APP/X5990/V/19/3240661 Trudy Gold statement, witness for Baroness Deech

To whom it may concern

I am one of Britain’s leading experts and educators on the subject of Jewish history and the Holocaust.

I am the former CEO of the London Jewish Cultural Centre. I was one of the founder members of the British Delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (now IHRA). I facilitated the inaugural Holocaust educational seminar. I have taught Modern Jewish History in schools, universities and to adult groups throughout the world. I have coordinated teacher training, particularly in Eastern Europe and latterly in China. I am the author of the student resource, *Understanding the Holocaust*, and the digital resource, *Lessons of the Holocaust*.I have over 40 years’ experience in Holocaust education.

I am writing with heavy heart regarding the proposed National Holocaust Memorial & Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, Westminster. I know that the establishment of such a memorial is generously meant. But I believe that such a memorial is at best cosmetic – it will do nothing to solve the very serious problem of anti-Semitism - and is, at worst, counter-productive and dangerous. It will not prevent anti-Semitism: that will require something far more forensic and comprehensive. It will, however, expose Jewish people to accusations of special treatment and special influence; a literal purloining of a beloved public space at the centre of British democracy. Holocaust memorialization exists throughout the world and it is, of course, soothing for Jews and those well-disposed towards them. There is no evidence that it does anything to prevent anti-Semitism among those disposed to it: quite the contrary.

In my view the proposed £100 million should instead be spent thus:

I propose that Holocaust studies (currently taught at KS3) be taught within the wider framework of Jewish history. Students are seldom taught the extraordinary 2000-year-old story of the Jewish diaspora and how anti-Jewish tropes developed. In a world where the notorious forgery The Protocols of the Elders of Zion is still common currency and conspiracy theories abound, enlightenment is urgent. By studying Jewish history, students would have far more understanding of the Jewish community and the events which led to the Holocaust.

There are many racisms in Britain, and they will rise together, or fall together. We must, in our search for appreciation – and not fear - of the other, examine them all. I propose that, alongside the study of Jewish history and the Holocaust, children should study Afro-Caribbean history, Irish history, and the Indian and Pakistani experience in Britain. Every racism should be examined, separately and together: that is how young people will understand real cultural diversity and the similarities – and differences – in specific forms of racism. That is how they will understand this country and themselves. These programmes would of course be developed by the best academics, educators and psychologists this country has to offer. Britain could lead the world in anti-racist education, if it has the will.

There are already many excellent learning centres in the field of Holocaust education. In this country alone there are is the exemplary exhibition at the Imperial War Museum and the National Holocaust Museum and Centre in Nottingham. The Holocaust Educational Trust offers extensive teacher training programmes and visits for young people to Auschwitz. It arranges for survivors to speak to students in schools and universities. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust oversees excellent programmes for Holocaust Memorial Day. The Weiner Library provides research facilities and there are now many universities that offer courses in Holocaust studies. There are over 300 Holocaust museums worldwide.

Despite this work, the levels of hatred, antisemitism and xenophobia remain extremely high. We have not willed a more tolerant society into being. Incidents of antisemitism in this country are at record levels, including prejudice from other minority groups. We are living in a period of economic and social instability, exacerbated by a pandemic which is polarising people’s attitudes. We cannot fall back on the kind of memorial that only speaks to the already enlightened. We must try something more ambitious. Isn’t it time to ask ourselves anew how we can once and for all change the attitudes of a generation?