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BAJS Annual General meeting 13 July 2007  
University College London

Present: Jim Aitken (treasurer), Michael Berkowitz (president), Daniel Langton (secretary), Dan Levene, Joachim Schlör, and 3 others.

1. Apologies: Philip Alexander (president 2008), Maria Diemling, Hannah Holtschneider, Geoffrey Khan, Seth Kunin, Alison Salvesen, Willem Smelik, Isabel Wollaston.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting: approved.

3. Matters arising: John Klier reported with regret that at a previous meeting of the EAJS it had been decided that membership of a national Association of Jewish Studies (e.g. BAJS) would not be regarded as adequate bona fides for membership of EAJS.

4. President's report:

4.1 Michael Berkowitz reported that he and Geoffrey Khan had written a short letter to a number of newspapers and which was also available on the website:

The British Association of Jewish Studies (BAJS), representing scholars of many backgrounds and a variety of perspectives on the State of Israel, is deeply distressed by the consideration of an 'academic boycott' of Israel. As the current and immediate past Presidents of BAJS, we believe that the proposed measure contradicts the aims of scholarship and mission of an academic body, and does not ultimately contribute to the resolution of the conflict.

Professor Michael Berkowitz  
Professor Geoffrey Khan

Note: This protest has been sent to The Guardian, The Observer, The Times, The Sunday Times, The Evening Standard, The Telegraph, The Financial Times, The Economist, The Independent, The Jewish Chronicle

Dan Levene pointed out that it was also important to stress that any retaliatory boycott of British Academics would be very unhelpful.

4.2 Michael Berkowitz reported that he had mailed letters to the RAE Panels offering the services of BAJS in identifying experts and that he had received very positive replies. He also communicated Seth Kunin's comments that, from the experience of his own university, few members of Panels or Heads of Panels believed that they were likely to consult outside their Panels.

5. Treasurer's report: See attached.

5.1 Jim Aitken reported that finances as a whole were stable, although the UCL conference would make a deficit due to cancellations and a generous allocation of travel bursaries. He pointed out that in years past, BAJS had lost hundreds of pounds on conferences, but that nowadays there was a healthy reserve. Only ten years ago, the balance had been a meagre £300.

5.2 Jim Aitken asked for directions from BAJS members as to how to respond to academics working outside the UK who applied to join BAJS. After some discussion it was **agreed** that a note regarding our working policy should be added to the website specifying that such members would be welcome to take part in the annual conference but would not have voting rights. It was also **agreed** that the constitution would be reconsidered (in the context of classes of membership) at the next committee meeting.

#### 6. Secretary's report:

6.1 Daniel Langton reported the committee's decision to revise the website in terms of both content and design. Funds would be set aside for the creation of a new template, although the work of updating would continue to be performed at Manchester. The idea of having the design of a new logo open to competition was welcomed.

6.2 Daniel Langton reported on the committee's decision to draft a letter to the AHRC offering the services of BAJS in nominating an expert to ensure specific representation of Jewish Studies within the Peer Review College.

8. Conference 2008: Daniel Langton reported on behalf of Philip Alexander that the 2008 conference would adopt the theme 'Normative Judaism', provisional dates 20-22 July. The BAJS conference would dovetail with both the Jewish Law Association Conference (22-24 July) being organised by Bernard Jackson, which would share the same theme, and the Conference on Globalisation and Jewish Identity being run by Cathy Gelbin and Sander Gillman, in addition to a special day conference on the Agunah problem (25 July). He reported that details concerning the date (early January), venue and speaker for the Annual Lecture would be announced shortly.

9. President 2009: Daniel Langton announced the committee's nomination of Seth Kunin (Durham). No other nominations were received and Prof. Kunin was duly elected. Jim Aitken noted that the provisional theme was 'Culinary Judaism'.

10. New Committee members: Daniel Langton announced the committee's nomination of Joachim Schlör (Southampton) to join the committee. Ada Rapoport-Albert also nominated Lars Fischer (UCL). No other nominations were received and both were duly elected.

11. New BAJS members: Dr Ben Outhwaite (Cambridge), Dr Vera Grodzinski (UCL), and Rabbi Margaret Jacobi (Birmingham) were elected as full members. Miriam Deborah Davies (UCL), Michael Green (UCL), Linda Holman (UCL) were elected as student members.

#### 12. Essay Prizes:

12.1 Alan Levene announced one winner for 2007: Thomas Sharrard (University of Southampton) for an essay entitled 'Representations of London's East End through literature: Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*'

12.2 Daniel Langton reported the Kessler Foundation's decision not to continue funding the Prize, and that, since they had not provided any reasons, he would write asking for any useful feedback with a view to reapplying. He also reported that the current competition had certain disadvantages (e.g. difficulties in comparing very different kinds of essays) and that it had been agreed to trial for next year two BAJS Essay Prizes (one for Undergraduates and one for Postgraduates) each worth £200, to be dedicated to the theme of the forthcoming conference and limited to 5000 words.

#### 13. Any other business:

13.1 Ada Rapoport-Albert reported her discussion with Seth Kunin about the failure of UK universities to exploit the MA market in the USA, bearing in mind that UK institutions' one-year degrees represented excellent value for money. She noted that the international recruitment unit at UCL was not interested in promoting Humanities and suggested that BAJS might promote Jewish Studies at UK universities in the US by means of an evening reception at a future AJS conference (probably in January 2009). She asked

that the committee find the means to send a couple of representatives to co-ordinate and distribute promotional materials from a range of UK institutions and to liaise with interested parties. She reported that Seth Kunin also believed that some US students who missed out on places at top-level US institutions might also represent a potential PhD market. Michael Berkowitz suggested that the example of SOAS was relevant in that it sent representatives to US campuses to give academic talks and promote the institution's programmes. John Klier voiced some scepticism that sending representatives to AJS would have much of an effect, but it was **agreed** that the committee should consider the issue in January.

13.2 On behalf of the committee, Dan Levene congratulated Michael Berkowitz on having organised the largest conference programme to date.

14. Date of next meeting. 22 July 2008 in Manchester.

**British Association for Jewish Studies**  
**Treasurer's Report, Annual General meeting, 13 July 2007**

## **Summary**

The balance in the current account has increased in 2006, owing to an unexpected profit from the conference. This arose from successful fund raising from the President and many on-site 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. 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 2006**

#### **1. Current Account**

*Opening Balance* **£3382.52**

#### INCOME

Subscriptions: £1020  
Conference 06 £4256.32  
Refund from BAJJS lecture £20.28  
Advertising £50

*Total Income:* **£5346.60**

#### EXPENDITURE

Travel £274.88  
Web domain £29.38  
Expenses £50.99  
Conference refund £119  
Conference 06 £3626.18  
Bulletin £263.52  
BAJJS lecture and reception £184.21  
Essay Prize £175

*Total Expenditure:* **£4723.16**

**Closing Balance** **£4005.96**

#### **2. Deposit Account**

*Opening balance* **£5221.45**

Interest £76.27

*Closing balance* **£5297.72**

## **B. Provisional Accounts Jan–June 2007**

### **1. Current Account**

*Opening Balance* £4005.96

#### INCOME

Subscriptions: £995

Total income: £995

#### EXPENDITURE

Travel: £240.79

BAJS Lecture £50

Catering £31.34

Conference Deposit: £398.88

Web domain £29.38

Total expenditure £750.39

*Closing Balance* £4250.57

J.K. Aitken

11<sup>th</sup> July 2007