

News story: Natasha Kaplinsky recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours for project to remember the Holocaust

The award recognises Natasha's incredible personal commitment to preserving the memory of the Holocaust for future generations, following her work to record the testimony of more than 100 British Holocaust survivors and Bergen Belsen liberators as part of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation's major national project.

Over a period of 15 months and on an entirely pro-bono basis, Natasha conducted 112 testimony interviews. The majority of these moving personal stories were recorded for the first time. The invaluable body of testimonies created by Natasha cover a wide range of experiences of Nazi persecution, including camp survivors, children in hiding, refugees who escaped to Britain – some of whom then served with the British Army – and children who arrived in Britain on the Kindertransport, an organised rescue effort for Jewish children in Germany and Nazi-occupied countries before the outbreak of war. The collection also includes Charedi survivors, a Roma survivor and recordings of British soldiers involved in the liberation and relief of Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp.

Natasha's work gave all these people the chance to record their history, preserving it so that their voices can be used to educate future generations about the lessons of the Holocaust and to challenge them to think about their own role in fighting hatred and prejudice in all its forms. The testimonies will have a permanent home in the new education centre that will accompany the National Memorial which is to be built next to Parliament in Westminster.

Natasha Kaplinsky said:

"Meeting the survivors and their families has been an incredible privilege. Their testimonies detail humanity's darkest hour. They are also stories of incredible strength, compassion, inspiration and forgiveness.

"Through their testimony they offer up challenges for us all to consider about our world and the way we treat each other, and to remind us of the constant need to stand up against hatred and prejudice in all its forms."

Natasha's empathetic, sensitive and personal style ensured that survivors felt comfortable sharing their experiences and the impact they had on their lives. Reflecting on their interview, one survivor commented:

"You handled me and my testimony with great sensitivity, which made it easier for me to talk about the painful events in my life. I cannot say I enjoyed the interview as it brought back so many painful memories, but at the end I was pleased to have done it... Future generations must know what happened."

The national project began after an independent, cross-party commission found there was an urgent need to record and preserve further testimony of British survivors and liberators. It has been led by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

Sir Peter Bazalgette, chair of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, said:

“Natasha has undertaken an extraordinary project, single-handedly interviewing 112 British Holocaust survivors and liberators. Using her expertise, professionalism and compassionate approach, she was able to draw out stories sympathetically and sensitively, supporting survivors to recount their testimony.

“Natasha has helped to create an indelible record of the Holocaust, curating a particularly British story for future generations to learn from. This is something we can all be grateful for.”

The testimonies will be made available online so that they can be explored by individuals and educational projects around the UK. This new digital resource will add to the existing testimony available and form part of a rich network of recorded testimonies to aid remembrance and education.

[Watch an example of excerpts from the testimonies.](#)

About Natasha Kaplinsky

Natasha Kaplinsky is one of the UK's leading broadcasters having worked for Sky News, BBC and ITV. Natasha is patron of a number of charities and an Ambassador for Save The Children. In 2014 she became a member of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission and in 2015 she was appointed by the Prime Minister to the board of the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

About the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF) was created to implement the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission report in 2015, ensuring that the memory of the Holocaust and its lessons are preserved and remain current for future generations. Alongside the programme to record and preserve the testimony of Holocaust survivors, UKHMF is leading the creation of a new national Holocaust Memorial and accompanying education centre that will explain the facts of the Holocaust and challenge visitors to explore its lessons for society today. UKHMF has cross-party support and is chaired by Sir Peter Bazalgette.

[Press release: DIT appoints Crawford](#)

Falconer as new Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser

A globally respected trade negotiator, tasked with sealing deals with the UK's key trading partners, has been appointed today by the Prime Minister and the International Trade Secretary.

Internationally recognised expert Crawford Falconer will act as head of profession for trade negotiators and will bolster the Civil Service's trade negotiation skills, bringing over 25 years of public service in trade and foreign affairs.

As the Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser and Second Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Trade (DIT) he will be responsible to the Secretary of State for International Trade, The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP for negotiating with ministers the best global trade deals that will benefit the whole of the UK.

The new expert Second Permanent Secretary post was created to support the establishment of a world-class trade negotiation function and lead this new profession within the Civil Service, reporting to the DIT Permanent Secretary.

Together with his team Crawford will:

- develop and negotiate free trade agreements and market access deals with non-EU countries
- negotiate plurilateral trade deals on specific sectors or products
- make the department a 'centre of excellence' for negotiation and British trade
- support the UK's membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

Since its formation in July 2016, the headcount at DIT has increased to a global workforce of over 3,000 people. The Trade Policy Group that includes policy and country specialists, as well as expert economic analysts and lawyers, has itself quadrupled in size.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

Britain is a great global trading nation and, as we leave the EU, we will embrace the world and seek to build an outward-looking Britain that is confident on the world stage.

We're attracting the very best global talent to DIT as an international economic department. Crawford brings extensive experience of trade negotiation and foreign affairs and will play a key leadership role, with ministers and the first Permanent Secretary as we further build our trade capability

Welcoming the appointment Sir Jeremy Heywood said:

As the UK's first Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser, Crawford Falconer will play a crucial role in building the Department for International Trade's trade negotiation capability, enabling the new department to take forward its vital mission of promoting free trade and supporting UK business on the global stage. I am delighted that we have been able to secure someone for this role with a long and distinguished track record in international trade negotiations.

Crawford Falconer is an excellent addition to DIT's senior team and I look forward to working with him.

Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary at DIT, said:

Crawford Falconer brings a wealth of global trade expertise to the Department for International Trade from over 25 years of working on trade policy in the New Zealand government, the OECD and academia.

International trade drives the prosperity of the UK and the world. As we build our relationships to create a more global Britain, Crawford will be central to our work to secure the best trade deals that deliver for businesses and consumers.

Crawford Falconer said:

As the UK prepares to leave the EU, it will be top of the government's agenda to turn the enormous new opportunities opening up for the UK into win-win agreements with our trading partners around the globe.

That will bring tangible new gains to us at home, and it will bring gains to those trading partners that join us. As the world's fifth largest economic power, the UK will bring much needed leadership to the international trade agenda. I am absolutely delighted to join this hugely exciting new journey.

DIT has already established a series of 9 'working groups' with 15 countries including India, China and Australia and high-level dialogues to explore the best ways of progressing our trade and investment relationships.

The announcement comes as Dr Fox prepares to visit his US counterparts in Washington (Monday 19 June 2017) to explore ways of deepening trade and economic links on what will be his first international visit since being reappointed International Trade Secretary.

A New Zealand/UK dual-national, Crawford Falconer is currently Professor of

Global Value Chains and Trade at Lincoln University. This follows a long career at the heart of NZ's Foreign Office, specialising in trade. He was latterly the NZ Deputy Secretary and Vice Minister for International Trade and Foreign Affairs. He is a former NZ Ambassador to the WTO, and the holder of a variety of trade-related posts within the ministry.

Further information

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Jeremy Corbyn letter to the Prime Minister regarding the independent public inquiry into the fire at Grenfell Tower

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, has

today written to the Prime Minister regarding the decision to hold a full and independent public inquiry into the fire at Grenfell Tower.

Jeremy Corbyn said:

"Whilst the inquiry should be limited to the awful events at Grenfell Tower, it must be empowered to consider all the steps that were, or were not, taken leading up to and contributing to this most terrible incident. It must also identify the urgent steps that need to be taken in relation to fire safety standards for other buildings of this nature.

"In addition to finding facts, the inquiry must be empowered to make recommendations for the avoidance of any similar future disaster – and in so doing, to consider recommendations arising from previous similar fire-related deaths."

The full text of the letter is below.

Theresa

May

16 June 2017

The
Prime Minister

10
Downing Street

London

SW1A 2AA

Dear
Prime Minister,

I
am writing to note your decision to hold a full and independent public
inquiry
into the fire at Grenfell Tower and to seek your assurance that the inquiry
you
establish will be held under the provisions of the 2005 Inquiries Act.

On
the assumption that it is your intention to establish a 2005 Act Inquiry, I
want to share my view that it is vital that the Terms of Reference be drawn
with sufficient scope for the inquiry to establish all the relevant facts and
to ensure that all necessary lessons are learned. Whilst the inquiry should
be
limited to the awful events at Grenfell Tower, it must be empowered to
consider
all the steps that were, or were not, taken leading up to and contributing to
this most terrible incident. It must also identify the urgent steps that need
to be taken in relation to fire safety standards for other buildings of this
nature.

In
addition to finding facts, the inquiry must be empowered to make
recommendations for the avoidance of any similar future disaster – and in so
doing, to consider recommendations arising from previous similar fire-related
deaths.

It
is very important that the Terms of Reference are drawn with sufficient scope
to require the participation of all those with a legitimate interest – this
should undoubtedly include the bereaved families, survivors and also
individuals and organisations with a legitimate interest such as the
residents'
campaign and representative organisations who were involved in the period
leading up to these events. Their views and experiences are as important, if
not more so, as the expert opinions of state actors and their service
providing

contractors.

I am also

very concerned to ensure that this public inquiry is not used to delay any parallel actions which might be taken by interested parties. It is important that justice is served in as comprehensive and timely way possible. This must include, of course, ensuring that legal funding is available to support those involved in the inquiry and any inquests. I would also like to support the request of the Mayor of London for an interim report to be produced which I believe is important for the community to feel as if justice is being done in a timely manner.

Whilst

I believe that the policies and priorities of your government in the arenas of

social housing and public safety are legitimate targets for my criticism, I hope we both share a determination to discover the truths underpinning this tragedy so to avoid any repetition. For these reasons, in support of my hope to publicly welcome your decision, I would appreciate early consultation on your government's proposed inquiry Terms of Reference.

In

response to my question yesterday, the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service made it very clear that survivors made homeless would be appropriately and locally rehoused. This is imperative in order that they be enabled to re-build their lives and have some hope of recovery from these devastating events. It now appears that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea may not be as committed to ensuring that all are re-housed locally. Your public re-commitment to this is imperative as part of an unequivocal, wider statement that the government will do all it can to provide timely practical support to those who have suffered so much. In this context, I note the announcement of the first government investment of £5million. Given the magnitude and scale of the crisis, this will clearly not be sufficient and I therefore await information regarding further funding plans.

On

a related matter, I believe that an attitude of generosity and compassion in relation to the costs of funeral expenses and ensuring that it is possible for

families living outside the UK to travel here to attend funerals, as well as participate in the inquiry, is also warranted in such a tragic situation.

This

is particularly the case given the circumstances of many of the Grenfell Tower

residents, including the number of bereaved families who may be resident overseas and the costs of burial and cremation. As was also raised at yesterday's brief discussion in the Grand Committee, I would expect that the Home Office guarantees the replacement, as a matter of urgent priority, of all

documentation for those affected.

Finally,
on behalf of all those in the Labour Party, may I express our admiration for those in the emergency services who responded with the utmost courage and professionalism and share our deepest sorrow at these harrowing events – and commit that we will do all in our power to ensure that this be the last such tragedy of its kind in our country.

Yours
sincerely,

Jeremy
Corbyn

The Government must lift the housing revenue account borrowing cap to free councils to undertake urgent retrofitting work – John McDonnell

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor,
commenting on
the Grenfell Tower fire, said:

"The
tragic fire that occurred on Grenfell Tower must never be allowed to happen again. The lessons of Camberwell, Shepherds Bush and Southampton have not been
learned, and it is the responsibility of government to provide solutions.

"The
Government must now as a matter of urgency lift the housing revenue account borrowing cap to free councils to undertake the urgent retrofitting work required on all existing housing stock found not to meet required safety standards.

"Councils
must also be given the power, as Labour's housing manifesto pledges to do, to borrow to invest in council housing on the scale necessary to allow all those living in homes deemed to be unsafe to be properly rehoused.

"The
next Labour Government will take any and all steps required to address the critical housing crisis in our country. Labour have pledged to invest to build
over a million new homes over the course of the next parliament. Within five

years, our manifesto commits to building at least 100,000 council and housing association homes a year for genuinely affordable rent or sale.”

Ends

Press release: Prime Minister's statement on the death of Helmut Kohl

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

It is with great sadness that I learned of the death of former Chancellor Helmut Kohl. As the First Chancellor of a unified Germany since 1945 he was a giant of European history. On behalf of the people of the United Kingdom I pay tribute to the role he played in helping to end the Cold War and reunify Germany.

We have lost the father of modern Germany and my deepest sympathies and condolences are with his family and with the German people at this sad time.