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BAJS Annual General Meeting – 10 July 2018

University of Durham

Present: Yulia Egorova (President Elect), Hannah Ewence, Eva Frojmovic, Helen Spurling (Secretary), and around twenty-five other members.

Apologies: Maria Diemling (Bulletin Co-Editor), Francois Guesnet, Hannah Holtschneider (Bulletin Co-Editor), Hindy Najman (President Elect), Larry Ray, James Renton (Social Media Officer) and Zuleika Rodgers (Web Officer), Andrea Schatz, Sacha Stern

1. Welcome, Apologies and Matters Arising

Helen Spurling opened the meeting and welcomed members.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the previous AGM at Edinburgh.

3. Committee and Officers

Helen Spurling reminded the AGM that Hindy Najman (Oxford) would be President for the next year. Maria Diemling and Hannah Holtschneider were leaving the Committee after well over a decade of service. HS noted that both were very committed to BAJJS and had made an enormous contribution and the Association owed them many thanks. The approval of the AGM was requested by Yulia Egorova for the election of Helen Spurling (Southampton) to the position of President Elect 2020, and of Hannah Ewence (Chester) to the position of Bulletin Co-Editor, which was granted.

4. BAJJS Essay Prizes

Helen Spurling reported that there were 8 entries for the essay prize this year, which consisted of 7 UG entries and 1 PG entry from a range of institutions in the UK. The submissions were of a very high quality, but this year had seen a focus on the modern period. Members were encouraged to submit entries from across the field next year. One prize at UG level was announced: Fergus Selsdon-Games (Manchester) for 'Soviet Nationality Policy and the Movement for Soviet-Jewish Emigration during the Brezhnev Era'. Congratulations were offered to Fergus on his excellent work.

5. President's report

Yulia Egorova reported that the conference theme 'Theories and Histories: Jewish Studies Across Disciplines' had worked well because it was broad and inclusive of different disciplines. There were around 100 delegates attending and 26 panels. YE noted that the PG/ECR professionalization panel was particularly useful. Costs had been kept low because the venue was provided for free by the university. Kosher food had been brought from Manchester. YE thanked all those who were giving papers, and also the Committee for all of their support.

6. Treasurer's report

Helen Spurling presented the state of the Association's finances on behalf of Holger Zellentin. This year had seen a total income of £4237.07. Total expenditure had been £2,227.09, which left a closing balance of £6,421.23. In addition, HZ had transferred £3000 to the deposit account and also added the surplus income from the Edinburgh conference, so that the deposit account now had a balance of £10,568.89. HZ reported that there were 8 new student members, 4 associate members and 3 ordinary members this year. The list of applicants approved by the committee for membership was circulated for information. HZ closed by emphasising that the Association needs to grow, and appealed to members to encourage colleagues to join.

7. Secretary's report

Helen Spurling reported on communications with members. The BAJIS e-newsletters are going well and were holding at a c.50% 'read rate'. There had just been a newsletter announcing the publication of the Bulletin online, and the next would be in August. HS reminded members about the new General Data Protection Regulations. We never share member details and the database is secure. The BAJIS Studentship holder is Joshua Lander (Glasgow), and he has done some good work to progress the development of the website. Marton Ribary is our PG/ECR Representative and has developed some excellent initiatives to facilitate support for PG/ECR members. It is critical for the Association to support the future of the field and so these positions are amongst some of our most important initiatives and are only possible due to the support of our members. HS informed members that the first round of sub-panel nominations for REF 2021 was held before Christmas. Expectations were now a lot higher in terms of procedures and transparency in making decisions on nominees. BAJIS had proposed seven nominees across panels for History, Theology and Religious Studies, Area Studies, Anthropology and English Literature: Philip Alexander (panels 25, 28, 31); Anthony Bale (panel 27); Michael Berkowitz (panel 28); Yulia Egorova (panel 22); Charlotte Hempel (panels 25, 31); Hannah Holtschneider (panel 28, 31) and Daniel Langton (panel 28, 31). There were over 4000 nominations across all panels and unfortunately none of our nominations were selected. We are very fortunate that Paul Joyce (KCL) had been selected who was a TRS-UK nomination. Further sub-panel members and assessors would be appointed in 2020 following a survey of institutions intending to submit to the REF and the committee will fight for more representation at the appropriate moment, given the diversity of disciplinary approaches within Jewish Studies.

8. Web officer's report

Helen Spurling reported on behalf of Zuleika Rodgers. Everything is going well in terms of regular lecture notifications via the website. Members were reminded to pass on announcements to ZR for posting on the website and to sign up for automatic notifications at <http://britishjewishstudies.org/>. The website upgrade project was progressing and many thanks to Joshua Lander for all his work. Members were asked to send images that are copyright free to ZR or JL for the website. JL shared his work on the website and explained what the website should look like when complete, but this is a long-term project.

9. Bulletin editor's report

Helen Spurling reported on behalf of Maria Diemling and Hannah Holtschneider. The Bulletin had been published online at the start of the conference and members should have received an announcement. The Bulletin is an important opportunity to celebrate our achievements in Jewish Studies and showcase our work in the field. Members were requested to send feedback and ideas for articles to the new Bulletin Editors, Hannah Ewence and Yulia Egorova. It is crucial for members to share news and be proactive in offering input, such as details of publications, grants and other successes. HS thanked MD and HH for all their hard work.

10. Social media officer's report

Helen Spurling reported on behalf of James Renton. JR sent his greetings and reported that the BAJIS Twitter account was consistently attracting new followers. BAJIS currently had 705 followers and JR appealed to members to send news to him to share.

11. PG/ECR representative's report

Marton Ribary reported that the Facebook page for the PG/ECR network had not worked too well as there was largely one-way communication. However, other initiatives were successful; the mentoring programme was definitely working. 8 applications had been received this year (up from 3 last year), and some mentors/mentees had met during the annual conference. The PG/ECR training event during the conference had been organised together with Yulia Egorova and Jennifer Creese from the Australian Association for Jewish Studies and focused on issues around transitioning from PhD to the job market. HS thanked MR for all his important work.

12. Conference 2019

Helen Spurling announced on behalf of Hindy Najman that the next annual conference would be held in Oxford from 22nd to 24th July 2019 and the theme will be 'What is Commentary?' HS presented the CFP for the 2019 conference and asked for feedback to be sent to HN.

13. Any Other Business

Thanks were offered to Tim Lutz for generously donating to BAJIS to support postgraduate students. On behalf of the membership, Helen Spurling thanked Yulia Egorova for all her dedicated efforts in organising an excellent conference this year. HS noted that the theme had resulted in some fascinating papers.

14. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will take place during the 2019 conference in Oxford.

provisional minutes, 19/07/18