



Jack Renshaw

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Just being a Nazi terrorist at work.
The White Jihad rages on! Insha'Allah!

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12

'WHITE JIHAD'

Jack Renshaw's journey from
far right student to would-be terrorist

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INTRODUCTION

On 17 May 2019, Jack Renshaw was sentenced to life imprisonment for his attempt to murder a Member of Parliament and a senior police officer in what would have been a shocking act of neo-Nazi terrorism. Renshaw’s path from far right student activist to would-be neo-Nazi terrorist is an example of the danger of hateful extremism, and the power of the violent rhetoric that permeates Britain’s far right. It is also a chilling reminder that hatred of Jews lies at the core of neo-Nazi ideology: while discussing his terror plot with his closest colleagues, Renshaw considered attacking a synagogue.

This story begins in 2014, when CST first started receiving complaints about a young far right activist at Manchester Metropolitan University. At around the same time, CST also began tracking the growth of the new far right organisation Renshaw was most closely associated with: National Action. Over the next four years, CST repeatedly reported Renshaw and his associates to the Police for their extremist, and at times illegal, activities, while arguing for National Action to be proscribed as a terrorist organisation – a step the Government took in December 2016.

Renshaw typified a new generation of far right activism in Britain that was much more openly antisemitic and violent in its language than its immediate predecessors. Whereas most of the British far right had spent the previous few years prioritising attacks on Muslims, and some even claimed to be pro-Jewish, National Action revelled in its glorification of Adolf Hitler and Nazism. They weren’t Holocaust deniers: instead, they celebrated the attempted extermination of European Jewry and wished for another genocide. Compared to other British groups, their online activism was relatively slick and daring, and it was accompanied by street activities that directly targeted the Jewish community. Most strikingly of all, they consciously copied the language and imagery of jihadist propaganda from ISIS and other terrorist organisations.

This report traces Renshaw’s career in the British far right. It shows how he went from being a youth activist on campus to becoming involved in some of the most extreme and violent neo-Nazi groups in the UK, eventually ending up in prison for attempted murder. Renshaw is a case study in how an individual’s activities can escalate from ‘mere’ extremist rhetoric to real-life terrorist plotting motivated by a far right ideology.



Neo-Nazi Jack Renshaw speaking at a National Action rally

THE CAMPUS YEARS: FROM BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY TO NATIONAL STRIKE FORCE

CST first became aware of Jack Renshaw in 2014, due to his involvement with the British National Party (BNP) while he was a student at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).

Renshaw had originally joined the BNP at the age of fifteen, claiming to be motivated by his frustration at the banking system and perceived lack of white British people in UK cities. His activism in the party led to his membership of its youth wing, known variously as Young BNP, Youth BNP and BNP Youth. It has been suggested that the party’s then chairman, Nick Griffin, hoped to use this youth wing to cultivate future party leaders.

In September 2013, Renshaw, then eighteen, arrived at MMU to study economics and politics. His enthusiastic campaigning for the BNP on campus resulted in him being elected its youth liaison officer in 2014, and in May of that year he appeared in a short promotional video for BNP Youth entitled “*Fight Back*”.

The video featured Renshaw, along with seven other teenagers, voicing racist and homophobic views and conspiracy theories regarding those they considered to be attempting to destroy “*British culture and British identity*”.

Renshaw tried to set up an official BNP Society at MMU, but this was prevented by the Students’ Union following protests from other students. In October 2014, as he was beginning his second year at MMU, Renshaw stood as a BNP candidate in a local by-election for the BNP in Blackpool Council’s Waterloo ward. He received only seventeen votes.

The same month, party infighting resulted in the removal of Nick Griffin as the BNP’s leader, while several YBNP members deserted both Griffin and the party.

Despite this setback, Renshaw continued to pursue his far right activism both on and off-campus, describing himself as an independent “*British ethno-nationalist*”. One particular focus of his efforts was an organisation named National Strike Force (NSF).

NSF marked its launch on 28 January 2015 with a “*day of action across Manchester*”. This involved distributing hot drinks vouchers to twelve homeless people in the city centre, and posting race-hate stickers and flyers on the campuses of the universities of Manchester and Salford. These bore the slogan “*Multiculturalism is Genocide*” along with a Nazi Death Head insignia.



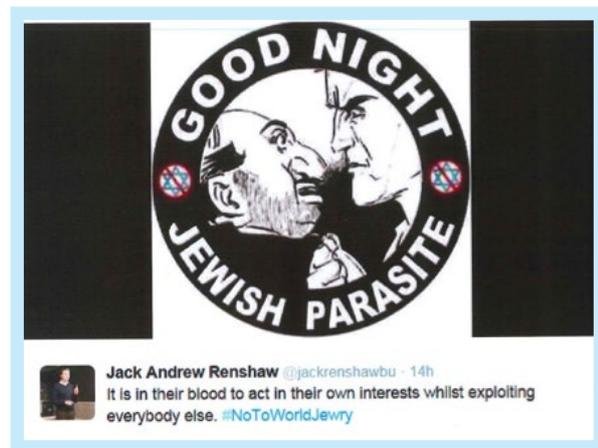
During the course of that day, Renshaw posted several tweets claiming that he and other NSF activists had been distributing copies of these flyers in the north Manchester suburb of Prestwich, an area that is home to a large proportion of the city’s Jewish population.



These Tweets included one in which NSF activist and far right blogger Sean Moran could be seen standing, megaphone in hand, outside the constituency office of the then Labour MP for Bury South, Ivan Lewis, who is himself Jewish.



Two days later, Renshaw tweeted the following antisemitic image and comment on his Twitter feed:



On 10 February 2015, just over a week after this incident, Renshaw posted a virulently antisemitic article on his personal blog “Renshaw’s Corner”, in which, above a photograph of a hangman’s noose, he stated:

“When our time comes, the Jewish elite and the Judeophile traitors who were used as their puppets will be put on trial - if found guilty, they will get the sentence that is deemed appropriate - for me that is hanging. This time, it is for real - Delenda est Judaica.” [“Delenda est Judaica” is a Latin phrase popularised on the American far right that roughly means “Judaism must be destroyed”]

The article also included the antisemitic image below, which Renshaw then tweeted:

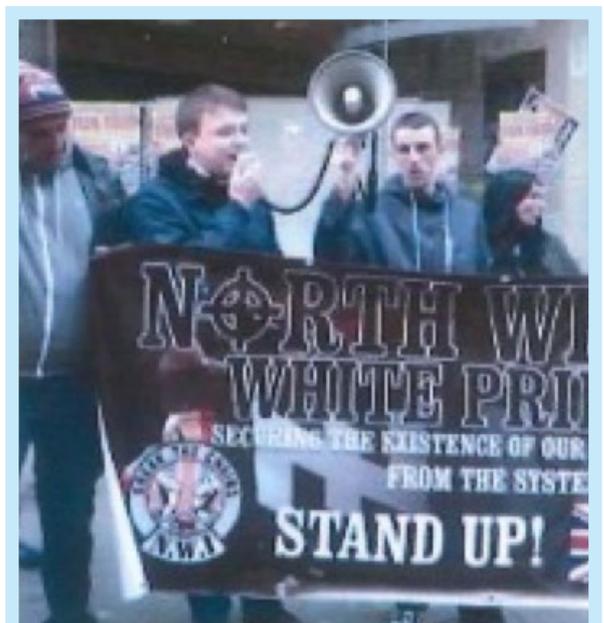


On the day Renshaw posted this blog post, CST made a formal complaint about its content to Greater Manchester Police. Working with the Union of Jewish Students and the MMU Jewish Society, CST also raised concerns with MMU’s campus security regarding the possible threat that Renshaw might pose to the safety of Jewish students both on and off the campus. This complaint led to MMU opening an official investigation into Renshaw’s activities.

In the meantime, Renshaw continued to express neo-Nazi antisemitism, racism and homophobia, such as the below tweet that alleges a Jewish conspiracy to control the BBC. The hashtag #WeAreLongshanks is a common far right reference to King Edward I, also known as Edward Longshanks, who expelled the Jews from England in 1290.



On 9 May 2015, Renshaw spoke at a public demonstration in Rochdale town centre organised by the far right group the North West Infidels (NWI). In his own tweets about it, Renshaw described his speech as “*fervently anti-Jewish*”.



Jack Renshaw speaking in Rochdale, May 2015



Immediately after the protest, Renshaw was arrested on suspicion of using words or behaviour, or displaying written material, with the intent to stir up racial hatred. The allegations related to the antisemitic comments he had published in his online blog in February – one of the subjects of the complaints made to Greater Manchester Police by CST and Jewish students at MMU – as well as to those he had just made in his speech.

Writing in a subsequent blog post about the incident, Renshaw described his speech as being *“critical of the Jew's part in the displacement and destruction of our race, as well as the un-proportional control they have over our society”* and claimed he had *“criticised the “facts” concerning the holohoax”*. He ended the post with the same Latin phrase: *“Delenda Est Judaica”*.

MMU's investigation into Renshaw's activities finally led to a decision to expel him from the university. After he failed his end of year exams, he was refused permission to resit them, and was therefore unable to continue his course.

NATIONAL ACTION

National Action [NA] has been described as the most overtly antisemitic far right organisation to be seen in the UK in decades.

It was founded in 2013 as a far right “youth movement”.

Reports suggest that its membership has never exceeded 100 individuals.

On 16 December 2016, NA was proscribed by the UK Government under the Terrorism Act 2000. This was the first time since the Second World War that a far right extremist organisation had been banned in Britain.

The proscription of NA means that it is a criminal offence to belong to the group, invite support for the group, arrange meetings to support the group and to wear clothing or publicly carry or display articles which support the group. Penalties for offences which contravene the proscription carry a maximum prison term of 10 years and an unlimited fine.

NA's current and former members idolise Adolf Hitler, and proudly proclaim their antisemitism, racism and xenophobia. Their social media, speeches and recruitment videos are filled with hate and incitement to violence.

The organisation showed support for Thomas Mair, who murdered Jo Cox MP in June 2016.

Following NA's proscription, suspected former members attempted to carry on their activities under new organisational aliases. In September 2017, the UK Government laid an Order which provides that two of these successor organisations - Scottish Dawn and NS131 (National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action) - should be treated as alternative names for NA and hence subject to the same proscription.

Examples of hate crimes carried out by NA supporters include:

- In October 2014, NA supporter Garron Helm was sentenced to four weeks in prison for sending antisemitic messages to Jewish Member of Parliament, Luciana Berger, on Twitter. CST worked closely with Berger to support her and ensure that Helm was brought to justice.
- In January 2015, NA supporter Zack Davies stabbed a Sikh man in Tesco in Wales, while shouting “*This is for Lee Rigby*”, and was consequently found guilty of attempted murder. He received a life sentence.
- In June 2015, NA activists sprayed antisemitic graffiti on a menorah in Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham, and hung a Nazi flag on it. They put a video of this hate crime on YouTube to encourage and incite antisemitism in others. Some of the comments under the video on YouTube included “*Gas subhumans jews! Salute from Greece! Heil Hitler!*” and “*n****r loving b****h I'll hang you and your family at the stake*”.
- In July 2016, an NA activist broke into the grounds of a Manchester synagogue and attached a sticker bearing the slogans “*White Zone*” and “*National Action*” to the menorah standing outside the building. A photograph of the desecration was later tweeted by NA.

NATIONAL ACTION AND NEO-NAZI ACTIVISM IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

Undeterred by his expulsion from university, Renshaw maintained his progression towards open neo-Nazism. On 15 August 2015, he took part in an unsuccessful attempt by an amalgam of neo-Nazi groups to hold a “White Man March” through Liverpool city centre. In a blog post published on 25 October 2015, Renshaw announced his decision to stop being an “independent nationalist” and instead ally himself with the relatively new British neo-Nazi group, National Action (NA). Just over a year later, NA became the first far right group in the country to be proscribed by the UK Government as a terrorist organisation.

Renshaw described NA as being full of “ideologically strong nationalists that are radical and constantly striving to better themselves” and embodying “what nationalists should be”. Once again, he ended his post with the phrase, “Delenda Est Judaica”.

On 23 January 2016, Renshaw joined a group of around fifteen NA activists for a demonstration in Newcastle city centre. The group gave Nazi salutes and displayed a banner declaring, “Refugees not welcome. Hitler was right”. Four days later, on 27 January, coinciding with the UK’s annual Holocaust Memorial Day, Renshaw used a Twitter account in the name Jack Albion to say: “Happy Holocaust Memorial day. A day in which we remember Jew lies have taken European lives #WR #NextTimesForReal#WeDidNotDieInNuremberg”.

On 27 February 2016, Renshaw was amongst a group of NA activists who took part in an NWI rally in Liverpool city centre. Standing on the steps of St George’s Hall alongside NA founder Ben Raymond while holding a banner bearing the slogan “Britain is ours! The rest must go!”, Renshaw and the other demonstrators taunted opposing anti-fascists gathered in the square below with Sieg Heil salutes. Violent clashes eventually broke out between the two sides.



NA Demonstration in Newcastle city centre, January 2016



Jack Renshaw’s Tweets on Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January 2016



Renshaw seen masked and holding an NA banner whilst giving a Sieg Heil salute, with other members of NA at an NWI rally in Liverpool, February 2016

Two weeks later, on 12 March, Renshaw personally addressed yet another public NWI rally, this time held in Blackpool. Surrounded by an audience of around forty supporters on the town’s seafront promenade, including masked members of NA, he launched into an antisemitic diatribe.

In his opening remarks Renshaw derided anti-fascists, stating: *“When the time comes, they’ll be in the chambers...and we’ll execute them.”* Then, referring to what he described as *“the refugee problem”*, Renshaw declared: *“it’s a symptom of a disease; that disease is international Jewry”*.

He went on to claim that Britain took the *“wrong side”* in the Second World War by fighting the Nazis whom, he said, *“were there to remove Jewry from Europe once and for all”*. Describing Jews as *“parasites”* and a *“disease”*, he complained that they were being allowed to *“live among us”* and *“destroy us”*, and claimed there was a *“Jewish master race”* running Europe.

Finally, having proudly declared himself a *“National Socialist”*, a *“Nazi”* and a *“fascist”*, Renshaw concluded his tirade with the words: *“We need to start focusing on the real enemy. The real enemy is the Jew!”*

After identifying an online video of Renshaw’s speech, CST reported the incident to Lancashire Police, emphasising that Renshaw’s words constituted incitement to racial hatred and he ought to be prosecuted.

Meanwhile, in early May 2016, CST and the anti-fascist organisation ‘Hope Note Hate’ became aware that a recording of Renshaw speaking at a private gathering of far right nationalists had been posted on the internet. The event, known as the Yorkshire Forum, had actually taken place in Leeds on 6 February 2016.



Renshaw addressing a North West Infidels rally in Blackpool, March 2016

In the recording, Renshaw can be heard stating that white nationalists needed the “killer instinct”. He then demanded that Jews should be “eradicated”, in a chilling passage that echoed the worst neo-Nazi anti-Jewish incitement:

“Hitler was right in many senses but you know where he was wrong? He showed mercy to people who did not deserve mercy... So as nationalists we need to learn from the mistakes of the national socialists and we need to realise that, no, you do not show the Jew mercy. The Jew does not deserve any mercy. The Jew is a merchant, a deceiver, he is a Jew. He's nature's financial parasite and nature's social vermin. He needs to be eradicated.”



Renshaw speaking at the Yorkshire Forum meeting in Leeds, February 2016

CST reported the contents of Renshaw’s speech to West Yorkshire Police, requesting that he be investigated for stirring up racial hatred against Jews and citing his previous antisemitic speech in Blackpool as wider context. CST subsequently provided a Community Impact Statement to Police to support the prosecution of Renshaw for both speeches.

On 16 December 2016, National Action was proscribed by the Government under the Terrorism Act 2000, thus making membership of it, or support for it, a criminal offence. This was the first time since the Second World War that a far right extremist organisation had been banned in the UK. Announcing its proscription in Parliament, the then Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, described NA as a “racist, antisemitic and homophobic organisation which stirs up hatred, glorifies violence and promotes a vile ideology”.

WHITE JIHAD

Jack Renshaw described himself as a “*white jihadi*”. In what might appear to be a contradiction of neo-Nazi ideology, he sought to achieve his white supremacist goals by emulating the propaganda and tactics of militant Islamist groups, such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

Photographs show Renshaw performing the raised finger gesture that has become associated with jihadists. Not only did he intend to die carrying out a suicide terrorism plot to murder an MP and a police officer, but he also suggested to his fellow neo-Nazis that he could film a “*jihadi-style*” propaganda video to be shown posthumously.

Renshaw is not alone amongst neo-Nazis in having sought to appropriate such techniques. Indeed, as an organisation, National Action have openly acknowledged being inspired by the tactics of jihadist groups.

In February 2016, NA released a recruitment video called “*Inside The White Jihad*”, which included images of its members engaged in martial art training. Those who attended its training camps are also reported to have been shown ISIS videos. On Twitter, NA used the hashtag “*#WhiteJihad*” - most notably when, following the murder of MP Jo Cox in June 2016, it posted: “*Only 649 MPs to go #WhiteJihad*”.

Other neo-Nazi organisations around the world appear to be following similar strategies. In a testimony given to a 2019 meeting of the United States’ House Homeland Security Committee, Ali Soufan, a former FBI special agent with wide experience of countering Islamist terrorism, described the threat posed by the nation’s white supremacist extremists as bearing “*a striking resemblance*” to that of jihadism (<http://ow.ly/BWA750zqXKX>).

Soufan summarised the similarity in their tactics thus:

- White supremacists around the world are forming global networks in much the same way as jihadists did in the years leading up to the 9/11 attacks.
- The propaganda of white supremacists warns of an alleged “*Great Replacement*” of whites in the same way that jihadists warn of an alleged war against Islam.
- White supremacists advocate violence to protect racial purity in the same way that jihadists use violence to protect the purity of religion.
- Both white supremacists and Islamists use social media to recruit followers and reinforce their messages.
- White supremacists post online manifestos, whilst jihadists produce martyrdom videos.
- White supremacists from around the world are now travelling to eastern Ukraine to train and engage in combat in a similar way that jihadists travel to countries such as Syria and Afghanistan to do so.

And, of course, central to the ideologies of both white supremacists and jihadists is a vehement hatred of Jews.

FROM EXTREMIST SPEECHES TO TERRORIST PLOTTING

On 11 January 2017, police arrested Renshaw in connection with the speeches he had made in Leeds and Blackpool, and several electronic devices were seized during a search of his home. Analysis of the data on these devices led to him being rearrested on 19 May 2017 by one of the investigating officers, Detective Constable Victoria Henderson, on suspicion of grooming two teenage boys for sex.

Fearing he would be exposed as a paedophile to his far right associates, a few days after being released on bail, Renshaw began devising a plan whereby he could maintain his status as a hardcore neo-Nazi and take revenge against DC Henderson. He planned to do this in combination with a plot he had already been working on: the murder of his local Labour MP, Rosie Cooper. Coming just a few months after the murder of Jo Cox MP in June 2016 by another far right terrorist, Thomas Mair, this represented a dramatic escalation of Renshaw's extremism.

According to the judge who was to eventually try Renshaw for the plot, Renshaw had decided to kill the MP because he saw her as *“representing the Jewish controlled State oppressing the white community”*.

Renshaw's plot involved taking Cooper hostage at one of her social events and killing her by using a machete to *“hack”* her jugular artery. Then, wearing a fake suicide bomb vest, he would demand that DC Henderson come to the scene. Once she arrived, he planned to kill her too and then to *“die by cop”*, shot by the armed police who would have been scrambled to the incident. In a conscious reference to this mimicry of jihadist terrorist tactics, Renshaw had also planned to produce a ‘martyrdom video’ in which he would explain his motives for

having carried out the attack, which he called *“White Jihad”*.

On 1 July 2017, Renshaw revealed the details of his plot to current and former members of (by then proscribed) NA, as they met for a drink at one of their regular haunts, a pub in Warrington. By this time, he had purchased the intended murder weapon, a 19-inch Gladius machete.

Having complained to the gathering about the ongoing police investigation into the allegations against him of inciting race-hate, Renshaw declared his intention to carry out the plot if charged with the offences. In response, NA member Matthew Hankinson suggested to Renshaw that he should target a synagogue. What Renshaw, Hankinson and the others did not know is that one of their number, Robbie Mullen, had secretly become an informer for Hope Not Hate. In an effort to dissuade him from attacking a synagogue, Mullen told Renshaw that it would be a *“bad idea”* to kill children, to which Renshaw retorted: *“All Jews are the same, they're all vermin.”*

Fearing Renshaw was close to carrying out his plot, Mullen immediately contacted Hope Not Hate to warn them. Cooper was quickly informed about the potential threat to her life, while counter-terrorist police began an urgent search to track Renshaw down.



The Gladius machete purchased by Jack Renshaw

It would not be long before all of Renshaw’s various offences caught up with him, and he eventually stood trial four times. He was charged with two offences contrary to Section 18 of the Public Order Act 1986 - using threatening/abusive/insulting words or behaviour or displaying written material with intent/likely to stir up racial hatred - in relation to the antisemitic speeches he had made in Leeds and Blackpool, and for comments he had made on social media. Charges for engaging in conduct in preparation for a terrorist act and making threats to kill soon followed.

In January 2018, Renshaw was found guilty of the charges of inciting racial hatred during his speeches in Leeds and Blackpool, and was jailed for three years. Passing sentence, the judge said of Renshaw: *“He seeks to raise street armies, perpetrate violence against Jewish people and ultimately bring about genocide.”*

The following June he was sentenced to a further 16 months, having been convicted on four counts of grooming a child for sex.

On 12 June 2018, Renshaw, along with NA leader Christopher Lythgoe, Matthew Hankinson and three others, appeared in court charged with membership of the organisation after its proscription in December 2016. All six defendants denied the charge. Renshaw, crucially, admitted to plotting to murder Rosie Cooper MP and making a threat to kill DC Henderson.

On 18 July 2018, Lythgoe and Hankinson were convicted of membership of NA and one of the accused was found not guilty. The jury, however, were unable to decide if Renshaw and the two other defendants, Andrew Clarke and Michal Trubini, had remained members of NA after its proscription.

Renshaw, Clarke and Trubini stood trial a second time for alleged membership of NA but, on 2 April 2019, the jury once again failed to reach a verdict, and the prosecution announced that there would be no further attempt to prosecute them.

On 17 May 2019, 23-year-old Renshaw was finally jailed for life for the charges relating to his plot to murder MP Rosie Cooper and police officer DC Victoria Henderson: engaging in conduct in preparation of a terrorist act contrary to section 5 Terrorism Act 2006, and making a threat to kill contrary to s16 Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

Passing sentence, the trial judge told Renshaw that he would serve at least 20 years before being considered for release. In his sentencing remarks he said: *“You are undoubtedly a dangerous offender. You represent a continuing threat to minority groups, particularly Jewish people.”*

There can be no doubt that Jew hatred was central to Renshaw’s world view as a neo-Nazi, and that his blatant and aggressive antisemitic and racist rhetoric provided ample evidence that he was a dangerous man, capable of plotting brutal violence and murder in pursuit of his supremacist beliefs.

During his final trial, Jack Renshaw remained unrepentant. As he was led from court for the last time, Renshaw gave a Sieg Heil salute to fellow neo-Nazis who had come to show their support – a chilling reminder of how vital the work of the CST continues to be in the protection of the Jewish community from antisemitic terrorism and hatred.

RENSHAW'S CONVICTIONS

On 8 January 2018, Jack Renshaw was convicted of the following two counts of stirring up racial hatred for which he was subsequently sentenced to a 3 year term of imprisonment:

Count 1

On 12 March 2016 gave a speech at the North West Infidels demonstration in Blackpool and used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour intending thereby to stir up racial hatred or, having regard to all the circumstances, whereby racial hatred was likely to be stirred up, contrary to Section 18(1) of the Public Order Act 1986.

Count 2

Between 15 June 2015 and 18th November 2016 gave a speech at the Yorkshire Forum for Nationalists in North Yorkshire and used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour intending there by to stir up racial hatred or, having regard to all the circumstances, whereby racial hatred was likely to be stirred up, contrary to Section 18(1) of the Public Order Act 1986.

In June 2018, he was sentenced to a 16-month term of imprisonment for 4 offences of inciting a child to engage in sexual activity between February 2016 and January 2017. He was also given a 10 year sexual harm prevention order.

On 12 June 2018, Renshaw pleaded guilty to the following charges relating to his plot to murder MP Rosie Cooper and police officer DC Victoria Henderson, and was subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 20 years:

Engaging in conduct in preparation of a terrorist act contrary to section 5 Terrorism Act 2006.

Making a threat to kill contrary to Section 16 Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

Renshaw was also charged with membership of NA after its proscription. He stood trial twice for the alleged offence but on both occasions the jury failed to reach a verdict.

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.



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