

Report on Demonstration Against Fascism and Racism in London 17th Nov '18

-by Pete Gregson, Labour's favourite "anti-Semite", who's in trouble for calling Israel a racist endeavour in this petition, which Labour readers can sign – it's at tinyurl.com/israelihra

So I roll up the night before on the train from Edinburgh, having just hit "send" on [my response to the GMB on their allegations of anti-Semitism](#), by whom I have been suspended; I am the only GMB shop steward in the large public sector organisation for whom I work, employing over 20,000 staff.

It's been a good week, for a media whore such as I. On Wednesday, the Marxists at Labour Against the Witch-hunt (LAW) had declared my [treatment to be unfair](#) ¹

This led to the National publishing on the Thursday this piece "[Labour pressure group back Scots activist over anti-Semitism dispute](#)" after which I had spent the evening splashing it on 90 Labour-loving Facebook pages.

I am very chuffed, because whilst on the train I've opened my Weekly Worker and found an article with me in it – the first print media coverage I've ever had (apart from Private Eye) in a rag south of the border. "[Anti-Zionism and self-censorship](#)" is about how the witch-hunt against Jeremy Corbyn and the left is in full swing to mobilise against it. Carla Roberts of Labour Party Marxists has observed, that "LAW, while defending Gregson against any disciplinary action, does not support the petition² because it is, in parts, rather clumsily (and unfortunately) formulated." I am surprised on two counts. Firstly, I am thrilled to hear I am on the left. As someone who considers that capitalism can be used to manage the market I am chuffed to know that now makes me a leftie (the Tories having moved, presumably, so far to the right that the NF better move aside to make room). Secondly, that Carla thinks me a clumsy wordsmith. I realise it is now important to clarify stuff.³

But I have done prep for the demo – [I've emailed the organisers several times](#) to ask if I can address the crowd through their PA... No response. I fear they have been nobbled by the IHRA and suspect that mentioning Israel's apartheid at an anti-Racist demo might now brand march supporters John McDonnell and Diane Abbott as being (like me) anti-Semitic. The phrase is beginning to lose all meaning. Could we all really be as bad as Hitler, as Margaret Hodge might think? Hmm. I had tried to speak at the Anti-Racism march in Edinburgh on the 27th Oct - the organisers had ignored my emails, but when I tracked them down at the demo they confessed – "We can't let you speak – it would upset the Zionists". Though I saw no flags with the Star of David, it seems they might yet be there in plain clothes. The previous year, I was told, the Zionists had cut up rough on an anti-racist demo, having joined it because, they declared, Jews were an oppressed minority too. Whilst I wasn't too sure about that, I was even more surprised that Zionists thought they were doing anything to

¹ but with the caveat that "Although Peter's petition is a good idea, challenging Labour's NEC to revoke its adoption of the IHRA definition, we cannot support it. Firstly, we disagree with some of its wording – eg, before it adopted the full IHRA definition on September 4, Labour did *not* allow "full freedom of speech on Israel". On the contrary, the witch-hunt was in full flow long before that. Secondly, some of the formulations in Peter's supporting documents internalise the racism of Zionist ideology, failing to distinguish clearly between the Zionist movement and the Jewish population, and attributing a non-existent collective political identity to "the Jews", eg, "the Jews have so much leverage here [in the UK]"."

WRT the second point, I suspect LAW misunderstand my statements, please [see here for a conversation between myself and a Jewish friend who](#) also finds my view distasteful.

² The petition can be found at tinyurl.com/israelihra

³ See ¹ above.

help the cause of the Jews in the UK these days. It had felt to me that with their victory in getting the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism adopted by just about every organisation in the UK (including the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign⁴) that their work in the UK must be quite complete. But no, of course, they fear a roll-back if society ever suspects it has been duped by the greatest piece of double-think seen in this century and maybe even the last – that now anybody in the universe that suggests the Arabs in Israel (and here I include the occupied territories) are racially discriminated against is no better than Adolf – and might be accused of getting the gas ovens warmed up – as soon as they dared to state the blindingly obvious about the only country in the world that has legislated, in the Nation State law, that the Jew in Israel is the master race. Crafty as fuck, those Zionists. They deserve the Uri Geller mind-bending award.

Anyhow, as a result of their hard work, no MP or MSP or AM will now say a word about Israel, even as [Jewish settlers recently pumped their shit](#) into an Arab children's school, for fear of being branded anti-Semites. The IHRA is, I think, inadvertently giving Jews a bad name, since to know of evil but to fear ever speaking of it is an insult to every sense one has. Just about the only groups refusing to adopt the IHRA these days are the Muslim and the Marxist ones. They are fast becoming the beacons of sanity for me, as I feel myself adrift in a sea of madness.⁵

Anyhow, I digress. Earlier on the Saturday morning I have emailed Jeremy Corbyn and everyone else at the NEC with what will be my final tract before they make their initial judgement upon me on Tuesday 20th November, when the Disputes Panel meet at Southside. The piece, headed "[Why Bother?](#)" is meant to convince them I have no harmful intent – rather the opposite, for I have presented my plan as to how we might harvest 2.7 Million more Labour votes come the general election.

At 11am, I arrive at the demo which starts right by the BBC, the first body to give me a job on leaving Uni and a place I hadn't been back to since I had handed in my resignation in 1979, after just a year spent twiddling knobs as a Studio Manager. I am glad to see W1A 1AA is still standing though I know that the BBC must have adopted the IHRA too, since they won't say a word about (and probably never will) the growing opposition to the IHRA, presumably because they too, fear it would mean the Zionists could then brand them too as (heaven-forbid) institutionally anti-Semitic.

Once you let a group define its own oppression, you see, then you are on a slippery slope. The MacPherson principle (derived from the 1999 MacPherson Report on the Stephen Lawrence inquiry) specifically does not give members of an ethnic or religious group the sole right to determine what is or is not racist conduct, i.e. a perception of racist behaviour is not sufficient to establish that such behaviour has actually occurred, but must be supported with independent evidence of racist intent. Sadly, such is the zeal of the British in following instructions to the letter, that the MacPherson principle seems to have been flung out of the window – because the author too, could now be seen as anti-Semitic – for daring to set the grounds upon which the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism might be seen as less than perfect.

⁴ The publication "Fight Racism! Fight Racism!" notes in its article "[Defend Palestine Solidarity: Fight Back](#)" of 16/10/18 that "the PSC has decided it will comply with the IHRA definition and at its events its representatives now say next to nothing about Israel..."

⁵ I have also sent several emails to the Black Committee at the STUC in Glasgow asking if I might speak at their anti-racist demo on Saturday 24th September. The TUC is, in part, the architect of Labour's support for the IHRA definition and it is no surprise that they ignore me there as well. Mark Serwotka of the PCS is the [only union leader to suggest publicly](#) that Israel created Labour's "anti-Semitism" row by using the IHRA.

So anyway, here I am at the BBC and soon meet up with Gerry from Bexleyheath. Gerry has signed the petition and is the only one of the 70 signers that live near London who has responded to my cries for help via my Change.org update emails, that now fall into signers' inboxes on a weekly basis. He is a scouser who has moved dahn sarf. Scousers are becoming for me, the cream of the UK; time and again they come to my aid in this project: the last time I had turned up at an event with 5,000 flyers in my backpack had been at Labour Conference on the 23rd Sept; on that occasion too, scousers had come to my aid, though sadly not the Police scousers, who had [sought to bang me up](#) for waving my banner with the Latuff cartoon on it.

I have since lodged a complaint with them and hope that maybe I can sue them for breaching my human rights to the level where my crowdfunding website at tinyurl.com/legalihra becomes redundant; the £160 I have raised since it was launched on the 12th October will be barely enough to cover Michael Mansfield's expenses for a day of his time (he employs staff too); he has now agreed to take me on, but not on a pro-bono basis. I do believe Michael deserves to be paid for working and I hope the Merseyside Police will help him cover his mortgage.

Anyway, I have brought the banner with me again, as I stagger along the pavement, laden like a mule, with that and 5,000 flyers [\[like this\]](#) on my back. I truly believe the London Met will be more tolerant than their Merseyside brothers (yes, they seem to be mostly men) in that even though Theresa May has bound every copper to the IHRA, there must be a few of the Boys in Blue who are sane enough to doubt its legality. I reckon today I shall be safe from police harassment, though the chums I have left behind in Edinburgh doubt it. In the event, I get on well with the cops I meet on Saturday. My only complaint of them is that they had let their police horses shit liberally all along the route. Regent Street had come to resemble a farm track in places and protestors had to tread carefully, a reaction no doubt intended by the rozzers. But nature must take its course, and their horses must obviously have to shit somewhere, but it really looked like they must have been fed laxatives that day.

Anyway, Gerry and I form a battleplan; he will do one side, I must do t'other. We agree that we might best start by getting to the front of the march and working backwards. The crowds are so dense that just doing that is going to be a huge feat, even though we are still at 11.30am and the march is not due to get going till noon. I find that folk are less inclined to take flyers than they used to be. I must state "excuse me, I have been suspended by the GMB as shop steward" each time before they might take a flyer. I later learn that Gerry has had no problem, having only prefaced his approach to protestors with a huge grin. On the day, he gets shot of his 1200 flyers long before me.

As I leafletted bystanders, I met some of those English Defence League men watching the march at Trafalgar Square - I thought the badge one wore was for the Labour Party - no, he said, it was for the Armistice. We soon fell to talking about my Territorial Army chum and his famous one-o'clock gun production on Armistice day (11 bangs, at 11am bang on time). By the time we parted, they were most cordial. One took a flyer. Later that one (Bob) found me and became very emotional, saying how much he respected what Gerry and I were doing, and wanting hugs and such like. Funny old world, eh?

Quite a few folk came up and asked if I was the guy from Dudley. Evidently a council worker in Dudley was suspended from work for publishing the phrase "Israel is a Racist Endeavour" online, while advertising a lobby of Dudley Labour MP Ian Austin's surgery. [More here](#); I have since messaged him on FB; perhaps we look alike too.

Anyhow, when we got to the Cenotaph I found I had lost touch with Gerry (whom I had not seen for hours) so set up my banner by tie-ing it to the railings. I decided to adopt the manner of a stall-holder calling to all and sundry "The GMB have suspended me" in a sing-song rhyme (try it, it works). Also, this one "anti-Semites, anti-Semites, get your anti-Semites here, three for a pound". Thence I met some great folk. Some students at SOAS took bundles of flyers away to give to others. And I met an African student who's living in Glasgow who wants to help me do the STIR anti-racist march there next Saturday (I still have at least 2000 flyers left).

Finally, frozen and tired at 5pm I made it to Whitehall and discovered a huge mob of protestors in party mode. I had only got round a dozen of them with my flyers before I realised that their banners had nothing to do with anti-racism. These were the youths that had blocked 5 bridges in [another guerrilla protest that had caught the police unawares](#). There were many cops at Whitehall too, surrounding them, but the atmosphere was most genial. It all felt like a great big pop festival.

So – to summarise - we shifted 2,500 flyers that day. I checked last night as to how many new signatures we'd got as a result. 4.

Later that evening I popped into the TUC headquarters at Congress House in Fitzrovia. Most union leaders chose to back the IHRA, with no consultation with members at all. Before they voted, they had ignored this letter from Palestinian unions: "[Labour must reject biased IHRA definition that stifles advocacy for Palestinian rights](#)"

I gave the night watchman 50 flyers and asked him if he might give them to the TUC bosses. He laughed. When I told him I'd been suspended as a shop steward by the GMB for what was on the flyers, he laughed even more.

It's now Monday morning and I am back in Scotland. I have just found that the National have published another tale of my GMB woes. [Read it here](#).

-ends -

More info: contact Pete Gregson on 0758 472 2191

Videos of the March – [this video taken from outside the BBC offices](#), lasts 11 minutes and shows the extent of the protest. This other, [by RUPTLY, last half an hour](#) and has lots of faces, and shows the detailed effort many have gone to for the day.

How many were on the demo? I don't know; I can find no press reports on it. I imagine 30,000 but I cannot say. Gillian Dalley suggested as many in her letter to the Guardian [of 19/11/18 complaining about the lack of press coverage](#)