

 **Annual 2011
Conference**

Conference Report

Sunday 4 December 2011



Hosted by

Leeds Jewish Society
Michael Kosky, President 2010-11

Staff

Daniel Grabiner, President

danielg@ujjs.org.uk

**Richard Verber, Professional Development and
Leadership Training Director**

richardv@ujjs.org.uk

Daniel Sheldon, Campaigns Director

sheldon@ujjs.org.uk

Charlotte Karp, Communications Director

charlottek@ujjs.org.uk

Emily Black, London Officer

emilyb@ujjs.org.uk

Judith Flacks, Developing JSocs Officer

judithf@ujjs.org.uk

Emma Stone, Membership Services Officer

emmas@ujjs.org.uk

**Amanda Shoffman, Project Coordinator and
Interim Office Manager**

amandas@ujjs.org.uk

Matthew Keston, MASA Fieldworker

mattk@ujjs.org.uk

Mark Passer, Operations Associate

markp@ujjs.org.uk

Techie stuff

Twitter hashtag: #ujjsrefresh

Special thanks

A big thanks to the following organisations
for their support for Summit:

UJIA

CST

Israel Lazarus Charitable Trust
Leeds University Union

Thank you

This weekend, UJS held its first Annual Conference for seven years.

Students had the opportunity to debate and vote on policy ideas, hold the President to account and vote for the new leadership of UJS.

The policies in this document will now be enacted by the UJS team over the coming year.

They also heard from NUS President Liam Burns about the current challenges facing students in the UK.

And on Friday and Saturday, new J-Soc committees from over 20 J-Socs took part in our Summit - our flagship leadership training event.

To the 170 students who attended our Summit and Conference, thank you for contributing to the future of our Union.

Dan Grabiner,
UJS President 2011-12



Election Results

President

Alex Green, Birmingham



Candidates

Alex Green, Birmingham
290 votes 81%

Re-Open Nominations
61 votes 17%

Abstentions
8 2%

National Council

Michael Kosky, Leeds
Sarah Granof, St Andrews
Emily Carp, Manchester
Dan Mackenzie, Leeds
Adam Charlton, Nottingham

Candidates

Maggie Suissa
Sam de Kare-Silver
Ella Rose
Max Sobell
Daniella Doffman
Adina Holder
Charles Braunstein
Michael Kosky
Ilana Sichel
Hannah Skolnick
Danny Hakimian
Emily Carp
Sarah Granof
Jessica Engler
Max Sobell
Re-Open Nominations

Community Ideas

As passed by Annual Conference

CO1 Reaffirm a commitment for the two state solution

CO3 Tikkun Olam in UJS

The following ideas did not pass

CO1a Add amendment

CO2 Support the progressive Israel we know – educate on the J14 movement

CO1 Reaffirm a commitment for the two state solution

Eytan Halon, Joseph Moses
Birmingham

What do you want?

1. I want UJS to reaffirm its commitment to the two state solution to end the Israel-Palestine conflict.
2. When it comes to promoting a solution on campus, I believe UJS should be at the forefront and mandated by Jewish students to initiate campaigns in favor of mutual self determination for Israelis and Palestinians in the form of a two state solution.

Why do you want it?

1. I believe that a majority of Jewish students support a two state solution, and therefore it is important for this to be reaffirmed as UJS policy.
2. Campaigns that are initiated by UJS that involves Israel must have legitimacy and support from Jewish students.
3. Therefore I would like UJS to be mandated by Jewish students, to campaign for a two state solution.

CO3 Tikkun Olam in UJS

Jay Stoll
LSE

What do you want?

1. The lack of discourse on the environment and social action is something of an embarrassment.
2. This “idea” seeks to mandate the incoming UJS executive team to make social action a priority campaign, alongside “ensuring a fair debate on Israel and the Middle East” and “Promoting a positive campus environment”.
3. Social action incorporates adhering to much more improved ethical policies on publications and merchandise wherever possible, such as sourcing freshers’ diaries from environmentally sustainable and ethically respectable sources.
4. It also means a move from UJS on campuses to the wider community. UJS has the potential to be a huge force for good and outreach programs are a vital absence in our current agenda. This can range from helping children in Jewish schools across the country prepare for the debates ahead, to helping out at care homes, or homeless shelters. We need to do more.

Why do you want it?

1. I am not an eco-warrior and this is certainly not a product of my time in Habonim Dror! The reason I want this to pass is I believe the UJS, with the resources it currently has at hand, has the great potential for a real impact in improving the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves. This is a basic tenant of Judaism.
2. Be it through tsedaka, or tikkun olam, it is our duty as a Jewish Union of Students to lead by example. There is also no reason why the UJS should be shying away, or remaining silent on the environmental challenges that lie ahead. To my knowledge, we dont have policy that says it is a fallacy, therefore we should take a proactive stance on this!
3. Essentially though, this “idea” seeks to kick start the development of a long forgotten potential of the UJS.

UJS & J-Socs Ideas

As passed by Annual Conference

UJ3 Fair Representation

UJ4 UJS should be governed by a proper national council

UJ5 UJS needs to think about how they treat ex committee members

UJ6 Jewish Students need a better understanding of the work of the UJS Tsevet

UJ8 £1 donation on every UJS / JSOC ticket

The following ideas did not pass

UJ1 All JSocs should endeavour to run their committees on a academic yearly cycle

UJ2 Complete autonomy for JSoc campaigns

UJ7 More inter JSOC sport competitions other than JUEFA cup

UJS Fair Representation

Maggie Suissa

Manchester

What do you want?

1. A policy that ensures all our student members are given a fair representation. It will enforce UJS to work towards securing that our Women and LGBTQ students are given a voice from a central level. This is to recognise that these members are significantly underrepresented and disadvantaged by the social stigmas attached to them, and that the Jewish community at a student level make it a priority to remove such prejudices.
2. To campaign and educate on how sexual harassment; homophobia, and domestic abuse are prevalent matters within our own community and that we at a student level have the ability and enthusiasm to overcome these social atrocities. To promote tolerance and equality for Jewish LGBTQ students in the student community, whereby the safe space is set up for like minded students to interact.
3. To work with other Jewish community organisations that focus on such campaigns, i.e. Jewish Women's Aid etc... and promote action days such as BaGeLs Pride, throughout the year.
4. To work towards ensuring that within the structure and organisation of UJS there is a balanced representation and equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender or sexuality.
5. That UJS be mandated to hold activism days for women, LGBTQ etc members throughout the year, so that regardless of UJS office worker's personal aims, the issue of fair representation is continued from office to office.
6. That UJS promotes on a local level equality through outreaching and engaging with all students, thereby encouraging all students to be involved with their JSocs.

Why do you want it?

1. UJS should be at the forefront in promoting equality and fair representation. The various different religious sects from Orthodoxy to Reform act and educate on the matter of equality in regards to their religious interpretations. UJS, as a union that seeks to equate all Jewish students and promote a singular unified body, should proactively campaign on the underlying belief that all our students deserve equal and fair representation with the same opportunities applied to all.
2. Female representation in the Jewish community, as seen by the lack of female representatives in organisations such as the BOD, is unbalanced. We at a student level have the ability and opportunity to make a change.

3. Many of our members will go onto work in organisations in the Jewish community, and it is the responsibility of UJS to ensure that those organisations are fairly represented by both males and females.
4. The policy will promote and encourage our female Jewish student population to get involved with our community in a manner that does not compromise the positioning of males through gender balanced rulings.
5. Within society there still exists prejudices and an intolerance towards LGBTQs, and it is of the UJS' concern that we as an active body of students, with an understanding of the Jewish motto to "Love your neighbour as you do yourself", promote equality and tolerance amongst our students. Regardless of religious affiliations, it is the role of UJS and its local Jewish Societies to be a safe space for all students to express their beliefs and feel comfortable to engage with all members at a central and local level.
6. It is during our time in university that people have the chance to interact and socialise with many like minded people and UJS should promote such occasions for this purpose.
7. I like equality.

UJ4 UJS should be governed by a proper national council

Adam Taylor
UCL

What do you want?

1. UJS should set up a national independent committee to look into changing the National Council and other governance bodies in order to make UJS more accountable.
2. The committee should look into issues such as the composition of members of the National Council, the constitutional powers of the National Council and the inclusion of non-Council students on other UJS governance bodies
3. The committee should come up with a Constitutional amendment to be submitted at least 14 days before the next Summit and should publish its conclusion by 30th September 2012 or 28 days before the next Summit, whichever is sooner
4. UJS should facilitate the committee and ensure that its members are independent of the Team and National Council, whilst still allowing them the opportunity to consult with existing National Council and team members

Why do you want it?

1. UJS needs to be held to account by those it claims to represent. At the moment, while it claims to be a democratic organisation, in reality it is only democratic for one position once a year.
2. There is no opportunity for those on the Team or National Council to be held to account for their actions, and no opportunity for anyone to really have a say in what goes on behind closed doors

UJ5 UJS needs to think about how they treat ex committee members

James Wallis

Leeds

What do you want?

1. I would like to see an all or nothing approach to looking after the welfare of ex-committee members, especially presidents.
2. Either the union rewards, ALL the students who have done similar jobs and dedicated their lives to Jewish life on campus or they don't do it all.

Why do you want it?

1. In 2010, UJS handpicked two ex-presidents out of the 'big-four' to go spend a week in Israel visiting gap year students.
2. Understandably, this can be viewed as a massive honour, and as an ex-president myself, I would have jumped at the chance.
3. In my view, I feel it is extremely demoralizing and unjust for two people to be hand-picked without any explanation to the two other presidents who weren't asked.
4. UJS ought to consider the consequences for their actions and not be ignorant and unaware of the people on the front line in the future.

UJ6 Jewish Students need a better understanding of the work of the UJS Tsevet

Alex Goodman
Manchester

What do you want?

1. I want regular updates (possibly fortnightly or monthly) about the work of the UJS Tsevet.
2. I think these should include, what they have been spending their time on, what the aims of their work are, how successful they are being.

Why do you want it?

1. Jewish Students need to appreciate that the UJS Tsevet is appointed / selected to work directly for them. Too often, too few students appreciate this.
2. In the same way that Student Councils hold the Executives of their union to account, some form of accountability needs to be introduced to UJS team members.
3. I personally think that a huge reason for disengagement with UJS stems from a lack of knowledge and understanding of the work of the Tsevet. Requiring each team member to submit regular updates about their work, and for this to be accessible, would enable Jewish Students to engage better with their union.
4. I by no means think that this will solve all of UJS's problems, but I think it may be a small step to creating a more accessible, legitimate union structure.

UJ8 £1 donation on every UJS / JSOC ticket

Joel Marks
Birmingham

What do you want?

1. All J-Socs will offer two options for ticket prices on each ticket they sell, one including a £1 charity donation and one not.
2. The charity will be chosen by the relevant JSoc for that event; they may change charities for each event they run

Why do you want it?

1. Positive encouragement for Jewish students to donate to charity.

Campus Ideas

As passed by Annual Conference

CA1 Free from hate

CA2 UJS Policy on Fraternities and Sororities

CA3 Establishing a fund for UJS to provide educational/research grants

CA1 Free from hate

Dan Mackenzie

Leeds

What do you want?

1. This proposal suggests that UJS adopts a policy of zero tolerance towards hate speech and will lobby wherever possible to ensure that those who practice hate speech are not permitted on campus.
2. UJS fully supports peaceful protests against hate speakers.
3. UJS will delegate staff to give full support during these protests.
4. I want UJS to support the no platform policy against racists and fascists on university campuses.
5. I also would like UJS to be at the forefront of defending minority rights on campus.
6. UJS to work with other faith, culture and liberation groups to combat hate speech.

Why do you want it?

1. Hate speech is detrimental towards Jewish students because it reduces their comfort and confidence around campus. It is also illegal as outlined below.
2. The above proposal does not represent a devaluation of free speech as freedom of speech or expression cannot be a standalone concept. It must always be considered inside a wider context where the rights of others to live their lives without harassment and fear trumps that of any individual to say what they want, when they want, in whatever manner they want. This is outlined in JS Mill's "harm principle" and later clarified with Feinberg's "offence principle"
3. It is important that UJS opposes hate speakers when they come to campus, and that university's and student unions are encouraged to ensure all students feel safe at university.
4. Below is information on the relevant acts of parliament that relate to hate speech and other forms of incitement:
 - (1) *Race Relations Act 1976 (to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race): Items that are covered include discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin in the fields of employment, the provision of goods and services, education and public functions.*
 - (2) *These were then defined as a criminal offence in the Public Order Act 1986.*
 - (3) *Parts 3 and 3A – Racial, Religious hatred etc.*
 - (4) *"Part 3 of the Act creates offences of use of words or behaviour or display of written material (section*

18), publishing or distributing written material (section 19), public performance of a play (section 20), distributing, showing or playing a recording (section 21), or broadcasting (section 22), if the act is intended to stir up racial hatred, or possession of racially inflammatory material (section 23).

- (5) *Part 3A was created by the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 with the insertion of new sections 29A to 29N. This part created new offences for acts intended to stir up religious hatred. Sections 29B to 29N are to be further amended by the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 when the relevant parts of that act come into force. These further amendments will extend Part 3A to cover intent to stir up hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation (to be defined in new section 29AB)."*
- (6) *The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 (c. 1) is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which creates an offence in England and Wales of inciting hatred against a person on the grounds of their religion.*
- (7) *The bill contains wording to amend the Public Order Act 1986:*
- i. Section 29A*
 - 1. Meaning of "religious hatred"*
 - 2. In this Part "religious hatred" means hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief.*
 - ii. Section 29B:*
 - 1. A person who uses threatening words or behaviour, or displays any written material which is threatening, is guilty of an offence if he intends thereby to stir up religious hatred.*

CA2 UJS Policy on Fraternities and Sororities

Rob Prager, Alex Green, Joseph Moses
National Council - Leeds & Birmingham

What do you want?

1. The Union of Jewish Students acknowledges the creation of fraternities and sororities around the UK, but seeks to warn of the negative effects they pose to the welfare of the Union's membership.
2. Whilst individual JSocs are free to act as they wish, UJS condemns the existence of fraternities and sororities which do not share the same values as our organisation.
3. UJS further encourages all Jewish Students to get involved in UJS and their local JSoc's so we can focus on improving the range of activities and services available to Jewish Students.
4. UJS should take a stance on sexism and accessibility issues. We believe that any organisation which restricts membership on the basis of gender has no place in JSoc or UJS.

Why do you want it?

1. Fraternities and sororities are by definition exclusive organisations, with members needing to be inducted in order to become brothers.
2. Fraternities and sororities are also by definition sexist since women are unable to join, and cannot have a say in how they are run. At the core of UJS is diversity and equality, and as such our Union cannot support organisations which do not share these values.
3. Whilst UJS is the umbrella organisation for all Jewish students across the UK and Ireland, it is right that we have a clear policy and stance and remain vocal in defence of diversity and equality.

CA3 Establishing a fund for UJS to provide educational/research grants

Robert Prager

Leeds

What do you want?

1. A number of Jewish students are choosing to undertake research on important issues relating to Jewish History, Zionism, Jewish Culture, etc.
2. UJS should set aside some of its funds, or seek and bid for further funds from relevant communal organisations in order to provide grants for individuals who need extra funding in order to carry out their academic research.
3. UJS will strive to find an appropriate way to scrutinise the way that grants are issued

Why do you want it?

1. As the Student Union for Jewish Students, UJS is there to provide support to us, the membership.
2. Academic research is the lifeblood of universities, and it is right that our union is there to provide funding to our students to undertake research on poignant Jewish issues.
3. There needs to be a facility for students to receive financial support to carry out primary research and even if it is just 20 or even 50 pounds, UJS should be there to provide this support.

