

February 19<sup>th</sup> 2021

By e-mail to Professor Hugh Brady, Vice Chancellor and President of the University of Bristol

Dear Professor Brady,

It is with regret that we have felt the need to write to you again concerning the ongoing behaviour of an academic at your institution, whose increasingly hysterical attacks on British Jewish organisations are now raising the prospect of real physical harm.

That Professor David Miller, of the University's Sociology Department, is the Director of a group known as the Organisation for Propaganda Studies is the University's own affair. If your institution has decided it has no issue with one of its academics directing an organisation which has promoted conspiracy theories about 9/11, the shooting down of an airliner over Ukraine in 2014, the White Helmets humanitarian rescue group in Syria, the anti-vax movement and the origins of Covid-19, as detailed in this Times article - <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/conspiracy-theories-spread-by-academics-with-university-help-9g09xtc73> - then that is not something we would usually get involved in, troubling as it may be.

But where we do have an interest - a considerable interest - is when it comes to Professor Miller's attacks against the UK's Jewish community, Jewish communal organisations and Jewish students, which one might charitably describe as completely deranged.

Last year, for example, it became known that Professor Miller was teaching students that this country's major Jewish organisations, including our own, "are one of the most important causes of Islamophobia today" - a deeply insidious falsehood which can only serve to promote hatred - <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/bristol-professor-resigns-from-labour-ahead-of-probe-into-his-conduct-blaming-the-zionist-movement-1.500687>

Professor Miller seems to have a particular obsession with the CST - Community Security Trust - which exists to protect Jews in this country from hatred directed at us from all sides of the political spectrum. It receives government funding in order to provide protection to Synagogues, Jewish schools and other UK Jewish institutions. This, however, is a statement from Professor Miller: "The CST received £14 million this year from public funds. This is an organisation that exists to run point for a hostile foreign government in the UK. Rather than being funded by the British state, it should be under investigation for its ties with the State of Israel."

"This is a straightforward story of influence-peddling by a foreign state. In particular, a state that has tried to dictate the outcome of the past two general elections, and by any yardstick, succeeded to a great extent."

<https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/bristol-professor-cst-is-a-case-of-influence-peddling-by-a-foreign-state/>

He has also referred to "the Zionist movement" as "the enemy of world peace", saying that it must be "directly targeted". Given that the majority of this country's Jewish community is Zionist and obviously will be the first thought when people think of "the Zionist movement", we have to wonder exactly what being "directly targeted" means. Most recently, as reported widely, he accused Jewish students on UK university campuses – including, of course, Bristol University, of "being used as political pawns by a violent, racist foreign regime engaged in ethnic cleansing."

Like any academic institution in this country, you will doubtless be concerned with the importance of freedom of speech. But in the UK, unlike the US, there has always been an understanding that free speech should not include hate speech – and we believe Professor Miller's statements fall unquestionably into that latter category.

Representations to the University on the subject of Professor Miller have been made before, by us as well as many others. We would now urge you to consider whether the University of Bristol is eager to define itself as a place where Jewish students no longer feel welcome - because your institution is already advancing down this path with some speed.

This is not an issue which your institution can afford to avoid any longer. By failing to end Professor Miller's tenure as a member of faculty, the University is providing him with the appearance of respectability and academic seriousness which it is entirely clear he does not deserve. Continued lack of action will indicate a complete lack of concern regarding his odious and increasingly dangerous statements and lead us and others to seriously question why the University is so determined to keep shielding someone whose rants would not look out of place on the pages of Der Stürmer.

Yours sincerely



**Marie van der Zyl**  
President