

27 Riversdale Grove
Edinburgh EH12 5QS
Tel 0758 472 2191
peter.n.gregson@outlook.com
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National Safeguarding Operations Manager
The Scout Association
Gilwell Park
Chingford
London E4 7QW
Sent by email to safeguarding@scouts.org.uk

Dear sir/madam,

Membership of the Scouts

I first got involved in the scouts in 1969 and was very active until 1973. I was aged 12 to 16 and hugely valued the experience I had; getting badges, orienteering, camping, building fires, cooking, hiking, playing football. For me, a Catholic boy growing up on a generally hostile protestant city (Aberdeen) it was a great way to get out and go places with those who were not Catholics. It truly was "Scouting for All". I moved up to being Senior Patrol Leader before I had to leave in 1973, as the scouts on a Friday clashed with a theatre group I had been moved to. But the experience and new skills I learnt moulded me- and gave me a love of the great outdoors and camping that I continue to enjoy to this day.

In 1980 I became a youth worker and was so until 2005, when I moved to housing regeneration. Having kids and working evenings (when most youth work takes place) did not work for my family. However, I was still keen on the Scouts. There is no youth provision in my area, so I encouraged my kids to join the beavers, the cubs, etc from 2006 onwards. When I was at the Scouts AGM in 2012, they said they needed a new Treasurer- I volunteered.

Since then, I have been organising finances and payment for youth leader expenses, fundraising at festivals, preparing and submitting accounts for the Scout group for its charity registration, claiming Gift Aid from parents from HMRC, organising AGMs, Christmas sing-a-longs, etc. This could be why I got the [Chief Scout's award](#) from Bear Grylls in 2018.

I attended all the scout leader training that was offered. At no point was I told that I could not use my home landline phone number as a contact point for those who might get involved with the Scout Executive Committee. However, that appears to be the reason why you started this attack against me.

In your decision to expel me, I think what I am seeing here is a manifestation of the endless witch-hunt by Zionists in targeting all who oppose Israel.

I am quite sure if I had used my phone number for a group complaining about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, you would not have taken an interest in my case.

The difference of course, is that you see the scouts as a pillar of the British Establishment- and the British are manifestly responsible for the creation of Israel, a European colonial project, from the moment we illegally gave away the land in 1917 to a group of atheists in the Zionist Federation who laid claim to a land they said was promised to them by a God they did not believe in. Everything we did there was illegal, from the relentless suppression of the Palestinians throughout the British

Mandate, to the arming and training of the Jewish settlers who carried out the Nakba- the illegal attack and displacement of 750,000 Palestinians into the camps they languish in to this day, followed by many more illegal invasions of Palestinian land, as these Zionists push forward in seeking to create a state for people who have no heritable claim to the land (genetic studies have shown that Israelis bear little relation to the ancient Hebrews- and they plainly do not follow the Torah, which makes it quite clear that [Jews should not have a state](#)).

That the Scouts have chosen to come to the aid of this racist endeavour is simply astonishing, given its slogan of “Scouting for all” and the movement’s laudable efforts to train Scout leaders to make Scouting more inclusive.

Journalist Asa Winstanley has recently written [Weaponizing Antisemitism: How the Israel Lobby Brought Down Jeremy Corbyn](#). It is an Amazon best-seller and important book. It has a lesson for those of us in the Palestinian solidarity movement working for social justice here and in the U.S. It declares the Israel lobby lied, cynically manufacturing a fake crisis of antisemitism in the Labour Party where it didn’t exist, using fear to succeed. The lobby cannot be placated. They need to be called out and confronted. That is the main lesson of the book.

If you take the time to view “The Lobby”, the undercover TV series by Al Jazeera on Israeli interference in British affairs, you will see that their threat that “they can take out any politician they like” to be not an idle one. [In the first episode](#) in “*The Lobby*” series, an undercover German infiltrates the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM) and exposes links with Israel in schemes to take down British politicians.

That the Scouts have chosen to align themselves to Israel is shocking to me- and will be to others, too. A couple of years ago Amnesty International declared what Palestinians have known for many years, that Israel is an apartheid state. You can see their 15-minute video summarising the findings, the “Israel Palestine Apartheid Explainer”, at www.tinyurl.com/amnesty-israel

That the Scouts chose to suspend me on non-existent wrongdoing is bad enough, but there is a complete absence of due process. When I was suspended on 12th May 2022 there was zero indication of the allegations against me. What had I done wrong? The suspension dictated that I could not contact any of the 150th Scouts and I held to that, only communicating with the Group Scout Leader (GSL).

I don’t believe any of them looked at the Weekly Worker (a miniscule leftie publication) but somehow the word got out that it was to do with antisemitism. Some two weeks after my suspension I had organised an enormous celebration for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in our local park, which I had already arranged for the 150th to run a stall at, on the basis of it being a great way for the young people to get a bit of retail experience. The event drew Royal blessing (Buckingham Palace did a recce because Princess Anne was thinking of coming) and 1,000 attendees. The Scouts did their bit, without a word to me.

BTW Did you know that the Queen, our Scout patron, despised Israel? She refused to ever set foot on the place- she was no fool; she could see racism in action. She annoyed the Israelis to the end. As [Haaretz noted in Sept 2022](#):

‘Over 120 countries, but never Israel: Queen Elisabeth II’s unofficial boycott

In her 70-year reign, Queen Elizabeth II crisscrossed the globe, but purposely skipped Israel. In 1984, during a visit to Jordan, she found the settlements ‘depressing’ and the Air Force’s planes frightening...

But had she truly wanted to, the Queen could have popped over for a visit. “The sad but inescapable conclusion, therefore, is that she herself is part of this nasty, petty British intrigue to deny Israel that

rankling vestige of legitimation that is in their power to bestow or withhold – a royal visit.,” Landau wrote in Haaretz over a decade ago, in an article where he called upon the monarch to “bin these sour-smelling inhibitions and end this boycott.”

Some British royals visited Israel over the years, but Buckingham Palace always went out of its way to make it clear that the visit is neither royal, nor official.’

It’s highly likely that King Charles III feels the same way.

So, if the patron of the Scouts, our Queen, held Israel in such low regard, why does the UK Scouting Association lean the other way?

But I digress. Although I did not tell the local scout leaders why, after 10 years of supporting them, I was suddenly not talking to them, they knew I had been suspended over antisemitism allegations. Our GSL tells me that he had to tell the leaders on numerous occasions that I was no antisemite- that I had every right to campaign against Israel. He is aware of their abuses towards Palestinian children (Israeli occupation forces have arrested 568 Palestinian children and 72 women since the beginning of this year. Many children have been murdered- no IDF soldier has ever been held to account).

The GSL’s defence of me is honourable, for he is an Israeli Jew. He himself does not consider my suspension in any way fair. I have co-operated with him throughout the duration of my suspension, for I bear no ill-will to my Scout Group and would not want to see our young people suffer as a result of the District Commissioner’s ill-judged decision to suspend me.

I have given the GSL all the letters that he needs when the bank sends them to my home (the scout hall is not used for the banking address, as there are many who hire the venue, and invoices and bank letters were not getting to me). So, I have assisted the Scouts throughout my suspension, in spite of the manifestly unfair treatment I’ve received. I continue to receive all the bank statements to my home here.

It appears that what drives your antagonism towards my political activities is my involvement in the Campaign Against Bogus Antisemitism. Why am I involved in this campaign? Because I have suffered huge damage to my reputation through allegations that were made against me that I hated Jews. Of course, I do not. The only thing that I oppose is Israel, a colonial project intent on taking land from the Palestinian people. Since the Nakba of 1948 where 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes by Jewish terrorists- a whole army equipped and trained by the British, we have seen untold pain and suffering visited upon a people whom, under the British Mandate for Palestine, we were foresworn to protect. The British Government had absolutely no right to gift their land to the Zionist Federation, an action we British took without reference to the million Palestinians living there at the time.

Those driven from their homes languish to this day in refugee camps in Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan, waiting for Israel to give them the right of return that the UN declared them entitled to in 1948 when [UN resolution 194](#) was passed; the number of Palestinians plus those in the diaspora now are 13 Million- that is 13 million souls who dream of returning to the homes and land they were driven from. In fact, Palestinians continue to be forced from their land in the ongoing Nakba (or “catastrophe” in English) that Israel perpetrates even now, using armaments purchased with 3.8 Billion dollars of US military aid every year.

We, of course, created Israel, as any Zionist will tell you; we did it with the aims of getting Jews out of the UK, creating an outpost in the Middle East to protect the Suez Canal and to secure American Jewish funding for the First World War effort- and to progress the evangelical Christian belief that putting Jews to Palestine would bring the second Messiah. The support of extreme Christians in 1917 was central to this project to export Britain's antisemitism to the Middle East; Balfour was one of a large group of evangelists who genuinely believed that putting those claiming to be Jews to Palestine would bring the second coming of Christ. (Balfour was from Edinburgh, my hometown, by the way- and a true antisemite. In 1905, while serving as Prime Minister, he presided over the passage of the Aliens Act. This legislation put the first restrictions on immigration into Great Britain, and it was primarily aimed at restricting Jewish immigration.)

Throughout the period of the British Mandate, we oversaw a change in demographics whereby those calling themselves Jews moved from being 8% of the population of Palestine in 1918 to 82% in 1948. I say they called themselves Jews because they failed the OED dictionary definition of what it is to be Jewish- they did not follow the Torah (which expressly forbids the creation of a Jewish state) and ethnically, they are not descended from the ancient Hebrews. (Many Orthodox Jews refuse to recognise Israel to this day.)

Throughout our mandate, we British relentlessly and ruthlessly suppressed the Palestinians every time they objected to the phenomenal change in demographics they were witnessing, as they watched their country being given away to immigrants who despised them, who refused to employ them and who made it crystal clear that they were not interested in respecting their rights. They were being driven from the homes they had occupied for millennia.

Last year, on the 6th of Oct 2022, Munib al-Masri, 88, a close friend and supporter of the late Palestinian political leader Yasser Arafat, brought a petition against the UK Government, seeking an apology for British war crimes in Palestine. The BBC reported that "the 300-page dossier of evidence asks for a formal acknowledgement and apology for abuses during the period of British rule in Palestine from 1917 until 1948", after which Britain rapidly withdrew and the State of Israel was declared.

A BBC review of the historical evidence involved includes details of arbitrary killings, torture, the use of human shields and the introduction of home demolitions as collective punishment. Much of it was conducted within formal policy guidelines for UK forces at the time or with the consent of senior officers. (see [Palestinian petitions UK for apology over alleged abuses during British rule | Palestinian territories | The Guardian](#)). The Newsnight 9-minute TV programme on this can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/ukExz33xKGU>

So, we British bear absolute responsibility for the suffering of the Palestinians. Those whom we supported now run the state of Israel, an illegal state in my view, which is intent on driving all Palestinians from their homes from the river to the sea. If you doubt this, please consider Israel's '[Nation State Law](#)' of 2018, which embeds apartheid in its legal system because it says only Jews have a right to self-determination. It does three things:

1. It states that "the right to exercise national self-determination" in Israel is "unique to the Jewish people."
2. It establishes Hebrew as Israel's official language, and downgrades Arabic — a language widely spoken by Arab Israelis — to a "special status."
3. It establishes "Jewish settlement as a national value" and mandates that the state "will labour to encourage and promote its establishment and development."

Arabs and Christians now have citizens status only, whereas Jews have national status- which confers greater rights. Watch [Know your Stuff: Israel’s “Jewish Nation-State Law” Explained](#) – “the uber-mensch and the unter-mensch explained”. An illuminating 23-minute video made in 2018 by Dr. Shir Hever. In January 2023 it was reported that [About Half of Jewish Israelis Believe Jews Should Have More Rights Than Arabs, Study Shows – Israel News – Haaretz.com](#)

The British have an ongoing responsibility to rectify the suffering of the Palestinian people, which has arisen due to our machinations in the Middle East. Israel cares more about what the UK thinks of it than just about any other country- even more so than the US. That is why our campaigning and support for [BDS](#) is crucial, in persuading Israel that it must change.

So, what does all this have to do with the Campaign Against Bogus Antisemitism? Lets explore language.

The classic definition of antisemitism: “hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people” – according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

The IHRA Definition of Antisemitism: there are 11 examples given, 7 of which relate to Israel. The full definition can be [found on the IHRA website here](#).

The misleading IHRA antisemitism definition comes with these list of [11 examples of what constitutes “antisemitism”](#). One of their so-called examples of antisemitism includes “claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour”. The truth is that it most definitely is. For evidence, see [11 Examples of how Israel is a racist endeavour — No IHRA](#)

The IHRA definition is pushed by Zionists as being necessary to safeguard Jews. Which leads us to the question: what is a Semite? What is a Zionist?

Semite– a member of any of the peoples who speak or spoke a Semitic language, including in particular, the Jews and Arabs

Zionist– a supporter of Zionism; a person who believes in the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel.

In truth, the IHRA Definition was created by Zionists and has switched the focus away from protecting Jews from hatred, to protecting Israel from criticism.

In 2015, when Zionists started calling for the IHRA Definition to be adopted everywhere; barristers and judges of integrity (many Jewish)- were quick to point out its shortcomings. Even one of its authors was dismayed; Kenneth Stern said, “The definition was not drafted, and was never intended, as a tool to target or chill speech on a college campus.” Stern was well aware that antisemitism is not the same as antizionism.

Indeed, many enlightened Jews have spoken out against the IHRA Definition, which Palestinian civic groups describe as “fraudulent and politicised”.

One such is Jamie Stern-Weiner, who has penned an up-to-date analysis of its misuse; see it on the Free Speech on Israel website: [“IHRA-The Politics of a Definition”](#) . And for a really great perspective

of what's going on, read "The chimera of British anti-Semitism, and how not to fight it if it were real" by acclaimed US political scientist Norman G. Finkelstein see page 19 of [Socialist Fight Pamphlet no 1](#)

See also Peter Beinart's article of March 2019: [Debunking the myth that anti-Zionism is antisemitic | Antisemitism | The Guardian](#)

["What Is Wrong with the IHRA Definition of AS"](#) - by Jonathan Coulter explores all the above matters.

So here is a new definition of antisemitism which is utterly tied up with protecting Israel from any criticism that it is racist and exploits the Holocaust for political ends. Ergo, it is a "bogus" definition of antisemitism.

How does this affect me? Because I myself am a victim of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism.

I took Israeli historian Ilan Pappé's advice to heart ("Lets Breach the IHRA" - video, 2.5mins, [Middle East Monitor](#)) but I have paid heavily for it. I was the first to be expelled from a trade union for criticising Israel. I was expelled by my union, the GMB, for whom I was shop steward, for saying Israel was a racist endeavour and claiming it exaggerates the Holocaust for political ends. (I used the Merriam-Webster definition of "exaggerates" to mean "to enlarge or increase especially beyond the normal : i.e. [OVEREMPHASIZE](#)"). Whilst it clearly breaches the IHRA definition, the GMB went further and said this amounted to Holocaust denial!

Initially, I had been told by the then Scotland GMB Secretary, Gary Smith, [now UK General Secretary] that I was being investigated for an email I had written to Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) on 28th Sept 2018 [which could only have been passed on by one person] decrying the IHRA proposals and stating "I appreciate that the Labour Party felt the Jews to be an oppressed minority back in the mists of time when Zionism was deemed a cause worthy of support. But the actions of a state founded on the ethnic cleansing of 700,000 Arabs out of Palestine into the makeshift bomb-riddled townships they occupy today, denied access to energy, medicine and rights to trade has well and truly taken any kind of moral cause out of the Zionist creed."

For anyone caring to study the case, it will be apparent that Rhea Wolfson, a leading light in the NEC and the [Jewish Labour Movement](#) (formerly Paole Zion), had forwarded my email to her boss at GMB Scotland. Smith enthusiastically took up the attack and informed me that I was going to be investigated for antisemitism. (The GMB union was an early adopter of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism)

In the following exchange of emails with Smith, I expanded on my views of Israel; I was well aware of what would breach the IHRA, and purposefully told him that "Israel exaggerates the Holocaust for political ends", as this comment is specifically barred under the IHRA Definition. I consider that making comments about Israel is not antisemitic - and expected other GMB comrades to agree. I wanted to provoke further debate about the IHRA definition and felt it was important to do so.

Smith then accused me of "misogynistic and abusive behaviour towards a young Jewish woman". But I had never met the woman. What I had actually done was identify in the comments string of the National newspaper that [Rhea Wolfson](#) [who both sat on the NEC up till the end of Sept 2018 and who was also a regional organiser at the GMB] was my GMB accuser. I had been told the attack was coming from Wolfson by insiders at the union.

I went onto describe her [in this document](#) on my [website](#) as a "raving Zionist". Gary Smith then exaggerated this description into "misogynistic and abusive behaviour towards a young Jewish

woman". Wolfson was planning to stand as Labour's Westminster candidate for Livingston North; the expression "*if you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen*" applies to anyone seeking a career in politics. But to hide behind the defence of exploiting her Jewishness and female sex, in the face of political criticism (I didn't even know she was a Jew) was rank manipulation of GMB disciplinary processes.

The full letter of 13th Dec 2018 from Gary Smith with allegations, along with my responses of 17th Dec, [can be viewed here](#). My minute of the Appeal hearing in London on the 5th March 2019, which Rabbi Cohen and Tony Greenstein attended to speak on my behalf, [can be viewed here](#).

(As well as demanding that I be expelled for criticising Israel, Wolfson, a regional organiser who worked in the same office as Smith at the GMB, had been a key player in getting both her union and Labour's NEC to adopt the full IHRA definition; she had written several [press articles](#) about why she would not feel safe until it was adopted everywhere).

There is more info in the National newspaper here . Also see my post on the "[holocaust denier](#)" slur here. I have never denied the Holocaust, but Zionists in the media continually claim that I have.

Even though I had Rabbi Ahron Cohen come to the GMB hearing in Glasgow on 17th Dec 2018 to plead on my behalf, it made no odds; the Rabbi travelled from Manchester and his train was 45 mins late to the meeting; the GMB refused to wait and so refused to hear the Rabbi's statement from the Rabbi himself. I made a 20-minute film about this which can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/ZvIXwQ8LR4I>

At the same time as the union were booting me out, I had lodged a petition to Edinburgh council seeking to get my city twinned with Gaza. Just the day after my well-publicised "[Gig for Gaza](#)" in Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens, the Herald ran a [front-page story](#) (they had interviewed Smith of the GMB) declaring that I had said the Holocaust was exaggerated.

I complained to the Independent Press Standards Office (IPSO); my complaint was dismissed. I pointed out to both IPSO and the Herald that they were misunderstanding basic grammar: "Israel exaggerates the Holocaust for political ends" is very different from saying "The Holocaust was exaggerated". In the first, the subject is acting on the object in a manipulative way; the second is a generalised statement purporting to be a truism. Another example might be "Trump exaggerates racism in the US for political ends" which is not the same as saying "Racism in the US is exaggerated".

In an effort to justify my statement, I had pointed out to the GMB that of the 11 million killed in the Holocaust, as far as Israel presents history, the slaughter was purely about 6 million Jews. Israeli university courses on the Holocaust ignore non-Jews. There is no mention of the millions of Russians, Poles, Roma and others murdered en masse. Norman Finkelstein documents Israel's use of the Holocaust as its indispensable ideological weapon in his book "The Holocaust Industry- Reflections on the exploitation of Jewish suffering." Please also see Holocaust survivor Dr. Hajo Meyer's 2010 speech on Israel – "[The Misuse of the Holocaust for Political Purposes](#)".

Even Israelis admit they exploit the Holocaust. Israeli former minister of Education, Shulamit Aloni, 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?". Aloni replied: "Well, it's a trick, we always use it. When from Europe somebody is criticizing Israel, then we bring up the Holocaust..."

There is more on “The IHRA and Zionist thought control- Racism and Holocaust denial slurs” at [The IHRA Definition of Antisemitism and Labour – Campaign Against BOGUS Antisemitism](#)

Neither the GMB nor IPSO accepted any of my arguments. Presumably it was to encourage confusion about what Israel does with the Holocaust that Zionists put the condition into the IHRA definition in the first place- and to deter any suggestion that they exploit Holocaust guilt.

I hope by now you are appreciating that there is a huge difference between the classic definition of antisemitism: “hostility to or prejudice against Jewish people” – according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism most of which relates to protecting Israel. The full definition can be [found on the IHRA website here](#).

The difference means that there is such a thing as real antisemitism and there is the fraudulent definition designed to protect Israel which is, of course, bogus antisemitism. This is antisemitism that is counterfeit or fake; it is not genuine- it barely considers ill-will towards Jews as Jews. To claim that stating the obvious – that Israel is apartheid – amounts to Jew-hate is ludicrous. Ineed, if you were to claim that Israel does represent all Jews, then you yourself would be guilty of antisemitism, according to the IHRA Definition. (It declares it is antisemitic to “Hold Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel”).

I hope this makes clear to you why I chose to set up the Campaign Against Bogus Antisemitism in February 2022. It was to counter the many attacks made upon our freedom of speech on Israel that I and others set up CABA. We are all passionate about Palestine and trying to undo the harm we have done- and continue to do- to its people.

I believe there is real antisemitism and there is bogus antisemitism. I am a victim of charges relating to the latter- I have never borne any ill-will towards the Jews, only towards Israel. There are 30% of the 300,000 Jews in the UK that will not support Israel. These Jews are regarded by Zionists as, laughably, “self-hating Jews”. That they include Orthodox Jews, who follow the Torah, makes this slur from the Zionists (who are generally atheists) look even more ridiculous.

So why are the Scouts so unhappy about my involvement in the Campaign Against Bogus Antisemitism (CABA)? Or any of the other bodies I have helped set up, such as LAZIR (Labour Against Zionist Islamophobic Racism)?

CABA was mainly aimed at fighting the wholesale adoption of the fraudulent and politicised IHRA Definition of Antisemitism, which equates criticism of Israel with Jew-hatred, a plainly ridiculous assumption. The IHRA Definition was created to defend Israel, not to defend Jews. Where did it come from? In 2000, Israel realised that it was going to have to do something radical if it was not to go the way of South Africa and become a land for all its peoples. It was devised from 2000 by Dina Porat, an Israeli historian, on her return from Durban; she worked on it alongside the Israeli Government, the IHRA and the US State Dept and it was unleashed upon the world in 2009.

Alison Weir, in her “If Americans Knew” blog of 17 May 2017 explains fully how Israel developed the definition in her piece- [International campaign is criminalizing criticism of Israel as ‘antisemitism’](#) .

Your Process

Anyway- to the facts. I received my suspension letter on 12th May 2022. The letter did not state why I was being suspended. I did not learn the nature of the allegations against me until I was expelled, over a year later, on 30th June 2023. I believe you took this long because some in Head Office could see I had done no wrong. It now appears that your determination to expel me over nothing has prevailed.

One of the complaints you have made against me is that I publicised your attack upon me in the Weekly Worker. Can I point out that in the suspension letter, there was nothing about confidentiality? I have every right to protest publicly against unfair treatment of me and attacks upon my freedom of speech. The suspension itself was quite outrageous.

Let us examine in more details the actions for which you suspended me.

At the request of the 150th Executive Committee, in January 2017, I applied to put up an [advert on behalf of the Scout Group](#) seeking volunteers for our committee, offering my personal landline phone number as a contact for more information (our scout group did not have a phone number).

The Edinburgh Volunteer Centre recently confirmed to me [in this email](#) that the advert was finally posted on 19th April 2017. There was no interest, and the advert was taken down six months later.

At the time, in the summer of 2017 I was not in any way involved in campaigning about Israel; I was campaigning though, at that point, in favour of [whistleblower hotline for staff at the NHS](#), where I work. I used my home phone number for that too- but that use does not seem to be a problem for the Scouts. What you take exception to, it seems, is my use of my personal phone number (freely available from any phone book) to support my volunteering activities, whether that be for the Scouts or CABA.

There is no stricture in the Scouts Policy, Organisation and Rules (“POR”) that forbids volunteers from using their phone numbers for volunteering work. Any citizen will use their phone number for any activities they choose to support. The Scout association does not give out a dedicated phone to every volunteer. It is expected of us, as volunteers, that we make best use of our personal resources to advance Scouting. Yet that is why you suspended me.

Sometime between late February (when we founded Caba) and the 2nd May (when you received the complaint), Zionists got to work on trying to find a connection between my campaigning for Palestine and the Scouts. I had used my home phone number at the Edinburgh Volunteer Centre in 2017, and I had also used it on the CABA Facebook page, published five years later, in 2022.

The District Commissioner, Mark Hesketh, rang me to ask if I was associated with CABA. When I said I was, he immediately suspended me, on 12th May 2022.

One wonders how on earth the complainant had found my landline phone number, hidden somewhere deep within Volunteer Edinburgh’s IT system, for an advert that had disappeared 5 years earlier.

So, I was suspended for using my phone number as a contact point for the 150th Committee at a time when I was not in any way involved in campaigning for Palestine. It was not until late 2018 that I became active on Israel protest and LAZIR (Labour Against Zionist Islamophobic Racism) was not set up until May 2019.

Although I had never mentioned my politics at the Scouts, I was suspended and after one year, with no interview and no right to respond, expelled.

I had previously given 10 years' service, acknowledged by the [Chief Scout's award](#). What kind of a way is this to treat your volunteers?

I am shocked and upset at my treatment. The Scouts appear to be working to the [IHRA Definition of Antisemitism](#) which equates criticism of Israel to antisemitism. But Rabbi Yisroel Dovid Weiss of Neturei Karta [writes in my support](#) saying "Pete is in no way anti-Jewish". His letter is appended – he makes note of the way antizionism is purposely confused with antisemitism, an error which I believe you are guilty of.

What is quite shocking is that the Scouts felt that my political activities were of relevance to them. In March 2010 the [World Scout Committee](#) (WSC) issued a statement on human rights issues which affirmed its “unequivocal adherence to the principles of human rights expressed in the UN Declaration. A key plank of the UN Declaration, Article 19, states “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” It appears that the UK Scout Association has breached both my human rights and World Scout Committee declarations. For I am entitled to my political views, which I have never articulated in a scouting environment.

You state provisions within the POR which I believe that you yourself have breached. You state in POR 14.1.1.1 that “The Scout Movement is not connected with any political body”.

But by suspending me at the behest of a Zionist, upset because of my campaigning activities, you have put the Scouting movement in the firing line of a huge political argument.

Furthermore, I was campaigning against a foreign power, that has worked to undermine our human rights to freedom of expression here in the UK. By your action, you have clearly connected the Scout Movement to the Zionist movement. You yourself have brought scouting into disrepute, by accommodating a politically motivated criticism of me, one that took the side of my Zionist attacker.

I think you should face censure for clearly breaching the POR- by so obviously aligning scouting with support for apartheid Israel.

As you seem to observe, I was never speaking on behalf of the Scout Association when I expressed my opinions. Indeed, I have never acted as a representative of the movement when I have made public utterances on any political matter.

Your statement that “a third party was able readily to draw a connection between [my] capacity as a member of the Scouting movement and [my] role in political campaigning such that a complaint was raised” is quite ludicrous. The complaint was that I used my phone number in April 2017 and then again in 2022? The former in a scout setting that drew absolutely ZERO interest. The latter on a Facebook page that also drew absolutely ZERO interest.

How can anyone “readily” make that connection? On both counts the landline was buried deep within Edinburgh Volunteer Centre's IT system and in Facebook - and only advanced technology could make the connection. This is not “readily”, is it?

And why should I not use my home phone number for scouting business? The Scouts have never suggested I do otherwise? The Scouts in the UK have 116,400 adult volunteers, according to Wikipedia. Do they use their phones for scouts' business? Of course they do. Are some of them politically active? Of course they are. Are you witch hunting through all your volunteers in the same way? No doubt if any criticise Israel, the Zionist movement in the UK will be logging complaints and groundless attacks against them too. But if I were to complain about my GSL crowing about Israel in his Scout uniform, what would you be doing? Nothing.

As far as I know, there is no restriction on Scout Leaders using their personal, private phone numbers for activities related to volunteering, whether that be political or not. Would I be getting suspended if someone associated me with a campaign to criticise Russia? I doubt it. So, I maintain that I most definitely have not breached rule 14.1 on "Citizenship". It is you yourself who should be in the dock on this charge.

You declare that you, as National Safeguarding Operations Manager (but you won't give your name) and the South-East of Scotland Regional Commissioner (who is of course Martin Elliot) have come to the conclusion that my continued involvement "may adversely affect the reputation of scouting". On the contrary, I would argue that it is yourself and Martin who have adversely affected the reputation of scouting.

As you probably know, I made the Chief Scout, Bear Grylls, aware of your attack upon my freedom of speech a year ago- and I assume that you know that his office declared he refused to get involved. By so doing, he has abandoned the principles of free speech for us adult volunteers- as you and Martin have. You clearly suspended me only because I was campaigning against apartheid Israel. By so doing, the Scout Association gives every appearance of condoning racism.

Throughout the period of my suspension, I have continued to support our local scout group- I helped our GSL take on paying expenses. So far, the impact of your actions has led to our Scout Chairperson resigning (she left in disgust at Christmas) and the accounts have still not been done, two years on. The Scottish Charity Regulator is unhappy we do no return and I believe our charitable status to be at risk. The Gift Aid claim, which usually boosts our coffers by £500, has not been undertaken. By dithering for 12 months as to what to do to me, you have shown scant regard to the wellbeing of the 150th Craigmaldon Scout Group.

And what kind of message are you sending out, when you declare that your scout leaders may never engage in any political activity, quite separately to their scouting work, if it involves supporting Palestine? According to a recent study, the public largely supports Palestine; [this survey of public opinion](#) shows 23% favour Palestine; just 10% favour Israel.

I can only think you believe volunteers grown on trees. The Scout Association should reinstate me and stop witch-hunting anti-racist campaigners for Palestine.

If it does not, the matter should be referred to the World Scout Committee, as the UK Scout Association has clearly breached both my human rights and the WSC declarations.

Yours sincerely,

Pete Gregson

Neturei Karta International
Jews United Against Zionism

NY Regional Office:
P.O.B. 1316 - Monsey, NY 10952 U.S.A.



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August 21, 2022

To whom this may concern

With the help of the Almighty

We have known Pete Gregson personally for several years. He is in no way anti-Jewish; on the contrary he has tremendous respect for Jews and Judaism, while maintaining his moral position of sympathizing with the oppressed people of Palestine.

It is true that there is, and for a long time has been anti-Semitism in the world. But when someone criticizes a particular Jew for a crime he committed, it doesn't become anti-Semitic. Pro-Palestinian activism is an attempt to bring justice to an oppressed people. This activism is not a threat to Jews. It is confronting crimes committed by individuals who happen to be mainly of Jewish descent.

On the contrary, those who portray all Jews as supporters of Israel, and thereby claim that pro-Palestinian activists are against Jews, are provoking anti-Semitism. Dragging all Jews into the conflict is selfish, untrue and unjust. They are trying to use the Jewish religion as a shield, sully the name of the religion and desecrating G-d's name.

It is this sort of intolerant people who have branded Mr. Gregson an anti-Semite, following the usual Zionist tactic of expanding the definition of anti-Semitism to include anyone who doesn't subscribe to their ideology.

May we all merit to see, soon in our days, the revelation of the glory of the Almighty, when all humankind will serve Him in peace and harmony. Amen.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Yisroel Dovid Weiss

NKI is a nonprofit religious Jewish organization committed to publicizing the viewpoint of masses of anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews worldwide, who strongly oppose the State of Israel and its actions. NKI travels around the world to attend rallies and conferences and to speak on many occasions on the topic of Zionism versus Judaism. NKI speakers are available to speak at universities and conferences around the world, as well as for radio and television interviews.