



ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS

January-June 2020

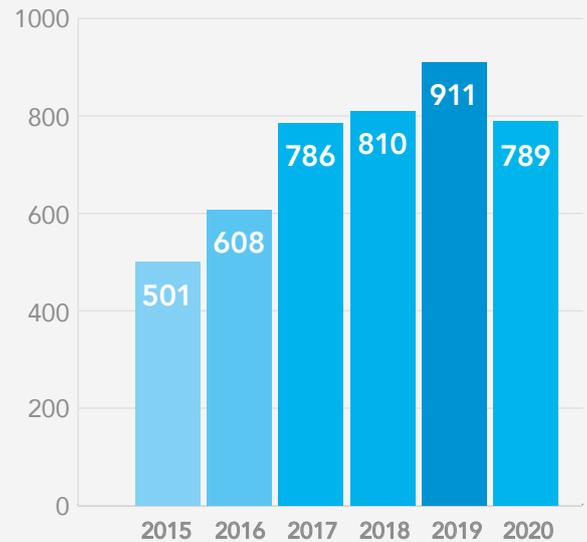
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- CST recorded **789 antisemitic incidents** across the United Kingdom in the first six months of 2020, **the third highest total that CST has recorded in the January-June period** of any year. This is a **decrease of 13 per cent** from the 911 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the first six months of 2019, which remains the highest total that CST has ever recorded for the January to June period, and formed part of a record annual total of 1,813 antisemitic incidents across the whole calendar year of 2019.¹ CST recorded 810 antisemitic incidents in the first half of 2018, 786 from January to June 2017, and 608 in the first six months of 2016.
- Whereas CST recorded over 100 antisemitic incidents in every one of the first six months of the preceding three years, **April 2020** broke this trend with 98 incidents reported. This **was the first time since December 2017 that any monthly total was under 100**, and just the third time since April 2016.
- Nevertheless, the fact that **over 100 incidents were recorded in the other five months** – even in a half-year that saw a drop in reported antisemitism – sustains the pattern of historically high antisemitic incident figures. By way of illustration, CST only recorded monthly totals surpassing 100 incidents on six occasions between January 2006 and December 2015.²

1 The incident totals for past years and months in this report may differ from those previously published by CST, due to the late reporting of some incidents to CST by incident victims, witnesses or other sources. Figures published in this report are also subject to change for the same reason.

2 On five of the six occasions from 2006-2015 when the monthly total surpassed 100, it was mainly due to reactions to Israel-related conflicts. The outlier of this group, January 2015, was the month of an anti-Jewish terrorist attack in Paris.

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS, JANUARY-JUNE 2015-2020



- **The picture of antisemitism in the UK in 2020, and the decrease observed in reported incidents, have been strongly influenced by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.** The lowest monthly totals in the first half of 2020 were April and March, with 98 and 102 antisemitic incidents respectively; the lowest figures recorded by CST since December 2017, and a significant fall from 2019's monthly average of 151 incidents. They correlate neatly with the timeframe across which lockdown measures were most forcefully communicated and applied: the instruction to close down restaurants, pubs and other venues was issued towards the end of March, while messaging was relaxed in May, from the explicit "Stay at Home" to "Stay Alert". April was also the month in which the UK reached what is for now a peak number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths.³ It is likely that all of these factors – and the way the public has at large reacted to them – feed into the reduction in reports of antisemitism in March and April.

3 World Health Organisation: <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/gb>

Cover image: Antisemitic graffiti seen in London, Northumbria and Northamptonshire, between January and June 2020

- Just as the pandemic has forced people to find new ways of communicating, it has compelled those who wish to spread anti-Jewish hate to be equally innovative in doing so. In the first half of 2020, CST received **ten reports of educational or religious online events hijacked with antisemitic content**. This is an entirely new type of incident, informed by a sudden widespread reliance on such platforms, demonstrating the ability, opportunism and speed of antisemitic offenders to adapt to a new social reality.
- The COVID-19 outbreak has not merely given rise to a new medium through which offenders express antisemitic sentiment; it has provided them with new strands of antisemitic discourse as well. During the first six months of 2020, **CST recorded 26 incidents that contained antisemitic rhetoric alongside reference to the pandemic**. These range from conspiracy theories about Jewish involvement in creating and spreading COVID-19 or creating and spreading the myth of COVID-19 for various malevolent and financial purposes, to simply wishing and hoping that Jewish people catch the virus and die from it.⁴
- The fact that antisemitic discourses evolved so immediately regarding Jews and the pandemic is reflective of a wider **trend of antisemitism following events in the news cycle, almost irrespective of their direct relevance to the Jewish community**. While incident figures have not spiked in the first six months of 2020 compared to peaks recorded in previous years, clusters of incidents were reported that correlated with periods when certain discourses were prominent in news, politics and media. For example, 12 of the 26 incidents containing rhetoric related to COVID-19 occurred in March, more than in any of the following

months; the month that lockdown measures were introduced in the UK, government press briefings happened daily, and lives were most dramatically affected.

- In a similar vein, rhetoric and symbology relating to Hitler, the Nazis and the Holocaust were most prevalent in January (38 incidents), the month commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK, while reports of Labour Party-related antisemitism⁵ were at their highest in April and June (both 20): the former saw the election of new leader Keir Starmer, and the latter a positive and widely-publicised meeting between Starmer and representatives of various Jewish communal and leadership organisations. While not as considerable, this follows on from 2019, a year in which incident peaks corresponded to the times when the continuing controversy over allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party was especially prominent. All display the ways that **antisemitic sentiment and discourse can be news-led**, with a single event sparking its expression across the ideological, political and social spectrum.
- Even though the overall incident figure for January to June 2020 is less than that over the same period in 2019, the number of reported online instances of antisemitism⁶ has increased by four per cent from 332 to **344 incidents**. This is **the highest number of**

4 An in-depth examination of coronavirus and antisemitic discourse can be found in CST's publication, '[Coronavirus and the Plague of Antisemitism](#)'

5 These include antisemitic incidents reported to CST occurring within the Labour Party, directed towards Labour politicians and members, spouted by Labour politicians and members (or both), antisemitic incidents where online offenders displayed clear signs of affiliation to/support of the Labour Party in their abuse or their social media profiles. Finally, an incident is considered Labour Party-related for these purposes if antisemitic views appear to be motivated by arguments over alleged antisemitism in Labour: for example, if antisemitic abuse is directed at a former Labour politician after they have left the party.

6 Online incidents refer to antisemitic incidents that take place via electronic communication, with the exception of phone calls and voicemail messages. These include – but do not only mean – social media incidents.

online incidents ever recorded by CST in the first half of a year

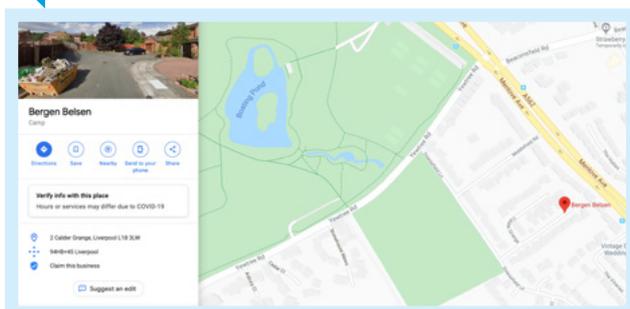
and constitutes 44 per cent of this year's total so far, compared to 36 per cent of 2019's six-monthly figure. The proportional increase of online incidents is not surprising in the context of a global pandemic, though is more due to a reduction in offline incidents than a large surge in online incidents. At a time when social distancing etiquette and heightened anxiety concerning face-to-face contact with others in public continue to make in-person antisemitic exchanges less likely, online platforms represent a convenient, far-reaching, anonymising and secure-feeling environment for those who wish to voice and incite hatred.

- CST had feared that months spent indoors without the stimuli of 'normal' life would see a sharp escalation in reports of online antisemitism, with offenders potentially taking to their keyboards out of increased boredom and disillusionment. Instead, the overall rise observed in these totals has been a more modest **continuation of the shift online** over the last few years, rather than a spike triggered by lockdown conditions. In 2019, CST recorded an average of 58 online antisemitic incidents per month; a total only exceeded three times so far in 2020, in January (63 incidents), May (66 incidents) and June (76 incidents).
- These totals are only indicative, as **the actual amount of antisemitic content that is generated and disseminated on online platforms is much larger**. In

some cases, social media has been used as a tool for coordinated campaigns of antisemitic harassment, threats and abuse directed at Jewish public figures and other individuals. Where this is the case, CST will record a coordinated campaign as a single incident, even if it involves multiple tweets, posts or comments. CST does not trawl the internet looking for online incidents to log, and will only record online incidents that are reported to CST by a member of the public, and where either the offender or the victim is based in the UK.

- CST recorded **47 incidents in the category of Assault** during the first six months of 2020, a decrease of 45 per cent from the 85 incidents of this type recorded in the first half of 2019. Given the impact of COVID-19 on social interactions in public, it is not surprising that reported incidents in this category have almost halved. However, unlike in January to June 2019, **one of these assaults was serious enough to be classified as Extreme Violence** (for legal reasons, CST is not able to share any further details). Despite the fall noted in this category, a concerning feature of those assaults recorded since the easing of lockdown restrictions began is that they have been marked by increased levels of aggression. It may be that this trend reflects a release of frustrations pent up over the course of lockdown, manifesting in more extreme action.
- Incidents of Damage & Desecration to Jewish property fell by 28 per cent, from 39 incidents in the first half of 2019 to 28 between January and June 2020. Nineteen of these incidents involved damage done to the homes and vehicles of Jewish people, two to Jewish schools, two to synagogues, and one to a Jewish organisation.
- There were **36 incidents reported to CST in the category of Threats** in the first six months of 2020, which includes direct threats to people, institutions or property, rather than more general abuse that may

A Jewish area renamed 'Bergen Belsen' on Google Maps, Merseyside, April



contain vaguely threatening language. This marks a fall of 28 per cent from the 50 incidents of this type reported in the first half of 2019.

- CST recorded **673 incidents in the category of Abusive Behaviour** from January to June 2020, a decrease of seven per cent from the 727 instances of Abusive Behaviour recorded across the same period in 2019. This forms 85 per cent of this year's total so far.
- There were **five incidents reported to CST in the category of mass-produced antisemitic Literature** in the first six months of 2020. This signifies a drop of 50 per cent from the ten such incidents recorded in this category between January and June 2019.
- **Sixty-nine per cent of the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the first half of 2020 occurred in the UK cities with the largest Jewish populations, Greater London and Greater Manchester.** Four hundred and seventy-seven were reported to have taken place in the former, comprising a rise of two per cent from 2019's total of 467 incidents across the same time period. CST recorded 69 antisemitic incidents in Greater Manchester between January and June 2020, a decrease of 44 per cent from the 123 in the corresponding timeframe and area last year. The combined proportional contribution of these communal hubs to the UK's half-year total has risen slightly, from 65 to 69 per cent.
- While expected that the majority of incidents would take place in the areas where Jewish life is most established, it is notable that elsewhere in the country, CST has observed a **broader geographical spread of antisemitic incidents**, even though the overall total has diminished. In the first six months of 2020, CST recorded an antisemitic incident in all but two Police regions across the UK (Surrey and West Mercia), compared to nine in the first half of 2019. Several explanations are possible. Online incidents, which do not necessitate physical proximity to Jewish populations, continue to grow, and so does the potential for reported antisemitism to emanate from a more varied geographical profile. As online incidents have increased, so has CST's social media footprint, and with it the accessibility and capacity for the public to report antisemitism. CST has improved its own efforts to determine the locations within the UK of either the offender or victim of online incidents, which is reflected in the fall of incidents for which the location was recorded as as "Online Unknown", from 79 between January and June 2019 to **17** so far this year.
- The ever-developing **relationship and trust between CST and the Police** has played an important role in painting a more accurate landscape of antisemitism in the UK. The increase observed in regions such as Northumbria (from 24 to 40 incidents, of which 24 were reported by the Police), Durham (from one to seven incidents, of which four came via the Police) and Cambridgeshire (from two to six incidents, all of which were reported by the Police) is a testament to this.
- In addition to the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first six months of 2020, **a further 97 potential incidents were reported to CST that are not included in this report's statistics** as, upon investigation, they did not evidence antisemitic motivation, language or targeting. Many of these potential incidents involve suspicious activity or possible hostile reconnaissance at Jewish locations, and they play an important role in CST's provision of protection to the Jewish community. This number is much reduced from the 270 such incidents recorded in the first half of 2019, almost certainly because so many Jewish community buildings were closed during the COVID-19 lockdown.

ANTISEMITIC INCIDENT NUMBERS

CST recorded 789 antisemitic incidents across the United Kingdom in the first six months of 2020, which is the third highest ever total that CST has recorded in the January to June period of any year.

It constitutes a fall of 13 per cent from the 911 antisemitic incidents reported in the first half of 2019, which remains the highest ever total recorded by CST between January and June, and formed part of a record annual total of 1,813 antisemitic incidents across the whole calendar year. It continues the cycle of historically high incident totals recorded by CST over the past five years. CST recorded 810 antisemitic incidents in the first half of 2018, 786 from January to June 2017, and 608 in the first six months of 2016. CST has been recording antisemitic incidents since 1984.

In addition to the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first half of 2020, a further 97 potential incidents were reported to CST though, upon investigation, they did not evidence antisemitic motivation, language or targeting. These incidents, forming 11 per cent of the 886 potential incidents reported to CST, involved suspicious activity or possible hostile reconnaissance at or near Jewish locations, non-antisemitic crime affecting Jewish property or people, or anti-Israel activity that did not involve antisemitic language, imagery or targeting. Although not included in this report's figures, they are important in CST's provision and protection of the Jewish community, and most required some investigation or a security-related response, whether or not they were then deemed antisemitic in nature.

In April 2020, for the first time since December 2017, CST recorded a monthly total of fewer than 100 incidents. The 98 reported incidents in April broke a trend dating back 28 months, and it was just the third time since April 2016 that under 100 incidents were reported in a single month. April and March's tallies of 98 and 102 incidents respectively are the lowest figures that CST has recorded since December 2017 (86 incidents),

representing a sizeable fall from 2019's average of 151 incidents per month. However, in a wider context, these figures are considerable: between January 2008 and March 2016, higher totals were observed in only six months.

A significant influence on the incident decrease from the first half of 2019, especially on the figures reported in March and April – the lowest so far this year – is the COVID-19 pandemic. These troughs line up with the strongest communication and application of lockdown rules, the peak number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths in the UK, and the effects of these measures on social behaviour (discussed further in the next section of this Report). The drop of 32 per cent in offline incidents from the 659 recorded in the first six months of 2019 (72 per cent of the half-year total) to the 445 reported in the first half 2020 (56 per cent of the half-year total), as a logical consequence of fewer people spending time outside – and those who did, keeping socially distant from people outside their household – is perhaps the biggest reason that incidents have decreased by 13 per cent relative to the same period last year.

The lockdown did not have the same effect on online incidents. Three hundred and forty-four online incidents were recorded by CST in the first half of 2020, an increase of four per cent from the 332 such incidents recorded in the first half of 2019 and the most ever reported to CST in the first half of a year. These incidents are predominantly made up of Abusive Behaviour, but also include Threats and mass-emailed Literature. Of these 344 incidents, 238 occurred on Twitter, 38 on Facebook, 35 on other social media, 16 via email, 12 through text or instant messaging services, three were abusive comments on online articles, and two on YouTube. Forty of these posts included antisemitic images, memes or cartoons. This means that 313 of these 344 online incidents took place on social media platforms. They give antisemites the space to express political,

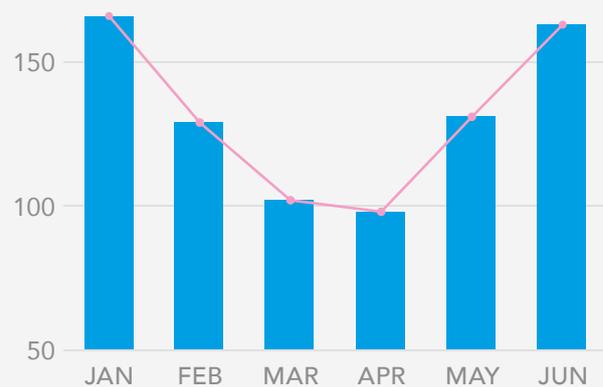
ideological and extremist ideas, both simple and nuanced, as well as the security of distance and anonymity. Abuse can be preserved in these spaces and spread worldwide instantly.

This extends a trend observed over the last five years, during which reports of online antisemitic incidents – and their proportional contribution to the incident total – have multiplied (with the exception of 2017). In the first half of 2019, CST recorded 332 online incidents (36 per cent of the total), 221 over the same period in 2018 (28 per cent), 81 in the first half of 2017 (ten per cent), and 163 in the first six months of 2016 (27 per cent).

It makes sense that this trend would remain unaffected by the pandemic. Heightened anxiety over public, face-to-face encounters with strangers have made in-person interactions less likely, but online platforms remain an expedient domain through which offenders can voice their bigotry. While figures for reported online incidents have stayed consistent across the first six months of 2020 as other vehicles for antisemitism dwindled in lockdown, they did not increase to the extent feared at the outset. CST had feared that months spent indoors without the stimuli of 'normal' life would see a sharp escalation in reports of online antisemitism, with offenders potentially taking to their keyboards out of increased boredom and disillusionment. Instead, the overall rise observed in these totals has been a more modest continuation of the shift online over the last few years, rather than a spike triggered by lockdown conditions. In 2019, CST recorded an average of 58 online antisemitic incidents per month; a total only exceeded three times so far in 2020, in January (63 incidents), May (66 incidents) and June (76 incidents).

Given the vast array of material posted and platforms across which it is circulated, an accurate figure for the actual amount of antisemitic content on social media would be impossible to quantify. Instead, they highlight that online forums continue to be a fertile ground for public expressions of antisemitism, sometimes culminating in coordinated campaigns against Jewish public

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS, JANUARY-JUNE 2020



figures and institutions, which are more likely to be reported. CST may record each specific targeted campaign as a single incident because to record each piece of antisemitic content as a separate incident would be unsustainable and cause extreme variations in CST's incident totals, obstructing clear analysis of offline incidents.

It is difficult to gauge whether the pattern of historically high antisemitic incident figures observed by CST since 2016 is due to more incidents taking place in the UK, or a society that feels more comfortable to report. The answer is likely to be a combination of both. Despite improvements in reporting, it is expected that antisemitic hate crime and incidents are under-reported, especially where the victims are minors or the incident is considered of 'lesser' impact by the victim. The statistics contained in this report should therefore be seen as indicative of general trends, rather than absolute measures of the number of incidents that took place.

Answering why antisemitic incidents take place is not simple. Victim or witness evidence for what may have been a brief, traumatic experience can be vague and disjointed. Many incidents do not have a specific victim and the offender is often unknown, but it is still possible to analyse the data contained in the individual reports received by CST, and the picture they show is complex. In short, there is no single profile of an antisemitic incident victim or offender, nor is there a single explanation as to why antisemitism persists in modern society.

ANTISEMITISM AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The 13 per cent fall in antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the first half of 2020 shows the importance of events affecting antisemitic incident levels. The COVID-19 lockdown acted as a suppressor of physical antisemitic incident levels, while the virus was referenced by antisemites in 26 antisemitic incidents. The correlation between the lockdown and the fall in reported antisemitic incident levels is shown by April (98 incidents) and March (102 incidents) being the two lowest months between January and June 2020.

April and March show the importance of comparing monthly totals in both short and longer term contexts. In one sense, they appear low, as the lowest monthly figures recorded by CST since December 2017 (86 incidents) and are one-third down on 2019's average of 151 incidents per month. From January 2018 to March 2020, CST recorded over 100 incidents. This has been unprecedented, and the theme is continuing. In statistical terms, over 100 incidents per month is a new normal, but antisemitism is not about numbers: it is about people, both as victims and as perpetrators. By comparison, between January 2008 and March 2016, the monthly incident total exceeded 100 on only six occasions, five of which were triggered by reactions to Israel-related conflicts (and the other by Jihadi terrorism against Jews in Paris).

Political and social change can be reflected in hate crime and incident statistics in different ways. The number of antisemitic incidents recorded by CST since 2016 has, at different times, risen in apparent response to arguments over antisemitism in the Labour Party. During the same period, hate crimes in general rose in the lead up to and following the European Union referendum in June 2016, when questions of racism, immigration, nationalism and Britishness were brought more firmly into public discourse.⁷

⁷ Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018/19 (London: Home Office, 2019)

Both these developments show how mainstream politics can affect hate crime levels; the sustained high level of monthly incidents recorded by CST over the past four years reflects the fact that the same factors that can invigorate and embolden offenders to express their hatred, can also motivate victims and witnesses to report hate crimes to CST, the Police or other agencies.

In the context of this year, the relatively low monthly totals correlate with the period in which lockdown measures were most strongly communicated, introduced and applied. People in the UK were encouraged to work from home on March 16, and schools, restaurants, pubs and other communal venues were instructed to close over the course of the following week. Governmental messaging was relaxed in May, from the explicit "Stay at Home" to "Stay Alert", while restrictions regarding social gatherings and their locations have gradually been lifted since. April was also the month in which the UK reached what for now remains a peak number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and related deaths. It is highly probable that all of these factors – and the way the public has at large reacted to them – feed into the reduction in reports of antisemitism in March and April, and thus the half-year total.

Understandably, the type of incidents most adversely impacted by this new reality were those that demand face-to-face and/or physical contact, during a period when lockdown restrictions made such interactions much less common. This proved especially true in the category of antisemitic Assault, of which only one was recorded by CST in April. It is not since January and February 2014 (zero assaults each), when the UK was hit by a series of major storms, that CST has received so few reports of physical attacks. A more detailed exploration of the pandemic's effect on antisemitic Assault can be found in the Incident Categories chapter of this report.

Beyond the overall decrease in reported antisemitism, the pandemic appears to have affected the incidents that CST has recorded in several illuminating ways:

The shift online

Even though the total number of incidents decreased, the first half of 2020 saw the extension of an ongoing trend over the past five years of increasing reports of online antisemitism. Between January and June, 344 online incidents were reported to CST, the highest number of online incidents ever recorded by CST in the first half of a year, and 12 more than the 332 such incidents reported in the corresponding period last year. It is unsurprising that online incidents have continued along this trajectory, as the ability to communicate antisemitism online was unaffected by the COVID-19 restrictions.

However, it is not so much the small increase in the number of recorded online antisemitic incidents that was prompted by the pandemic, but the proportion of the total for which these incidents account. Compare this with previous years:

Online incidents, January-June

2020, 344 of 789 (44 per cent)

2019, 332 of 911 (36 per cent)

2018, 221 of 810 (28 per cent)

2017, 81 of 786 (ten per cent)

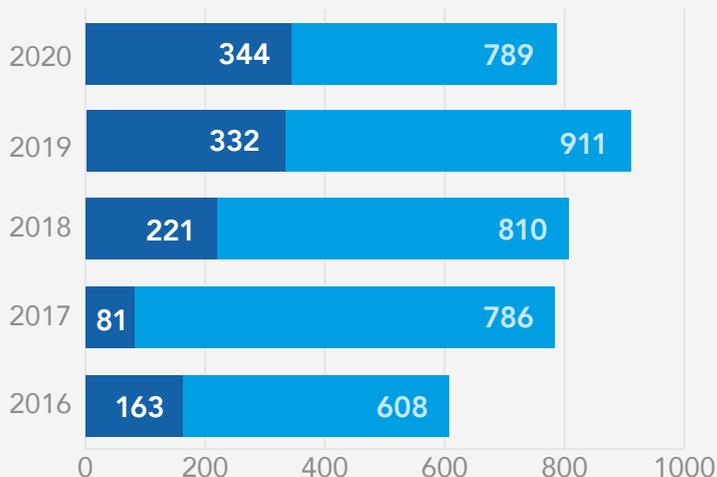
2016, 163 of 608 (27 per cent)

It can be surmised that the observed growth in the proportional contribution of online antisemitism to the overall incident total so far this year is not so much due to the modest rise of 12 individual cases of this nature, but a direct consequence of a reduction in offline incidents, for which the pandemic is chiefly responsible.

A new type of incident

The outbreak of COVID-19 has challenged a huge number of people and organisations to rethink the ways they operate and communicate in adapting to a new and exceptional set of circumstances, both in personal and professional arenas. This opportunity for innovation has,

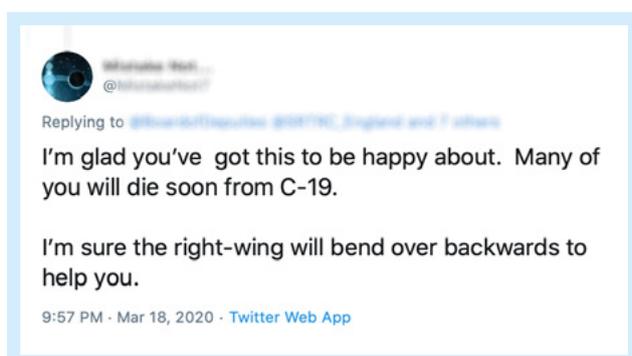
PROPORTION OF INCIDENTS OCCURRING ON SOCIAL MEDIA, JANUARY-JUNE 2015-2020



unfortunately, been equally open to those who wish to express their hatred of Jews, some of whom have done so on the very platforms that people have turned to for socially distant, face-to-face contact. In the first half of 2020, CST received ten reports of online events that were hijacked with antisemitic content. These were hosted by synagogues and communal bodies providing remote access to prayer services and study sessions. On five occasions, antisemitic comments were left in the chat box; in three instances, voices or recordings of voices were heard making antisemitic remarks; in one case, a user joined the webinar with an antisemitic username; and there was one antisemitic image posted in the comments section. This is a completely new kind of antisemitic incident that CST has come across, born out of the sudden reliance on these platforms for social participation, and it required CST to produce special online security advice for video conferencing that was shared across the Jewish community (and used by Police to advise other communities). It is no coincidence that antisemites disrupted these calls; they took advantage of the fact that Jewish organisations needed to engage the community online at a point when it was forbidden to physically meet. This targeting indicates the ability and speed of antisemitic offenders to adjust to and exploit even a radical shift in the social landscape.

Old antisemitic tropes, repackaged for COVID-19

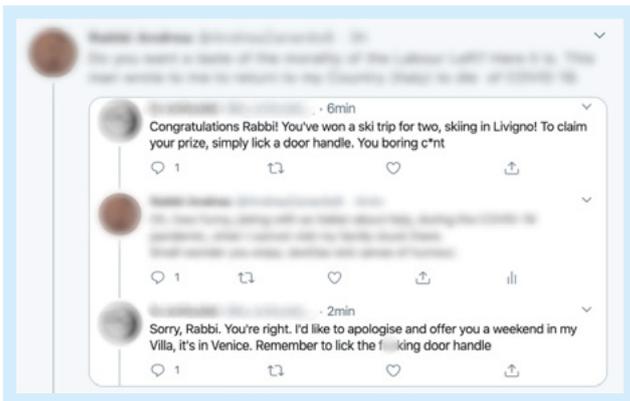
This capacity for adaptation is further evidenced in the explosion of antisemitic discourses that began to populate social media as soon as news emerged of a dangerous new virus spreading across the world. From January to June 2020, CST recorded 26 incidents that included antisemitic rhetoric alongside reference to the pandemic. These include conspiracy theories about Jewish involvement in creating and spreading COVID-19; in creating and spreading the myth of COVID-19 for financial and political gain; and in creating a vaccine for their exclusive use or to be sold at huge profits. Here, several hardwired antisemitic stereotypes are wed. The trope of Jews as carriers of disease was already well-established at the time of the Black Death in the 1340s, and this brand of dehumanisation was heavily invoked in Nazi propaganda. The idea that Jews are untrustworthy, mendacious and manipulating society for their own purposes remains a hugely popular theme in modern day antisemitism. Of the 188 incidents reported to CST in the first six months of 2020 that presented some kind of antisemitic conspiracy theory, 145 drew on the conspiracy theory of global Jewish power. These ideas have simply been tweaked to suit those who seek to spin the pandemic as a tool for antisemitic incitement:



A plainer narrative strand to emerge is the wish that Jewish people catch and die from the virus:

From: [redacted]
Sent: 10 April 2020 11:02
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Informal Rejection

i paid the ticket hope you and your family specially your loved ones if you have kids get Covid 19 you son of a b...h, jewish c...t



Twelve of these 26 incidents, which also include offline instances of verbal abuse, occurred in March – almost half the overall total of coronavirus-related incidents and more than in any other month. It could be that March, when the virus began to have major implications for UK society, represented the peak of public uncertainty and anger, which have historically proved ripe conditions for antisemitic scapegoating.⁸ This initial rage and confusion may have since settled, as the nation has had time to grow accustomed to and accept the consequent disruption to daily life, and as those disruptions have eased. For a deeper dive into these discourses and their proliferation on fringe, extremist platforms (from which incidents are not usually reported to CST), CST's report *Coronavirus and the Plague of Antisemitism* is available on the CST website.

Victim/offender relationship

Another notable element to the incidents recorded over the lockdown period is the

⁸ The Jewish community is of course far from the only community to receive the brunt of COVID-19 related abuse, with a [significant spike in race hate crimes targeting East Asian communities](#)

relationship between offender and victim. In the vast majority of cases, the incidents reported to CST take place between strangers. While this has still been the case in the first half of 2020, there has been a slight increase of interpersonal incidents where the victim and offender have some kind of relationship to each other. Thirty-four (four per cent) of the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST from January to June 2020 were classed as such, compared to 25 (three per cent) of the 911 incidents reported over the same period last year. Ten of these occurred in April which, as discussed, was the month most deeply affected by the pandemic from an incidents point of view, forming ten per cent of that month's total. Compare this to January and February, the two months this year when social behaviour in the UK was largely undisturbed by the virus, and just four of the recorded 160 incidents (two-and-a-half per cent) and four of 124 incidents (three per cent) respectively were deemed interpersonal.

Related to this is the number of reported incidents that took place at people's residential property. The rise of 20 per cent from 50 incidents in the first six months of 2019 to 60 across the same timeframe in 2020 could be partially down to an upswing in neighbour and housemate disputes, which constitute a considerable portion of the interpersonal incidents recorded. What this may show is that with people having to spend more time at home, and frustrations building at life in lockdown, pre-existing localised tensions are potentially heightened. With fewer external outlets, these can spill into hate speech directed at those close by.

INCIDENT CATEGORIES¹⁰

Assault

CST recorded 47 antisemitic assaults in the opening half of 2020, a 45 per cent decrease from the 85 assaults recorded from January to June 2019. One of these assaults was grave enough to be classed as Extreme Violence (no further details can be given for legal reasons). There were 62 antisemitic assaults reported to CST in the first six months of 2018, 80 in the first half of 2017 and 45 between January and June 2016, with none classified as Extreme Violence. Of the recorded assaults, 13 involved punching or kicking of the victim; eight involved stones, eggs or other objects thrown, on four occasions from a passing vehicle; three involved the offender stripping the victim of religious clothes or accessories; on one occasion, a knife was used. Eighteen of these attacks were accompanied by verbal abuse and ten contained an element of threatening language.

As the only incident type that requires face-to-face contact, it is highly probable that this sharp drop in Assault figures is a direct result of the way the pandemic and social distancing impacted and reduced day-to-day, public interactions. This was especially true of April, the month when lockdown instructions were most explicitly communicated and strictly enforced, during which only one antisemitic assault was reported. This constitutes the fewest antisemitic assaults recorded in a single month by CST since January and February 2014, when the UK was struck by a spell of extreme weather and successive major storms (which, incidentally, are the only two months since 2008 in which no assaults were reported).

Perhaps a more abstract and worrying consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak on antisemitic assaults is the nature of those observed since the gradual easing of lockdown

restrictions began. It is not just that they have crept back up to their pre-pandemic frequency – ten were reported in May and eight in June – but they have often been especially aggressive and nasty. This is not to downplay the fact that every unprovoked physical attack is both of these things, but to highlight a trend that has run through those reported in May and June, which include the case of Extreme Violence.

CASE STUDY

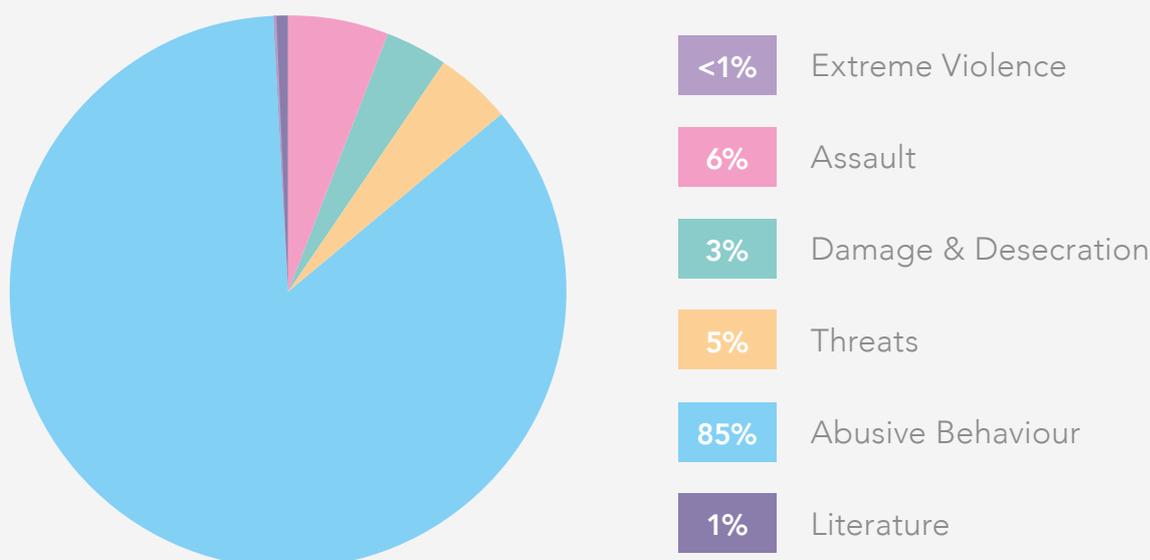
In May, a man and his mother were walking around a park in London when a jogger ran past them, verbally abusing them on his first two laps. On the third lap, the victim challenged the offender on the reason for his abuse, to which he replied, "You are f**king selfish," before punching the victim and kicking him when he fell to the floor. As he was down, the culprit called them "F**king Jewish c**ts," and ran away.

The Police were called and the offender identified, while CST has continued to provide support to the victim.

Although it is very difficult to know exactly why there has been an apparent escalation in assault intensity, let alone understand the mindset of someone who would demonstrate their contempt in such a vicious way, it could be that such events represent the release of frustrations that have built over the course of lockdown. For antisemites who found the confines of self-isolation a claustrophobic, boring and aggravating experience it is possible that even the slight alleviation of regulations presented an outlet for these pent-up feelings.

⁹ A full explanation of CST's antisemitic incident categories can be found in the leaflet '[Categories of Antisemitic Incidents](#)'

ANTISEMITIC INCIDENT CATEGORIES



In the category of Assault, one theme noted in 2019 that persists in 2020 is their regional concentration. Of the 47 antisemitic assaults reported between January and June 2020, 28 (60 per cent) took place across just four boroughs of Barnet (ten) and Hackney (eight) in Greater London, and Salford and Bury (five each) in Greater Manchester. These boroughs are home to some of the largest Jewish populations in the UK, and some of the most visibly Jewish communities. Indeed, in at least 21 of these 47 incidents, CST understands the victim(s) to have been visibly Jewish, usually owing to religious insignia, Jewish school uniforms or traditional clothing.

Again, it is impossible to completely comprehend what prompts an antisemitic assault. However, it could be speculated that Jewish visibility – as an obvious marker of difference – may be interpreted by the offender as a threat to their own culture and territory, or a sign of something so distinct that it becomes easier to dehumanise and degrade. At the same time, it may provide them with a certainty of who and what it is they are attacking, as well as the opportunity for maximum public humiliation in stripping their victims' markers of identity.

Damage & Desecration to Jewish property

There were 28 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the category of Damage & Desecration to Jewish property in the first half of 2020, a fall of 26 per cent from the 39 incidents of this type reported in the corresponding time period last year. To compare, there were 44 incidents recorded in this category over the first six months of 2018, 54 between January and June 2017, and 32 in the first half of 2016. Nineteen of these incidents saw damage done to the homes and vehicles of Jewish people, two involved the desecration of Jewish schools, two of synagogue buildings, and one affected a Jewish organisation.

In 13 of the 28 cases of Damage & Desecration, the offender used graffiti, daubing or stickers of an antisemitic nature to deface the Jewish target (of which four depicted swastikas or made reference to the Holocaust), while eggs, stones, bricks and other projectiles were thrown to cause damage on five occasions. CST recorded three instances of broken windows, and two involving the destruction of the mezuzah – a Jewish prayer scroll affixed to a building's entrance. All included some element of antisemitic targeting, language or imagery in order to be recorded as antisemitic by CST.

Threats

CST recorded 36 direct antisemitic Threats between January and June 2020, dropping by 28 per cent from the 50 incidents of this sort reported in the first half of 2019. Fifty-six incidents were recorded in this category in the first six months of 2018, 58 in the first six months of 2017, and 48 from January to June 2016.

Seventeen of the 36 reported threats took place in public spaces, while four were directed at public figures, three at Jewish organisations or companies, and two at the homes of Jewish individuals. Ten of the incidents in this category were written on online platforms, one delivered via phone call or message, and there was one bomb threat made.

An antisemitic threat made on Twitter, London, January



Abusive Behaviour

There were 673 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the category of Abusive Behaviour in the first half of 2020, signalling a fall of seven per cent from the 727 instances of Abusive Behaviour recorded between January and June 2019, and comprising 85 per cent of this year's overall total. This is the second highest number of incidents classed as Abusive Behaviour that CST has ever recorded in the first six months of a year. There were 616 counts of Abusive Behaviour in the first half of 2018, 582 from January to June 2017, and 473 in the same period in 2016. The umbrella of Abusive Behaviour covers a wide range of incident types, including antisemitic spoken and written abuse, antisemitic graffiti on non-Jewish property, one-off cases of hate mail, and online incidents that

are not direct threats. As with all the incidents included in this report, the recipients of this abuse do not need to be Jewish for an event to be deemed antisemitic.

Among the 673 incidents of this kind, 175 involved spoken verbal abuse and 112 written abuse, while 20 contained threatening language without making a direct threat to the victim. There were 92 instances of antisemitic daubing, graffiti or stickers on non-Jewish property, the majority of which included the depiction of swastikas. Forty-one offensive shouts or gestures in public, of which 23 were made from passing vehicles, contribute to this category's tally, as well as 11 examples of physical hate mail sent to the victims' address and five abusive phone calls or voice messages.

Just as in all categories of antisemitic incidents, the Abusive Behaviour total has diminished relative to the corresponding reported figure in the first half of 2019. However, the fact that the fall of seven per cent in this category is less substantial than the percentage drops in other categories could be partly attributed to the increasing reports of online antisemitism. Of the 673 instances of Abusive Behaviour recorded by CST, 333, or 49 per cent, occurred online.

White supremacist graffiti on a cash machine, London, February



Literature

There has been a drop in the category of mass-produced antisemitic Literature, with five such incidents reported to CST in the first half of 2020 compared to ten in the first six months of 2019, signifying a fall of 50 per cent. CST recorded 32 instances of Literature distribution between January and June 2018, 12 in the first half of 2017, and ten in the corresponding period of 2016.

The abnormally high number of incidents in this category recorded in the first six months of 2018 was in large part due to the circulation

of an antisemitic and conspiracy-laden leaflet called Tip of the Iceberg around homes in north London and Hertfordshire. Reports of that particular leaflet fell to seven in the first half of 2019 and constitute just two of the five reports of Literature distribution submitted to CST so far this year, both of which were received in January. No other reported texts have been produced and disseminated on the scale of this dwindling publication. Of the remaining three pieces of Literature reported in 2020, two were leaflets and one was an email (see below) sent to hundreds of institutions, including Jewish organisations.

CASE STUDY

In the wake of April's Labour Party leadership election, CST – among many other communal journalistic, political, cultural, governmental, and student organisations and individuals, Jewish and non-Jewish – received the following email. It contains the conspiracy of disproportionate Jewish political power in the familiar guise of the "Zionist Lobby", and implicitly lays the actions of Israel at the door of British Jews and Jewish organisations that are not affiliated with Israel.

Subject: Fwd: Keir Starmer New Labour leader

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-52164589>

Labour Party Leadershit Election

New Labour leader, 'Stammering' Starmer vows to lead party into 'new era' of pro-Israeli political compliance.

Yep, the Zionist lobby finally got their Tony Blair stooge replaced with a favourable Israeli ass-kissing Labour leadershit shill.

So Labour will doubtless be henceforth dropping Corbyn's humanitarian policy and condemning the BDS movement - plus giving a thumbs-up to all future 'annexations' - read 'outright thefts' of further Palestinian lands in the military-occupied West Bank - and too the continued privations of the Palestinian population besieged in the Gaza Strip littoral behind Israel's 30-odd foot high Great Apartheid Wall - inside the biggest concentration camp on the planet.

Vote Labour? We think not. 🙄👉👉👉👉

INCIDENT VICTIMS

The victims of antisemitic incidents come from the whole spectrum of the Jewish community: from strictly orthodox to liberal, reform and secular Jews; from the largest Jewish communities of London and Manchester to small, isolated communities all over the United Kingdom; and from Jewish schoolchildren to members of parliament. Occasionally, antisemitism will also be directed at people who do not identify as Jewish.

There were 184 incidents reported to CST in the first six months of 2020 in which the victims were ordinary Jewish individuals in public. In at least 82 of these, the individuals were visibly Jewish on account of their religious or traditional clothing, Jewish school uniforms, or jewellery and insignia bearing religious symbols. Of the 789 incidents recorded by CST from January to June 2020, there was an element of spoken verbal abuse in 202; 63 involved threatening language; abuse of an antisemitic nature was shouted or gestured in public on 46 occasions, 25 of which came from an occupant of a vehicle. All of this is broadly reflective of the most common single type of offline incident reported to CST: the random, spontaneous, verbal abuse of strangers who are presumed for whatever reason to be Jewish, as they go about their daily lives in public spaces that often have a high population of Jews.

There were four antisemitic incidents recorded at Jewish schools in the first six months of 2020, compared to 26 in the first half of 2019. An additional 12 incidents involved Jewish schoolchildren away from school, often on their way to or from home, compared to 29 incidents of this type reported across the same period last year. CST recorded four incidents wherein the victims were Jewish schoolchildren or staff at non-faith schools, falling from the 13 reported from January to June 2019. This results in a total of 20 incidents affecting people and buildings in the school sector, constituting a sharp decrease of 56 per cent from the 68 such incidents recorded in the first six months of 2019. Of these

WHO AND WHAT IS BEING TARGETED



Visibly Jewish individuals



Jewish community organisations, communal events, commercial premises

20 incidents, three came under the category of Assault, all of which targeted Jewish children away from the school premises; two incidents were classified as Damage & Desecration to Jewish property; there was one direct Threat made; and 14 incidents were classed as Abusive Behaviour. For the second consecutive year, no mass-mailed antisemitic Literature was aimed at schools between January and June 2020.

There were 15 antisemitic incidents recorded during the first six months of 2020 that targeted synagogues (buildings, congregants and staff while on location), a drop of 32 per cent from the 22 incidents of this type in the first half of 2019. A further five incidents saw synagogue congregants or rabbis targeted on their way to or from prayer services, falling 69 per cent from the 16 such incidents reported to CST from January to June last year. This adds up to a decrease of 47 per cent from the 38 incidents affecting synagogues and the people inside or travelling to and from them recorded in the opening half of 2019, to the 20 incidents of this kind recorded so far this year.

The substantial drop in antisemitic incidents targeting schools and synagogues – and the people associated with those spaces – is quite probably a direct consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak. The majority of schools closed on March 20, and places of worship were instructed to shut down on March 23. It was not until June that the phased reopening of schools began, and July until places of worship were permitted to open their gates once more. These events, alongside the general reduction in offline

incidents throughout the lockdown period, contribute to these diminished figures.

In the first half of 2020, 18 antisemitic incidents affected Jewish students, academics, student unions or other student bodies, rising by 38 per cent from the 13 incidents of this kind recorded from January to June 2019. Thirteen of these events took place on campus or university property, and five off campus. Among these, there was one instance of physical Assault, one in the category of Damage & Desecration and 16 examples of Abusive Behaviour. It may seem strange that campus incidents have risen and school-related incidents have fallen at a time when universities and schools have been hit with similar challenges. This is likely to be a consequence of CST's concerted drive over the last year to encourage more reporting of incidents from the Jewish student community.

CST recorded 60 antisemitic incidents that took place at people's residential property. The rise of 20 per cent from the 50 incidents of this kind in the first six months of 2019 could be partially down to a rise in neighbour and housemate disputes over the course of lockdown. With people forced to spend more time at home and frustrations building, local tensions are potentially heightened, potentially spilling into hate speech and acts directed at those in closest proximity.

Four incidents were related to the workplace and there were 103 antisemitic incidents that targeted Jewish organisations and companies, just over the 102 such incidents reported between January and June 2019. That this targeting of Jewish organisations has been sustained at a similar level to last year can mainly be explained by online reactions to Jewish communal, leadership and news organisations posting on social media about subjects as varied as: Holocaust Memorial Days, positive steps taken by the new Labour leadership to eradicate antisemitism in the party and the publication of reports about antisemitism. Alternatively, some offenders simply tag Jewish organisations in their online

diatribes. CST is chief among the Jewish organisations reporting such abuse, being the target of 80 of these 103 incidents.

Antisemitic incidents in which the victim was a prominent individual or public figure have fallen by 15 per cent, from 62 instances in the first half of 2019 to 53 reported to CST in the first six months of 2020. Last year's tally largely correlated with an upswing in social media antisemitism reacting to MPs who left Labour for Change UK – citing the problem of antisemitism as a reason behind their decision – played out on the backdrop of the wider discourse concerning allegations of institutional antisemitism within the Labour Party. Of course, this conversation is still very much taking place in political and public circles alike, but no single event has yet occurred in 2020 to trigger such a wave of personal abuse that the departure of Labour MPs for Change UK, citing antisemitism as a reason, did in 2019. Having said that, 53 instances of antisemitism directed at prominent individuals is still a high total; for reference, only 25 were recorded in the corresponding timeframe in 2018. This is reflective of one aspect of modern-day antisemitism and racism, as played out on the Internet: public figures, Jewish and non-Jewish, who use their platform to speak out about anti-Jewish hate, often become lightning rods for the very hatred they are addressing.

CST received a description of the victim or victims' gender in 400 of the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first half of 2020. Of these, 231 (58 per cent) were male; 135 (33 per cent) were female; in 33 incidents (nine per cent), the victims were mixed groups of males and females.

The victim or victims' age was ascertained in 399 of the antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the opening six months of 2020. Of these, 340 (85 per cent) involved adult victims; 33 (nine per cent) involved victims who were minors; ten (two per cent) involved victims over the age of 65; in 14 instances (four per cent), mixed groups of adults and minors were targeted.

INCIDENT OFFENDERS

It is not always easy to ascertain the ethnicity, gender or age of antisemitic incident offenders. Many face-to-face incidents involve fleeting, nonverbal, public encounters in which the offenders may not be fully visible or who leave the scene quickly. Victim and witness testimonies may be vague and disjointed, which is understandable given the nature of the ordeal that they have experienced. Many incidents do not involve face-to-face contact, and it is therefore not always possible to obtain a physical description of the perpetrator. Furthermore, those who commit antisemitic offences online may choose to completely anonymise themselves, which makes it almost impossible to garner any information about the person behind the abuse. On the other hand, if social media profiles are not anonymised, they can provide some personal details of offenders, such as a name, photograph or approximate location.

While it is possible to collect data regarding the ethnic appearance of incident offenders, this data is not direct evidence of the offenders' religious affiliations. The content of an antisemitic letter may reveal the motivation of the offender, but it would be a mistake to assume to know the ethnicity or religion of a hate mail sender on the basis of the discourse they employ.

CST received a description of the offender or offenders' ethnic appearance in 297 of the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded over the first six months of 2020. Of these, 200 (67 per cent) were

described as white – North European; six (two per cent) as white – South European; 46 (15 per cent) as black; 14 (five per cent) as South Asian; just one (less than one per cent) was described as Southeast Asian; finally, 30 (ten per cent) were described as Arab or North African. These proportions have fluctuated very little from January to June 2019, and are broadly typical of a period without a significant trigger event from the Middle East.

A description of the gender of the offender or offenders was provided to CST in 435 (55 per cent) of the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded in the first half of 2020. Of these, the offenders were described as male in 361 incidents (83 per cent of incidents where the offender's gender was obtained), female in 64 incidents (15 per cent), and mixed groups of males and females in ten incidents (two per cent).

From 372 of the 789 reports of antisemitism between January and June 2020, the approximate age of the offender or offenders was obtained. Among these, 338 (91 per cent) involved adult offenders; in 33 cases (nine per cent) the perpetrators were minors; there was only one incident (less than one per cent) in which the offenders were a mix of adults and minors. The offender age and gender breakdowns are statistically consistent with previous recorded averages, and the most common single profile of perpetrator was a white (North European), adult male.

OFFENDER DESCRIPTIONS



Described as male



Described as female



Described as mixed group

DISCOURSE, MOTIVES & IDEOLOGY

CST attempts to monitor the number of antisemitic incidents that take place in the UK each year behind which there is evidence of political, religious, or ideological discourse or motivation. CST now also monitors the number of instances where conspiracy-fuelled sentiments are present: stereotypical tropes about the Jewish people's power, influence, money, and exaggerating or inventing the tragedies of the Holocaust can be especially prevalent in online expressions of antisemitism. It is common for the same incident to combine two or more of these discourses, even if they would appear ideologically incompatible. Such seeming contradictions are entirely representative of the multifaceted nature of contemporary antisemitism. Historic, simplistic prejudices have been manipulated by such a vast array of social, religious, cultural and political factions, that a much more layered and complex landscape has emerged. It should be made clear that the use of political rhetoric and evidence of political motivation are not synonymous; for example, a person who shouts "Heil Hitler" at a Jewish passer-by might be motivated by far right extremist ideology, or they might simply know that this phrase will cause offence and upset to Jewish people.

In 186 incidents – 24 per cent of the 789 incidents reported to CST in the first half of 2020 – the offender or offenders made reference to Hitler, the Nazis, the Holocaust, employed discourse based on the Nazi period, and/or punctuated their abuse with a Nazi salute or the depiction of a swastika. Of these, 34 glorified the Holocaust, its perpetrators and/or their ideas, or expressed a desire to see the mass extermination of Jews once again. A further 32 incidents contained the denial of either the scale of the Holocaust, or its having happened at all. There were 60 instances in which far right motivation was evidenced, wherein alignment with far right extremist ideology or beliefs was expressed beyond – though often alongside – the simple and superficial appropriation of Nazi-era references. Far left discourse was used in 49 incidents.

CST does not consider criticism of Israel or Zionism inherently antisemitic; all of the incidents recorded as such and included in this report have displayed antisemitic language, sentiment or targeting within or alongside discourse condemning Israel or Zionism.

Of the 789 incidents recorded by CST between January and June 2020, 148 made allusions to Israel and the Middle East, and 36 of these directly compared Israel with the Nazis. This particular equation carries meaning and offence because of the relationship that Jews have to the Holocaust, and because it abuses Israel's significance as a home for Jews as the basis for the insult. In 89 of these 148 incidents, there were explicit anti-Zionist or anti-Israel beliefs or motivation present, while the terms "Zionism" or "Zionist" were used in 64 incidents, often as a by-word for "Jewishness" and "Jew". An additional seven incidents contained discourse relating to Islam and Muslims, while four showed evidence of Islamist ideology and, in 14, another religious ideology was present.

In the first six months of 2020, CST recorded 101 incidents connected to specific political parties or their supporters. Of these, 97 were related to the Labour Party, classed as such for the offender's expressed affiliation or support, because the abuse targeted party members or politicians, because it was expressed by party members or politicians, or because it appeared motivated by news and stories relating to Labour. The remaining four incidents comprised of one related to the Conservative Party, one to the Scottish National Party, one to a minor fringe party and one to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

There were 22 incidents in which aspects of Judaism were attacked or deliberately mischaracterised for antisemitic purposes. Of these, nine focused on religious literature, seven manipulated ideas taken from religious scripture, and six focused on religious traditions.

Fifty-one expressions of antisemitism employed stereotypes or dehumanising language and images, while four incidents contained abuse about specific ethnic groups that exist within the wider Jewish community.

Conspiracy theories were evident in 188 (24 per cent) of the 789 incidents reported between January and June 2020, more than any other individual brand of discourse. From these, 145 spoke of Jewish power and influence over global politics, media, finance and other walks of life; 12 aimed to spread myths about the origins of Jewishness, with the intention to undermine the existence of any notions of modern Jewish identity; and 11 involved falsehoods regarding religious rituals and practices.

Of the 789 incidents recorded by CST in the first half of 2020, 165 (21 per cent) involved a combination of two or more of the above political, religious, conspiratorial and racist discourses and ideologies. The fact that within a single incident there can be multiple sources and references of hatred indicates the layered and multifaceted make-up of contemporary antisemitism. Even many offenders are not sure of the basis for their often-confused prejudice, but some ideas appear so deeply embedded across the social, ideological and political spectrum that it is perhaps an error to believe that their manifestation is the result of a conscious rationale in the mind of the perpetrator. These two tweets, made in the same thread targeting a Jewish person who was tweeting about antisemitism in the Labour Party without mentioning Israel or Palestine, exemplify this:



In two comments, the perpetrator commits an offence that alludes to Israel and the Middle East; glorifies the Holocaust; in turn, compares Israel to the Nazis; plays on the trope that

Jews are disloyal; and, because of the context in which it occurred, the incident was Labour Party-related.

This overlapping of rhetoric speaks to a trend observed in 2019's analysis, wherein it was noted that the same conspiracy theories and tropes are often used by those on the extreme right and left. While still true, a theme of this year has been how anti-Jewish discourses are somewhat determined by the news cycle, and the different ways these groups deploy them in response to the same events, almost irrespective of their direct relevance to the Jewish community. In the first half of 2020, there have been flurries of reports that correlated with the prominence of certain discourses in news, politics and media. The emergence of new narratives based on old tropes reacting to the COVID-19 outbreak has been covered in the chapter on the pandemic, and there are further examples. In January, the month commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK, the most common rhetoric (in 38 incidents) made reference to Hitler, the Nazis, the Holocaust, employed Nazi-era discourse, and in some cases their abuse was punctuated with a Nazi salute or swastika depiction. Most of these were clustered around January 27, which is Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK. Of these, ten directly compared or equated Israel with the Nazis, nine denied the Holocaust, and six glorified it. In each case, these monthly totals were not surpassed in the following months. Consider these tweets referencing Holocaust remembrance:





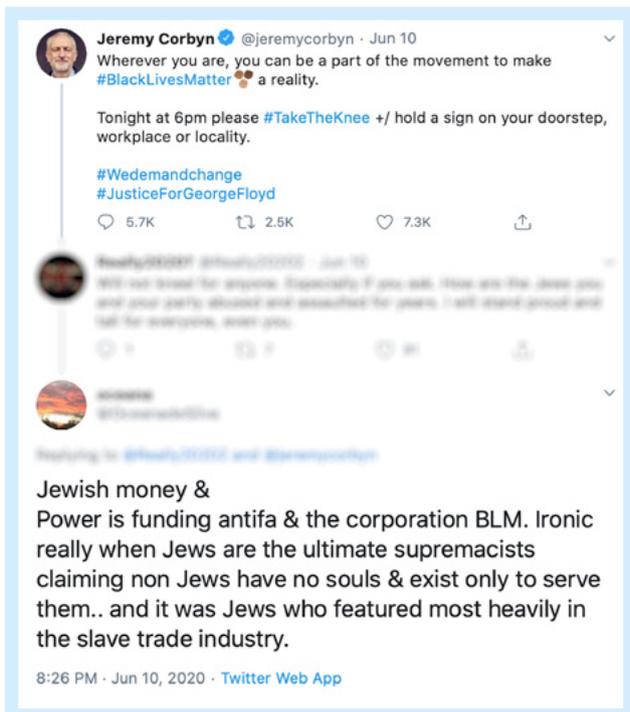
Here, one single news topic has ignited Holocaust denial; Israel/Nazi equivalence (which tends to be a discourse of the far left); dehumanising language that at once dismisses the facts of the Holocaust and glorifies violence against Jews (which is usually an incitement of the far right); and a simple crude joke. This is not an outlier. In the first half of 2020, reports of

Labour Party-related antisemitism were at their highest in April and June (both 20): the former saw the election of new leader Keir Starmer, and the latter a positive and widely-publicised meeting between Starmer and representatives of various Jewish communal and leadership organisations. Here are some of the responses to that meeting:

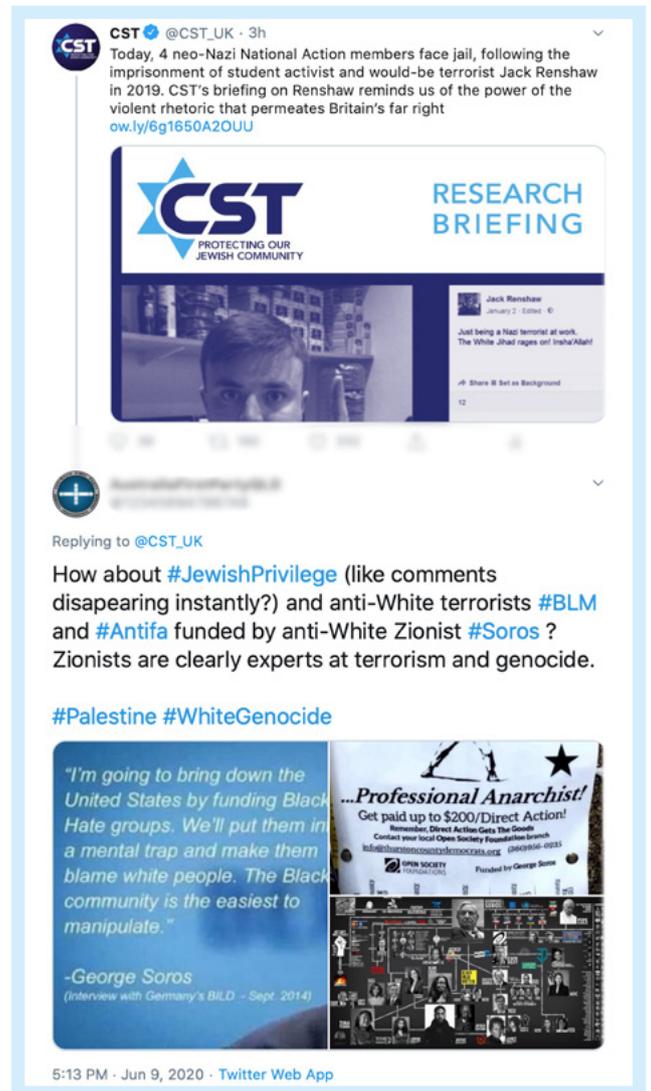


In this case, a Zoom conference intended as a relationship-building exercise between the Labour leadership and the Jewish community

has inspired written abuse; Holocaust denial; conspiracy theories about Jewish power; and criticism of Israel and Zionism where neither are pertinent to the initial story. As a final illustration of this point, since the murder of George Floyd on May 25, CST has recorded 15 antisemitic incidents reacting to or including rhetoric relating to coverage of the Black Lives Matter movement.



In these examples, there is the targeting of a Jewish organisation for the actions of Israel; the Great Replacement theory – a white nationalist conspiracy that suggests Jews are trying to facilitate the replacement of white populations with non-European people of colour; the implicit conspiracies of Jewish financial and political control; and falsehoods regarding Jewish beliefs about non-Jews.



Each of these case studies not only evidences that modern-day antisemitic discourse is often news-led, but reflects how the same stereotypes, conspiracy theories and misconceptions – which exist across the social, ideological and political spectrum – are repackaged and tailored to the story of the day and, by extension, the agendas of those who use any story as an avenue to express their anti-Jewish hatred.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS

Of the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in the opening six months of 2020, 546 occurred across the regions of Greater London and Greater Manchester; the UK cities where the largest Jewish populations reside.

In the former, 477 incidents were reported to have occurred, comprising a rise of two per cent from the 467 London incidents recorded from January to June 2019. The latter's total of 69 is a fall of 44 per cent from the 123 incidents that took place in the Greater Manchester area during the same period in 2019.

CST recorded at least one antisemitic incident in 32 of the 33 Metropolitan Police boroughs of London. Of the 477 incidents recorded across Greater London in the first half of 2020, 135 occurred in Barnet, the local authority which is home to the largest Jewish population in the country. There were 63 instances of antisemitism recorded in Hackney, 42 in Camden, 32 in Westminster, and 16 in Haringey. Within these statistics, 18 incidents were reported to have taken place in London that fall under the jurisdiction of the British Transport Police, and 54 were online incidents that, while it was known that either the victim or the offender was based in London, it was not possible to establish a more specific location for the incident.

Of Greater Manchester's 69 antisemitic incidents recorded for January to June 2020, 24 happened in Salford, 18 in Bury, seven in the City of Manchester, and four each in Bolton and Stockport. In no Police region did assaults form a greater proportion of the total antisemitic incident count than they did in Greater Manchester: 12 of the 69 reported incidents, or 17 per cent, were direct physical attacks.

Allowing for rough generalisations in comparing the type of incidents reported in these two centres of Jewish life, it could be concluded that those occurring in Greater Manchester are more

likely to involve spontaneous acts of racism in public, whereas a higher proportion of London-based incidents are politically or ideologically motivated, aimed at the Jewish organisations, leadership bodies and public figures residing in the capital. To illustrate this, 35 of Greater Manchester's 69 antisemitic incidents, or 51 per cent, targeted individuals in public, compared to 132 of the 477 incidents located in Greater London, or 28 per cent. Conversely, 102 of Greater London's tally, or 21 per cent, were cases of antisemitism directed at Jewish organisations or high-profile individuals, whereas there were just five reported examples of this taking place in Greater Manchester, constituting seven per cent of the region's six-monthly total.

Although the combined proportional contribution of these two communal hubs to the UK's half-year total has risen from 65 per cent in 2019 to 69 per cent in 2020, CST has observed a broader spread of antisemitic incidents across the country. This is made more curious still by the fact that the overall total has also diminished by

Antisemitic graffiti with other conspiracy theories in an underpass, Northamptonshire, June



Graffiti related to the supporters of a Polish football team, London, March



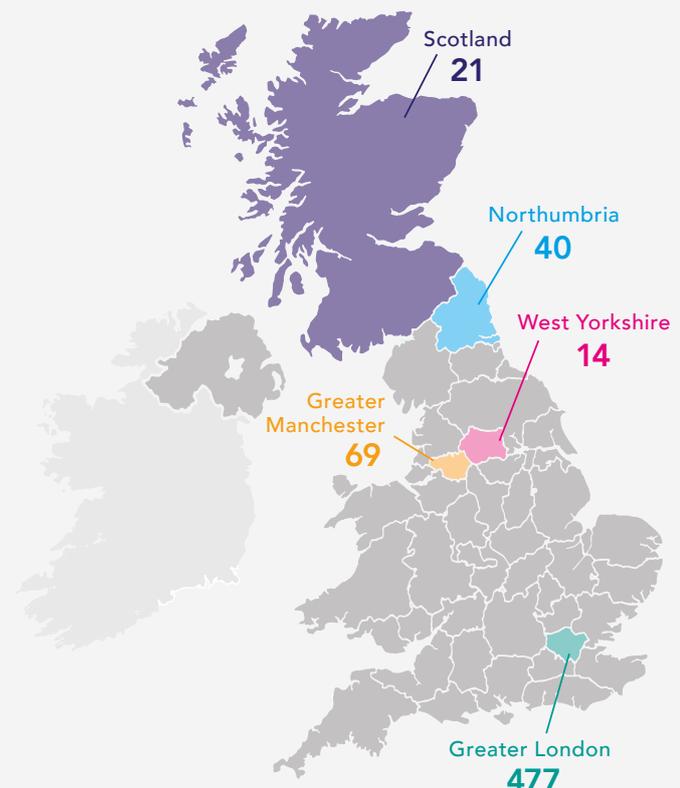
14 per cent, from 911 to 789 incidents. In the first six months of 2020, CST recorded an antisemitic incident in all but two Police regions across the UK (Surrey and West Mercia), compared to nine in the first half of 2019.

A possible factor behind this is the continuing rise in the use of online forums as a medium for sharing antisemitic sentiment. The accessibility and convenience of social media platforms in particular have granted a wider demographic the opportunity to vent their prejudice, without the need to be physically near Jewish communities for their abuse to reach its desired target and impact. Another potential explanation is CST's increasing efforts to establish the precise location within the UK of either the offender or victim of online incidents, which is reflected both in the fall of incidents recorded as "Online Unknown" – from 79 between January and June 2019 to 17 so far this year – and in the rise in incidents occurring in Scotland: 21 incidents were reported as occurring in Scotland between January and June 2020, 15 of which were online, compared to nine incidents across the same period in 2019. Finally, the deepening relationship and trust between CST and the Police has

proved invaluable in gaining a more accurate understanding of where and how antisemitism happens in the UK. The increases observed in Northumbria (from 24 to 40 incidents, of which 24 were reported by the Police), Durham (from one to seven incidents, of which four came via the Police) and Cambridgeshire (from two to six incidents, all of which were reported by the Police) are a testament to information sharing agreements that have been recently enacted.

Aside from the locations already mentioned, the Police regions with the highest numbers of antisemitic incidents recorded by CST were West Yorkshire with 14 (compared to 23 in the first half of 2019), Lancashire with 13 (increasing from seven between January and June 2019), Hertfordshire with 12 (down from 43 in the first six months of 2019), and Sussex with ten (compared to nine over the same period last year). Included within all of the figures in this chapter are 21 incidents that took place on public transport (eight on London buses, eight on the London Underground and five on other transport) that fall under the authority of the British Transport Police.

LOCATIONS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF INCIDENTS



REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

CST classifies an antisemitic incident as any malicious act aimed at Jewish people, organisations or property, where there is evidence that the victim or victims were targeted because they are (or are believed to be) Jewish. Incidents can take several forms, including physical attacks on people or property, verbal or written abuse, or antisemitic leaflets, posters and graffiti. CST does not include the general activities of antisemitic organisations in its statistics, nor does it include offensive placards or mass antisemitic chanting at political demonstrations. Antisemitic material that is permanently hosted on websites is not recorded as an incident, and CST does not proactively trawl through online platforms in search of antisemitic comments to add to the incident tally. However, CST does record antisemitic comments posted on social media, messaging services, blogs or internet forums if they have been reported to CST by a member of the public who fulfils the role of victim or witness; if a comment made online shows evidence of antisemitic content, motivation or targeting; if the offender is based in the United Kingdom, or has directly targeted a UK-based victim. Examples of antisemitic expressions that fall outside this definition of an antisemitic incident can be found in CST's *Antisemitic Discourse Report*, available on the CST website.

The inclusion of the number of incidents from social media recorded by CST is not intended to reflect the real number of antisemitic comments on social media, which is likely to be so large and widespread across different platforms as to be effectively impossible to calculate, but rather to reflect the reality that social media platforms have become increasingly prominent as arenas for public expressions of antisemitism that Jewish people are more likely to view and to report, whether or not they are the intended audience. Social media is also increasingly used as a tool to facilitate coordinated campaigns of antisemitic harassment and abuse directed

at Jewish organisations, public figures and other individuals. Where social media is used for targeted campaigns of that nature directed at UK-based victims, CST may record each campaign as a single incident, although that campaign may involve hundreds or even thousands of antisemitic tweets, posts or images.



A Twitter thread in which several antisemitic comments were made, classed as a single incident

Not every incident recorded by CST has an identifiable victim. Not every incident recorded by CST has an identifiable perpetrator; but every incident recorded by CST has a reporter. Antisemitic incidents are reported to CST in a number of ways, most commonly by telephone, email, the CST website, via CST's social media profiles, or in person to CST staff and volunteers. Incidents can be reported to CST by the victim, a witness, or by an individual or organisation acting on their behalf. In 2001, CST was accorded third-party reporting status by the Police. CST has a national Information Sharing Agreement with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), and similar agreements with a number of regional forces, which allow CST to share antisemitic incident reports, fully anonymised to comply with data protection requirements, so that both CST and the Police can glean as complete a picture as possible of the number and nature of reported antisemitic incidents. CST began sharing antisemitic incident data with Greater Manchester Police in

2011, followed by the Metropolitan Police Service in 2012. Now, using the national agreement, CST shares anonymised antisemitic incident data with several forces around the UK. Any incidents that are reported to both CST and the Police are excluded from this process to ensure there is no 'double counting' of incidents.

This partnership continues to prove hugely valuable. In the first half of 2020, 285 of the 789 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST were reported by the Police. This comprises 36 per cent of the total for this period, building on the 32 per cent contribution for January to June 2019. Of these 285 reports, 223 came via the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), 24 from Northumbria Police, 20 from Greater Manchester Police (GMP), and 18 from other police services around the UK.

In the first six months of 2020, 247 of the 789 incidents recorded by CST were reported by a witness to antisemitism, whether in person, online or exhibited in a public space, whereas 135 incidents were reported directly to CST by the victims themselves. In 21 cases, a friend or relative of the victim related details of the incident. CST staff reported 82 occurrences of antisemitism. This sizeable figure is largely due to the online incidents in which CST has been tagged or targeted with abuse, which was the case in 80 of the 103 recorded incidents directed at Jewish organisations or companies. Ten incidents came to CST's attention via a media report, seven from security guards at Jewish premises, and two through CST volunteers.

Antisemitic graffiti seen in a playground, Hove, March



ANTISEMITIC INCIDENT FIGURES, JANUARY–JUNE

Antisemitic incident figures by category, January–June 2010–2020

Category	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Extreme Violence	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Assault	45	42	34	29	22	45	45	80	62	85	46
Damage and Desecration	47	35	29	20	27	36	32	54	44	39	28
Threats	19	15	20	18	19	39	48	58	56	50	36
Abusive Behaviour	211	197	223	154	238	374	473	582	616	727	673
Literature	3	5	4	2	4	5	10	12	32	10	5
TOTAL	325	294	312	223	310	501	608	786	810	911	789

Antisemitic incident figures by month, 2010–2020

Month	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	30	45	39	33	53	109	81	155	106	119	166
February	48	54	52	38	43	88	69	134	119	182	129
March	54	49	75	23	39	83	82	110	119	171	102
April	61	45	48	44	58	75	105	142	151	147	98
May	50	58	44	48	51	60	140	121	182	150	131
June	82	43	54	37	66	86	131	124	133	142	163
TOTAL	325	294	312	223	310	501	608	786	810	911	789

Antisemitic incident figures, full breakdown, 2020

Month	Category	Extreme Violence	Assault	Damage & Desecration	Threats	Abusive Behaviour	Literature	MONTH TOTAL
January		0	9	7	11	137	2	166
February		0	8	4	8	108	1	129
March		0	8	5	3	86	0	102
April		0	1	4	2	90	1	98
May		0	10	4	4	112	1	131
June		1	10	4	8	140	0	163
CATEGORY TOTAL		1	46	28	36	673	5	789

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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CSTmedia



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Manchester (Northern Regional Office) **0161 792 6666**

