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BAJS Annual General Meeting 22 July 2008
University of Manchester

Present: Philip Alexander (president), Maria Diemling, Hannah Holtschneider (web officer), Seth Kunin (president-elect), Daniel Langton (secretary), Dan Levene, Sarah Pearce, Joachim Schlör, and others.

1. Apologies: Jim Aitken (treasurer), Michael Berkowitz, Lars Fischer (Bulletin editor), Geoffrey Khan, Alison Salvesen, Willem Smelik.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting: approved.

3. Matters arising:

(4.2) RAE Panels: Daniel Langton confirmed that no requests for advice had been received from RAE Panels.

(13.1) UK representation at the (North American) Association for Jewish Studies (AJA) conference: Daniel Langton reported that there had been no interest from members in representing British Jewish Studies at the North American conference, despite efforts at publicising this idea. As Seth Kunin had explained, the purpose was raise the profile of UK Jewish Studies PG programmes, which remain considerably cheaper than those offered in the US. Daniel Langton reported on the committee's recent decision to write to the AJA requesting a table at which literature from the various UK institutions could be displayed. Once this was arranged, he would call for the necessary literature (including details of costs) and would arrange for shipment to the US in time for the December conference.

4. President's report:

4.1 Philip Alexander noted with sadness the passing of John Klier (UCL).

4.2 Conference 2008: Philip Alexander expressed his thanks for the work of Bernard Jackson, who had overseen the integrated administration of the three conferences that made up the JudaicaFest, together with Penny Junkermann and Daniel Langton. He noted that he and Daniel Langton were hoping to co-edit the proceedings for a special edition of the new *Journal of Jewish Identities*.

4.3 State of Jewish Studies in UK: Philip Alexander expressed his gratification at the evident health of the association. Nevertheless, he noted with regret that, as result of the political climate, Jewish Studies appeared less favoured on today's campuses than it had in the past. He also observed that within a few years many senior Jewish Studies specialists would be retiring, citing amongst others Ada Rapoport Albert (UCL), Mark Geller (UCL), Robert Hayward (Durham), Nicholas de Lange (Cambridge), Adrian Curtis (Manchester), Bernard Jackson (Manchester), Philip Alexander (Manchester). He feared that many positions would not be replaced and suggested that the AGM might be the right forum for discussing what, if any, strategies BAJIS should adopt. Martin Goodman wondered whether BAJIS might consider ways of pressing institutions to replace retired Jewish Studies lecturers. Seth Kunin disagreed, arguing that, in his experience, such tactics tended to be regarded as external interference and to risk provoking counter-productive effects. Maria Diemling wondered to what extent Jewish Studies would benefit from interest in Religious Studies more generally, but Philip Alexander reported that desk-research at

Manchester suggested that interest in Religious Studies at university level appeared to be falling [at Russell Group institutions]. Martin Goodman asked what Jewish Studies representation existed for RAE2008, and Philip Alexander confirmed that Robert Hayward (Durham) was on Panel 48 (Middle Eastern and African Studies). Martin Goodman agreed, emphasising the importance of tracking the representation of Jewish Studies on the RAE panels, and Seth Kunin strongly agreed the importance of this role in the context of the future REF. Sarah Pearce wondered whether BAJJS might be able to organise some kind of Jewish Studies summer school. Martin Goodman agreed, observing that while it was not difficult to find summer schools for Modern Hebrew, such was not the case for Classical Hebrew. Dan Levene wondered whether BAJJS might be able to organise some kind of co-operative research bid, prompting Philip Alexander to express his pleasure in the number of large grants for Jewish Studies won in the last few years at individual institutions (including Southampton, UCL, Cambridge, and Manchester). Philip Alexander **agreed** to write up a short report of the state of Jewish Studies in the UK and circulate it to colleagues.

5. Treasurer's report: See attached.

On behalf of Jim Aitken, Daniel Langton read out the report. He noted that the cost of the new website and the promotional pens was around 1500.00, and that 500.00 had been expended on the JudaicaFest.

6. Secretary's report:

6.1 Bulletin: Daniel Langton reported that the hard-copy of the *Bulletin* had been issued late in February. He noted that the committee had decided that in the future a shortened version of the annual *Bulletin* would be published, although it might perhaps include an insert profiling one or two centres for Jewish Studies. He reported that Lars Fischer had generously **agreed** to take over these duties and had been co-opted as Bulletin Editor.

6.2 New Website: On behalf of the association, Daniel Langton thanked Hannah Holtschneider and Maria Diemling for their work in establishing the splendid new BAJJS website. Hannah Holtschneider asked colleagues to advertise the web-address (www.britishjewishstudies.org), to encourage other associations and individuals to link to the website, and to subscribe to the automated emailing service via the website. Daniel Langton reported that Hannah Holtschneider had generously **agreed**, in the event that the constitutional amendment to create the post of Web Officer was approved at the AGM, to be co-opted as Web Officer.

7. Conference 2009: Seth Kunin confirmed that the theme of BAJJS Conference would be 'Culinary Judaism' and that the dates would be Sun 12 to Tue 14 July. He **agreed** that details concerning the date (in late January or early February), venue and speaker for the Annual Lecture would be announced shortly. Martin Goodman suggested that committee members take care to avoid clashes with the SOTS conference.

8. President 2010: Daniel Langton announced the committee's nomination of Sarah Peace (Southampton). No other nominations were received and Dr. Pearce was duly elected.

9. UCU anti-Israeli proposals:

9.1 Statement: Daniel Langton reminded colleagues that the University & College Union (UCU) had passed a motion at the end of May calling members 'to consider the moral and political implications of educational links with Israeli institutions, and to discuss the occupation with individuals and institutions concerned, including Israeli colleagues with whom they are collaborating.' Since this appeared to be an annual problem, it was suggested that the website should include the following *general* statement. (*Specific* responses to specific UCU motions could be added in the News section of the website when necessary). The proposed text read: 'The British Association for Jewish Studies (BAJS), representing scholars of many backgrounds and a variety of perspectives on the State of Israel, deplores any attempt to weaken educational links with Israeli institutions or individuals by the University & College Union (UCU). We believe that such actions contradict the aims of scholarship and the mission of an academic body, and do not ultimately contribute to the resolution of the conflict. BAJJS will continue to promote educational links with Israeli institutions and individuals.' No amendments were suggested and the proposal was duly endorsed by the members of the AGM.

9.2 Haifa University: Daniel Langton communicated Lars Fischer's report that, in order to facilitate demonstrations of solidarity, Haifa University is currently appointing Affiliated Professors (www.bc-cac.org/newsItem.php?id=45). Requests should be directed to the Rector, Professor Yossi Ben-Artzi, and can best be submitted to Riva Friedman who is in charge of the Rector's office at rfriedm1@univ.haifa.ac.il

10. Amendments to Constitution: See attached.

Daniel Langton distributed several draft amendments that had been agreed by the committee. These would respectively encourage membership from within the Republic of Ireland; expand associate membership so as to include those from outside the UK and Republic of Ireland with serious academic interests (while not allowing them voting rights); allow experienced committee members to stay on for a second term; replace the role of Publicity Officer with Web Officer. Each amendment was explained, proposed (by Philip Alexander) and seconded (by Daniel Langton) before being voted on. All four amendments were duly adopted.

11. New Committee Members: Daniel Langton reported that, the relevant constitutional amendment having been formally approved, the committee's nominee was Dan Levene. No other nominations were received and he was duly elected to serve a second term.

12. New BAJS Members: Daniel Langton announced the committee's nominations for election. Dr Rocco Bernasconi (Manchester), Dr Tim Grady (Chester), and Dr Diana Lipton (KCL) were duly elected as full members; Julie Hall (Exeter) and Naomi Hilton (Cambridge) as student members; John Cooper (London), Ann Rau Dawes (London) as associated members.

13. Student Essay Prizes.

13.1 Funding: Daniel Langton reported that in response to a letter he had written, the Kessler Foundation had invited the association to reapply for funding. He and Jim Aitken were in the process of making this application.

13.2 Submissions for 2008: Daniel Langton reported that, since there had been no undergraduate submissions and only a small number of post-graduate submissions, the rubric for the prize was being reconsidered.

13.3 Awards: Daniel Langton announced that the post-graduate prize would be shared by Simon Mayers (Manchester) for an essay entitled 'An Examination of the Judaism-Jewishness' Dialectic within Jewish Studies' and Zoe Jacob (UCL) for an essay entitled 'Which theory of secular domestic law best helps underpin the Orthodox Jewish feminist approach to halakhah, and does this theoretical underpinning strengthen Orthodox Jewish feminist position?'

14. Any other Business. None.

15. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 14 July 2009 in Durham.

British Association for Jewish Studies

Treasurer's Report, Annual General meeting, 22 July 2008

Summary

The balance in the current account has increased in 2007, owing to an unexpected profit from the conference (over £300 including the bursaries). This arose from many registrations bringing in extra conference fees. Excluding this increase, the running expenses have matched the income in real terms, and our expenditure overall remains stable.

For 2008 there are significant expenses for the redesign of the website that have not yet been paid.

We remain grateful to all members that promptly pay subscriptions, which ensures that the running costs of the Association are covered, allowing the balance to offset any unseen expenses.

The interest on the **Deposit Account** has increased moderately.

A. Accounting year Jan–Dec 2007

1. Current Account

Opening Balance £4005.96

INCOME

Subscriptions: £995
Conference: £2706

Total income: £3701

EXPENDITURE

Travel: £405.75
BAJS Lecture £50
Catering £31.34
Conference: £2040.22
Conference bursary: £320
Essay Prize: £100
Postage £85.12
Web domain £29.38

Total expenditure £3061.81

Closing Balance £4645.17

2. Deposit Account

Opening balance £5297.72

Interest £86.25

Closing balance £5383.97

B. Accounting Period Jan–June 2008

1. Current Account

Opening Balance £4645.17

INCOME

Subscriptions: £913

Advertising £150

Total income: £1063

EXPENDITURE

Travel: £547.82

Conference bursary: £500

Essay Prize 2007: £100

Printing & Postage £540.62

Total expenditure £1688.44

Closing Balance £4019.73

2. Deposit Account

Opening balance £5383.97

Interest £122.91

Closing balance £5506.88

J.K. Aitken

16th July 2008

BAJS Constitution: Proposed Changes for 2008

2. Aims

“The aims of the Association shall be to promote and defend in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, on a non-profit-making basis, the scholarly study of Jewish culture in all its aspects within Higher Education; to organise conferences; to initiate and support research and publication.”

MODIFICATION: This would replace “the British Isles” with “the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland”

3. Membership: (iii) Associate Members

“Associate membership shall be open to (a) those outside the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland who have a serious academic interest in Jewish Studies, and (b) those within the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland with a serious academic interest in Jewish Studies but who are not professionally involved in the subject. Associate members will not have voting rights but are welcome to attend the Association’s conferences.”

MODIFICATION: This would replace the current text: “Associate membership shall be open to those with a serious academic interest in Jewish Studies but who are not professionally involved in the subject.”

7. The Committee of the Association: Committee members

“Members who have completed a full term of office shall be eligible for re-election for one further term, but thereafter cannot be re-elected for a period of 3 years.”

MODIFICATION: This would replace the current text: “The retiring Committee members shall not be eligible for re-election until two years have passed.”

7. The Committee of the Association: Officers

“The Officers shall be the President, Treasurer, Secretary, Web Officer, and Editor of the Bulletin. They shall be elected to hold office for one year. The President is not eligible for immediate re-election. The President shall be pre-elected at the Annual General Meeting held two years before the year in which he or she is due to hold office. The Treasurer, Secretary, Web Officer, and Editor of the Bulletin may be re-elected annually. In the event of either the Treasurer or Secretary demitting office in mid-term, the President shall be empowered to appoint a new Treasurer or Secretary to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.”

MODIFICATION: This would remove the role of the Publicity Officer and replace it with Web Officer