

April 2009 – Nissan 5769

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THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES  
OF BRITISH JEWS  
Established 1760

Board of Deputies of British Jews  
**Bulletin Board**

**This is *your* community . . .** April 2009 - Nissan 5769

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## 1,000 Campaigns Against the BNP



The regional Board Meeting in Oxford saw the launch of a new campaign kit to assist grassroots activities in the run up to the June European Elections. Under the slogan **'Your Voice or Theirs'**, the campaign aims to encourage local communities to run their own campaigning events to highlight the threat of the British National Party and the importance of voting for a mainstream political party.

The kits (pictured) contain everything needed to run a local campaign, from posters to leaflets and balloons, and 1,000 of them are being distributed across the community over the next four weeks, ahead of the date for registration for voting and for postal ballots.

The date of the election is 4 June, and the BNP claim that they intend to put up candidates in every part of the United Kingdom. A low turnout will favour extremist parties and so it is essential that as many people vote as possible. If you'd like to get involved, call our offices or email [Ruth@fight-racism.co.uk](mailto:Ruth@fight-racism.co.uk), and get campaigning!

## British Ambassadors Visit The Board

Three British Ambassadors paid visits to the Board's offices whilst in London for a Foreign & Commonwealth Office Conference. The UK's Ambassadors to Argentina, Israel and Lithuania had requested the meetings to discuss issues of concern to the British Jewish community in the countries in which they are currently serving.

Topics discussed included the rise in antisemitism following the Gaza conflict and the economic downturn, particularly as it related to the Diaspora communities in Argentina and Lithuania. Tom Phillips, Ambassador to Israel, (pictured) discussed the British Government's policies during and post-Gaza, stressing its understanding of the intolerable threats faced by Israeli citizens from cross-border attacks from Gaza. Concerns over the issues of boycotts and food-labelling were raised with him, noting that such campaigns appealed to those who had little or no understanding of the true situation in the region.



## Jewish Way of Life Exhibition Arrives in Harrow



The Board's Jewish Way of Life Exhibition has travelled to the Middlesex New Synagogue in Harrow where it was opened by Board President Henry Grunwald QC and Cllr John Nickolay, Mayor of Harrow (both pictured here at the event).

The exhibition includes descriptive and beautifully illustrated six foot display panels, a Chuppah and a Sukkah as well as a model torah and synagogue. Trained guides were on hand to assist visitors and worksheets are available to students. Written by educators and designed by experts, JWOLE ensures that the teaching of Judaism fully

supports all locally agreed syllabuses. The exhibition is a hands-on experience for all ages but is especially suitable for school children at Key Stages 2 and 3.

The Board believes that educating as many young people as possible about what it means to be Jewish is the best way to promote tolerance and understanding of our community.

## Other issues we've been working on this month...

- **Faith Schools** - Successful lobbying helped defeat an anti-faith schools motion at the Liberal Democrats Spring Conference. At a positive meeting with Conservative Education spokesman Michael Gove MP, a commitment to faith schools was made along with an agreement to work on issues of concern to Jewish schools.
- **Romanian Embassy visit** – The Board hosted a Breakfast for the Romanian Ambassador in latest in a series of constructive contacts between the Board of Deputies and the Romanian Embassy.
- **Reception for the Archbishop of Westminster** - Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor was honoured on his impending retirement with a reception attended by faith leaders. He has been a strong advocate of interfaith relations and a great friend to the Jewish community (as recently demonstrated by his swift and unequivocal condemnation of Richard Williamson).
- **Durban Review Conference** – A new draft declaration has emerged that does not single out the State of Israel for criticism, but this may change again. The Board and partners in the Jewish Human Rights Coalition continue to work for a satisfactory outcome and a robust response to any re-emergence of unacceptable language in the final text at the Geneva Conference in April.
- **Heritage** - After extensive work by Deputies and the Board's staff, the work of transferring title to the Board of 12 disused Jewish cemeteries has begun.

**On behalf of the President, the Honorary Officers and all the staff at the Board, we wish the community a very happy and healthy Pesach.**



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