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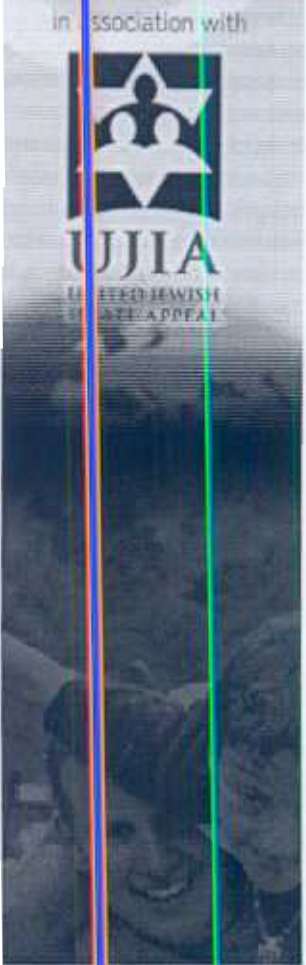


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Groundbreaking Course

by Justin Cohen - Dec 2

Undergraduates on the Indian subcontinent could soon be taking part in the region's first Jewish studies programme.

Plans for the groundbreaking initiative, which the Indian-Jewish association hopes will be introduced in October 2005, were outlined at last week's reception in central London.

Supported by the last Indian High Commissioner in London, several thousand pounds have already been raised through the association's new Gandhi-Einstein fund.

The programme is the brainchild of Dr Gautam Sen, a professor at LSE and long-term active member of the association.

He is now seeking additional financial backing within India while also attempting to secure the agreement of a university to host the programme.

John Levy, co-chair of the association, said: "There has never been a Jewish and Hebrew studies programme so this will be a totally new departure for this vast subcontinent. Our whole reason d'etre is to enlarge and deepen connections between the Jewish world and the cultures of India."

The organisation, backed by UJS and Indian student leaders, is also set to launch an essay competition asking graduates and undergraduates to explore what it feels like to be an Indian or Jew in multi-cultural Britain.

The winners will receive tickets to Israel and India.

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Groundbreaking Course - Dec 2

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Tully spices up Indian night

BY LEON SYMONS

A JOURNALIST whose words were regarded as sacrosanct by millions across the Indian sub-continent for more than a quarter-of-a-century held the attention of a much smaller group on Monday night.

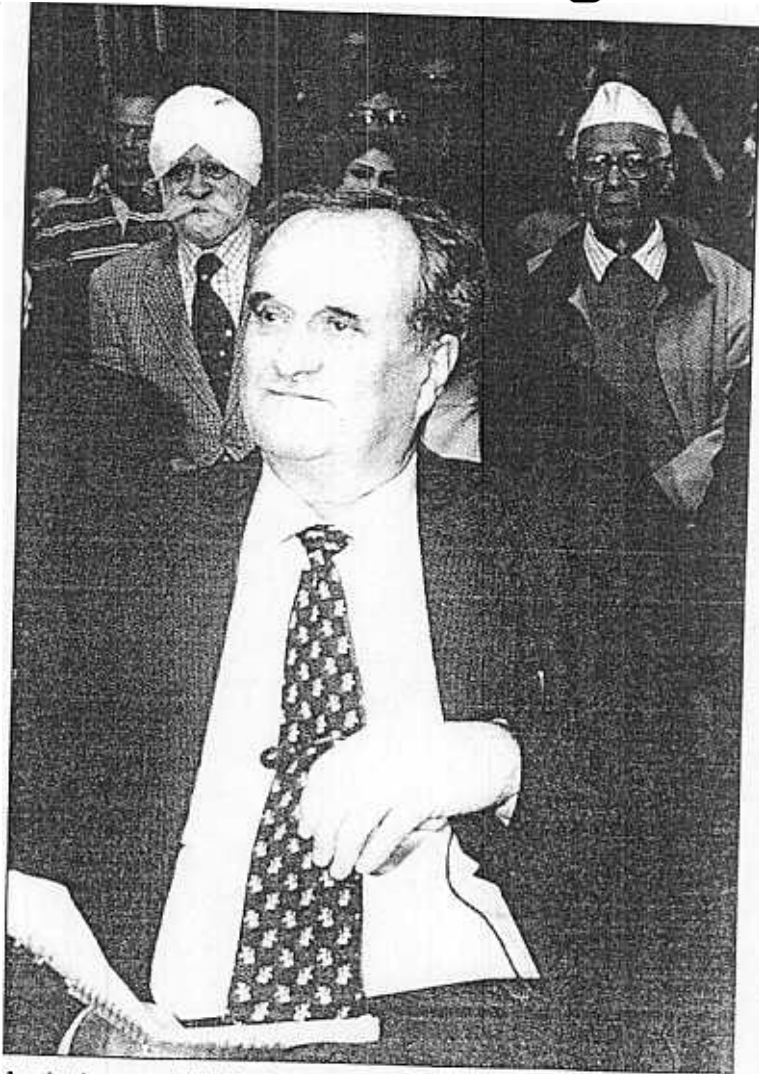
Veteran BBC India correspondent Sir Mark Tully was the guest of honour at an Indian Jewish Association meeting, held at the law firm Mishcon de Reya's offices in Bloomsbury.

An audience of some 80 people listened intently as Sir Mark discussed how India had maintained a multi-cultural, multi-faith society.

"India has this message of standing on its own feet and learning from others," Sir Mark explained. "But there is another message which is highly important, and that is learning to live with other religions. It has provided an historic home for the major religions for centuries.

"As Jews, you know about the historic Jewish community of India, the Bene Israel. Large numbers went to Israel, but there was no ban on people from Cochin going to another part of India to preach their religion. They were told: 'We would like you to live as Jews and we will go on living as Hindus or Muslims or whatever.'"

While Jews and Indians of other faiths had different cultures, they shared common values, such as the importance of the family.



Ace in the crowd: Sir Mark Tully at the London event SIDNEY HARRIS