



# POLICING FOR THE FUTURE

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**CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTISEMITISM**

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# CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) is a volunteer-led charity dedicated to exposing and countering antisemitism in the United Kingdom through education and zero-tolerance enforcement of the law. It was established in August 2014 and was registered as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) in October 2015.<sup>1</sup>

In January 2015, Campaign Against Antisemitism released its first Antisemitism Barometer survey. With YouGov, we surveyed the British population about their attitudes towards Jewish people, and separately we conducted our own survey of British Jews — the largest ever — to determine how antisemitism affects them.

Antisemitism in the United Kingdom is reaching a tipping point. Incitement against Jews online is now translating into violent attacks on Jews. The survey found that 45% of British adults believe at least one antisemitic stereotype, 26% of British adults believe two or more antisemitic stereotypes, 17% of British adults believe three or more antisemitic stereotypes, 45% of British Jews of British Jews fear they may have no future in Britain, 77% of British Jews have witnessed antisemitism disguised as a political comment about Israel, 25% of British Jews have considered leaving Britain in the last two years because of antisemitism.

Campaign Against Antisemitism wishes to draw the Committee's attention to the increasing problem of online antisemitism and we hope that this submission will provide a useful tool for all stakeholders in the fight against online antisemitic hate crime.



1. CAA Website, <https://antisemitism.uk>

2. CAA Annual Antisemitism Barometer Survey, <https://antisemitism.uk/barometer/>, 14th January 2015

# GROWTH OF ONLINE ANTISEMITISM

Social media can be used for good but unfortunately it is increasingly being used as a tool for antisemites. Social media is the engine room of contemporary antisemitism and is fueling its incredible growth. It has emboldened many to express antisemitic views that they would not disclose publicly. Online anonymity and secrecy further exacerbates the problem as antisemites can render themselves unrecognisable and untraceable. Antisemites can hide behind their keyboard and smartphone, using Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other social media platforms as amplifiers. The social media giants have been slow to recognise their responsibility in combating the antisemitic crime that their platforms are facilitating.

It is difficult to monitor the vast swathes of ferocious and vulgar antisemitic abuse committed online. Campaign Against Antisemitism identifies thousands of hate comments and tweets, week in, week out. There are thousands of Facebook pages, each of which have thousands of likes that are profoundly antisemitic and there are thousands of tweets on Twitter spreading hate and incitement.

Social media is bringing the extreme into the mainstream. Before the advent of social media, fringe groups talked to their own kind, namely neo-Nazis, Islamist extremists and hard-left antisemites. Now, these groups are having conversations outside their clique. Antisemitic posts or tweets are often shared or sent on by the perpetrator,

and when the victims respond, the original antisemitic post or tweet is displayed to the victim's social network, so the impact of such hatred is amplified.

We do not believe that there is a hierarchy of hate, but antisemitism is different from other types of racist hatred. It is no mere prejudice; it endures because it is an ideology. It presents itself as a form of justice. Whereas other forms of racism slur their victims to diminish them, antisemitism does the opposite. Jews are presented as conniving, corrupting, parasites who wield immense power to the detriment of society. Antisemites present themselves as agents of justice, freeing mankind from Jewish dominance.

Like all ideologies, antisemitism has its own antibodies. Every Jewish contribution to society is cast as a bid for power. Every person who does not adopt antisemitism is dismissed as weak and blind. Every opponent of antisemitism is discredited as being part of a Jewish conspiracy or in the pay of Jews. Call an antisemite antisemitic and they will insist that you are smearing them to stop them exposing Jewish power. Social media has enabled antisemitic ideology to become 'open source', allowing it to mutate faster than ever before, combining the strains of far-right antisemitism, far-left antisemitism and Islamist antisemitism into one super-resistant antisemitic ideology that is almost invulnerable to the usual social immune defences of reason and opprobrium.

There has been a dramatic growth of antisemitic themes on internet platforms. These include conspiracy theories that the Jews were behind the 9/11 terrorist attacks and are based on classical antisemitic themes that Jews are greedy, are responsible for economic crises, control banks and the media. Modern antisemitism perpetrated on extreme left-wing websites builds on classical antisemitic themes, for example by comparing Israel to the Nazis, alleging that Israel is inflicting a new Holocaust on the Palestinians and substituting words for Jews, such as “Zionists”. Holocaust denial and trivialisation — claiming the Holocaust was a Jewish invention, as depicted in the recent film, *Denial*, about the David Irving libel trial — is resurgent.

Campaign Against Antisemitism sees many cases of online hate as exemplified by three current and glaring examples.

On 12th February, John Nimmo, a vile antisemitic online troll was sentenced to two years and three months in prison for targeting Jews with sickening antisemitic abuse and death threats, including Jewish Labour MP, Luciana Berger. Newcastle Crown Court heard how Nimmo wrote to Berger, referring to her as “Jewish scum” and signing off as “your friend the Nazi”. He sent her images of a knife and told her she would “get it like Jo Cox”, the MP murdered by a far-right terrorist.<sup>3</sup>

On 11th February, the Muslim Public Affairs Committee in the United Kingdom (MPAC) tweeted its congratulations to Ecuador after Horacio Sevilla Borja, an Ecuadorian diplomat said he did not think there was “anything more similar” to Nazi persecution than Israeli policy. Under the International Definition of Antisemitism, “Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis” is antisemitic.<sup>4</sup>

On 7th February, we exposed John Clarke, a Labour Councillor and Chairman of Black Notley Parish Council in Essex, who tweeted an image claiming that the Rothschild family, a Jewish family of bankers and philanthropists, has “used usury alongside modern Israel as an imperial instrument to take over the world and all of its resources, including you and I”. The image was clearly from antisemitic conspiracy myth website Smoloko and was first tweeted by an account whose biography proclaims that “Hitler was right”.<sup>5</sup>

The increase in online antisemitism through the growth of social media and the frenetic pace of technological change requires a quick and well-informed response from the authorities. Antisemitism is often nuanced and camouflaged, so it is important that the authorities comprehend its complexities. It requires a response that is constantly updated and which can draw on the skills of experts in the field. Existing online technologies are rapidly changing and new

3. CAA Bulletin, 27 months in prison for online troll who targeted Jews with death threat, <https://antisemitism.uk/27-months-in-prison-for-online-troll-who-targeted-jews-with-death-threats/>, 12th February 2017
4. CAA Bulletin, Muslim Public Affairs Committee congratulates Ecuador on antisemitic slur, <https://antisemitism.uk/muslim-public-affairs-committee-congratulates-ecuador-on-antisemitic-slur/>, 11th February 2017
5. CAA Bulletin, Racist Labour’s Councillor Clarke found berating Holocaust victims for not fighting back, <https://antisemitism.uk/racist-labours-councillor-clarke-found-berating-holocaust-victims-for-not-fighting-back/>, 7th February 2017

technologies are continuing to emerge. We acknowledge that the Home Office is developing a monitoring program, however this could be strengthened by drawing on the expertise of specialised organisations such as ours which can contribute expertise amassed through our own monitoring programme.

It is essential that police officers are given detailed and specific training, guidance and education to understand the problem of online antisemitism and how social media operates. They need to learn what antisemitism is, especially its most modern forms, how it manifests, and how it hides itself. It is vital to identify officers who are well equipped with a good grasp of the intricacies of antisemitism and to put them in the frontline to confront it.

Policing is not uniform in this respect. For example, Essex Police understands the problem well and has put in proper procedures to facilitate reporting. Most other police forces, however, have been abysmal. Many victims of antisemitism have therefore come to Campaign Against Antisemitism for assistance because they are exasperated by the lack of interest and shown by the police when they have reported severe online antisemitic harassment and hate speech.

Furthermore, whilst the Crown Prosecution Service has announced that it prosecuted 15,442 cases of hate crime in 2015, the last year for which figures are available, and the highest annual total on record, as far as we know, only twelve of those cases were prosecutions of antisemitic hate

crime. We cannot know exactly because the Crown Prosecution Service refuses to provide any breakdown of its statistics.

Campaign Against Antisemitism deals daily with police forces, regulators and the Crown Prosecution Service. It is our opinion that it is almost impossible for an unaided Jewish layperson to successfully ensure that a non-violent antisemitic crime of which they are victim is investigated and prosecuted. Indeed, even in the cases in which we become closely involved in supporting the victim and dealing with police and Crown Prosecution Service, we are met with flat, unaccountable refusal to act, either by the police or Crown Prosecution Service.

This allows antisemitic incitement and low-level crime to escalate and spread as antisemites are emboldened, and as the Jewish community increasingly views reporting antisemitic hate crime as an exercise in futility. The situation has become so desperate that we have now launched judicial review proceedings against the Crown Prosecution Service, and have begun launching our own private prosecutions.

Britain have one of the strongest legislative frameworks in Europe for fighting hate crime and extremism but our criminal justice system is not using it effectively. Unless we act now to act against antisemites as forcefully as the law will permit, then antisemitism will continue to spread, antisemites will become bolder, attacks on Jews will become more common and more ferocious, the Jewish

community will become more fearful and start making plans to emigrate, and the golden era for Jews in Britain will have ended.

Campaign Against Antisemitism is pleased with a very profound recent development in the fight against antisemitism. We applaud the Prime Minister's decision to make the British government the first in the world to formally adopt the International Definition of Antisemitism. This definition is clear and detailed, leaving no doubt as to what antisemitism is. In particular, this definition tackles the full spectrum of antisemitism, from ancient slurs to conspiracy myths to antisemitism in discourse about Israel. We worked hard over many meetings for the government to take this step and we thank the Prime Minister for her leadership and recognise the major contribution of the Committee and also of Sir Eric Pickles to this important result.

6. CAA Bulletin, British government becomes first in the world to formally adopt International Definition of Antisemitism, <https://antisemitism.uk/british-government-becomes-first-in-the-world-to-formally-adopt-international-definition-of-antisemitism/>, 12th December 2016



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Stakeholders need a strategy to interrupt the transfer of antisemitic ideas and disrupt the link between the extreme and the mainstream. The best way to challenge antisemitism is to reduce its spread into the mainstream. This can be achieved by discouraging everyday antisemitism by exposing individuals in mainstream society who promote antisemitism on social media, ensuring that they are seen to suffer criminal, professional and social sanctions and encouraging commercial and civil organisations and the public sector to stand up to antisemitism.

We propose a number of measures which will enable police forces to fight the antisemitism of the present and the future, and by extension other forms of hate crime.

**The Home Office should work with Campaign Against Antisemitism and others to develop a state-of-the-art monitoring system for online antisemitism, the benefits of which could be applied to the fight against other forms of hate crime.** It may also be useful to draw on open source software models in the private sector as a template; they have been extremely successful and might suit this task. It is also vital that specialised experts, such as those within Campaign Against Antisemitism, are closely involved so that the parameters used by the monitoring system are constantly updated to keep up with changing trends in online hate speech. The quality of the monitoring system will be

determined by the quality of its keywords and algorithms, and the frequency with which they are updated.

**A national centre for online hate crime and extremism should be established.**

The centre should act almost as a national police force specialising in protecting online spaces against hate crime and extremism, in much the same way as British Transport Police works nationally to protect the travelling public and our transport network against criminals. Investigating online hate crime and extremism requires specialised skills which are clearly lacking in many police forces, and also require a national approach due to the interconnected nature of online hate crime and extremism.

**The International Definition of Antisemitism should be enshrined in law so that it can be acted upon by police forces.** The definition was adopted by the British Government on 12th December 2016, due to the concerted efforts of the Committee, Campaign Against Antisemitism, Sir Eric Pickles and others. The London Assembly unanimously voted on 8th February 2017 to adopt the definition. The College of Policing has for years included the definition in its hate crime guidance. Regrettably however, it is not always clear to police forces whether the definition is actionable as it has not been enshrined in law. A simple law enshrining the definition as the one to be used by courts, regulators, universities and

all other bodies of the state would clarify the situation.

**Social networks should be regulated, and the civil law remedies available to victims of online hate crime should be clarified in legislation.** Legal and advocacy groups are emerging overseas, but most social networks are based abroad, which is why they have not yet been regulated by the British government, and why remedies are either unavailable to or are prohibitively expensive for British victims of online hate crime. This increases the burden on police forces which must constantly tackle the perpetrators of online hate crime, without the British government being able to pursue any recourse against the social networks which facilitate online hate crime and extremism and fail to take sufficient action against the perpetrators.

