

European Union for Progressive Judaism

June 2017 Newsletter

© European Union for Progressive Judaism

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner addresses imams at London Bridge



Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner with Muslim and Christian clergy at London Bridge gathering

Senior UK Reform Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner addressed a group of imams on Wednesday 7 June as they gathered to condemn the recent atrocities in Manchester and London stating that "British Jews stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters when wickedness has attacked London".

A statement condemning extremism and terrorist violence, endorsed by 500 imams from all over the UK, was read out publicly.

[Click here to read more](#) and [click here to read a report in The Jewish News](#). Read Rabbi Janner-Klausner's address on page 2.

NPLS twins with Teiva in Ukraine



Rabbi Aaron Goldstein and Tammy with young Teiva members and musicians. Read more on the right.

Revitalisation of Community Connections within the EUPJ

The twinning of Former Soviet Union communities with Progressive communities within the United Kingdom has until recently been running under the administration of the EUPJ. This is now due to change. The EUPJ will be responsible only for twinning and connecting between Jewish communities within Europe.

The number of our communities is increasing each year. As a new community/synagogue starts up they need assistance, help to provide suitable Progressive Jewish values and to build up successfully and, therefore, grow in a sustainable manner.

Through Community Connections we would like to engage with such communities by establishing partners that they can work with through our larger and long-standing communities and synagogues.

We are very fortunate to have major communities that are large contributors to Jewish life in the United Kingdom, France, The Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium.

Within the last few months NPLS, the Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue in England, has started a twinning relationship with the Teiva Progressive Community in Lviv in the Ukraine, achieved primarily by Rabbi Aaron Goldstein going to Lviv to meet with their members and leadership. Here we have a highly functioning community with over 1000 members helping out a younger, much smaller one. We hope to replicate this many times in the future.

We are in the process of taking on a new Community Connections Coordinator to provide the conduit between the established and the new and needy communities.

Michael Reik

Vice chairman with special responsibility for twinning

June 2017 Newsletter Contents

1-3 EUPJ	10 Italy, Spain
4 Hungary, Czech Republic	11 Spain, Portugal
5 Switzerland	12 Germany
6 Belgium	13 Germany
7 Netherlands, Poland	14-15 UK
8 France	16 UK, WUPJ
9 France, Italy	17 WUPJ

EUPJ Honorary Officers and Staff 2016

Honorary Life Presidents

Leslie Bergman, UK
Ruth Cohen, Israel
Jeffery Rose, UK

President

Gordon Smith, UK

Vice-Presidents

Alex Dembitz, Switzerland
Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, UK
Rabbi Dr Walter Homolka, Germany
Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris, UK

Chairman

Miriam Kramer, UK

Vice-Chairmen

Stéphane Beder, France
Sonja Guentner, Germany
Michael Reik, UK

Honorary Secretary

John Cohen, UK

Honorary Treasurer

David Pollak, UK

Rabbinic Adviser

Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim, Switzerland

EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly

Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim, Chairman

European Beit Din

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, Chairman
Rabbi Dr Jackie Tabick, UK, Convener

Administrator

Deborah Grabiner, UK
administrator@eupj.org

Newsletter Editor

Arthur Buchman, Denmark
newsletter@eupj.org

Assistant Newsletter Editor

Sarah Sussman, Ireland



Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner's address



Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner with imams at London rally

We all weep for those we've lost. British Jews stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters when wickedness has attacked London. Now's the time for the very leadership that you are modelling as imams – modelling for Britain today, not just for Muslims, but for all British people. Judaism and Islam are linked by a great prophet, Moses. Moses showed humility in his leadership when he asked God "who am I that Pharaoh will listen to me?" Moses didn't seek out the responsibility that fell upon him, he was unsure of his impact but with God's strength within him, Moses overcame the enormity of his task. He was listened to. He led his people to freedom. He changed history. We have to do the same; we have to bring our message, we have to impact on our society, on the Britain that we love.

Today, the world faces a deadly threat. What can we do as leaders of communities, as leaders of people who love Britain and love and are proud of our religions? We must bring together people who disagree with each other, people who can challenge each other robustly – with words and not with violence.

We must and we will stop our people from turning towards sickening ideologies, which we have in all forms of religion, including Judaism and Islam.

Moses knew that the most influential leadership was not through grand presentations or speeches, but by meeting individuals face-to-face, in Hebrew, panim-el-panim, in Arabic wajah le wajah, building connections in the hearts of others. That is our work. To turn souls away from wickedness, and we are all together in that holy task.

Ramadan Mubarak!

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](#)



ULIF Marseille

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



EUPJ website, click on www.eupj.org

We are delighted to share with you our Micro Site pending the launch of the full (all bells and whistles) main site in a few months' time. In the coming weeks new website pages will be added. Email corrections of fact and comments for the full site to Deborah Grabiner at administrator@eupj.org.

We would love to receive interesting photos with captions relating to your community for use on the website.

The Countdown Begins Regeneration 2018, Building the Future EUPJ Biennial Conference in Prague

Taking a leaf out of Connections 2017, at the time of writing, it is now just 310 days before Regeneration 2018 will open in the stunning city of Prague on April 26. In my last article, I reported that our EUPJ conference title will be **Regeneration**. We have now agreed to add the tag line **Building the Future**. This seemed a totally appropriate and fitting title to give our next Biennial, reflecting the philosophy that drives both Progressive Judaism in Europe and beyond and, certainly, the driving force that inspires and motivates our community leaders and especially our young leaders.

We are already well advanced in arriving at a shortlist of keynote lecturers and a distinguished celebrity to speak at our Opening Ceremony.

On that subject, news hot off the press is that we have secured the stunning Smetana Hall, which forms part of the Municipal House in the centre of Prague, to host our Opening Ceremony on Thursday April 26. After the Kurlander Palais in Dresden and the Guildhall in London, it was always going to be difficult to find somewhere to compare with these illustrious venues. For those of you who have been lucky enough to hear one of the many world-famous orchestras that have played in Smetana Hall, and for those of you who have not, you are in for a treat.

Feast your eyes on a wealth of sculpture and decoration both inside and outside the hall, with murals, mosaics and paintings that pay tribute to the many fine Czech artists, sculptors and, of course, composers including Dvorak and the hall's namesake, Smetana. And more, Smetana Hall is situated just a three-minute walk from our conference hotel.



Smetana Hall in Prague

In addition to our conference programme, of which you will read more in the coming months, we have identified a good number of fascinating places of interest to visit both before and after the main event. This will be on offer in addition to a number of tours we have planned during the conference, all of which will provide every delegate with a journey and experience they will never forget.



Interior of Smetana Hall in Prague

In our next issue, I shall give you an update on our progress in developing an all-singing, all-dancing registration feature in our new website. All being well, we are aiming to open for registration in September for the early birds amongst you. We shall introduce an interim registration rate in January and February for the late early birds and a full rate from March for anyone who forgets to register early – always assuming we're not fully booked by then!

L'Shanah Habaah b'Prague!

David Pollak

EUPJ Annual Report 2016 available for download

We invite all readers to see our annual report [here](#). We were not able to distribute our reports at the European Assembly in Jerusalem due to events outside our control. Now everyone can enjoy reading it in the comfort of their own home and/or on any electronic device.



EUROPEAN UNION
FOR
PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

Annual Report
2016

for the
European Assembly
at

'Connections 2017'
WUPJ Biennial Conference
Jerusalem, Israel
19th May 2017

Hungary, Czech Republic



Sim Shalom Budapest news

Once again Sim Shalom has had to move to new premises for its services and other programs. Balint House, the JCC where we have been meeting for the past year, was closed in mid-May for extensive renovations. Fortunately, from one of our ecumenical connections made through the NDI project we have recently joined (see last newsletter), we got access to a building housing a Youth Club of the Methodist Church in Hungary. That organisation was quite sympathetic to us already since they were one of the other religious institutions that had its government registration cancelled five years ago. The space is not too large, but is sufficient for our summer programmes.

Rabbi Ariel Pollak led a joint Kabbalat Shabbat service at the end of May for Sim Shalom and Bet Orim congregations at the Milestone Institute in Budapest. This is part of the Budapest Judaism Development programme sponsored and paid for by West London Synagogue and EUPJ. It happens about once a month. Ariel's services with their warm spirit and their use of Shlomo Carlebach tunes are drawing in new young people and even some with children. On Saturday afternoon, Ariel gave a shiur on the Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hasidism, which is one of his special interests.

A group of about 20 congregants from Congregation Emanu-El of San Francisco, led by Rabbis Jonathan Singer and Lawrence Kushner, met with our Rabbi Kati Kelemen and two Sim Shalom Board members, Adam Komaromi and Peter Arvai a month ago. The guests were very interested and asked many questions about the situation of our congregation, about Progressive Judaism in Hungary, and about our relations with the government and the rest of the Jewish community here. It was a very warm and nourishing meeting for our people to experience their interest.



Rabbi Ariel Pollak



Sim Shalom's Rabbi Kati Kelemen

Jess Weil, Treasurer

A Czech Shavuot

Forty-five members of Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue and others from America and Israel, connected by having a Torah scroll from Kolín in the Czech Republic, went to that town to celebrate Shavuot. A Tikkun Leyl Shavuot was held in the synagogue built in 1696, studying the words of its last rabbi, Dr Richard Feder. The Shavuot morning service welcomed the mayor and was joined by over 30 grammar school pupils who had completed an impressive exhibition about the children from their school who were murdered in the Shoah.

After a civic reception, in fact an amazing "Kiddush lunch" provided by the mayor, the group set off for Brandýs nad Labem where a restored synagogue, built in 1828/9 has two women's galleries, one above the other! We were welcomed by the mayor of this town, a former Czech Minister of Defence. Back in Kolín the next day over 50 stolpersteine were dedicated in the centre of town, all donated by members of the visiting group. That evening the grammar school choir joined our synagogue choir in a concert of Jewish music at which the Chair of the Westminster Memorial Scrolls Trust, Jeffery Ohrenstein, together with a representative of the Prague Jewish Museum presented the mayor of the town with a certificate of thanks for the town's initiative in restoring its Jewish monuments and keeping alive the memory of the former community.

The group then moved on to Brno to celebrate Shabbat with its flourishing community. Its modern Orthodox rabbi was very welcoming, though Kabbalat Shabbat consisted of three songs, Kiddush and a kosher meal!



The Great Synagogue of Boskovice

Next morning we went to Boskovice for a Progressive Shabbat morning service in the synagogue that goes back to 1636. At the beginning of the service I said we didn't need prayer books as so many of the prayers are painted on the walls and ceiling of the sanctuary. It was such a privilege to pray and sing and read Torah in this beautiful synagogue. It is one of 10 synagogues restored by the Federation of Czech Jewish Communities. Brandýs is another, and Dublin Progressive and Amsterdam Liberal have scrolls from there. Do come to the EUPJ Conference in Prague next April where I am helping to organise pre- and post-conference tours to such places of interest and show you some beautiful Bohemian countryside.

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein

Switzerland

GIL events



Metin Aditi

Talk by Metin Aditi

July 12 18:45: Buffet (CHF 15.-)

19h45: "The loving dictionary of Switzerland" and "My father on shoulders". Free entry.

Switzerland as loved by one who arrived aged seven and has never left it: Metin Arditì paints his adopted country for us with a look as passionate as surprising. Then he recounts his childhood and his admiration for his father with fondness but also clarity. Registration at info@gil.ch



Michèle Sarde

Talk by Michèle Sarde

July 12 18:45: Buffet (CHF 15.-)

19h45: "Return from Silence". Free entry.

Reflections on migration, integration, transmission, and resilience. The path of a Sephardi family that fled Thessaloniki, where they lived a comfortable life, to come to Paris in the 1930s. There, in order to escape the Nazis, some of the members concealed their Jewish identity and regained it back with difficulty.

Registration at info@gil.ch

Leadership change at Migwan

"They who want to build high towers have to give good consideration to the foundation" - Anton Bruckner, Austrian composer (1824-96)

In this spirit, the entire Migwan board and I would like to thank Jean Carol, who has been responsible for our various programmes in the last eight years. She gave us a solid cultural foundation on which it is now necessary to build the first building blocks of the tower. Jean Carol left the board at the last AGM, but she will continue to run the L'Chaim bar. Grateful and unanimously elected by the plenum, I will represent this department on the board in the future and would like to encourage you, my dear members, to approach openly and to participate actively with your (realisable) cultural wishes. My endeavour is also to work increasingly with partner organisations. I look forward to it.

And so I would like to point out our "Culture in June". Together with OFEK (an association for members of the Israeli community of Basel), we will have a day trip to Konstanz at the Bodensee on Sunday June 25. On a two-hour tour, we will enjoy Jewish culture and then have lunch together. Full details of the history and the organisation can be found at www.migwan.ch/Calendar.

Save the date for the ETJK (European Day of Jewish Culture) on Sunday September 3. Again, Migwan will participate with a special programme. "Thessaloniki - Jerusalem of the Balkans". Further information will follow in our August newsletter.

Orah Mendelberg

Coming Down the Mountain at Migwan

Instead of the announced Migwan Shabbaton for children/teens we had a new programme for Saturday morning on June 3: "Coming Down the Mountain: Embodying our Visions in our Lives".

We joined Rabbi Diane over a post-Shavuot breakfast discussion to explore together why Jewish values are most important to us - as individuals and as a community. What are our "ten utterances?" How do we want to speak with, and about, one another? How do we manifest faith or kindness? How can we create stories and practices that encourage us to live into our best selves? And have fun at the same time! (It is never too early to start preparing for the High Holidays!)

On Jewish Music and Its Origins

On Monday May 22 from 6 to 9 pm, Migwan in Basel presented On Jewish Music and Its Origins, a talk and performance by clarinetist Michal Lewkowicz. Michal is a well-known Israeli clarinetist living in Basel who has founded the Mizmorim Festival there. Last January, the festival, which is an important forum for Jewish composers, was held for the third time.

Michal spoke to us about the challenges of organising a music festival and presented some musical works.

Michal Lewkowicz



Belgium

New perspectives at IJC Brussels

On May 20th, the International Jewish Community held a Welcome Shabbat service for the many new faces who have been popping up at IJC over the past few months. It replaced the annual Farewell Shabbat service normally held in May or June each year to say good-bye to our members moving abroad.



Steven Brummel

This year - surprisingly for an international congregation - none of our current members are leaving. In addition, a larger influx of newcomers or simply long-time residents have suddenly made the effort to check out our IJC. The Welcome Shabbat, led by Rabbi Ira Goldberg, was a big success. It demonstrated to all attending the breadth and warmth of our community.

This is a pleasant change for us. For the past three years, events in Belgium and the world at large have forced the IJC to operate in "maintenance mode". In reaction to a range of events, we saw greater than normal numbers of our members leaving Belgium and thus the IJC. We spent a lot of time staying functional without much thought to the future. Perhaps the IJC has turned a corner – and we can focus again on the future.

The IJC's annual general meeting (AGM), taking place on Sunday morning June 25th at our normal location, is just such an opportunity. It looks back to where we have come from and to the future and where we should be going. We have important issues on the agenda including housing, the Hebrew school and how to promote membership in such a way that new faces actually commit to joining the IJC. We hope many will attend the AGM to participate in the discussions and ideas for the future. As El Presidente is el hombre del pueblo, we want to hear your views.

Steven Brummel, IJC President

Beth Hillel Brussels talk

The grand themes of Judaism: "Homosexuality, Tanach and Judaism" by Rabbi Marc Neiger - June 25 at 18:00. Members: Free, Non-Members: €10

[Learn more here.](#)

Mazal Tov to Gilbert Lederman

The Liberal Jewish Community of Belgium, Beth Hillel, is pleased to announce the appointment of its president, Gilbert Lederman, as Regional Representative Europe in the Executive Offices of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and also as Board Member of the European Union for Progressive Judaism.



Gilbert Lederman

Interfaith project at IJC



Brian Doyle (I) listens at IJC interfaith event

On June 4 IJC member Brian Doyle took part in a panel discussion with Imam Ilber Redzepi and Bishop Luc van Looy (Ghent). Fasting and the rituals that go with it in Judaism, Islam and Christianity was the central theme. More than 70 people attended the event organised in Ghent.

Muezzin Rachid Renardo opened the proceedings with a beautiful recitation from the Qur'an and theologian Jonas Slaats moderated. An equally beautiful musical interlude was provided by Osama Abdulrasol and Helena Schoeters.

Following the discussions, attendees moved to the dining room for a delicious iftar provided by Refu Interim (refuinterim.be), an organisation that helps find work for refugees. The muezzin called us to prayer and recited a blessing to 'break the fast' of Ramadan.

While the June 4 event focused on Ramadan, a similar event is planned for September 24 in which Jewish fasting will be the central theme; and in March 2018 the focus will be on Christian fasting.

A Bar Mitzvah thank you!

Dear Members of the Beth Hillel Community,

On the occasion of the Shacharit Shabbat Service on May 27, I introduced myself to you as a young adult. You held out your hands to me and I joined you. I know that I already said it while I was reading my drasha, but once again



Rabbi Marc Neiger and Simon Dobruszkes

thank you all for your presence, your generosity, your presents and your compliments.

It was not easy to prepare for this Bar Mitzvah. Six months were dedicated to the studies of my parasha and to the composition of my drasha. A big thank you to Catherine Neiger and all the teachers of Talmud Torah.

Simon Dobruszkes

New member of the synagogue Beth Hillel

Parashat Beha'alotcha Numbers 8:1-12:16



Sanctuary of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, Amsterdam

"When you set the lamps, let the seven lamps give light at the front of the lampstand" (Bamidbar 8:2). Aharon has been told by God to place the golden menorah in the Mishkan in such a way that the light will shine to the front.

The sanctuary in the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in Amsterdam is constructed in such a way that the light shines outward. The windows and balconies of our synagogue, built in 2010, makes the connection between the outer and inner worlds – a connection between the world around us, which we are part of, and the Jewish world. The idea is that the light that we carry, from generation to generation, l'dor vador, shines from inside out and from outside in. The windows on the east and west sides of the Synagogue are a menorah in themselves; that is the shape we designed with the architect. The seven branches on both sides lead the congregants, in a symbolic way, to the balconies and the ground floor. On the mizrach (east) side the Aron decorates the synagogue area, and at the same time it forms the middle, vertical branch of the menorah, with the three branches on both sides.

Our Jewish Community (1,080 families) wants to be part of the world, but we also have something to give to the world. That is the essence of the light – we give to the world around us. We are leading the dialogue with the Muslims around us (started some 12 years ago).

We want to show the world that our light does not shine only inward, but outward, and we want to be an example of how Jews should take their stand in the larger world. We have strong and friendly connections with mosques, as well as churches and other organisations. We try to be a light among the nations, to inspire both others and ourselves.

Fire, light, has two sides. On the one hand if you don't act responsibly with fire, you might burn yourself, a house might be destroyed by flames. Even the fire within us can ruin us if we become over-zealous in something we do. It might also harm others and us. However, if we light the fire and keep it burning in a proper way, and we guard it so that it is not extinguished, then we are doing the right thing - keeping our lights burning, as the golden menorah was kept burning by the kohanim in the Mishkan and the Temples.

It is our task to keep the fire burning by learning, teaching, being connected to the outer world, while simultaneously maintaining our inner Jewish world. It is a balance to keep, which is not easy.

Rabbi Menno ten Brink

Talking about God

Introduced by the Dean of the Levisson Institute, Rabbi Menno ten Brink, the Levisson Institute (training rabbis, chazzanim and teachers in The Netherlands) organised an afternoon on May 28 to discuss about God.

God-talk is not really very popular. Jews usually ask: what do you do, not what do you believe. Or do you believe? But we had a good turnout of almost 50 people who listened and discussed about God.

Rabbi Albert Ringer (a graduate of the Levisson Institute) spoke about Rabbi Levi Yitschak of Berdichev (1740-1809) and his ideas of a God far away (transcendent) and a God who is nearby (immanent). Both are present in Judaism, but how do we feel God today?

Philosopher Yoram

Stein explained how the famous Dutch Jewish philosopher Spinoza thought about God. For Spinoza there was no doubt, but God explicitly exists and God is in everything and everywhere. Without God nature cannot exist. Real religion is to act according to the knowledge of God. It is our task to learn and try to find God in everything we do.

Francine Püttmann, Levisson Institute, Amsterdam



L-R: Yoram Stein and Rabbi Albert Ringer
Photo by Philip Menco

Spiritual workshop at Beit Warszawa

We held an open workshop on Jewish Meditation and Kabbalah led by Rabbi Olivier BenHaim from Seattle on Saturday May 27. Rabbi Olivier promotes Jewish spirituality supporting integration of mind, body and spirit.

During his workshops, he teaches how to express yourself in the surrounding world. Rabbi Olivier has been recently recognised as one of the 20 most inspiring rabbis in the US by *Moment Magazine*.

We hope that

Rabbi BenHaim will visit Beit Warszawa Synagogue again in the future.



Rabbi Olivier BenHaim

News from Keren Or, Lyon

The month of June is marked by large events in our community. First of all, Timothé, Lila and Thomas celebrated their Bat/Bar Mitzvah at Keren Or. We are delighted to have share this moment with them along with their families.

The new Board of Directors, in collaboration with the volunteers who joined us at our General Assembly, is actively preparing the beginning of the new school year together with our future rabbi, Haim Casas.

On Tuesday June 13 the community celebrated its communal Shavuot with Haim Casas, in the company of Pastor Nicole Fabre and our Muslim friend Hafid Sekhri. It was a wonderful opportunity for all to exchange their views on the welcome of the foreigner in their different traditions.



Student rabbi and soon Rabbi Haim Casas leads the Shavuot service at Keren Or, Lyon



Rabbi Dr René Pfertzel

After the Havdalah Service on the evening of June 17, we marked the farewell of Rabbi René Pfertzel, who shortly, after over a decade with the Jewish Community in Lyon, will be moving to a new role in the UK. It was an opportunity for the community to thank him for his involvement in Keren Or and to wish him all the best for the future.

We were happy that so many were able to join us.

Pamela Vennin
President

Discover Itoni Magazine No 72

May - June 2017. The 72nd issue of Itoni has just come out! It includes an editorial by Haim Casas on Shavuot, an article on Kashrut by Claude Birman reprinted by F Guedj, an article on Shavuot by Christel Jenoudet, and an article on Karima Berger's book "The Attentive Ones, Dialogue with Etty Hillesum" by Brigitte Frois. Itoni also includes cultural briefs and future service programmes.

[Download](#) the latest issue. [Browse](#) the latest issue.



ULIF News

Kol Nidre concert at ULIF, Paris

A *Kol Nidrei* concert took place at the ULIF-Copernic synagogue on May 21. This was a very special event for several reasons.

Three world premieres: Alexandre Tansman's *Kol Nidrei*: Tansman, born in Poland, settled in France in 1919 where he died in 1986. Benoit Menut's *Kol Nidre* for string quartet: this piece was commissioned by Copernic and premiered by the "Quatuor Copernic". Jean-François Zygel's *Kol Nidre* for solo piano: Zygel is a well-known improviser, composer, teacher, also with popular TV shows. He premiered his *Kol Nidre* himself.

Three European premieres: Canadian cantor Eyal Bitton's *Kal Nidrei* for cantor and a *cappella* choir. Bitton is currently cantor of Beth Jacob, Hamilton, Ontario. Ben Zebelman's *Kol Nidrei Variations* for piano, violin and cello. Zebelman is from New York City. Sid Robinovitch's *Kol Nidrei* for solo classical guitar, played by French-Israeli guitar player Liat Cohen. Robinovitch is from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Also, Joachim Stutshevsky's *Kol Nidrei* (arranged for harp and cello) was played by Israeli harpist Sivan Magen and cellist Martine Bailly, former principal cellist of the Paris National Opera orchestra. Stutshevsky was born in Ukraine, then settled in Austria and left Austria at the time of *Anschluss* (1938) to Israel.

Finally, Ensemble Choral Copernic, one of Copernic's two amateur choirs, led by its French-Israeli chorus master Itai Daniel, performed his *Kol Nidrei* for choir, tenor, clarinet and string quartet to conclude the concert.

The synagogue was bulging to the seams!

Bruno Fraitag, ULIF Vice-Président



Liat Cohen

New CD released

I am happy to announce the release of my CD "Chants hébraïques et chants d'amour" (Hebrew Songs and Love Songs) on June 16 and the Release Concert on June 21 at Lamartine Paris 16th, on the Parisian label Calliope Records. The CD is also available at www.sofiafalkovitch.com. I look forward to your feedback!



Cantor Sofia Falkovitch
Mezzo-soprano

Tikkun Leil Shavuot at Kehilat Gesher, Paris

Just as Shavuot, the holiday, marks the end of the journey of our ancestors from slavery to the start of liberation - from Egypt to Sinai - so does this season celebrate our own journey, step by step, towards a fuller, more meaningful life... if we would only permit ourselves the time, the tools, and the commitment. This year, we gathered together for a meal with cheesecake craziness and studies at Kehilat Gesher, followed by an all-night communal study session with our sister community, CJL. We had several different subjects presented, read our texts, and asked – and who knows, maybe even answered – the questions we cannot answer alone. It was a communal celebration of Shavuot!

Rabbi Tom Cohen

Kehilat Gesher elects a new Board



Kehilat Gesher's new Board

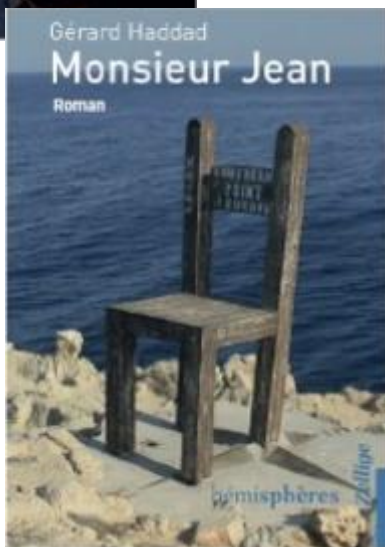
Book signing at AJTM, Paris

Gérard Haddad's New Book: Monsieur Jean



Psychiatrist,
psychoanalyst
and essayist
Gérard Haddad

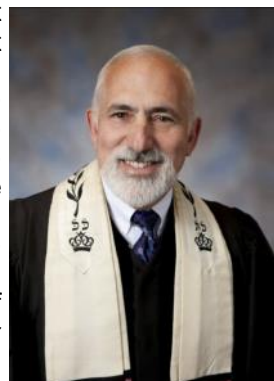
A saga that brings together members of two families of different culture and religion in the wake of WWII in Algeria: Oranese Jews and rural Muslims. On the occasion of the publication of Gérard Haddad's latest novel, AJTM convened a book signing on June 8 at 20:30.



Events at Beth Shalom Milan

We enjoyed a good turnout for services, lessons and events at Beth Shalom for the month of June

Tuesday, May 30. Shavuot at the rabbi's home at 7:30pm. Shavuot is the third of the Biblical Pilgrimage Festivals and celebrates the giving and receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. We asked ourselves, how did the Torah come into the world? Why did Steven Spielberg take the story of Torah and make a major motion picture recalling this holiday? What does the Torah say to us today? On Erev Shavuot it is customary to study late into the night, posing questions like these while eating dairy based foods. We came to the rabbi's apartment and brought our questions and other refreshments associated with this festival.



Rabbi David Whiman

Sunday, June 4. Torah Class at the rabbi's apartment at 11:00 am

Saturday, June 10. Services at 10:30 am. Rabbi David Whiman led the services and the title of his sermon was: How Does God Speak in the World? This was our last service until the Jewish New Year.

Wednesday June 14. General Assembly at the rabbi's apartment at 7:30 pm. Elections were held to appoint new members to the Board of Beth Shalom.

Sunday, June 18. Torah Class at the rabbi's apartment at 11:00 am

Friday, June 23. Kabbalat Shabbat dinner at the Rabbi's apartment at 19:30. This was also our last chance to say goodbye to Rabbi Whiman and his spouse David Zucker until they return in the fall.

Communications Team Beth Shalom Milano

New book in Italian and Arabic

At a time when the most open religious ministers should work for dialogue and peace; I would like to present this new book, *Il Padre Misericordioso*, The Merciful Father, which has just been published in Italy by Edizioni del Messaggero, an important Italian publishing house. This is the first book in a series where different

Vittorino Andreoli
Elena Bosetti
Haim Fabrizio Cipriani
Yahya Pallavicini

Introduzione
del card. Francesco Montenegro

**IL PADRE
MISERICORDIOSO**



religious representatives comment on texts coming from the various religious traditions.

This series, in which each text is published in Italian and Arabic, aims to overcome ignorance and to improve understanding, respect and knowledge of the different spiritual points of view, in a spirit of exchange and listening.

The section devoted to a possible Jewish reading is written by myself. The other chapters are written by an imam, a psychiatrist, and a professor of Christian theology.

Rabbi Haim Fabrizio Cipriani

ULIF Marseille, Kehilat Kedem Montpellier, Etz Haim Italy

Italy, Spain

Shavuot at Beth Hillel Roma



Rabbi Haim Cipriani

Beth Hillel Roma celebrated Shavuot with Rabbi Haim Cipriani who came to Rome for the occasion. On Tuesday May 30 at 18:30 Rabbi Cipriani met with the youngest children. At 19:30 tefillah followed and then the usual community dinner. All the participants were invited to contribute with dairy based food as per the Shavuot tradition and as second option with sweet or kosher wine, or alternatively with a contribution of €10.

At 21:00 there was a conversation on the theme 'Homosexuality in Jewish Law'. Rabbi Cipriani spoke on 'Thoughts and Rabbinical Insights'; Marco Fiammelli, president of Magen David Keshet talked about 'History of the LGBT movement with a focus on Jewish organisations'; and Federico D'Agostino presented 'The Reform movement and equality, a complex history of changes.'

On Wednesday May 31 at 10:00 there was a Shavuot tefillah with Rabbi Cipriani.

Lev Chadash Milan offers the History of the Jewish People

Elena Lea Bartolini is a professor at the Center for Studies of the Near East in Milan and author of many books and articles on Judaism. She is part of Teshuvah's inter-faith group and is engaged at the local and national level in dialogue between churches and Jews. Already begun on May 29 at Lev Chadash, she will teach The History of the Jewish People, From Antiquity to the Middle Ages in five classes over June and July. The cost is €90.



Elena Lea Bartolini

Italian Federation for Progressive Judaism



L-R: Miriam Kramer, EUPJ Chairman; Fabio Fantini, Beth Hillel Rome; Joyce Bigio, Lev Chadash Milan; David Pollak, EUPJ Treasurer ; Rabbi Joel Oseran, Beth Hillel Rome.

Dear Members of the Italian Progressive Communities, Friends and Supporters, We are happy to announce that the Federazione Italiana dell'Ebraismo Progressivo (FIEP) was ratified on May 19 in Jerusalem at the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) General Assembly. FIEP unites our four congregations: Beth Hillel - Rome, Beth Shalom - Milan, Lev Chadash - Milan and Shir Chadash - Florence. We, the Progressive Jewish Communities of Italy, are at a wonderful point in our development. We have positive lay leadership with broad participation throughout our congregations and strong assistance and guidance from our Progressive rabbis. We are therefore able to promote tolerance, inclusion, justice and our modern approach to Judaism as our path to spirituality, community and prayer.

Let us all say, "Shehechiyanu."

Joyce Bigio

Italian representative to the EUPJ Executive Board

Madrid community in the news



Yael Cobano, Ruth Timon, Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz and Zohar Ben-David participate in the Torah reading at the Reform Jewish Community of Madrid

This Progressive synagogue started by women is shaking up Jewish life in Spain. Read the full JTA article by Margarita Gokun Silver [here](#).

Spain, Portugal

Bet Shalom Barcelona events

Shavuot in Bet Shalom Barcelona is a holiday where the women of our community play a central role in its celebration. They read the Ten Commandments in different languages - Hebrew, Spanish, Catalan, Italian, English, French, Russian - as they stood together at the Bimah, showing solidarity with the Women of the Wall. We also honoured the tradition of studying on Shavuot with a special shiur by Rabbi Carl Astor, from Michigan, USA, who visited us with his family.



Rabbi Carl Astor

The theme of this shiur was "Psalm 23 and its relevance in our lives". The evening of celebration was completed with a wonderful community dinner where dairy products were at the centre of the table. In the same week, Bet Shalom hosted 13 members of Keren Or, the Jewish Liberal Community in Lyon, France, for Kabbalat Shabbat. We enjoyed a beautiful Shabbat together and strengthened links and friendship between our two communities. It was agreed that Bet Shalom will reciprocate the visit to Lyon very soon!

Beit Rambam video



A Purim moment from 'To Be Jewish in Seville'

I would like to share with you a wonderful short video that an American student has made about Beit Rambam of Seville. This is the community that I founded about seven years ago and which I am planning to visit several weekends next year.

[Open this link](#) and click on 'To Be Jewish in Seville'.

Haim Casas, Student Rabbi
Keren Or Synagogue Libéral de Lyon
Atid Comunitat Jueva de Catalunya

Majané Kaitz 2017

Atid's Netzer summer programme is from 18 to 29 July. Be sure to watch this exciting [video on YouTube](#). We have a new form of registration and payment for all events on our website. More information is [here](#).



Associação J. I. Hehaver
Sinagoga Ohel Jacob

| FUNDADA EM 1934 |

Outreach in Lisbon

Synagogue Ohel Jacob was invited to be part of a lecture about different religions in a secondary school in Lisbon on May 15. The school's name is Escola Secundária de Miraflores.

Two members participated, Rachel Yeshurun and me. We had 30 minutes to talk and we gave a brief overview of Judaism, our beliefs, our rituals, the Shoah, and the history of the Jews in Portugal. After our talk we opened up for questions and the students were quite curious and interested in Judaism.



Ohel Jacob outreach in Lisbon secondary school

We considered this outreach activity very important because our local society is quite overpowered by the Catholic Church and knows little or nothing at all about other religions. Judaism was a strong part of the history of Portugal and, as progressive and inclusive Jews, we are positioning ourselves at the forefront of outreach activities such as this one in our community. We feel it is very important to educate others about what Judaism is and about who we are as Progressive Jews. Prejudice and fear begin with ignorance and lack of knowledge about others. We are determined to help the light of knowledge shine brighter here in Portugal.

Ana Scherer

Tali Training at Atid

On Wednesday, June 15, from 3pm to 6pm, the TALI Training Seminar was held at our community, an method of Jewish studies from Israel. We had the assistance of the Director of the Rabbinical Seminary of Buenos Aires, Rabbi Ariel Stofenmacher.

The seminar was aimed at educators, and all those involved in training children and youth.



Germany

A new Torah scroll for Munich's Jews



Rabbi Tom Kucera with Beth Shalom Munich's new Torah scroll

In honour of the 10 - year service jubilee of Rabbi Tom Kucera, the Liberal Jewish Community in Munich, Beth Shalom, obtained, with the help of donations, a new Torah Scroll which was introduced on May 28. It took the London based Sofer Bernard Benarroch four months to write down the 304,805 letters, 79,976 words, and 5,844 verses. With the help of several guests of honour, according to Jewish tradition, the last 12 letters were added at Beth Shalom in the end of May.

The small but thriving community's vision for the future is a synagogue building and community centre of their own, based on plans by world renowned architect Daniel Libeskind.

Yet another volume from Potsdam



Book launch with Rabbi Prof Dr Walter Homolka (second from left)

On June 12 the German Bundestag introduced the 600 page-long book "Jewish and Israeli Law - An Introduction" (De Gruyter) written by Rabbi Walter Homolka and Law Professor Shimon Shetreet, who, on this occasion, also spoke about "Contemporary Issues of Law and Religion in Israel in Historic Perspectives".



JASSBERLIN July 31 - August 20

Jewish Activism Summer School: Professor Jonathan Schorsch of Abraham Geiger College is organising a Jewish Activism Summer School for young adults aged 18-35. [Click here](#) for information.

Hamelin in May

We observed Memorial Day on May 9, the day Fascism was defeated by the allied troops in 1945 and marked the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces. We honour and thank our veterans, who sacrificed so much to free the world of the tyranny of Nazism. We gathered in the synagogue, presenting our veterans with flowers and gratitude. Those who are housebound were also visited and thanked. We prayed, sang and shared stories and memories with one another. This day means so much to our members and it was good to be together. The day honours so many of our more senior members' lifetimes. Our thanks go to all who made the day memorable.



LJG Hamelin veterans

On Sunday May 14 we celebrated our annual Lag B'Omer picnic. Lag B'Omer is celebrated on the 33rd day between Pesach and Shavuot. Faina Pelts read a sermon that Rabbi Ulrike Offenbergl had prepared for the day. The festival is traditionally celebrated with a picnic and barbeque outdoors. Kosher hotdogs and drinks were enjoyed, cooked perfectly by our grill masters: Arkadij, Petro, Valerij and Sascha. The table was loaded with delicious home-made vegetarian dishes. The sun didn't let us down, shining on us in the garden of the Lutheran Church where we meet every year. We thank Pastor Sophia Sander and her congregation for hosting us in their lovely garden.

Shavuot is a joyous festival which goes hand in hand with Pesach. Pesach celebrates our freedom from slavery and Shavuot celebrates the giving of the Law. Freedom without law or law without freedom would be meaningless. We see once again that the Torah's teachings and wisdom has led the way to what we see as modern democratic thought. The congregation, led by Rabbi Offenbergl, celebrated with an Erev Shavuot service, followed by a Tikkun ha Leila, an evening study session and a morning Shavuot service the following day. On Shavuot morning we held a Cheesecake Contest and had a qualified jury of connoisseurs to select the best of the best. Everyone won as there was loads to eat! Pictures will be available in next month's newsletter.

The final meeting of this year's Inter-Religious Women's Group was 5:00 pm on May 31. Rabbi Offenbergl offered a Torah reading and lead a discussion in keeping with the spirit of Shavuot.

Rachel Dohme

Read the June newsletter [here](#).

Amos Oz honoured for 'freedom of thought'



**Rabbi Dr Walter Homolka presenting the
Abraham Geiger Prize to Amos Oz**

Following his shortlisting for the 2017 Man Booker prize, author Amos Oz, Israel's liberal voice of conscience, has taken home from Berlin the Abraham Geiger Prize.

The celebrated Israeli writer received Germany's prestigious Abraham Geiger Prize during the 36th German Protestant Church Biennial in the presence of an audience of 1,200 guests. Bestowed by the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam, near Berlin, Rabbi Walter Homolka, the college rector, said Oz is among those who "firmly believe in the ability of people to change the world for the better."

The €10,000 prize, which was awarded to Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2015, is named in honour of progressive Rabbi Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), and recognises personalities who promote pluralism "and are committed to openness, courage, tolerance and freedom of thought."

In God's name en route

Listen to the podcast *In Gottes Namen unterwegs* on German radio by the rabbi, author, cabaret artist, songwriter and jazz singer Dr Walter Rothschild in conversation with Ulrike Timm [here](#).



Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild on the air

Chawurah Gescher, Freiburg

Visit to the exhibition "The Female Side of God"

On a sunny day in May, a group from Gescher travelled along Lake Constance in Switzerland to the picturesque town of Hohenems in Austria where we had a guided tour of the exhibition "The Female Side of God" in the Jewish Museum. The visitor descends into the atmospheric vault of the museum which is in luminous silver, while mirrors and shiny blue discs highlight the exhibits. The museum poses the monotheistic religions the challenging question whether it is possible to see the "one and only God" as other than male, according to Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions. The exhibition presents the sources that yielded the notion of the one God and the images of the female in religious tradition, especially in Judaism. It also reveals hidden and suppressed traditions of different perceptions of the divine, for example as represented by modern artists. After Hohenems, the exhibition travels to Frankfurt and Washington.

There then followed a tour of the Jewish quarter of Hohenems, tracing its 300 years of Jewish history from its development into a thriving community which at one time numbered over 500, to its destruction. Our group were surprised to discover that the renowned cantor and composer, Salomon Sulzer, was born in Hohenems where he was the cantor until he was appointed chief cantor in Vienna in 1826.



Bat Mitzvah student cleaning a stolpersteine

Bat Mitzvah project

Our bat mitzvah student started her mitzvah project, preserving the "stolpersteine", the stumbling stones set into the pavement as a memorial to the individual victims of Nazism. Guenter Deming, the initiator of the project in Freiburg, gave her and some classmates historical background information before they set to work.

Cleaning the stones required elbow grease and the correct technique. Once the names were visible again, the girls were interested to find out more about these victims who once lived in their area. This meaningful project ensures that the fate of these individuals who stand for so many, will continued to be remembered by future generations.

Liberal Judaism's Day of Celebration

No topic was off the table at the Liberal Judaism Day of Celebration 2017, as 250 impassioned Jews of all ages debated everything from the impact of the recent UK general election to fighting antisemitism to how to use faith as a force for good.

Delegates from 32 communities around England, as well as Edinburgh and Copenhagen, packed into Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NPLS) for the event, which tackled the question 'Is Liberal Judaism Political Judaism?'

The first keynote speaker Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin – chaplain to both the Queen and the Speaker of the House of Commons – challenged delegates to live their faith, arguing that helping others and speaking up for the vulnerable was even more important than attendance at synagogue or church. She said: "It is better to live according to religion's values than to preach religion on street corners. When we live what our faith means... that is when we will change the world."

The second keynote speaker Lord (Alf) Dubs – who came to Britain on the Kindertransport in 1939 and is a renowned campaigner for today's refugees – spoke passionately on pressuring our politicians to do more to help those fleeing persecution abroad.

He said: "The Liberal Jewish community's unswerving support of the rights of vulnerable children has been critical and impressive. We must always remember that every child brought to safety is a victory for humanity."

Other speakers at the Day of Celebration included Lord (Danny) Finkelstein, associate editor of The Times; academic David Hirsh; Board of Deputies' chief executive Gillian Merron; and Emily Holzhausen OBE, director of policy and public affairs at Carers UK. The key sessions in the main hall were also broadcast to homes around the world, via the NPLS live streaming service.

Rabbi Danny Rich, senior rabbi of Liberal Judaism, said: "As you would expect, Liberal Judaism set itself a difficult and controversial topic. But its rabbis, lay congregants and staff approached it with depth, breadth, thoughtfulness, inclusiveness and a determination to transform thinking and talking into practical ways of bringing Liberal Jewish values and the Liberal Judaism message to our needful society." The day also included a full LJY-Netzer programme of youth events, including song, dance, discussion and games.

As well as the Day of Celebration itself, a whole weekend of events included a Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday night at East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue and Saturday's Day Celebrating Liberal Jewish Music at NPLS. Rabbi Rebecca Birk, chair of the Day of Celebration organising committee, concluded: "Liberal Judaism has always been at the vanguard spiritually and ethically – punching well above our weight in the Jewish community and beyond."

"The Day of Celebration was truly that, as 250 of us recognised the progress and tradition that animates our prayer, our learning, our music and our just action."

Reform Judaism Musical Conference



We are delighted to open bookings for [Shirei Chagigah](#), our music conference on July 6-9. Summer is just around the corner and Shirei Chagigah, our biennial music conference isn't far away. Above are some pictures from past events; will you be in this year's pictures? We hope to see you there! Find out more about Shirei Chagigah and book your place [here now](#).

Lag b'Omer at Sukkat Shalom, Edinburgh



Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh Lag B'Omer picnic

Lag b'Omer was a picnic extravaganza. Several Sukkat Shalom families enjoyed a wonderful day out in the Callendar Park woods in Falkirk where they joined many other Jewish families from across Scotland. The woods are a great place to visit, and surprisingly wild for somewhere so close to the town. The Forestry Commission staff put on lots of activities for the children, such as archery for the older ones, making fairy houses for the little ones, story-telling for everyone and much more. We are most grateful to the sponsors of the event, SCoJeC and the Newton Mearns Hebrew Congregation and to all the volunteers who helped.

The event concluded with demonstrations of fire juggling



Rabbi and imam 'Great Together'



Imam Qari Asim MBE and Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

Earlier this month the Great Get Together marked the first anniversary of the murder of MP Jo Cox with events around the country that weekend. The rabbi and imam come from two different Yorkshire communities, but exactly as Jo Cox MP once told Parliament, they have so much more in common than that which divides them.

Imam Qari Asim MBE and Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz took part in a moving video using messages held up on cue cards that reveal just how much they have in common. The idea was borrowed from the film *Love Actually* where a man uses the cards to declare his feelings. In their video, the two faith leaders share their love of their two-year old children, of "God's own country" Yorkshire and of food – plus a mutual aversion to bacon sandwiches.

The video ends with the message 'Great Together'. Imam Qari, the Imam of Leeds Makkah Mosque says: "It was very moving to see how people from all backgrounds came together recently to show unity after the horrific attacks in London and Manchester."

Interfaith art exhibition brings people together at BHPS

More than 500 people of all faiths, and none, attended an open house interfaith art exhibition, which ran at Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue (BHPS) throughout May.

The synagogue has a long-standing commitment to interfaith work in the local area and, as part of the Brighton Festival this year, hosted the exhibition, welcoming visitors over four Sundays during the month.

Titled 'Reflections of the Divine: artwork inspired by sacred art traditions', it included an amazing array of multimedia works – inspired by Jewish, Islamic, Daoist and Christian traditions. Each week, a different artist gave a talk about their work.

The works by Andrew Franks, Jess Wood, Tracy Wideman and Sandra Hill represented contemporary expressions of the sacred using traditional methods and materials brought to life through four artists' unique perspectives of the divine.

Jess Wood, who also acted as curator, said: "At a time of great turmoil in our country, it was inspiring to see artists working with different sacred traditions come together to create beauty, peace and harmony in a Jewish space open to all."

The Montagu centre is now open

Liberal Judaism is pleased to announce that the Montagu Centre is up and running. We're still sorting out the final details but we are almost back to normal.

Thank you for your patience during the process.

Leo Baeck College admits eight new rabbinical students

Eight students from Britain, Germany and France will start on Leo Baeck College's acclaimed five-year rabbinic programme in September. The class will encompass an eclectic range of people from a youth movement worker to the College's former bible lecturer to a campaigning French television journalist.

Leo Baeck College (LBC) is a pre-eminent institution of Jewish scholarship and learning. Almost every serving Liberal and Reform rabbi in the UK, and many abroad, trained at LBC.

Students spend five years at the College training for the rabbinate. The depth and intensity of the programme is a reflection of the centrality of the College in the life of the Progressive Jewish world in the UK and the rest of Europe.

General criteria for admissions are 1) appropriate motivation for undertaking the rabbinic programme, 2) academic ability, 3) willingness and potential to grow and develop, 4) religious commitment and personal integrity 5) dedication to the principles of Progressive Judaism and 6) intellectual maturity.

The Leo Baeck College rabbinic programme offers a Graduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, a Postgraduate Diploma in Hebrew and Jewish Studies and an MA in Applied Rabbinic Theology.

The full programme can be found [here](#).

Rabbi Benji Stanley is new Minister of Westminster Synagogue

At the 59th Annual General Meeting of Westminster Synagogue held on 25 May, Rabbi Benji Stanley was unanimously elected as Minister of the Congregation in succession to Rabbi Dr Thomas Salamon, who has served the community with great distinction since 1997.

Rabbi Stanley will take up his post towards the end of 2017. After a period of sabbatical it is expected that Rabbi Salamon will become Minister Emeritus.

Read the full story [here](#).



Rabbis Benji Stanley and Thomas Salamon



Leo Baeck College's 2016-17 year

Leo Baeck College underwent a Review of Higher Education Alternate Providers by the QAA [Quality Assurance Agency].

During 2016/17 the College continued to celebrate its 60th anniversary year, which began in November 2016 with a Service of Celebration that was held at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue. The celebrations include a fundraising dinner at the Institute of Directors with guest speaker, Diane Lees, OBE, Director General of the Imperial War Museum on June 6.

The first Lionel Blue Lecture was held in April at Alyth Synagogue. The lecture was delivered by the Right Honourable and Right Reverend John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, and marks the beginning of an annual lecture to honour Rabbi Lionel Blue.

As part of the fundraising strategy, the College will focus on endowing two faculty chairs: the Rabbi Lionel Blue Chair in the Public Engagement in Progressive Judaism and the Rabbi Sheila Shulman Fellowship in Jewish Feminist Theology.

The ordination of seven rabbinic students will be held at West London Synagogue. Six of the ordinands are British students. The final student will be the first Spanish-born Progressive rabbi to be ordained in Jewish history.

Four MA students in Jewish Educational Leadership will continue their studies towards this new award in 2016/17 academic year.

Leo Baeck College hosted a 'viva' day to celebrate the research undertaken by the MA in Applied Rabbinic Theology students to which faculty, alumni, and patrons were invited.

A group of theology graduate students from the University of Paderborn, Germany will join rabbinic students at the college for a seminar in June.

Representatives of the College, including students, attended the World Union for Progressive Judaism's Connections conference in Jerusalem in May.

Click the logos for news of our UK movements



WUPJ 1949 – 2017

WUPJ. The World Union for Progressive Judaism was founded by Lily Montagu in 1926. Its Sixth International Conference under the title The Mission of Judaism – Its Present-Day Application was held in July 1949 in London. I came as a Youth Delegate from Holland accompanied by Otto Frank who had supported his Amsterdam Liberal Congregation and WUPJ generously. One hundred delegates from 13 countries attended. Shabbat eve services were offered at five congregations, and after that private hospitality was provided. I had the fortune to be invited by "Miss Lily" to her home which also served at the administrative office of WUPJ.

Continental Progressive congregations are more traditional. So I was surprised that at the Shabbat service at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue no one except the officiants wore a kippah or tallit. There was only one aliyah, no procession of the Torah, very little Hebrew and Havdalah was unknown. The President, Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck z'l, challenged and inspired us and twice (in his presidential and keynote speeches), ended with the words: "God waits for us!" The Youth Section held a dance and a session at which one of the speakers was Mr J Rayner!



Rabbi Harry Jacobi MBE

Contrast 2017. Over 450 delegates from 32 countries participated. Erev Shabbat was celebrated in an open tent at the former railway station in Jerusalem. One thousand people joined in joyful Hebrew songs and dances. Eight Progressive congregations around Jerusalem combined and welcomed the wider Jerusalem public to celebrate Shabbat together. Shabbat morning at Bet Shmuel overlooking the old city was also most joyful and enthusiastic, with five musicians leading the service. Whilst at previous conferences passages were read by delegates in their own language, this time the whole service was all in Hebrew with seven aliyot. The Torah was processed accompanied by singing and dancing to the jolly "Vehaer Eynenu" and "Al Shelosha Devarim". The popular president of the World Union Rabbi Daniel Freeland gave a challenging sermon.

The greatest contrast between 1949 and now is one of mood. Soon after the trauma of the Shoah the mood was sober, anxious and contemplative. Now I was delighted to see a movement of which everyone was proud, confident and optimistic.

Therefore we sang the traditional Chasak, Chasak, Venitchasek at the end of Leviticus with enthusiasm: We are strong and will strengthen one another!

Rabbi Harry Jacobi MBE



Creating Meaningful Connections: Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators, July 13-23

Educating the educators is one of the Bergman Seminar's guiding principles. An intensive 10-day programme for Progressive Jewish Educators from around the world, the Bergman Seminar, led by the WUPJ's Anita Saltz International Education Center, combines classroom and text study with site visits and face-to-face encounters with individuals and educational projects that explore the multitude of Jewish narratives inside and outside of Israel. For more information, including the schedule and fees, [click here](#).



Bergman Seminar participants



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.

WUPJ 2017 Calendar

July 13-23 - Jerusalem

[The Bergman Seminar for Jewish Educators](#)

July 19-30 - Europe

[WUPJ/Netzer Summer Youth Camp Mission](#)

Read the WUPJ Annual Report



The World Union is growing and strengthening Reform and Progressive Judaism around the world thanks to our support and involvement. We are proud to introduce our 2016 Annual Report and invite you to learn more about our impact and activities.

[Click here](#) to read it online.

Pictures from Connections 2017



Innovation and Inspiration came together in Jerusalem. Speakers, services and special events recognised innovation and creativity as core values and drivers of Progressive Judaism.

View the photos and read the stories from our four-day biennial conference that ended on May 20 following a meaningful and inspiring programme of speakers, special events, Shabbat services, site visits and more.

We live streamed keynote speakers, musical performances and special events on our [Facebook page](#). Click [here to view the videos](#) and share them with your friends, family and communities.

We uploaded photos with highlights of each day of CONNECTIONS 2017 onto Flickr so you can view and download pictures of yourselves, regional leadership and community members in Jerusalem. Click [here](#) to start.

Newspapers in Israel and around the world covered CONNECTIONS. Click [here](#) to see all the articles.

Centered around the theme "Milestones & Innovations," in celebration of the WUPJ's 90th anniversary, the four-day biennial event drew over 450 lay leaders, rabbis, students and congregants from Progressive, Reform, and Liberal communities from 30 countries, including more than 100 young adults. For many, coming together and magnifying our voices through prayer, learning and song encapsulated the heart and soul of our movement.