



ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA GREATER PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER



July 29, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ZOA: Mastriano’s Statement Falls Short – He Must Repudiate Torba; Not Enough to Say Antisemite “Doesn’t Speak” for Him

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The Zionist Organization of America’s Greater Philadelphia Chapter and Pittsburgh Chapter call on Pennsylvania State Senator Doug Mastriano to unequivocally and immediately specifically repudiate the anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist rhetoric and attacks made by Gab social media platform founder and CEO Andrew Torba, who is a vocal Mastriano supporter. Further, Mastriano must reject Torba’s endorsement and support.

Mastriano’s statement on the matter that he issued on July 28 (see it below) does not go far enough, and his minimizing of Jew-hatred by conflating it with economic issues and matters related to government policy in response to COVID are disturbing and insulting.

Greater Philadelphia ZOA and Pittsburgh ZOA together represent and serve the Jewish people, advance Zionism and support the pro-Israel community throughout the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Mastriano is the Republican Party’s nominee for governor of Pennsylvania for the general election in November. On Thursday, July 28, Sen. Mastriano posted a terse statement on the matter of Jew-hatred to his twitter feed – though not on his campaign web site. The statement (see below) neglects to repudiate Torba or any of his anti-Jewish claims, accusations and demands, and it lacks any apology for any discomfort his association with Torba and Gab may have caused Jewish Pennsylvanians.

Were he to become governor, Mastriano would represent nearly 13 million Pennsylvanians and among these are hundreds of thousands of Jewish Americans. Pennsylvania is America’s fifth most populous state.

Mastriano’s statement in its entirety:

“Andrew Torba doesn’t speak for me or my campaign. I reject anti-Semitism in any form. Recent smears by Democrats and the media are blatant attempts to distract Pennsylvanians from suffering inflicted by Democrat policies.

“While extremist speech is an unfortunate but inevitable cost of living in a free society,

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extremist policies are not – and the only candidate in this election who wants to impose extreme policies on Pennsylvania – inflation, crime, lockdowns, and mandates – is Josh Shapiro.”

While ZOA appreciates Sen. Mastriano issuing a statement on the subject of “anti-Semitism,” and clarifying that Torba “doesn’t speak for me or my campaign,” Mastriano’s words fall short of what is necessary to put the minds of Pennsylvania’s Jews at ease given the breadth and frequency of Torba’s anti-Jewish verbal assaults -- and Mastriano’s use of this situation to wage a political attack is unseemly.

“Unfortunately, Mastriano referred to Torba’s frequent Jewish-centric attacks as “extremist speech” rather than hate speech,” said Steve Feldman, executive director of Greater Philadelphia ZOA. “Jew-hatred is a particular form of millennia-old hatred. It is not mere universal “extremist speech.” Torba’s statements include his assertion that Jews – due to their religious beliefs – are unfit to hold elective office in America.

Feldman stated: “Jew-hatred is not and must never be or made into a partisan issue. Whether it is committed by Republicans, Democrats, someone affiliated with another party or someone who has no political affiliation whatsoever – it is despicable, has no place in American society and should not be given quarter in any corner. The goal of Jew-hatred is to inflict pain on Jewish People – already the most preyed-upon group in America. There must be zero tolerance of it, and it must be immediately and clearly condemned by all decent people in every instance and in every form that it takes.”

“That Sen. Mastriano chose to equate Jew-hatred – which has led to the genocide, pogroms and persecution of Jewish People for thousands of years right up to this moment – with inflation, “lockdowns” and mask mandates is discouraging,” Feldman added.

“Doug Mastriano states only he rejects any form of antisemitism -- he expressed no regret about advertising and supporting a platform, Gab, whose CEO, Andrew Torba, is an antisemite,” said Stuart Pavilack, executive director of Pittsburgh ZOA “Torba has repeatedly stated that this movement that he promotes does not want Jews or nonbelievers to be a part of it.”

Pavilack added that “Torba’s racist views and demands that Jews embrace Christianity in order to be accepted are an affront to Judaism.”

Torba, the founder and CEO of the social media platform Gab, has made a number of recent vile and outlandish anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist and anti-Israel statements and claims (detailed below) -- ranging from his assertion that Jews cannot hold public office in the United States, which he called “a Christian nation” -- only Christians can; to his claim that there is a Mossad/Israeli conspiracy to corrupt and pervert Christianity; to his assertion that Christians should not be pro-Israel or “bend over backwards for a foreign country and for people who hate our lord and savior Jesus Christ and reject him as the savior and the messiah.” Torba has stated repeatedly that Jews must “repent and accept Jesus Christ as their lord and savior.”

In May, Mastriano participated in a 16-minute video with Torba for Torba’s Gab platform that remains on Gab. It was a chummy interview with Mastriano smiling throughout. Midway through, Mastriano praised Torba for creating and maintaining Gab. “Thank G-d for what you’ve done.”

Referencing pre-COVID situations in America and “all this stuff’s going wrong in our country,” Mastriano claimed: “This has gone too far. It has gotten this far because so many of us on the Christian side have stood off on the sidelines. ... So many Christians are kind of like Pontius Pilate washing their hands and saying ‘Oh, It’s G-d’s will.’”

Earlier in the interview, Torba – fully aware of his own offensive statements -- told Mastriano: “You may even get called a name for doing this interview with me so brace yourself with that.”

The Zionist Organization of America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and as such does not endorse candidates. We are nonpartisan. However, it is our duty to call out and combat Jew-hatred and those who espouse it and incite it, as well as those who participate in anti-Zionist and anti-Israel activity. Additionally, we challenge candidates – no matter from which party or what office they are seeking – to sever their relationships with those who espouse or incite Jew-hatred or make anti-Jewish or anti-Zionist epithets.

We call on all candidates to publicly, forcefully and unequivocally oppose Jew-hatred and anti-Zionist and anti-Israel rhetoric and activities. Failure to do so leads us to question their ability to govern all of their constituents fairly.

Though Mastriano said that he rejects “anti-Semitism,” we at ZOA want to know: Does Mastriano agree with and

support Torba's contentions? If he does not, we call on Mastriano to publicly say so. He must also affirmatively state that of course Jews can hold office; that of course Jews are welcome in the political conservative movement; and that the alliance between the United States and Israel is vital to both nations, and that he supports it.

Among Torba's other contentions – which he has broadcast in livestreams on his own Gab platform are:

- “[There is a controversy that Torda stated that] Jewish conservatives ... aren't welcome in our movement. Well no, not unless they repent and accept Jesus Christ as their lord and savior.”

“No, we don't want people who are atheists; we don't want people who are Jewish; we don't want people who are you know, non-believers, agnostic, whatever – this is an explicitly Christian movement because this is an explicitly Christian country. Now we're not saying that you know we're gonna deport all these people or whatever. You're free to stay here, right. You're not going to be forced to convert But, you're going to enjoy the fruits of living in a Christian society under Christian laws and under a Christian culture. ... “

- He continued in the same livestream: “We [Christians] are going to take dominion of this entire planet. ... Our generation of Christians is not buying dispensational Zionist lies. We do not have a pessimistic eschatology. What do I mean by that: We don't believe that this is the end times and satan is going to rule over this world and we should just wait it out to die, wait it out for Christ to come back and basically do nothing and get stepped on by the enemy.”

“We're [the younger generation] not believing the dispensational Zionist lies from the Scofield Reference Bible anymore. It's done. That belief system; that pessimistic eschatology: It's done. The Boomers will be the last generation that bought into that lie. And we're gonna make sure of that.”

- Returning to the subject of non-Christian conservatives, Torba said: “No: ... They're not allowed to have a prominent voice in our movement because they don't share our values. ... If you want to be involved in what G-d is doing in taking back our towns, our cities, our states, our legislatures and eventually our country, then you've gotta repent. There's a cost. You've gotta repent and accept Jesus Christ as our lord and savior. That's just the way it is. “

- On Jews being part of the movement that Torba champions, he stated:

“Go look up what the Talmud says Read what it says about our lord and savior and about Mary. ... These people do not share our world view; they do not share our faith. Therefore you should not be giving them your time, and money and attention. Your time, and money and attention should be going to G-d's people and to G-d's word.” ... [W]e need to get strong and unite as Christians and come together against this evil that we're facing.”

- He added of this movement: “Let me be clear: This is not a Judeo-Christian movement. This is a Christian movement explicitly Because those two terms are a contradiction.”

- In a separate livestream on Gab in response to criticism from the Anti-Defamation League's Jonathan Greenblatt, Torba doubled down on his attack against Jewish Americans, saying on video: “This is a Christian nation. Christians outnumber you by a lot. A lot. And we're not going to listen to 2 percent. You represent 2 percent of the country, OK? We're not bending the knee to the 2 percent anymore. The 98 percent of the rest of us — you know, 70, 75 percent of which are Christians, self-identifying Christians — we're not taking it anymore, bud. We are taking back our culture. We're taking back our country. We're taking back our government. So deal with it.”

“We have officials not only at the state level, not only at the federal level, but also at the local level. People who are running for school boards — Christian nationalists who are running for school board and by Christian nationalists, I mean like concerned Christian parents who are done, who are done, done with this, done, done being controlled and being told what we're allowed to do in our own country by a 2 percent minority or by people who hate our biblical worldview, hate our Christ, hate our Lord and savior. Done. It's over. So you better deal with it.”

<https://www.mediaite.com/news/gab-ceo-employs-anti-semitic-trope-in-response-to-adl-head-slamming-christian-nationalism-wont-be-bossed-around-by-2-minority/>

- Responding to criticism from MSNBC host Rachel Maddow about him, Torba said in a livestream:

“I don't care if you're Jewish, atheist, pagan, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Indian. I don't care and neither does G-d. If you accept Jesus Christ as your lord and savior and repent: You are my brother; you are my sister; you are a part of the kingdom of G-d.”

- Torba continued: “Yes, on the threat of people who are not Christian running and in power of a Christian country –

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yes, we are going to talk about this whether they are Jew or atheist or pagan or anything else – we’re going to continue talking about this because this is the United States of America and we have the First Amendment which allows us to talk about these things.”

“If you want to be part of a Christian movement – an explicitly Christian political, social and cultural movement, then you must be a Christian. ... There’s nothing hateful, there’s nothing controversial. You can be ethnically Jewish and accept Jesus as your lord and savior ... and be saved from eternal damnation. eternal damnation and have your sins forgiven.”

- He went on to assert: “American eschatology has been totally subverted for the past 150 years and it was subverted *“You know who subverted it.* And we’re gonna change that because It’s not what the Bible says; it’s not what the scripture says, and it’s a pessimistic, defeatist eschatology -- doomsday eschatology -- which is the reason that so many Christians in this country bend over backwards for a foreign country and for people who hate our lord and savior Jesus Christ and reject him as the savior and the messiah. That is going to end. That eschatology is the core of the problem in American Christianity, and we’re going to turn that on its head.”

...

- “We [Christians] have a shared enemy, and that enemy is the god of the state and the god of the secular rulers or the unbelieving rulers that we have over us. And we are going to peacefully, lawfully and constitutionally replace them – right? We’re going to replace them, and we’re going to put people in power who have biblical wisdom; who are true, authentic Christians; who fear god only; who aren’t blackmailed by some Mossad Israeli operation like [sic]Epstein. These are the people that we’re gonna put in power and those are the people we’re gonna bring out of power.”

<https://tv.gab.com/channel/a/view/watching-and-responding-to-rachel-maddows-62df6003661f3ff97d5ba03d>

- In a July 21 livestream broadcast on Gab, while criticizing Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, who Torba declared is “part of a den of vipers,” Torba said:

“They’re scared, folks. They’re incredibly scared and they should be, because Christians are waking up. Christians are no longer afraid of being called names for simply practicing our faith, talking about theological issues. Listen: Jews and Christians have been going back and forth on theological views for 2,000 years. It doesn’t mean that I hate an entire race of people because I want to discuss theological issues that have been debated for the past 2,000 years publicly. I’m sorry if you don’t like that. I’m sorry if you don’t like that I’m waking people up and getting Christians engaged in the word of god and making them question the things that they have been told for decades now: These lies of dispensational Zionism that are just like a cancer throughout American Christianity. I’m sorry if you don’t like that. But I’m not gonna stop.”

<https://tv.gab.com/channel/a/view/gab-press-conference-on-josh-shapiro-62d97f25fcf7d3ab0e85bf53>

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