



European Union for Progressive Judaism

May 2016 Newsletter

© European Union for Progressive Judaism

What a Conference!

After the many months of preparation, not to mention thousands of emails, meetings and phone calls, it is hard to believe that the 2016 EUPJ Biennial Conference is now history. But what a Conference it was!

The event began with the Opening Ceremony in the Guildhall, a medieval building in the heart of the historic City of London. Welcoming addresses, music, pageantry and the unforgettable trumpeters set the stage. We marked the 90th anniversary of the founding of the World Union for Progressive Judaism with flag-bearers from each of the nine original countries.



Miriam Kramer



Flags from each of the nine original WUPJ countries
(photos © and courtesy of Dale Lazar)

On the Friday it was down to business with plenaries and workshops. Space does not allow me to describe them all but among the highlights was Fania Oz-Salzberger's talk on Jewish identity, the Dragons Den search for a project to enhance community programmes and a vital session on Chevara Kadisha.

The Kabbalat Shabbat, held at West London Synagogue, was led by the congregation's rabbis. After the moving ceremony of a West London Torah scroll being given to new EUPJ member Madrid on loan, WUPJ President Rabbi Daniel Freeland led the congregation in his setting of Shalom Rav. Nobody present will ever forget the sight – and sound – of all 70 rabbis and rabbinic students, accompanied by the organ, leading a rousing Adon Olam before bestowing the priestly blessing.

After a short walk to a nearby hotel we all enjoyed an excellent Friday night meal, singing and dancing,

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EUPJ Biennial: record attendance, landmark initiatives and resolutions

A record number of delegates took part in the 2016 European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) Biennial Conference in London from April 14-17: more than 350 people from 28 countries, including 86 rabbis and student rabbis.



EUPJ Biennial opening event at the Guildhall

The conference was an opportunity for Progressive Jews to come together, discuss a range of issues, and stand united in the face of anti-Semitism in Europe and anti-Reform sentiment in Israel. Other topics discussed included the impact of Jewish voices on their cities, the changing demographics of Europe, how to engage millennials, the training of rabbis, and LGBTQI+ inclusion. [continued on page 4](#)



Outside the Guildhall

NB: See our WUPJ 'back cover' for honours to Leslie Bergman and Rabbi Joel Oseran.

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Welcome back!

We welcome our readers back after a long two months without an EUPJ Newsletter. There was no April issue because of our Biennial Conference in London. This May issue has much more material than usual because it covers both Purim and Pesach as well as our conference. If your EUPJ community or country is not represented, it is only because we received no material from you. The remedy is simple: please add newsletter@eupj.org to your mailing list to make sure your news reaches us.

And then make sure all your members and others who receive your announcements also receive the EUPJ Newsletter. You can forward the newsletter to all of them when it arrives. Or you can add this link to your home page and regular mailings: www.eupj.org/publications/eupj. We have a great deal of positive news to spread, and your community's members and friends will be glad to read about it.

Arthur Buchman, Editor

Letters

Thank you, Arthur and Deborah, for including my essay in this very informative newsletter!

Rabbi Stephen Fuchs

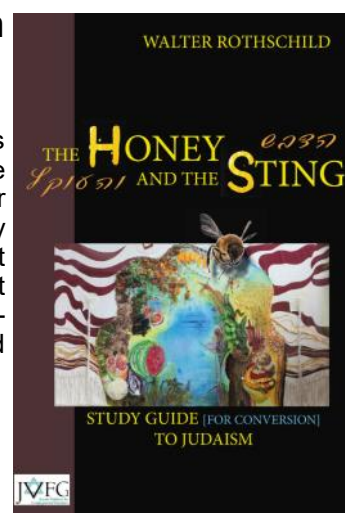
Thank you for the great Super Shabbat write-up Arthur. Much appreciated!

Diana Kanter, IJC Brussels

Guide for conversion published by Rabbi Walter Rothschild

Walter writes: Check out this book, "The Honey and the Sting: Study Guide for Conversion to Judaism" by Rabbi Walter Rothschild. Just published! The perfect present - if a little too late for Pesach - at least something to read during the Omer.

Start reading it for free [here](#).



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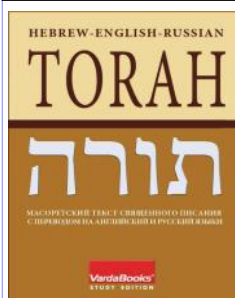
Synagogues everywhere

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](#)



**Liberaal Joodse Gemeente
Utrecht**



Free trilingual Torah on line

The new trilingual Torah from Varda Books is now available to bookmark to your personal browser or to your shul's website, and it is free at Publishers Row. This edition contains the Masoretic text of the Leningrad Codex, a classic Jewish English translation (for example, not gender neutral) and a new Russian translation. [Click here to view it.](#)

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What a Conference! continued from page 1

seeing a presentation of WUPJ's history and then bidding a bittersweet farewell to Rabbi Joel Oseran who has retired after 30 years of extraordinary service as WUPJ Vice President for Community Development.

Shabbat morning was at Liberal Jewish Synagogue. Senior Rabbi Alexandra Wright welcomed us and the service was taken by three EUPJ rabbis in conjunction with the LJS choir. Each of the three sections of the Torah portion was leyned by a student rabbi from the three European rabbinic seminaries. To mark the 60th anniversary of its foundation the principal of Leo Baeck College, Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris, gave the sermon. The afternoon was spent in Lunch'n'Learn sessions and a number of visits to places of interest.

Havdalah was led by members of the UK's youth movements and was followed by the now-traditional Saturday night entertainment masterminded by David Pollak. There were songs, instrumental solos, recitations and then an hour of raising the roof via the EUPJ Songbook.

On Sunday morning, following the EUPJ Annual Assembly, there were more study sessions and finally the closing plenary at which the rabbinic leaders of the two UK movements gave their views on how to respond to the challenge of the future of Progressive Judaism.

There were so many people involved in making this Conference the success it was that naming them all would probably take up the rest of this newsletter. I must, however, mention a handful without whom it simply would not have happened. Top of the list is John Cohen who took on chairing the Conference committee and delivered a marvellous event. In addition David Pollak kept his eye on the budget, Noeleen Cohen was overall programme guru, Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh led the tefilah team, and without Deborah Grabiner, our wonderful administrator, it is not an exaggeration to say the Conference could not have become reality. There are many others and I apologise that they have not been mentioned; they have all been thanked for their important contributions.

From Conference we all went straight into Pesach and I hope that you all had a joyous and spiritual chag. We are now on our way to Shavuot and I can assure that EUPJ work carries on.

Miriam Kramer, Chairman



EUPJ delegates from Hungary and Poland

European Rabbinic Assembly created



The Executive Board of the European Rabbinic Assembly, during the presentation in London.
(L-R) Rabbis Marc Neiger (Belgium) Charley Baginsky (UK), Celia Surget (treasurer, UK), Menno ten Brink (secretary, The Netherlands) and Ruven Bar-Ephraim (chair, Switzerland)

For many decades various attempts were made to form a rabbinic forum in Europe, one which would connect all the rabbis within the EUPJ family. Since the Amsterdam EUPJ conference (2012) a group of rabbis has worked very hard to get this forum off the ground - hard work that took the form of many meetings and discussions, and break-ups, and hiccups, and more talks. But in the end, with the help of the legal adviser to the EUPJ, Andrew Hart, and our new president, Gordon Smith, the necessary documents were provided, and the road was clear to establish this progressive rabbinic assembly.

During the Rabbinic Kallah held in London on April 13-14 the founding of the European Union for Progressive Judaism Rabbinic Assembly (ERA) was announced. The ERA has three main goals:

1. To be the Progressive Rabbinic Voice in Europe
2. To support the European rabbis with study sessions (kallot) and other important skill building opportunities for their day to day work
3. To support the European rabbis in work-related and personal challenging situations

The ERA will comment on issues occurring in Europe which have our concern through press releases and other means. If in the past, the debates around brit mila, kosher slaughter or refugees went on without the Progressive rabbis of Europe voicing their views, from now on the ERA will take upon itself this role.

The ERA will also provide its members with learning opportunities either in the form of a kallah – a retreat of a couple of days, during which the rabbis learn and teach – or on-line learning. The ERA will also generate discussions on halachic topics and support the sharpening of all the working tools of the modern rabbi. The ERA will advise the EUPJ on halachic issues and will support the European Bet Din (EBD, rabbinic court).

The 'soft' side of rabbinical work will also be supported by the ERA. This can advising in difficult situations between a rabbi and the congregation. If requested the ERA will provide coaching.

The ERA was created to add, and not to diminish. The existing rabbinic groups in Europe will continue to operate autonomously and independently.

May we go from strength to strength - חזק חזק ונתחזק

Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim

EUPJ Biennial

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Landmark initiatives at the conference included:

- The formation of a European Progressive Rabbinic Assembly (ERA) to provide a Progressive Rabbinic voice in Europe and support and networking for rabbis across the continent.
- Admitting three new institutions to the EUPJ – the newly formed French Assembly of Liberal Jews, and the first-ever Progressive Jewish communities in Madrid and Lisbon.
- Resolutions passed at the conference called for a comprehensive humanitarian response to Europe's refugee crisis, and an immediate implementation of the Israeli Government's decision in relation to the *Kotel*.



Miriam Kramer, EUPJ Chairman

EUPJ Chairman Miriam Kramer said, "The 2016 Biennial Conference exceeded all expectations. The services, for *Kabbalat Shabbat* at West London Synagogue and *Shabbat* morning at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, were inspiring. The workshops and plenary sessions were full to bursting – both in terms of people attending and in exchange of ideas and information - and we were honoured to be able to celebrate two significant and very special anniversaries."



Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim (right) congratulates Gordon Smith on becoming the new President of EUPJ (above and this photo © and courtesy of Dale Lazar)

Gordon Smith, incoming EUPJ president, added, "Our EUPJ Conference in London was an extraordinary gathering. The conference theme – 'Building Bridges – Spanning the Jewish World and Beyond' –

provided a crucial structure for a superb programme. We debated, discussed, even disputed but always for the sake of heaven, "*B'Shem Shamayim*". The largest number of delegates ever, left after four days having recharged their Jewish batteries, committed and invigorated to carrying on this sacred work within the Jewish world and beyond in the promotion of Progressive Judaism across Europe and the world." The conference's closing plenary saw Rabbis Danny Rich and Laura Janner-Klausner – the senior rabbis of Britain's Liberal and Reform movements, respectively – outline a 'Vision for Progressive Judaism in Europe Today'.



Hamotzi with Rabbi Danny Frelander (standing)

Rabbi Rich told of his history as a fourth generation Liberal Jew descended from immigrants to the UK. He said: "Now, more than ever, each of us holds multiple identities: English, British, European, Jewish, Liberal Jewish and so on and, if Progressive Judaism in Europe is to have a bold future, it will need to accommodate itself to an even more complex array of identities which will make up the modern European Jew."



EUPJ closing plenary

Rabbi Janner-Klausner spoke passionately about the need to take European Progressive Judaism forward with a robust and strong moral voice. She said, "Our inclusive and innovative formula for Jewish life is a magnet for young families, mixed couples and previously unaffiliated Jews. We can and must sustain our vision. We need to show off. We need to show who we are and why we love our Progressive Judaism using that famous Jewish skill – *chutzpah*."

WUPINews

Introducing Gordon Smith, new EUPJ president

On Sunday April 17 I was honoured by being elected as President of the EUPJ. In this EUPJ Newsletter I have been asked to say a few words about myself. I come from a family of communal activists and am very proud of my Jewish heritage. My late parents escaped the horrors of the Shoah when they left their home country, Czechoslovakia, in March 1939 to go to England. Most of their relatives perished in the camps. I was born in Oxford where my parents ran a Kindertransport Boys Home from 1942 to 1948. My father Sam was an ardent Zionist and my family emigrated to Israel on the establishment of the State in 1948. We returned to the UK in 1956 and my father became the General Secretary of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). Both my brothers are Progressive rabbis and my family has been involved in Anglo-Jewry for three generations.

I currently also serve as Vice Chairman of the WUPJ and a Vice President of the Movement for Reform Judaism (MRJ) in the UK.

Previously I served as Vice President of Alyth Synagogue, Chairman of the EUPJ, Chairman of the Leo Baeck College, Chairman of Mosaic Reform Synagogue and as a Trustee of the Manor House Trust. In real life, having retired as the senior partner of a firm of chartered accountants in London, I remain as a consultant with that firm as well as Honorary Vice President of a major international network of accountants and lawyers.

During my working career I specialised in acting for charitable institutions, authors, trusts and dealing with international, cross border tax issues. I remain as a trustee and advisor on a number of national and international trusts.

I am fortunate to have been married to my wife, Judy, who has been my mentor, advisor and companion for nearly 50 years. We have homes in London and Israel. We have two children, Gideon and Joanne, and six grandchildren. I am conscious of the huge privilege that has been entrusted to me by being elected as President of the EUPJ. I am following in the footsteps of our new Life President, Leslie Bergman, whose shoes will be difficult, if not impossible to fill. Leslie has set the bar very high and I am grateful that he has agreed to continue his involvement with the EUPJ.

I am delighted to be working with Miriam Kramer, the chairman of the EUPJ, and our wonderful team. I look forward to continuing the excellent work of the Board of the EUPJ in realising our ongoing dream of establishing, nurturing, building and supporting our Progressive communities across Europe.

Gordon Smith



Gordon Smith

Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut



We Jews remember in sadness before we celebrate in joy. The day of Yom Hazikaron: The Day of Remembrance for the Fallen Soldiers of Israel and Victims of Terrorism, Tuesday evening May 10 - Wednesday May 11, preceded Israel's nationwide celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut, its Day of Independence, Wednesday evening May 11 - Thursday May 12.

Israel's sirens wailed twice during this 24-hour period of solemnity - once at night on Tuesday for one minute, ushering in the sadness and opening ceremonies across the country, and once Wednesday morning for two minutes, bringing the country to a halting stop as the sirens wail, like a piercing cry, freezing road traffic, human interactions and even children playing. Then, as the day unwound, evening ceremonies took their cues from torch bearers, transitioning the country from strength to strength, affirming that all those who are no longer with us have contributed to the independence of Israel and all of its achievements.

Living outside of Israel, these sirens do not halt our daily doings; but they should. If terrorism can bring cities such as Paris and Brussels to a halt, we too should join remembering those victims as well on this day.

This Yom Ha'Atzmaut, marking Israel's 68th year of achievement, innovation and growth, we celebrate the unity of Diaspora Progressive Jewish communities with the people and State of Israel. We applaud all efforts that foster deeper relationships, stronger support, and wider inclusion of Progressive Jews in religious, political and social arenas of Israel and Jewish life.

"As long as the Jewish spirit is yearning."

"כל עוד בלבב פנימה"

From the ringing of "Next year in Jerusalem" "לשנה הבאה בירושלים" in our recent Pesach Seder to the singing of HaTikvah, Israel's national anthem, today we look forward to making this year of our Jewish peoplehood memorable - and more peaceful.

On behalf of the World Union for Progressive Judaism,

Rabbi Daniel H Freeland, President, WUPJ
Carole Sterling, Chairman, WUPJ



EUPJ Rabbinic Kallah



Youth was well represented.

Rabbi Edward van Voolen and Jeffery Rose on the dance floor

Applause for the dancers



The entertainers



Eliyahu Hanavi at Havdallah



The Zemel Choir at Guildhall



The hora

The sine qua non of our conference team:
David Pollak and Deborah Grabiner



Birkat Hamazon

Beth Hillel Brussels is open



Purim 2016 at Beth Hillel Brussels

On Friday March 25 Beth Hillel Brussels finally reopened after the new lockdown. Beth Hillel held its Purim celebration on Sunday as originally planned with brunch, mincha service (including a tribute to the victims), games for children and a quiz for adults. Despite dramatic events and Easter holidays we were around 40 congregants at Beth Hillel. To feel connected with national mourning, everybody was encouraged to wear the colours of Belgium: black, yellow and red (see photo). It was a resilient way to express our compassion at its best.

**Gilbert Lederman, Président, Synagogue Beth Hillel
Communauté Israélite Libérale de Belgique**

Of course we celebrated Purim

On the eve of Purim, all Belgium awoke with a terrible pain in the heart and head. Our first thoughts were for the victims and their relatives, for the injured and their families. We conveyed to the families of the victims our sincere condolences and prayed for the recovery of the wounded and for the peace of mind of all for those who were directly or indirectly affected.



Rabbi Marc Neiger

We have become all too familiar with these tragedies, and yet we cannot treat them as commonplace tragedies because they are not the result of chance, but of targeted hate. This is why although we could not celebrate Purim that night, while we were in shock and grief, we held Purim on Sunday as we originally intended. Of course our joy did not ignore the circumstances; so we included a service in tribute to the victims - to try to bring a spiritual response to this event.

This might sound surprising but Purim is the perfect time for such a response. Purim is the time of year when the unexpected and opposites meet, the time when by carnival exuberance we can assert the primacy of life over death and destruction. This is why I urged everyone, despite the mourning, to come dressed in costume and with the colors of Belgium: black, yellow and red.

Rabbi Marc Neiger, Beth Hillel



IJC Shavuot Retreat - June 10-12

Would you like to get away from the maddening everyday rush and enjoy some Shabbat spirit in beautiful country surroundings? Then join us the weekend of June 10-12 from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon for an inspiring Shavuot retreat on the grounds of a gorgeous castle in Vlaams Brabant, 45 minutes from Brussels.

[Click here](#) for the programme.

Price: €100 per person for two nights. Spaces at this rate are limited. Reservations in the castle will be charged a supplement. Self-catering.

Make your paid reservation by June 1. When IJC receives your payment, you will receive a confirmation email with further details.

If you'd like to offer to lead or co-lead a session, please send an email to ravira@ijc.be with your suggestion.

We welcome everyone.

For those with financial concerns

please do not hesitate to contact president@ijc.be. We are unable to accommodate cancellations for paid reservations.

Please contact info@ijc.be for more information.



Paideia launches on line magazine



Paideia Connect and Paideia, The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden are announcing the launch of JEU, European Jewish Magazine. Visit www.jeumag.com.

Hungary

Bet Orim in action!



Rabbi Dr Ferenc Raj, Rabbi Dr Walter Homolka, Erika Siegfried-Tompson and Dr Tamas Grof at the EUPJ Conference reception in London's Guildhall

Three of us represented Bet Orim in London: Rabbi Dr Ferenc Raj, Dr Tamas Grof (joint VP in charge of international relations) and I, Erika (WLS Twinning Project and Arzenu Hungary).

I also attended WRJ's (Women of Reform Judaism) excellent inaugural International Women's Leadership Seminar, making extensive contacts with 20 women leaders from around the world, visiting and studying at Leo Baeck College, sharing our vision for our communities and leaving with a practical action plan with WUPJ support.

At the EUPJ Conference we had a chance to talk to representatives of relevant sister communities like Pro Zion in Austria and to lobby the leaders of EUPJ, WUPJ and Arzenu on behalf of Bet Orim. We moved the WLS Twinning Project forward, and with my Arzenu hat on, I had the honour to be part of a panel discussing models of loving Israel advocacy whilst acknowledging problems and striving to better Israeli society.

Following a passionate talk by Anat Hoffman (Women of the Wall) Tamas Graf was able to initiate, propose and get passed an EUPJ resolution to urge PM Netanyahu to implement the government's recent decision in relation to the Kotel.

At the 'Dragons' Den competition' of innovative programmes Rabbi Feri presented his novel and successfully running initiative of teaching basic Hebrew through 100 biblical words.

We were touched by the EUPJ Conference, by the wonderful events, services, concerts, celebrations and the palpable feeling of belonging together.

On the home front some members of the two Hungarian Reform communities formed a friendly circle to organise jointly events missing from our programme palettes, like a musical Havdalah, Israeli holiday celebrations, etc specifically to attract younger people. Following a very successful first event Bet Orim embarked on a once monthly programme of energetic, musical Kabbalat Shabbats employing an excellent and charming singer/performer.

Erika Siegfried-Tompson

Super Seder in Budapest

In 5776, as in the past few years, Bet Orim's Seder was the most popular and perhaps the best attended one in Budapest. More than 180 people gathered together in the Regiment Restaurant to celebrate

humankind's most ancient freedom festival. Many congregants, their families and friends, public figures and celebrities participated in the event. Among them were the Honourable Colleen Bell, US Ambassador to Hungary; Reverend Gabor Ivanyi, President of the Hungarian Evangelical Fellowship; Jozsef Szecsi, Secretary General of the Christian Jewish Society; and Judit Kardi, President of the Hungarian Zionist Alliance.



Colleen Bell, US Ambassador to Hungary, Rabbi Ferenc Raj, Jazzrael Duo: Bandi Jager & Nora Biro

Since there were quite a few foreign visitors in the audience, Rabbi Ferenc Raj conducted the ceremony in three languages: in Hebrew, English and Hungarian. He explained the symbols of the Seder and provided modern commentary on the traditional Haggadah text. The enthusiastic crowd prayed and sang together. Bet Orim's two talented musicians, Bandi Jager and Nora Biro, led the songs with joy and passion. One of the guests, the well-known young Hungarian folk singer Agi Szaloki surprised the community with a medley of Yiddish, Sephardi and Roma songs.

In his remarks, Rabbi Raj elaborated on the current refugee crisis and offered a special prayer on behalf of the asylum seekers. He noted that while prayer gives us inspiration, it is incumbent upon each of us to act and not just pray as we partner with the Almighty to bring about freedom and justice for all.

Sim Shalom Budapest news

Our experiences in Berlin

In early April, Rabbi Kati Keleman started classes at Potsdam University while I left to go to the Biennial Conference of the European Union for Progressive Judaism. These conferences are always exciting because one hears about all the progress over the past two years in the growth of Progressive/Reform Judaism.

Kati is taking Talmudic literature classes with analysis on a very high level from a very eminent Israeli professor named Ammiel Cosman.

Congregational Seders are not so common here, so we ended up attending a Seder held by Chabad. It didn't start till 9 pm since it was Shabbat, and the Seder had to come after the Shabbat services which couldn't start till after sundown. The Chabad Seder was quite different from the one in Sim Shalom, which includes a lot of singing of the prayers and telling the story. Instead, an Israeli rabbi read the Haggadah in Hebrew and commented simply in English for the benefit of all the foreign guests. There was very plentiful and tasty food. All in all, it was a quite satisfying experience. We were made to feel welcome, were a part of the celebration of this important holiday, and enjoyed the happy chaos of being with young and old families.

Jess Weil

Poland

A Polish Torah returns to Poland



Rabbi Haim Dov Beliak (left) with the Torah after clearing customs, with Lech Widawski, Piotr Stasiak (President of Beit Polska), Joe Smocynski (Audit Committee) and Lorraine Lipman

Recently Friends of Jewish Renewal in Poland announced that it was seeking a Torah for its communities in Poland. We were surprised at the quick response when on Sunday March 20 the board of Temple Hadar Israel in New Castle, Pennsylvania voted to send us one of their Torot. The exciting and positive response came from Temple Hadar Israel's rabbi, Howie Stein, and the president, Sam Bernstine. David Sarnat of Atlanta and the [Jewish Community Legacy Project](#) were the match-makers for this gift.

Los Angeles' Wilshire Blvd Temple was the setting for the symbolic Purim Day transfer of the Torah to Friends of Jewish Renewal in Poland. Thanks to the generous actions of the Executive Director Howard Kaplan the magnificent sanctuary was opened.

Dale Perelman, a member of Temple Hadar Israel delivered the Torah in front of Wilshire Blvd Temple. Rabbi Haim Dov Beliak, the executive director of Friends of Jewish Renewal in Poland took the Torah to Poland on March 30. It has now been used both at Beit Warszawa and Bet Centrum, the new inner city facility of our Warsaw congregation.



Kabbalat Shabbat at Beit Warszawa with the joyful feelings of that evening, welcoming back a Torah that left Poland 111 years ago.

Purim at Beit Krakow



Rabbi Tanya Segal is the jester in this Purim spiel at Beit Krakow

Beit Warszawa news

A strong team of our members represented Beit Warszawa at the EUPJ conference in London in April, and Dominika Zakrzewska, the coordinator of our children's activities, received the 'Dragons' Den' trophy awarded for the best pitch of ideas and programmes. We are truly proud of Dominika and the Shabbat Gam Yahad children's project. Congratulations!

On Saturday April 30 we said farewell to Rabbi Boris Dolin and his family. We want to express our warm thanks to Rabbi Boris for the time he has spent with us at Beit Warszawa, for his commitment, heart and teaching. We wish Rabbi Boris and his family all the best with the new congregation they will become part of.

On Shabbat, May 13 and 14, Mati Kirschenbaum, student at Abraham Geiger College in Germany, was our guest at Beit Warszawa. Mati led all our Shabbat prayers together with Piotr Mirski, and he spent an hour of Torah study with us on Saturday morning. In the afternoon Mati led a short workshop 'Aliyah to the Torah – everything you need to know.'



AGK Student rabbi
Mati Kirschenbaum



Rabbi Alan Iser

On May 20 and 21 Rabbi Alan Iser will be our guest. Rabbi Iser is an adjunct professor in the Department of Theology at both Villanova and St. Joseph's universities. He is a former congregational rabbi, ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and has an MA in Near Eastern Languages and Civilisations from Harvard. Together with our Shatzim, Anna Riveiro and Avigail Geniusz, Rabbi Iser will lead our Shabbat services.



Rabbi Haim Fabrizio Cipriani to visit Beth Hillel in Rome

Our community will have the great pleasure to welcome our dear friend Rabbi Haim Fabrizio Cipriani on May 27 and 28 in Via dei Salumi 51.

He has studied at the Collegio Rabbinico Italiano under the guidance of Rav Giuseppe Laras and received traditional orthodox ordination at the Ateret Tzvi Yeshiva, of Shlomo Carlebach's lineage, and by Rabbi Joseph H Gelberman at the Rabbinical Seminary International in New York. From 2006 to 2013, he was rabbi of congregation Lev Chadash in Milan and Rome. Since 2012 he has been the rabbi of the Masorti congregation in Marseille and of the Progressive congregation in Toulouse. Rabbi Cipriani is part of the European Assembly of the Masorti/Conservative Movement as well as the Progressive Movement.

He is a well-known musician and expert on baroque music, and he divides his time between France and Italy.



Rabbi Haim Cipriani

Beth Hillel Roma Seder

On the first night of Pesach our Seder took place at Meze Bistrot on Via di Monteverde, preceded by Kabbalat Shabbat and Arvit, all directed by Rabbi Naamah Kelman, the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi in Israel. Rabbi Kelman is Dean of Hebrew



Rabbi Naamah Kelman

Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem. She led the evening in English, and we had a Haggadah in Hebrew, Italian and English. This allowed everyone to participate to the Seder with their preferred language.

Beth Shalom Milan special events



Purim 2016 at Beth Shalom Milan

On March 20 Beth Shalom held its annual Purim party – a truly special event! We decided to hold a pre-Purim Happy Hour which we felt we would attract old and young alike.

The event started at 5.30pm, and we realised that, according to true Jewish tradition, there would be no shortage of food. As our members started filing in, the tables became laden with plates and plates of hamentashen in myriad varieties. In addition we had loads of other delicious 'naughty' food including lots of candy for the children.

The event was attended by some 40 people and was held at the Spartico Lounge, a fabulous loft owned by two of our most active members. The husband of one of our members is a professional barman who mixed an array of fabulous alcoholic and non-alcoholic cocktails in keeping with the Purim spirit.

We read the Megillah, half in Italian and half in English as all of us clapped, stamped our feet and made a huge, joyful racket using pots and pans and graggers. The younger children, dressed in an array of costumes, had a wonderful time and it filled our hearts as we once again read the story recounting how Mordechai and Esther pulled off the save of the century. Then we held a short Purim quiz followed by a fabulous DJ set of Jewish songs sung only by Jewish performers. People took to the floor and began dancing – a truly joyous occasion!

We had a marvellous time and all left feeling truly blessed to be part of such a loving, joyful congregation. I am happy to say that many of us, old and young alike, have found their true spiritual home at Beth Shalom.

Bat Mitzvah of Rachel Aghib, May 7

More than 100 people attended Shabbat at Beth Shalom Milan to celebrate the Bat Mitzvah of Rachel Aghib, daughter of Andrea Pigley and Tony Aghib. Her calling to the Torah was a joy for all of us who have seen the conversion of her parents, their wedding and Rachel's growth from a little girl of six to a very special young lady. As a surprise Rachel's Aunt Deborah came from San Francisco, her grandmother Rosilde was present and so was her childhood friend from Trieste, a friendship that has lasted for three generations. For Tikun Olam, Rachel goes once a week to Milan's Central station to serve soup and give out clothing to the Syrian refugees passing through Milan.

We are proud of Rachel's accomplishments and look forward to the Bat Mitzvah of her sister Sara in three years.

Major progress for Shir Hadash in Florence

Recently, Shir Hadash in Florence was invited by ADEI - Associazione Donne Ebreo Italiane - to participate in a round table discussion on "The Role of Women in Judaism Today, both Public and Private." Women representatives from Shir Hadash, the Orthodox Community of Florence, and Chabad of Tuscany were all asked to participate in the round table as ADEI wanted to include what they felt were the three current realities of Judaism in Florence.

This invitation was particularly important for Shir Hadash because it was the first time that any organisation associated with the synagogue of Florence has recognised Shir Hadash in an official nature.

We presented a brief history of Reform Judaism and the role of women in Reform Judaism, and then talked about the role of women specifically within Shir Hadash, as well as what both Shir Hadash and Reform Judaism mean to us as women. Our presentation was received with enthusiasm and interest, and after a warm and well-balanced discussion, the majority present expressed interest in continuing this kind of exchange as well as further activities together. We hope to organise an event at Shir Hadash with ADEI in the next four months while Rabbi Leigh Lerner is here in Florence.

A special thanks to Rabbi Robert and Sheila Gan for helping us prepare for this presentation and supporting us at the event.

Jong LJC Netzer



Netzer youth from the Netherlands and UK share a Shabbat dinner at LJC Amsterdam

Jong LJC Netzer youth movement youngsters from the Netherlands hosted a lovely Friday dinner and activity at LJC Amsterdam for youngsters from the Progressive Netzer movement in the UK.



JONG LJC-Netzer

We are happy to create connections between Liberal communities in Europe through meeting each other. We also want to send a big thank you to LJC Amsterdam Rabbi Menno Ten Brink and LJC Amsterdam for helping to lead the event.

Tal Brantzy-Schramm
Youth leader Netherlands
Sjlich Jewish Agency

Cultural activities flourish at Lev Chadash in Milan



As part of the cultural activities organised by Lev Chadash, Milan - Italian Association for Progressive Judaism - a programme was presented on Thursday May 19 entitled *The reasons for silence - The pink triangle in the Holocaust*. The poster shows the details.

And on Thursday April 14 Lev Chadash presented Avram Hason The Bund: history of the Jewish labour movement. The Bund, the Jewish socialist movement



Algemeiner Jidisher Arbeterbund in Lite, Poylen un Russland (General Federation of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland and Russia) was founded as a workers' union and became a political movement. As an alternative to Zionism, the Bund fought for Yiddish culture and the rights of workers Jews in Eastern Europe. In Russia, it merged into the Bolshevik Party, but in Poland it exerted an important role until the Nazi invasion.

Avram Hason, an engineer and entrepreneur, is past president of Bnei Brith and a leader in the Comunita Ebraica of Milan. He presented the story of the events and thoughts around the Bund-Zionism dichotomy. The Bund is claimed to be the origin of the last century's ideological movements.

LJG Hamelin news



Purim 2016 at LJG Hamelin: the children and the spiel

It is wonderful to see how we've grown spiritually through the almost 20 years since our establishment as the first Jewish congregation after WWII in Hamelin. The small group of Jewish immigrants has created "Beitenu" - our house. Leading weekly Shabbat services is one of the ways we embrace our communal heritage.

International Women's Day on March 8 was celebrated with a concert, lovely flowers and a festive table.

Certainly the highlight of the month of March was our Purim celebration. Since it was Good Friday some of our neighbours may have wondered why American soldiers, pirates, kings, princesses, skeletons and cowboys were coming to the synagogue. Our celebration began with the reading of the Megillat Esther and an absolutely delightful retelling of the story by our youth group followed. Valerij Bogatchyk and his thespians treated us to a Purim Spiel in Russian. The costumes, music and special effects were dazzling, and the play is ready for the great stages of the world. Polina Pelts and her culinary crew satisfied every sweet tooth.

In April we had no rabbinical visits but held moving and joyous services ourselves. We had a full house on Pesach, and we upheld our tradition of not charging our members for the Seder. Each table was decorated festively and set with a Seder plate and Haggadot in Russian or German. The congregants acted as a huge choir, and the festive meal left nothing to be desired.

Our project "Aktion Mensch" supported two moving evenings for our seniors in April: a programme about the cities and villages in the FSU where most of our members came from, and a fascinating lecture by Inna Luybich entitled "The Inheritance of the Maccabees - Soviet-Jewish resistance during WWII."

Rachael Dohme

Read much more in our [April](#) and [May](#) newsletters.

Union of Progressive Jews of Germany 28th Annual Conference

The conference of the UpJ has a new home and this year we will meet in Bonn from July 28 to 31. The conference offers fascinating speakers, hands-on workshops, moving services and time to reconnect with colleagues and friends from all over Germany. There is a children's programme and, as always, the conference languages are German, Russian and English.

Information and registration are available [online here](#) and from the UpJ office at info@liberale-juden.de.

Seder in Cologne

The Cologne community "Gescher LaMassoret" celebrated its first Passover seder with Rabbi Natalia Verzhbovska since her ordination last year. All day and most of the week members had been preparing the delicious food and decorating the large room ready for the evening. Around 70 members, friends and guests arrived to celebrate together. The evening started with Sephardic families singing a traditional song and circling the Seder plate above each person's head. This was new to a lot of the members but a very moving and welcoming sight. Afterwards Rabbi Verzhbovska, along with her friend and colleague Rabbi Sonja Pilz, led the Seder with songs, readings and stories.

However, before we could eat, each table was given an image representing the four children. The tables had to then discuss their images as well as their views and thoughts about the four children and then address the room and present their ideas. This very thought-provoking activity was enjoyed by all.

During the evening the younger members were busy making and colouring in their own Seder plates as well as searching everywhere for the afikomans – each table hid their afikoman, which gave the children plenty of opportunities to run around searching for them.

After the meal when the children had found all the afikomans, we were treated to more songs, sung beautifully by Rabbi Pilz.

As dusk turned into night everyone moved around, talking to old friends and new, sharing news and stories and finishing off the last of the fantastic food. From the smiles and laughter heard all evening, it was a wonderful Seder which everyone enjoyed,

New CD by Die Drei Kantoren

Die Drei Kantoren (The Three Cantors) are Amnon Seelig, chief cantor in Dusseldorf; Ido Ben-Gal, cantor in Delmenhorst; and Assaf Levitin, soon cantor of the Liberal Congregation in Hanover (and who led the Kabbalat Shabbat service at the 2014 EUPJ Biennial in Dresden).

Click [here](#) for their new album, Second Yom Tov, with beautiful singing, very attractive original arrangements and fine new compositions.



-Ed

Rabbi Danny Rich leads Seder at Shir Hatzafon in Copenhagen



Rabbi Danny Rich (standing) leading Shir Hatzafon's 2016 Seder in Copenhagen

On the first night of Passover this year, Shir Hatzafon packed the Unitarian House in Copenhagen with a delightful mix of over 70 members, friends and first-time guests. A most welcome returning guest was Rabbi Danny Rich, chief executive and senior rabbi of Liberal Judaism in the UK, with which we recently affiliated. Danny led the evening in a thoroughly extroverted style, giving out (sometimes throwing) chocolates to everyone who answered one of his constant questions and explaining the Pesach ritual and Haggadah with great humour and originality. He learned and remembered for the whole night the names of every child in the room and most of the adults. Every aspect of Danny's presentation was an enjoyable and impressive tour-de-force.

Great thanks go to honorary chairperson Jesper Yoel Andersen for organising the food and preparing much of it himself. The tasty kneidlach soup, very edible gefilte fish, and tender brisket all came from his little kitchen in Valby. Lars Josefowicz, newly returned to the Board, prepared the room splendidly with tablecloths, flowers and more. Both Jesper and Lars had terrific help from other members who must go unnamed here, but everyone at this Seder was grateful to be cared for so well.

This was a Pesach Elijah should have attended.

As is our tradition, the leftover food was delivered to Mændenes Hjem, a shelter for homeless men in Copenhagen.

Arthur Buchman

Monday at GIL with Bertrand Herz



Elie Weisel, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Bertrand Herz, American President Barack Obama at Buchenwald in 2008

Shoah survivor Bertrand Herz will speak at the GIL on May 23 at 7:45 pm following a buffet dinner at 7. Born in 1930 into a French Jewish family in the western suburbs of Paris, Bertrand was arrested in Toulouse in 1944 with his parents and sister. He was the youngest French person deported to Buchenwald, where his father died of exhaustion in January 1945. After surviving a death march of over 80 kilometres from Niederorschel to the main camp of Buchenwald, he was liberated on April 11 1945 by the US Army. His mother had died in the meantime at Ravensbrück, and his sister was freed in April 1945.

Bertrand "rebuilt" himself by immersing in difficult studies that led him to the École Polytechnique. For 45 years he did not speak of his suffering, but at retirement age the memory of his deportation stirred him to activism. This led Bertrand to become President of the International Committee of Buchenwald. In 2008 in this role he welcomed to Buchenwald US President Barack Obama, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Elie Wiesel (see photo). We will have only Bertrand Herz at the GIL on Monday night, and we will be deeply honoured to hear his story, The Pullover of Buchenwald.

The buffet dinner is CHF 15 to participate, and the talk is free.

Migwan events

Yom Hashoah Commemoration Day 2016. Sunday, May 8 at 5 pm

We remembered the deceased and honoured present survivors and their relatives. This year we also invited non-Jewish people to participate in the historic responsibility against forgetting. Stephan Guttman spoke about his imprisonment at Auschwitz and answered questions from the audience. Afterwards memorial candles were lit. To conclude the official ceremony Emily Silverman recited "El male rachamim - God of compassion". Refreshments were served and personal conversations continued.

L'Chaim Open Bar. Monday, April 18, 7 - 9 pm

Attendees treated themselves to a fun evening with old and new friends over a glass of wine and Irène Speiser autographed her new book *Meerespassagen* (Sea Passages). The story reflects on the nature of friendship and the loss of loved ones as contemporary elements in realising a secular Jewish identity. People brought copies of the book to be signed.

Migwan Benefit Book Fair. Sunday, May 1, 12 - 4 pm

Proceeds went towards financing our new Siddurim (prayer books). We also had coffee and baked goods to create a bookshop reading atmosphere. Members and friends volunteered to either help sell on Sunday or bake goods. We had a delightful turnout.

France



MJLF Mahané was great fun



MJLF Mahané April 2016 - 36 kids and 6 monitors.

Community Seder in Paris



Pesach 2016 in Paris: Rabbis Pauline Bebe, Communauté Juive Libérale, CJL (left) and Tom Cohen, Kehilat Geshher (3rd from left) with guests from three religions around the Seder table

Tenou'a Yom HaShoah special edition

From generation to generation - L'dor Vador. To mark the occasion of Yom HaShoah this year, there is a special issue of Tenou'a magazine, which has 44 pages of moving articles and illustrations, all in French, of course. You can read it on line by [following this link](#).



Birthright Israel

For the first time, Taglit (Birthright Israel) is offering 10-day trips to Israel for the Liberal communities in France from August 2-12. 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, 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.

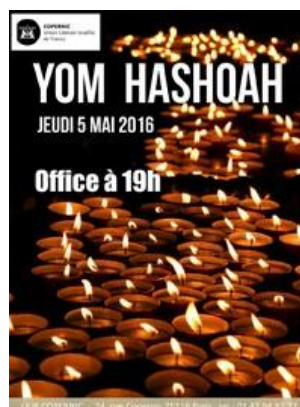


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BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL
www.birthrightisrael.com



ULIF News

ULIF news in pictures



MahaNetzer in France



July 2016: Registration is open, but the 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 July 11 to 24.

Complete details in French here. More information and registration at rabbi@kehilatgesher.org or direction.talmud@gmail.com.

UNESCO Executive Board Resolution

Press Statement by the Assembly of Liberal Judaism (Assemblée du Judaïsme Liberal), Paris, May 11.

On April 16 last, the UNESCO Executive Board adopted a Resolution that is so unilateral as to deny any link between the Jews and Jerusalem, in particular the Wailing Wall, as well as between Christians and Jerusalem.

By failing to recognise the historic link between Judaism and Jerusalem and its spiritual importance for the Jewish People, this Resolution constitutes a deliberate negation of a heritage that affects the Jews in particular and even humanity as a whole since the Holy City constitutes a common heritage. The Resolution adopted ignores in particular the fact that the State of Israel renovated the "Western Wall Plaza" for the sole purpose of facilitating access to the Wailing Wall for Jews from all parts of the world to allow them to pray in dignity and security.

More troubling still is that the Resolution weakens any chance of sincere and peaceful dialogue in the Middle East: no durable or negotiated peace can be built on the basis of contempt for history. UNESCO, expected to stand for moral and intellectual integrity with respect to humanity's common heritage, has failed its duty of balance.

Adding to this failure is the incomprehensible position of our country, France, which unlike most of the Western powers sanctioned the text by affixing its signature.

France would do itself an honour by clarifying our country's position, by asking UNESCO to recognise the historic truth, to abandon ambiguity and to remove any misunderstanding.

In the name of its values of spirituality and openness to others, respecting all cultures and all religions, the *Assembly of Liberal Judaism (AJL)* requests the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the French Republic to express a clear public position on this subject as soon as possible. It should be a position that, showing respect for the historical truth, recognises a shared heritage but also the special connection of the Jewish People with Jerusalem and with the Wailing Wall, part of the Temple Mount.

Translation by Robert Ley



The Wailing Wall and the Temple Mount

Les Voix de la Paix, Voices of Peace, launches in Paris



On Tuesday March 22, 700 guests gathered at the magnificent Paris City Hall to celebrate their different spiritual convictions and to seal their commitment to living peaceably together under the banner of "laïcité à la française", "French secularity", which guarantees freedom of belief in France's secular society. The event was part of the city-wide project "Les Voix de la Paix", or "Voices of Peace", aimed at promoting interfaith dialogue across Paris. The project was led by Rabbi Yann Boissière of the Progressive community Mouvement Libéral Juif de France (MJLF) and partnered with other local organisations with financial support from public authorities and Jewish organisations, including the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).



A successful Mimouna ...

This year, for the first time, the AJTM in Paris wished to organise a community meal to mark the end of the Passover holiday.



About 50 people were present and we shared the time together with joy and friendliness. The menu: mouflétas (thank you Valerie), waffles (Agnes thank you), couscous (Agnes and Sophie thank you), pastries and mouna (Renée thank you) and the inevitable sandwiches.

The idea was to get together and share as we usually do on Shabbat, with Talmud and other community activities. We thank all participants for their attendance and their indulgence. We also particularly thank the organisers of this meal, Agnes, Valerie, Sophie, Murielle and Renée, not forgetting Abraham, who was our DJ for the evening. Renée told us that she was reminded of the Mimouna of her childhood and of the significance of this evening. See you next year.

NB: Mimouna is a traditional North African Jewish celebration held the day after Passover, marking the return to eating chametz, which is forbidden during the week of Passover.

- Ed

Ireland, Scotland

Dublin's 70th anniversary



DJPC celebrants in the sanctuary

Dublin Jewish Progressive Congregation (DJPC) celebrated its 70th anniversary on May 11 with a sold-out gala dinner and jam-packed weekend of services and events, attended by VIPs representing all of Ireland's faiths.

Dignitaries included Most Rev Dr Diarmuid Martin, the Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland (Roman Catholic), and Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, the Archbishop of Dublin (Church of Ireland) – as well as leaders of the Romanian Orthodox, Unitarian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Bahá'í communities.

Liberal Judaism was represented by its president, senior rabbi and chair, with Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, Rabbi Danny Rich and Simon Benscher all playing roles throughout the weekend – along with Rabbis Dr Charles Middleburgh and Alan Mann. Guests – including the British, Israeli and Austrian ambassadors to Ireland, as well as members of the Dublin City Interfaith Forum – attended a Friday night service, which saw Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh inducted as DJPC's rabbi emeritus and a Yom HaShoah commemoration.

DJPC president Dr Helen Marks told a packed sanctuary: "As we pause to remember the Holocaust, we are blessed to be surrounded by members of the diplomatic community, interfaith groups and representatives of around 10 different faiths. Hopefully by meeting and praying together we create the type of dialogue and understanding that is essential in creating the future we all want for ourselves and our children."

A Shabbat morning service and evening gala dinner followed on Saturday, with Sunday bringing 'Tots on the Bimah' and tree planting events. The community's youth planted apple trees in the garden of the synagogue for Rabbis Middleburgh and Goldstein, in honour of everything they have done to build and sustain DJPC.

As well as celebrating 70 years of a thriving congregation, the weekend also gave members a chance to reflect on how they can help others in the local Dublin community.

Welcoming guests to the gala dinner, Helen said: "As we enjoy this meal, we should keep in mind those for whom a warm meal and a safe place to sleep is a luxury or even a dream. That is not only in

Europe, the Middle East and other faraway places but right here, outside this hotel on the streets of Dublin. Our work with Inner City Helping Homeless as part of Mitzvah Day 365 has brought this sharply into focus.

"We are blessed to be part of a community such as DJPC and to have this opportunity to celebrate what that means together."

[Click here](#) to read Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh's sermon.



The DJPC Anniversary Choir under the community's new logo, designed to celebrate 70 years

Tales of the McGillah Clan

Purim began with Rabbi Mark Solomon's interactive megillah reading to a large and increasingly noisy crowd.

After a hamentaschen break, this year saw the revival of Sukkat Shalom's famous Purimspiel. It was set this year in medieval Edinburgh (with the odd reference to Glen Cohen) when King Ahasuerus, the history of whose reign has unaccountably been omitted from most history texts, was prevented from persecuting the McGillah Clan.



Purim 2016 at Sukkat Shalom in Edinburgh



Chagigah: Reform Judaism Biennial

Something special will be happening at our biennial conference this year. Join us at Chagigah to begin a journey that has the potential to transform your community.

At Chagigah, alongside the usual programme, Reform Judaism will launch three initiatives as part of our commitment to strengthening communities and inspiring our members.

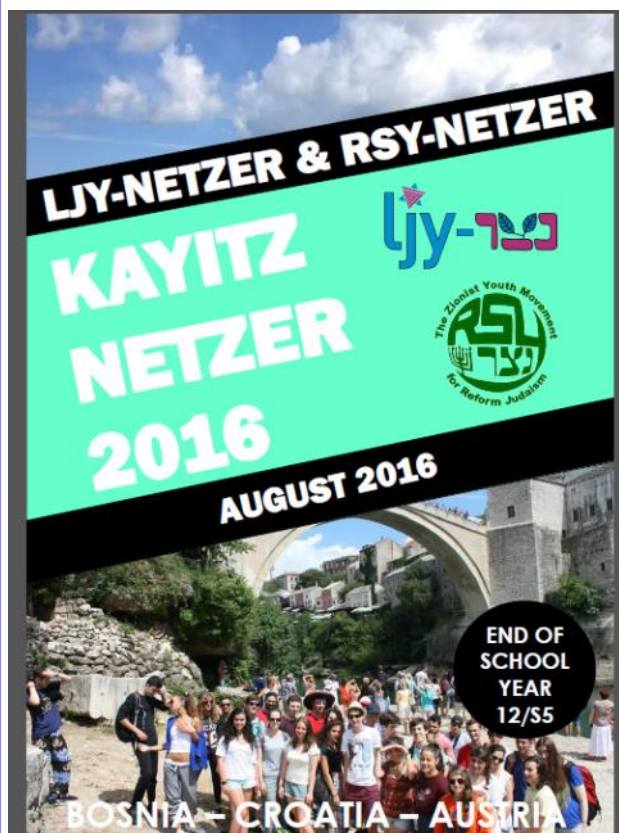
Read [Chagigah 2016 FAQs](#). [Click Here](#) to watch the film introducing Chagigah 2016

There are 24 specialised learning sessions in store for you and much more! Prices go up on Monday 23 May. Secure your place now [Click Here to book](#)

For more information about [Chagigah](#) or if you wish your community to be invoiced for your place please email chagigah@reformjudaism.org.uk.

For financial assistance please contact sarita.robinson@reformjudaism.org.uk.

LJY Netzer schedule



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

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. The programme is available [online here!](#)
[Get your tickets today](#)

Kingston says goodbye to Rabbi Charley Baginsky



Rabbi Charley Baginsky saying goodbye at KLS

Kingston Liberal Synagogue (KLS) was filled with old and new members on April's last Shabbat, as the community bade farewell to their rabbi of 10 years, Rabbi Charley Baginsky.

Charley wrote a special service for the occasion, which she led with Rabbi Danny Rich – the senior rabbi of Liberal Judaism and Kingston's emeritus rabbi. The music was led by Tammy Rich – supported by Emma Rich, Robert Simmons and Avi Stone – and both the KLS choir, led by Rebekkah Wedell, and the Beiteinu kids choir sang.

Charley, who was presented with leaving gifts by the community, said: "In many ways KLS is my birth place, I spent my student rabbi days there and then another eight more – over 14 years altogether, 10 of those as their rabbi. I have grown up here, had my children here and found my community here.

"Ultimately, this is the most supportive, most inventive, most welcoming and most inspiring community that a rabbi could ask for."

KLS chair Steve Farrer added: "We have been immensely lucky at KLS to always have had such wonderful rabbis. Today is a wonderful opportunity to say thank you to Charley who has dedicated so much time, love and energy to our community."

Charley is now the rabbi for South Bucks Jewish Community and also the co-ordinator for the Alliance for Progressive Judaism between Liberal Judaism and the Movement for Reform Judaism.

Kingston is starting the process of recruiting a new rabbi and, in the meantime, will be supported by its excellent lay leadership and Rabbi Danny Rich.

**Click the logos
for news of UK
movements**



Sir Nicholas Winton in memoriam



Sir Nicholas Winston honoured on a UK postage stamp

Sir Nicholas Winton recently died aged 106. He was a true hero of our time - a man who in the 1930's managed to get over 600 Jewish children out of Prague into the UK. For many years his story was untold - he was too unassuming to have it otherwise. But in recent years this truly incredible story has gained prominence in the UK. Sir Winston has been justly feted as a hero - with a postage stamp issued in his honour shortly after his death.

Not well known was his relationship with Maidenhead (Reform) Synagogue. My daughter Annette and her family are members of this synagogue and she tells the story:

Sir Nicholas Winton ("Nicky") married Grete Gjelstrup, a Danish secretary and accountant's daughter after the war. The couple settled in Maidenhead, where they brought up their three children.

Sir Nicholas never wanted to go into a care home, and his desire was to stay and be cared for in his family home. His children do not live in the local area and visited him on a regular basis. The Maidenhead Synagogue decided to draw up a rota of people locally within the community that would visit Nicky every evening and bring him a home cooked meal. Although he had a full time carer the reason for this arrangement was that he genuinely enjoyed the company and chatting to people. The same group of about 10-15 members became very close to him and gained amazing insight into his inspirational journey of life. On the occasions that I met Nicky, he was still very alert and always was reading a newspaper and kept up to date on all current affairs, the stock market and the local news. He chatted about his various journeys and travels. On almost every occasion, he said 'the problem is the world never learns and the same mistakes are made over and over again, history just repeats itself.'

It was a true honour to spend time with Nicky and get to know him though he rarely talked about the war specifically and never of his direct personal accomplishments.

Leslie Bergman

[Read more here.](#)

Purim celebration at Leo Baeck College



Purim 2016 at Leo Baeck College

Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris, Principal of Leo Baeck College, colleagues, board members and rabbinic students celebrated Purim on Thursday March 24. In the tradition of Leo Baeck College, the megillah was read by the students and staff in different languages and reflecting different traditions. This year parts of the megillah were read in French by Student Rabbi Yaera Ratel, in Romanian by Student Rabbi Daniela Touati, in Latin by Dean of Leo Baeck College Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh and in German by Senior Librarian Dr Annette Boeckler. To complement the languages, Student Rabbi Zahavit Shalev leyned beautifully and senior staff team member Jo-Ann Myers evoked a suffragette message in her reading in Afrikaans. Rabbi Middleburgh commented. "Our celebration of Purim this year was marked by some new languages reflecting the diversity of our students and faculty and there were many highlights. I am sure that none present will forget Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris's rendition of a chapter in the Texan drawl of her youth!"

The French Blog - in English

I have been asked to participate in a French blog on the Jewish Chronicle website, «Le blog français». I will make sure that all the contributors will come from Progressive communities in London. It is a French Jewish voice in the UK, and I thought it might be interesting to have a link in the EUPJ newsletter, as it is transnational and progressive at the same time.

[Here is the link](#)



Rabbi René Pfertzel
The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

Passover at Bet Shalom Barcelona



Passover 2016 at Bet Shalom Barcelona

About 110 individuals (including about 20 American and Israeli tourists) gathered in a hotel in Barcelona for Bet Shalom's annual congregational Seder held on the first night of Pesach, April 22. Led by Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz and Maria Prieto, the celebration included special guests such as the Auxiliary Bishop of Barcelona and representatives of the government and parliament of Catalonia.

Using a creative Haggadah honouring the teaching that "it is praiseworthy to elaborate/expand on the telling of the going out of Egypt", two themes important to Progressive Jews were highlighted:

1) welcoming the other, especially of a different sexual orientation and

2) remembering the Syrian refugees especially those that have drowned in the Mediterranean. This year's Seder was a joyful and meaningful experience for Bet Shalom members and its friends.

Jose Luis Martin
Secretary, Bet Shalom

Bet Shalom 10th anniversary

On behalf of the Board of Bet Shalom Barcelona, I would like to thank the EUPJ especially for the presence of Miriam Kramer during the ceremony of dedication of our synagogue and the celebration of our 10th Anniversary. Her presence in the two events as a representative of both the EUPJ and the WUPJ made it even more memorable.

We would like to share with you our deep appreciation and to inform you that the dedication of our synagogue and the celebration of our 10th Anniversary were a true success!

Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz and Rabbi Rifat Sonsino led Havdala and the dedication ceremony. We had representatives of ATID, Bet Januca (Rota), the Javurá of Madrid, the orthodox community of Barcelona, state and city government and many members and friends. [Here is a link](#) to the video broadcasted by Barcelona's local TV. We had also articles published in two national newspapers.

We are proud to have a new synagogue and of course, to get higher visibility for Progressive Judaism in Spain! Once again thank you for supporting us continue our work to build a Jewish life and a vibrant Judaism in Barcelona.

Jai Anguita
President, Comunitat Jueva Bet Shalom Barcelona

Beit Emunáh Asturias is online



Since the study process began at Beit Emunah, we have been aware of the enrichment that new technologies could provide. The Internet allows us to be "close" even though we are hundreds of kilometres away from each other.

We have an online programme to help applicants to the EUPJ Bet Din and a weekly conversion class with the financial support of the EUPJ, plus weekly classes with Rabbi Alona Lisitsa from Jerusalem. We also have an online education project with the invaluable support of our friends from the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ).

We have organised a daily morning prayer group through the internet. We needed an updated, egalitarian and at the same time traditional Siddur, so we have created one, perfecting it with contributions from people in the group and by consulting different siddurim. Our goal is to learn together and help everyone feel comfortable in any kehilah.

We read the Torah every Monday and Thursday, studying and debating the drasha. We have also revised the Kabbalat Shabbat service, adapting it and making it easier for people who are not near a community. We use [U-Stream](#) for watching, listening and contributing actively.

We participate in a communal Havdalah service via the internet, for which we have also revised and adapted the Shabbat Mincha prayer and added Sephardic songs in Ladino. Every Saturday we meet at dusk, and each participant makes Havdalah at home, but we are connected simultaneously via the Internet in this virtual kehilah.

We are connected with 14 cities in Spain and five places overseas including Israel, the UK and Mexico. Through the internet, Jews have a prayer, reflection and meeting place in Spanish where people can interact, explore their questions and insecurities, practise Jewish life, learn and feel part of a friendly and receptive cyber-community.

Beit Emunáh / בית אמונה
Comunidad Judía del Principado de Asturias.
Oviedo, España
www.sefarad-asturias.org



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, "Creating Meaningful Connections". It takes place in Israel July 14-24 and is 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 here](#) or write to saltz@wupj.org.il.



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.

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IMPJ Newsletter

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

WUPJ 2016 Calendar

May 27-28 Israel

[Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism Conference](#)

July 14-24 Jerusalem

[Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators](#)

International Assembly honours Leslie Bergman



WUPJ Chair Carole Sterling honours outgoing EUPJ President Leslie Bergman. Photos © & courtesy of Dale Lazar

The World Union for Progressive Judaism's (WUPJ) International Assembly (IA) took place on April 14 with about 100 attendants onsite in London, and many more participating virtually. The meeting opened with a blessing by Rabbi Joel Oseran, WUPJ Vice President for International Development, in

honour of his impending retirement. As part of the meeting, the IA approved the WUPJ Executive Board's resolution to honour Rabbi Oseran with the title of Vice President Emeritus.

WUPJ President Rabbi Daniel H. Frelander presented his vision for the World Union's



Rabbi Joel Oseran

upcoming years, and Vice President and COO, Shai Pinto presented the organisation report. Representatives of each of the seven regions shared highlights and upcoming goals to look forward to in the coming year. They also each paid tribute to Rabbi Oseran's contributions to their regional development and success over the past years.

Similarly, many honoured the leadership of outgoing European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) President Leslie Bergman. His many years of distinguished service to the World Union, global Progressive Jewry and the EUPJ formed the basis of a discussion between Leslie and Rabbi Frelander about current and future issues facing our global family and movement.

At the closing plenary session of the EUPJ conference, Leslie Bergman was elected Honorary Life President of the EUPJ.