



PROTECTING OUR  
JEWISH COMMUNITY

Academic tells university event  
Jewish students' campus fears  
are 'propaganda'

Swastika and KKK graffiti spotted on  
University of Kent campus

University have removed the graffiti

Jewish students in Sheffield condemn swastika graffiti  
found in student areas

The swastika is a symbol of pure ha

Anti-semitism row in Essex  
University student society vote

News

Cambridge Union audience laughs at  
anti-Semitic 'joke' by Malaysian prime  
minister

Warwick professor accused of spreading antisemitic  
ideas in lectures

News

Bristol University accused of failing to  
heed Jewish students' complaints

ism in the Labour Party as an "Israeli lobby kind of idea"

'Offensive' student T-shirts are 'hate  
speech'

Essex University lecturer accused of  
antisemitic Facebook posts

Undermines to reject the accepted definition of

CAMPUS ANTISEMITISM  
IN BRITAIN 2018-2020

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## FOREWORD

For many students, university is their first experience of independence. Many will leave the comfort of their homes, their families, and their communities. Several have described this as the bursting of their Jewish bubble that has surrounded them their entire life. This can be a nerve-wracking time for many young people. But rest assured; a whole new family and community are waiting to greet them at their new adopted home. From forming friendships that will last a lifetime, to creating memories that they will always cherish, university is a time for discovery and learning. For Jewish students, life is currently good on UK campuses. Jewish societies are thriving and growing; they are organising amazing events such as Friday Night Dinners, celebrations of festivals and exciting guest speakers.

However, Jewish students, just like the general Jewish community, know that this friendly environment can change in a second. Jewish students can never be complacent. Antisemitism on campus continues to grow, universities and academics are still fighting against the IHRA definition of antisemitism and online hate continues increasing.

Jewish students are being failed by many universities. Every student has a right to study with respect and dignity without fear of discrimination. When antisemitism does arise, students need to feel protected by their universities, with proper investigation launched and action taken. As this report shows, this is not currently the case at every university.

Nonetheless, this will not stop Jewish students, it only emboldens them. Jewish students do not hide from these challenges but face them head on. In the past two years, Jewish students have held universities and vice-chancellors to account ensuring that they do not sweep antisemitism under the carpet; led campaigns for the adoption of the IHRA definition; held protests outside trustee meetings; won debates inside student unions; organised petitions and made sure they will never be silenced. Both current and future community leaders are being created every year on campus.

This work could not be done without the support, advice and protection that CST provides. Jewish students are safer on campus because of the work that CST delivers, from ensuring that students know how to organise events safely, to providing protection and the invaluable support when students are the victims of antisemitism.

I am proud of the close relationship that the Union of Jewish Students has with CST. Together, we will never rest until antisemitism is eradicated from our society, until all universities are protecting and supporting their Jewish students and that their basic needs, like the supply of kosher food on campus, are being met. The Jewish students and societies I have worked with, across the country, show me that the future is bright. Jewish students will continue to thrive, will continue to succeed, and will always ensure that come Friday night, they can gather together as one community sharing stories over a bowl of chicken soup (or a veggie alternative!). I implore all those who read this report to act upon its recommendations.

Bradley Langer

Campaigns Organiser  
Union of Jewish Students

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- University is a great and exciting place for Jewish students, full of activities, opportunities and engagements. The vast majority of Jewish students have a strongly positive experience at university, and there are thriving Jewish student communities across the country. However, **antisemitism does affect Jewish students and staff, and it is essential that universities have the appropriate and necessary procedures in place to deal with their concerns in a timely, adequate and sensible manner.**
- This report, which focuses on the past two academic years, uncovers a much higher number of antisemitic incidents on UK campuses than had previously been reported. It shows that **in some instances, university staff, academics and student societies were themselves responsible for antisemitism on campus, and that university complaints processes are sometimes inadequate.** In one case reported to CST, a Jewish student at the University of Warwick was even subjected to disciplinary investigation after he complained that a member of academic staff had made an antisemitic comment in a lecture. This was later dropped with no action taken against the student.
- CST recorded a total of **58 university incidents in the 2018/2019 academic year and 65 university incidents in the 2019/2020 academic year**, making a total of 123 antisemitic incidents during the two years covered by this report. **The total for 2019/2020 is the highest total CST has ever recorded in a single academic year**, despite the year being cut short as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Previously, CST had recorded university incidents by calendar year, and logged 25 such incidents in 2018; 22 in 2017; and 41 in 2016. **The significant increase in university incident totals since 2018 reflects a sustained drive by CST's campus team to encourage students to report antisemitic incidents.** This increase in the number of university incidents therefore needs to be seen within the context of increased awareness among university students of the need and importance of reporting incidents to CST, as well as the rising levels of antisemitism in the UK more widely. It is likely that more incidents remain unreported.
- This is the first time CST has published a report specifically on antisemitism in, or related to, Higher Education. **It has been produced to encourage Jewish students to report and challenge antisemitism where it exists, and to show universities the need to establish appropriate procedures to deal with this type of discrimination within their institutions.** CST encourages all students who experience antisemitism to report it to CST.
- **University incidents in this report include any antisemitic incident reported to CST that involves students, staff, student bodies or academics at a UK university.** These include incidents that take place on-campus, and incidents that take place off-campus but where the incident relates to the victim's student, academic or staff status, such as desecration of private student accommodation, incidents in night clubs known to be popular with students, or antisemitism directed at organisations whose work is focused on universities, such as the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) or University Jewish Chaplaincy. It also includes online incidents that fit this description.
- **University incidents recorded by CST are categorised by geographical location as well as by institution**, given that several incidents take place in town centres of places with multiple universities, or in places where

there is a joint Jewish Society for more than one campus. Throughout the two-year period covered by this report, CST recorded incidents from 34 different towns and cities across the UK.

- **The six cities with five or more recorded incidents throughout this period were Coventry (with 14 incidents, 13 of which took place at the University of Warwick), Birmingham (13), Leeds (11), Nottingham (nine), Bristol (seven) and Leicester (five).** With the exception of Coventry and Leicester, these cities represent the locations with the largest Jewish student populations, and therefore **follow the national trend towards more incidents in areas with larger Jewish populations.**
- **CST recorded four instances of Assault**, two of which were in the 2018/2019 academic year and two in the 2019/2020 academic year. These took place in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester.
- **There were seven university incidents recorded by CST in the category of Damage and Desecration to Jewish property.** This included damage to, or theft of, two mezuzahs (a small box placed on the doorpost of Jewish homes, containing a prayer scroll) and two swastikas drawn on Jewish property.
- **Five Threats took place in the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years**, three of which were online and two of which took place off-campus. None of these five resulted in physical harm to Jewish students.
- **Eighty-Seven per cent of the antisemitic incidents recorded by CST during this two-year period were in the Abusive Behaviour category**, totalling 107 incidents. Examples of Abusive Behaviour include antisemitic messages sent in group chats, antisemitic emails received by Jewish societies (JSocs), and antisemitic comments made by students

in class, on nights out and at speaker events. This total also includes 16 instances where swastikas or antisemitic messages were graffitied, painted, or carved on property that was not Jewish-owned or associated with Jewish students and staff.

- There were no recorded university incidents of Extreme Violence or mass-mailed antisemitic Literature in this period.
- The highest monthly totals of university incidents recorded by CST in the academic year 2018/2019 were **March 2019, when CST recorded the single highest monthly total with 14 university incidents, and October 2018, when nine university incidents were recorded.** The 14 incidents in March 2019 took place in 12 different universities and were mostly online. The two months with the highest number of university antisemitic incidents in the 2019/2020 academic year were November and December 2019, with 13 incidents in November and 12 in December. The absence of peak months in the second half of 2019/2020 is possibly due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in university activities being cancelled or transferred online.
- **Forty-one per cent of university incidents recorded during these two years took place online**, with 51 such incidents recorded. The vast majority of online incidents fall into the Abusive Behaviour category, with the remaining three incidents categorised by CST as Threats.
- **Thirty-nine university antisemitic incidents took place on-campus and 33 took place off-campus** (not including the 51 online incidents described above). CST defines on-campus incidents as any antisemitic incident that occurs within university premises, including at events hosted on campus, in lectures and seminars, and in university-owned halls of residence. Off-campus incidents include any offline incident that

takes place outside the university premises, but where the incident relates to the victim's student, staff, or academic status.

- CST recorded 14 university antisemitic incidents perpetrated by staff, including four at the University of Warwick, two at the University of Leeds and two at the University of Nottingham.** Incidents perpetrated by members of staff can often involve a strong power imbalance between victim and perpetrator, if a Jewish student needs to complain about an academic who is in a position of direct authority over them, or if they are expected to report concerns to the same institution that they are complaining about. This can be intimidating and, when handled inadequately, can leave the victim in a vulnerable position.
- Throughout the two academic years covered in this report, **CST recorded 10 antisemitic incidents perpetrated by student union officers or student societies.** This refers to incidents where the alleged perpetrators were elected officers or staff in a university's students' union (regardless of whether they were full or part time officers), or were National Union of Students (NUS) full time, part time or voluntary officers (such as members of its former National Executive Committee, currently known as the National Scrutiny Council). This also includes antisemitic incidents perpetrated by students' union-affiliated clubs or societies (such as incidents perpetrated by members of a society or club's executive committee in their capacity as an executive committee member), or antisemitic events organised by a students' union-affiliated club or society.
- An issue that often creates anxiety among Jewish students is when universities or student societies host individuals or organisations that have been associated with antisemitic remarks in the past. In the two academic years in question, **CST recorded 15 instances in which an organisation or speaker fitting this description was invited to speak on campus.** These events do not fit CST's strict definition of an antisemitic incident (as they involve antisemitic comments made at some point in the past rather than during the period under review), and therefore are not included in the overall total of 123 antisemitic incidents in this report.
- Whereas some institutions have provided strong support to Jewish students, **some universities have failed in their duty to investigate and adjudicate complaints about antisemitism fairly, objectively and quickly.** The University of Essex provides an example of good practice, having dealt with antisemitic posts made by one of their professors in an effective manner, therefore minimising the impact on Jewish students. Contrastingly, the University of Warwick and the University of Bristol have failed to address Jewish students' concerns seriously and in a timely manner. Detailed case studies of all three are provided in this report.
- CST recommends that universities should adapt their **procedures for addressing antisemitism and handling complaints in the following ways: allow third party reporting; use the IHRA definition of antisemitism; provide an adequate time frame in which to respond to complaints; have processes in place to gather evidence of antisemitism when it is reported; provide an independent process for complaints that involve alleged antisemitism from a member of staff.**



# INTRODUCTION

## Jewish student life

There are roughly 8,500 Jewish students with approximately 67 Jewish societies across the UK, and life on campus for those students is extremely diverse. The most popular university cities for Jewish students are Birmingham, Nottingham, Leeds, Bristol and London. This is mainly because of the number of facilities available for Jewish students (such as Kosher accommodation on campus), vibrant and active Jewish societies, and easy travel back home.

Typically, life for Jewish students on campus is exciting and full of lots of opportunities for engagement with other students, their university, the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), and other Jewish organisations. Jewish societies hold a wide range of events, including weekly Friday night dinners, lunch and learns, socials, speaker opportunities and many more. Universities with bigger Jewish societies tend to have a greater variety of events, whereas smaller Jewish societies usually focus on organising Friday night dinners and occasional social events. The way and frequency with which Jewish students engage with Jewish activities while at university is in large part determined by the size of the Jewish society, the number of external Jewish organisations active in the university, and the number of Jewish students on campus.

Most Jewish students will not encounter any antisemitism during their time at university. However, antisemitism occurs frequently enough that it can sometimes present a significant challenge



for Jewish students at some campuses. This is especially the case when antisemitism is connected to broader political disagreements and movements, such as debates about Israel and the Middle East, arguments over antisemitism in the Labour party, or in the expression of conspiracy theories. Where this antisemitism has taken place, Jewish societies have been active in speaking out against it, raising complaints with the relevant university and students' union, supporting the students affected, and reporting it to UJS and CST.



## What is CST?

Community Security Trust (CST) is a UK charity that advises and represents the Jewish community on matters of antisemitism, terrorism, policing and security. CST received charitable status in 1994 and is recognised by government and the Police as a best practice model of a minority-community security organisation. CST provides security advice and training for Jewish schools, synagogues and Jewish communal organisations and gives assistance to those bodies that are affected by antisemitism. CST also assists and supports individual members of the Jewish community who have been affected by antisemitism and antisemitic incidents. All this work is provided at no charge. An essential part of CST's work involves representing the Jewish community to police, legislative and policy-making bodies and providing people inside and outside the Jewish community with information to combat antisemitism. CST has recorded antisemitic incidents in the United Kingdom since 1984.

CST works alongside the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) and other campus-based organisations to support students, academics and others who experience antisemitism in a Higher Education setting. CST's campus team gives advice to Jewish students and Jewish Societies on campus regarding how to organise events safely. CST also works with different organisations to teach students about topics relating to antisemitism and extremism on campus.

## CST's message to Jewish students

Universities offer multiple opportunities for you to engage with your Jewish identity in varied and thrilling ways. This is an exciting time in which you will be able to meet students from across the country and beyond, and take part in multiple religious, social, political and educational activities of your choice. Although most Jewish students have a student life filled with positive experiences, antisemitism is unfortunately a reality in UK Higher Education institutions, and CST and UJS are here to help you through it when it happens.

Reporting antisemitism needn't be an intimidating experience, but this can sometimes be the case, especially if the person you wish to complain about is an academic, staff member or students' union officer in a position of power and authority. However, it is only through widespread reporting that universities can work towards tackling antisemitism within their institutions. CST and UJS can support and assist you throughout the process by providing pastoral care, helping you to report the incident to the necessary bodies, or going with you to meetings with different parties where possible and appropriate.





## Why have we produced this report?

CST has produced this report to shed light on the antisemitism experienced by some Jewish students in British universities. This report details the amount and types of antisemitic incidents reported to CST over the last two academic years and addresses the variations in some universities' responses to such incidents. Worryingly, some universities have failed to take appropriate action in a timely manner when they have received complaints of antisemitism from students or staff. This report is focused exclusively on antisemitism that has taken place in Higher Education institutions, or that has affected students and staff involved at those institutions.

In recent years, a series of reports have been published regarding experiences of antisemitism and other types of discrimination in UK universities. The Institute for Jewish Policy Research's 2011 *National Jewish Student*

Survey found that 42 per cent of respondents had either witnessed or been subject to antisemitism since the start of that academic year.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in 2016 the Institute of Jewish Policy Research published their *Searching for Community* report, a qualitative study into the opinions and attitudes of Jewish students in five different cities, which suggested that while most students encountered little antisemitism in their day to day lives, antisemitism and anti-Zionism are very much present in the university context and "discourse around Israel, both in student politics and sometimes in the classroom, is often toxic and even threatening".<sup>2</sup> In addition, the inquiry into racial harassment in UK Higher Education institutions published in October 2019 by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission revealed that 24 per cent of students from an ethnic minority background and nine per cent of white students experienced racial harassment at university, equating to 13 per cent of the overall student body.<sup>3</sup> CST hopes that this report will add to this existing pool of evidence of discrimination in UK Higher Education and Further Education institutions, and contribute towards positive change for all students in the UK.



1 <https://www.jpr.org.uk/documents/Key%20findings%20from%20the%202011%20National%20Jewish%20Student%20Survey.pdf>

2 <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=3048>

3 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged.pdf>

## INCIDENT STATISTICS

### What is an antisemitic incident?

CST defines an antisemitic incident as any malicious act aimed at Jewish people, organisations or property, where there is evidence that the act has antisemitic motivation or content, or that the victim was targeted because they are (or are believed to be) Jewish. This is a narrower definition than that used by the criminal justice system, which defines an antisemitic hate incident as *“Any non-crime incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s race/religion or perceived race/religion”*.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism<sup>4</sup> is a useful guide in identifying the different types of antisemitic language that may be used in an incident. Antisemitic incidents can take several forms, including physical attacks on people or property, verbal or written abuse, hate mail (including antisemitic emails), antisemitic leaflets and posters or abuse on social media.

An antisemitic incident is labelled by CST as a *university* incident if it relates to any student, student body, staff or academic at a UK university. This includes online incidents, on-campus incidents, and off-campus incidents where the incident relates to the victim’s student, academic or staff status, such as the desecration of private student accommodation, incidents in student night clubs or night clubs frequented by students where the victim is a student, academic, or member of staff, or antisemitism directed at campus-focused organisations, such as UJS or University Jewish Chaplaincy.

University incidents recorded by CST are analysed by location as well as by institution, as many incidents take place in town centres of

places with multiple universities. Nottingham, for example, has students from both the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University who frequent similar spaces. In places such as Leeds, there is a joint Jewish Society for more than one institution. This methodology does not include London, where a lot of universities are spread over a large geographical area, and therefore a single total for the number of incidents in London would be less meaningful.

### National antisemitic trends over this period

The university antisemitic incidents discussed in this report have occurred during a period when recorded hate crime in the UK in general has increased across the board.<sup>5</sup> This wider trend is echoed in CST’s annual antisemitic incident statistics, with record annual totals reported in 2016 (1,375 incidents), 2017 (1,420), 2018 (1,690) and 2019 (1,813).<sup>6</sup> Since 2016, allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party meant that the subject of Jews and anti-Jewish racism were prominent in news and politics. Antisemitic incident spikes in CST’s general statistics were observed at the specific moments that this discourse was especially relevant. More broadly, political debates around the European Union referendum in June 2016 brought issues and questions of national and ethnic identity, racism, nationalism, Britishness, immigration, and hate crime more firmly into public debate.

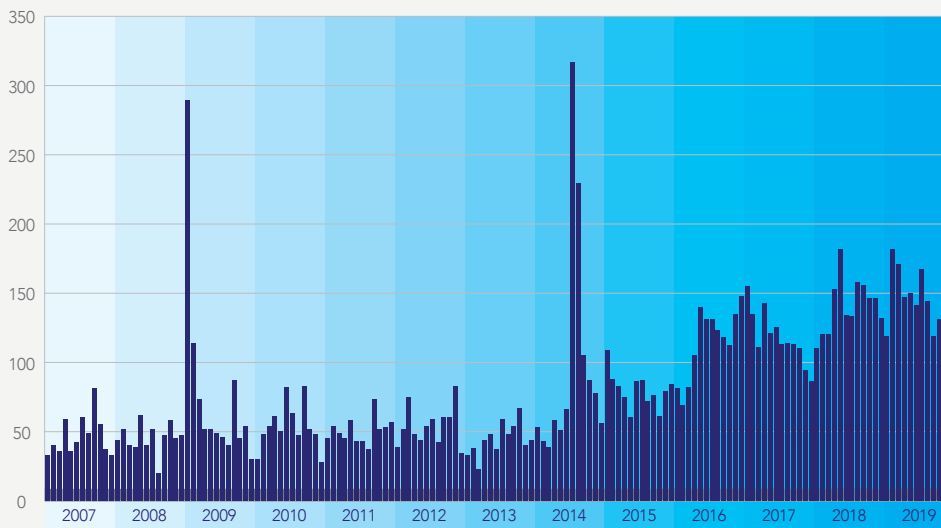
These social and political factors are likely to have contributed, directly and indirectly, to the sustained high levels of antisemitic incidents recorded nationally by CST since 2016. Reports of university incidents, included in the above yearly totals and explored in detail below, are unlikely to be isolated from this broader phenomenon.

<sup>5</sup> Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018/19 (London: Home Office, 2019)

<sup>6</sup> CST Antisemitic Incident Reports: <https://cst.org.uk/publications/cst-publications/antisemitic-incident-reports>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS, MONTH BY MONTH, 2007-2019



This graph shows monthly totals of all national antisemitic incidents recorded by CST.

### Antisemitism in UK universities during this period

CST recorded a total of 58 incidents in the 2018/2019 academic year and 65 incidents in the 2019/2020 academic year. These are the highest and second-highest totals of antisemitic university incidents recorded by CST in a single academic year. Previously, CST had recorded university incidents by calendar year, and logged 25 such incidents in 2018<sup>7</sup>; 22 in 2017<sup>8</sup>; and 41 in 2016<sup>9</sup>. The significant increase in university incident totals since 2018 reflects a sustained drive by CST's campus team to encourage students to report antisemitic incidents. This increase in the number of university incidents therefore needs to be seen within the context of increased awareness among university students of the need and importance of reporting incidents to CST, as well as the rising levels of antisemitism in the UK more widely.

It is particularly notable that the total for 2019/20 is higher than that of 2018/2019, considering that the 2019/2020 academic year was cut short by

the COVID-19 pandemic.

In March 2020, the country was put under national lockdown, meaning in-person lectures, seminars, and tutorials, as well as other campus activities, were either suspended or transferred online. Throughout this period of national lockdown (mid-March 2020 – mid-June 2020) CST recorded a total of seven university incidents, all of which took place online.

The 123 incidents recorded by CST throughout the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years were spread over 34 cities. The six cities with five or more recorded incidents throughout this period were Coventry (14, 13 of which took place at the University of Warwick), Birmingham (13), Leeds (11), Nottingham (nine), Bristol (seven), and Leicester (five). These numbers need to be seen in the context of the number of Jewish students in each institution. With the exception of Coventry and Leicester, these cities represent the locations with the largest Jewish student populations, and therefore follow the national trend towards more incidents in areas with larger Jewish populations.

7 <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/2/9/Incidents%20Report%202018%20-%20web.1549538710.pdf>

8 <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/a/b/IR17.1517308734.pdf>

9 <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/b/e/Incidents%20Report%202016.1486376547.pdf>

## INCIDENT CATEGORIES

CST classifies antisemitic incidents by six distinct categories: Extreme Violence, Assault, Damage and Desecration to Jewish property, Threats, Abusive Behaviour, and mass-produced antisemitic Literature. The definitions of each one, with totals and examples of university antisemitic incidents recorded during the period covered by this report, are given below.<sup>10</sup>

### Extreme Violence

Incidents of Extreme Violence include any attack potentially causing loss of life or grievous bodily harm (GBH). CST did not record any event of Extreme Violence in the 2018/2019 or 2019/2020 academic years.

### Assault

Incidents of Assault include any physical attack against a person or people, which does not pose a threat to their life or cause GBH, but instead may be considered actual bodily harm (ABH) or common assault. This includes attempted assault, even if it fails; and throwing objects at Jews, including where the object misses the target.

CST recorded four instances of assault, one each in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester. Two of these took place in the 2018/2019 academic year, and the other two took place in the 2019/2020 academic year.

<sup>10</sup> A more detailed explanation of the six antisemitic incident categories can be found in the CST leaflet *Definitions of Antisemitic Incidents*, available on the CST website: [www.cst.org.uk](http://www.cst.org.uk)

### Assault: Jeremy Corbyn protest at the University of Bristol

On 9 December 2019, Jeremy Corbyn MP, then leader of the Labour Party, visited the University of Bristol as part of his general election campaign. Jewish students on campus attended the event to protest about antisemitism within Labour. They reported to CST that they were verbally and physically assaulted. A Jewish student present explained that they were called “a filthy zio”, “a puppet of the Zionist lobby” and “selfish”, were “repeatedly asked who was paying [them] to be there”,<sup>11</sup> and told that they “should go back to where [they] belong”.<sup>12</sup>

Students also reported that they were physically attacked, with people forcibly trying to take their placards from them.<sup>13</sup> In a statement about the incident, Bristol Chaplaincy claimed it was “absolutely shocked and saddened to hear about the physical and verbal antisemitic abuse that Jewish students from Bristol University were subjected to today at a Labour rally”.<sup>14</sup>



<sup>11</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/jewish-students-allegedly-assaulted-at-labour-rally-in-bristol-610606>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/jewish-students-protesting-corbyn-subjected-to-abuse-including-filthy-jew-1.494192>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/jewish-students-allegedly-assaulted-at-labour-rally-in-bristol-610606>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/BristolJewishChaplains/posts/1066289863712596>

## Damage & Desecration to Jewish property

This category includes any physical attack directed against Jewish-owned property, or property that is perceived to be connected to Jews, which is not life-threatening. This includes the daubing of antisemitic slogans or symbols (such as swastikas) – including fixing stickers and posters – on Jewish property; and damage caused to property where it appears that the property has been specifically targeted because of its perceived Jewish connection. As this type of incident is usually only seen after the act has been completed, it is often very difficult to get any information about the perpetrators. Damage and Desecration to Jewish property was the second most prominent incident category, with seven incidents of this kind throughout the two academic years. This included two instances where a mezuzah (a small box placed on the doorpost of Jewish homes, containing a prayer scroll) was pulled off, and two instances where a swastika was drawn on Jewish property.

### Damage and Desecration of Jewish property: swastika on Jewish student's car

In December 2019 a Jewish student walked outside to find a swastika marked in the icy window of his car. The student posted about this incident in 'Fab n Fresh', a Facebook group used by Birmingham university students.

His post was seen by CST volunteers, who reported the incident to CST, to Birmingham University's Jewish Society, and to police.



This image was sent to CST by a CST volunteer who obtained it from the Facebook group where it was posted.



## Threats

This category includes only direct antisemitic Threats, whether verbal or written. This would include potential Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) that are designed to be hoaxes, if they do not contain any explosive material.

Throughout the past two academic years, there were five incidents which fell under this category. Three of these were online and were made by individuals outside the UK, while the other two took place off-campus. None of them resulted in any harm to Jewish students.

### Threats: Vehicle swerves towards Jewish students in Manchester

In October 2019, a vehicle swerved towards Jewish students who were walking to the GE Centre in Manchester, where the Jewish Society hosts most of its events. While swerving towards the students, the driver yelled "Yiddo". This incident was reported to both CST and Manchester's Jewish Society.

## Abusive Behaviour

This category includes verbal and written antisemitic abuse. The verbal abuse can be face to face or via telephone calls and voicemail messages. The category also includes antisemitic emails, text messages, tweets and social media comments, as well as targeted antisemitic letters (that is, one-off letters aimed at and sent to a specific individual), irrespective of whether the recipient is Jewish. This is different from a mass mailing of antisemitic leaflets, pamphlets or group emails, which is dealt with by the separate Literature category. Antisemitic graffiti on non-Jewish property is also included in the Abusive Behaviour category.

There were 107 Abusive Behaviour university incidents throughout the two academic years covered by this report, comprising 87 per cent of the total. Examples of Abusive Behaviour include antisemitic messages sent in group chats, antisemitic emails received by Jewish societies, and antisemitic comments made by students in class, on nights out, and at speaker events. There were also 16 incidents reported to CST where swastikas or antisemitic messages were graffitied, painted, or carved on non-Jewish campus-related property.

### Abusive Behaviour: White t-shirt parties

White t-shirt parties are university socials at which students wear a white t-shirt for other people to write things on. This has been a popular type of event for student nights in recent years. At the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year, members of the University of Plymouth's Conservative Society were reported to have written offensive and antisemitic comments on several members' t-shirts at a white t-shirt party.<sup>15</sup> This was followed by similar reports involving Lancaster University's Snowsports Society,<sup>16</sup> Newcastle University's Mechanical Engineering Society,<sup>17</sup> and Coventry University's dodgeball team,<sup>18</sup> all of whom were reported to have had comments of a similar nature written on members' t-shirts during these parties.

During the 2019/20 academic year, "I'm a Nazi" was written on a student's high-vis jacket while on a night out in Leicester,<sup>19</sup> and "Hitler wanted my kind alive" was written on a white t-shirt on a different night at the same university.<sup>20</sup> At a different party, a student at Edge Hill University,

who later won the Student Union's presidential election, dressed as a Holocaust concentration camp prisoner.<sup>21</sup>

Most of these incidents came to light via the media, with CST's primary role being to ensure that Jewish students at each respective university were fully supported. Staff from CST contacted the Jewish societies affected to offer support and guidance to them and their members. The universities involved investigated the reports with the aim of identifying the perpetrators, with varying degrees of success. At Coventry University, the incident led to the suspension of the dodgeball team,<sup>22</sup> while at the University of Leicester<sup>23</sup> and Lancaster University<sup>24</sup> it led to a full banning of white t-shirt socials by the student unions.



<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-45735591>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-46205164>

<sup>17</sup> <https://thetab.com/uk/newcastle/2019/01/14/newcastle-university-students-wore-white-t-shirts-with-comments-about-the-holocaust-on-to-a-society-social-38714>

<sup>18</sup> <https://thetab.com/uk/coventry/2019/02/12/the-jews-deserved-it-cov-dodgeball-team-suspended-for-antisemitic-white-t-shirts-3880>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/shayna.wisetill/posts/1653323951470030>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/shayna.wisetill/posts/1653323951470030>

<sup>21</sup> <https://thetab.com/uk/2020/03/23/su-president-pictured-dressed-up-as-holocaust-survivor-at-house-party-149013>

<sup>22</sup> <https://thetab.com/uk/coventry/2019/02/12/the-jews-deserved-it-cov-dodgeball-team-suspended-for-antisemitic-white-t-shirts-3880>

<sup>23</sup> <https://thetab.com/uk/leicester/2019/10/22/white-t-shirt-socials-banned-due-to-offensive-writing-hitler-wanted-my-kind-alive-13120>

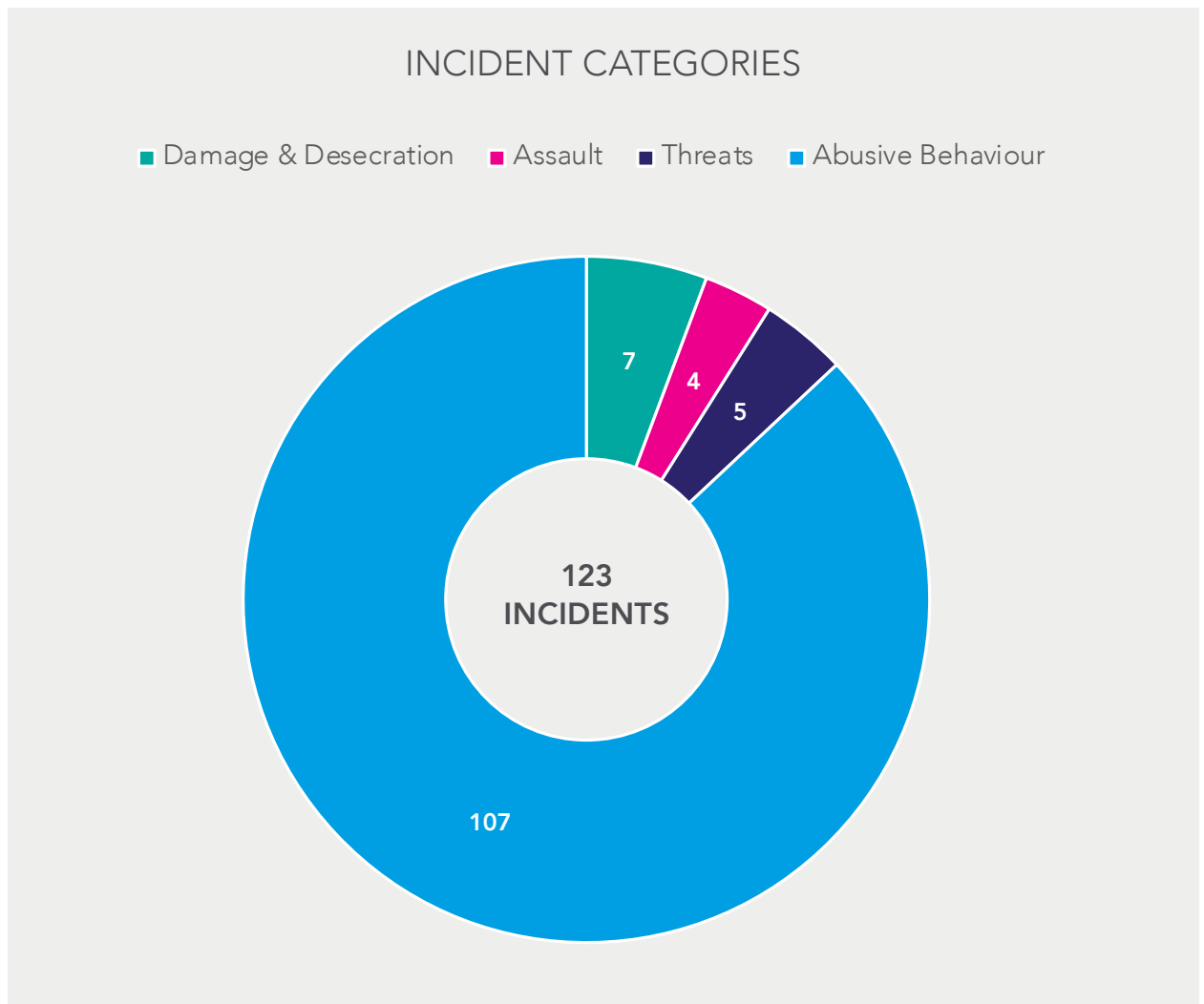
<sup>24</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/white-t-shirt-social-lancaster-university-students-nightclub-offensive-slogans-a9195231.html>

## Literature

This category covers mass-produced antisemitic literature that is distributed in multiple quantities. This can involve a single mass mailing or repeated individual mailings, but it must involve the multiple use of the same piece of literature in order to fall into this category. This is different from one-off cases of hate mail targeted at individual people or organisations, which would come under the category of either Abusive Behaviour or Threats (depending on the content). This category includes literature that is antisemitic in itself, irrespective of whether or not the recipient is Jewish, and cases where Jews are specifically targeted for malicious distribution, even if the material itself is not antisemitic. This would include, for instance, the mass mailing of neo-Nazi literature targeted at Jewish organisations or homes, even if the literature did not mention Jews. This category

also includes antisemitic emails that are sent to groups of recipients. The statistics for this category give no indication of the extent of distribution. A single mass mailing of antisemitic literature is only counted as one incident, although it could involve material being sent to dozens of recipients. Thus, the number of incidents reflects the number of offenders and their actions, rather than the number of victims.

CST did not record any university incidents in the Literature category in the 2018/2019 or 2019/2020 academic years.



## WHEN AND WHERE DID UNIVERSITY INCIDENTS HAPPEN?

The following sections include different ways of analysing the antisemitic university incidents reported to CST in the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years.

### Incidents per month

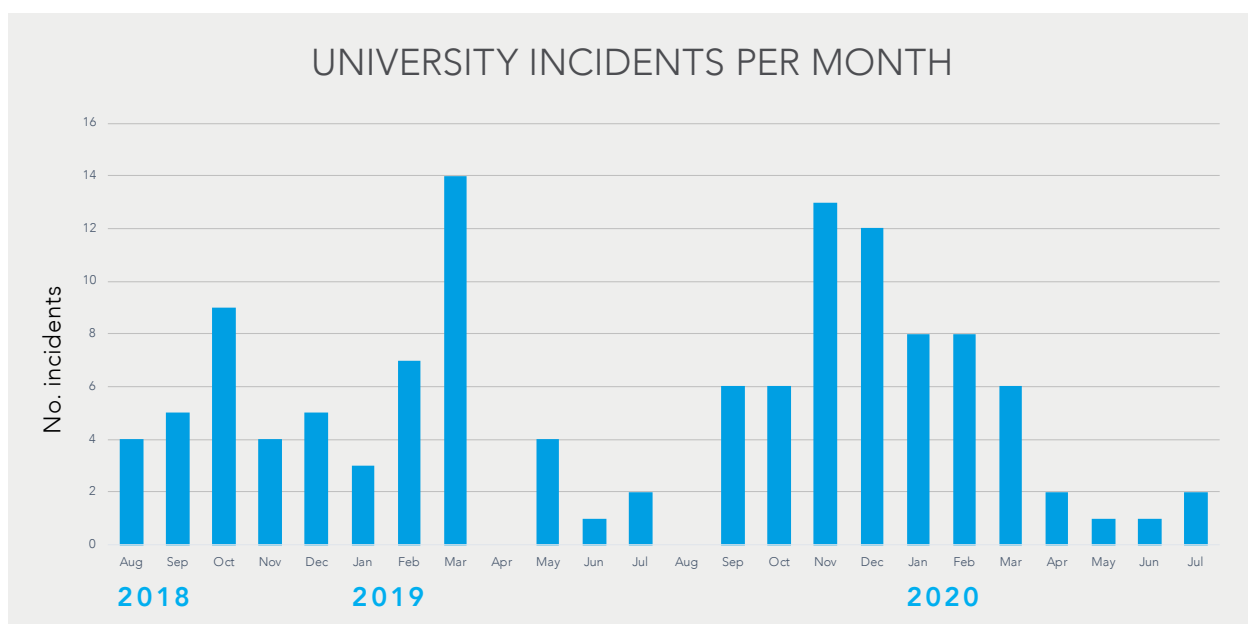
The monthly totals of university-related antisemitic incidents correlate, unsurprisingly, to those months when universities are most active. The academic year starts in late September or early October and runs through to the following summer, with holidays over Christmas and Easter that run roughly in parallel with school holidays. Most undergraduate students finish their academic year between late May and late June, while postgraduate students usually finish in late August.

Antisemitic incidents reported to CST in 2018/2019 appear to be concentrated around two peaks in October 2018 and March 2019, as shown in the below graph. The nine antisemitic incidents that took place in October 2018 were spread across seven different universities and they all fell into the Abusive Behaviour category. Three of these incidents were in relation to student parties (two of which took place at

white t-shirt parties), and another two incidents involved swastikas being graffitied.

March 2019 was the single highest monthly total in the two years covered by this report, with 14 antisemitic incidents across four different incident categories and 10 different cities. Nine of these incidents took place online, four on-campus, and one off-campus. Incidents in this month were driven by nine Abusive Behaviour incidents, which included antisemitic emails sent to student Jewish societies, antisemitic comments made on social media by student societies and students' union officers, and antisemitic events held at universities during this period.

In 2019/2020, antisemitic incidents recorded by CST were more spread out throughout the academic year, with a single, longer peak in November and December 2019. CST recorded 25 antisemitic incidents in these two months combined, spread across 10 different universities. In November 2019 CST recorded 13 antisemitic incidents, of which 11 were in the Abusive Behaviour category and two involved Damage and Desecration of Jewish property. These 13



incidents included antisemitic graffiti on Jewish and non-Jewish property, antisemitic messages sent to Jewish students and Jewish student societies, and antisemitic comments made by lecturers. Four of the incidents in this month took place in Birmingham, and a further three incidents took place at the University of Warwick.

In December 2019, CST recorded 12 antisemitic incidents, 10 of which fell into the Abusive Behaviour category, one fell under Assault, and one involved Damage and Desecration of Jewish Property. The University of Warwick had the most incidents during this period with four recorded incidents, followed by the University of Bristol with three incidents during this period. Five of the incidents in this month took place online on social media, five were on-campus and two were off-campus.

The relatively low monthly totals of antisemitic incidents after March 2019/2020 probably reflect the ceasing of university activities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

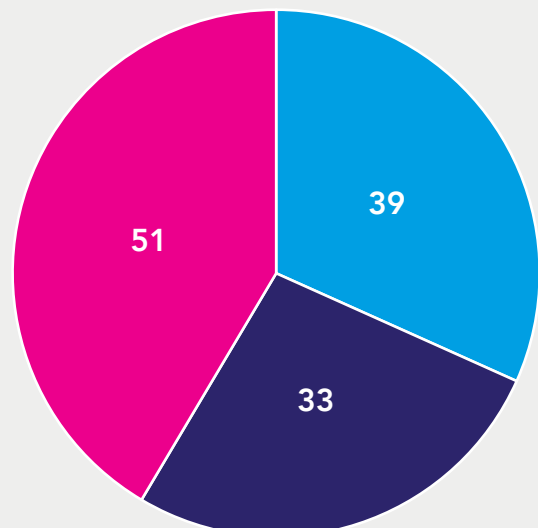
### Online, on-campus and off-campus incidents

University incidents can take place in one of three different physical settings: on-campus, off-campus, or online. It is important to distinguish between these different settings for university, as the effect on the victim can vary considerably. It can be more disturbing to experience antisemitism within a student's own university campus as opposed to when it occurs elsewhere, and an offline incident may be more directly intimidating than an online incident (although that is not always the case).

In the last two academic years, CST recorded 51 online incidents and 72 offline incidents. Online incidents included antisemitic messages sent via email, text or social media to Jewish students or Jewish Societies, antisemitic messages in group chats, and antisemitic online posts by students, staff, or students' union officers that have been reported to CST. All but three of the 51 online incidents reported to CST fell into the category of Abusive Behaviour; the other three were classified as Threats. Seven of these incidents were directed against the Union of Jewish Students, including antisemitic tweets and messages received on social media platforms. The university with most online incidents reported to CST was the University of Warwick, with a total of nine over the two-year period.

#### PHYSICAL SETTINGS OF INCIDENTS

■ On-campus ■ Off-campus ■ Online





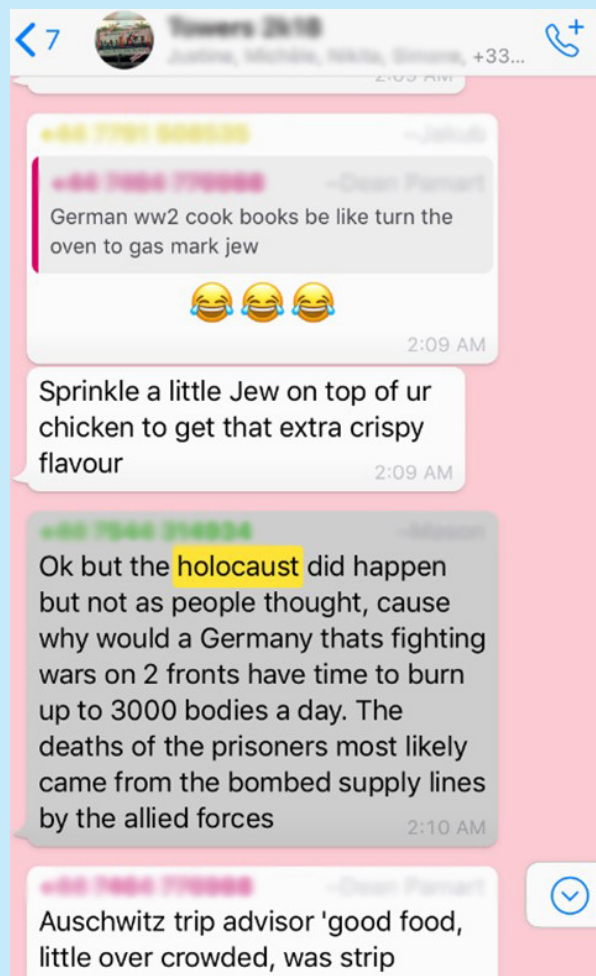
### Online incident:

#### Antisemitic comments in group chat

In September 2018 a series of antisemitic comments were made in a WhatsApp group chat for incoming students at the University of Essex who were staying at the Towers university accommodation. The group chat had around 80 members and it featured antisemitic comments, including "German ww2 cook books be like turn the oven to gas mark Jew", "sprinkle a little

*Jew on top of ur chicken to get that extra crispy flavour", and "why would Germany thats fighting wars on 2 fronts have time to burn up to 3000 bodies a day".*

A student who was in the chat reported these comments to the Proctor of Student Conduct, and to the university through their incidents reporting system. They were told that the incident would be fast-tracked.



Of the 72 offline incidents, CST recorded 39 on-campus incidents, and 33 off-campus incidents. CST defines on-campus incidents as any antisemitic incident that occurs within university premises, including at events hosted on campus, in lectures and seminars, and in university-owned halls of residence. Out of the 39 on-campus incidents recorded by CST in the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 academic years, 33 fell into the Abusive Behaviour category, two were Assaults, and four were Damage and Desecration of Jewish Property.

Conversely, an off-campus incident refers to an offline incident that took place outside the university premises, but where the incident relates to the victim's student, staff, or academic status. This includes incidents at clubs frequented by students or student parties hosted off-campus, as well as incidents in private student accommodation. In total, CST recorded 33 off-campus incidents in this two-year period, including 26 Abusive Behaviour incidents, two Assaults, three instances of Damage and Desecration to Jewish property, and two Threats.

### Off-campus incident: Antisemitic bouncer at nightclub in Nottingham

In October 2019, CST received a complaint from a Jewish student at the University of Nottingham about antisemitic comments made by a bouncer at a nightclub in Nottingham frequented by university students. According to the report, the bouncer made a series of antisemitic remarks to her and her friends while they were queuing to get into the nightclub. These included "You Jews should go in last", "You Jews are rich so just pay your way in" and "I don't care about all you Jews".<sup>25</sup>

The student submitted a complaint to CST, police, and the director of the nightclub, who immediately banned the bouncer from working at their venue. He was subsequently sacked by his agency.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> <https://thetab.com/uk/nottingham/2019/11/11/ocean-bouncer-fired-after-saying-you-jews-are-rich-so-just-pay-your-way-in-to-jewish-students-45613>

<sup>26</sup> <https://thetab.com/uk/nottingham/2019/11/11/ocean-bouncer-fired-after-saying-you-jews-are-rich-so-just-pay-your-way-in-to-jewish-students-45613>

## INCIDENT OFFENDERS

### Incidents by university staff

Incidents by university staff involve incidents where the offender is part of the academic body or professional staff at the university. This can include professors, assistant professors, lecturers and non-academic staff such as caretakers and building managers. Throughout the last two academic years, CST recorded 14 incidents by university staff, four of which took place at the University of Warwick, two at the University of Leeds, two at the University of Nottingham, and one each at the University of Bristol, the University of Birmingham, the University of Essex, the University of Exeter, the University of Glasgow and the University of Hertfordshire. All these incidents belong to the Abusive Behaviour category: eight of them took place on-campus, and seven online.

Incidents perpetrated by members of staff involve a strong power imbalance between victim and perpetrator, whereby Jewish students are expected to make a formal complaint about

a person who may have direct authority over them; and to do so by complaining to the same institution they are complaining about. Students are often hesitant to report this type of incident due to fears of having their grades affected as a result of the complaint. This is why a lot of students choose not to report incidents of which they are victim in class, or to only do so anonymously or via third parties such as CST or UJS.

However, it is vital for students to report antisemitic incidents perpetrated by university staff since, unlike students who graduate after a few years, staff are often present in the same university over extended periods of time and therefore antisemitic content in lectures or seminars, for instance, may be repeated with successive cohorts of students, potentially affecting a significant number of students if they are not reported.

### Incident by university staff: University of Birmingham

In the autumn term of 2019, CST received a report from a Birmingham University student regarding a guest lecture in the Liberal Arts and Natural Sciences course on the topic of "how to navigate propaganda and fake news".

According to the student, the professor started off the lecture by discussing time as a social construct. He used the existence of a Jewish calendar to explain how not everyone thinks we are in 2019. He then asked who in the class is Jewish, to which two Jewish students raised their hands. The student reported that following this, the professor started discussing the topic of truth, and asking how it is possible to know whether something is true or not. The student claims he used the Holocaust as an example, and stated that Hitler never wrote anything down, so David Irving is "arguably" a Holocaust denier, but that technically we have no proof of it.

The student says the professor then asked the other Jewish student in the class how many people died in the Holocaust. Following his response, the academic claimed that the Holocaust is very Jewish focused and that it should not be since other people were killed too.

Following this, the student reported that the class was split into groups for an exercise, whereby they were asked to come up with something that is in the news and which they are not sure is true. While the students were choosing their topics, the professor put an article on the board accusing then Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn of antisemitism.

According to the reporter, at the end of the class the professor gave suggestions about which newspapers to look at and which ones to avoid. He did so by using a statement made by the Chief Rabbi regarding antisemitism in the Labour Party as an example, and by comparing headlines in the *Times*, *Telegraph* and *Guardian*.

A formal complaint was never made to the university regarding the incident, but it was informally reported to the course leader, who was in attendance at the lecture, and who, according to the student, agreed to back their claims if a complaint was made. The student also met with a member of the department who explained the various options they had with regards to moving things forward, but the student decided not to proceed.

## Incidents by students' union officers or student societies

CST recorded 10 antisemitic incidents across the two academic years 2018/19 and 2019/20 in which the alleged perpetrator was an elected officer or staff member in a students' union (regardless of whether they were full or part time officers), or were National Union of Students (NUS) full time, part time or voluntary officers (such as members of its former National Executive Committee, currently known as the National Scrutiny Council). This also includes antisemitic incidents that directly involve students' union-affiliated clubs or societies (such as incidents perpetrated by members of a society or club's executive committee in their capacity as an executive committee member), or antisemitic events organised by a students' union-affiliated club or society.

The 10 antisemitic incidents of this type recorded by CST form eight per cent of the total of 123 university incidents recorded during this period. Five of these 10 incidents were perpetrated by students' union officers, one was perpetrated by a member of the National Union of Students' National Executive Committee, and four were perpetrated by student clubs or societies.

### Incident by students' union officers or student societies: Chair of the University of Bristol's Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) network

On 18 April 2019, CST received a report from a Jewish student at the University of Bristol claiming that he had been subject to online abuse by the students' union incoming Chair of the Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) network. In an online exchange in 2018 on *Bistruth*, an anonymous confessions page for Bristol students, the future Chair of the BME network had allegedly told the Jewish student to "be like Israel and cease to exist". The Jewish student submitted a complaint to his students' union

who, following an investigation, said that the comments "were found to be antisemitic, and in addition to receiving an official warning about his future conduct, a series of recommendations have been made" for the incoming BME officer.<sup>27</sup> They also stated that "Bristol SU is committed to tackling racism and antisemitism on campus. We uphold the IHRA definition of antisemitism and will ensure that all SU officers and chairs of networks receive antisemitism training. We will also reach out to Jewish students to make sure their concerns are heard and addressed".<sup>28</sup>

The incoming Chair of the BME network issued an apology, stating "I wholeheartedly apologise to [the victim], Jewish students at the university, and the wider Jewish community for these ignorant and offensive comments", and said that "I want to continue to grow my understanding of antisemitism and the different forms it takes and will undertake antisemitism training as part of this. I will do everything I can to show that these comments do not represent my character and commit to creating a more welcoming environment for minorities in the work I do next year, starting with myself".<sup>29</sup> He was allowed to remain in his position.

*I never see you even try to contribute anything. You just always come with some hella smarmy, asinine [redacted]. So please, be like Israel and cease to exist.*

Just now Like Reply

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/articles/statement-on-antisemitism>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/articles/statement-on-antisemitism>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/articles/statement-on-antisemitism>



## EXTERNAL SPEAKERS AND ORGANISATIONS ON CAMPUS

An issue that often creates anxiety for Jewish students is when universities or student societies host individuals or organisations who have been associated with, or accused of, antisemitism in the past. In the academic years of 2018/19 and 2019/20, CST recorded 15 instances where speakers or organisations that had previously been associated with antisemitic views or statements were invited to speak on campus. These invitations are usually provided by student societies, although there have been some cases where university departments have co-hosted such meetings. These events are not included in the total of 123 antisemitic university incidents recorded by CST for this report as they do not fit CST's strict definition of an antisemitic incident (see p.10), but they are nonetheless an important part of the wider story of University-related antisemitism.

The following case studies illustrate this issue. They all represent instances where students were active in speaking out against the invitations extended to the individuals and organisations in question, but where the event was held regardless of these concerns.

### Case Study: EuroPal Forum at SOAS

In February 2020, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Palestine Society advertised a workshop taking place on 7 March 2020 about "advocacy for Palestine on campus".<sup>30</sup> According to the Facebook event advert, a third of the day was focused on antisemitism, and the event was co-hosted by Westminster Friends of Palestine Society, EuroPal Forum, and two other groups.<sup>31</sup>

30 <https://www.facebook.com/SOASPalSoc/photos/a.1517638034948627/2862544280457989/?type=3&theater>

31 <https://www.facebook.com/events/814302095716611/>



EuroPal Forum describes itself as "an independent and non-party political organisation based in London, working to build networks throughout Europe in support of the promotion and realisation of Palestinian rights".<sup>32</sup> A year before this SOAS workshop took place, a booklet containing a potentially antisemitic theory, co-published by EuroPal Forum and a group called Olive, had been handed out at a different student event at Kings College London.<sup>33</sup> Olive describes itself as "a youth non-profit organisation that aims to mobilise Palestine youth"<sup>34</sup> and they were the co-hosts with the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) of this previous event. The offending booklet was titled *Basic facts on the Palestine issue* and it included the claim that Jews are descended from Khazars.<sup>35</sup> This is a theory that can be associated with antisemitism as it is commonly used by far right extremists such as the Ku Klux Klan,<sup>36</sup> and has been cited by the Holocaust denier Nicholas Kollerstrom.<sup>37</sup>

32 <https://europalforum.org.uk/en/page/1/About+us>

33 [https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2224180644306665&ef=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2224180644306665&ef=watch_permalink)

34 <http://www.olive.org.uk/whoarewe>

35 <http://david-collier.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Basic-Facts-on-the-Palestine-Issue-004.pdf>

36 <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/46433NCJRS.pdf>

37 <https://terrorontheTube.co.uk/related-articles/wrong-definition-of-anti-semitism/>

The presence of this group as the co-host of an event at SOAS in March 2020 to discuss the topic of antisemitism, following their publication of a booklet containing potentially antisemitic elements, caused concern among some Jewish students, who tweeted criticism of the SOAS Palestine Society for hosting EuroPal Forum. The Union of Jewish Students also made a statement, claiming that they were “absolutely disgusted that @SOAS Palestine Society are hosting a ‘workshop’ on antisemitism with EUROPAL”.<sup>38</sup> Jewish News published an article titled “Anger at student event promoted by publisher of ‘antisemitic’ material”.<sup>39</sup>



In response, EuroPal Forum published a statement claiming that “we have had no say in the organisation and planning of the event and will not be speaking in any capacity on

the day as we have not been invited to.”<sup>40</sup> It was also reported that the Director of SOAS replied to an email from a member of the public complaining about the event, by saying that SOAS has “a clear and explicit zero-tolerance policy in relation to anti-semitism”, and that “I am assured by our students’ union that external speakers from EuroPal Forum are not due to be on campus for this event. The event is being held by one of our student societies, it is for students only and there are no external speakers involved”.<sup>41</sup> On 5 March, two days before the scheduled event, questions were asked in Parliament about the meeting and EuroPal Forum by Baroness Deech.<sup>42</sup>

The event took place on Saturday 7 March and, despite the assurances provided by the Director of SOAS, there were external speakers in attendance. This was confirmed by the Facebook post made by SOAS Palestine Society after the event thanking an external speaker for their attendance, and by a photograph they posted showing a second external speaker giving a presentation at the event.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> [https://twitter.com/UJS\\_UK/status/1233035215024611329](https://twitter.com/UJS_UK/status/1233035215024611329)

<sup>39</sup> <https://jewishnewstimesofisrael.com/anger-at-student-event-promoted-by-publisher-of-antisemitic-material/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://twitter.com/EuroPalForum/status/1235251050262810633/photo/1>

<sup>41</sup> <http://david-collier.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/soas4.jpg>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-05/HL2260/>

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/SOASPalSoc/posts/2873309292714821?\\_tn\\_=-R](https://www.facebook.com/SOASPalSoc/posts/2873309292714821?_tn_=-R)

### Case study: Mahathir Mohamad at the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was invited to speak at the Oxford Union on 18 January 2019<sup>44</sup> and the Cambridge Union on 16 June 2019.<sup>45</sup> Mahathir Mohamad has a long history of antisemitism, including previous comments about Jews having hooked noses,<sup>46</sup> stating that Jews “understand money instinctively”,<sup>47</sup> and claiming that “Jews rule the world by proxy”.<sup>48</sup>

The University of Oxford’s Jewish Society published a statement condemning the Oxford Union’s invitation to the Malaysian Prime Minister. In it, they stated that *“this isn’t the first time that the Oxford Jewish Society has reached out to the Union or made a public statement with concerns about the antisemitic views of the speakers on their termcards. In previous instances, Union Presidents have responded to our concerns by saying that they weren’t aware of the speakers’ discriminatory opinions, or have ignored our communication with them. However, in response to the worries we have now raised about the forthcoming speakers, the President of the Union has offered to hear the Jewish Society’s suggestions on ways the Union can improve their safeguarding of Jewish members”*.<sup>49</sup>

In June 2019, following the Cambridge Union inviting Mahathir Mohamad to speak at an event, the Union of Jewish Students made a statement expressing their disappointment.<sup>50</sup>

Despite these statements, both events went ahead as planned. At the event hosted by the Cambridge Union the Prime Minister stated, *“I have some Jewish friends, very good friends, they are not like the other Jews, that’s why they are my friends”*, to which attendees responded with laughter.<sup>51</sup> When asked whether he regrets the antisemitic comments he had made in the past, he responded *“if they are still true, I will continue to stay with my statements”*.<sup>52</sup>

Mohamad’s comments caused significant distress and anger amongst Jewish students, and led Jewish former Presidents of the Cambridge Union to condemn the society’s decision to invite Mohamad to speak. One former President wrote that he was *“appalled that antisemite Mahathir Mohamad was invited to speak, was openly antisemitic and was greeted with laughter. What a shameful chapter in the history of a wonderful organisation”*.<sup>53</sup>

UJS released a blog about the event, where they argued that *“It is chilling, particularly for any Jewish students in the room, to see a crowd of students laugh off flagrantly antisemitic comments used by Mahathir Mohamad. The decision to host the Malaysian Prime Minister was defended by Cambridge Union as exercise of free speech, but as we consistently make clear, freedom of expression must be balanced against incitement to hatred against a minority group, and that’s exactly what happened last night. We urge all institutions linked to Higher Education to consider the implications of prejudicial speech when inviting speakers”*.<sup>54</sup>

44 <https://www.facebook.com/events/2284938355090069/>

45 <https://www.facebook.com/events/822860071415450/>

46 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/oct/02/malaysian-prime-minister-mahathir-mohamad-calls-jews-hook-nosed>

47 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/anti-semitic-malaysian-pm-insists-jews-are-hook-nosed-to-bbc/>

48 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/06/27/former-asian-leader-wont-stop-claiming-jews-rule-the-world/>

49 <https://www.facebook.com/oxfordjsoc/posts/796606014022207>

50 [https://twitter.com/UJS\\_UK/status/1138762745787158528](https://twitter.com/UJS_UK/status/1138762745787158528)

51 [https://twitter.com/UJS\\_UK/status/1140545167704961024](https://twitter.com/UJS_UK/status/1140545167704961024)

52 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJ0mYjyU4ec>

53 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/cambridge-union-condemned-for-hosting-notorious-antisemite-malaysian-prime-minister-mahathir-mohamad-1.485510>

54 [https://www.ujs.org.uk/malaysian\\_pm\\_cambridge](https://www.ujs.org.uk/malaysian_pm_cambridge)

## UNIVERSITY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Throughout the past two academic years, CST has worked alongside the Union of Jewish Students and other campus organisations in supporting students through the process of reporting to their universities incidents they perceive to be antisemitic. This work has uncovered a number of flaws and inconsistencies in some universities' complaints procedures and their application. Whereas some institutions have provided strong support to Jewish students, others appear not to have investigated and adjudicated complaints about antisemitism fairly, objectively or quickly.

The following case studies illustrate the contrasting realities faced by students when it comes to reporting what they feel is discrimination against them. As these case studies show, when universities meet their duty of care to Jewish students who have specific concerns relating to antisemitism, they can play a key role in making those students feel safe and welcome in their institutions. When this does not happen, universities can actually compound the harm done by the antisemitism that Jewish students feel they have encountered.

### Example of good practice: The University of Essex

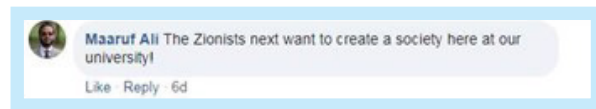
In February 2019, the University of Essex's Student Union held a vote on whether a Jewish Society should be created following what at the time was standard procedures on the creation of new societies,<sup>55</sup> and over 200 students voted 'No'.<sup>56</sup> During the campaigning period for this vote, a Jewish student came across a Facebook comment by a Lecturer in the Pathways Department at Essex University,<sup>57</sup> Maaruf Ali, who added a comment saying "*the Zionists next want to create a society here at our university!*", to a University of Essex Palestinian Solidarity

<sup>55</sup> <https://twitter.com/EssexSU/status/1098629897243815941>

<sup>56</sup> <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/essex-jsoc-outrage-2/>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.essex.ac.uk/people/alimu66804/maaruf-ali>

Group Facebook post. This student reported this comment to CST, who then supported them in raising their concerns with the university.



Shortly after, it was discovered that Ali had posted other antisemitic conspiracy theories online.<sup>58</sup> The screenshots below are two examples of the conspiracy posts made by this academic:



<sup>58</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/21/essex-university-lecturer-accused-antisemitic-facebook-posts>

As soon as this was reported, the University of Essex investigated the incident and suspended Ali from his position during the investigation.<sup>59</sup> Following a few months of deliberation, the university decided to dismiss Ali from his post.<sup>60</sup> In addition to this, the University of Essex engaged extensively with the Jewish community following this incident, including with Jewish communal organisations such as CST. They ensured that a Jewish Society was created at the university, conducted a review into the experiences of Jewish students and staff, and held a public event in support of the Jewish community.

A month after being sacked, Ali gave an interview in which he explained his actions by saying: *"I read UJS's manifesto and did not agree with their zealous promotion of Zionism and the state of Israel. That was my only concern. I was not voting against Jews, Judaism or their culture",* and *"I would like to*

*stress that I did not and would not vote against the formation of a Jewish Society that was not politically Zionist".* He also claimed *"I was singled out. The media falsely portrayed me as a ringleader of the 240 students who voted against the UJS [...] I was a useful scapegoat for their witch hunt",* and *"I knew as soon as the tribunal began that the University intended to dismiss me. They followed their procedures only to the extent that they would not affect the preordained outcome".* Regarding his Facebook posts, he mentioned *"a post from smoloko.com I made four years ago that a French police officer allegedly killed in terror attacks in Paris was actually a Mossad agent. There are many such theories about the 2015 attacks and I posted it for discussion purposes".* He concluded his interview by stating *"the University of Essex that claims to have 'zero tolerance to hate' seems to apply that standard based upon who the victim is".*<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-lecturer-accused-of-anti-semitism-holocaust-denial-is-dismissed/>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/university-of-essex-academic-dismissed-after-speaking-out-against-establishment-of-jewish-society-1.484848>

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<sup>61</sup> <http://stgeorgewest.blogspot.com/2019/06/an-electronic-engineer-in-orwells.html>

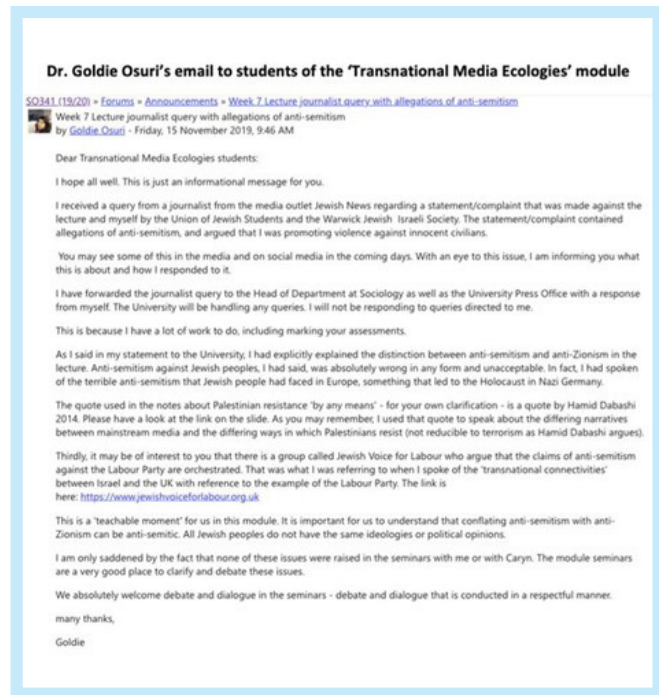


## Example of bad practice: Warwick University

In November 2019, a Jewish student contacted CST regarding a lecture given on Israel and Palestine by Goldie Osuri, an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick.<sup>62</sup> According to the student, the lecturer told the students in her lecture that *“the next time they say that the Labour Party is antisemitic, you know there are some people possibly that are possibly antisemitic, but this idea that the Labour Party is antisemitic is very much an Israeli lobby kind of idea, the idea that you want to discredit the Labour Party because there is support for Palestine among some members of the Labour Party”*. A few days after the original report was made to CST, the University of Warwick’s Jewish Israeli Society released an audio recording of these comments on their Facebook page.<sup>63</sup>

The President of Warwick’s Jewish Israeli Society submitted a complaint to the university on behalf of the Jewish student who was in the lecture, who wished to remain anonymous. News of the incident reached *Jewish News* who contacted Osuri to ask her for a response to the allegations. Following this, Osuri emailed her whole class informing them of the complaint and the request from *Jewish News*, insisting that *“I had explicitly explained the distinction between antisemitism and anti-Zionism in the lecture”*. She then recommended to her students that *“it may be of interest to you that there is a group called Jewish Voice for Labour who argue that the claims of anti-semitism against the Labour Party are orchestrated”*, providing a link to the Jewish Voice for Labour website.<sup>64</sup>

Osuri ended her email by complaining that *“none of these issues were raised in the seminars... We absolutely welcome debate and dialogue in the seminars – debate and dialogue*



*that is conducted in a respectful manner”*. This misses the point that many students may be reluctant to directly accuse their lecturer – a professor in a position of power and authority over them – of making an antisemitic remark, and may be especially reluctant to do so in front of a lecture hall full of people. Jewish students may understandably feel that antisemitism is something that is simply wrong and should be recognised as such, and not a subject for debate. By emailing the entire class of students, Osuri effectively pre-empted and undermined the Jewish student’s right to choose to use the university’s complaint procedure, even though that procedure exists for this purpose. The Jewish student who had originally complained to CST felt targeted and intimidated as a result. The Jewish Israeli Society criticised Osuri’s decision to send this email, saying that *“Dr Osuri’s argument that the concerns of Jewish students in the lecture were not ‘raised in the seminars... in a respectful manner’ demonstrates a demonstrable lack of sensitivity to the experience of people affected by racism. Her comments upset students and this response is a clear attempt at victim-blaming”*.<sup>65</sup>

When asked for comment by *Jewish News*, a

<sup>62</sup> <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/goldieosuri/>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1190628267802707>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/jisocwarwick/photos/pcb.2421492271436001/2421510971434131/?type=3&theater>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/jisocwarwick/photos/pcb.2421492271436001/2421510971434131/?type=3&theater>

university spokesperson said the following:

*The researcher concerned sees these assertions as a misrepresentation of her lecture and that those assertions do not include significant context in regard to the matters under discussion.*

*There was considerable opportunity during that lecture, and in the following seminars, to discuss and debate what was presented in their totality. Indeed, such discussion and debate is actively encouraged though no such issues were raised at that time.*

*Warwick is committed to ensuring a working and learning environment in which all university members, staff and students, are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.<sup>66</sup>*

This comment suggests that the University of Warwick quickly took a position that backed Osuri's version of events in opposition to the Jewish Israeli Society and the Jewish student who had complained, even though their complaint had not yet been fully investigated. Instead of taking the student's complaint seriously and refusing to form an opinion about the incident until an appropriate investigation was conducted, the university criticised the Jewish student for not having raised their concerns with the academic, showing a lack of appreciation for how difficult a situation like this can be for a student. This response has the potential to deter other students from complaining about comments by academic staff that they perceive to be antisemitic in the future.

Despite their initial comment endorsing Osuri's account, the university did proceed to hear the students' complaint. The Jewish Israeli Society was informed that the university could neither listen to the recording of the lecture nor look at the screenshot from Osuri's emails (both of which had been published by the Jewish Israeli Society on its Facebook page), because doing so would infringe General Data Protection

Regulations. They were also told that the university might have to investigate and punish whoever leaked the recording and the email.

Following the investigation, Warwick's Jewish Israeli Society received an email from the university on 30 January, which acknowledged that Osuri's comment "was interpreted as an anti-Semitic conspiratorial trope" and that "the sociology student was clearly offended and upset by what was said and did perceive it as an experience of racism", but also noted that "in a response made to all students on the 15th of November, Dr Osuri expresses her opposition to anti-Semitism and opened up the space for dialogue and discussion, as would be expected in an academic environment". They ruled that Osuri's statement in the lecture was legitimate "within the principles and values of tolerance and freedom of speech", but said "this does not diminish the offence felt by the student in question". The university concluded that this stage of the complaint had been resolved and gave the victim the option to appeal.

Warwick's Jewish Israeli Society expressed their dissatisfaction with the ruling by accusing the university of "a shameful abdication of your responsibilities to both the Jewish student who sits in your department and the wider Jewish community at Warwick". In their view, the university had failed "to prove that it treats antisemitism with the utmost severity, akin to its approach to every other form of racism".

However, this was not the end of the matter. On the 14 July 2020, the Jewish Israeli Society President (who had submitted the complaint against Osuri on behalf of the Jewish student who wished to remain anonymous) received a letter from the University of Warwick informing him that a complaint had been made against him by Osuri and another academic at Warwick. Regarding Osuri, the Society President was charged with "Violation of the Policy on Recording of Lectures by Students" due to the leak of the recording of Osuri's lecture, and "bullying and harassment and a defamation

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/jisocwarwick/photos/pcb.2421492271436001/2421489041436324/?type=3&theater>

of the academic reputation of Dr Goldie Osuri through the use of a decontextualized lecture recording and the submission of a vexatious complaint to the Department of Sociology that was also released on social media and to the press".<sup>67</sup> After a three-month investigation, all the disciplinary charges were dropped and no action was taken against the Society President. The investigation found that he had not made the original recording of the lecture, nor was there any evidence that he had contacted *Jewish News* or had "orchestrated the social media attention that followed Dr Osuri's lecture." It found that he was one of several students who collectively decided to make the recording public, and that responsibility for this lay with the Jewish Israeli Society as a whole rather than an individual student.

There are many lessons from this extraordinary and worrying episode. The potential for such action to deter other students from bringing similar complaints in the future is obvious. Furthermore, the student in question was acting in his capacity as President of the Jewish Israeli Society by representing one of its members who believed they had experienced antisemitism and wanted to remain anonymous. It is essential that student representatives are able to perform this representative role without risking personal damage or loss as a result. The University of Warwick's Policy on Recording of Lectures by Students states: "*Should you wish to record a lecture (in any format, whether audio or audio-visual) you must seek the permission of the lecturer before the lecture begins and you will need to explain the reason for wishing to record the lecture...*"

Any recording that is made with the lecturer's permission *must not be distributed in any format*".<sup>68</sup> It does not include any 'whistle-blower clause' that would permit the recording of a lecture as evidence of antisemitic, racist or other prejudiced language on the part of the lecturer. This is despite the fact that the University of Warwick does have a separate Whistleblowing Policy that says it aims to "Encourage you, whether student, staff, or anyone contractually connected to the University, to report your concerns about a suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that your concerns will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and confidentiality respected... *you should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken*".<sup>69</sup>

In July 2020, shortly after receiving notice of the disciplinary action against him, the Jewish Israeli Society President responded by saying:

*To investigate this vexatious complaint any further would be to set a precedent that Jewish students who challenge antisemitism are worthy of investigation and therefore possible punishment.*

*Does Dr Osuri suggest that I, as the representative of Jewish students on campus, should not have the right to submit complaints of antisemitism on behalf of Jewish students?*

His email concluded, "The allegations against me of bullying and harassment are simply absurd and represent a total inversion of the power relations between professors and students at Warwick".

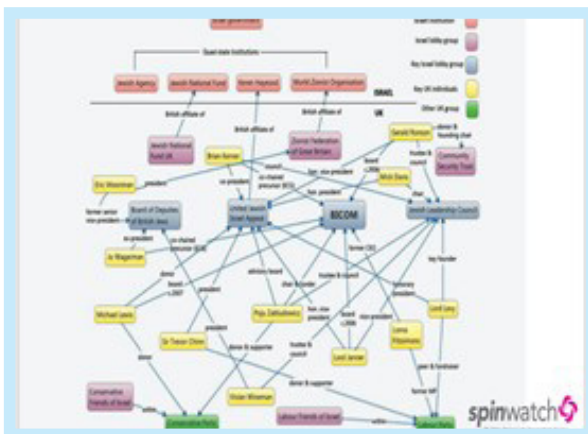
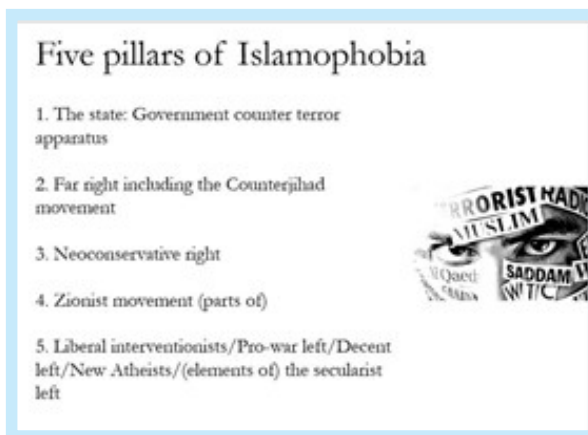
<sup>67</sup> Private communication between Jewish Israeli Society President and CST

<sup>68</sup> <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/aro/dar/quality/recordinglectures> (emphasis added)

<sup>69</sup> <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/whistleblowing/> (emphasis added)

### Example of bad practice: the University of Bristol

In February 2019, two Jewish students contacted CST to report what they felt was antisemitic content taught in a lecture by David Miller, Professor of Political Sociology at the University of Bristol.<sup>70</sup> According to the students, this lecture, in a module called 'Harms of the Powerful', included a PowerPoint slide with a diagram featuring a web of Jewish organisations, placed under or subservient to the "Israeli government". The topic of the week was 'Islamophobia', and the slide was part of Professor Miller's explanation of his theory that the "Zionist movement (parts of)" is part of a global network that promotes and encourages hatred of Muslims and of Islam. The PowerPoint presentation used by Miller during the lecture included CST and other mainstream UK Jewish organisations and leaders in this diagram, implying that they are part of this alleged Islamophobic network.



70 <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/people/david-miller/index.html>

One Jewish student in the lecture gave CST a written statement that "as a Jewish student I felt uncomfortable and intimidated in his class. I know and understand what he says is false, it is clear however that a number of students in the class believe him, just because he is an academic".

The same student claimed that "I fear that if he found out that I was Jewish this would negatively affect my experience throughout this unit". A different Jewish student in his class further stated that "I don't think it is right that I should have to sit in a lecture or seminar in fear. Fear that he will offend me personally or for fear that he is going to spread hatred and misinformation to other students who, in turn, can pass on these false ideas".

Out of respect to the students' desire to remain anonymous, CST wrote to the University of Bristol, representing the views of these students, expressing concern about what CST considered to be an antisemitic conspiracy theory taught in the lecture, and complaining specifically about the defamatory implication that CST encourages Islamophobia. Bristol University Jewish Society submitted a separate complaint expressing its concerns and asked that the IHRA definition of antisemitism be used in the complaints process.

The University of Bristol's response to CST stated that "the University does not have a formal process for responding to complaints from third parties" but that they "asked the Head of School to discuss your letter with Professor Miller, through his line manager, and to consider with him whether any changes might be made to his lecture or PowerPoint presentation to clarify the points that you have raised and to correct any information that is out of date, ensuring that the material is suitable for undergraduate teaching". However, Bristol University has not informed CST whether any changes were made, or what these might have been. The letter also stated that the University would only accept complaints from students "if the students are willing to give their names to the Student Complaints Officer [...] there should be no immediate need to disclose their names to Professor Miller".

The students who had contacted CST insisted on remaining anonymous and did not consider that this was compatible with the request that they be identified to the Student Complaints Officer. Since then, as a result of the students' desire to remain anonymous, the University has misleadingly insisted that it did not receive any complaints about Miller's lecture from any students who were present.

The University of Bristol's Jewish Society received a separate response to their complaint from a senior academic in the part of Bristol University where Professor Miller teaches. In his response, he rejected the request to use the IHRA definition of antisemitism because, he wrote, it *"is a somewhat controversial definition, with some believing that it is imprecise and can be used to conflate criticism of the policies of the Israeli government and of Zionism with antisemitism"*<sup>71</sup>. Instead, he decided to use *"a simpler and, I hope, less controversial definition of antisemitism as hostility towards Jews as Jews"*<sup>72</sup>. He then ruled regarding Professor Miller's lecture that *"I cannot find any evidence in the material before me that these views are underlain by hostility to Jews as Jews"*<sup>73</sup>, and that *"I am unable, therefore, to find grounds upon which Professor Miller should be subjected to disciplinary action"*<sup>74</sup>.

In December 2019, the University of Bristol formally adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism in full, after which the Jewish Society's complaint was re-opened. At the time of writing, this complaint is still ongoing, over a year-and-a-half after Professor Miller's original lecture, and the Jewish Society has not been informed of any progress in deciding whether the complaint is worthy of a disciplinary investigation into Miller. Nor has there been any clarity from the University about whether Miller will be allowed to teach the same untrue conspiracy theories in future lectures.

71 Correspondence provided to CST by UJS

72 Correspondence provided to CST by UJS

73 Correspondence provided to CST by UJS

74 Correspondence provided to CST by UJS

In August 2020, CST again wrote to the University of Bristol to make a new complaint about Miller after he made further comments that CST described as *"appalling, untrue and potentially dangerous allegations about CST, including more conspiracy theories that we consider to be antisemitic"*. This related to comments by Miller in an online Zoom meeting in which he described CST as *"people who must only be faced and defeated"*. When challenged on these comments by *Jewish News*, Professor Miller said that CST *"is an organisation that exists to run point for a hostile foreign government in the UK... this is a straightforward story of influence-peddling by a foreign state"*.<sup>75</sup>

Two months after receiving CST's complaint, the University of Bristol replied to say that *"to the extent that you (as an external third party) are asking the University to take certain specific action and/or follow certain procedures, these are internal University matters that are private and confidential and it is, therefore, inappropriate to respond in detail to the various points you have made"*. The letter repeated on four occasions that CST is, in their view, an *"external third party"* and therefore the university will not *"confirm whether such an investigation will or will not take place... The University's duty in respect of any and all of its employees (and students) is to maintain neutrality and not to engage in debate with an external third party about matters that it has raised, which may impact on both its students and its employees"*.<sup>76</sup> This response did not recognise that CST is not a *"third party"* in this complaint, but rather is the injured party and is making a complaint about comments made about CST by an employee of the University of Bristol. In effect, the university appears to have decided not to have a complaints policy available for anyone outside the university to make a complaint about anything their staff say or do.

75 Correspondence from CST to Bristol University, 17 August 2020

76 Correspondence from Bristol University to CST, 15th October 2020



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES

When quick and decisive action is taken, universities can play a key role in minimising the impact of antisemitism on Jewish students. However, if not handled appropriately, antisemitic incidents at universities can leave Jewish students feeling isolated and vulnerable. It is essential that universities have the procedures in place to handle reports of antisemitic incidents correctly. These procedures should include:

- **THIRD PARTY REPORTING**

Reporting hate crime can be an intimidating and stressful experience. During the past two years, CST has seen instances where students swiftly reported antisemitism to CST but were hesitant to submit a complaint to their university. By allowing third party organisations such as CST or UJS to submit complaints regarding antisemitism on behalf of students, universities could significantly enhance the tackling of discrimination in their institutions. This is common practice in the hate crime field and would be greatly beneficial in the university context.
- **APPROPRIATE DEFINITION**

Having an adequate and accepted definition of antisemitism is vital to successfully tackling campus antisemitism. On too many occasions, universities have failed to recognise the existence of discrimination due to relying on inappropriate and incomplete definitions. By adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, universities can ensure that there is a common, accepted standard with which to measure antisemitism and assess complaints. However, according to UJS, as of the beginning of December 2020, only 41 out of 133 higher education institutions had adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism.
- **TIMING OF COMPLAINTS**

Universities should have an adequate and reasonable time frame in which they respond to and resolve complaints. When complaints are dragged out over many months, they can easily extend into examination periods and may affect students' academic performance. They may even extend past students' graduation, limiting students' ability to actively engage in the process and preventing them from receiving appropriate closure before they leave campus life. Universities should also be willing to accept and investigate historical complaints, as many students want to wait until they have completed their studies before making a complaint to avoid the risk of any negative consequences during their time at university.
- **THE BURDEN OF PROOF**

Some universities have imposed unfair requirements on Jewish students to provide all the evidence to support their complaint, resulting in victims being discouraged from reporting antisemitism to the university. This is particularly the case when it comes to antisemitic comments made in lectures or talks. Institutions need to ensure that, where appropriate, they put measures in place to obtain the necessary evidence themselves to investigate Jewish students' claims, such as lecture recordings for modules where students claim to have experienced antisemitism from an academic, or moderation and recording for events involving problematic speakers.



- **ENSURING IMPARTIALITY**

Given the close ties between academic staff at an institution and particularly within departments, the individual in charge of a complaint often holds a close personal and/or professional relationship with the individual who is the subject of that complaint. This brings into question the perceived and actual objectivity of any investigation and disciplinary process. Universities should develop an independent process for complaints of discrimination, bigotry or hateful language to be assessed by staff who do not have any personal relationship with the academics or students involved in each case, perhaps involving external advisers who have specialist expertise in the type of discrimination or bigotry being alleged.

**If you are a Jewish student who has witnessed or experienced antisemitism, it is essential that you report it.**

You can do so by emailing [students@cst.org.uk](mailto:students@cst.org.uk), or filling out the form on the CST website at [cst.org.uk/report-incident](https://cst.org.uk/report-incident).

CST and UJS have strong expertise and a dedicated team focused on helping and supporting you, and we can help you report antisemitism whether it is to your university, students' union or to the police.

Please get in touch and let us help you fight antisemitism on your campus.

## CST'S MISSION

- To work at all times for the physical protection and defence of British Jews.
- To represent British Jews on issues of racism, antisemitism, extremism, policing and security.
- To promote good relations between British Jews and the rest of British society by working towards the elimination of racism, and antisemitism in particular.
- To facilitate Jewish life by protecting Jews from the dangers of antisemitism, and antisemitic terrorism in particular.
- To help those who are victims of antisemitic hatred, harassment or bias.
- To promote research into racism, antisemitism and extremism; and to use this research for the benefit of both the Jewish community and society in general.
- To speak responsibly at all times, without exaggeration or political favour, on antisemitism and associated issues.



[www.cst.org.uk](http://www.cst.org.uk)



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