Political Affairs Digest
A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answer

Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom: Finance

The Lord Bishop of Leicester [HL8212] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the value of the Inter-Faith Network, and (2) the risks of withdrawing funding from the Network.

Baroness Scott of Bybrook: This department has provided funding to the Inter Faith Network since 2006/07 and is grateful to the Inter Faith Network for its work to promote understanding between different faiths and none. The department monitors all funded organisations throughout the lifecycle of their project for the purposes of assessing delivery against workplan targets, compliance and evaluation, in line with best practice for the management of public funding and to ensure value is demonstrated. When making funding decisions, the Government considers a wide range of factors, including government priorities and current budgetary pressures.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-05/hl8212

House of Commons Committee of Privileges

Matter referred on 21 April 2022 (conduct of Rt Hon Boris Johnson): Final Report

https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/40412/documents/197199/default/
Robbie Owen [Parliamentary Agent at Pinsent Masons, on behalf of the Secretary of State]: … As the Committee will be aware, the primary purpose of the Bill is to facilitate the coming forward of a memorial to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and an associated learning centre at Victoria Tower Gardens, by removing pre-existing legislative impediments, as well as to authorise the Secretary of State to incur expenditure in relation to the memorial and learning centre, wherever it is situated.

It is important to stress that the Bill does not authorise any works or other operations to facilitate the memorial and learning centre. Instead, the usual consents would be required to be obtained separately. It goes without saying that the memorial and learning centre could not come forward without those consents, not least, of course, planning permission. …

I would like to make a preliminary point at this stage in response to submissions made by the memorialists ahead of the hearing today, which assert that there has been some negligence or other failing on the part of the Secretary of State in his not concluding that the Bill was hybrid before its introduction …

… those submissions are firmly refuted by the Secretary of State. He took advice … on the question of hybridity, and carefully considered that advice. The rationale for the Bill proceeding as a public Bill was set out in the submissions made before the examiners, and the Secretary of State and his advisers had confidence in those arguments.

… the examiners, in their statement of reasons for declaring the Bill to be hybrid, clearly acknowledge … “the lack of clear precedent”, and they also refer to “the highly unusual nature of this Bill”. It is therefore our case that it was anything but clearcut at the time the Bill was introduced that it should be considered hybrid …

… we submit that the primary purpose of the Standing Orders in question is to ensure that those who are specially and directly affected by the Bill are made aware of it and its passage through Parliament and, critically, given advance notice of the ability to petition against the Bill. With a hybrid Bill, the petitioning process does not start until the Bill has been given a Second Reading, which has not yet occurred. As such, the opportunity to petition against the Bill has not been missed by anybody. …

… no prejudice has been caused by the non-compliance with the Standing Orders to date, given that the date for Second Reading, and therefore the petition period that follows immediately after it, has not yet been set. …

… The Secretary of State … has taken steps to substantively comply with the applicable Standing Orders. …

First, in accordance with Standing Orders Nos. 4, 10 and 11, notices were published on 9 June in the London Gazette, the Evening Standard and Westminster Extra, each notice being headed with the short title of the Bill and containing a concise summary of the Bill, details of inspection locations, when objections can be made to the Bill, and from whom further information can be obtained on the process. The notice specifically mentions Victoria Tower Gardens. …

Next I turn to Standing Order No. 4A. In accordance with that Standing Order, hard copies of the Bill and explanatory notes have been deposited in two offices in London. One is the office of my firm, Pinsent Masons LLP. The other is an office in the City of Westminster, which is the local government area within which the principal office of the Secretary of State is located.

You may well be wondering why the office in Westminster is not the Department’s main office, or, indeed, another Government office, but the simple answer to that is that security considerations make it difficult for members of the public to easily access the Department’s
office, and indeed other departmental offices … Copies of the Bill and explanatory notes are available at both locations to be taken away by members of the public. …

32 Penultimately, I turn to Standing Order No. 39, in relation to which copies of the Bill and the explanatory notes have been deposited electronically with a number of Government Departments and other public bodies, in accordance with Standing Order No. 1A. …

35 … as required by Standing Order No. 38(1), the Bill has, in any event, been deposited in the Vote Office, and is available to the Private Bill Office … but, just as a matter of technical correctness, we do not think that Standing Order No. 38 applies to hybrid Bills, as opposed to private Bills. …

41 … No prejudice has been suffered and no prejudice will be suffered. The future steps relating to representations or petitions will apply if and when the Bill is given a Second Reading in this House. That will then open up the petitioning window …

46 Baroness Deech [appearing in her own right and on behalf of a group of Holocaust survivors]: … A memorial and museum, if built, is for future generations, not the current ones. The Holocaust survivors I represent, and there are many others, do not want it in its current form. There are already at least six other Holocaust memorials and museums around the country that have been open for years to existing Holocaust survivors. … So it is not as if there has been nothing else and then there is this one. There is no hurry, and we need to get it right. …

48 We need legal help. All of that was paused: the lobbying, the representations, the meetings, the crowdfunding and so on that was trying to spread news among the Jewish community of what was actually going on. So we were adversely affected.

49 I am appealing to you now to allow a pause, not just so that we can recommence that, but so that dialogue can take place ahead of petitions. We have been unable to have any constructive dialogue with Ministers or with the leaders of the projects, who on the whole do not answer letters, will not agree to meetings and will not debate in any forum. While that goes on, it creates more and more dissension of the sort that should not surround a Holocaust memorial. …

52 Helen Monger [on behalf of the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust]: … I ask that the Committee upholds the requirements of the Standing Orders in full …

53 First, there has been consistent inadequate consultation and appropriate public engagement. The Government, despite all the resources at their disposal, chose erroneously to declare the Holocaust Memorial Bill a public Bill. It proved to be hybrid. That is the first time the examiners have overruled a Government on their chosen classification since the 1970s, I believe. That error cannot now be a justification for seeking an alternative and curtailed route that dispenses with the Standing Orders. …

54 … I suggest that many people still have no clue about the Bill’s progress before Parliament. It is impossible to know how many people who may have an eligible interest in the Bill, want to involve themselves and could offer valuable insights for parliamentarians, may have missed or will miss their chance to petition and be heard. …

55 … London Parks and Gardens considers that the principle of the Bill, and, as importantly, the documentation that supports it, is misleading and should not be sped through Parliament. …

57 … I have an observation about democracy being on the line here. The Bill is intended to enable the construction of a Holocaust learning centre in Victoria Tower Gardens. In part, campaigners were told at the planning inquiry, the park was chosen as the location to hold up a mirror to parliamentarians and remind them of the importance of democracy and the virtues of standing up to a totalitarian regime. The Government, in their statement, suggest that they are now complying with the rules and so any transgression that they may have made or be making would be minor. On the contrary, if the Government’s mission is to encourage democratic engagement and tolerance of different views, it would be perverse to now seek to waive those very rules—provided by Parliament to ensure that the necessary democratic processes are fulfilled—because of mere inconvenience. …
61 Richard Buxton [on behalf of the Buxton Family and the Thomas Fowell Buxton Society]: … At the heart of this matter … is a matter of environmental protection. That’s what’s going on here. This is making Victoria Tower Gardens into something that it isn’t. At the moment, it is protected as a public park, as is its environment; and that is not what is proposed for the future. …

71 Donald Peck [on behalf of the Thorney Island Society]: … I feel that the only point I would like to draw to the Committee’s attention is that there has been consistently inadequate consultation and a lack of any kind of appropriate public engagement on this project or, as Ruth Deech just said, any meaningful dialogue about the project, particularly with local residents, but also with others. …

72 This failure of the Government to commit to consult, engage or enter into dialogue has been consistent throughout a long process of years, now stretching to over seven. This may or may not amount to negligence on the part of the Government in this particular instance of the Standing Orders; but, none the less, it amounts to … a deliberate failure by the Government, again, in the case of the Standing Orders, to consult the public. …

The Committee adjourned to deliberate in private from 1 pm to 1.26 pm.

77 Chair [Rt Hon. Dame Rosie Winterton MP, First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means]: … First, we have resolved that Standing Orders Nos. 4, 10 and 11 are dispensed with as to notices, subject to the following conditions. The second publication of the notice required by Standing Order No. 10 must occur at least six clear days from the publication of the first notice. We are intending to inquire whether there can be improvements to access online …

78 We have also resolved that Standing Orders Nos. 4A and 39 are dispensed with as to the availability and deposit of the Bill. We have agreed that Standing Order No. 38 is dispensed with. …

79 We also have agreed that we will write to the Department to draw its attention to the fact that all the memorialists raised the issue of consultation, and that you felt that that could be improved. …

80 In general, we did discuss the issue whether this should be proceeded with, rather than delayed. We felt that, actually, this was announced some years ago. It has been in a Government manifesto, and the proper place for debate is Parliament. We feel, therefore, that allowing the Bill to go forward with those conditions, and dispensing with certain things, will enable a debate about a number of the issues you have raised. …

To read the full transcript see
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51608/documents/3575

Submissions to the House of Commons Standing Orders Committee can be read at
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51533/documents/3550
and
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51498/documents/3536
and
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51499/documents/3537
and
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51500/documents/3538
and
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51503/documents/3539
‘Hate Is a Danger to Everyone and So Fighting It Must Be a Job for Everyone’, Secretary-General Tells Security Council Meeting on Human Fraternity

... Faith leaders are vital allies in our shared quest for global peace. My esteemed predecessor Dag Hammarskjöld once observed that, and I quote: “The United Nations stands outside — necessarily outside — all confessions, but it is, nevertheless, an instrument of faith. As such it is inspired by what unites and not by what divides the great religions of the world.”

Every great faith summons the imperatives of human fraternity, mutual respect and understanding. These universal values animate the United Nations Charter and are at the core of our work for peace, justice and human rights.

Preserving peace and preventing war is the raison d’être of this Council. Threats to peace come in many forms — from competition for power and resources, to human rights violations and weak governance, to extreme poverty, inequalities and marginalization that breed hopelessness and despair.

But an all-too-common denominator to the onset and escalation of conflict is hatred of the other. Hate fuels humanity’s worst impulses. It is a catalyst for polarization and radicalization and a conduit for atrocity crimes. It is also a result of these crimes, contributing to horrific cycles of violence that can churn for decades.

It greases the wheels of violence, frays the social fabric, and corrodes the pillars of stability. It is, in short, often the bloody heart of conflict. And that heart is pumping venom and division throughout the bloodstream of the global body politic.

Around the world, we are witnessing a groundswell of xenophobia, racism and intolerance, violent misogyny, anti-Muslim hatred, virulent anti-Semitism, and attacks on minority Christian communities. Neo-Nazi white supremacist movements today represent the top internal security threat in several countries — and the fastest growing.

Demonization of the other; disdain for diversity; disregard for human rights — these evils are not new to our time. What is new is their speed and their reach. Social media has equipped hatemongers with a global bullhorn for bile. Today, no conspiracy is too outrageous to find a vast audience; no falsehood too absurd to feed an online frenzy.

Unverified assertions or outright lies can gain instant credibility, placed on an equal footing with facts and science. They are often embraced — and even promoted — by political leaders. Hate-fuelled ideas and language are moving from the margins to the mainstream, coarsening the public discourse and triggering real-life violence.

The effects are everywhere — and they are deadly. The perpetrators of the heinous attacks on a mosque in Christchurch, a synagogue in Pittsburgh, and a church in Charleston all were radicalized online. ...

Hate is a danger to everyone and so fighting it must be a job for everyone. ...
Second, as we move toward evermore multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies, we need to invest in social cohesion. We need to ensure that every community feels respected in their unique identity while feeling valued as an integral part of society as a whole. We need to recognize diversity as a richness of all societies — not a threat. Hatred takes root in the soil of ignorance and fear. But when we enrich the soil of knowledge with facts, science and historical accuracy, hatred cannot spread like a deadly weed. That means ensuring quality education for everyone, everywhere, including women and girls. It means supporting education systems that instil respect for science and celebrate humanity in all its diversity. And it means a surge in education financing, peacebuilding and global solidarity.

Finally, and fundamentally, we must strengthen the values of compassion, respect and human fraternity and secure free and safe civic spaces. … The fact is, we see examples of intolerance in all societies and among all faiths today. It is the duty of religious leaders to prevent instrumentalization of hatred amidst their followers. …

To read the full transcript see

Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2686 (2023), Security Council Urges International Community to Prevent Incitement, Condemn Hate Speech, Racism, Acts of Extremism

Recognizing that hate speech, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance, gender discrimination and acts of extremism can contribute to conflict, the Security Council today unanimously adopted a resolution that, among other things, urged Member States to publicly condemn violence, hate speech and extremism and encouraged them to prevent the spread of intolerant ideology and incitement to hatred. By the terms of Council resolution 2686 (2023) … the 15-nation organ encouraged all relevant stakeholders to share good practices promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence and address hate speech and extremism in a manner consistent with applicable international law. Member States, in particular, were called upon to have regard to inter-religious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool to achieve peace, social stability and internationally agreed development goals, …

Condemning misinformation, disinformation and incitement to violence against United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Council encouraged all of the Secretary-General’s special representatives and special envoys to use their good offices to support local peace initiatives and involve local communities, women, youth, civil society and religious leaders where appropriate. In addition, it requested United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions to monitor hate speech, racism and acts of extremism that might impact peace and security. …

Speaking after the vote, James Kariuki (United Kingdom) pointed out that, for the first time, the Council has directly addressed the discrimination and persecution faced by a range of minority groups in conflict settings. …

To read the full press release see

The resolution referred to above is not yet available online.
**Relevant Legislation**  **new or updated today**

**UK Parliament**

**Bill of Rights Bill**
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227

**Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill**
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186

**Holocaust Memorial Bill**
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421

On Tuesday 13 June 2023, the House of Commons Standing Orders Committee resolved that Standing Orders 4, 4A, 11, 38 and 39 relating to private business ought to be dispensed with, and that Standing Order 10 relating to private business ought to be dispensed with subject to … conditions …

On Tuesday 13 June 2023, the House of Lords referred the Examiners’ Certificate to the House of Lords Standing Orders Committee …

Depending on the result of the House of Lords Standing Orders Committee and once the House of Commons Standing Orders Committee is satisfied that its conditions have been met for dispensing with Standing Order 10 relating to private business, the Government will announce a date for Second Reading of the Bill in the House of Commons.

It is expected that immediately after Second Reading the House of Commons will commit the Bill to a select committee for consideration of any relevant petitions submitted to the House of Commons within a period of 25 days beginning on the day after the House of Commons has given a second reading to the Bill.

Uncorrected Transcript of House of Commons Standing Orders Committee, 13 June
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51608/documents/3575

Submissions to the House of Lords Standing Orders Committee:

- London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust
  https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51624/documents/3580

- The Thorney Island Society
  https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51625/documents/3581

- The Buxton Family and the Thomas Fowell Buxton Society
  https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51626/documents/3582

- Baroness Deech and Holocaust Survivors
  https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/51609/documents/3579

**Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325

**Online Safety Bill**
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137

**Nakba Commemoration Bill**
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3461
Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438

Schools Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454

Scottish Parliament

** Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill
Notice of amendments
and

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

Consultations
** new or updated today

** closes today
Supporting earlier resolution of private family law arrangements (closing date 15 June 2023)
**closes in 3 days**
Review of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (closing date 18 June 2023)

**closes in 8 days**
Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill (closing date 23 June 2023)
https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3146/

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

** A Human Rights Bill for Scotland ** (closing date 5 October 2023)