

# Revealed: NUS delegates call for expulsion of main Jewish group

From the [Jewish Chronicle](#)

Delegates at a National Union of Students (NUS) conference voted in a breakout meeting to stop recognising their Jewish members' main representative body because of its support for Israel, the *JC* can reveal.

The non-binding vote against the continued affiliation of the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) was carried overwhelmingly at the NUS conference in Blackpool last month during a session that began with calls to “dismantle” the Jewish state as a “racist project of colonialism”.

Lord Mann, the government adviser on antisemitism, said he was appalled by the move and promised it would not succeed. “In the 1980s extremists started banning Jewish societies. We beat them. And today we will beat the extremists again. UJS will stand strong and proud and we will stand with UJS,” he said.

Fears that anti-Israel student activism in the UK has stepped up amid the US campus riots – with protest camps already set up at 15 universities – have prompted Education Secretary Gillian Keegan to call an emergency meeting with vice-chancellors this week to discuss what can be done to better protect Jewish students and staff.

At the Oxford protest camp, participants have been asked to agree that as a “colonised” people, Palestinians have the “right to resist against occupation”. They have also been told they must support the Thawabit, a set of demands issued by the Palestine Liberation Organisation in the 1970s that would lead to the end of the Jewish state, including a right of return

for six million Palestinian refugees and their descendants. One Jewish student was reportedly refused entry to the camp when he declined.

At the NUS conference last month, swastika graffiti was discovered at the venue along with several examples of the slogan "f\*\*\* Zios".

The NUS, which announced an official "antisemitism action plan" only last year, apologised for the vote against the UJS, saying it had had only been an attempt to "take the temperature" and was non-binding.

Tory MP Robert Halfon, who recently stepped down as universities minister, told the *JC*: "The NUS said they have changed, but it is same old, same old. The question is whether or not NUS is institutionally antisemitic. It is up to them to prove otherwise. The treatment of UJS will be a seminal example."

Unreported at the time, the move to expel the UJS took place at an NUS conference session on Palestine. It began with an invasion of the stage by a group of students claiming the only way to bring peace was to "dismantle the Israeli state" founded on "ethnic cleansing", and that Zionism was a "racist ideology" and a "colonial project".

One of the conference organisers then asked delegates whether the UJS should continue to be the "representative for Jewish students".

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a Jewish student who was present told the *JC*: "The session had an incredibly hostile atmosphere, especially when delegates began to vilify the UJS. The proposal to disaffiliate from it was backed by a vast show of hands in support, which in a room of non-Jewish students felt isolating and wrong. Students with no skin in the game had decided that their place was to speak on matters impacting Jewish students."

The following day the NUS issued a statement of apology, saying the vote had been “outside of our guidelines and rules”, accepting that the UJS was still recognised and that “the politics and actions of UJS are a matter for Jewish students themselves to discuss in Jewish only environments”.

But UJS president Edward Isaacs pointed out that only last year, in response to a damning report by Rebecca Tuck KC on antisemitism in student politics, the NUS had “committed to ensuring that Jewish students would be as welcome as any other student in their spaces”.

Yet at Blackpool, Isaacs went on, “Jewish students were faced with gross antisemitic rhetoric, with a swastika graffitied in the toilets, defence of Hamas in debates, and reports of Holocaust inversion from fellow delegates. For over 100 years, UJS has proudly been the representative voice of Jewish students across the UK and Ireland. It is reprehensible that delegates used NUS conference as a vehicle to seek to oust UJS and delegitimise the voice of Jewish students.”

One delegate who spoke at the conference was University of East Anglia union sabbatical officer Serena Shibli, who shared Instagram posts celebrating the Hamas massacre on the day it occurred. One hoped it would lead to “victory to Palestine, from the River to the Sea” and that the IDF would be “sent packing”. Shibli was approached for comment.

Other university camps have also featured extreme, anti-Zionist rhetoric. . . In Manchester, the campers’ chant was “from Manchester to Gaza, globalise the intifada,” and at Sheffield, “say it loud and clear, we don’t want no Zionists here”.



Pro-Palestinian encampment on the lawn of the Kings College, University of Cambridge (Photo: social media)

*Of the picture (left) I'll make the same observation that others have made about these camps in both the UK and the US. Nearly all the tents are exactly the same; somebody has bankrolled the protest such that they could make a bulk order with a camping company for new uniform tents. These are not individual students bringing their own tents last used at Glastonbury, or from the garage at home from Sixth Form outward bound expeditions. This is backed by an organisation with deep pockets.*