

**Report of Meeting of
Board of Deputies of British Jews
Held on 12 September 2021**

by Julian Pollard

The Deputies convened online on Sunday 12th September 2021.

The extensive range of topics covered by the Divisional Groups are set out in the Reports which were presented to every Deputy and which can be accessed at these links and I urge you to spend a few minutes to read these Reports:-

- a) President's Report – Page 2 to 11
- b) Community and Education Division – Page 12 to 14
- c) Defence and Group Relations Division – Page 15 to 16
- d) International Division – Page 17 to 18

The Debate on Sunday covered issues some of which appear in the Reports including:-

- The local Jewish communal support of Afghan Refugees
- Action to address the anti-Refugee Bill going through Parliament
- What action should be taken to deal with Professor Miller at Bristol University and a private prosecution was suggested
- The work of the Association of Jewish Refugees which has substantial funds available to support aging and impoverished refugees or their families who need home care, home conversion, meals etc
- The President's meeting with the BBC and why the DG would not attend the meeting but Jeremy Bowen did-possibly inhibiting open criticism. Discussion was "robust and forthright" and their stance would be continually monitored
- Whether the UOHC should be censored for the views on child sexual abuse of Dayan Paltiel Schwarcz. The President was clear that the BOD would never accept such behaviour and would always call it out

If any Magen Avot member wishes to bring an issue to the attention of the BOD he or she can do so at any time so please contact me at any time at: jandjpollard@hotmail.com

PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Announcements

Mazal tov to Syd Braham on the birth of a grandson
Mazal tov to Gordon Globe on the bat mitzvah of his granddaughter
Condolences to Jonathan Goldblum on the passing of his brother
Condolences to Richard Cohen on the passing of his mother

2. Afghanistan refugee response

I am sure that many of you will have been as concerned and disturbed as I was at the awful situation in Afghanistan, where tens of thousands of people sought to flee the country as it collapsed back into the control of religious fundamentalists. In a statement, I noted the Taliban's sickening record of the repression of women and girls, and complete disregard for human rights, which I said filled us all with great anxiety for the Afghan people. I called on our Government to expand on its plans for the resettlement of Afghan refugees, to whom the world now owes a duty of care and moral responsibility.

Subsequently, I was incredibly impressed at the Kiddush Hashem (sanctification of G-d's name) which was displayed by British Jews. The outpouring of responses to an emergency collection for Afghan refugees at Bushey United Synagogue, for example, made headlines around the country. Groups and Synagogues from all denominations of UK Jewry sprang into action, organising collections for those who have arrived in our country with next to nothing. World Jewish Relief launched an appeal, publicly backed by the Board, as did JCORE. Members of our community have donated goods, money and their time in order to help. The Board of Deputies has a [page](#) on its website listing some of the many worthwhile initiatives which people can join in.

Many of us have family members who were forced to flee their homes and who came to this country with very little. The Torah portion of Ki Teitzei, which we read in synagogues just a few weeks' ago, encourages us to remember the experiences of our own people when it comes to how we treat others. I am extremely proud of the response of British Jews to this situation; I believe that it really shows the best of our community.

3. Bristol University

As Deputies will be aware, around six months ago Bristol University launched an investigation into the conduct of David Miller, an academic in the institutions Sociology Department. Among other things, Mr Miller accused the University's Jewish Society of being "pawns of a racist regime engaged in ethnic cleansing". The University has been extremely reticent to act on the concerns of the University's Jewish Society or the Union of Jewish Students. Last month it

became clear that despite the ongoing – and lengthy – investigation into his conduct, the University intends to let Mr Miller continue to offer his courses to students in the upcoming academic year.

I wrote to the Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Hugh Brady, calling on him to suspend Mr Miller while the investigation is ongoing. I said that failure to do so “will cause the UK Jewish community to assume that either the University is not taking the behaviour exhibited by Mr Miller seriously, or, perhaps even worse, that this entire investigation is a sham”.

I also noted that “either inadvertently or deliberately, the University appears to be suggesting it believes that by pretending no problem exists, the anger and disquiet surrounding this issue will disappear. I feel the need to emphasise that this is not going to happen.”

I asked for a meeting with Professor Brady to discuss the disciplinary process, pointing out that there was “a reputational risk to the university if the current policy of under-engagement is not changed”.

In Professor Brady’s absence, I received a response from the Deputy Vice Chancellor, in which it was claimed that suspending Mr Miller during the course of the investigation would be prejudicial to the outcome of the university’s internal process. It was also claimed that information as to the nature of the disciplinary process could not be shared with outside parties, for fear of compromising the investigation’s integrity. My request for a meeting was also avoided and the University stated it had met with Bristol JSoc and UJS to discuss their concerns.

I wrote back to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, citing my decades of experience as an employment lawyer. I noted that it should be perfectly possible to reveal the timeline and nature of this disciplinary process, without sharing any confidential information about the content of the investigation thus far. Indeed, I stated that given the lack of information that has been forthcoming about the process, it would be reasonable for us to wonder if there is a continuing investigation at all.

I further pointed out that in allowing Mr Miller to continue to teach whilst under investigation, the University is taking a stand against its Jewish students who have experienced discrimination whilst in the care of the University. Suspension would be a neutral act, protecting students whilst the investigative process is completed.

I expressed serious disappointment at the University’s avoidance of a meeting with me, and noted that Bristol JSoc and UJS have found their engagements with the university to be deeply unhelpful.

I have written an article about the situation as it stands for the *Jewish News*, which can be read [here](#). The situation is disgraceful and the Board of Deputies will continue to support UJS and local Jewish students at the University in their efforts to achieve a proper resolution in this case.

4. Labour’s expulsion of Ken Loach

The Labour Party informed the film director Ken Loach that he was being expelled from the Party. I responded by describing this as “absolutely the correct decision”, noting that “over the

last few years he has tarnished his legacy as a film-maker by repeatedly standing with antisemites.”

Of course, the situation goes well beyond that. Many Deputies will remember a few years ago, when Ken Loach appeared on the BBC and was asked to comment on the remarks made by a notorious anti-Zionist activist at fringe meeting at Labour Party conference. That activist had said that Labour members should have the right to ask “Holocaust: Yes or No?” When asked for his thoughts on this, Mr Loach said “history is there for all of us to discuss, before immediately pivoting to the treatment of Palestinians by Israel”.

Going back even further to the late 1980s, Mr Loach directed a notorious work of Holocaust Revisionism called “Perdition” which attempted to falsely implicate Zionists from working together with the Nazis to murder Jews. In an interview given after the Royal Court cancelled the production, Mr Loach described the “strength and power” of “the Zionist Lobby” which he said wanted to “leave intact the generalised sense of guilt around the Jews so that it remains an area you can’t discuss.” Mr Loach has to date never apologised for any of this. Labour is immeasurably better off without him.

5. The Nationality and Borders Bill

The Board of Deputies, together with World Jewish Relief, Rene Cassin and JCORE, released a joint statement last month in response to the Government’s Nationality and Borders Bill.

The statement noted that “many people in the Jewish community originally came to the UK as frightened and vulnerable refugees – some on the Kindertransport – and were welcomed into this country.”

The Board and the other organisations said that “we share the Government’s desire to reform the asylum system. We would want the UK to demonstrate being a proud and principled sanctuary for the relatively small number of people who seek safety here from persecution and war. Like others in the refugee and asylum sector, we want to see a fair and effective asylum system that treats people with compassion, dignity and respect.”

The statement noted that currently “there are few safe routes for those seeking asylum to get to the UK and for those that are here, decision making is slow and accommodation conditions are unsavoury limiting the support that those most in need require. Reform should focus on greater investment in the capability and capacity to assess and make decisions on asylum claims in a humane and informed way and be part of a greater global effort around resettlement.

It registered concern that “the Nationality and Borders Bill seeks to assess those seeking asylum differently based on their means of arriving in the UK rather than on what they have fled from, and their respective protection needs. The assumption that by restricting the rights and entitlement of those seeking asylum here will reduce the scale of people smuggling is not clear. In reality, this attempt at deterrence will not protect those fleeing persecution, oppression or tyranny. It will do little to prevent dangerous Channel crossings nor undermine the efforts of people smugglers.”

Concerns were also noted with regard to “the proposals to limit access to family reunion for many people granted refugee status, because of how they arrived in the UK. These proposals are likely to reduce the number of families being reunited and increase the risk of families taking dangerous journeys to be with their loved ones.”

The statement also pointed out that “while the Bill celebrates the UK’s recent positive past resettlement success as a safe route to seek protection, it is a missed opportunity that the Bill does not set targets or seek to expand on the number of those being resettled. Worries were also expressed relating to “the suggestion to expand the UK’s indefinite immigration detention system into offshore facilities; we encourage the Government to consider the proven community-based alternatives to detention.”

Together the Board of Deputies alongside the other Jewish organisations urged the Government “to give consideration to these concerns as the bill makes its journey through Parliament. The UK has a proud tradition of providing refuge to those fleeing conflict and persecution and this must be upheld.”

6. Concerning activity of Prevent programme adviser Irfan Chishti

The Board of Deputies has registered serious concerns with Home Office officials regarding the apparent rehabilitation of Irfan Chishti.

As reported by the Jewish Chronicle, Mr Chishti was recently cleared to return to his role as a paid advisor for the Prevent programme. This was despite the Home Secretary ordering an inquiry into Mr Chishti’s behaviour during the latest flare-up of the Israel-Gaza conflict. Mr Chishti, who previously served as the imam at the Manchester Central Mosque, was recorded giving a speech in Rochdale in which he said the following:

- “We ask you Allah that you accept every single shahid (martyr) who has given their life for Palestine.” This includes hundreds if not thousands of terrorists who have murdered civilians.
- That under Muslim rule the area had been peaceful, but now Israel was “this terrorist state forcing terror upon our brothers and sisters”.
- Said that “our Jewish brethren” are “a lot smarter than us” and that Muslims knew “exactly the strategy that those Jewish, Zionist politicians are doing and we also know how to respond. It’s got to be long term, it’s got to be economic, it’s got to be with strategy”.
- Suggested to the crowd that if they wanted to become “mujahideen”, holy warriors, then they should emulate the Muslim general Saladin, who expelled the Crusaders from the Holy Land in 1187. He asked the crowd “Where is the modern-day Saladin?”
- Praised “shahids”, or martyrs — a term used by militant groups such as Hamas for civilians and those killed as suicide bombers or in combat.

We also informed the Home Office of inflammatory statements that Mr Chishti had shared on social media, including the notorious Khazar Theory, the theory that many modern Jews are descendants of the Khazars, an Eastern European nation which allegedly converted to Judaism in the eighth century. Antisemitic groups all over the world – including the Ku Klux Klan - have embraced the “Khazar hypothesis,” which claims that these Khazar converts and their descendants have a secret agenda to undermine other societies and enrich themselves at the expense of their non-Jewish neighbours. This antisemitic conspiracy theory is also attractive to some anti-Zionists who believe that it undermines the historical claim of modern Jews to the land of Israel.

We pointed out to the Home Office that it is extremely worrying to many in the Jewish community that someone who has now publicly engaged in extremist, inflammatory and indeed antisemitic rhetoric appears able to now resume a paid position with an organisation meant to counter such behaviour.

The Home Office has told us that it is treating this matter with the urgency and seriousness it deserves.

7. Community Fun Run

I would like to thank all members of staff, Honorary Officers, Deputies and friends of the Board who took part in the Maccabi GB community fun run and helped raise money for all of our crucial work. This was the first time the Board of Deputies had signed up as one of the participating charities in the fun run, and it was a pleasure to see so many people taking part in the different distance runs. We also congratulate Honorary Officers and Deputies who ran for other charities, including the Nisa-Nashim interfaith group.

8. Questions from Deputies

Questions are included in the exact form in which they are received.

Name of Deputy: Joe Miller
Constituency: Muswell Hill Synagogue

Question

What is the Board of Deputies doing to address the ongoing failings in many Jewish faith schools. With even JFS now rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted, who commented that 'pupils do not learn enough about LGBT issues'. What role can the Board play in ensuring that Jewish children do not continue to be failed by the community's faith schools?

Answer

JFS is an important institution in Anglo Jewry and we are of course monitoring the situation closely. The Board of Deputies has a formal role in relation to the inspection of the Jewish Studies curriculum through its Pikuach programme. However, inspection of secular subjects and the wider school environment is a matter for Ofsted. We hope that JFS is swiftly brought back on track by the new leadership team and we will of course provide any support we can, should the school wish.

Name of Deputy: Joe Miller
Constituency: Muswell Hill Synagogue

Question

Given the success of the under 35 observers programme in engaging younger members of the community, would you support extending voting rights, where appropriate (for example for votes on new organisations joining the board) to under 35 observers?

Answer

We are delighted with the success of the under 35 observers programme. With regards to voting rights, however, it is proper that only Deputies who have been elected from their own constituency organisations be allowed to cast a vote. It is our sincere hope that many of our under 35 observers will go on to become full Deputies, which will of course enable them to vote on such matters.

Name of Deputy: Paul Hart
Constituency: Mosaic Liberal Synagogue

Question

I asked this question of the International Division and never got a reply, why has the board never complained to the United Nations of their constant condemnation of Israel but never

condemning including its recent take over of Afghanistan the lack of Human Rights record of the Taliban

Answer

The Board of Deputies has and will continue to highlight and call for an end to the singling out of Israel in the United Nations and other multilateral organisations. We do this at multiple levels, including in public statements, meetings with the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Minister for Middle East and British representatives to the UN. We also raise it when engaging with Ambassadors and diplomatic missions to London. Most recently, the Board of Deputies, in partnership with communal colleagues, were successful in our advocacy to the UK Government to not attend the UN's fourth commemoration of the Durban Conference. As Deputies will recall, what was supposed to be an anti-racist event in reality it singled out Israel and embraced antisemitic antizionism at its heart. The Board of Deputies has also continued to work with the WJC and other international partners to encourage other countries to follow suit.

Name of Deputy: Joe Millis

Constituency: Bromley Reform Synagogue

Question

Is the acceptance/adoption of the IHRA "working definition" now a purity test for new organisations wishing to join the Board?

Will you stop the weaponisation of the "definition" by those who wish to exclude their political rivals?

Answer

The Board of Deputies, along with all other Jewish mainstream communal organisations, has adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism in full.

The Board of Deputies has not and will not institute a requirement that any new organisations wishing to join the Board must accept this definition. It is down to the votes of individual Deputies as to whether a new organisation is accepted to join the Board. Individual Deputies are well within their rights, as part of their process of considering their vote on any potential joining organisation, to consider where any organisation stands with regard to the IHRA definition, to ask for clarification if they are uncertain of an organisation's stances, and then take this information into account when casting their vote.

Name of Deputy: Joe Millis

Constituency: Bromley Reform Synagogue

Question

What did you personally take away from the Jewish News' two-part piece on the - mainly generational - schism in British Jewry?

Answer:

Personally, I welcomed the acknowledgement – inadvertent or otherwise – that the Board of Deputies is very much central to British Jewish life. I noted an interesting disagreement between the two pieces. On the one hand, there appeared to be an urge to stress the nature of a significant and previously unseen schism within British Jewry on Israel. On the other, examples were given of how in many cases, former schisms which were said to have divided the community seemed to have all but disappeared and that we were in fact more united as a

community now than we had been in the past. I believe that the majority of the community agrees with the official position of the Board of Deputies, reaffirmed by Deputies last year, that we support a Two-State Solution to this conflict, which will see a secure Israel alongside a viable Palestinian State.

Name of Deputy: Nicholas Grant

Constituency: Mitzvah Day

Question:

In what ways will the Board promote this year's (annual) Mitzvah Day, being run on Sunday 21st November? On Mitzvah Day, synagogues and other Jewish schools & groups are challenged to undertake social action for the benefit of both their local and wider communities including supporting the annual AJEX parade

Answer:

The Board of Deputies is pleased to be able to have worked with Mitzvah Day to ensure that an event could once again take place in Parliament this year, now that Covid restrictions have been lifted. Additionally, Board of Deputies staff will be organising activities as part of Mitzvah Day. As always, we encourage all constituent organisations to participate. The Board of Deputies will of course also be sharing and promoting Mitzvah Day resources on social media.

Name of Deputy: Leigh Dworkin

Constituency: Maidenhead Synagogue

Question:

Would it be possible to review the plans to have hybrid meetings for the BoD in detail, so that regional deputies can have some input into such plans to ensure all deputies are first class citizens, especially regional deputies who may not be able to travel to London as easily?

Answer:

The F&O have formed a working group which will take these plans forward. We value our regional Deputies, who are a vital part of the organisation; we will do everything possible to ensure that regional Deputies do not feel penalised under any system going forward.

Name of Deputy: Leigh Dworkin

Constituency: Maidenhead Synagogue

Question:

It strikes me that the BoD can provide some real best practice when it comes to how to use Zoom to run an effective hybrid meeting, something that synagogues and communal organisations must be struggling with right now. Could you put together a guide to hybrid meetings to help us?

Answer:

The Board of Deputies has not to date run hybrid meetings – over the last 18 months our events have taken place exclusively online. However, I know that many of our member Synagogues and organisations will be working through this exact issue at the moment. I would encourage representatives of such organisations to be in touch with the questioner on this issue.

Name of Deputy: Mike Hinden
Constituency: Belmont Synagogue

Question:

Will the Board make a statement condemning UOHC since the repulsive statement by Rabbi Schwarcz and their response it was merely an unaddressed, unsigned, incomplete academic draft that was sent to one person for review and for consultation regarding its standing in English law, as is the norm in academia.

Answer:

As a Jewish community and as a wider society we must do all we can to tackle Child Sexual Abuse. The leading Charedi congregational body, the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, has “clearly and unambiguously presented the position ... that mesirah does not apply where the person being reported is suspected of causing criminal harm to others, such as in the case of child abuse”. Cases must always be reported. We should never allow a veil of silence to endanger children, women or men. The reported comments by this individual are deeply disturbing and we are seeking clarification from the appropriate sources about the facts. We must recognise that CSA is a problem across society, and not just one segment such as the Charedi community. Such stigmatisation is unfair on those who face it, as well as potentially allowing others to avoid the painful truth that there is work to be done across all sectors of society.

Name of Deputy: Tommer Spence
Constituency: UJS

Question:

The Jewish manifesto at the last general election called for the government to provide funding for a permanent memorial to victims of the transatlantic slave trade. This call was commended in the Stephen Bush report. Now that approval has been granted to the Holocaust Memorial in Westminster, will the Board put resources towards the campaign for a national slave trade memorial?

Answer:

We have raised the issue in meetings across Government and will continue to do so. As President, I have written in support of it in the past. We will look to see what other opportunities to properly acknowledge and commemorate this immense human atrocity.

Name of Deputy: Jessica Baker
Constituency: UJS

Question:

On August 5th, the BoD tweeted that "we are proud to speak up for Israel's security, welfare and standing." Commanders for Israel's Security, an organisation comprised of over 300 senior officers from Israel's security services state that what is in Israel's best security interests is an end to the military occupation of the West Bank. Does the BoD acknowledge that occupation and settlements are a barrier to peace and decrease Israel's security?

Answer:

As part of our unwavering commitment to Israel, the Board of Deputies supports the Two State Solution and is therefore supportive of all policies that place Israel in the strongest position to achieve this outcome. It is for the democratically-elected Government of Israel, with the support of those currently in charge of Israel's security services, to decide how best to accomplish this.

Name of Deputy: Leila Cumber
Constituency: Wembley United Synagogue

Question:

To allay confusion, do you not think it advisable to inform the Jewish public that the charity 'Association for the Well-being of Israel's Soldiers (AWIS) has changed its title to 'Yachad' before any confusion sets in with the political movement.

Answer:

I thank the Deputy for the question. The name change took place five years ago, when the Association for the Well-being of Israel's Soldiers merged with Libi (the Fund for strengthening Israel's defence). There does not seem to have been any great confusion in the time since, and I note that the UK charity is still called "UK Friends of the Association for the Well-being of Israel's Soldiers".

Name of Deputy: Leigh Dworkin
Constituency: Maidenhead Synagogue

Question:

In light of the report of inadequate provision to counter sexual abuse in certain Orthodox synagogues, what can be done to insist this is remedied, primarily for the sake of potential victims and to protect them from harm, but also to prevent British Jewry as a whole having its reputation tarnished?

Answer:

It is critical that we as a community take child safeguarding with the utmost seriousness. The cost of not doing so is terrible suffering and broken lives. The Board of Deputies thanks IICSA for its important work and supports the recommendations of its report. We will be liaising with all synagogue movements and regional representative councils to ask how their member synagogues and institutions will be responding to the report. There have already been a number of forward-thinking and encouraging responses from different sections of the community.

Name of Deputy: Nathan Boroda
Constituency: JLM

Question:

Christian Wakeford's local Conservative group have readmitted a local councillor, after suspending him for describing Sedgley Park as a 'grot spot' where it is difficult to communicate with residents 'unless you speak Hebrew.' Will the Board condemn this?

Answer:

We have shared our concerns with the Conservatives on this matter – obviously we believe that Councillor Caserta’s comments were deeply offensive. We understand that the councillor is up for reselection in the coming months and intend to write to the local Conservative group urging them to make the correct decision in the interests of community cohesion.

COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION DIVISION

ACTIVITY REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2021

1. UK Education – Working Group Lead Sheila Gewolb

Whilst schools were on holiday over the summer, work in the field of education continued. **Senior Vice President Gary Mond** and **Education and Youth Engagement Officer Jake Berger** joined colleagues from the CST, JLC, PaJeS and HET for a roundtable hosted by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, to discuss the recent increase in antisemitism in schools and education settings. You can see the Education Secretary's tweet about the meeting [here](#). **Senior Vice President Gary Mond** and **Education Policy and Youth Engagement Officer Jake Berger** met Shadow Education Secretary Kate Green MP. Topics discussed included antisemitism in schools, religious education, and education unions. You can see a tweet about the meeting [here](#). As students received exam results over the summer, **Gary** wished them the best of luck in a message [here](#). Separately, **Senior Vice President Gary Mond** and **Education Policy and Youth Engagement Officer Jake Berger** met Ella Rose of the Holocaust Educational Trust, discussing Holocaust commemoration work in the community.

There was a discussion about making the Jewish Living Exhibition (JLE) operational again, possibly with training for volunteer presenters; the desirability of attracting younger people to train to co-present; and creating an inventory of the necessary resources/artifacts for presenters. There was a discussion about creating a Primary School Judaism Resource along the lines of the best-selling Judaism GCSE Resource.

It is essential that the BoD establishes where there are Jewish reps on SACREs and what level of input they have, how many meetings they attend, etc. A suggestion was made to organise a SACRE conference (possibly December 2021 or January 2022), as there is a high level of support needed for SACRE reps. **Sandra Teacher (Education Consultation)** will lead on this, with several leading educationalists to be asked as guest speakers.

2 Israel Education – Working Group Lead Gary Mond

The first three meetings of the Deputies Israel Education series on Zoom has been held, and it is hoped to run about 35 or so of them over the triennium. The topics were the physical, historical and spiritual significance of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the Galil respectively. The fourth session will take place on 30 September 2021 and will cover early Zionism. A huge thank you to Interim CEO Michael Wegier for his excellent presentations.

Support is needed for Jewish students and others to counter antisemitic and anti-Israel bullying. Work should be commenced on a resource on modern Israeli history and materials should be produced for teachers on Israel.

3 Holocaust Education / Commemoration – Working Group Lead Gillian Moonman

Deputy Spencer Nathan is arranging a presentation on Lithuanian Holocaust Denial on 23 November 2021. It was suggested that in January 2022 **Spencer would offer** two presentations for Deputies and others with the films "I Will Not Die" and "Oratorio Terezin". The quality of Holocaust education in schools and the desirability of not confining the teaching solely to Year 9 pupils was discussed.

4 Communities – Working Group Leads: Andrew Gilbert (London); Jeremy Michelson (Regional)

London Jewish Forum (LJF) has continued to focus on the recovery missions. These include holding two community meetings which were part of the London Festival of Ideas (Dr Ron Wolfson on the Post Pandemic Synagogue and with Rabbi Raphael Zarum on Jewish Recovery). As part of the "NHS 5 ways to wellbeing" programme, Healthy London Partnership and LJF have brought together JAMI, Maccabi, Rabbinic Expertise and Health London from the London Borough of Barnet. Additionally, LJF have partnered with Public Health England in London around the Vaccination programme and also Mental Health concerns, this led to funding and support for London UJS Pizza in the Park and a meeting between PHE and the Stamford Hill community on mental health focused on Haringey. JAMI and LJF will continue to work closely on this.

Beyond the work on the recovery and the emergency, LJF also works on community engagement where during August meetings continued with MPs, Council Leaders, Assembly Members, Council Cabinet members covering Health, Cohesion and Directors of Public Health and Borough commanders.

For the regions outside of London, it was suggested that communities set up WhatsApp groups, with the relevant GDPR permissions, so they can access expertise and information from around the country as well as the locality. The question was asked whether we are seeking to help established communities, or isolated Jews all over the country? Twinning of communities was suggested, extending knowledge, expertise and inter=community support. It was suggested that the BoD's "Community Focus" section on the website needs to be updated more often.

5 Wider Community and Deputy Engagement

The Community Engagement Team hosted 30 Deputies for a Coffee Break where Deputies were able to meet each other in a social setting.

Senior Vice President Gary Mond, Interim Chief Executive Michael Wegier, Director of Public Affairs Phil Rosenberg, Regional Manager Sara Radivan and Education Policy and Youth Engagement Officer Jake Berger took part in the Maccabi GB Community Fun Run and raised valuable funds for the Board of Deputies. Several other Deputies also took part in the Fun Run, raising money for and representing a range of charities.

Five new organisations – Gift, the Jewish Police Association, the Jewish Small Communities Network, Kisharon and Langdon – were voted on to the Board of Deputies. The Community Engagement Team are in the process of supporting these organisations in their Deputy elections.

Communities Manager Lauren Keiles and Regional Manager Sara Radivan have been meeting with Deputies from constituent organisations to ensure there is effective collaboration for this Triennium.

President Marie van der Zyl has delivered presentations to the South Wales Jewish Representative Council AGM, Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation and Cockfosters and North Southgate Synagogue on the work the Board of Deputies is doing on behalf of the community.

New Deputies have been assigned their buddies and connections have been made.

In the lead up to Rosh Hashanah many community magazines have featured the Rosh Hashanah greeting from **President Marie van der Zyl**, and a regional article from **Regional Manager Sara Radivan**.

6 Jewish Heritage – Working Group Lead Sheila Gewolb

The BoD currently holds the title for 8 closed cemeteries. **Archives and Heritage Manager Dawn Waterman** has visited most of them and made contact with them all. **Dawn** recently visited the Jewish burial grounds at Penzance and Falmouth in Cornwall and Merthyr Tydfil in Wales and met those involved in their upkeep. There is much work to be done, especially in Wolverhampton and volunteers are needed. Site visits for Deputies could be arranged.

Working group for Deputies to act as ambassadors for the Hidden Treasures project, with training to be given. **Dawn** to present to SACREs to raise awareness of Jewish contribution to local areas.

Archives and Heritage Manager Dawn Waterman continued to give talks to synagogues about Hidden Treasures; celebrating Jewish archives in Britain at Mosaic Reform Synagogue, Finchley Progressive Synagogue, Harrogate Hebrew Congregation, the New North London Synagogue and the South London Liberal Synagogue. She also gave presentations about the project to the conference of the British Association of Jewish Studies and to the Jewish Historical Society of England.

7 Health and Mental Health – Working Group Lead Andrew Gilbert

Meetings have been held with JAMI and Jewish Care CEOs, and JAMI chair and Deputy Tessa Arnold. Deputies with expertise in local government have been invited to join this group. The intention is to partner and involve Jewish community organisations relevant in this field; build links with the NHS and PHE and other connected bodies; and, where necessary, to advocate to the relevant parts of local, regional and national government.

8 Jewish Women's Aid – Working Group Lead Ruth Hart

The working group discussed its ongoing support for Jewish Women's Aid Shabbat as a key initiative to raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and other related topics such as Get refusal, custody issues and mental health and to introduce the prevention of abuse as a tikkun olam subject. JWA will be contacted with the aim of continuing our work together.

Attendance at previous meeting (1 September 2021): Gary Mond (Chair), Garry Abrams, Brian Bloom, Richard Del Monte, Flora Frank, Sheila Gewolb, Andrew Gilbert, Ruth Hart, Jeremy Michelson, Gillian Moonman, Spencer Nathan, Ariel Simble, Naomi Ter-Berg, Louis Trup
Observers: Annabelle Daiches, Leigh Dworkin, Simon Gurevitz, Daniel Hirschfield, Jeremy Kelly, Rosalynde Lewis, Alan Lion, Judith Prinsley, Michael Reik, Bob Vertes
Staff: Sara Radivan, Jake Berger, Dawn Waterman, Sandra Teacher
Apologies: Anthony Bolchover, Toby Kunin, Gideon Smith

The Community and Education Division congratulates Gillian Moonman on her election as Vice Chair of the Division. The vote was taken during the Division's meeting on 1 September 2021. The Division also thanks Andrew Gilbert for putting himself forward for the role, for his service in the previous triennium, and for his ongoing contribution to the Division.

DEFENCE AND GROUP RELATIONS DIVISION REPORT AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021

1) Antisemitism

- a) **Amanda** reacted to footage of TalkSport presenters failing to call out antisemitism live on air, [describing](#) it as “extremely disturbing” and calling on the radio station to rectify the situation. TalkSport later publicly apologised.
- b) **Amanda** and **Public Affairs Officer Daniel Sugarman** met representatives of TfL to discuss the ongoing case of a troubling architectural feature at a London Underground Station.
- c) **Phil** and **Daniel** met representatives of Ofcom, the regulator set to take on additional duties in the online sphere as per the Online Safety Bill, to discuss ideas to help better protect Jewish internet and social media users.
- d) **Phil** attended a meeting of Twitter’s Trust and Safety Council to talk about strengthening their policies and procedures on tackling antisemitism.
- e) **Daniel** was a panellist at a webinar on Hate Speech and Antisemitism organised by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies
- f) **Daniel** attended the monthly meeting of the World Jewish Congress Online Hate Working Group to discuss what representatives of different Jewish organisations worldwide are doing to combat bigotry online.
- g) A pilot process for monitoring media bias and antisemitism has been established by the Board. Deputies that identify any potential examples of media bias should in the first instance contact Simon Round (simon.round@bod.org.uk)
- h) **President Marie van der Zyl, Vice President Amanda Bowman, Interim Chief Executive Michael Wegier, Public Affairs Director Phil Rosenberg and Communications Officer Simon Round** met BBC Director of News and Current Affairs Fran Unsworth and other senior BBC executives. Among items discussed were coverage of the Israel-Gaza conflict, the BBC Arabic service, antisemitism and faith coverage.

2) Religious Freedom

- a) **Amanda** and **Phil** held discussions with the European Commission, the Belfast Jewish Community and the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland about facilitating kosher imports from Great Britain to Northern Ireland in the context of Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol.
- b) **Amanda, Phil** and **Regional Affairs Officer Daniel Elton**, together with Chair of the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland Maurice Cohen and the Belfast Jewish Community’s Reverend David Kale and Chair Michael Black, met Adebayo Babjide (the European Union’s Chargé D’Affaires in London) and other European Commission officials to discuss the Kosher food supply crisis relating to the Northern Ireland Protocol, as well as possible means of remedy.
- c) **Phil** and **Daniel Elton** also met officials from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Northern Ireland Office to workshop possible means to fix the problem of Kosher food supply.
- d) The BoD’s Family Law Group has been liaising with religious authorities and synagogue movements regarding how the community responds to the consultation on the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Government indicated it would include in guidance for judges that refusal to give a get could be viewed as a form of domestic abuse, at the prompting of Parliamentarians who had not properly consulted religious authorities. We thank those members of the FLG who have worked so hard on this issue and the Board’s response to the Government consultation.
- e) In March 2021 the Financial Conduct Authority indicated religious burial societies would be subject to new regulation. Such regulation would potentially cost Jewish burial societies tens of

thousands of pounds and may make smaller regional ones unviable. Furthermore, such regulation could affect synagogues, as the act of paying for membership of a synagogue could be viewed by the FCA as the point of regulation and could create a burden for smaller synagogues to take on. The BoD has sent responses to two FCA consultations on this issue and has been in correspondence with the FCA and the Treasury and although we cannot be certain what the final regulation will be, there are indications that Jewish burial societies and synagogues will be exempt. A special thank you to Liberal Judaism for their assistance in this matter.

3) Group Relations

- a) Amanda and fellow BoD **Vice President David Mendoza-Wolfson** met Rahima Mahmut from the World Uyghur Congress, along with **International Officer Talia Ingleby** and **Interfaith and Social Action Manager Anthony Silkoff**, to discuss what more the Jewish community can do to support the Uyghur people, who are facing a genocide in China.
- b) **Phil and Anthony** met Revd Peter Cowell, Acting General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and Imam Qari Asim, Chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, to discuss opportunities and challenges in Christian-Muslim-Jewish relations.
- c) **Anthony** and Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, Chair of Eco Synagogue, joined a meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s Interfaith Liaison Committee to discuss plans for the COP26 Climate Conference.
- d) **Anthony** had meetings with Amandeep Kaur from Eco Sikh, and Kamran Shezad from the Islamic Foundation for Ecological and Environmental Sciences, to discuss opportunities for collaboration with Eco Synagogue.

4) Higher Education

- a) After Jewish students at Bristol University and the Union of Jewish Students were made aware that Professor David Miller is listed to be teaching during the upcoming academic year, **Marie** wrote to the Vice Chancellor of the University to call on them to suspend him. You can read Marie's letter [here](#).
- b) After Bristol's reply made clear they will not suspend Professor Miller nor respond to the Board of Deputies' request for a meeting, **Marie** wrote an op-ed in the *Jewish News* about the issue. You can read the op-ed [here](#).
- c) **Amanda** and **Jake** met with UJS and CST to discuss joint approaches to antisemitism on campus taking recent incidents into account

Attendees at Defence Division meeting 23rd August:

Defence Division: Amanda Bowman, Ephraim Borowski, Ruth Abrams, Anthony Adler, Nathan Boroda, James Harris, Vicki Harris, Laurence Julius, David Katz, Jerry Lewis, Eleanor Lind, Stuart Macdonald, Jonathan Metliss, Jonathan Neumann, Karen Newman, Susan Pascoe, Peninnah Serrano

Staff present: Phil Rosenberg, Anthony Silkoff, Jake Berger

The Defence and Group Relations Division congratulates Ephraim Borowski on his election as Vice Chair of the Division. The vote was taken during the Division's August meeting. The Division also thanks both Jonathan Neumann and James Harris for putting themselves forward for the role.

International Division

Activity Report

July-August 2021

1) Israel

Bias against Israel is an unfortunate norm of international relations, and the Tokyo Summer Olympics sadly proved to be another stage where this played out. That is why **Vice-President David Mendoza-Wolfson** wrote an article for the *Jewish Chronicle* discussing the problems that Israeli athletes were experiencing during the sporting event. He reflected on the sad truth that pathological hatred of Israel remains rife in many parts of the Middle East and North Africa, and resulted in athletes refusing to compete against Israeli competitors. This behaviour was particularly stark in the context of the Munich Olympic Massacre which, nearly 50 years after the event, was finally commemorated with a minute's silence in the Olympics' opening ceremony.

As part of group of organisations who participate in Israel advocacy in the UK, **Vice President David Mendoza-Wolfson**, **Interim Chief Executive Michael Wegier**, **Director of Public Affairs Philip Rosenberg** and **International Relations Officer Talia Ingleby** were invited to attend a breakfast reception at the Embassy of Israel to thank them for their ongoing support for the security and well-being of the State of Israel. Moreover, **International Relations Officer Talia Ingleby** held a series of meetings with communal colleagues, including Russell Langer, Head of Policy and Research at the Jewish Leadership Council, and Ronie Gazit, from the Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre, to discuss collaborative opportunities and Israel advocacy.

2) Diplomatic Engagement

Vice President David Mendoza-Wolfson made a series of public statements expressing disappointment over the passing of new Polish legislation which will stop Jews from reclaiming property stolen from them during the Holocaust. He stated that this development was unfortunately not a 'surprise' and 'is simply another blight on Poland's record on dealing with issues relating to Holocaust restitution and runs counter to its international commitments.' The Board of Deputies has repeatedly raised concerns on the issue of Polish restitution with Lord Pickles, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Post-Holocaust Issues, with the British Embassy in Warsaw and with the Polish Embassy in London. David also said that "By ratifying a law that legalises theft, Poland is sliding backwards towards decline. Until it reverses this measure, Poland's Government is complicit in the dispossession of Polish citizens. The attitude of its leaders in penalising Holocaust survivors brings shame on the country."

As part of his induction into his responsibilities as Chair of International Division **Vice-President David Mendoza-Wolfson** reached out to the key diplomatic missions with whom the Board of Deputies have relations with to hold introductory meetings. Accordingly, David held an introductory meeting with Michael Zimmermann, Ambassador of Austria to UK. Topics discussed included combatting antisemitism and safeguarding Jewish institutions. David thanked the Ambassador for Austria's show of support for Israel's right to self defence during Operation Guardian of the Walls, Austria's proscription of Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organisation and their rejection of and non-attendance at the Durban IV Conference. **Vice President David Mendoza-Wolfson** and **International Relations Officer Talia Ingleby** also met Sheikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the UK. They discussed the Abraham Accords, collaboration in combating hate and extremism, as well as Jewish heritage in both Bahrain and the UK. Moreover, **Vice President David Mendoza-Wolfson** and **International**

Relations Officer Talia Ingleby held a meeting with Renatas Norkus, Ambassador of Lithuania to the UK. They spoke about the importance of Holocaust remembrance, fighting antisemitism and the annual 'Litvak Days' celebration held at the Embassy of Lithuania. **Vice President David Mendoza-Wolfson** and **International Relations Officer Talia Ingleby** also met Ales Opatrny, Deputy Head of Mission of the Czech Republic to the UK. They thanked the Foreign Ministry for their support of Israel's right to self defence in Operation Guardian of the Walls, and discussed combatting antisemitism, and the historic importance of the Czech Memorial Scrolls which are housed at Westminster Synagogue and other Synagogues in the UK. Furthermore, **Vice-President David Mendoza-Wolfson** and **International Relations Officer Talia Ingleby** had a meeting with Greek Ambassador Ioannis E. Raptakis at which they discussed, among other things, the importance of fighting antisemitism across Europe and the wider world and Holocaust remembrance. David also thanked the ambassador for Greece's support for Israel during the most recent conflict and expressed the community's happiness at the flourishing Greek-Israeli relations. Lastly, **Vice-President David Mendoza-Wolfson** and **International Relations Officer Talia Ingleby** met with Julia Gross, Deputy Ambassador of Germany, and Susanne Frane, Head of Culture and Education, to discuss areas of mutual interest, including fighting antisemitism, Holocaust remembrance and protecting international religious freedoms.

3) International Partner Organisations and Outreach to Sister Communities

As part of a global Jewish community, the network of international Jewish partner organisations is an important resource for confronting shared concerns like antisemitism, coordinating messaging and providing support for sister communities. **Vice-President David Mendoza-Wolfson** reacted to the shocking report from the Federal Bureau of Information's 2020 Hate Crime Statistics that found that despite only making up 2% of the US population, Jews were the targets of nearly 60% of religious bias crimes. David stated that the report underlines the importance of continuing to work together to fight the normalisation of antisemitic tropes in political and public discourse and social media, and sent a message of support to our American brothers and sisters in the fight against this age-old hatred. Moreover, **Public Affairs Director Phil Rosenberg** met counterparts at the Board of Deputies' Canadian sister organisation, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, to discuss the fight against antisemitism, the recent Israel-Hamas conflict, racial justice in our communities and solidarity with the Uyghurs. **Public Affairs Director Phil Rosenberg** also met Wendy Kahn, National Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, to discuss projects of mutual interest. Lastly, in support of the World Jewish Congress JDCorps' virtual Rosh Hashana seder, **Director of Public Affairs Philip Rosenberg** and **International Relations Officer Talia Ingleby**, as members of the WJC JDCorps, hosted a virtual roundtable, 'A Conversation with Fahad AlBinali, Deputy Head of Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the UK' to discuss the historic Abraham Accords, and areas of mutual interest such as inter-faith relations, freedom of religion, minority rights and coexistence. Also in attendance were deputies, and fellow members of the WJC JDCorps, Natasha Hausdorff, Efrat Shaoulian Sopher and Aaron Cohen-Gold.

Attendees at the September Division meeting, held on 02.09.21: Ido Ben-Shaul, Richard Cohen, Aaron Cohen-Gold, Jonathan Cole, Andrew Freedman, Natasha Hausdorff, David Mendoza-Wolfson, Tessa Milligan, Jess Mindel, Bruce Rothberg, David Safir, Edwin Shuker, Ivan Sloboda, Efrat Sopher, Joy Wolfe. **Apologies:** Yochy Davis, Karen Solomon.

At this meeting, Jonathan Cole was elected Vice Chair of the International Division. Karen Solomon was designated at the division's representative to the Regional Council.