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COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Board of Deputies President sends letter to Jeremy Corbyn expressing ‘grave concern’ about his foreword for antisemitic book

Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl this week sent an open letter to Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn expressing grave concern about the article he wrote for the republication of John Hobson's "Imperialism" - a book which has an obvious antisemitic message.

You can read Marie's full letter [here](#).

Read the BBC report [here](#) and the Guardian story [here](#).

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

1 May 2019

Dear Mr Corbyn

We write to express grave concern about the foreword you wrote for Spokesman Books' 2011 republication of John Hobson's book *Imperialism*.

According to media reports, you endorsed it as a "great tome", even though the book has an obvious antisemitic message. It says:

"United by the strongest bonds of organisation, always in closest and quickest touch with one as other, situated in the very heart of the business capital of every state, controlled, so far as Europe is concerned, by men of a single and peculiar race, who have behind them many centuries of financial experience, they are in a unique position to control the policy of nations."

This is pure and unequivocal racism and there can be no apology for it.

In just over a year, we have learned that you opposed the removal of a mural by Mear One that contained obvious antisemitic tropes; that you described a group of British Jews as having "no sense of irony" despite "having lived in this country for a very long time"; that you were present - but apparently not involved - in a wreath-laying ceremony for terrorists who murdered Israeli Jews; and that you unsuccessfully attempted to dilute the international definition of antisemitism that was adopted by the Labour Party.

This is in addition to a long record of sharing platforms with, describing as 'friends' and offering support to individuals and groups who have made unambiguously racist comments and, in some cases, endorsed terrorism against Jews.

The British public is entitled to know how you account for these actions and we expect a full explanation.

Yours sincerely



Marie van der Zyl
President

Marie van der Zyl reacts to fatal shooting at San Diego synagogue

Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl has reacted to the shooting at a synagogue in the USA in which a woman was murdered and several others injured by an extremist gunman.

On Sunday, Marie said: "Overnight we were devastated to hear of a shooting incident at a Chabad synagogue in San Diego during which Lori Gilbert Kaye died as a heroine, putting herself between the shooter and one of the rabbis. Our thoughts and prayers remain with Lori Gilbert Kaye's family and those reported injured in the attack in Poway, near San Diego: Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein, Noya Dahan and Almog Peretz."

Read Marie's article in the JC on the renewed threat of the far right [here](#).

'Labour needs to look itself in the mirror' following

Brighton revelations

Board of Deputies Vice President Amanda Bowman has reacted to the disturbing revelations about Brighton and Hove Labour Party which have emerged this week.

Amanda said: "We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community in Brighton and Hove in light of the series of disturbing revelations about the Brighton and Hove Labour Party. In recent days it has been revealed that council candidate Alex Braithwaite was suspended for a series of horrendous social media posts including Rothschild conspiracy theories and another local member, Amanda Bishop, called, in a chilling echo of the far right, for all local Labour members to march on Hove Synagogue.

"Labour needs to look itself in the mirror and ask itself about how this culture has grown up. Bigots like Amanda Bishop need to know that people who seek to threaten, bully or abuse our community will fail. Where prejudice shows its face, the Jewish community, whether at a national level or through our brave grassroots activists, will never be silenced."



A cross-party group of MPs and peers this week toured Jewish community institutions in north London, including Hampstead Synagogue, to learn about Jewish life in Britain. Pictured (left to right) Stephen Lloyd MP, Lisa Cameron MP, James Floyd (Louise Ellman's Parliamentary Assistant), Hampstead Synagogue Vice Chair Gabriel Herman, Paula Sherriff MP, Board of Deputies Vice President Amanda Bowman. [Read a full report here](#)



Today is Yom HaShoah, the Jewish calendar date for Holocaust commemoration. Alongside our colleagues at UJIA, we lit six candles to remember the six million Jews who lost their lives in the Shoah. Each candle is named for one of the victims

ACTIVITY REPORT

YOM HASHOAH

Yom HaShoah UK invites the entire community to stand together for the UK National Commemoration Event 'Remember Together - We Are One' taking place on Sunday May 5 at 11:30am at the National Holocaust Remembrance Gardens, Hyde Park.

The Jewish community will gather to remember the loss of six million people and to pay tribute to the survivors and refugees for their remarkable contributions to the Jewish community and wider UK society.

To book your tickets for this important event, click [here](#).

Senior Vice President Sheila Gewolb attended the Yom Hashoah commemoration at Pinner United Synagogue, which was addressed by the Polish Ambassador, Arkady Rzegocki. The programme also included Lili Stern Pohlman, a survivor of the Lwow Ghetto, in conversation with Antony Lishak, founder of 'Learning from the Righteous'.

POLITICAL

Ahead of Thursday's local elections, candidates standing in dozens of councils have backed the [Board of Deputies Jewish Manifesto for Local Government](#). Among other asks, the manifesto calls for councils to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and support Jewish schools and social care providers. To read a full report, click [here](#).

Parliamentary Officer Joel Salmon met Neil Coyle MP to discuss combatting antisemitism in the Labour Party. They also discussed the work of the APPG on British Jews, the secretariat of which is provided by the Board of Deputies.

Chief Executive Gillian Merron and **Parliamentary Officer Joel Salmon** met George Howarth MP to

discuss the work of the Board of Deputies, countering antisemitism and supporting the Jewish community.

EDUCATION

Board of Deputies Vice President Edwin Shuker has responded to the announcement of the new Independent School Standards. He said: “The new Independent School Standards are the marker by which independent Jewish schools will be inspected, the vast majority of which are in the Strictly Orthodox sector. The government has taken on board the perspectives put forward by the Board of Deputies and other community groups in ensuring all of the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act are mentioned, including religious belief. It is welcome that there is flexibility given to individual schools to educate according to their ethos in teaching about different protected characteristics at ages considered appropriate by each school. Additionally, it is encouraging that the guidance states that there will not normally be enforcement action and school closures for ‘one or two unmet requirements’ of the standards. As ever, the outcomes for schools will depend on the interpretation of the standards during inspections by Ofsted and the ISI.”

Education Policy Officer Jake Berger visited Beit Shvidler Primary School, meeting with Headteacher Rabbi Jonathan Spector.

INTERFAITH

Senior Vice President Sheila Gewolb and **Vice President Edwin Shuker** attended the United for Peace event, an initiative of the Oxford Foundation, which brings together people of all faiths and none to fight against extremism and race-hate. An evening of religious and cultural performance included testimony from Ahmad Nawaz, an 18 year-old survivor of the 2014 Peshwar School attack where his brother and 131 fellow students were killed by the Pakistani Taliban.

COMMUNITY

Chief Executive Gillian Merron and **Public Affairs Director Phil Rosenberg** met Emma Bergen, new Executive Director of the Zionist Federation.

INTERNATIONAL

Treasurer Stuart MacDonald represented the Board of Deputies on the March of the Living in Poland.

ANTISEMITISM

Vice President Amanda Bowman and **Parliamentary Officer Joel Salmon** met JLC Chief Executive Simon Johnson to discuss antisemitism in football.

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