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Subject: RE: FAO Gary Smith, GMB : Anti-Semitism accusations against me

Dear Gary,

I received the [attached letter](#) from you this weekend. There are a few points that need clarification.

On the covering letter, you say "Other than a fully financial member of GMB, no other individuals will be admitted to the hearing".

But then on the first of the following pages, under the section named THE HEARING, the text clearly reads "A non-member may attend to give evidence as a witness".

Can you clarify to me now as to whether my witnesses will be allowed to attend and speak? They may number 3 – none are GMB members.

Also, in the section marked THE HEARING there are the words "an appendix to this guidance outlines a procedure for the hearing". But I do not have that appendix. Can you send it me?

On your letter, you also say "There will be no debate about IHRA".

But I am charged with anti-Semitism according to the IHRA. And as we both know from the document you sent me, published by the IHRA, the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism is pretty vague. By its own admission it is a "non-legally binding working definition of anti-Semitism" – yet I am to be judged by it.

And it appears you seek to condemn me on an "example that may serve as an illustration". Presumably the use of the word "may" here means that there is room for debate?

The IHRA Working Definition of Anti-Semitism goes on:

"Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity."

The whole document is riddled with the words "might" and "may". So it is very much in the eye of the beholder as to whether anything I could have done, be defined as anti-Semitic. There is no absolute definition in the "Working Definition".

I will agree one thing. I am guilty of "Accusing Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust". It is the exaggerating part I admit to. But here I must refer you to the words of the Israeli former minister of Education, Shulamit Aloni, who said in a US interview that "[anti-Semitism is a trick. We always use it](#)". The interviewer said: "Often, when there is dissent expressed in the United States against policies of the Israeli government, people here are called anti-Semitic. What is your response to that as an Israeli Jew?". Shulamit Aloni replied: "Well, it's a trick, we always use it. When from Europe somebody is criticizing Israel, then we bring up the Holocaust...."

So if a former Israeli government minister says that Israel exaggerates the Holocaust whenever it suits itself to do so, then presumably that whole example becomes meaningless.

Of course I will need to go on about these woolly examples at the hearing.

You seek “No debate about the IHRA” but how on earth can the Committee come to a decision as to whether I am anti-Semitic or not, without looking at what the IHRA says? Since so much of it is unclear or contradictory how can it be used as a test for anti-Semitism?

As the Palestinian trade unions note, the IHRA is a “politicised and fraudulent definition of anti-Semitism”. Do you really think it is of value here to ignore these people’s view? Are we trade unionists, or not? Is it GMB policy to support the Palestinians? It is. On 17/10/17 [the Jewish Chronicle reported](#) that

“The National Union of Teachers, Unison, the GMB, Aslef and Unite The Union are among a near unanimous show of support from the union movement for the *Justice Now: Make It Right For Palestine* demonstration taking place on Saturday November 4. The rally is organised by the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign, the Stop The War Coalition, the Friends of Al Aqsa and the Muslim Association Of Britain.”

So why would the GMB now ignore their Palestinians trade unionist brothers’ and sisters’ heartfelt plea? How can the union have it both ways – ie supporting the Palestinians and the Israeli state equally?

In your letter you also refer to Rhea Wolfson and make clear she will not be in attendance. But I think she needs to be – might she not speak on her own behalf, and bear witness against me, and make herself available for cross-examination? Then she can deny any role in my suspension. She may also deny that she fought for the IHRA definition to be adopted at the NEC, but then that would be lying, for there is plenty of evidence that she did.

You seem to be particularly keen to promote the fact that she is Jewish and female.

The funny thing is, in the papers you have submitted as evidence, I have made no reference to her ethnicity, apart from mentioning in passing that she “is former president of the **Oxford University Jewish Society**.” But I would have thought anybody could be president of OUJS, even a non-Jew? Otherwise it would be a discriminatory body, would it not?

Of course, I did refer to her as a raving Zionist – but presumably non-Jews can be raving Zionists too? (I’m thinking Trump here)

I look forward to hearing from you on the above matters.

Best wishes

Pete