

Truth Defence GM May 2021

Present

1. Justin Schlosberg - TD Director
2. Andrew Feinstein - TD Director
3. Victoria Thomas - TD Secretary
4. Alan Maddison
5. Brendan O'Brien
6. Eleni Liarou
7. Hannah Dadd
8. Harriet Evans
9. Helen Marks
10. Keith Armes
11. Mary Davies
12. Rachel Hubbard
13. Stephen Moorby
14. Deepa Govindarajan Driver
15. Barry Donnan
16. Rachel Hubbard
17. Elizabeth Hallworth
18. Soodi Balali

Minutes

Justin Schlosberg - explains our founding and the work we have done so far. Poses the question to the supporters, "where would you like to see us go from here?".

Helen Marks - I've been totally shocked at the immorality about how companies/politicians have conducted themselves. I have complained about the Panorama show and have heard nothing for months. It went through BBC to Ofcom and they chose not to pursue the matter. I would like to support those who research the facts and how we can show them to the public.

Justin Schlosberg - In relation to Panorama, as a precursor to Truth Defence I launched a crowd funder for a judicial review. What became clear is that the judicial review regime is heavily stacked against the claimant. It is designed to protect power instead of to assist those who are trying to challenge. The bar for the judge to accept this case was so high we had to prove that Panorama had acted completely irrationally. Ofcom relied entirely on false assertions of fact in its defence to this action. The reason offered for their taking as long as they did to decide not to investigate was based on the number of complaints they received over that time. We have proof that they received the number of complaints that they claimed over 2, not 4, months.

Andrew Feinstein - I think there is a crisis of the public center generally in the UK, especially the bodies in question. We have seen this in the last two governments. It is ok to be in contempt of parliament, with no repercussions. The state of the BBC today is unrecognisable in comparison to 15 years ago. EHRC is pursuing a partisan agenda, they pursued one party over

anti-semitism instead of all parties over all racism. WBUK chairs the APPG with no transparency.

Deepa Govindarajan Driver - I have three suggestions; shall we look at APPG's and how they are structured? Many of these legitimisation bodies are corrupt. We could look at FOI's and how the information being released is of poor quality and handled poorly. We could engage in some kind of planned strategic campaign to go through all the Labour Left events etc to expose some of the research we have done.

Justin Schlosberg - thank you Deepa. Some of our work has spoken to the interconnections between many orgs. We are not suggesting there is a secret orchestrated campaign but there is a problem of revolving door syndrome. These are suggestions we could take forward. We would like to look to speaking with Momentum or other similar groups but we are not politically aligned. We must avoid the drift and be careful to focus on our unique interests and keep a tight focus on the subversion of truth and the undermining of trust.

Hannah Dadd - Have you heard more about the Ken Livingston case?

Justin Schlosberg - It's not something we are directly involved with but these things tend to be a long game, especially with the pandemic, hearings are delayed.

Harriet Evans - I am a member of the highgate labour party and was an officer. I'm an academic and anthropologist by trade. I would like to comment on the corrosive democratic environment and how that is experienced by ordinary citizens and the block they experience through the Ofcom on housing. I would like to see a survey of the Ofcom system across the board, I would be happy to help with research.

Justin Schlosberg - I think that is a useful suggestion. It is clear that Ofcom has systematically failed since its founding.

Eleni Liarou - I'm a new member, thank you for the work you have done. I wanted to raise the question, given the work of Ofcom, how can an organisation operate as a campaigning body to make people aware about the new channels [GB News UK TV News]? How can we research and work together to raise awareness and can we stop them?

Justin Schlosberg - UKTV News has folded. But this is a very real problem in the access to truth. It is clear that the issue that has founded GB News is not in fact to counter disinformation. A lot of disinformation comes directly from the government, and I think we can expect a lot of the same from GB News. We would need to decide how we meaningfully address that and how we can work with researchers and other orgs to monitor the output of GB news/UKTV news. All three of the reports that we have produced have shone a light on further areas of research that we could do.

Alan Maddison - Our problem is getting our message out to the general public. On the panorama program, the Jewish whistleblowers suggested they were almost unsafe, but were they representative of the further Jewish community? The labour muslim group published a survey showing that 29% of their members had experienced abuse, 300 complaints were reported vs 30 from the Jewish community. The latest report from labour shows that 70% of the complaints were about anti-semitism but only 2% were about Islamaphobia and 2% about rasism.

Justin Schlosberg - We would need to understand how to engage in that arena considering we are not a political pressure group. We would struggle, as important the issue is, as it does not sit within our narrow remit as an organisation. We should however follow up on all the issues around the handling of the EHRC, especially how Kier Starmer is championing himself as anti-sleaze, despite that being an Orwellian suggestion. The disappearance of the Forde Inquiry is a fruitful route to which we could investigate more.

Andrew Feinstein - It's lovely to see that at least two members here are academics and activists. Something that we should look into is the problems with FOIs and how that is at odds with a free democracy.

Justin Schlosberg - The area of FOIs and SARs is an area that speaks to our core mission and is also not being looked at anywhere else. It is something that we could very fruitfully explore. We will take forward the issue of the corrupt nexus between public bodies and how that contributes to dis/misinformation. The whole issue of Ofcom as a regulator and the degree to which it is undermining its core mission. There is mileage in the disinformation work we have done including watching out for disinformation from GB News. There is also potential in a project on the extent of cover up within the Labour party. We should also look into being more active in reaching a wider audience for our reports.

Meeting Closed.