

Community Briefing

The Board of Deputies of British Jews

Oct/2009

Keeping you informed...

Tishrei/5770



Board Receives Permission to Intervene in Supreme Court Hearing of JFS Case - The Board's application to assist the Supreme Court in its understanding of the effects of the JFS judgement has been accepted. As an Intervener, the Board will present a written submission informing the Court about Jewish practice and identity as applied across the community, and the impact of the decision in the Court of Appeal to only allow religious practice as a test of Jewishness for schools admissions.

Board's Boost to Jewish Education - As part of its strategy to nurture Jewish education for Jewish schools, the Board of Deputies, in partnership with UJIA, commenced its annual training programme in September to increase the number of Jewish Education Pikuach inspectors from 28 to 35. Qualified educationalists and heads of schools studied the latest methodologies for delivering and measuring achievement in Jewish studies in schools. Pikuach is the equivalent for Jewish studies of Ofsted inspections for secular subjects.



Board Hits Back at Israel Boycott - The Board forcefully condemned the recent motion at the annual Trade Union Congress which called for further boycotts on Israel and will continue to lobby politicians and opinion formers against the counterproductive nature of boycotts and sanctions.



Board Meets Nick Clegg - A delegation consisting of Board President, Vivian Wineman, Treasurer, Laurence Brass and Chief Executive, Jon Benjamin, enjoyed a candid and open meeting with Liberal Democrat Leader Nick Clegg in Westminster. Mr Clegg restated the several issues where his party had been supportive of the Jewish community and its concerns, including opposition to academic boycotts aimed at Israel, support for faith schools and profound concern over the Durban Review Conference in April, from which he felt the UK should have stayed away.

Board Protests Ahmadinejad UN Appearance - As part of its ongoing dialogue with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Board thanked Foreign Secretary David Miliband for the British Government's stand against Iranian President Ahmadinejad's speech at the UN General Assembly on September 23.

Jon Benjamin, Chief Executive of the Board, said, *"The UK diplomats' walk-out was a powerful statement that poisonous speech of this kind will not be tolerated and was a fitting reaction to the hateful rhetoric of the Iranian President against the Jewish people and the State of Israel."*

The Board also welcomes the action taken by the Government in relation to Iranian banking interests in London.

Board's Jewish Way of Life Exhibition Arrives in Belfast - The Board's Jewish Way of Life Exhibition, designed to educate members outside of the community about religious and cultural aspects of the Jewish religion is off to Belfast for the first time this month. Many local schools and thousands of visitors are expected to attend the event at which the Board was represented by Jerry Lewis (Vice President, and Chairman of the Community Issues Division) and Adam Dawson (Vice-Chairman of the Community Issues Division).



JWOLE features a number of display panels depicting Jewish life.



All items on the Exhibition's 'artifact table' are designed to be touched and held by participants.

Brit Milah Inquest - Following the death of a baby shortly after his brit milah in 2007, the Board worked with parties to the recent inquest to ensure that compelling expert evidence was placed before the Coroner. The Coroner recorded a verdict of natural causes as well as delivering a powerful acknowledgement that the practice of brit milah, as carried out in UK by the Initiation Society, is of the highest possible standard and was not connected in any way to this tragedy.

National Interfaith Week - A national event from 15 - 21 November; interfaith week will showcase the positive work across all faith communities. The Board of Deputies will be demonstrating the outstanding contribution that the community is making to religious harmony and community cohesion. If your community or organisation is involved in any event during the week, please help us publicise your valuable work by contacting our Inter Faith Officer, Phil Rosenberg at philip.rosenberg@bod.org.uk.

Mitzvah Day 15th November - This national, interfaith, and intergenerational event is running across the whole community with thousands taking part. Mitzvah Day encourages the giving of time and not money to support existing charities as well as working to reduce poverty, help the environment and to bring a little joy where it is needed. Register now and help build the community, working for everyone and making a real difference. For full details see website: www.mitzvahday.org.uk or phone 020 7443 5160.



If you have any questions about this briefing or you'd like to know more about the work of The Board, contact us at the office...

Board of Deputies of British Jews
6 Bloomsbury Square, London
WC1A 2LP
T - 020 7543 5400
F - 020 7543 0010
E - info@bod.org.uk
W - www.bod.org.uk