

May 2009 – Iyar 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 . . .** May 2009 - Iyar 5769

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## **Board Reflects on the Durban Review Conference**



Ever since representatives of the Board attended the ill-fated 2001 Durban Conference, the challenge has been to avoid a repetition of its antisemitic excesses and to highlight the dangers of Holocaust denial, demonisation of Israel and the airbrushing of antisemitism from the anti-racism agenda of the UN.

As a lead organisation in the Jewish Human Rights Coalition (JHRC-UK), co-chaired by Board President, Henry Grunwald QC and Rosalind Preston OBE, the Board worked with partner organisations in the UK and abroad, to assemble a caucus to be present at the Conference in an effort to refocus the process once again and to concentrate on the issues of racism and human rights around the world.

Consequently, there was no repetition of the notorious NGO forum, which had resulted in the worst excesses in Durban in 2001, and the final document in Geneva acknowledged the unique role of the Holocaust in history and the dangers of antisemitism.

Inevitably, given the forces arrayed against the caucus, the DRC in its preparatory stages and in Geneva witnessed some of the same vilification of Jews and Israel – most notably from the President of Iran (pictured), whose very presence in Geneva was a travesty. But in contrast to 2001, his inflammatory comments were challenged and rejected vigorously in the conference hall and in statements from politicians and diplomats from around the world, which made headline news.

## **JWOLE Visits Bradford**

The Board, together with the Bradford Council for Mosques, Education Bradford and the Bradford District Faiths Forum has hosted the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition at the Khidmat Islamic Community Centre in Bradford. The exhibition, which was open to all Bradford District schools as well as adult and community groups, enabled visitors to experience Judaism through beautifully illustrated 6 foot display panels with clear text, authentic artefact tables and hands on educational activities.

This is first time that the exhibition has been hosted by a Muslim community centre and the Board believes that this is an excellent model for education and interfaith cooperation.



## Board Campaigns Against Greek Author

The Board has publicly condemned the recent decision taken by a Greek court to acquit neo-Nazi author, Kostas Plevris (pictured), who wrote a book entitled 'Jews – The Whole Truth' which praises and justifies the actions of the Nazis while calling for Europe to be rid of its Jews.



Mr. Plevris, was given a 14 month suspended sentence in 2007 for violating an anti-racism law which prohibits incitement to racial discrimination, hatred or violence, but the Appeals Court decided to overturn the decision in April and acquit him completely.

Following the appeal and in the lead up to it, the Board made contact with the Greek Ambassador to the UK on several occasions, expressing its concern about the way the trial was proceeding. The Board has also been in constant contact with the Greek Jewish community and, together with them, we are now determined to increase awareness of this missed opportunity to punish a man whose poisonous ideology has been given free reign by Greek authorities.

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

- **Coroners and Justice Bill** – The Board has carefully followed the passage of the Coroners and Justice Bill through Parliament which will have important consequences for ensuring that the Jewish community is able to arrange the fastest possible burials and keep invasive post-mortem examinations to a minimum.
- **Dominic Grieve Visits the Board** – The Shadow Justice Secretary and Attorney General, Dominic Grieve recently visited a meeting of the Equality and Diversity Forum, which was hosted by the Board, to discuss the recently published Equalities Bill which is designed to bring together and replace the existing legislation on equalities.
- **Meeting With Buddhist Leaders** – Representatives of the Board have met with leaders of the Buddhist community to discuss ways in which the relationship between our communities can be developed. A number of Buddhist publications will now feature an article written by our interfaith officer, Phillip Rosenberg.
- **Seeing Jewish Life Tours Continue** – The Seeing Jewish Life Tour offered by the Board which is comprised of explanatory tours around Jewish areas, visits to Jewish Shops, Kosher Restaurants and Synagogues was most recently offered to senior Civil Servants who were extremely grateful for the opportunity to better understand the British Jewish community and sent their thanks to Raleigh Close Synagogue and the Independent Jewish Day School, who had both warmly welcomed the group.



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