

Wednesday 9th June 2021

By e-mail to Mary Bousted and Kevin Courtney, Joint General-Secretaries of the NEU

Dear Ms Bousted and Mr Courtney,

As the democratic representative organisation of British Jews in the UK, we are profoundly disturbed by the news that an individual, who engaged in behaviour which the overwhelming majority of British Jews deem profoundly antisemitic, has been organising “understanding antisemitism” workshops for your union.

As reported by the Jewish News this week, Ms Ewa Jasiewicz, in her role as an organiser with the NEU North West Region, has been behind a number of recent workshops on this subject. Ms Jasiewicz is infamous within the Jewish community for having daubed the words “Free Gaza and Palestine – liberate all ghettos” on a section of the extant wall of the Warsaw Ghetto. Ms Jasiewicz attempted to “justify” her behaviour by saying that Israel had “co-opted” the Holocaust to serve “agendas of colonisation and repression”. For many Jews, however, her actions were profoundly antisemitic – both by making a direct comparison between the Nazis and Israeli, and by her gross disrespect to the memory of the hundreds of thousands of Jews incarcerated in the Warsaw Ghetto who were murdered by the Nazis.

To have somebody with this sort of track record organising antisemitism training workshops for your union is simply grotesque. There are a number of outstanding Jewish communal organisations in the UK which provide training on understanding antisemitism, and I am sure that had the NEU been in touch with them, they would have been very happy to arrange such sessions and we would be very happy to recommend them to you.

Your union represents more than half a million teachers, responsible for educating this country’s children and young adults. The NEU has a responsibility, therefore, to ensure that education it offers to its own members on antisemitism is given by providers who are widely respected within the Jewish community, rather than people like Ms Jasiewicz and her associates. To do otherwise makes a total mockery of what is often referred to as “the oldest hatred”.

We would urge you to ensure that this sort of activity is not repeated. Not only does it do a disservice to your members, it also tarnishes the NEU’s reputation.

Yours sincerely,



Marie van der Zyl
President