



STUC St Andrew's Day Anti-Racism Brochure 2011

No Racism is Good Racism

In his contribution to last year's STUC anti-racism brochure, our then Chair referred to the finding by Ipsos MORI that almost a quarter of British Jews had witnessed an antisemitic incident during that year. Since then, another survey has reported that, amongst Jewish students, "respondents in Scotland are the most likely to report having experienced some form of antisemitism – over half have witnessed and/or been subjected to antisemitism. By contrast, a third of respondents studying in London had experienced antisemitism."

In the last two months, a St Andrews student who was convicted and expelled for a racist attack on a Jewish colleague claimed that attacking someone asleep in his own bed was "legitimate political protest" against Israel – then referred to him outside court as a "rich American Jew" and compared him to Shylock. A blogger has been sentenced for posting on the Scotsman website that "the Jews are not fit to breathe our air." Teenagers in Glasgow created "Welcome to Israel, only kidding you're in Giffnock" on Facebook, and the following week the Herald published an article comparing Gaza to Giffnock, both using traditional stereotypes of rich Jews.

Did they do any research before identifying the local community as representatives of Israel, or just use a handy stereotype? It's not surprising that Ipsos MORI found that more than half of those who had experienced an antisemitic incident attributed it to the assailant's views on Israel.

Where is the Trade Union movement in condemning what is more than ever showing itself to be "the antisemitism of fools"? Whatever happened to the Macpherson principle that "a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person"?

Treating antisemitism differently from other racism is just a way of treating Jews differently from others, and that is antisemitism. That is why, with the greatest of regret, I am no longer a trade union member. The fact that unions refuse to examine the beam in their own eyes speaks volumes. As we cautioned last year, it's all very well condemning racism; you have to be very sure that you are not feeding it.

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