

## To help challenge and eradicate antisemitism, UCU members should:

- ▶ avoid language that might be well meaning but could actually be patronising; respect a person's religious, non religious or belief structure but do not treat people as ambassadors for their religion or ethnic group
- ▶ not make assumptions about an individual's beliefs, religious practices or belonging based purely on their nationality or background
- ▶ make sure you think about the balance between the right to freedom of expression and sensitivity to individuals' religion or belief
- ▶ acknowledge the diversity among people who identify as Jewish – a wide range of cultures, experiences, religious (and non-religious) beliefs and practices, traditions and lifestyles
- ▶ be sensitive to the needs of religiously observant Jewish colleagues, for example, by avoiding calling meetings on Friday afternoons and Saturdays, where possible, and by checking that meetings do not clash with Jewish religious festivals
- ▶ support all UCU's work around combating racism and fascism. Antisemitism is central to fascist ideology. Encourage members to sign up to the UCU equality networks: **contact: eqadmin@ucu.org.uk**
- ▶ organise events at work including around National Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January.

## Holocaust Memorial Day

Every year, on 27 January, the world marks Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), which provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. On HMD we share the memory of the millions who have been murdered in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur in order to challenge hatred and persecution in the UK today.

**'Many people consider tackling the issues of equality and fairness to be the province of anti-discrimination law, of advocacy groups, or of government, to be addressed by discrete, often marginal programmes of activity**

**directed at particular groups. But the greatest impacts on the opportunities open to individuals are made by everyday decisions in every part of society, most of which apply equally to everyone.'**

*Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010*

**UCU commemorates Holocaust Memorial Day every year.**

## Some ideas to help you commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day

- ▶ **UCU films** Host a screening of UCU's two films commemorating the Holocaust  
[www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6876](http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6876)
- ▶ **UCU materials** Download our updated reading and viewing list  
[www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/g/1/HMD\\_suggestedreading.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/g/1/HMD_suggestedreading.pdf)
- ▶ **Read and share** the UCU Testimonials submitted by UCU members  
[www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/r/3/HMD\\_UCU\\_testimonials.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/r/3/HMD_UCU_testimonials.pdf)
- ▶ **Display UCU's HMD wall chart**
- ▶ **Branches/LAs** can also request copies of the UCU Holocaust Memorial Day wall chart by sending an email to [eqadmin@ucu.org.uk](mailto:eqadmin@ucu.org.uk)

**The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust** has a wealth of resources on their website [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk) – all free. In addition, you can register for a free training session in your region. For details and to obtain a free campaign pack contact [enquiries@hmd.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hmd.org.uk).

## Find out more about UCU's work on equality at [www.ucu.org.uk/equality](http://www.ucu.org.uk/equality)

You can find information about the events, seminars and conferences that UCU organises throughout the year at [www.ucu.org.uk/events](http://www.ucu.org.uk/events)

## And if you're not a UCU member you can join online at [www.ucu.org.uk/join](http://www.ucu.org.uk/join)

*If you feel you are being discriminated against at work, contact your branch immediately.*

**UCU**  
University and College Union



**UCU is committed to challenging antisemitism at work and within the union. UCU wants all its members to be treated equally at work, to participate fully in the union and to have the protection of UCU when it is needed.**

**ANTI-SEMITISM**

## UCU's commitment to equality

While our prime concern is to fight for greater equality and to oppose all forms of harassment, prejudice and unfair discrimination at work, we recognise that this includes the injustices that members face in all areas of their lives, whether on grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, class, impairment or disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or belief, age, socio-economic status, casualisation or any other aspect of status or personal characteristic which can lead to discrimination.

## Antisemitism

Antisemitism is hostility toward, or prejudice, or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic or racial group. An international expert on antisemitism, Dr Brian Klug of Oxford University, offers the following short definition:

**'At the heart of antisemitism is the negative stereotype of the Jew: sinister, cunning, parasitic, money-grubbing, mysteriously powerful, and so on. Antisemitism consists in projecting this figure onto individual Jews, Jewish groups and Jewish institutions.'**

Antisemitic actions and behaviours cause offence and distress. Antisemitism at work takes many forms including:

- ▶ jokes, banter, insults and taunts
- ▶ the dissemination of antisemitic literature
- ▶ excluding people because they are Jewish
- ▶ physical attacks
- ▶ excluding people based on perceptions or assumptions.

Antisemitism, whether it is intentional or not:

- ▶ undermines confidence and self-esteem
- ▶ is offensive
- ▶ makes work an unsafe place
- ▶ means treating someone differently and unfairly
- ▶ can be viewed as a potential or actual hate-related offence
- ▶ is unlawful and contrary to the rules of UCU.

Employers have a duty to prevent harassment and provide remedies if it occurs.

UCU takes antisemitism very seriously and wants employers and our members to take it seriously too. It takes a lot of courage to challenge harassment and discrimination and members are encouraged to approach the union for support and advice. UCU will:

- ▶ take all complaints seriously and treat them sensitively and confidentially
- ▶ provide support through our branches and regional offices
- ▶ train our officials and activists to be able to provide advice and support.

Antisemitism at work is covered by the Equality Act 2010. The key concepts in the Act include: **direct discrimination** (for example if a college refused to employ staff from certain religious backgrounds); **indirect discrimination** (for example if team meetings are always held on a Friday afternoon); **harassment** (for example offensive and hurtful comments directed towards any individual in the workplace, on account of their religion or ethnicity); and **victimisation** (when an individual is treated detrimentally because they either bring a case to an Employment Tribunal, intend to bring a case, or support someone else in bringing a case).

Another important collective protection is the **public sector equality duty**. Previously born out of the need for public authorities to combat institutional racism, this duty includes a requirement to foster good relations at work including around religion and belief.

UCU recognises that members often belong to more than one equality group and identifying the reason for discrimination and harassment can be complex.

## Managing freedom of speech within the law: the right to freedom of expression must be balanced with sensitivity to an individual's religion or belief

Freedom of expression is crucial for a civilized society but must be in the context of tolerance, good relations and respect for the rights and dignity of others.

We must ensure equality and freedom from discrimination and harassment on grounds of religion, race or national origin for individuals and groups. And we must show respect for the freedom of individuals to join together to celebrate their ethnicity and practice their religion.

UCU will vigorously defend the rights of its members to exercise their academic freedom at work and to engage in political debate within the union, including on sensitive and difficult issues such as the Middle East.

**But the union will not tolerate discriminatory language or behaviour.**

Examples of this are:

- ▶ holding Jews collectively to blame, eg for the actions of the Israeli Government. Many Jews do not support the actions of the Government of Israel.
- ▶ denial or trivialisation of the Holocaust; use of Holocaust imagery in describing Jews; accusing Jews of exaggerating the Holocaust
- ▶ targeting Jews or Jewish organisations for anti-Israel protests. For example, a 'Free Palestine' slogan is legitimate political debate. Daubed on the wall of a synagogue, it is an antisemitic act.
- ▶ deliberate distortion, exaggeration or misrepresentation of religious concepts and teaching.

The rules of the union require all its members to refrain from all forms of harassment, prejudice and discrimination, and this includes antisemitic speech or behaviour.

The rules enable the union to discipline or expel members found to have engaged in antisemitism. The union will not hesitate to take action against members in these circumstances.

The ideal is to ensure that the actions listed in this leaflet are followed so that Jewish members are protected as full and valued members of the union.