Board of Deputies - Highlights of the Year to October 2020

Prepared by: Leigh Kogan October 2020

I have attended several monthly Board of Deputies meetings this year, both in person when this was possible, and more recently on Zoom.

I have prepared this short report to highlight some of the wide-ranging work carried out by the Board of Deputies. There is much more that I could have listed, however, I hope that, after reading this paper, you will be convinced that your annual donation to the Board’s funds is exceedingly well spent!

**Political Engagement:**

Last year, we were in the midst of **Labour’s** **antisemitism** crisis. Following the election and the change of leadership, the Board set out ‘Ten Pledges’ on anti-Jewish racism. These were enthusiastically adopted by the new Labour leadership team. The progress we have seen is very encouraging as evidenced by the sacking of Rebecca Long-Bailey from her Shadow Education role earlier this year.

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| With particular relevance to us in **Redbridge**, local councillors reached out to Board of Deputies over anti-Semitism. Board of Deputies Vice President Amanda Bowman met Redbridge councillors, including Council Leader Jas Athwal, to discuss anti-Semitism after allegations of antisemitic conduct in a Labour Party ward meeting emerged. |
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**Racial Inclusivity:**

Further to the worldwide movement, which developed rapidly in response to the racist murder of George Floyd, many in the Jewish community felt we needed to formulate our own initiative. The result is the Board of Deputies’ ‘**Commission on Racial Inclusivity in the Jewish Community’** which is being chaired by distinguished journalist Stephen Bush.

**Interfaith**:

The Board’s interfaith activities have certainly made the news – for example our support for the **Chinese Uyghur Muslims** currently suffering oppression in China, has raised awareness of the problems. In January, the Board organized an event in Parliament to support the Uyghurs.; this was attended by many MPs and faith leaders.

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**Education**:

Through Pikuach, the Board supervises religious education in Jewish schools, and, pandemic permitting, travel the country with the **Jewish Living Experience exhibition**, educating non-Jewish children and adults about our way of life.

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| A Jewish student at King's College London had their **examination date** moved from the Jewish festival of Shavuot thanks to an intervention from the Board of Deputies and University Jewish Chaplaincy.  |

**Israel**:

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| Local councillors, mayors and politicians attend packed events to hear Israeli and Palestinians speak about their hopes for peace. The events were organised by ‘**Invest in Peace’,** a joint initiative between the Board of Deputies of British Jews and Churches Together in Britain. Recent events took place at Kingston Liberal Synagogue, Avenue St Andrew’s United Reformed Church, and Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation. |

**Community**:

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| **Social media:** The Board of Deputies has partnered with Facebook and the Community Security Trust to produce a resource about how to tackle antisemitism on the social media platform. This resource, launched in Parliament as part of National Hate Crime Awareness Week, explains what antisemitism is, how Facebook’s community guidelines work, and further steps Facebook will implement. |

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| **Organ donation**: The Board of Deputies welcomed religious safeguards contained within the new organ donation process. Vice President Amanda Bowman, Medical Adviser Professor David Katz and Government, Regional and Religious Affairs Officer Daniel Elton attended a Board of Deputies-organised Zoom session at which donation experts and transplant recipients spoke to Deputies and Jewish medical professionals from around the country, urging Jewish communities to engage in the organ donation system.

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*Note: Sections of this report have been copied directly from the weekly Communal Briefing email update issued by the Board.* |
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