



European Union for Progressive Judaism

January 2015 Newsletter

© European Union for Progressive Judaism

Make the right choices

Stéphane Beder is a vice-chair of the European Union for Progressive Judaism, and a member of the World Union for Progressive Judaism's executive board. Here he shares his reflections following last Sunday's rally in Paris.

Make the right choices. This is what all human beings are challenged with throughout their lives as individuals. As Progressive Jews, we believe we also have group decisions to make - as a community, as a nation.

A few minutes ago, we were over a million people rallying in the streets of Paris to state our choice for unity, our refusal of fear and hate. The amazing support from all around the world has been a real source of comfort. Having 50 heads of state and government including Netanyahu and Abbas join us today is certainly very symbolic but all the messages received from Progressive Jews all around the world have an even deeper more personal impact.

We have no doubt that new attacks will hurt our communities in France but also in other locations. There is no magic simple solution and no shortage of weak minds.

Stéphane Beder



[continued on page 4](#)

Register now for the EUPJ General Assembly in Geneva on 22 March

This year's EUPJ General Assembly is 22 March in Geneva, hosted by Communauté Israelite Libérale de Genève, GIL. GIL is offering a full weekend of religious, social and cultural activities for participants, starting with Shabbat services on Friday evening, 20 March. A major highlight will be a talk by Rabbi Daniel Freeland, President of the WUPJ, preceding our General Assembly on Sunday afternoon.

[Click here](#) for the full programme and to register.



[CONNECTIONS 2015. Click here](#) for latest news.

President's Message

"I am tolerant of everything other than intolerance."
– Voltaire

The Charlie Hebdo massacre, the murders in the Kosher supermarket and the shooting of police officers are horrific events. Elsewhere in this newsletter are articles written by our French and UK leaders. I would like to give some thoughts from a European perspective.



Leslie Bergman

Some months ago I was asked to write an article on my views of anti-Semitism in Europe. I wrote that there is not a single anti-Semitism. There are three distinct types: A. "Traditional" right wing, nationalistic, xenophobic anti-Semitism claims the Jews are not part of us, that they are the cause of all our problems because they are greedy capitalists (or communists). Church inspired over the centuries, then taken over by authoritarian non-democratic politicians (eg the current "Jobbik" in Hungary). The root cause of the Holocaust. But a different animal today – ugly and intimidating – but very little threat to life or livelihood.

B. Anti-Zionism morphing into anti-Semitism. A complex subject, but here is the bottom line. Whenever there is violence involving Israel, no matter what the cause or however justified Israeli military action is, if it leads to the deaths of Arab or Palestinian civilians (particularly children) – there will be an increase in anti-Semitism in Europe. This will be mostly words but also isolated physical attacks on property and occasionally on people. We have to accept this reality and prepare for it.

C. Muslim extremism – Jihad / Al Qaeda / ISIS inspired. Related to B, but not always. I disagree with those who say that this is not religiously inspired. It is. Those perpetrating terror acts believe they do it in the name of Mohammed, the Prophet, and that martyrdom is what they seek because they will go to paradise to be met by 70 virgins. This is not the Islam of the vast majority of its adherents – but it is the radical Islam of the terrorists.

The view I expressed in that article several months ago: what was seen and condemned as Jihadist inspired acts against Jews will become a European problem when the violence extends beyond Jewish targets (Toulouse, Brussels Museum, etc.). Eventually, [continued on page 3](#)

EUPJ Honorary Officers and Staff 2014

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Social Action Program awards

The World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) and the Union for Reform Judaism's Religious Action Center (RAC) announce the Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch International Social Action Award, a prize of US\$1000 to recognise exemplary work in communities around the world, **excluding North America**.

[Click here for links and application.](#)



The NLPS Trust for Progressive Judaism

New NLPS Trust Website

The NLPS Trust for Progressive Judaism has launched their new website (www.nlpstrust.org.uk) where you can access information about the Trust and the grant application form.

Letters to the Editor

As always, I enjoy travelling through Europe as I read the newsletter. Thank you for including our contributions. I also sometimes read about news in Spain that I did not know of!

Dominique, ATID, Barcelona

Corrections from the November issue

Page 8: Two errors when citing Barcelona. The last paragraph of the Bet Din article confuses Atid and Bet Shalom. Rabbi Bar Ephraim officiated at both Atid and the other EUPJ congregation in Barcelona, Bet Shalom. And the photo captioned Yom Kippur in Barcelona is not from Atid as stated, but from Beit Emunah in Asturias. **-Ed**

Community Connections

We are pleased to let you know that you can read the most recent Community Connections Newsletter and all our past

newsletters: just [click this link](#). We hope you will be interested in the news from our twinned communities and friends in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia as well as in the UK, and we thank all our members for your work in making our twinning links successful. If your community is not yet part of our network and you would like to find out more about how you could set up a link, please do contact us by email at communityconnections@eupj.org and visit our website [here](#).

Synagogues everywhere

Progressive Shabbat services can be found nearly everywhere during your travels. Click on a blue link to find a synagogue near your destination. [Europe](#) / [Worldwide](#)



Beit Tikva in Bielefeld, Germany

Please support
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www.fpje.org.uk



President's Message, continued from page 1

if uncontrolled, the Jews will become a sideshow in this challenge to European civilisation. And so this is what happened in Paris. Jews, the media (Charlie Hebdo), police (Muslim and Christian): all were struck down in the name of radical Islam.

Voltaire wrote his views when the intolerance was manifested by the ruling class and the Church. One wonders what he would have made of the present situation, where intolerance is coming from a minority part of democratic, tolerant societies. *The challenge presented by Jihadist religiously inspired terrorists is how to preserve tolerant, democratic societies in the face of those who abuse such tolerance to perpetrate evil.* Does this ring a bell? Let us always remember that Hitler was elected Chancellor in a democratic election in Weimar Germany.

The marches, arm linkings, candle lightings and speeches were truly inspiring and necessary for showing the unity of French society and the support of foreign leaders. I was awed by what I saw on television. One particular crowd scene showed a kippahed Jew, Muslim with headdress, a person of African origin and an Asian of Indo-Chinese ethnicity. Heart warming.



But this is analogous to pain relief: necessary, but not addressing the cause of the issue. Action will be necessary by European political leaders to monitor and control education in faith-based schools to prevent the teaching of intolerance, to forbid hate speech in places of worship, to control the entrance and exit of those who are headed for Jihad training, to search for and seize weapons. This will diminish some of our personal freedoms. But there are no free lunches here. Preserving the tolerant, democratic societies that Voltaire wished for, which we Jews live in after so many centuries of internecine European violence, will require action beyond platitudes. Here is something for the European Union to address beyond squabbling over subsidies.

We Jews in Europe must be part of this. I do not believe that mass emigration – to Israel or anywhere else – is the solution. Our European Jewish heritage is a jewel in the crown of Judaism. Are we, the generation that recreated Jewish life in Europe that fascism and communism sought to obliterate, going to cower to this new danger? I hope not. As the French Foreign Minister said: "France without Jews will not be France". And for France one can insert Europe. Evil must be eliminated and we must be part of the action - not the victims as happened in the 1930s and 1940s.

Leslie Bergman

Riding for Reform in Israel

Due to many requests, registration for the Ride4Reform will continue until a week before the ride. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to take part in an unforgettable experience!

All the information about the ride and registration can be found at www.riding4reform.org. Contact us with any question you may have at hadas@reform.org.il.

We will hit the road on Sunday, April 26 and end our ride at the sea of Galilee on Thursday, April 30

The EUPJ asks all those interested to respond directly to the IMPJ but also to cc Michael Reik, EUPJ Vice-Chairman at jhgroup.t21@btinternet.com. Michael is chair of the EUPJ Israel Committee and wants to coordinate individual involvement with community representation between the EUPJ and IMPJ.

**Apply now for Paideia Fellowships in Jewish Studies 2015-2016**

Explore the plurality of Jewish Civilisations! The Paideia One Year Jewish Studies Programme offers a unique international experience during eight months in Stockholm with the possibility of a 120 ECTS Master in Jewish Civilisations at the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg. Grants for tuition and living expenses are available. For more information visit www.paideia-eu.org.

December 31, 2014 - not New Year's Eve for Jews!

According to the Jewish calendar, nothing happened at midnight on December 31. It was 5775 before, and it was 5775 the next day. You probably think that's because Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish new year. And it is - one of them.

But did you know that according to Jewish law there are actually four new years? Every year?

Rosh Hashanah is the new year for political things, like taxes and kings (you keep track of a king's reign according to how many Rosh Hashanahs he spent on the throne). The 15th of Shevat, better known as Tu B'Shevat is the new year for trees. The first of Elul is the new year for cattle. And the first of Nisan, celebrated two weeks before Passover, is the new year for people and celebrations.

So save a little champagne and some of those confetti poppers - the next new year is coming up at sundown on 3 February.



Update from France

Prime Minister Manuel Valls, in an extraordinary speech before the National Assembly of France on January 13th called for a massive engagement by France to protect its Jews and synagogues. [Read more [here](#). -Ed]

Since Shabbat we have a platoon of soldiers at Kehilat Gesher. This is with mixed feelings, sadness that we need protection of any sort and a sense of reassurance that the government is taking very seriously (at last - and at what cost) their role of protecting all its citizens, including the Jews of France.

[Rabbi Tom Cohen \(from Facebook\)](#)

Author Evening at Kehilat Gesher

Evelyn Bloch-Dano presented her book on the mother of Marcel Proust: 'Madam Proust'. It was nice to have a normal evening with two different ulpanim classes in the front room.



[Evelyn Bloch-Dano signs her book at Kehilat Gesher](#)



17 victims felled by terrorist hatred

We shall not forget them. We invited many and many came on Friday 16 January at 18:30 for a memorial prayer and meditation that preceded a special Sabbath service. We lit 17 candles in memory of the 17 victims in the presence of Madame Frédérique Calandra, Mayor of the 20th Arrondissement of Paris; Madame Sandrine Mazetier, Member and Vice-President of the National Assembly; police officers and representatives of the Muslim community.

Make the right choices, continued from page 1

But there are clear choices we all have to face. Do we continue to live our lives as Jews, going to synagogues, Jewish restaurants, events? Do we trust the authorities of our nations to provide the appropriate security to protect us? Do we continue to express what we think even if we know some people might react with violence?

Clearly we decide to answer positively to all of the above.

Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité more than ever!

One less known fact about the kosher hypermarket attack: an employee saved several customers by hiding them in a storage room. He is a black Muslim, Lassana Bathily. He also made choices that we should recognise appropriately.

[Stéphane Beder](#)

WUPJ Statement

In response to these acts of exceptional barbarism, Rabbi Daniel Frelander, President of WUPJ, stated: "We join our French congregations in expressing our horror at the targeted killings in Paris Wednesday morning. This abhorrent act raises the concern of all who value free speech and religious diversity. Our future ultimately depends on the determination of governments to defend and protect pluralism, and show no tolerance for the descent into this kind of violence."



[Rabbi Daniel Frelander](#)



Haredi radicalism evening

Thursday 29 January at 8 pm

Fundamentalism in Israel, or how Sephardic Jews became Haredi radicals. This presentation will be devoted to the history of Sephardic haredism as it was formed in Morocco in 1912, after the Holocaust in Europe and later in Israel with the appearance of the Shas movement. The event will be hosted by historian Yaacov Loupo, a specialist in the Sephardic Jewish ultra-orthodox movement, followed by a friendly drink. Free admission



EUPJ Newsletter en français

Click [here](#) for the French edition of past EUPJ Newsletters, translated by Celia Naval.

The second edition of MahaNetzer



MahaNetzer last year

The communities of the Federation of Liberal Judaism are planning a real "summer-camp" in the liberal Jewish spirit "EiZeh Kef"! Dates: 6 to 19 July with a crazy 14 July. We will have 60 children aged between seven and 17 divided into three groups. The location is in a village in the beautiful country of Côte d'Or.



Keren Or interfaith event

Entitled A Meeting with Benjamin Stora and Ali Benmakhlouf, Keren Or was one of the sponsors of this very timely event held on Tuesday 20 January at at the Villa Gillet in Lyon. The discussion centered around the recent book "History of the Relations between Jews and Muslims" by Albin Michel. The speakers were well received, and the evening was very positive.



RENCONTRE
AVEC
BENJAMIN
STORA
ET ALI
BENMAKHLLOUF

AUTOUR DU LIVRE
HISTOIRE DES
RELATIONS ENTRE
JUIFS ET
MUSULMANS
ALBIN MICHEL, 2013

MARDI
20
JANVIER
VILLA GILLET

19H30



Statement from KEREM

We express our compassion for the victims of the attacks in Paris and to their families. We unequivocally condemn these acts and remember that no reference to any religion whatsoever can justify barbarism, terrorism or the denial of freedom.



Rabbi François Garai
(Liberal Jewish Community of Geneva)
President, Kerem - Rabbinical Council of Francophone
Liberal Jewish Communities

Migwan – Liberal Jewish Community in Basel

Happy New Year to all Migwan members and friends!

We started 2015 with a week full of cultural events. On Saturday 17 January, we presented Monologues with Music, Janusz Korczak: Alone with G'd- prayers by those who are not praying. This was a theatre production created and played by Yael Schüler with texts by Janusz Korczak, accompanied by David Serebryanik (Germany-Uzbekistan) on Synthesiser and Itamar Barkai (Israel) on Cello. The performance was based on the writings of Janusz Korczak, Polish Jew, doctor, writer, pedagogue, and witness. After working as director of an orphanage in Warsaw, Korczak refused the chance to leave the children and save his life and stayed with his orphans when they were deported to Treblinka.

On Monday 19 January, two days later, the Book Group discussed another tragic character in "The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist," although the interpretation here was not so much tragedy as irony. On 22 January we visited the Jewish Museum of Switzerland and toured the special exhibit Made for Each Other: Partnership and Love in Judaism. Many joined for dinner following the tour.

We look forward to seeing many of you and wish you much health and happiness in 2015!

For the Migwan board, Jean Carol
www.migwan.ch, info@migwan.ch

MJLF trip to Israel in March

The MJLF (Liberal Jewish Movement of France) offers a wonderful trip to Israel, Monday 16 March to Monday 23 March. This voyage is aimed both at those who already know Israel and those who will go there the first time. All will discover exceptional sites, often lesser known. [Here is the detailed brochure](#) of this trip.

Jacqueline Doljansky, MJLF administrator, is at your disposal for additional information.

THE TIMES

Letters to the Editor

January 15, 2015

Jews in Britain

We need to put the brakes on the idea that Britain is not safe for Jews (News, January 14). We are living in a wonderful time for British Jewry, and any suggestion to the contrary simply isn't true. Yes, people are worried. But the results of the Campaign Against Antisemitism survey do not tally with the experiences of those I meet daily. Britain is not an antisemitic country. The idea that we are living in something resembling 1930's Europe is not credible. In Britain today, we have a government working with the community to combat antisemitism. Twenty-first century Britain is a great place to be a Jew.

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner
Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism

Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

The first edition of [Lulav](#) for 2015 is now published. Holocaust Memorial Day this year sees the Edinburgh Interfaith Association inviting Ela Weissberger to address us. Now 83, she was in the cast of *Brundibár* at Theresienstadt and is one of the few remaining survivors. The event will be held on 28 January.

Please note that our Council is launching a consultation about future directions for the community. Please see the article inside.

This year we are supporting a Burns Supper to be held at Roslin Masonic Hall on 24 January to help the Kinship Advice and Advocacy Provision. The founders of this charity, Paul and Bruce, have recently found their way to our community.

If the weather is getting you down, we have Tu BiShvat and blossoms in the trees to look forward to. Our Tu BiShvat seder will be on 6 February.

Forthcoming events for the next few months, with full venue details linked to maps, are all listed in our [Diary](#).

Norman Crane, Chair of Sukkat Shalom
Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

RSY-Netzer winter events

RSY-Netzer winter events 5775 which took place in December were an amazing success, as RSY-Netzer Movement Worker Gavi Morris explains.

[Read more](#)



Liberal Judaism Statement on the Paris Terrorist Attacks

By Rabbi Danny Rich
Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism

The tragic terrorist attacks in Paris, first at the magazine Charlie Hebdo and then at the Kosher supermarket, have saddened and shocked us all.

Liberal Judaism fully endorses and supports the statements issued by the organisations to which we are affiliated, including the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council.

I also wanted to offer a particular Liberal Jewish perspective for our members and accordingly draw their attention to two further items.

The first is by the Muslim members of the National Council of Imams and Rabbis, of which I am a member. The statement, which was written by Imams from the UK and abroad, includes advice for those in the Muslim community concerned about the depiction the Prophet Muhammad.

It includes the passage: "As British citizens we must not allow hate to creep into our hearts due to the horrific incidents of Paris. Muslims, non-Muslims and people of all backgrounds must come together and show unity and solidarity and not let it divide our communities. We must remember the statements of the Prophet (peace be upon him) such as: 'Someone who unjustly kills a non-Muslim citizen cannot attain a whiff of Heaven, even though its fragrance is felt from a distance of forty years. (Bukhari)', or 'He who hurts a non-Muslim citizen hurts me, and he who hurts me annoys Allah. (Tabarani)' and many other similar hadiths highlighting that Muslims are not allowed to hurt their non-Muslim brothers and sisters in humanity."

Read the statement in full, by visiting [here](#).

The second is a sermon from our own Rabbi Lea Mülhstein, of Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue, which can be read [here](#)

[Read more on our website](#)



Rabbi Danny Rich

Adult Education 2015 at Leo Baeck College

Biblical Hebrew

with Dr Alinda Damsma
Spinoza's Jewish Philosophy

with Rabbi Mark Solomon
Jewish Sacred Music

High Holy Days: nusach, melodies and texts

with Dr Annette Boeckler
Why did God laugh?

- *Introduction to Midrash*

with Rabbi Colin Eimer

To sign up, read more [here](#).



Leo Baeck College
At the Heart of Progressive Judaism

United Kingdom

West London Synagogue YAD events

This month contained all of our regular events with Torah on Tap on Tuesday 13 January, YAD Dinner on Friday 16 January, Lunch & Learn on Saturday 24 January and The Book Club on Sunday 25 January. A nice crowd joined student rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen and other YAD members in The Royal Oak in Marylebone for the monthly Torah on Tap. January's YAD Shabbat Shira Dinner was at the earlier time of 7:15pm following a special musical Shabbat Service featuring Cantor Shira Lissek. As always, we had delicious food, top quality entertainment, and the great company of fellow YAD members.

For the [Shabbat Lunch & Learn](#) on Saturday 24 January from 12:45, join Rabbi Sybil Sheridan who will be discussing *Purity and Impurity* to see how the rules of Niddah impact our relationships. How can we observe these rules today? Are they inherently sexist? Don't forget to bring and share lunch just after *Shira Chadasha*. Dessert is on us!



West London Synagogue YAD
#YADMeetUp

YAD Shabbat Lunch & Learn

A bring and share lunch just after Shabbat Chadasha, we will be learning together discussing different topics

From 12:30 on 24 January 2015 – with Rabbi Sybil

We will be discussing *Purity and Impurity* to see how do the rules of Niddah impact our relationships? How can we observe these rules today? Are they inherently sexist?



LJS Day of Jewish Poets & Jewish Poetry

Sunday 1 February at 10:30am-5:15pm. The Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London invites you to a day of Jewish poetry including readings by poets, book signings plus Peter Lawson and Anthony Rudolf in discussion about "Is there a British Jewish Identity in Poetry?"

[Click here for more details](#). **Cost:** £12 (£30 family) includes lunch and tea. [Click here to book](#).

About Pro-Zion

Pro-Zion is the UK-based organisation that works to support Progressive Judaism in Israel and to promote Israel in Progressive Jewish Communities in the UK. [Click here](#) to learn more.



Click the logos for news of UK movements



First AGK ordinand in UK

Rabbi Fabian Sborovsky, who was ordained last June by Abraham Geiger Kolleg in Potsdam, will be the rabbi for Menorah in Manchester. He is the first Geiger graduate to be appointed to the pulpit of a British congregation. Fabian was very active when a student rabbi in serving our developing communities in Spain and Italy, working under the auspices of the EUPJ.



Rabbi Fabian Sborovsky

Rabbi Sborovsky writes: I am very happy to share with you that after being unanimously recommended by the board for the position of rabbi at Menorah in Manchester, at an EGM vote the recommendation was likewise approved.

I am very excited and very much looking forward to begin. I was fortunate to have several offers to consider lately and am delighted to have found a great community that felt right and a good fit from the very start (though it wasn't exactly the place I envisioned geographically speaking!).

[With heartfelt thanks and best regards, Fabian](#)

Reform members recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours

Laura Marks, founder of Mitzvah Day International, Senior Vice-President of the Board of Deputies and a member of Alyth (North Western Reform Synagogue) has been made an OBE for services to interfaith relations.

[Read more here.](#)



Laura Marks



Joseph Fisher

Joseph Fisher, a member of Newcastle Reform Synagogue, has been made an MBE for services to charity and the British Polio Fellowship.

[Read more here.](#)



Viv Bellos

Viv Bellos, outgoing director of music at Alyth (North Western Reform Synagogue) has been made an MBE for services to music.

[Read more here.](#)

Chanukah at Kehilah Beit Emunah



Public Chanukah lighting in Oviedo

In the late evening on Saturday 20 December, we performed a public ceremony of lighting the menorah (chanukiah) in Oviedo. We decorated the Plaza del Fontan and "planted" our menorah outside the back door of our building in a very busy place full of people. In the picture you can see our team. We baked sufganiot, donuts and other delights for visitors and the general public to taste and enjoy part of Jewish culinary culture.

Upon the arrival of the Mayor of Oviedo D Agustín Iglesias Caunedo we welcomed the people who were with us and performed Havdalah and sang the blessings to conclude the Sabbath. Once finished, we explained about Chanukah and proceeded to light the huge chanukiah. This brought the Plaza to life and with many people as well as the local media. We also lit a special chanukiah for those who were unable to be present. Next we enjoyed some rikudim (dancing) with sufganiot and donuts, along with cider. Even rain did not prevent us from showing our traditions to people who came to join us. We hope they return next year and say Chanukah Sameach!

Aida Oceransky

Kehilah Beit Emunah, Oviedo

www.sefarad-asturias.org

Tribute at Ohel Jacob, Lisbon

Ohel Jakob is working to become a member of the EUPJ, and this is our first story about them. **-Ed**

On 8 Kislev 5775 we held a modest ceremony to honour four good persons without whom it would not be possible for all of us to be part of the shul. These men were Samuel Sorin, the person who created Ohel Jacob in 1934, Sapese Noymark, Salomão Marques and Aron Katzan who have supported us since 1998. The purpose was to thank them for making Ohel Jacob Synagogue a religious place as well as community one.

The ceremony began with a short text describing how these people helped the community to grow. Then a member of the family honoured give thanks to us for making this event. Next we heard three violin pieces, two with singing participation by all present. The event was followed by a small reception. Among the evening's guests were Israel's Ambassador to Portugal Tzipora Rimon as well as the Ambassador of the World Parliament of Religions, Prof Paulo Mendes Pinto.

Adriana Souza and J I Hehaver

Bet Januká visits Cordoba



Cordoba Shabbat with student rabbi Haim Casas

At the end of December, some of the members of Bet Januká of Andalucía enjoyed a beautiful and emotional gathering in Cordoba, Spain with student rabbi Haim Casas. We held Kabbalat Shabbat and a lively Oneg Shabbat that we had the pleasure to share with some local residents as well as some Americans who were visiting the area. Haim led a short and instructional Shacharit service in which we sang many of the morning prayers with Sephardic melodies. According to Haim, these melodies are sung in the Sephardic synagogue in London. This is the second get-together where we have held services in the Casa de Sefarad, the Cordoba cultural center.

Deborah and Ahuvah

Congregation Bet Januká, Andalucía

Chanukah in Cadiz



Chanukah at Bet Januká with Dalia Levy (l)

On the first night of Chanukah Bet Januká gathered together to light the first candle, and we had the honour and pleasure of receiving a visit from the charming Dalia Levy, executive director of Arzenu. She gave us an informative presentation about Arzenu and how to make our voices heard by becoming members of the organisation. We would also like to share with you a picture of our public lighting ceremony that we held at Bet Januká in Rota (Cadiz).

Deborah Ríos Rey, Congregation Bet Januká

Rabbi John Friedman in Milan and Florence

Beth Shalom Milan held services on Saturday, January 17 at 10:30 am at the Hotel De La Ville. We had been really looking forward to having Rabbi John Friedman lead us. After a short break for lunch, Rabbi Friedman conducted a lively discussion on American and European views on Israel today. He spoke for about 30 minutes and then we asked questions and shared comments.

Rabbi John Friedman was born in Kansas City and studied at Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem and Cincinnati, where he was ordained in 1976 and from which he received an honorary doctorate. After four years at Emanuel Congregation in Chicago, he went to Judea Reform in North Carolina, where he has been for over 30 years.



Rabbi John Friedman

He has been active in many Jewish and civic organisations, has been a popular speaker for diverse groups and has written articles for a variety of Jewish publications. Rabbi Friedman is presently serving at Shir Hadash in Florence and has agreed to be with us in January before Rabbi Lerner returns in early February.

Carey Bernitz, President of Beth Shalom

Chanukah in Rome



Lighting Chanukah candles at Beth Hillel, Rome

It was a great Chanukah at Rome's Beth Hillel with the participation of almost 100 members and friends. The afternoon saw a very interesting lesson and kids' activity directed by Jenn Linsday. There were about 30 children who immensely enjoyed the program. After the Havdalah, the lighting of the Chanukiot by the children and the singing of Chanukah melodies were very emotional moments.

Refreshments and beverages were then served before the much applauded Chanukah concert performed by Gabriel Zagni and his Gilgul Sevivon Quartet.

Sim Shalom Budapest News



Chanukah at Sim Shalom, Budapest

Shortly after my last newsletter, we had a very enjoyable visit for Shabbat services by a group of 21 young people from England, led by a former member of Sim Shalom, Nick Young, who is now leading a Jewish day school in the outskirts of London. The group he brought with him were Netzer (Reform Youth Group) kids from three congregations in and around London. Besides attending our services, they visited the many places of Jewish interest in Budapest, including the many memorials to the Jews killed in the Holocaust. It's always good to have such visitors, both for their enthusiasm for Judaism, and for our own young people to meet and hobnob with.

Another kind of visit was made by Rabbi Steve Burnstein from the World Union for Progressive Judaism in Israel. Steve was here to help organise the various groups of progressive Jews in Budapest to work more closely together. One of the main things planned was a mini-conference to take place in the spring to attract presently unaffiliated young Budapest Jews. Rabbi Burnstein also played a big part in our Shabbat services, leading parts of the service with his guitar, prayers and talks. Steve is a very energetic and charismatic guy, and made a strong impression on those who attended the services and programmes he led.

In early December, we were very lucky to have a several-day Israeli film festival here. There were some very good documentaries about Jewish life in Israel, both the good and the difficult sides of it, and about Jewish-Palestinian relationships, some of which actually resulted in the saving of lives. And there were even some very good fictional films showing the lighter side of life in Israel.

Chanukah was celebrated several times over during the week of candle lighting. Rabbi Kati Kelemen took part in a community-wide programme for the first night at the Jewish Community Centre called Balint Haz. Sim Shalom had its celebration during and after our Kabbalat Shabbat Service. There were about 20 chanukiot lined up on a long table in front of our three-foot high menorah. Seventy people attended the joyous event; the room was packed! And on the last day we participated in a candle lighting held at a meeting place of young Jews who do not belong to a recognised congregation.

Jess Weil

Shir Hatzafon Shabbaton - a weekend of learning & fun



Rabbis Sandra Kviat and Rebecca Lillian

Sign-up for the family weekend of Friday 23 to Sunday 25 January is now well under way. The Shir Hatzafon family weekend takes place in a pleasant large cottage about two hours north of Copenhagen. Come and feel how wonderful a Shabbat can be.

Lots of fun and interesting activities: Challah baking, treasure hunt, workshops for all age groups, ten new songs, a musical service. Learn the why and how of Shabbat and what is a mitzvah, have a screen-free weekend, wander in the Danish desert (in the beautiful nature of Odsherreds)...and much more.

We are arranging this Shabbaton together with Rabbi Rebecca Lillian (American, from Sweden), who has been involved with Shir Hatzafon since its earliest days and co-produced our first siddur (prayer book) a dozen years ago and with Rabbi Sandra Kviat (Danish, from Britain), Denmark's first Progressive rabbi.

It is open to members, their families and friends of Shir Hatzafon.

Register now at shir@shirhatzafon.dk.

Jewish adult humour

A young child tells the rabbi he has four questions to ask. "First, is it true that the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea and they received the Ten Commandments?"

The rabbi replies, "Yes."

"And the Children of Israel also defeated the Philistines?"

"Yes, that is also true."

"And the Children of Israel built the Temple in Jerusalem?"

"Again, you are correct," the rabbi says.

"So my last question, Rabbi, is this. What were the grown-ups doing all this time?"



Beit Warszawa events

On Friday, 23rd January we invite you to Beit Warszawa to meet with Cantor David Wisnia, who has agreed to tell us about his life. As a boy, Cantor Wisnia sang in the choir led by David Eisenstadt at the Great Synagogue in Warsaw. He survived Auschwitz and after that joined the American army. The meeting will start at 6:00 pm and it will be in Polish.

On that same evening, Cantor Wisnia, together with his grandson, musician Avi Wisnia, and Rabbi Gil Nativ will lead the Shabbat evening service. Join us for this very special evening at Beit Warszawa!

On 6 February we invite you to a Friday lecture with Leszek Ragan – *Jews in Poland, their settlements and contribution to Polish culture*.



Cantor David Wisnia

Jewish Midrash Theatre in Kraków

The Lonely Tango of Vera Gran was performed on Sunday 18 January at [Teatr Bez Rzędów](#) in Kraków.

This theatre piece was conceived and directed by Rabbi Tanya Segal of Beit Kraków.

Vera Gran was a renowned Polish singer and the muse of the legendary Cafe Sztuka of the Warsaw Ghetto, who after the war was accused of collaborating with the Gestapo. The performance deals with one of the most damaging

inclinations of human nature - the tendency for gossip, in Jewish tradition considered equal to murder.



Day of Judaism in Chmielnik

On Friday 16 January in the synagogue in Chmielnik on Wspólna Street, the Day of Judaism opened with a debate between Rabbi Tanya Segal and Priest Rafał Duda concerning the possibilities and challenges of interfaith dialogue in Poland. This was a very fruitful and successful dialogue, as was the entire day.



Rabbi Tanya Segal

Germany

Abraham Geiger College in London's Jewish Chronicle

Our jubilee year 2014 ended with happy news: the New Year's honours list announced my appointment by President Joachim Gauck to the German Federal Order of Merit in the grade of Officer [the equivalent of OBE in Britain].

The Minister-President of the State of Brandenburg will receive me on February 27 for individual investiture. This is a good indicator for the German and Brandenburg interest in the work of the Abraham Geiger College and the School of Jewish Theology Potsdam.



Rabbi Walter Homolka

You can read about the Abraham Geiger College in the 23 December issue of the Jewish Chronicle London [here](#).

Rabbi Professor Dr Walter Homolka

Netzerniks from Spain and Germany meet in Barcelona

It was a great time with wonderful people in a beautiful city! Over 30 Jewish youth from the two countries gathered to meet, learn and have fun.



Netzerniks from Spain and Germany at the gathering in Barcelona in November 2014

Hamelin blessed with rabbis

Our congregation has always considered it a priority to have regular rabbinical support. Our congregation would not be what it is today without the dedicated work of our Rabbi Irit Shillor. We are happy that she will continue to serve us this year.

We are pleased that Rabbi Alexander Lyskovoy will join her in her work with our community. Many of our members have had the opportunity to have met Rabbi Lyskovoy and know what a contribution this well-respected Moscow Progressive rabbi can make in our congregation. We gave him an especially warm welcome on Shabbat Shemot, January 9th and 10th. Rabbinical student Dr Ulrike Offenberg will also continue this year, and we can look forward to her visits throughout the year.

Read the full newsletter [here](#).

Rachel Dohme, The Jewish Community of Hamelin



L-R: Rabbis Irit Shillor and Alexander Lyskovoy, student rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

20 years of Beth Shalom Munich

A celebration and ceremony will take place on Sunday 22 March at 17:00 in Hilbert Burda Hall of the Munich Jewish Community on St. James Place in Munich. Come to "20 years of Beth Shalom Munich"! We want to get together with friends as well as our community with representatives from politics, religious communities and the Munich municipality. We will look at the historical highlights which have led Progressive Judaism back to the center of the Jewish community in Munich. We also will have the klezmer band Boris Rosenthal & Friends on the cultural program. Restaurant Einstein will provide our buffet. You can order tickets for €20 (€10 for children), and please reserve your places now at info@beth-shalom.de.

Beth Shalom Chanukah party



Chanukah at Beth Shalom in Munich

Read the UpJ newsletter

Union progressiver Juden in Deutschland (UpJ), the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany, publishes a newsletter in German. Read and subscribe to it [here](#).



More than 100 members and guests celebrated Chanukah at Beth Shalom in Munich on 21 December with candle lighting, storyteller Gidon Horowitz, a children's program, music by Cantor Nikola, Juan Carlos Lopez and Ivan, and dancing. Thank you to all who organised, helped, shopped, decorated, cooked, cleaned and all the many other "little things" which made such a fantastic event!

Belgium



From Rabbi Ira Goldberg

Best wishes to all for a healthy, happy and successful 2015. I also wish to extend my thanks to the entire IJC community for the warm welcome that has been extended to me, my wife Max (Marcus) and our children, Yirgalem, Ronit and Saraf. It is both an honour and a pleasure to be the rabbi of the IJC as it is for the entire Goldberg-Marcus family to be a part of this extraordinary community.

I look forward to getting to know you, the members of the IJC family, and to contributing to our growing, dynamic congregation with all that it offers to the community.

In this season of new beginnings, it is appropriate that we begin the Book of Shemot, Exodus, the second of the five Books of Moses, the Torah. The story of the Children of Israel's slavery in Egypt, the Exodus from Egypt and the wandering in the desert are for many of us quite familiar stories. Actually, more than any other moment, the identity of the Children of Israel as a people emerges from the crucible of slavery and exodus. Not the giving of the Torah, for example, but the journey from slavery to freedom, on some level, defines Judaism. Repeatedly, the Torah, the Bible reminds us: "care for the stranger, for the widow, the orphan, the powerless, because you were strangers, you were slaves and powerless in the land of Egypt." The Exodus is a moral imperative for pursuing social justice, an element of tikkun olam, the Hebrew term for making the world a better place. For me Judaism is also joy, a celebration of life and a deep appreciation for our blessings. It is dynamic, modern and simultaneously an invitation to explore a treasure chest full of thousands of years of rich tradition in which we may find something meaningful if we are open to it.

Ira Goldberg is Rabbi of the IJC



Rabbi Ira Goldberg

students, and we have a stand at the twice-yearly information fair for newcomers. A steady stream of (mostly exchange) students from Israel/UK/Canada have found their way to us, some for the service and the potluck dinner that follows, others just for the social event and the opportunity to meet and schmooze with other Jews.

Once a year we organise a Shacharit Service with a Kiddush

lunch using a Torah Scroll from the theology library. IJC meets in the University Begijnhof complex – a former enclosed monastery or Beguinage established in 1232. It is an excellent facility subsidised by the university.



IJC meeting place at the Leuven University Begijnhof complex



Beth Hillel

Communauté Israélite Libérale de Belgique

Activities at Beth Hillel maintained

In the present context, the question arose whether to hold our planned Beth Hillel activities (Shabbat services, study circle Kenéh Lekha Haver, the jubilee celebration, etc). The answer is "yes", except for a last-minute cancellation or force majeure. The group responsible for the security of the building tells us that increased safety measures were taken.

Indeed, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of Beth Hillel took place as scheduled on 18 January with a full house of visiting and local dignitaries, members, friends and well-wishers. It was a grand day, most auspicious for the future of Beth Hillel.

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Chocktails in Leuven

The IJC's satellite in the university town of Leuven is going from strength to strength since Friday Kabbalat Shabbat services started in February 2012.

At our most recent event – Chanukah and Chocktails on 18 December – 25 people came together to light Chanukah candles, sing traditional songs and eat Chanukah food. The 'chocktails' may not be traditional, but they have quickly established themselves as part of IJC-Leuven's minhag.

Jews in and around Leuven are few and far between, but the group of local participants, IJC members, students, post-grads and staff has grown steadily as our activities have become known. IJC is now featured as the only Jewish organisation in the university's information brochure for international



A full house gathered to celebrate the 50th birthday of Beth Hillel in Brussels.

WORLD
UNION FOR
PROGRESSIVE
JUDAISM



האיגוד
העולמי
ליהדות
מתקדמת

The Beutel Seminar 2015

Jewish Leadership Begins with Jewish Learning: The Beutel Seminar, scheduled for February 5 - 15, is a prestigious ten-day seminar in Jerusalem run by the [Anita Saltz International Education Center](#). The seminar offers the opportunity to connect with other Progressive Jewish leaders from around the world and address critical issues facing our communities like engaging young adults, balancing innovation and tradition and more.



Beutel Seminar

Using Israel as our classroom, we will also explore ancient texts and history; discuss current political and social issues; explore spiritual pathways and concepts of Jewish leadership - all within a Progressive Jewish context. *There are still a few spaces available for this year's Beutel Seminar.* For more information contact the [Saltz Education Center](#)

IMPJ supports co-existence

As the tides of racial intolerance continue to grow and spread, the IMPJ continues to take a firm stance against acts of violence and incitement. We have made co-existence and shared living a flagship area of programming for the



IMPJ Co-existence Conference

coming year, and this Chanukah we held our first-ever co-existence conference at Kehillat Yozma in Modi'in, bringing together hundreds of our community members to learn and engage with ways of promoting tolerance and shared living in their communities.

[IMPJ Newsletter](#)

WUPJ Calendar

February 5-15 - Israel

[Beutel Seminar](#)

May 13-16 - Rio de Janeiro

[Connections 2015, WUPJ 37th Biennial Conference](#)

July 2-12 - Israel

[Bergman Seminar for Jewish Educators](#)

October 7-22 - Israel and Poland

[Israel - Poland Mission](#)



CONNECTIONS 2015 'Early Bird' Deadline Extended

Save on Simcha, Soul and Solidarity!

The World Union for Progressive Judaism's (WUPJ) global celebration is extending its 'Early Bird' special until **February 15**. To secure your place at the event that's written on the calendars of Progressive Jewish people around the world, [click here](#) to visit the CONNECTIONS 2015 website.

Taking place May 13-16 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the WUPJ's 37th International Convention will bring members of our far-flung family together to learn about the inspiring vision of our movement's future via a wide variety of educational and entertaining sessions that will touch on the hot button issues affecting Reform, Progressive and Liberal Jews everywhere.

Ready for Rio? Register on line [here!](#)



Torah from around the World

Every week, WUPJ emails *Torah from around the World*, a commentary on the Parashah (Torah portion) of the week by a rabbi from one of its congregations. To subscribe, please [click here](#).



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IMPJ Newsletter

Click on [this link](#) for the newsletter of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism.