

## **Condemning the Rising and Continuing Acts of Anti-Semitism, Jewish Hatred, Desecration of Jewish Cemeteries and Threats of Violence: A Joint Statement**

**February 28, 2017**

The recent rise in and continuation of anti-Semitic acts of intimidation, desecration, hatred and violence must be named and widely condemned. To speak about the etching, painting and drawing of swastikas (some here at McMaster University) as isolated, or simply as graffiti to be removed fails to recognize the broader context and collective impact of both historical and present day acts of hatred and violence on targeted members of our community.

This hatred is simultaneously occurring alongside numerous bomb threats that have and are targeting Jewish Community Centres, the desecration of Jewish cemeteries in Missouri and Philadelphia, anti-Semitic messages in a Toronto condominium, swastikas drawn on sidewalks and on a rail trail in a Hamilton and very recently anti-Semitic posters at the University of Calgary. We denounce these acts as well as the use of these acts or similar as a platform to rationalize other forms of hatred including Islamophobia.

We must end the practice of treating these incidents as simple isolated incidents of ignorance or poor judgment. Instead, we must condemn these specific acts of hatred and violence and provide the support and solidarity that are necessary to address the fear, hurt, and discrimination that is revealed when we attend to that which we do not see every day. These acts of hatred/anti-Semitism are where people walk in public, where people live, where they learn, where they gather, and at final resting places for the dead. The slurs hurled at students and Hamiltonians for wearing a Kippah, the intentional and brightly coloured painting of swastikas on very public spaces are acts of intimidation and hatred that are working vigorously to make hatred and anti-Semitism normalized.

Beginning last year, McMaster's President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC), with support of the University administration and staff advanced work on identifying and addressing the need for accessible, equitable and affordable Kosher food on campus. We wrote to challenge the hatred and bigotry of the alt-right posters and we named anti-Semitism on campus. The University is continuing to work to address and respond to booking of a room using the name KKK in a McMaster University Library (work that has been continuing since the incident). These incidents revealed the ongoing need to address racism and anti-Semitism here in Hamilton and at McMaster University. Speaking out on these issues needs to be supported in classrooms, in public spaces, and in the wider community. Now is a unique opportunity to develop proactive *and* responsive policies and practices that support the education and training necessary to help the McMaster community to understand the violence within anti-Semitism. It is also crucial that we support people now, that we speak out, and provide support- without confining these incidents to the past.

We stand in solidarity with those who have been and continue to be made to live in fear and have been working to resist persistent anti-Semitism.

Signed,

**Ameil J. Joseph Ph.D.**

Chair: McMaster University's President's Advisory Committee on building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC) On behalf of PACBIC

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