

Leading, Defending & Enriching Jewish Student Life

PESACH APPEAL 5781

Providing in a Pandemic



Southampton J-Soc committee members deliver Friday Night Dinner, doorstep style. Inset: our survey for self-isolating Jewish students helped us support students across the UK with their vital needs at this time.

Today the Union of Jewish Students launches its Pesach Appeal.

Commenting ahead of the launch, UJS President James Harris said:

“A year ago, due to the pandemic, Seder nights were cancelled, and Jewish students could not come together to celebrate Pesach with their parents and grandparents. These last 12 months have been hugely challenging and very few students have had anything like the year they expected.”

A year later, we are all preparing to do it again. But a lot has happened in that year. And for Jewish students, UJS has been at the heart of it.

Whilst campuses have been closed and students have been learning and studying online, UJS has:

- Supported over 100 students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds
- Delivered almost 7,000 Friday night dinners to students' doors
- Organised a student Dvar Torah every single week of the year

Since the pandemic hit, our digital events have had more than 1.5 million impressions, with hundreds of hours of live events, activities and workshops being broadcast to Jewish students in every corner of the UK.

In spite of the restrictions due to

lockdown, the tier system and social distancing regulations, UJS has been:

- Campaigning against antisemitism in Bristol
- Successfully lobbying over 50 universities to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism
- Receiving national and international press coverage for our work
- Standing up against the delegitimisation of Israel on campuses including successfully campaigning to stop speakers spreading lies and incitement
- Launching a successful “Israel Election” podcast and educational series
- Developing a world-leading “Digital Israel Portal” for students to deepen knowledge and engagement with Israel

UJS is leading the way both Jewishly and digitally for students in the UK and Ireland.



Projecting a significant reduction in our ability to fundraise the money needed to enrich the lives of these Jewish students, UJS had to rethink how we work. We made cuts, changed method and even moved our offices. What we didn't do is abandon Jewish students in their hour of need.

Now more than ever, we need you to support UJS.

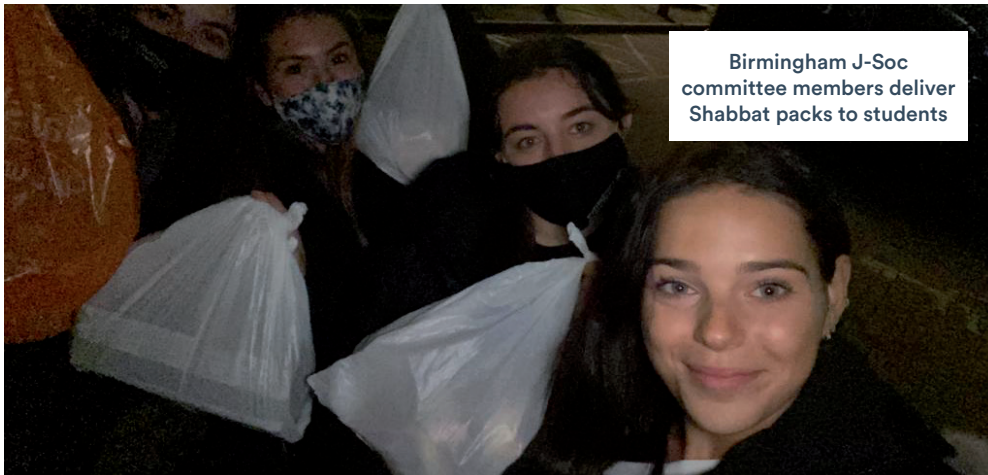
Please give generously and help us make sure that Jewish students are not abandoned and can be the exceptional future leaders of our vibrant Jewish community and beyond.



Left: Leeds J-Soc produces and delivers Shabbat packs for Jewish students in isolation. Above right: Cambridge J-Soc packs for Mitzvah Day

SUPPORT JEWISH STUDENTS THIS PESACH

Friday Night Dinner for all Birmingham students



Birmingham J-Soc committee members deliver Shabbat packs to students

Over 100 students in Hillel House, every week. That's the Friday night experience I was expecting to preside over when I became Birmingham J-Soc President in late 2019. I was lucky: the start of my presidency was before COVID took hold and we celebrated Shabbat with our wonderful student community, week in, week out.

As the academic year got started, it quickly became clear it wouldn't be able to continue. COVID meant my committee of 17 volunteer student leaders weren't able to hold a single Friday Night dinner for hundreds of new students, as we'd hoped and planned.

But we didn't let that stop us providing for more than 1,000 Jewish students in Birmingham. We quickly came together to create a plan. Supported by UJS and other campus partners, we made sure Jewish students in Birmingham were not left without their connection to a Jewish community.

What's the best way to connect a Jewish community? Food of course!

Through the weeks and months of lockdowns, restrictions, and more, we created and delivered more than 250 Shabbat packs every week, amounting to over 5,000 in total.

With the UJS team's help, we built a support structure for Jewish students through every stage of this strange and challenging year.

"Jewish students and UJS need your support - we cannot do this alone."

17 new student leaders have now taken over the J-Soc for next year. They need leadership and guidance from the experienced team at UJS, now more than ever. Your support will ensure UJS is able to continue its leadership training, experienced guidance, and support, not only for the 1,000 Jewish students I was proud to represent at Birmingham J-Soc, but for the almost 8,500 Jewish students at every Jewish society in the country.

Jewish students and UJS need your support - we cannot do this alone.

Natasha Hertz was Birmingham J-Soc President late 2019 - early 2021

1.5 million views on digital platforms

Counter-antisemitism training for more than 150 staff at universities and students' unions

52 Dvar Torah videos made by students - 25,500+ views

200 online live, social and training events

Financial support to 100 students in need

6,000 Shabbat and festival meals hand-delivered



UJS and Jewish students celebrate Purim 5781/2021 on 'Zoom'

Launching: The All-New UJS Digital Israel Portal

UJS is proud to launch a worldwide first in digital Israel content with the **UJS Digital Israel Portal**, built in partnership with UJIA.

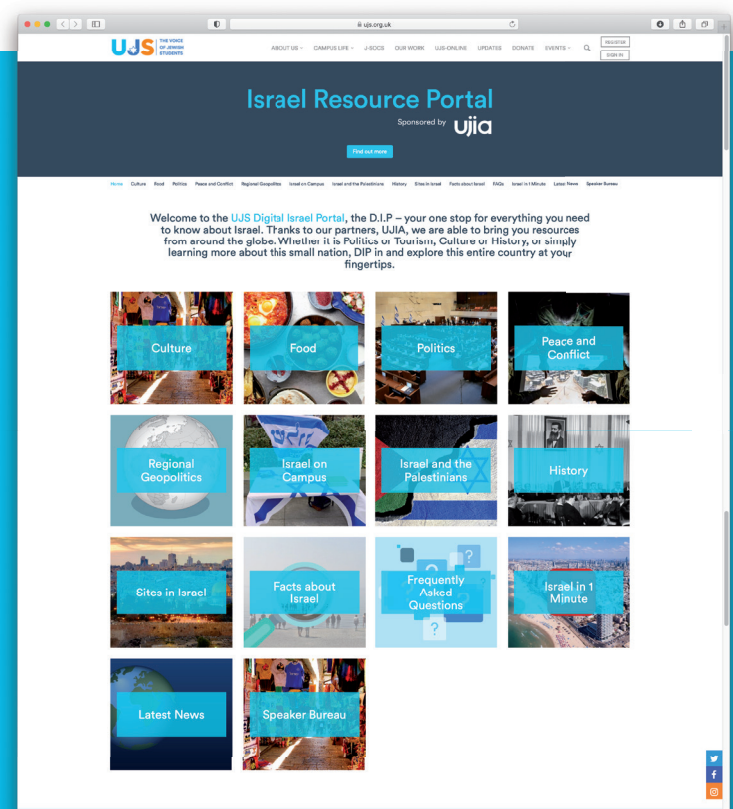
With worldwide content from multiple sources, this is the first Israel content aggregator of its kind. Featuring articles, videos, booklets and special features, the Digital Israel Portal gives users insights into and knowledge of Israel not available anywhere else.

Working with partners across the political spectrum to provide content already in existence, as well as building and generating unique and new content, UJS

is proud to once again be at the forefront of Israel engagement, celebration and education for the entire UK student community.

Whether you want to learn about Culture or Conflict, Geography or Geopolitics, Politics or the People, everything you need can be found at www.ujs.org.uk/israelportal

This much-needed resource will help our Jewish community's young members become better educated, more knowledgeable and more engaged, and we are so proud to have led the way in its creation.



SUPPORT JEWISH STUDENTS THIS PESACH

Fighting antisemitism: 74 universities adopt IHRA definition



“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews”. It really is quite simple. Yet at the start of this academic year, only 29 of the 133 British Universities had seen fit to adopt this definition of the world’s oldest hatred into their working practice.

With almost 9,000 Jewish students at universities in the UK, there are no longer any excuses for not signing up and using this simple definition.

Fast forward to now, and Jewish students together with the entire Jewish community are planning their Passover celebrations, once more isolated from their friends and families. But thanks to the exceptional work of the Union of Jewish Students, that number has leapt up to 74. That is 42 additional campuses that have adopted this definition, taking the safety of their Jewish students seriously, thanks to UJS and more positive decisions are imminent.

I am proud to be the Government’s Independent Adviser, stamping out

and calling out antisemitism wherever it rears its ugly head. I am even more proud to be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with the team at UJS in taking this fight against hatred and racism onto our university campuses.

For Jewish communities and for the country it is vitally important that Jewish students have confidence that their university life will be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. Any impingements on this should be regarded as wholly unacceptable by their university.

Yet Jewish students are being challenged at far too many universities. Their right to ask to be treated equally is being questioned and in some cases actually put to a vote. This is not ok, and not what we as leaders in society can accept.

That is why I am standing with UJS, and the hundreds of student leaders and activists they support in this fight for equality. We are not asking for much. We are simply asking for Jewish students to be afforded the right to define racism, hatred and

prejudice against them, simply for being Jewish students.

But I would go one step further.

“I call on each and every one of you, this Passover, to do what you can to support UJS. Your support allows UJS to do the hard and often thankless work that goes in to protecting Jewish students and standing up against antisemitism, wherever it rears its ugly head.”

The future prosperity of our country, under every definition of the word, relies on healthy universities. They need to be welcoming of Jewish students and seen to be welcoming of Jewish students, being able to be themselves whilst being students.

Every university must embrace IHRA. This is happening rapidly. It is thanks to the brilliant leadership of UJS. I applaud their work and am proud to support them wherever and whenever I can.

Lord Mann is the Independent Adviser to the UK Government on Antisemitism

Thank you to these universities for adopting the IHRA definition:

- Aston University
- Birkbeck, University of London
- Bucks New University
- Central School of Speech and Drama
- Cranfield University
- Durham University
- Harper Adams University
- Imperial College London
- Keele University
- Lancaster University
- Leeds Arts University
- London School of Hygiene
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Queen Mary University of London
- Rose Bruford College of Theatre & Performance
- Royal Academy of Music
- Royal Agricultural University
- Royal Holloway
- Royal Veterinary College
- Sheffield Hallam University
- Southampton Solent University
- St George’s University of London
- Staffordshire University
- University Campus of Football Business
- University College Birmingham

- University College of Osteopathy
- University of Birmingham
- University of Bolton
- University of Cambridge
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Chester
- University of Chester
- University of East Anglia
- University of Glasgow
- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Huddersfield
- University of Hull
- University of Leicester
- University of Oxford
- University of Portsmouth
- University of Salford
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University of Warwick

To stay updated with our ongoing IHRA campaign, visit www.ujs.org.uk/ihra_campaign



UJS Team 2020/21

“We have ensured UJS is not just a Union of Jewish Students but a Union FOR Jewish Students”

From the President’s desk

As a result of the pandemic, we have had a one-off opportunity to completely re-evaluate the way we engage with our students. Moving our work online has allowed us to expand our activism and develop our campaigning as well as provide Jewish students with more diverse and enriching content.

Over the last year, we have shaped government policy and brought incredible momentum through our many campaigns, including on the adoption of the IHRA definition at universities across the country, which has empowered a new generation of “digital-first” activists. We have created a digitally enhanced UJS that is set to succeed in a post-lockdown world, and we have ensured that UJS is not just a Union of Jewish Students but a Union FOR Jewish Students.

We’ve guaranteed that our students are

at the heart of all we do and will do in the year to come.

I am so proud to have led this organisation, a foundation of the UK Jewish community, and am proud of all our students for their strength and resilience in the face of each and every challenge facing them.



James Harris is UJS President 2020-21

Celebrities, politicians join UJS in fight to get hate out of Bristol University

For over two years, Jewish students at Bristol University have been fighting targeted hatred and attacks against Jewish organisations and institutions on campus. They have been fighting against the very institutions that are supposedly built to protect them – their university leadership, their lecturers and in some cases even their classmates.

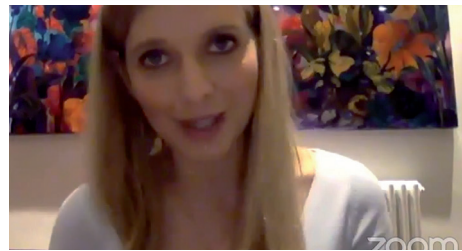
But for two years, Jewish students have been showing they are made of tougher stuff. They haven't been deterred or beaten, and they have not strayed from their aim: making Bristol university a safe campus for all who choose to go there.

Just six years ago, Bristol Jewish society was a small, up and coming Jewish society within the wider UJS family. In those past six years, Jewish life at Bristol University has thrived and grown exponentially.

From a mere 50 Jewish students at that time to 500 J-Soc members today, Bristol University is the latest campus to be affectionately labelled a "Jewiversity" by fellow and prospective Jewish students.



Echoing as loudly as possible, the sentiments of @BoardofDeputies and many others, why is @BristolUni "so determined to keep shielding someone whose rants would not look out of place on Der Stürmer" aka, virulently antisemitic, unadulterated Nazi-style propaganda.



Rachel Riley Tweeted her support publicly (top) after addressing the virtual rally (bottom)



Thangham Debbonaire MP (Bristol West) addressing the virtual rally

Addressing an online rally viewed live by almost 2,000 people and now seen by over 15,000, Bristol J-Soc President Edward Isaacs said, "at no point did I think that, just because I was born a Jew, I would ever have to respond to the attack of being viewed as the enemy".

In a single sentence, Edward was able to sum up the feeling of Bristol's Jewish students. No student chooses to attend university in order to have to justify their existence on their campus of choice. No Jewish student wants to go through what Edward has so successfully led his Jewish society through in recent months.

"Every step of the way, UJS will be there, shoulder to shoulder with our incredible Jewish students"

But with support from UJS' experienced campaigns and leadership team, backed by key community allies, Bristol J-Soc have successfully taken a stand and drawn a line in the sand.

Rachel Riley and David Baddiel are among the prominent names who've lent their voices to support Bristol J-Soc. Thangham Debbonaire, MP for Bristol West, has also been vocal in her support, as Bristol's Mayor Marvin Rees, and numerous other MPs.



Marie Van Der Zyl, Board of Deputies President, addressing the virtual rally

This will not be the end. This will continue to impact Jewish students. Every step of the way, UJS will continue to be there, shoulder to shoulder with our incredible Jewish students, the leaders not only of tomorrow but of today, saying we will not be silenced, we will not be ignored. We, our community, and our allies must stand together and say Get Hate Off Our Campus NOW!



Bristol J-Soc President Edward Isaacs addressing the virtual rally

Left to right, top then bottom row:

Cambridge J-Soc Friday Night Dinner: UJS supports thousands of Shabbat & festival meals annually

UJS Activist Training Day: UJS has hosted numerous sessions training activists to combat hate and antisemitism on campus

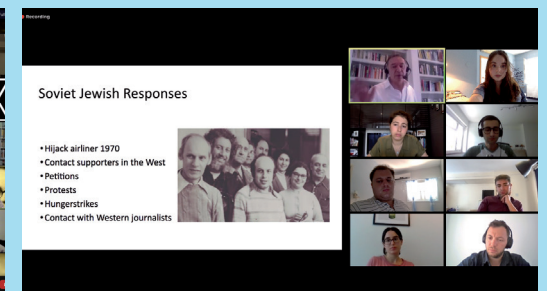
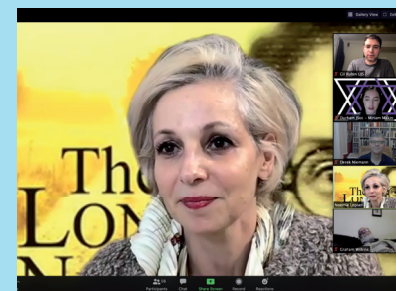
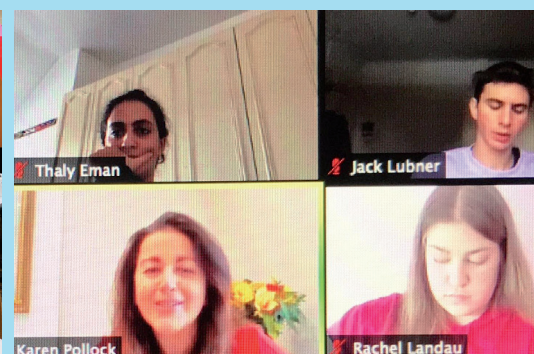
Leeds Welfare Packs: At the start of the year, UJS supported many J-Socs to provide welfare packs for their students

UJS Conference 2021 with over 150 Jewish students: Fully "online", UJS conference was still able to happen, shaping policy for the next three years

Marking Holocaust Memorial Day (Durham): Even without the ability to host survivors on campus, UJS ensured numerous events took place, educating students on the horrors of the Holocaust

Training current and future leaders of the Jewish community: Providing high level, engaging educational and developmental sessions for hundreds of future leaders

Selected snapshots: what we've been up to



This Pesach, Jewish students still need us – maybe more than ever before. So now we need you.

Your support will help us continue to stand by the 8,500 Jewish students in the UK and Ireland – whether they face antisemitism, demonisation, isolation, or simply want a cultural or social Jewish experience on campus. Your donation this Pesach will ensure this can continue long into the future. Thank you for your ongoing support, and chag Pesach sameach – have a happy, healthy and safe Passover from all of our family to yours.

