

LFI BRIEFING: THE PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN WINTER LOBBY DAY

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) are holding their winter lobby day on 7th December 2021.

Those who support a two state solution to the Middle East conflict, with Israel recognised and safe within its borders living peacefully alongside a democratic and viable Palestinian state, should oppose the PSC. **The PSC does not support a two state solution and are part of the fringe who oppose the existence of Israel as a Jewish state.**

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign does not campaign for a two-state solution

- Established in 1982 and opposed too supporting a two-state solution, which would achieve the right of self-determination for both the Jewish and Palestinian people, the PSC, established in 1982, **only and exclusively supports the national rights of the Palestinians**. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which is recognised as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" by over 100 states, has accepted a two state solution since 1988.
- Whilst the PSC keeps its official position on final status solutions ambiguous, the views of its leadership, literature and their logo point to the PSC supporting a one-state solution and the end of the State of Israel.
- The PSC makes no distinction between **the land Israel was established on in 1948** and the land it took control of in the defensive 1967 war, describing it all as "occupied territories." A two state solution relies on **accepting that the land Israel was established on in 1948 is Israel proper** and is not disputed or occupied territory.
- The PSC website states that the organisation is "in opposition to [the] Zionist nature of the Israeli state".¹ This further indicates that the PSC opposes the 'two states for two peoples' formula, since Zionism is the campaign for, and defence of, the right of self-determination of the Jewish people in their own sovereign homeland.
- The PSC campaigns **unequivocally for the Palestinians to have the "right of return" to their homes, or their ancestors' homes, abandoned upon Israel's creation in 1948.**² Realising the full right of return to Israel proper would undermine Israel's Jewish character and would make the **'two states for two peoples' formula impossible**. It is understood on both sides that a compromise will have to be found on this issue as part of a final agreement on a two state solution.
- The PSC describe convicted terrorists as "Palestinian political prisoners", making no reference to the terror attacks carried out by many of those sentenced and imprisoned in Israel.³

The PSC is the UK's most vocal proponent of the divisive, anti-two state solution Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, which seeks to encourage the boycott of all Israeli goods, people and institutions.

- The **BDS campaign makes no distinction to whether goods are produced, or institutions or people based, in Israel proper or the West Bank,** and does not take into account the views, role or actions of those it promotes a boycott of.⁴
- BDS activists have run campaigns of intimidation against Jewish shopkeepers. One was forced to flee the country with his family after he was hounded for five years by the Scottish PSC. Nissan Ayalon, 33,

¹ <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/about/>

² <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/resources/factsheets/refugees/>

³ <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/resources/factsheets/prisoners/>

⁴ <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/resources/factsheets/bds/>

relocated three times to escape the activists but each time they found him, attacking his shop with paint bombs because he sold Israeli cosmetics.⁵

- The PSC doesn't just targeted shops with links to the West Bank, but also ones like Manchester-based Kedem, which sells cosmetics from **undisputed Israeli territory**. That outlet narrowly avoided closure by gaining a court order that forced activists away from the entrance.⁶
- PSC's direct action campaign has not been limited to business, they have also organised to disrupt Israeli cultural events such as the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, an Israeli theatre company at Shakespeare's Globe and an Israeli LGBT event in London.⁷

Statements issued by local affiliates and leading figures have frequently displayed antisemitism

- An investigation⁸ in May 2019 by the Evening Standard found "local PSC branches across the country reveals activists are sharing anti-Semitic cartoons of Jews and conspiracy theories about Israel controlling the world." These included a cartoon comparing Israeli Jews with white power neo-Nazis, an ugly caricature of a Jew sowing hand grenades in a field, and an image of Benjamin Netanyahu bathing in Palestinian blood posing with Adolf Hitler.
- Other posts included the Brixton PSC calling Tom Watson a "corrupt Israeli agent", Leeds PSC sharing a cartoon in 2017 in which neo-Nazis with swastikas are likened to **Jewish men with an Israeli flag screaming "Kill all Arabs"**, Manchester PSC tweeting a graph comparing Israel and the Nazi regime with a swastika flag, Luton PSC has shared posts which liken Hitler to Mr Netanyahu, and a graphic that compared victims in Buchenwald concentration camp to an image of a West Bank checkpoint.
- A PSC organised event in 2004, following the **assassination of Hamas leader Sheikh Yassin**, led to Baroness Jenny Tonge being sacked from the Liberal Democrat party's front bench for claiming that in different circumstances, she might consider becoming a suicide bomber. She went on to hold a minute's silence in Yassin's memory at the meeting⁹. Baroness Tonge was subsequently suspended from the Liberal Democrats in October 2016 after hosting a meeting where one of the commenters appeared to blame the Jews for the Holocaust. She also wrote in a letter to the *Guardian*, with reference to the Home Affairs Committee's report on antisemitism, saying: "It is difficult to believe that a 75% increase in antisemitism it reports, have [sic] been committed by people who simply hate Jewish people for no reason."¹⁰ Despite these comments and her suspension, Baroness Tonge remained a PSC patron until 2018. Following the murder of 11 people at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, she appeared to blame Israel, posting on Facebook: "Absolutely appalling and a criminal act, but does it ever occur to Bibi and the present Israeli government that it's actions against Palestinians may be reigniting antisemitism?"¹¹ It was only after this post that she ceased to be a PSC patron. However, she "offered to stand down"¹² rather than being removed or suspended.
- Hastings and Rye PSC are listed as a "supporting organisation"¹³ of the notorious IHRC-organised "Al Quds Day" march where flags of the terrorist group Hezbollah were frequently flown prior to the group's full proscription in 2019.

⁵ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7087929/Pro-Palestine-group-supported-Corbyn-forces-Jewish-shops-close.html>

⁶ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7087929/Pro-Palestine-group-supported-Corbyn-forces-Jewish-shops-close.html>

⁷ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7087929/Pro-Palestine-group-supported-Corbyn-forces-Jewish-shops-close.html>

⁸ <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/swathe-of-antisemitic-abuse-is-uncovered-at-group-backed-by-jeremy-corbyn-a4136681.html#gsc.tab=0>

⁹ https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/Jeremy_Corbyn/12023669/Activist-group-linked-to-Jeremy-Corbyn-has-accounts-closed-amid-fears-it-may-be-funding-terrorism.html

¹⁰ <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jenny-tonge-suspended-by-liberal-democrats-1.54414>

¹¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/baroness-tonge-antisemitism-pittsburgh-shooting-lib-dems-peer-house-of-lords-a8605341.html>

¹² <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/statement-on-baroness-tonge-and-antisemitism/>

¹³ <https://www.ihrc.org.uk/activities/events/21700-al-quds-day-2019/>

Throughout Labour's antisemitism crisis, the PSC and its activists consistently opposed the Jewish community's requests, including adoption of IHRA

- The PSC completely oppose the IHRA definition. Ben Jamal, PSC director, claimed the internationally-recognised definition of anti-Jewish racism "drains antisemitism of any meaning".¹⁴
- Mick Napier, the Secretary of the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, addressed the extremist 2019 Al Quds Day rally. He told protesters that Peter Willsman should not have been suspended for saying that the Israeli embassy was behind allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party. He declared that not only was the Israeli embassy behind "phoney" antisemitism "smears", but that it also held workshops around the UK where "Zios" (an antisemitic slur word) plotted to orchestrate the "smears".¹⁵
- Tony Greenstein – expelled from the Labour party – was one of PSC's founding members.¹⁶ He was kicked out of the party over abusive behaviour that included writing blog posts about veteran Jewish Labour MP Louise Ellman as the MP for "Tel Aviv South" and a "racist supporter of the child abuse of Palestinian children".¹⁷
- The Norwich branch of PSC hosted a "fundraising dinner" with expelled Labour member Jackie Walker as the guest speaker.¹⁸

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign has met, and worked with, terrorist groups and antisemites

- The PSC opposed cross-party proposals to fully proscribe Hamas, the antisemitic terrorist group that is committed to destroying Israel, when they were announced in November 2021. These proposals were supported by Labour and passed with Labour support.
- As part of October 2010's Viva Palestina convoy to the Gaza Strip, the PSC met with Hamas leader Mahmoud Al-Zahar, who has made deeply homophobic and anti-Semitic comments. In January 2009 he called for the killing of Jewish children "all over the world" and in an interview published by Reuters on 28 October 2010, attacked the West for supporting Israel, saying "you do not live like human beings. You do not [even] live like animals. You accept homosexuality".
- In June 2012, PSC chair Hugh Lanning met with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza.¹⁹ Haniyeh is reported to have been involved in the planning of terror attacks against Israeli citizens and has been designated as a "Global Terrorist" by the United States.²⁰
- In 2015, the Co-operative bank closed PSC's accounts over fears that it may be inadvertently funding terrorism. In a statement, the bank said that due to the "high risk" locations in which PSC operates and send funds to, it had to carry out "advanced due diligence checks" on their accounts to ensure that funds do not "inadvertently fund illegal or other proscribed activities". The statement concluded that it was "not possible to complete these checks to our satisfaction and the decision to close a number of accounts, including the PSC and some of its affiliates, is an inevitable result of this process".²¹

¹⁴ <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/palestine-solidarity-campaign-director-ihra-definition-drains-antisemitism-of-any-meaning-ben-jamal-1.497584>

¹⁵ <https://antisemitism.uk/al-quds-day-parade-stripped-of-hizballah-flags-but-marchers-told-zios-plot-antisemitism-smears-at-workshops-run-by-israeli-embassy/>

¹⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20120919092702/http://www.cpgb.org.uk/home/authors/tony-greenstein>

¹⁷ <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/notorious-anti-zionist-tony-greenstein-is-suspended-from-unison-union-1.472146>

¹⁸ <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/jackie-walker-meeting-moved-to-quakers-venue-after-methodist-church-cancels-booking-1.147969>

¹⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-39253243>

²⁰ <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/u-s-designates-hamas-leader-ismail-haniyeh-as-terrorist-1.5783973>

²¹ https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/Jeremy_Corbyn/12023669/Activist-group-linked-to-Jeremy-Corbyn-has-accounts-closed-amid-fears-it-may-be-funding-terrorism.html

- The PSC supported Sheikh Reed Salah after he was banned from entering the UK.²² Salah infamously repeated the ancient blood libel, accusing Jews of using children's blood to bake bread. Sheikh Salah's Islamic Movement is reported to have mourned the death of Osama Bin Laden, calling him a "martyr" and his killers "Satanic".

Those in favour of peace in the region should support those willing to make the necessary compromises to achieve a two state solution rather than emboldening the PSC or other fringe groups.

Logo of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign



The map on the logo contains no political borders, boundaries or outlines. This suggests that the PSC sees a "final status" situation as being a one-state solution, and that "Palestine" is the only name for this area of land. This logo still appears on the PSC's website and their materials, as shown below.

²² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13969105>