



Shevat/Adar 5770
February 2010

The Board of Deputies

Community Briefing

Dear colleague,



Issues of particular interest this month include the CST's latest report on anti-Semitic incidents and a frustrating lack of progress on the right of Israeli politicians to visit the UK without fear of being arrested. Both are cause for concern and our challenge is to ensure that existing political will translates into tangible action. Look out also for our new 'Inside the Board' feature, which this month explores the Board's national role in influencing how Religious Education is taught locally.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact us with your thoughts on any of these issues. You can now also debate with us and others by [becoming a fan of the Board on Facebook](#). We look forward to hearing from you.

Warm Regards,

Jon Benjamin
Chief Executive

Latest Antisemitic Incidents Report

Incidents Reach a Record High



As expected, the CST has reported a record level of antisemitic incidents for 2009, largely as a result of the conflict in Gaza during the early part of the year.

The Prime Minister has acknowledged the report by reaffirming his friendship with the State of Israel and saying that *"no strength of feeling can ever justify violent extremism or attacks and we will stand firm against all those who would use anti-Israeli feeling as an excuse or disguise for antisemitism and attacks on the Jewish community."*

The full report and analysis are available [here](#).

Fear of Arrest for Israeli Politicians

Universal Jurisdiction - the Saga Continues



Since the issuing of an arrest warrant for Israel's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni (pictured) in mid-December last year, the Board has continued to exert pressure on the Government for a change in the anomalous law of 'universal jurisdiction'. The Board had hoped for resolution by mid-January but as yet, has not seen the necessary progress. This week we wrote to Justice Secretary Jack Straw, urging a meeting in order to ensure a speedy and favourable conclusion in this matter. We hope to be able to issue something far more conclusive in the coming days.

Read our previous statement on Universal Jurisdiction [here](#).

Recent Speakers to Visit the Board

Ivan Lewis - Foreign Office Minister

Deputies at the Board's most recent plenary meeting, where issues of concern to the community are debated, were given the opportunity to hear Foreign Office Minister Ivan Lewis' thoughts on the Middle East and to quiz him on issues of concern. The Minister spoke warmly of his fondness for the State of Israel as well as making welcome commitments on the issues of Universal Jurisdiction and sanctions on Iran.



John Bercow - Speaker of the House of Commons



More than sixty people also attended a lunch with the Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow, MP last week. An identifying Jew, Mr Bercow shared with the audience how his late father had taught him to stand up for who he is and not seek to hide his identity. Mr Bercow detailed his vision for Parliament, saying that, "we have to radically and fundamentally reform the expenses system to clean up politics."

When asked about Israel, he commented that "Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and should always be treated with respect even if one does not always agree with her policies and decision."

Census - Be Counted

Preparations Underway for 2011



The next UK census will take place on 27th March 2011 and, as in the previous census (2001), will include a question on religion. Planning for the census started almost as soon as the previous one had been completed, and the Board has been working with the Office for National Statistics throughout this period, to ensure that the results of the census will provide us with data that are of use in future planning for the community.

We will shortly be launching a publicity campaign, encouraging members of the community to complete the census, and to answer the question on religion (which is voluntary). This will include campaigns targeted specifically at those sections of the

community, such as the strictly Orthodox, which were undercounted in the last census. [More Information](#)

The Communal Diary

It's There - Make Sure You Use It!

Have you ever been involved in organising a communal function only to discover that it clashes with another event? For a number of years, the Board has maintained a Communal Diary, listing future events being planned by communal organisations, in order to reduce the number of scheduling clashes. The Diary is not published, but is made available to event organisers, who are encouraged to submit details of their own organisations' events. For more information, please email diary@bod.org.uk.

The Board at The General Synod

The Board Hosts a Fringe Panel Event on the Far Right



Together with the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ), the Board hosted a panel event to keep the far right high on the Church of England's agenda in this election year. The popular, standing-room only event took place at a fringe meeting of the Church of England's General Synod this month. The General Synod is a twice-yearly meeting of Bishops, clergy and lay leaders, which decides the Church's spiritual direction and policy.

The Panel was comprised of noted historian David Cesarani, Ray Hill, a former mole in the British National Party and Board President Vivian Wineman. The session was presided over by the Bishop of Manchester and CCJ Chair, the Right Revd Nigel McCulloch, who has been particularly active in his opposition to this malign force in politics.

[Full Story](#)

Facebook Goes Live

Get involved in the debate on our new Facebook Page

As part of the Board's commitment to ensure you're better informed about breaking issues affecting the community, we are delighted to welcome you to our newly launched Facebook page. [Become a fan of The Board](#) and contribute to topical discussions, receive live updates and help shape constructive, relevant debate. This is your space so please take part in what we hope will be a vibrant and insightful communal dialogue.

Fairtrade Fortnight

You Can Make a Difference...



Vivian Wineman, President of the Board, recently endorsed 'Fairtrade Fortnight', 22nd February - 7th March, affirming that Fairtrade is a logical extension of the central Jewish value of tzedakah - charity.

If you share our view that Fairtrade is an important issue for the Jewish community please click [here](#) for ways to involve your synagogue.

Interfaith Grants Available

Faiths in Action Round 2

If you're involved with an organisation that seeks to promote community cohesion between faiths you may be eligible for Grants of up to £6,000 from the Community Development Foundation (CDF). Applications for work between the different denominations of a faith will also be considered but unfortunately, grants are not available for work that only benefits the members of a particular place of worship or religious organisation without impact on wider society, i.e. not for paying for religious artefacts, payment of ministers, refurbishment costs, or promotion of doctrine. Applications will be considered on a rolling deadline until all of the money is allocated in April 2010. Further information on the funding programme and how to apply can be found [here](#), by calling the helpline on 01223 406533 or e-mailing the CDF at fundingadmin@cdf.org.uk.

Persecution in Iran

Board Campaigns on Behalf of the Bahá'í Community in Iran



An innate responsibility of the Board is to condemn all forms of racism, xenophobia and persecution. Which is why since May 2008 we have campaigned against the plight of the Bahá'ís, in Iran whose human rights continue to be systematically abused. The communal leadership of the Iranian Bahá'ís (some of whom are pictured) remain in custody on spurious charges of, among other things, spying for Israel.

See our letter to the Foreign Secretary [here](#).

"Inside the Board"

A Closer Look Inside 6 Bloomsbury Square



Welcome to 'Inside the Board', the first in a series of what we hope will become regular features, offering you fresh insights into some of the complex, comprehensive and often unsung work of the Board.

Here, Hannah Ashleigh, the Board's Education Policy and Projects Manager explains a side of our work rarely heard about:

As well as our directing on all aspects of educational policy regarding Jewish schools, the Board of

Deputies also ensures that Judaism is accurately and appropriately portrayed in Religious Education syllabi across the country.

Despite its status as a statutory subject which must be taught in all schools, Religious Education is not a part of the National Curriculum. Instead, every Local Authority has its own locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education, which is applicable to each of the school schools within its catchment. This syllabus is drawn up by a committee called a SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education). SACREs are made up of representatives of all the faiths in their given area, as well as additional Church of England representation, teachers associations and Local Authority delegates. Between this diverse group, decisions are made as to how Religious Education will look in schools in their local area. (NB - Voluntary Aided schools with a religious character such as our Jewish schools do not follow these Agreed Syllabi; they are free to teach Religious Education according to their own trust deed).

The Board of Deputies ensures that there are Jewish representatives on as many of these SACRE committees as possible across the country, and finds suitable candidates to fill any open positions. Currently, most areas have an active Jewish representative. To be a Jewish SACRE representative, a person must have a good knowledge of Judaism and ideally have some connection to the British Education system. Being a SACRE representative involves attendance at meetings about once a term and many people find it invaluable for building communal relations and for the networking opportunities it can provide. We have a database of wonderful Jewish SACRE representatives up and down the country, from Devon to Durham, from Hampshire to Hull - Judaism is being represented on SACREs and therefore hopefully taught in local schools.

As well as this work on a local level, we are also involved in shaping RE policy on a national level. The Board sits on the Executive of the RE Council, was heavily involved in the production of the latest DCSF publication "Religious Education in Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010" and we consult often with publishers of textbooks, with networks of RE teachers and with universities, training PGCE groups of RE teachers.

In addition, our many other educational projects such as the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition (JWOLE), Seeing Jewish Life Tours and JWOLE Lite posters are all tools that we use to ensure that there are positive, engaging opportunities for young people to learn about Judaism as part of their RE lessons.

So whilst it's our work with Jewish pupils in Jewish schools, or helping Jewish pupils in non-Jewish schools which you might have already heard about, don't forget all the work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure that our faith and traditions are being learnt about by all young people across the country.

Is there something you'd like to discuss with us?

Why not get in touch?

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