suspended on grounds of “antisemitism”; it doesn’t take an Einstein to see that Starmer and company were doing the bidding of those lobbying for Israel.

Lastly, we ask you to revisit the proscription of two organisations:

- Firstly, there is the political wing of Hamas, an organisation that notwithstanding its violent actions in Israel/Palestine, in no way threatens the UK. When Priti Patel proscribed it in 2021, she effectively criminalised contact with the Palestinian resistance and reduced the resolution of the current conflict to a zero-sum game. This suits Netanyahu and friends who wish to avoid all negotiations with Palestinians, of whatever faction, for an equitable solution to the conflict. But this is certainly not in the interest of the United Kingdom. Had a similar course been taken with the IRA, we could not have had the Good Friday Agreement.
- Secondly, there is Palestine Action. I strongly suggest you read [this article](#) that carefully sets out the case against its proscription, saying that: “the (terrorist) designation would place Palestine Action — a non-violent group that engages in property damage but has never incited physical harm — in the same legal category as ISIS, al-Qaeda and neo-Nazi gangs.... the move has less to do with public safety than with suppressing dissent and expanding the use of counter-terror laws to silence a politically inconvenient campaign”.

As I said above, we have no principled objection to your role but get the impression that you lack familiarity with and experience of the sort of people involved in protest movements, particularly regarding Palestine, and may be seeing threats where they don't exist. We therefore suggest you invest time in reaching out to such people to better understand their perspectives. We would be happy to assist and therefore propose we meet at your earliest convenience.

We would like to hear back from you within the next fortnight.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Coulter

Secretary, on behalf of the Executive Committee of CAMPAIN

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[1] For example, the view that right wing terrorism is less of a problem than Islamic terrorism, and the policy to withdraw from the European Court of Human Rights, the promotion of “Free Schools”. Policy Exchange and other libertarian think tanks played a role in the rise of Liz Truss.

[2] I wonder what exactly you perceive as “contentious” – I would like to believe that you view the indiscriminate murder of civilians as wrong from any perspective.