

The Board of Deputies of British Jews  
1 Torriano Mews  
Kentish Town  
London NW5 2RZ

5<sup>th</sup> September 2018

For the attention of Marie van der Zyl, Deputies President

Dear Marie,

As anticipated in my last letter, your remarks about Jeremy Corbyn in connection with the row over antisemitism have already caused damage to the Jewish cause. Jack Mendel, Online Editor of the Jewish News writes “If the community continues to resort to scare tactics and false arguments that can be easily deconstructed, it’s going to be an uphill and never-ending struggle.” He also concurs with the condemnation of Margaret Hodge’s distortion of history.

Liberal Rabbi Alexandra Wright writing in the JC (Aug 31) condemns “the ignorance, malice and racism that exist in the far left of the Labour Party.” But, quoting Lord Sacks, she acknowledges that “Jews are not the only people who face prejudice and hate.” I can personally confirm that, because I was the target of despicable and blatantly racist letters sent to me by your father Barry Kaye - including threats of violence - for which I never received an explanation or indication of remorse. His unforgivable slur saying I was “a non-Jew of no standing in the Jewish community, you are not welcome.” was vile and distressing, given that I had been fully committed to the Jewish upbringing of your husband Darrell and his sister Kerry, my step-children. Have you seen their bar/bat mitzvah pictures?

Jack Mendel says your statement that Jeremy Corbyn had “declared war on the Jews at home” was “Not only over-the-top, but intended to pour fuel on the fire.” This is a serious charge and your frenzied words not only exposed your naivety but your ignorance as well. You, happily, have never known what war means and, like Darrell, have not endured any real hardships in your life. You are far too young to have lived through a time when daily and nightly bombing raids discharged their deadly loads onto blameless British homes eliminating entire families. And you cannot begin to imagine the traumatic effects on innocents like your mother-in-law Nikki and her parents when they had to flee their home in Germany - leaving everything behind, including close relatives, who would lose their lives in the hellish death camps.

Mendel says the row over antisemitism is not going to be solved with hysteria and hyperbole and Rabbi Wright counsels the Jewish community to “take a step back and reflect on whether communal anger and tribal politics will help us to resolve the issue or stir its febrile nature into an unending whirlpool of conflict and hatred.” Wise words indeed and it behoves all sides to be brutally honest so that they can unite in solidarity against each and every form of hatred and racism, without exception, wherever it springs from.

Rabbi Wright says that “... racism of any kind should never be tolerated”. With Rosh Hashanah imminent we should remember the well known Talmudic Dictum “Shtika Kehoda” that is, “Silence is complicity.” Action is what matters.

Yours sincerely,

George Rooker,  
Historian