



European Union for Progressive Judaism

March / April 2016 Newsletter

© European Union for Progressive Judaism

Chairman's Annual Report to the WUPJ

In looking back over the past year my first task must be to report with enormous sorrow the sudden death in November of Dr Leo Hepner, a past chairman of EUPJ. Leo personified devotion to Progressive Judaism coupled with a vision and energy which made his achievements far too numerous to list. I will, however, mention his vital role of advice and support concerning the establishment of communities in Denmark, Germany and Spain. His wisdom and good sense will be missed.



Miriam Kramer

Last year has been challenging for many communities in Europe largely because of the increased number of terrorist episodes; not all targeted Jewish sites directly but most of them did. I wish to commend the police forces and governments for their swift reactions each time and for their public statements of intolerance towards these acts and those who support them.

One thing is clear: despite all the difficulties and challenges, not to mention sensationalist media attention, it is important to note that Jews are not leaving Europe in significant numbers. There may be a trickle but it is most certainly not a flood.

Our last Annual Assembly was held in March at GIL in Geneva and it attracted a large number of delegates from Europe and beyond. I am indebted to GIL's Rabbi François Garaï and President Alex Dembitz, as well as the community's administration for their warm welcome and their outstanding organisational skills over the weekend.

This year's WUPJ International Assembly is being held in London as part of the EUPJ Biennial Conference. London was chosen as the venue to celebrate the anniversaries of two vital institutions both established in London: WUPJ was founded in

[continued on page 2](#)

A Purim Message from Bad Segeberg in 1936



In little more than a week, Purim will be here again. In addition to masks, greggers, and fun-filled Purim spiels, I hope part of our preparation focuses on the vital messages this festival and the Book of Esther, the text that underlies it, send to us today

The faces in the photo that hangs in the new synagogue in Bad Segeberg haunt me. They seared themselves into my brain the first time I saw it, and they do not let go.

What were these 26 souls thinking when - in hiding - they celebrated Purim in 1936? Their eyes and their smiles betray fear as well as their resolve to celebrate the festival with joy.

There are those who demean Purim and the basis for the festival, the Book of Esther. They say:

[continued on page 13](#)

March/April Newsletter Contents

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1-2 EUPJ | 10 Belgium, Denmark |
| 3-4 EUPJ Conference | 11 Hungary, Netherlands |
| 5-6 EUPJ, Poland | 12 Switzerland |
| 6 Poland, France | 13 United Kingdom |
| 7 France | 14 United Kingdom, Purim |
| 8 Spain | 15 Germany |
| 9 Italy, Sweden | 16 WUPJ |



Register now

**14-17 April
in London**

[Click here](#) and see pages
3 & 4 for more information.

EUPJ Honorary Officers and Staff 2016

Honorary Life Presidents

Jeffery Rose
Ruth Cohen

President

Leslie Bergman

Vice-Presidents

Alex Dembitz
Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein
Sonja Guentner
Rabbi Dr Walter Homolka
Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris
Jonathan Lewis
Félix Mosbacher
Gordon Smith

Chairman

Miriam Kramer

Vice-Chairmen

Stéphane Beder
Michael Reik

Honorary Secretary

John Cohen

Honorary Treasurer

David Pollak

EUPJ Rabbinic Adviser

Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim

Administrator

Deborah Grabiner administrator@eupj.org

Newsletter Editor

Arthur Buchman newsletter@eupj.org

Gillian Thomas, Assistant Editor



This issue covers two months

We invite our readers to savour this edition of the EUPJ Newsletter, because the next issue will be in May. Preparations for our Biennial Conference in London next month (see pages 3 and 4) have impacted what we can include for March/April, and the conference itself makes a separate issue in April impossible. Many of our readers are coming to London, and there is still time to register [here](#). We'll tell you all about it in May.

Arthur Buchman, Editor

Chairman's Annual Report, continued from page 1

1926 and Leo Baeck College in 1956. There were representatives of nine countries at the initial meeting which resulted in the formation of WUPJ. I am certain that these pioneers would be both pleased and proud that from those modest beginnings we now have an organisation which has more than 1.8 million members and spans some 50 countries in all corners of the globe.

Each year that I have been privileged to serve as EUPJ Chairman I have mentioned two remarkable people: Betty and Arthur Roswell. They are staunch supporters, in words and in deeds, of WUPJ in general and of EUPJ in particular. Their financial support to the emerging and re-emerging communities in carefully targeted European countries is immeasurable. In addition to the actual fiscal benefit they demonstrate that we are all truly Klal Yisrael, the Roswells embody the saying that we are all responsible for one another. We are truly in their debt and I find it hard to find adequate words to express our gratitude to them.

The European Beit Din (EBD) operates in countries where there are not enough Rabbis to constitute the three-person panel. Under the leadership of Rabbis Jackie Tabick and Ruven Bar-Ephraim, with advice from Rabbi Andrew Goldstein and with administrative support from Pippa Suchet, this component of EUPJ sits both in the UK and in other European countries to interview scores of candidates each year. Each story is unique and, in its own way, very moving. We are all indebted to those named above and to the other Rabbis who constitute the EBD in different permutations and locations. Theirs is holy work and we are all the richer for it. The EUPJ has created a full activities report to be shared at the EUPJ conference in London. We will gladly share this detailed report with the Assembly.

Finally I would like to thank my colleagues on the Management Committee: Leslie Bergman (president), Stéphane Beder and Michael Reik (vice-chairs), John Cohen (honorary secretary), David Pollak (honorary treasurer), Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim (rabbinic adviser), Gordon Smith (WUPJ representative), Sonja Guentner, Rabbi Andrew Goldstein (immediate past chair) and Rabbi Joel Oseran. Without the dedication, wisdom and sense of humour of Deborah Grabiner, our administrator, we would accomplish much less. I am grateful to them all.

Miriam Kramer

See the EUPJ website: www.eupj.org.

Subscribe to the EUPJ Newsletter [here](#).

Read & download EUPJ Newsletter archives in English and French [here](#).

Send us your feedback [here](#).

Synagogues everywhere

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



Unna, Germany: Jüdische Gemeinde haKochav

Please support
Friends of Progressive
Judaism
in Israel and Europe.
They support us.
www.fpjie.org.uk



EUPJ BIENNIAL CONFERENCE



Rabbi Danny Rich and Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner (rabbinic heads of the Liberal and Reform Movements in the UK) will set out **a vision for building a dynamic and inspiring Progressive Judaism in Europe** and how we might use this as a basis for building wider, stronger bridges within our community, with other faith communities and beyond.



KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE
WEST LONDON SYNAGOGUE
followed by dinner nearby

SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE
LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE
followed by Lunch 'n Learn
sessions and opportunities to
experience London

SHABBAT AFTERNOON TOUR OPTIONS:

A private tour to Westminster Synagogue and the Czech Scrolls



Museum - which tells the story of a small but remarkable episode in the history of European Jewry. In 1942 a plan was devised to bring the religious treasures from the deserted provincial communities of Bohemia and Moravia to the comparative safety of Prague. There are 1800 scrolls of which 1564 came to Westminster Synagogue in 1964.

Victoria & Albert Museum - visit the world's leading museum of art and design and take a tour of their Judaica collection with Curator Louise Hoffman. Then you can explore the many galleries of design, fashion, jewellery, ceramics, medieval & renaissance, sculpture, theatre & performance and more.



A private tour to the National Portrait Gallery - join prize-winning guide and author, Rachel Kolsky, for this fascinating tour profiling portraits and artists through which you discover members of the Jewish community who became representative British subjects in the fields of politics, finance, industry and culture.



London in a Nutshell! / London by Coach



From the comfort of your luxury coach with a professional London's blue badge guide, sit back and enjoy an afternoon touring London seeing iconic sites, past and present.



The importance of **TRAINING 21st CENTURY RABBIS** will be discussed and debated by the heads of the key seminaries in the Progressive Jewish World, Rabbis Aaron Panken, Walter Homolka and Deborah Kahn-Harris.



ABRAHAM
GEIGER
KOLLEG
בית המדרש
אברהם גייגר

JOIN US IN LONDON FROM 14 -17 APRIL 2016.

Be a part of Building Bridges and help to build a stronger Progressive Judaism in Europe.

EUPJ BIENNIAL CONFERENCE



WILL YOU BE THERE TO BE INVOLVED AND INSPIRED?

THERE IS STILL TIME TO REGISTER, [click here](#).

In less than 60 days Progressive Jews from Europe and around the world will gather in London for the first ever EUPJ Biennial Conference to be held here. We expect that this will be the best attended and most diversely represented EUPJ Conference, with over 260 delegates from 23 countries having already registered to attend. Those attending include the rabbinic and lay leadership from our communities and movements as well as educators and teachers, those wanting to experience and learn and many young adults and student rabbis.

This conference will be a unique opportunity to study with, learn from, sing and pray with, and chat to friends and fellow Progressive Jews from around the world. The theme of "Building Bridges" is the perfect opportunity to experience the diversity of our ideas and practices, whilst being aware that all are firmly rooted in our traditions.

In keeping with this ideal, the programme is filled with a diverse selection of workshops and sessions. As well as interesting discussions, there will be sessions that celebrate our communities, that will give you ideas to take home with you and things to think about that will undoubtedly inspire you.



PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

THE POLITICS OF CITIES AND THEIR

JEWISH VOICES - Hear from leaders in Berlin, London, Paris and Jerusalem about how being a Jewish voice in a dynamic, culturally diverse city is both a challenge and a way to genuinely build bridges.

SALTZ WORKSHOP on strategic planning in communities led by Rabbi Steve Burnstein.

Sessions that focus on **YOUNG ADULTS** and their engagement outside the boundaries of community.

ISRAEL is at the heart of our programme. We will be joined by Anat Hoffman and Prof. Fania Oz Salzburger as well as representatives from ARZENU, IRAC and the IMPJ. We will be covering Jewish identity, city politics and racism in Israel and we will be looking at models for European communities to engage with Progressive communities in Israel and how to build informed and lasting relationships.

ISSUES THAT MATTER – anti-Semitism, interfaith relationships and demographic shifts in Jewish communities around the world are on the agenda. Dr Jonathan Boyd from the Institute for Jewish Policy Research will look at the facts and figures that speak to these issues, with thoughtful responses from our communities as to how we are responding to them.

Join us for the **opening ceremony** Thursday April 14 and experience the splendour of London's historic Guildhall.



From London drizzle to California sunshine: Miriam Kramer, Chairman of the EUPJ, visits the San Francisco Bay area

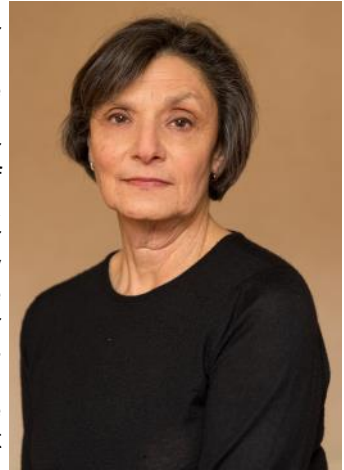
By Cherie Half

Miriam Kramer, Chairman of the [European Union for Progressive Judaism](#) (EUPJ) left cold, wet London to bask in the California sunshine while sharing her worldview with San Francisco Reform Jews. She has a unique perspective of the current political climate and its effects on Progressive Jewish institutions in Europe. Miriam gave examples of Progressive, Liberal, and Reform communities: mature (England, Germany, and France), adolescent (Belgium, Austria, Czech Republic), and nascent (Spain and Portugal). Each has its own unique situation: from being established from the ground up where there had not been any Judaism before, to reigniting an historical connection with Progressive Judaism, to combatting political entities that are anti-Semitic, or to working against Orthodox movement hierarchies. The EUPJ, under the umbrella of the [World Union for Progressive Judaism](#) (WUPJ), is working on the ground to give guidance and support to the leaders of 16 different nations on the European continent.

First stop on Miriam's speaking tour was a dinner hosted by Rabbi Melanie Aron at Congregation [Shir Hadash](#) in Los Gatos. Friday morning Miriam met with Sue Fishkoff, editor of the "J.", the Bay Area weekly Jewish Newspaper and was interviewed for [this piece](#). For Friday night Shabbat services at [Congregation Emanu-El](#) in San Francisco, Rabbis Ryan Bauer and Jason Rodich and Cantors Marsha Attie and Arik Luck centered the service on the origin of prayers from other countries and Miriam gave the *drasha*. Shabbat morning Torah study was led by Rabbi Janet Marder and 200 of her regular minyan at [Congregation Beth Am](#) in Los Altos Hills. Shabbat afternoon at Beth Am, Miriam again spoke about the EUPJ and its mission, this time to a standing-room-only crowd. Saturday night local committee members hosted Miriam at Greens, her favourite vegetarian restaurant. Next day convened the Bay Area Regional World Union meeting at [Beth Israel Judea](#) with a D'var Torah by Rabbi Danny Gottlieb, one of Miriam's "boys" when she chaired [Leo Baeck College](#) in London years ago.

The first questions asked at each session were all about concerns regarding the "rise" of anti-Semitism and the migration of French citizens to Israel. Miriam stated that there was anti-Semitism in Europe and regrettably that Hungary stands out as a country where the government does not quell right wing anti-Semitism (even though the Prime Minister has publicly stated that Hungary will not tolerate anti-Semitism). She further explained that the exodus of French Jews from France is being driven as much by economic issues as fear, specifically as there is a new tax that people are trying to avoid by moving abroad. In fact, Miriam asserted, London is the fourth largest city of French citizens in the world after Paris, Marseille, and Lyon.

Miriam converses in three languages other than English, and has visited Progressive Jewish communities all over the world. Her frank assessment of European Jewry was a breath of fresh air. Her experiences and history with the Progressive movement give her pronouncements significant weight. It was an enlightening experience for many West Coast Americans to delve into the complexities of life in Europe and hear stories that emphasised the strength of the World Union with two million members worldwide.



Miriam Kramer

If you want to hear and meet the leaders of the European Union for Progressive Judaism, join them for the [Biennial Conference](#) in London, April 14 thru 17, and celebrate 90 years of the formation of the World Union.

Joy in Krakow



Rabbis Boaz Pash and Tanya Segal

Our tradition teaches us that when the month of Adar arrives we should increase our joy. This year joy is doubled because we have two months Adar, not one. And for the Kabbalat Shabbat of February 24 there was even more joy, as we had two rabbis not one, because our guest was Rabbi Boaz Pash. Rabbi Boaz spoke with us about the fact that "*She is not in heaven*" [*lo ba-shamaim hi*] - about the Torah, which is not somewhere in heaven, but here - close to us. We also learned a *pyiut* connected to our current Torah portions.

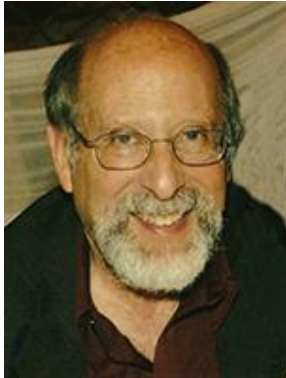
A reminder: Kabbalat Shabbat with Beit Kraków, kiddush and *mifgash* is always at 7.00 p.m. in Galicia Jewish Museum, Dajwór Street 18.

Rabbi Tanya Segal

Poland, France

A very active Beit Warszawa

On behalf of congregation Beit Warszawa, we wish to express our great appreciation to Neal Brostoff and Rabbi Joel Rembaum who were our guests in the last few weeks of February. The lectures, concerts, meetings and time they shared with us were an invaluable experience.



Neal Brostoff



Rabbi Joel Rembaum

We have begun another round of Israeli folk dancing! The workshops were led by Dominika Zakrzewska in the children's room. We began Saturday, February 27. After the dancing, Rabbi Boris Dolin led his second workshop of Torah cantillation. Then on Sunday, we held a class for anyone who wanted to learn to read music led by Paweł Jaworski. For Shabbat on March 4, Rabbi Joel Oseran, the Vice President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism was our guest at Beit Warszawa.



Andrzej Kluczyński



Rabbi Boris Dolin

On March 15 at 18:00 we presented a lecture with Professor Andrzej Kluczyński, *The Phenomenon of Biblical Prophetism*. He will discuss the history of research on prophets, as well as the basic topics of prophetic teaching. Professor Kluczyński graduated from the Christian Theology Academy, where he currently works, and he is a member of the Jewish Culture Association in Białystok.

On Friday, March 18th at 6:00 p.m. we invite you to Beit Warszawa for Rabbi Boris Dolin's lecture, *The Most Serious Laughter: A contemporary look at the meaning of the Purim story*. The Purim story was meant to be laughed at, but it is also a tale filled with profound meaning and inspiration. In this talk, Rabbi Boris will explore the different interpretations of the book of Esther, and look at how the story has influenced our understanding of Jewish identity, heroism and feminism. Cookies will be served!

Shabbat memories in Montpellier



Havdalah with Leo Baeck College student rabbi Haim Casas in Montpellier on February 6

I like this simple ritual, which allows us to use the last precious moments of Shabbat and help us spend time at work. Claude Bismut

AJTM trip to Israel May 8 to 15



AJTM offers its members a trip to Israel from May 8 to 15, where we will discover Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. This will be a trip with a warm and friendly community. For this event to take place we need 30 participants to offer an affordable price for the greatest number. All details of the trip will be announced soon, but you can contact Aurélien who is the coordinator. Subject to change, the price is 1250 Euros, which includes flights, transfers, accommodation and tours.

MahaNetzer in France



July 2016: Registration is open, but limited spaces are going quickly for the summer camp for Liberal Jews of Netzer France. We found a wonderful place for MahaNetzer 3 in the Languedoc-Roussillon/Midi-Pyrenees. You can book a place today for your children's holiday. When? From 11 to 24 July. Complete details in French [here](#). More information and registration at rabbi@kehilatgesher.org or direction.talmud@gmail.com.

France



MJLF News



Rabbis Floriane Chinsky and Phillipe Haddad

Paris Limmud

Over the weekend of March 4-6, Limmud France presented its annual exploration of every aspect of Jewish life, with more than 150 debates, services, concerts, films and dance. Rabbi Phillipe Haddad, ULIF, led the Sabbath services for the Liberal community. MJLF Rabbis and members were active too: Rabbi Floriane Chinsky addressed the question "Is God Feminist?" and Rabbi Yann Boissiere spoke on "Judaism's relations with the State". Others were Jean-Francois Levy "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", Francine Emschwiller "What to do about parental authority?" and Benoit Gobitz "Can science help explain terrorism?".

Book presentation

On 25 March after Kabbalat Shabbat, two well known brothers Salomon and Victor Malka will discuss their new book "Le Grand Désarroi: enquête sur les juifs de France" ("Study of the Jews of France in Disarray"). Their enquiry was provoked by the January 2015 attack



Salomon Malka

at a kosher supermarket near Paris in which Jews were murdered because they were Jews, the alarming growth of anti-Semitic acts in the last 10-15 years, hostility to Israel, and the massacres in Toulouse and Brussels. The two brothers travelled around France to meet with intellectuals, community and religious leaders, to attend conferences and to study the treatment of Jews in contemporary books, films and Muslim discourse. They found that the temptation to quit France or withdraw to the relative comfort of the community was far from general. Regional and individual reactions varied greatly. But fear was palpable and the Jews of France were distressed and in disarray.

Israel

For the first time, Taglit (Birthright Israel) is offering 10 day trips to Israel for the Liberal communities in France from 2-12 August. The trips are open to all young Jews of 18-26 years (one Jewish parent is enough to qualify) and will take in Sde Boker at kibbutz Lotan, the Golan, Galilee, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, organised by "L'Expérience Israélienne" and the Jewish Agency. From July 13-28, MJLF is organising its popular annual trip to Israel for 14-17 year olds.



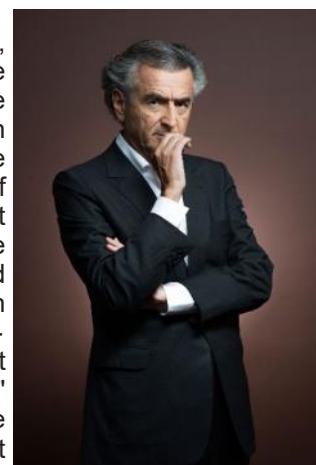
TAGLIT · תגליט
BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL
www.birtherightisrael.com



ULIF News

The Spirit of Judaism

On March 15 at 20:00, Bernard-Henri Levy gave a special speech at the Copernic synagogue on the occasion of the release in bookstores of his latest book "The Spirit of Judaism." During the evening, the writer and philosopher shared with the public some reflections including: 'what does "being Jewish" mean?' and 'why is one not asked to believe but to know?' He also spoke on the Jewish condition through the ages and the universal message carried by the Torah. The evening concluded with a drink of friendship and a book sale and signing session.



Bernard-Henri Levy

Jazz Night

On Saturday March 19 at 8 pm Copernic offers a Night of Jazz. Copernic continues to establish itself as a hotbed of jazz on the Parisian scene. In addition to the Jazz'n'Klezmer Festival, which we held in November, we now present every March a jazz concert at the highest level. On this night there will be three sets with different ensembles at each.

Cost: €35 for members of ULIF, MJLF, Adath Shalom, CJL, Kehilat Geshet, IEMJ, students, Aleph card, under 15.

Reservations: 01 47 04 37 27, www.ulif.org. Normal rate €45, reservations at www.fnac.com.



Spain

Double Celebration at Bet Shalom Barcelona

On Saturday 12 March there was a twofold celebration which marked the 10th anniversary of Bet Shalom and the dedication of their new premises.

President Jai Anguita as well as Rabbis Stephen Berkowitz and Rifat Soncino were joined by nearly 100 people for Havdalah, the entry of the Sefer Torah into the synagogue and dancing to a great band. Maria Prieto was the Mistress of Ceremonies.

There were representatives of ATID (the other Barcelona progressive community), Madrid and Rota. Local dignitaries also participated.

EUPJ Chairman Miriam Kramer, who spent the evening at Bet Shalom, commented that 'this is milestone in the story of Progressive Judaism in Spain. Bet Shalom is a vibrant and growing congregation and my wish is that in due course they have to look for even bigger premises.'

L-R: Bet Shalom President Jai Anguita, EUPJ Chairman Miriam Kramer and Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz



L'Chaim led by Maria Prieto



Bet Shalom Barcelona on the dance floor



Havdalah with Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz

New series at Lev Chadash Milan

Lev Chadash Milan is beginning a series of informal meetings, talks on current topics from many perspectives. Our intention is to share opinions with experienced people, to deepen our knowledge and investigate the complexity of reality in order to understand its many aspects.

The first meeting was held Thursday March 10 at 21:00 at our centre in Piazza Napoli 35 Milan and focused on highly topical subjects: GPA - gestation for others and Stepchild Adoption. Participants were, among others: Daniela Ovadia - science journalist, Rossana Ottolenghi - psychologist, Sergio Daniele Donati - civil lawyer, Daniela Palmieri Assael - also a civil lawyer and Carmen Dal Monte - philosopher and teacher.

Farewell to Rabbi Robert Arbib

The Shabbat officiated by Rabbi Roberto Arbib at the end of January at Beth Hillel Roma was really special. A strong feeling of friendship and warmth had welcomed him, especially since the rabbi was a Roman Jew, now head of a thriving community in Tel Aviv. There were lots of emotions on both sides in the beginning, and the farewell was also very intense. For sure there will be other occasions in the near future, a wish expressed also by members and associates who met Rabbi Arbib for the first time.



Rabbi Roberto Arbib

Scholarships for Pan-European MA Programme in Jewish Studies

Scholarships are provided for the joint 120 ECTS MA Programme in Jewish Civilisations at Paideia – the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden and the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg. The scholarships cover tuition, housing as well as living costs and are given for the entire duration of the two-year programme. The unique international programme offers the first year at Paideia in Stockholm and the second at HfJS in Heidelberg. Courses include intensive text studies, language studies (Hebrew), seminar courses in Jewish life, culture and literature, philosophy and religion and Master's thesis work, as well as Holocaust studies at Yad Vashem in Israel. **Deadline April 15.** For more information, please see www.paideia-eu.org or www.hfjs.eu or email info@paideia-eu.org.



Purim and Shabbat at Beth Shalom Milan with Haim Casas



Megillat Ester

On Wednesday March 23 starting from 18:30, at Via dei Salumi 51, our youngsters will be the protagonists, wearing their masks. In accordance with tradition they will read from the Book Esther and will participate in the activities planned for them. Accompanying adults are requested to bring along some pastries or sweets and for each child a small wrapped gift worth maximum €5. Gifts will be placed in big basket and will be given out at the end of the gathering.

The reading of the Megillat Esther will start at 19:39 for adults and young adults from the age of Bar and Bat Mitzvah, wearing costumes if they desire. The reading will be under the guidance of Haim Casas, a descendant of a Jewish family living in Spain before 1492 and now a rabbinic student at Leo Baeck College who soon will become the first progressive rabbi in that country.

We would like to ask all participants to bring along savoury snacks, kosher desserts or/and wine or other beverages. We encourage anyone with a Megillat Esther to bring it along.



Haim Casas

Student rabbi Casas will also be with us in Via dei Salumi 51 on Friday March 25 for Kabbalat Shabbat and Arvit, starting at 19:15. As usual we will have our community dinner to which participants are encouraged to contribute with vegetarian food, kosher wines and/or desserts.

Our schedule is not yet finished.

We will meet again on Saturday March 26 starting at 10:00 am for Schachrit, Mussaf and Kiddush. We warmly welcome you!

Beth Hillel Brussels events

"The great themes of Judaism", a series of lectures by Rabbi Marc Neiger, one Thursday a month, to discuss or rediscover the great themes of Judaism. We hope to see you Thursday, March 17 at 19:00 for a new session on "The Book of Esther."



Rabbi Marc Neiger

Derived from midrashic exploration, these talks offer an approach to the major aspects of our tradition and are open to all, regardless of the level of study. They are free for our members and €10 for non-members. Info and registration: info@beth-hillel.org or 02.332.25.28.

Shabbat leDor vaDor: Friday, March 4 at 18:30
Every first Friday of the month, Shabbat leDor vaDor is a friendly and family oriented musical service with a special children's' siddur. This service is particularly appreciated in the community because of its rather unusual format. It starts earlier to allow (and encourage) the participants to make kiddush at home, with family and / or friends. **Shabbat Shalom!**

Rabbi Sandra Kviat's first 'official' Shir Hatzafon weekend



Hamotzi after Shabbat morning service with Rabbi Sandra Kviat at Shir Hatzafon in Copenhagen on February 6, 2016



IJC News Super Shabbat

We had a super Super Shabbat event on February 20 at IJC. More than 70 people attended - of all ages and there were many new faces – some from our conversion class and some non-Jews who came with their Jewish friends. Sample events:



Interfaith couples & families at IJC

Many of us at the IJC are in interfaith or multi-faith relationships. Join us for a conversation about the dynamics, complexities and blessings that may be unique to these relationships and families. We especially want to welcome all adults who are part of interfaith families to join us. We hope the discussion will also help us think about how the IJC can be an inclusive, supportive community for all of us. Facilitated by Rebecca O' Murchadha & Ilana Sumka

Tales from the Diaspora

One of the great things about IJC is the coming together of Jews from all over the world. But how did our fellow congregants wind up in places scattered from Sweden to Guatemala and seemingly everywhere in between? What are Jewish communities like in those places? In an interactive discussion we'll hear from diaspora Jews who hail from with less well known Jewish communities. With Paul Cohen

BaLaGan

Meet BaLaGan the new group for LGBTQI Jews in Brussels, Belgium & Luxembourg. Learn about BaLaGan's plans, how it fits in the broader perspective within Judaism, Belgium, the LGBTQI movement in general and beyond. We'll try and identify what role progressive Jewish movements have played and can still play in this regard and what added value an organisation such as BaLaGan can have in local Jewish life. With David A L Weis & Syske van Wesemael

The Community Game

What does a community need? What is most important? Buy, trade and sell to acquire all the things you want in the community you design. What will yours look like? For ages 10 and up. With Rabbi Ira Goldberg

Hungary, Netherlands

Sim Shalom Budapest good news

Our premises crisis has been solved! At least for some time to come. After much active searching to find a new flat which met our requirements of rent that we could afford, enough space for our programs, good location, and good access to public transport, we were getting rather desperate. Neither the real estate market nor any of the city officials we approached could show us anything suitable. But then our inquiries to some of the Jewish organisations who have buildings with space in them suddenly bore fruit.

There is a fairly new Israeli Cultural Institute in Budapest which has a big building very centrally located, in walking distance from the station where three of the subway lines cross. This took care of two of our prime requirements. They have rooms of many sizes that are available and satisfactory for our religious services and also our educational programs, meeting another major requirement. And best of all, they are willing to give us the use of these rooms almost for free; we only have to pay for the security guard on Saturday since they are usually closed on Shabbat. We do have to pay for an office in the building, but that is only about 25% of the rent we paid last year for our present premises. So that very well satisfies our first criterion. It's a big relief to have this problem solved so satisfactorily.

And there are extra advantages to being where many other Jewish programs and activities are going on. We think that it's going to be easier to attract some of these new people to come to our services and programs, and that it should help us find new members. Proximity can work in our favour.

Another thing that is attracting attention of non-members are the short videos that Rabbi Kati Kelemen is making on the topics of her bi-weekly course on daily prayer rituals. Links to these are posted on our website and Facebook page, and the videos already are drawing favourable responses.



Rabbi Kati Kelemen at the Sim Shalom bimah

This may be last or next to last such newsletter until the end of summer. Rabbi Kelemen is going to go on sabbatical to study Talmud and Midrash at Potsdam University and Abraham Geiger College in Berlin for the months of April through July. I'll be going with her to keep the home fires burning and make sure she eats well during her arduous studies. We're looking forward to the lively cultural life in Berlin, which we've been hearing about for years.

Jess Weil

Netzer in the Netherlands

I'm Tal, the new youth worker of LJJ Netzer, a Zionist progressive youth movement) and also a Sjlichah (Israeli Emissary) of the Jewish Agency. As a youth movement *we believe in youth empowerment, in young people running things for themselves!* We would love to tell you about our February activities.



LJJ Den Haag Netzer Shabbat Dinner & Dialogue

LJJ Netzer Shabbat Dinner & Dialogue

Shabbos dinner at LJJ Den Haag is a traditional Friday dinner that brings together young adults from all over the Netherlands who are members of the liberal Jewish community. We meet after the Friday service to eat dinner with each other, and after that we have a discussion about Judaism, Israel, politics, culture, etc. At our latest event on February 12 we discussed the Jewish journey and the different reasons for Jewish people to immigrate. We spoke about our own Jewish journeys and also about the most dominant components of our Jewish identity. This brought out the important role of community and these kind of social events in our Jewish life.



LJJ Amsterdam Netzer Israeli dance workshop

LJJ Netzer Olympic games for youth from 12-16

On February 14 at LJJ Amsterdam there was a nice Sunday afternoon with Maccabiah sports games, trivia questions about Jewish athletes and an Israeli dance workshop. It was a great opportunity to meet youngsters from different liberal communities.

Also in Young LJJ Netzer we have Talmud Torah lessons, and we are privileged to be a part of the process of preparing for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. During those lessons we learn more about Israel and also wish to send the kids a message that it is fun and important to stay active after their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. They can and should join the activities of the LJJ Netzer youth movement to meet other youngsters and feel integrated with their community

Tal Branitzky-Schramm

Switzerland

The Frisco Kid in Geneva



GIL continued our English movie series celebrating Jewish humour on 3 March with a dinner at 19:00 (15 CHF) and movie at 19:45. [Read more](#)

Beate and Serge Klarsfeld at GIL



Beate and Serge Klarsfeld

On March 7, the GIL held a meeting with Beate and Serge Klarsfeld, who have dedicated their lives to expose the Nazi criminals who had escaped justice after the war. [Read more](#) (in French).

Shiurim with Rabbi Bea Wyler at Migwan in Basel



Rabbi Bea Wyler

In this Shiur cycle until Pesach we have been looking at Jewish biographies. Especially interesting for us has been what they have made of their Judaism. The cycle has four Mondays from 6:15 to 7:45, don't miss the last one on March 21.

Plateforme des Juifs Libéraux de Suisse PJLS

Plattform der Liberalen Juden der Schweiz PLJS

PJLS participates in national events

Nicole Poell, PJLS president, and Susi Saitowitz, our general secretary, attended the 1 December 2015 Day on the situation of the Jewish minority in Switzerland in Bern, organised by the Directorate of Inter-



national Law (DIL) of the Department Federal Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the fight against racism Service (SLR) of Federal Department of Home

Affairs (DHA) in collaboration with the PJLS, and with the SIG, the Council of Europe. Federal Councilor Didier Burkhalter delivered the inaugural address opening in which he particularly emphasised the following point: "The Jewish community was, is and remains an essential element of the culture and of the Swiss company. Anyone who attacks the Jewish people in Switzerland, attacks us all!"



Nicole Poell

One of the major themes of this conference was the security of the Jewish community. The government support requirement has been highlighted by different people.

On December 7, in her capacity as member of the Swiss group, our president Nicole Poell attended the meeting of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in Bern. In 2017, Switzerland will chair this international association. During this mandate, various events will be organised throughout Switzerland – including under the co-sponsorship of the PJLS.

In mid-January the traditional information meeting of the Swiss-Israel Association ASI was held in Zurich. The PJLS was represented at this meeting by Nicole Poell and Susi Saitowitz.

Sunday January 17 the Jubilee Jews in Switzerland: 150 Years of Equal Rights was celebrated in Bern. An exhibition traveling with a picture of 15 Jewish personalities from Switzerland will travel different Swiss cities throughout the year. The PJLS is planning a number of events to complement the exhibition in Zurich, Basel and Geneva.

United Kingdom

LJY Netzer is 5-10 April

If you are looking to do one thing this week, then sign up for Machaneh Aviv - it's looking to be the biggest and best one yet!! for more info sign up now [here](#) or contact sama@liberaljudaism.org.

LJY-Netzer Machaneh Aviv 14 - 17 April

LJY-Netzer Israel Tour 15 - 25 August

LJY-Netzer Kayitz Europe Tour 15 - 25 August

Progressive Birthright Tour 15 - 28 August

LJY-Netzer Machaneh Kadimah 20 September



Kaufman Annual Dinner

May 25, Montcalm Hotel, London

RSVP: dinner2016@lbc.ac.uk



Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) reaching out across the world

"Interested in doing some Jewish sightseeing before registration? We can go to Bevis Marks, the oldest synagogue in the UK, which is very near to the old Jewish East End, a great bagel shop and statues commemorating the Kindertransport." And so, even before the beginning of the Wilkenfeld International Women's Leadership Seminar, April 12-14 in London, the attendees are reaching out to each other.

With the vision and support of past WRJ President, Delores Wilkenfeld, WRJ set out to invite women from all over the world to participate. We held the number down to 20 for this first seminar and received 45 applications. With the help of the World Union, we selected women from the US, Brazil, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, England, and Hungary. What an international group!

Our goal is to help these delegates develop connections with other Progressive women leaders from around the world; to be introduced to the work of WRJ and WUPJ; to develop and articulate a personal leadership vision; and to create a specific action plan. We will also visit Leo Baeck College for a tour, text study, and workshops. The work is already starting via email and will continue afterwards by video conferencing and email.

We are excited about meeting our attendees and connecting our hands and hearts. Many thanks to leaders in the World Union for their help in publicising this conference and especially to Rabbi Joel Oseran for his advice along the way.

Liberal Judaism Biennial 1-3 July

This year, for the first time, we will have a scholar in resident - Rabbi Dr Dalia Marx, associate professor of liturgy and midrash at Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem. [Early Bird Extended until 15 March!](#) [Get your tickets today](#)

Edinburgh Newsletter revamped

[Click here](#) for the first edition of our new format newsletter ETROG. We know it is not perfect yet, and we hope to improve it. Please send feedback to newsletter@eljc.org on how it reads and looks.

The newsletter team



Chazan leads Edinburgh Shabbat service

Sukkat Salom was thrilled to have Cantor Gershon Silins to lead our Shabbat morning service on Saturday February 27 at the Columille Centre at 11am.

Cantor Silins is originally from North America where he has had a distinguished career as both a cantor and a professional singer, appearing with many well-known orchestras and both classical and Jazz groups. He is currently studying for the rabbinate at Leo Baeck College in London.

On Sunday afternoon, February 28 he spoke and sang at the Lit (Jewish Literary Society) at the Community Centre of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation, Salisbury Road on the topic of *The Revolution in North American Synagogue Music*

Gershon's talk gave a close view of the revolution which transformed synagogue music in North America in the 1980s and led to significant changes in music styles in synagogues, first in North America, and subsequently in the United Kingdom as well.



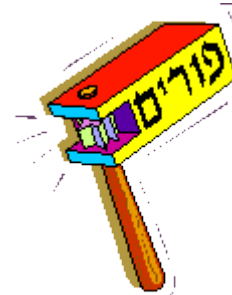
Cantor Gershon Silins

Young Adult Purim Party 24 March

Join us for our annual progressive Purim party! Come in fancy dress and enjoy the open band

karaoke with Josh Moritz and a live house band! Location: Camden. Cost: £6 in advance, £8 on the door (all proceeds go to tzedaka and include a drink). RSVP: [Book online](#).

This is a joint party between Reform Young Adults, LJ Routes, West London Synagogue, EDRS, HRS FRS, Alyth & Takum



Click the logos for news of UK movements



United Kingdom, Purim

Jewish history made in Scarborough



Scarborough Shabbat celebrants

Over 50 people turned out for the first Jewish service in Scarborough in living memory on February 27. Held at Albermarle Baptist Church, the service was organised as part of an outreach programme by York Liberal Jewish Community (YLJC) and led by their Student Rabbi Daniel Lichman. Yasmin King, who lectures locally, helped to arrange the event. Among those present were Ted and Ruth Sulman, who have owned a gift and toy shop in the town for 40 years as well as Joyce Wright, who has also lived in the area for 40 years. A number of families from nearby Whitby attended and are now considering organising a similar event there. Commenting afterwards, YLJC chair Ben Rich said: "This shows that there are people identifying as Jewish in pretty much every part of the country. If our community is going to continue to grow and thrive we need to reach out to where people are, rather than waiting for them to come to us." After the service, some of the attendees headed to the beach (pictured).

Mazal tov, Kobi!



Mazal Tov to Kobi Kahn-Harris, shown here with his parents Rabbi Dr Deborah and Dr Keith Kahn-Harris, who was Bar Mitzvah on February 27 in London

[continued from page 1](#)

"It is the only book in the *Tanach* that does not mention God!"

"The story reads like a cartoon melodrama. It is obviously a work of fiction"

"I am turned off by the excessive violence described as the Jews take their revenge."

These criticisms notwithstanding, Esther is our prototype story of triumph over forces that have tried to destroy us.

So what if the story is fictionalised and overdrawn? It is an inspiring tale of courage.

First of all there is the courage of Vashti. What a role model she is for women of today who face sexual harassment! When the King wanted her to show her beauty (in the altogether, commentators claim) to his drunken friend, she had the courage to refuse. She put her dignity and self-respect above position and power.

Then there is the question of destiny. When Mordecai told Esther to tell the King she was Jewish, she replied, "I can't. No one sees the king without an invitation, and he has not invited me for 30 days."

This is your moment, claimed Mordecai. "Who knows if you did not become queen just for this opportunity that is uniquely yours to stand up for our people?" What a powerful message.

If we look for them, we all have moments when we are in a unique position to make a positive difference. Esther seized her moment. Will we seize ours?

Certainly the Jews of Bad Segeberg seized their moment in 1936. Their celebration testified that they would not allow the Nazis to cow them.

Each time I stare at the photo I wonder: What befell these brave souls? How many - if any - survived Nazi tyranny and celebrated Purim in freedom at some later time?

Regardless, these brave celebrants are the lineal heirs of Vashti and Esther who placed pride and dignity over expediency and ease.

Few Jews remained in Bad Segeberg when the period of Nazi horror ended. The once proud synagogue in the city crumbled from disuse and was torn down in 1962.

But thanks in large measure to an influx of Jews from the former Soviet Union, and thanks to the skill and determination of the community's leader Walter Blender who saw to every detail of the construction of the new building, where the 1936 a miracle occurred. Thanks are also due to the kindhearted support of the Christian community led by Pastors Ursula Sieg and Martin Pommerening who extended the hospitality of their church to the new Jewish community as it reformed.

Every time I climb the stairs to the sanctuary of Bad Segeberg's Reform (and only) synagogue *Mishkan HaTzafon*, I look at the 26 brave faces in the photo, and I wish I could thank each and every one.

I have no doubt. Because of the courage of the Jews of Bad Segeberg in 1936 there is Jewish life - a thriving and God willing growing Jewish life - in Bad Segeberg in 2016.

Rabbi Stephen Lewis Fuchs
See Rabbi Fuchs' blog [here](#).

Germany

A gift from the US to Hamburg's Liberal Jewish Community: a challah cover by Ina Golub



**Dan Levine, Rabbi Moshe Navon, Dana Zeimer
with challah cover by Ina Golub**

The Hamburg Liberal Jewish Community (LJGH eV) sees itself as part of the global Jewish Reform movement. We are delighted when Jewish visitors to Hamburg give us a call and ask whether it might be possible to take part in one of our services. In this way, our community frequently welcomes guests from Israel, the US, the UK and other countries. We are very proud when these guests become friends and supporters of our community because our community, its members and our history have fascinated them and moved them to seek us out. In this way, regular donations have enabled us to employ our own rabbi. Some of the friends visiting us this year include husband and wife Dan and Lynne Levine from Rockville, MD (near Washington, DC), who visited for the second time as part of an orchestra tour – Lynne Levine is a professional musician.

Dan Levine visited us for our service on March 12. His father, a rabbi, would have turned 90 that day. In his memory, his son gave our community a precious gift: a beautiful, sumptuous challah cover, made by Ina Golub, a well-known American artist. The father of our friend was not only a rabbi, but also an artist, and worked closely with Ina Golub whose works are displayed in the Jewish Museum in New York. Her artworks, including Torah covers, Torah ark curtains and challah covers, adorn many American synagogues.

We are delighted with this beautiful gift and feel very lucky that Dan and Lynne Levine continue to belong to the international circle of friends of our community. We warmly welcome all Jewish guests visiting Hamburg to join us for one of our services. Lehitraot in Hamburg!

For more information about the LJGH, visit www.davidstern.de.

For more information about Ina Golub and her artworks, visit www.inagolub.com.

LJG Hamelin 5th anniversary



LJG Hamelin Beitenu inside and out

Our congregation celebrated our fifth anniversary in our beautiful synagogue on February 19th. Rabbi Irit Shillor led our congregation and guests through festive Shabbat services. Our sister congregation from Bad Pyrmont joined us for the joyous occasion. Our kitchen team outdid themselves with delicious dishes and beautifully laid tables. As always, Shabbat was enjoyed, the Oneg was appreciated and conversations between neighbours, friends and guests shed a warm glow throughout "Beitenu." What does "home" mean to you? For many of us, it is our synagogue. Beitenu opens its doors to those seeking religious, cultural and social encounters with a vast variety of people. Home also means familiarity - a feeling of our childhood, of memories, of our past. Pictures of our celebration will follow in next month's letter.

Rachel Dohme

Read our full newsletter [here](#).



Tu B'Shevat Seder at LJG Hamelin

WORLD
UNION FOR
PROGRESSIVE
JUDAISM



האיגוד
העולמי
ליהדות
מתקדמת

WUPJ 2016 Calendar

April 7-14 Berlin and London

[WUPJ Travel Tour](#)

April 14-17 London

[EUPJ Biennial Conference](#)

May 19-25 Jerusalem

[Roswell Seminar for Social Justice](#)

July 14-24 Jerusalem

[Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators](#)

Sign Up for the Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators



Bergman Seminar students on a study tour

The World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) invites you to join our upcoming Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators taking place in Israel July 14-24 designed to enhance your school and community educators. Implementing the Bergman Seminar is the [Saltz International Education Center's faculty](#) which includes some of the most accomplished Jewish scholars and educators in the world.

[Read more...](#)



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. Please click [here](#) to subscribe.

Subscribe to WUPJnews

[Sign up for WUPJnews](#) to receive on-going updates about our communities around the world.

Like WUPJ on [Facebook](#).

IMPJ Newsletter

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

2016 Beutel Seminar report



Beutel Seminar participants with IMPJ and WZO Representatives

This year's Beutel International Leadership Seminar was a tremendous success for participants hailing from Australia, Brazil, Canada and the UK.

According to Rabbi Steve Burnstein, Director of the Saltz Center, the 2016 Beutel Leadership Seminar underwent a significant renewal based on feedback from prior participants. "Just as we encourage the Beutelniks to revisit the mission and vision of their congregations through a serious process of strategic planning, we examined our own goals, giving great consideration to the changing needs of our WUPJ communities around the world." [Read more...](#)

Berlin to London Tour

A tour led by Rabbi Daniel Freeland, April 7-14

Join us as we celebrate 90 years of the WUPJ! Established in London in 1926, the WUPJ held its first international convention just two years later in Berlin. Come follow in the footsteps of history.

Together we will explore the World Union's past, present and future! We invite you to then join the [Biennial Conference of the EUPJ](#), European Union for Progressive Judaism in London (April 14-17).

[Click here for more details & to book online](#)



TaMaR in partnership with Tlamim present

17th annual conference IN Jerusalem, ISRAEL

March 30th to April 3rd, 2016 כ"ז אדר ב' תשע"ו

Creating a new: Young Jewish identity in a changing world

The Conference will be led by inspiring young adults with amazing Key-Note speakers!

We will be dealing with phenomena that we face in Israel and all around the world.

See you all soon!

for further information please contact Grit Shoshiers

ritshoshiers@wupj.org