

INITIATED INVESTIGATION REPORT

708 – 5Pillars UK

Relevant provisions of Impress Standards Code

Clause 4: Discrimination

4.3. Publishers must not encourage hatred or abuse against any group based on their characteristics, as detailed in Clause 4.1.

Breach of Clause 4.3.

Before Impress Regulatory Committee A

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1. Background and Executive Summary

1.1. Concerns were raised via Twitter/X by a member of the public about a short 23-second video clip taken from an episode of a podcast called 'Blood Brothers' by 5Pillars UK ("the Publisher"). The episode, entitled *Ethno-nationalism, western imperialism & the Zionist agenda*, was first published in full on Rumble on 20 February 2024, with a preview also published to YouTube. The full episode was later added to the 5Pillars UK website (via embedded video) on 27 February 2024, with a duration of 2:10:45. The episode is an interview with Mark Collett, who the Publisher describes as 'the controversial white ethno-nationalist and founder of the British far-right group Patriotic Alternative'. The episode has received 30.2K views on Rumble.

1.2. Impress were alerted to the short video clip by 'Harry's Place' (@hurryupharry), who posted the clip in accompaniment with the following text:

*This is a Nazi speaking to an islamist saying the same thing the far left says.
This podcast is by 5 Pillars UK a website regulated by @impress_org*

1.3. The post which contained the clip has received significant attention from the public (approx. 33.6K views, 41 comments, 191 reposts and 349 likes)

1.4. Considering the growing social media attention surrounding the Tweet/X post by the individual raising concerns about the Publisher's content in question, as well as the subject matter concerned, the decision was made to conduct an assessment of the content.

1.5. The preliminary assessment of the Executive was that the video clip appeared to engage the Clause 4.3 of the Standards Code and was within Impress' regulatory remit to consider. In particular, the exchange between the two speakers, including the interviewer's use of the question 'Jews?', appeared to suggest Jewish people are controlling forces behind both the Labour and Conservative parties. However, the Executive noted that the video clip only represented an excerpt from the full publication which would be subject to an investigation.

1.6. A Regulatory Committee was then convened to consider whether the short video clip and any other footage from the full podcast episode were within Impress' regulatory remit.

1.7. The Committee was further tasked with deciding whether there was sufficient evidence to justify commencement of an investigation into the publisher on Impress' own initiative for potential breaches of the Code.

- 1.8. The Committee made a preliminary assessment of whether there was a case to answer in relation to the material considered. In making its assessment, the Committee did not conclude there had been a breach of the Code, only that certain material engaged the Code and might be considered to be in breach.
- 1.9. The Publisher was informed of the Committee's decision to proceed with the investigation and provided with questions in relation to the substantive matters raised by Impress.
- 1.10. The reconvened Committee found that the Publisher had breached Clause 4.3 – Discrimination of the Impress Standards Code in relation to the material investigated.

2. Scope

- 2.1. Impress has powers to investigate potential Code breaches whether in response to a complaint or not. This is set out in the introduction to and in clauses 6.1 and 6.2 of the Impress Regulatory Scheme:

6.1 Impress may investigate potential Code breaches or breaches of its internal governance requirements whether in response to a complaint or not. Publishers are required to cooperate with Impress in any investigation, and to produce information and documents that Impress considers necessary.

6.2 Impress may consider launching an investigation on its own initiative if:

- *it has concerns about a potentially serious or systematic breach of the Code; or*
- *there is a significant public interest in initiating an investigation; or*
- *it receives a high volume of complaints about a similar issue or related issue.*

- 2.2. The extent of Impress' remit is set out in paragraph 3.8 of the Impress Regulatory Scheme:

The effective date of such Agreement marks the commencement of Impress's regulatory remit and the publisher's regulatory obligations. Impress's regulatory remit in relation to a publisher extends to materials first published and acts occurring after its commencement.

2.3. All Impress regulated publishers are contractually bound to follow the Impress Regulatory Scheme by virtue of clause 1.1 of the Agreement they sign when they voluntarily subscribe to Impress.

2.4. Publisher video and podcast content are within Impress' remit for consideration as part of any investigation conducted under the authority of the Regulatory Scheme. Section A – Scope & Remit of the Impress Standards Code sets out:

The Code applies to all content written, recorded, filmed or otherwise created by journalists or publishers producing edited news-related material and normally working under the editorial control of a publisher.

3. Clause 4.3 – Discrimination

3.1. The Committee considered that the podcast episode concerned several topics which engage Clause 4.3 of the Code. The Committee observed that there were several statements made throughout the episode which needed to be assessed against the requirements of the Code. The Committee considered that the following excerpts from the podcast episode fell within Impress' regulatory remit and should be investigated further.

3.2. Excerpt 1 [1:21:48]

Mark Collett (interviewee): ...there's one guy behind the scenes and he's got a Keir Starmer hand puppet on one hand and he's got a Rishi Sunak hand puppet on the other. It's Labour, Tory, but it's being controlled, all controlled

Dilly Hussain (Deputy Editor of 5Pillars UK – the interviewer): Jews?

Mark Collett: I would say Zionist control of British politics is at an unprecedented level...

3.3. Excerpt 2 [21:58 – 24:10]

MC: ...you can be smiled on if you are gay, transgender, come to school in a dress, adopt all that weakness, madness and poison...the only other viable option to Islam is the degenerate madness.

3.4. Excerpt 3 [38:42]

MC: ...pushed by anti-white academia which is disproportionately influenced by cultural Marxists who are largely Jewish.

3.5. Excerpt 4 [43:43]

MC: Now war is largely waged by the Judeo-American state for Zionist influence and Zionist power.

3.6. Excerpt 5 [53:23]

MC: Antisemitism is a trick... Why do we use it? To silence critics of Zionist or Jewish activity which benefits Jews but is not beneficial to others.

3.7. Excerpt 6 [1:06:02]

MC: ...if there is some flamboyant, homosexual drag queen that wants to advocate for sex with children, I don't think they should have the right to sit in libraries and speak to children.

3.8. Excerpt 7 [1:39:00]

MC: Jewish people and Zionists are massively overrepresented when it comes to those who pass these anti-white and anti-free speech laws.

3.9. Excerpt 8 [1:40:16]

MC: I do separate Zionists from Jewish influence.

DH: How do you separate from the JQ though?

MC: The Jewish question is a much broader topic. So we have largely been talking about and we have spoken privately about Zionist wars in the middle east, my opposition to Zionist wars in the middle east. But the Jewish influence is much, much wider than just wars in the middle east and Zionist power.

3.10. Excerpt 9 [1:40:58]

MC: When you talk about Jewish influence, you have to take into account things like the porn industry, feminism, cultural Marxists, the whole LGBT industry, the anti-racist industry, the holocaust industry. All of these things, all of these endeavours are controlled or disproportionately controlled by people of Jewish descent, and they are wielded in such a way that they have a negative impact on the white population.

3.11. Excerpt 10 [1:48:33]

MC: These Zionists are nothing more than Jewish supremacists... they've changed their names, they've Anglicised themselves. They walk amongst us and they look like us. It's like people like Margaret Hodge in Barking and Dagenham, people think she's just a normal white lady. Well, she's not. Her real name's not Hodge.

4. Publisher Response

- 4.1. On 8 March 2024, the Publisher was informed of the investigation by Impress and was invited to provide additional information in response.
- 4.2. In relation to the editorial process, the Publisher states that the decision to invite Mark Collett onto the Blood Brothers podcase was a difficult one that it considered carefully. The Publisher notes that Mr Collett is a very controversial interviewee and notorious in the Muslim community due to his anti-Islam rhetoric, and a significant section of the Publisher's viewers had not appreciated his presence on the podcast. The Publisher states that as Mr Collett was willing to engage, however, and gave it editorial control over the output, it decided that most of its viewers would be interested in what he had to say.
- 4.3. The Publisher states that it does not endorse Mr Collett in any way and would not argue with those who maintain that he is racist, antisemitic, homophobic and Islamophobic. The Publisher adds that it interviewed him due to his relevance to British Muslims and because it believes in engaging with and challenging those it disagrees with, which it says is important in a democracy that values free speech.
- 4.4. The Publisher also adds that it deleted some of Mr Collett's more incendiary comments out of the podcast for this reason during the editing process pre-publication. The Publisher clarifies that without review of the original rushes it is unable to recall what comments from Mr Collett were edited out. The Publisher says however that from memory Mr Collett did make some 'blatantly antisemitic' comments which it judged to be wholly gratuitous and crossed the line into hatred of Jews simply because they were Jews. The Publisher also believes there to have been one occasion where it felt that Dilly Hussain (the interviewer) had not sufficiently challenged Mr Collett. The Publisher elaborates that this was not due to the interviewer agreeing with Mr Collett's comments but because he had felt this section of the interview would be deleted from the final version of the podcast anyway and therefore it was unnecessary to challenge.

- 4.5. The Publisher says that the threshold for editing or deleting comments would be if it were to deem the comments to be blatantly antisemitic and there was not sufficient challenge to them.
- 4.6. The Publisher states that it is against racism and antisemitism. The Publisher adds that as believing and practising Muslims, it considers these concepts to be completely un-Islamic and prohibited. The Publisher adds that its religion teaches that it is wrong to hate Jewish people simply because they are Jewish. The Publisher says that it strongly opposes the political ideology of Zionism however, which it says can be followed by any faith or none and which it considers to be inherently racist, discriminatory, supremacist and colonialist in nature. The Publisher adds that it is clear that Zionism is being manifested in what the Publisher describes as the current genocide being perpetrated against the Palestinian people.
- 4.7. Regarding its position on same-sex relations, the Publisher says that it follows the Quranic injunction that homosexuality is a sin but does not promote hatred or violence against homosexuals. The publisher then addresses each of the relevant extracts of the podcast.
- 4.8. Regarding Excerpt 1, the Publisher explains that Mr Collett is widely believed to espouse neo-Nazi and antisemitic views, and therefore the interviewer's comment 'Jews?' was his attempt at seeking clarification on who Mr Collett believes are the 'puppet holders' behind Keir Starmer and Rishi Sunak. The Publisher adds that Mr Collett subsequently clarifies this in the same segment from 1:22:04 onward that it is 'Zionists' and the 'state of Israel'.
- 4.9. Regarding Excerpt 2, the Publisher states that while Mr Collett's choice of words to describe transgenderism and homosexuality was harsh and would understandably be seen as unsavoury, it is his opinion.
- 4.10. Regarding its approach in relation to Excerpt 2, the Publisher explains that the interviewer did not at the time perceive the comments made as hate speech, incitement or homophobic because the vast majority of practising Muslims (its core audience), as well as Christians and Jews, would be of the same opinion from the standpoint of their faith.
- 4.11. Regarding Excerpt 3, the Publisher states that Mr Collett substantiated his claim by stating that 'anti-white academia' is 'disproportionately' influenced by cultural Marxists, who are 'largely' Jewish. The Publisher elaborates that had Mr Collett claimed that *all* cultural Marxists were behind this claim and *all* cultural Marxists were Jews, then this would have warranted pushback for

further clarification. The Publisher adds that from 38:54 onward, the interviewer presents the Islamic perspective and counter to ethno-nationalism.

- 4.12. Regarding Excerpt 4, the Publisher states that Mr Collett's comment '...war is largely waged by the Judeo American state for Zionist influence and Zionist power' is his opinion. The Publisher adds that the US has had a long lasting alliance with Israel and many prominent American power brokers have been Zionists.
- 4.13. Regarding its approach in relation to Excerpt 5, the Publisher states that from 53:10 onward, the interviewer makes it very clear that many of Mr Collett's views would be widely perceived and understood by many Jews as 'antisemitic conspiracy theories'. The Publisher adds that Mr Collett clearly states he is citing the Israeli politician Shulamit Aloni who in a 2002 interview said: 'Well, it's a trick, we always use it. When from Europe somebody is criticising Israel, then we bring up the Holocaust. When in this country [the US] people are criticising Israel, then they are antisemitic'.
- 4.14. The Publisher further states that the weaponisation of antisemitism on Israel's behalf is a legitimate subject of debate and is something which many mainstream academics and commentators agree has taken place.
- 4.15. Regarding Excerpt 6, The Publisher states that the statement is Mr Collett's personal opinion that homosexual drag queens that advocate or have history of paedophilia should be kept away from young children, and not protected under free speech to deliver 'drag queen story time' at libraries. The Publisher states that it agrees that drag queens of this nature should not have access to children. The Publisher elaborates that Mr Collett did not say all drag queens should not have access to children or be protected under free speech laws, but specified those drag queens that advocate sex with children. The Publisher has provided news articles to Impress for context on this subject.
- 4.16. Regarding its approach in relation to Excerpt 7, the Publisher explains that the interviewer asks Mr Collett 'why?' at 1:38:57 and then asks 'are Zionists behind that as well?' at 1:39:05. The Publisher says these are clear examples of the interviewer probing and asking for further clarification on Mr Collett's claims, because he is widely accused of holding antisemitic views and conspiracy theories.
- 4.17. The Publisher adds that the interviewer questioned Mr Collett on whether he uses 'Zionists' to actually mean 'Jews', to which Mr Collett clarifies at 1:39:38 that 'not all Jews are Zionists, and not all Zionists are Jews'.

- 4.18. Regarding Excerpt 8, The Publisher says that the interviewer merely asked Mr Collett a question about whether and how he differentiates between Zionists, Jewish influence and 'The Jewish Question', which the Publisher describes as a popular antisemitic conspiracy theory espoused by white supremacists and neo-Nazis around the world.
- 4.19. Regarding its approach in relation to Excerpt 9, the Publisher explains that the interviewer immediately responds at 1:41:30 by saying 'do you reject that that very claim that you just mentioned there would be seen as antisemitic?'
- 4.20. Regarding Excerpt 10, The Publisher states that Zionism being centred around Jewish supremacy is not an alien idea or theory, but in fact a well-established argument, espoused by the founding fathers of Zionism and explicitly and repeatedly stated by Israeli politicians. The Publisher says that a recent employment case of Dr David Miller v The University of Bristol concluded that such views (anti-Zionism and anti-Israel) are not antisemitic and should be protected in the workplace.
- 4.21. The Publisher notes that at 1:49:39, the interviewer clearly mentions that the Europeanisation or Anglicisation of Jewish names was done to safeguard Jews from persecution and discrimination. The Publisher says that this was another example of the interviewer countering Mr Collett's claims with accurate historical and political context. The Publisher submits that the interviewer did this throughout the entire interview.
- 4.22. The Publisher concludes that it did not encourage hatred or abuse against the Jewish community in this podcast because it made clear that it did not agree with Mr Collett's comments and challenged them on several occasions. The Publisher also adds that Mr Collett's statements about homosexuals and transgender people were also his own opinion and it did not endorse them.
- 4.23. The Publisher says that given the sensitivity of the issue and the need for harmonious communal relations in the UK, it would be more than willing to listen to Impress' feedback about the episode and make any necessary amendments in the interests of the greater good.

5. Compliance

- 5.1.5 Pillars fully complied with the requirements of the Impress Regulatory Scheme in relation to investigations initiated by Impress.

6. Committee's Findings

- 6.1. The Committee considered the matter under Clause 4.3 of the Impress Standards Code (publishers must not encourage hatred or abuse). Guidance on Clause 4.3 sets out that the clause does not concern content that merely hurts feelings; to be in breach the disputed content must be more than provocative, offensive, hurtful or objectionable. Further, the clause includes but is not limited to publication that is likely to encourage others to target members of that group for abuse; encourages others to discriminate against them; perpetuates a narrative of prejudice against a particular group that can result in fear or harm amongst them; or includes dehumanising language against certain groups. This clause does not apply to groups identified by their political or ideological beliefs. There were two groups subject to discussion in the publication which were considered under the scope of this investigation based on their characteristics. These were people who identify as gay (sexual orientation) or transgender (gender identity or reassignment), and Jews (religion and race).
- 6.2. The Committee noted the Publisher's explanation that Mark Collett (the interviewee) was a controversial public figure and that he was regarded by some as racist, antisemitic, homophobic and Islamophobic. It also noted that during the podcast it was repeatedly made clear that the interviewer and interviewee had had private discussions about the issues to be covered. The Committee considered that the interviewer would have been well aware both of the issues to be discussed and of the likely responses of the interviewee, which might present a high risk of breaching the Code. The Committee considered that this placed a burden on the Publisher interviewer to prepare robust and effective questions and challenges for use throughout the interview at necessary and relevant times, and for the Publisher to be prepared to sufficiently edit the content prior to publication for it to comply with the Code. The Committee noted that failure to do so risked leaving the audience with the impression that the interviewee's statements were endorsed by the Publisher or that the interviewee's statements acted as a proxy for the Publisher's own worldview on certain issues where the risk of encouraging hatred or abuse was high.
- 6.3. The Committee firstly considered Excerpts 2 and 6 together, which concern matters of gender identity and sexual orientation. The Committee noted both the Publisher's explanation that it follows the Quranic injunction that homosexuality is a sin but does not promote hatred or violence against homosexuals and the Clause 4.3 guidance which states the Code gives due regard to religious communities' freedom to voice their convictions and that this is important. This includes debates on issues such as sexual morality.

- 6.4. Regarding Excerpt 2, the Committee considered that the interviewee likening homosexuality and transgenderism to 'degenerate madness' would have caused widespread offence and was dehumanising. The Committee noted that the interviewer did not question or challenge this assertion by the interviewee.
- 6.5. Regarding Excerpt 6, the Committee considered that the interviewee's assertion, though expressing his opinion, implied a statement of fact: that there are documented cases of homosexual drag queens, who advocate for having sex with children, and attend libraries and talk to children. The Committee noted that the press articles submitted by the Publisher concerned one individual who identified as gay and had dressed in drag and who had been convicted of sexual offences against children. However, there was no evidence in the article that that individual went to libraries where he talked with children. The Committee considered that an appropriate response from the interviewer would have been to challenge the basis of this claim and ask Mr Collett why he was singling out this case without presenting any evidence that sexuality or gender identity was a disproportionate factor in the incidence of child sex abuse. The committee considered that this lack of challenge to the interviewee's statement served to perpetuate a narrative of prejudice that could encourage hatred or abuse towards LGBT people.
- 6.6. The Committee then went on to consider the remaining excerpts which broadly concern discussion of Jewish and Zionist influence in political and public life.
- 6.7. The Committee considered that Excerpts 3, 7 and 8 contained statements made by the interviewee claiming disproportionate Jewish influence, particularly in academia and in politics. They also contained apparently factual claims which were entirely unsubstantiated and which perpetuated a narrative of prejudice against Jewish people as having disproportionate influence over public life. The Committee judged that, whatever its intent, the interviewer's question – 'are Zionists behind that as well?' – could be seen as invitational and reinforcing the message of the interviewee rather than challenging it. Overall, the Committee considered that the lack of challenge by the interviewer to the authenticity of the claims enabled the interviewee to encourage hatred or abuse.
- 6.8. Regarding Excerpt 8, the Committee noted that the interviewer used the shorthand 'JQ' in the exchange with the interviewee. The Committee considered that use of this abbreviation, which is widely acknowledged as a 21st Century abbreviation adopted by Neo-Nazi and alt-right movements, had the effect of normalising the phrase and gave the impression of a shared

language and perhaps a mutuality or reciprocity between interviewer and interviewee.

- 6.9. The Committee considered that Excerpt 10 was a seriously offending statement by the interviewee regarding Jewish and Zionist influence in public life. The Committee considered the interviewee's comment in particular 'they walk amongst us and they look like us' to be clearly dehumanising, constituting an explicit encouragement of hatred or abuse against Jewish people. The Committee noted that this comment was not challenged by the interviewer.
- 6.10. The Committee considered that Excerpts 5 and 9 added to the cumulative effect of perpetuating a narrative of prejudice towards Jewish people.
- 6.11. Regarding Excerpt 5, the Committee considered that the interviewee's statement that 'antisemitism is a trick...to silence critics of Zionist or Jewish activity...' had the effect of undermining the reality and seriousness of antisemitism. The Committee noted that the interviewer did make some attempt to challenge the interviewee by stating that many would consider his views to be antisemitic conspiracy theories, but this did not go far enough to address the seriousness of the interviewee's statement.
- 6.12. Regarding Excerpt 9, the Committee considered the interviewee's statement concerning Jewish people to be highly conspiratorial and prejudicial. The Committee acknowledged that the interviewer challenged how the interviewee's statement might be perceived, but did not challenge the substance of the claims. The Committee judged that an appropriate challenge would have been to question who these 'people of Jewish descent' are that the interviewee claimed to be behind various industries and how he had calculated what he claimed to be their disproportionate control.
- 6.13. The Committee considered that Excerpts 1 and 4 could, in a different context, be regarded as political polemic, but in the context of the full publication and alongside other discriminatory statements they contributed to an overall prejudicial impression of conflating Zionism with Jewish people. Regarding Excerpt 1, the Committee noted that the interviewee referred to 'one man behind the scenes'. Therefore, the Committee judged the interviewer's question 'Jews?' in response to be invitational and that a more appropriate question would have been to ask who this 'man behind the scenes' was. Regarding Excerpt 4, the Committee considered that anti-Zionist views were expressed by the interviewee as a vehicle for prejudice against Jewish people in general.

6.14. The Committee concluded that while some of the excerpts in isolation may not have reached the threshold for a breach of Clause 4.3, together they had a cumulative effect of encouraging hatred and abuse towards Jewish people. The Committee determined that insufficient challenge from the interviewer had created an impression that a platform had effectively been provided for the antisemitic views of the interviewee, however strongly the Publisher might disagree with some of the interviewee's other inflammatory opinions.

6.15. In summary, the Committee found that the publication had breached Clause 4.3 by encouraging hatred or abuse against groups based on gender identity, religion, and sexual orientation.

7. Sanctions and Remedies

7.1. The Committee considered that the podcast episode in its current form is in breach of Clause 4.3. The Publisher should therefore take necessary steps to ensure the publication is amended or removed in light of the Committee's findings.

7.2. The Committee added that the Publisher should display a Notice of Adjudication statement with a link to the full adjudication on the homepage of its website for 48 hours. The podcast episode page on the Publisher's website should also include this Notice statement and link to the full adjudication next to the title heading for as long as it continues to be published. The Notice statement should read as follows:

Notice of Adjudication for Episode 122 of the Blood Brothers podcast titled 'Ethno-nationalism, western imperialism & the Zionist agenda', first published to the 5Pillars UK website on 27 February 2024. An Impress ruling determined that this podcast episode has breached Clause 4.3 of the Impress Standards Code by encouraging hatred or abuse against groups based on gender identity, religion, and sexual orientation. The full adjudication by Impress can be accessed here.