

Kantor Center Report 2018

United Kingdom

CST recorded 1,652 antisemitic incidents in the UK in 2018, the highest total ever recorded in a single calendar year, and an increase of 16 per cent from the 1,420 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2017. In 2016, CST recorded 1,375 incidents and the record annual totals in 2016, 2017 and 2018 represent a sustained pattern of historically high antisemitic incident totals. Whereas previous high annual totals in 2014 and 2009 were associated with reactions to conflicts involving Israel, there has been no single trigger event to cause the high annual totals in recent years.

CST recorded over 100 antisemitic incidents in every month of 2018, the first time this has happened in a single calendar year. The highest monthly total in 2018 came in May, with 182 incidents, followed by April with 151 incidents and August with 150 incidents. In the past three years there have only been five months where the monthly incident total has dropped below 100; in contrast, in the decade prior to 2016 there were only six months in which CST recorded more than 100 antisemitic incidents.

The factors that influenced the general, sustained high level of antisemitic incidents in 2018 appear to be a continuation of those that similarly affected the level of incidents during 2017 and 2016. While there was no sudden trigger event to cause the record annual total in 2018, the months with the highest totals appear to correlate to periods when political and media debate over allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party were at their most intense and most public. These periods saw an increased number of incidents directly related to those debates, while the increased attention paid to the issue of antisemitism is likely to have emboldened offenders and encouraged victims to report more incidents. CST recorded 148 incidents in 2018 that were examples of, or related to arguments over, alleged antisemitism in the Labour Party, of which 49 were recorded in August 2018.

It is likely that the high monthly totals in April and May 2018 were also partly influenced by reactions to violence on the border between Gaza and Israel during those months, in which several Palestinians were killed. Overall, CST recorded 173 antisemitic incidents that showed evidence of being motivated by anti-Israel sentiments or ideology (alongside the antisemitism), compared to 108 incidents of this type in 2017. Over a quarter of the 173 antisemitic incidents showing evidence of anti-Israel political motivation in 2018 occurred in the two months of April and May. The 182 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in May is the highest monthly total CST has recorded since August 2014, when Israel and Hamas last fought a sustained conflict over Gaza, and is the fourth-highest monthly total CST has ever recorded.

Almost three-quarters of the 1,652 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2018 took place in Greater London and Greater Manchester, the two largest Jewish communities in the UK. CST recorded 950 antisemitic incidents in Greater London in 2018 compared to 784 during 2017, an increase of 21 per cent. In Greater Manchester, CST recorded 250 incidents in 2018 compared to 264 in 2017, a five per cent decrease. These different trends may reflect the fact that incidents involving political language or motivation are more likely to occur in Greater London than Greater

Manchester. Beyond these two centres, CST received reports of 452 antisemitic incidents from 32 of the 34 police forces around England, as well as in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in 2018. This compares to 386 incidents outside of Greater London and Greater Manchester in 2017.

It is likely that there is significant under-reporting of antisemitic incidents to both CST and the Police, and that the number of antisemitic incidents that took place is significantly higher than the number recorded in this report. The 2018 survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) found that only 21 per cent of British Jews who had experienced antisemitic harassment over the previous five years had reported it to the Police or to any other organisation. The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates that only 53 per cent of all hate crimes come to the attention of the Police. It is likely, therefore, that the true figures for antisemitic hate incidents will be higher than those recorded in this report.

There was one incident of Extreme Violence in 2018, the first time CST has recorded an incident in this category since 2015. Extreme Violence is an attack with the potential to cause the loss of life, or that causes grievous bodily harm. Overall, CST recorded a fall of 17 per cent in violent incidents, from 149 in 2017 to 123 in 2018 (comprising one in the category of Extreme Violence and 122 incidents in the category of Assault).

Incidents of Damage and Desecration to Jewish property fell by 16 per cent, from 93 incidents in 2017 to 78 incidents in 2018. Damage and Desecration is the only incident category for which 2018's total is not the highest or second-highest recorded in the past five years. CST recorded 81 incidents in this category in both 2014 and 2016, and 65 in 2015.

There were 109 incidents reported to CST in the category of Threats in 2018, which includes direct threats to people or property, rather than more general abuse. This is an increase of 11 per cent from the 98 incidents of this type recorded in 2017.

There were 1,300 incidents of Abusive Behaviour recorded in 2018, the highest number of incidents ever recorded in this category, and an increase of 22 per cent from 2017's total of 1,065, which was itself the previous record high in this category. Incidents of Abusive Behaviour include verbal abuse, hate mail, antisemitic graffiti on non-Jewish property and antisemitic content on social media, and 2018 is the third year in a row in which the number of antisemitic incidents in this category has risen.

There were 42 incidents recorded in the category of Literature in 2018, which comprises mass-produced antisemitic mailings and emails, rather than individual hate mail. This is an increase of 180 per cent from the 15 incidents recorded in this category in 2017, a rise explained by a cluster of one particular leaflet that was distributed repeatedly across London during 2018.

The most common single type of incident in 2018 involved verbal abuse directed at random Jewish people in public, a form of antisemitism that is more commonly associated with anti-social behaviour or local patterns of street crime than with political activism or ideologies. In 483 incidents, the victims were Jewish people, male or female, attacked or abused while going about their daily business in public places. In at least 224 of these incidents, the victims were visibly Jewish, usually due to their religious or traditional clothing, school uniform or jewellery bearing Jewish

symbols. A total of 724 antisemitic incidents out of the 1,652 incidents in 2018 involved verbal antisemitic abuse.

CST recorded 384 antisemitic incidents that involved the use of social media in 2018, comprising 23 per cent of the overall total of 1,652 antisemitic incidents. This is an increase of 54 per cent from the 249 antisemitic incidents CST recorded involving social media in 2017. CST does not proactively 'trawl' social media platforms to look for incidents of this type and will only record social media incidents that have been reported to CST by a member of the public, where the offender is based in the UK or the incident involves the direct antisemitic targeting of a UK-based victim. These figures are only indicative and the total number of antisemitic posts, comments and tweets in the United Kingdom in 2018 is certain to be far higher.

Sixty-six antisemitic incidents in 2018 targeted synagogues, and a further 30 incidents targeted synagogue congregants on their way to or from prayers, compared to 76 and 45 incidents respectively in 2017. In 221 incidents, the victims were Jewish community organisations, communal events, commercial premises or high-profile individuals, compared to 141 such incidents in 2017.

Ninety-six incidents targeted Jewish schools, schoolchildren or staff in 2018, compared to 88 incidents relating to schools and schoolchildren in 2017. Of the 96 incidents of this type recorded in 2018, 46 affected Jewish schoolchildren on their journeys to or from school; 40 took place at the premises of Jewish faith schools; and ten involved Jewish children or teachers at non-faith schools.

There were 25 antisemitic incidents in which the victims were Jewish students, academics or other student bodies, compared to 21 campus-related antisemitic incidents in 2017. Of the 25 incidents of this type reported to CST in 2018, 17 took place on campus and eight off campus. Out of these 25 incidents involving universities, three were in the category of Damage and Desecration of Jewish property, all of which occurred on campus; there was one incident in the category of Threats and 22 in the category of Abusive Behaviour. There were no incidents involving students, academics or student bodies in the category of Assault or Literature.

There were 270 antisemitic incidents which showed far right, anti-Israel or Islamist beliefs or motivations alongside antisemitism in 2018, making up 16 per cent of the overall total of 1,652 antisemitic incidents, compared to 226 politically motivated incidents in 2017 (16 per cent of the overall total for that year). Of the 270 antisemitic incidents in 2018 showing ideological motivation or beliefs as well as antisemitism, 84 showed far right motivation or beliefs; 173 showed anti-Israel motivation or beliefs; and 13 showed Islamist motivation or beliefs.

There is not always a straightforward correlation between the motivation of incident offenders and the antisemitic language they use; contemporary antisemitic incident offenders will select from a range of Jewish-related subjects, particularly insults related to the Holocaust or Israel, for language or imagery with which to abuse, insult or threaten their Jewish victims. In 2018, 45 per cent of the incidents recorded by CST involved the use of political language or imagery, an increase from the 30 per cent of incidents involving similar language in 2017. Of the 1,652 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in 2018, 456 involved language or imagery related to the far right or the Nazi period; 254 incidents involved references to Israel and the

Palestinians; and 29 involved references to Islam or Muslims. In 285 incidents, more than one type of political discourse was employed.

CST receives reports of antisemitic incidents from a range of sources, including directly from victims or members of their family; from witnesses; from CST's own national volunteer structure; from security guards at Jewish buildings; and via incident data sharing programmes with police forces around the UK. In 2015 CST signed a national information sharing agreement with the National Police Chiefs' Council (under its former name of the Association of Chief Police Officers), that allows for the systematic sharing of antisemitic incident reports between CST and the Police, so that both agencies have sight of incidents that had not otherwise been reported to them. The incident reports are fully anonymised to comply with data protection requirements.

Six hundred and forty-three of the 1,652 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST nationally in 2018 came to CST via information sharing agreements with the Police, representing 39 per cent of the incidents included in this report. A total of 431 incidents, or 26 per cent of the total, were reported directly to CST by the victims of antisemitic incidents, or by a friend or family member of an incident victim. In addition, 349 antisemitic incidents (21 per cent of the total) were reported to CST by people who had witnessed the incident but were not the direct victims of it. One hundred and forty-nine antisemitic incidents were reported by CST staff or volunteers throughout the UK. CST received reports of 50 antisemitic incidents from security guards and security officers at Jewish buildings and organisations. Seventeen antisemitic incidents were recorded by CST during 2018 on the basis of media reports. The remaining incidents were reported to CST by other Jewish community or hate crime monitoring organisations.

The Jewish community has become increasingly concerned about the rise in antisemitism within the Opposition Labour Party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, a Member of Parliament since 1983 and who was elected Leader of the Party in a surprise win in 2015. Since his appointment the Party has failed to deal satisfactorily with the many members, inside and outside Parliament, who have made antisemitic comments. Often, complaints made to the Party lead to the suspension of the offending member only for them to be reinstated after a short period with no transparent investigation or effective sanction. Corbyn himself has associated with, and offered support to many extreme and anti-democratic regimes, individuals and organisations, including terrorist groups, throughout his parliamentary career. Many of the new members who have joined the Labour Party under his leadership had previously been excluded from the Party because of their extremist views or membership of Communist, Trotskyist and other hard left groups.

These concerns prompted the Jewish community's leadership bodies to hold a demonstration in March outside Parliament to protest the growing antisemitism in the Labour Party.

Initially it was accepted that Corbyn did not himself hold antisemitic views, but that he was blind to such views held by others. Yet in late March, it was reported that he had supported the painter of an antisemitic mural in London in 2012. Subsequently it was reported in the media that Corbyn had commented that "Zionists" do not understand English irony, which was widely ascribed to an underlying antisemitism.

Antisemitism and anti-Zionism are promoted by a range of Facebook groups that bear Corbyn's name as well as Twitter messages and websites which have a direct line to the party leadership.

Both Corbyn and others in the Party leadership have acknowledged the growth in antisemitism, and condemned it, but then failed to take any meaningful action. Jewish members of the party, and particularly Jewish Members of Parliament, now find the obsession with Israel places them under intolerable pressure. Yet the parliamentary party (ie. Labour Members of Parliament) itself remains supportive and does not reflect extremist views.

In July, the Labour Party sought to agree a Code of Conduct on antisemitism, in part to avoid adopting the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism. Their tortured relationship with the Working Definition involves adopting it in December 2016 shortly after the Government adopted it, then seeking to remove some of the examples including one which notes that denying the Jewish people the right to self-determination by claiming that Israel is a racist endeavour. The alternative Code of Conduct was passed by the National Executive Committee, despite widespread opposition from Jews and others, but rejected by the Parliamentary Party, which backed the Working Definition. Corbyn then announced that the Party leadership would consult Jewish groups about the code, which it has failed to do with the representative bodies. However widespread public and internal criticism forced Labour finally to adopt the Working Definition as written, although Corbyn still announced that this did not prevent them criticising Israel, which the Definition allows anyway.

In November, the Antisemitism Policy Trust facilitated the Sara Conference, hosted at the Government's official Lancaster House to address the growth in misogyny and antisemitism. Three Jewish women MPs, Luciana Berger, Ruth Smeeth, and Dame Margaret Hodge and others described the gender-based hatred they had experienced in their careers, as well as the anti-Jewish vilification to which they are increasingly subjected. Sara Khan the Government's Commissioner for Countering Extremism noted that the 'sheer scale of antisemitism in 2018, particularly that aimed at Jewish women, was a source of national shame', and Margot James, the Minister of State at the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, noted that the internet industry had run out of self-regulatory measures to reduce the volume of racist and antisemitic content. To coincide with the conference, the Antisemitism Policy Trust published research jointly commissioned with CST and carried out on their behalf by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, that examined the disproportionate amount of online antisemitic abuse directed at women, compared to that directed at men. This showed that over 20 years the neo-Nazi Stormfront platform had hosted 9000 threads focussed on feminism, 60 per cent of which mentioned Jews or claimed that feminism is a Jewish invention.

FRA published its second survey of Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism in December, which covered 12 European countries and 97 per cent of the EU's Jewish population. In the UK, 4731 self-identified Jews responded, of whom 75 per cent think that antisemitism is a "very big" or "fairly big" problem. In the first survey in 2012, only 48 per cent responded thus. 25 per cent reported that they had suffered antisemitic harassment in the previous year and 34 per cent had suffered such

harassment in the previous five years. Where respondents identified a political motive for the perpetrator of antisemitism they experience, twice as many reported the perpetrator as “left wing”(25 per cent) or “Muslim extremist” (22 per cent) than “right wing” (11 per cent). The number of British Jews who have considered emigrating had increased from 11 per cent in 2012 to 29 per cent in 2018

In December, a parliamentary debate initiated by John Mann MP, Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, noted that Jews in Britain were increasingly disturbed by the growth in antisemitism and drew a strong and supportive response from Prime Minister Theresa May MP, who had hosted the annual Chanukah candle lighting two weeks earlier at her official residence in Downing Street.

Bilateral trade and academic exchanges between Israel and the UK continue to grow and have been unaffected by BDS campaigners. Indeed the UK Government actively promotes trade and academic and cultural exchanges between the two states, having established a high-tech hub in its embassy in Tel Aviv to initiate collaboration. In an Ipsos Mori poll for the Institute for Jewish Policy Research and CST carried out between 2016 and 2017, only 10 per cent of the 4005 persons interviewed agreed that Israel should be boycotted compared to 46 per cent who disagreed. In the FRA survey published in December, 75 per cent of British Jews responded that they regard boycotts of Israel or Israelis as antisemitic, an increase over the 65 per cent who responded to a similar question in 2012.

The National Executive Committee of the National Union of Students adopted a BDS policy which lapsed in 2018 and was not renewed. However, it had not been passed by the National Conference and therefore lacked authority. Nine British universities maintained BDS policies prior to July 2018, and two more have passed resolutions to do so since September 2018. However an attempt failed at Cardiff University in 2018 and at four other universities open letters supporting divestment in Israel were circulated but had no effect.

In February, the then national lead for Counter Terrorism Policing, noted in a public speech that the threat of terrorism in the UK had never been higher and that the authorities had foiled 10 terrorist plots by Islamists in the previous year. He added that they had also prevented four plots by extreme right wing activists in the same period and that the public should be aware of the growth in violent extremism from this quarter.

In January, Jack Renshaw was convicted of stirring up racial hatred after making speeches in which he described Jews as “parasites”, and jailed for three years. The first speech had been made in Blackpool in March 2016 at a far right demonstration, and at the second in North Yorkshire, he had also said that Jewish people should be “eradicated”. His identity could not be publicised at the time as he was due to stand trial again in June for membership of National Action, a violent neo Nazi group which had been banned the previous year.

Also in February, Connor Ward from Banff Aberdeenshire was convicted of preparing acts of terrorism, and subsequently jailed for life. He had stockpiled

weapons and bomb-making plans. At his trial at the Edinburgh High Court he acknowledged that he possessed large quantities of extreme right wing literature including *Mein Kampf*, *The Jew as Criminal* and *The Turner Diaries* and that he was “definitely anti-Jewish”.

In June, Jeremy Bedford-Turner was jailed for 12 months for inciting racial hatred, following a speech he had made at an antisemitic rally in July 2015. The rally was planned to take place on a Saturday in Golders Green, a north London suburb in which many Jews live, to protest against perceived Jewish control, but was moved to central London on the grounds that it would likely result in serious disorder.

Also in June, Alison Chabloz, was convicted of posting antisemitic and Holocaust denial songs on YouTube. At the termination of her trial, the judge noted that she had intended to insult Jewish people and that her material was grossly offensive.

Again in June, Wayne Bell, was jailed for four years and three months after pleading guilty to posting antisemitic and racist messages online. He was a prominent member of National Action and had prior convictions for incitement to hatred and violent crimes.

In July, Stephen Panagi was convicted of a racially aggravated breach of the Public Order Act after giving a Nazi salute outside a Jewish school in the London suburb of Southgate on 20 April, the anniversary of Hitler’s birth. He was sentenced to undertake community service, pay court and other costs and to attend lessons on the Holocaust.

Also in July, Husnain Rashid, who ran the *Lone Mujahid* Telegram channel, was convicted of terrorist offences and jailed for life. On his encrypted app he had encouraged lone actors to attack various targets in the UK and elsewhere including Jewish communities.

Again in July, Christopher Lythgoe and Matthew Hankinson, both members of National Action, were jailed for eight and five years respectively. Four others were acquitted but one of them, Jack Renshaw, had already been imprisoned for preparing an act of terrorism. A second member of this group, Garron Helm, had been convicted of sending threatening antisemitic messages to Luciana Berger, the Jewish Member of Parliament, in 2014. The group had also discussed attacking a synagogue. Yet another National Action member, Jack Coulson, was jailed for over four years in the same month for threatening to kill Luciana Berger in online messages.

In August, Austin Ross was sentenced for an act of racially aggravated arson, and lesser offences, after attempting to burn down a synagogue and other buildings, in Newport Wales.

In October, Hassan Butt, a former leading member of the Islamist al Muhajiroun organisation, was jailed for 13 years for fraud and related criminal offences. However it is worth recording that he was responsible for publishing antisemitic and violently anti-Israel propaganda for nearly 20 years. Following the 9/11 al Qaeda attack on the USA he moved to Pakistan to establish al Muhajiroun there, but he returned to the UK after several years.

In October, the government published *Action Against Hate*, the updated strategy for combating hate crime. It noted that the UK “is a world leader in tackling antisemitism” and that it was the first state to adopt the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism among a range of initiatives. The strategy includes ongoing work to challenge antisemitism including in schools and universities, funding for the Anne Frank Trust , Show Racism the Red Card, and Stand Up!, the joint CST-Maccabi GB classroom-based training for high school students .The government is also committed to continuing its support for the Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Antisemitism, a recommendation of the 2006 All Party Inquiry into Antisemitism.

In December, six further members of National Action were imprisoned for membership of a banned organisation. The court was told that two of them had large amounts of Nazi literature in their home and that another had sent WhatsApp message calling for the killing of Jews. Other members of the group were also imprisoned during 2018 for membership of a banned organisation or preparing acts of terrorism, some of whom had targeted Jews or Jewish institutions.

In December, the Government announced that a planning application had been submitted for the UK’s new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre following public consultation, and a competition to which some of the world’s leading architects had submitted designs. The site will be in Victoria Tower Gardens, adjacent to Parliament, and the Memorial will be dedicated to the Jewish and other victims of the Holocaust while the thematic exhibition will set the Holocaust within the British narrative and will address the complexities of Britain’s ambiguous responses.

The parliamentary Home Affairs Committee initiated an inquiry into *Hate Crime and its violent consequences*, in 2016 to which CST has made two submissions: the first in that year on the growth and nature of contemporary antisemitism; the second in October 2018 on the *The Far Right in the UK* at the request of the Committee. The Committee’s findings have yet to be published as the Inquiry was interrupted by the General Election, but evidence and interim findings were published during 2018. The terms of reference included: effectiveness of current hate crime legislation and law enforcement policies; barriers that prevent victims from reporting hate crime; the role of social media in identifying online sources of hate crime; the role of the voluntary sector; statistical trends in hate crime; the extent of victim support. The second submission by CST examined the rise of the Far Right in the UK, its use of social media and its impact.

CST has also worked closely with the European Commission during the four rounds of social media illegal hate speech monitoring agreed in the 2016 Code of Conduct agreed with the major social networks. It has participated in the High Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and other forms of Intolerance, and in the series of High Level Conferences on Antisemitism organised by the Chairman in Office of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as ODIHR - convened workshops on countering antisemitism for participating states’ criminal justice and law enforcement officials.