



European Union for Progressive Judaism

July~August 2017 Newsletter

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Chairman's message

Despite summer's arrival there has been no slacking of EUPJ's work. Connections 2017 is now a memory but meeting and exchanging ideas with so many of our colleagues from all over the world has led to many spin-offs. Of course David Pollak and his team are giving much attention to the arrangements for our conference next April in Prague and on page three you will read the latest news about it.



Miriam Kramer

Most of us feel a strong link with Israel and want to be supportive. The recent decisions of the Israeli government, particularly concerning conversion and worship at the Kotel, make that more challenging at the moment. Along with several other Jewish organisations WUPJ has made representations but sadly the Israeli government does not appear to be listening. The stranglehold by ultra-Orthodox factions on religious life in Israel seems to be ever-stronger and, of course, flies in the face of the country's constitution which guarantees freedom of worship for all.

These two matters are vital to us. For those who wish to become part of *klal Yisrael* we offer a rigorous programme of study, action and commitment. When candidates appear before our *Batei Din* they know full well the responsibilities they are about to undertake. So impressive are our conversions that they've been recognised by the State of Israel for *Aliyah* purposes. And prayer at the Kotel? Who among us can forget the memorable *shacharit* service when 13 of our colleagues from Latin America became *Bnot Mitzvah* for the first time during Connections 2017? The Israeli government must think again about bending to ultra-Orthodox pressures regarding these changes of policy.

This month seems to be the month of my travels to places whose names begin with B. The first destination was Barcelona where I joined Atid in celebrating its 25th anniversary. As the first Progressive Jewish community in Spain this marked an important milestone. Then there was Budapest when I joined Rabbi Ariel Pollak for another one of the Shabbat weekends that are part of the West London Synagogue/EUPJ initiative. And shortly after this newsletter is published I will be near Bonn for UpJ's annual conference.

We won't be publishing in August so I wish you all (at least those in the northern hemisphere) a wonderful summer. To our friends in the southern hemisphere I wish an equally wonderful winter.

Miriam Kramer

Leo Baeck College ordains seven rabbis



Historic ordination of seven Progressive rabbis
at Leo Baeck College in London on June 10

Leo Baeck College makes history again. Seven new European Progressive rabbis have been ordained by Leo Baeck College, including the first ever Spanish-born Progressive rabbi.

Rabbi Haim Casas will be a trailblazer when he returns home to begin work in communities in Spain, as well as France and Switzerland. He was one of the class of seven new Reform and Liberal rabbis ordained, in front of 500 guests at West London Synagogue, after studying for five years on Leo Baeck College's acclaimed Rabbinic programme.

Leo Baeck College principal Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris said: "In our 60th anniversary year, we could not be prouder to be carrying on the heritage of this transformational institution through these seven inspirational rabbis."

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EUPJ Honorary Officers and Staff 2016

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Community Communications July 2017

We are pleased to announce the appointment of the EUPJ Communications Coordinator. Sarah Smerald will be joining us as of the beginning of September. She will be working from the EUPJ office normally on Thursdays.

Daughter of Anthony and Vivien Feather, well-respected members of West London Synagogue (WLS), she is also a member of WLS with her husband Scott and daughter.

Once Sarah is settled into the role she will be contacting new communities set up in the last 24 months or so, to see where established EUPJ communities can form a mentoring twinning arrangement.

She will also be looking to twin Ukrainian communities that wish to have a greater involvement with European Progressive Jews.

If you have a twinning arrangement that we may not be aware of then please contact us, as this will be helpful to build on for our twinning library.



Sarah Smerald

Michael Reik

NPLS Trust funding opportunity

The next meeting of the NLPS Trust will be held on Tuesday 3 October 2017. Please [contact Sandra Greenberg](#), the Trust's administrator to request a grant application form. Grant application forms must be returned by Friday 1 September to be considered. [Click here for more details.](#)

Editor required

Arthur Buchman, who has given his time and expertise voluntarily to editing and producing our EUPJ Newsletter in such a professional manner for more than 10 years, is sadly stepping down due to other commitments. His last issue will be in September.

Applications to succeed him are invited. The successful candidate must be fluent in written English, must be familiar with the aims and ethos of EUPJ, and must be competent with desktop publishing software.

It may be possible to split the role into two: one person to write and edit content and a second with the technical skills to produce our attractive newsletter.

Please send a cv and letter of application to chairman@eupj.org stating your relevant experience as well as whether you are applying for one or both of the functions. **The deadline for receiving applications is August 7th.**

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](#)



Ohel Jaakov, Lisbon

Please support

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



Rabbis for High Holy Days

Are you a rabbi wanting to serve a community over the High Holy Days? Or are you a congregation which needs a rabbi over that period?

Through the good offices of WUPJ's Rabbi Steve Burnstein we are inviting you to make contact so he can match rabbis and congregations. If you are a rabbi please indicate which languages you speak and if you are a community please let us know which languages are comprehensible to you.

We can make no promises but will try to make as many matches as we can. Rabbi Burnstein can be contacted at steve@wupj.org.il.

EUPJ Biennial Conference

Prague – a City of Dreams Regeneration 2018 - Building the Future EUPJ Biennial Conference in Prague



We have made excellent progress in producing a customised registration system as part of the EUPJ new website. All the wrinkles have, we hope, been ironed out and we are assured that we shall be ready to go live on September 1, so mark your diaries now. Remember, our conference runs from:

Thursday April 26 to Sunday April 29 with post conference tours running through to May 1.

Registration rates for this conference will be:

- Early bird from September 1 to December 31
- Standard rate from January 1 to February 28
- Late bookers rate from March 1 onwards

The fees will be as follows:

	£	€	\$
Early bird	320	400	420
Standard	350	440	460
Late booking	380	480	500
Young adults & student rabbis	160	200	210
Young leaders special	50	65	70



In keeping with the theme of our conference, **Regeneration - Building the Future**, we wish to encourage as many young people as possible to attend. We shall be inviting all our delegates to sponsor young leaders, young adults and student rabbis when completing their registration form. We shall also be approaching communities, patrons, and supporters of the EUPJ and Progressive Judaism for contributions which will help everyone to attend Conference. As in the past, the Roswell Fund, which has enabled hundreds of individuals

from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Spain and Italy to attend our conferences over the years, will again be offering grants of up to 85% of the early bird rate. However, those grants are limited and will not be available after December 31. And what's on offer? Apart from services, dinners, pageant and an action-packed programme, filled with speakers and workshops that will go to the core of what is important to all of us, we shall be looking to the future of our movement and Progressive Judaism and to those people who will lead and shape that future.



Beautiful Prague will form the backdrop to our conference experience. There will be a selection of tours, both on foot and by coach, which will feature visits to Prague's rich heritage of historic buildings and Jewish and general places of interest. Furthermore, we shall be offering day tours to follow the conference from the 29th April to 1st May, which will take us out of Prague to places such as Terezin, Karlovy Vary, Kolin, Kutna Hora, Cesky Krumlov and Plzen. Details of these tours and costs will be available as soon as possible.



We all hope that you and your friends and family will be able to share what promises to be an exciting, fulfilling and memorable experience in Prague next April.

David Pollak



First Spain-born Progressive rabbi Bet Shalom Barcelona events



Rabbi Haim Casas

(JTA) — Leo Baeck College, the first post-War rabbinical seminary in Europe for Progressive (Liberal and Reform) Jews, ordained the first ever Spain-born Progressive rabbi, the seminary's spokesperson said.

Rabbi Haim Casas, who was born in 1981 and raised in Cordoba, was ordained at a ceremony in London on June 10 along with six other rabbis at Leo Baeck College, the institution said in a statement. Rabbi Casas plans to return to Spain, where he will be serving that country's growing Progressive communities, as well as congregations in France and Switzerland.

Leslie Bergman, the previous president of the European Union for Progressive Judaism, confirmed to JTA that, to his knowledge, Casas is the first Spain-born Progressive rabbi ever ordained.

His ordination was "especially poignant," Leo Baeck College principal Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris said in the statement, as the "Jewish community in Spain has only re-emerged very recently" after its near-total destruction in the centuries that followed the mass expulsions and forceful conversions to Christianity that took place during the Spanish Inquisition from 1492 until its abolition in the 19th century.

Casas was ordained by Leo Baeck College dean Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh in Spanish, "respecting his Sephardi heritage and the truly historic nature of the ordination itself," the statement read.

In 2005, together with a Spanish couple who shared his passion for Sephardic Judaism, Casas started a cultural centre and museum called Casa de Sefarad in the heart of the Jewish quarter of Cordoba. In 2010, he opened Casa Mazal, a cultural café devoted to Sephardic gastronomy.

In recent years, Progressive communities have seen significant [growth](#) (click the link) in Spain as a result of a mix of factors, including heightened interest in Judaism, facilitated by the internet and the secularisation in society in that country, which used to be a dictatorship until the 1970s. The arrival of hundreds of Jewish families from Argentina, where Reform and Progressive Judaism is relatively popular within the Jewish community compared to continental Europe, has also contributed to the growth of that stream of Judaism in Spain.



European Beit Din at Bet Shalom in Barcelona

From June 30 to July 1 Bet Shalom hosted the European Beit Din of the EUPJ to Barcelona. We held a Shabbaton sponsored by the Union del Judaismo Progresista de Espana, UJPE.

It was a pleasure to be able to welcome Rabbis Jackie Tabick, Charles Wallach and Alona Lisitsa accompanied by Bet Shalom's Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz.

Bet Shalom welcomed the leaders of the Spanish progressive communities of Galicia, Andalucía, Valencia and Madrid for a historic and fruitful Shabbaton filled with brotherhood and friendship in which the communities discussed about the present and the future of Progressive Judaism in Spain as well as about new and innovative ways of collaboration and joint building of our communities. Through all these important events we were honoured to have with us Sonja Guentner, the representative of the EUPJ/WUPJ for Spain. Her presence and support in the debates and discussions that we held were extremely important and we are really grateful to her for being with us. We also celebrated a very special Havdalah ceremony with members of an inter-cultural group from the City Council of Barcelona who wanted to know more about the Jewish life in their city and their institutions. This was a great moment for the UJPE. Our community is very proud to collaborate in the growth of Judaism in Catalunya, in Spain and in Europe. and we want to share it with all of you.



On July 14 Bet Shalom in Barcelona held Kabbalat Shabbat on the beach at Playa del Bogatell for an innovative and spiritual experience. After tefilah we had a community Kiddush.

Spain

ATID celebrates 25th anniversary

On July 6 ATID celebrated its 25th anniversary with a gala dinner in Barcelona. At this event we had the honour of the presence the Honourable Ambassador of Israel Mr Daniel Kutner.

It was a very special evening with emotional speeches by the newly ordained Rabbi Haim Casas, Miriam Kramer (EUPJ Chairman), Luis Bassat (ATID founding member), Gabriel Ben Tasgal (first ATID madrij), Milky Rodan and Juliet Tepper, our president Silvia Leida and of course Ambassador Kutner. We enjoyed the pleasant and indispensable company of the founding members, members, friends of all the communities of Barcelona, Colegio Hatikva, municipal institutions, Mossos d'esquadra, and friends of ACAI, ARCCI, LICRA, Mozaika, B'Nei Brit and Israel per Catalunya.



Rabbi Haim Casas speaking at ATID's 25th Anniversary

We thank the different contributors that made this celebration possible: Claudia Faiman for the cake, Fede Szarfer for the video and the Font Parés family for the public address system. We also thank all the organisers for the work that has involved, the PCB volunteer team, Netzer, the Board of Directors and especially our ATID community members. Without you, today we would not turn 25.

There was time for memories and also, as it should be, looking to the future honouring the name of our ATID Community. An unforgettable night, mazal tov!



A clip from Yan Pekar's 3½ minute ATID video

Photographer Yan Pekar has captured many moments of that fantastic night. We thank him very sincerely for his work. Click on [this link](#) to see Yan's 25th Anniversary video. The gallery link is [here](#). Enter your email address and the password for the gallery: atid25. Soon we will provide the links to the videos of the speeches of that night.

Shoah exhibit in Galicia

Children's drawings at Ribadavia



Exhibition poster: "The children that lived and drew the Holocaust" at the entrance of the Jewish Information Centre in Ribadavia in Galicia

Terezin was a ghetto built inside a fortress near Prague and it was known as the 'waiting room for hell'. During the war it was the last stop for 150,000 Jewish adults and 15,000 Jewish children. Many Jewish intellectuals were sent there before being deported to their untimely deaths in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. Many drawings done clandestinely by children interned in this camp under the guidance of Fredericke Dicker Brandeis, an artist who spent the last years of her life teaching children (Auschwitz 1944, z"l).

We have obtained a number of facsimiles of these drawings from the Czech Council in Madrid and have embarked in an itinerant tour of this exhibition around Galicia in Spain.

The first stop for this exhibition was at the Fonseca palace in Santiago, the capital of Galicia, and then we moved it to Ribadavia, a town with a buoyant and prosperous Jewish community before the 1492 expulsion of the Jews from Spain. This second leg from this touring display was inaugurated at this city's Jewish information centre in the presence of the city hall's mayor and Galician parliament representatives at the end of May.

The art exhibit in this town was an unqualified success and has been prolonged until the third week of July. We expect to move this display later this year to the large Galician cities of Vigo and Coruña.

Fredy Sussman
Kehila Bnei Israel, Galicia

Hungary

Sim Shalom Budapest news

Our move to new premises is working out reasonably well for the time being. The Methodist Youth Club space is big enough for our Kabbalat services, and has a rather cosy feeling. Unfortunately it is not available on Saturdays, so we have our Saturday services and Torah Study sessions in the rooms of the Mozaik Hub, run by the JDC, which also has been giving us some management training in the past few months. And very unfortunately, neither place is big enough for holiday celebrations like Yom Kippur and Chanukah, so we will have to make other arrangements for those times. We really need to find our own premises to meet all our programme needs.



Sim Shalom's tables at Judafest in Budapest

Three weeks ago, Sim Shalom took part in a big Jewish street festival called Judafest, a wordplay on the name of our city. Our stand was extremely popular, with crowds of people around all the time. We had lots of things going on. We were selling high quality Judaica imported from Israel, Rabbi Kati Kelemen was holding an 'Ask the rabbi' session, fielding all kinds of questions about Judaism, and half a dozen people at a time were making their own Judaica items by painting on silk, which one of our members has developed to a high degree.

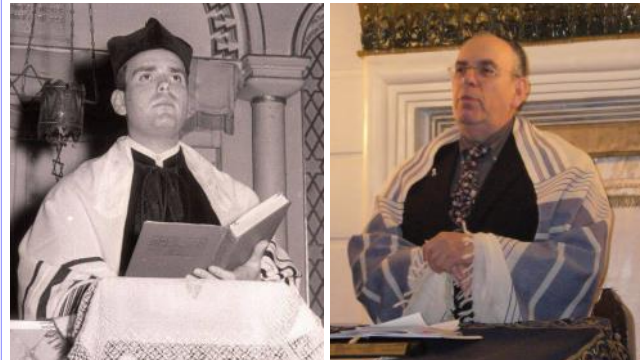
Many people stopped just see to what was going on, and then asked questions about Progressive Judaism, and Sim Shalom. Quite a bit of money was raised from the Judaica sales and silk painting activity, a welcome help to our treasury.

Taking advantage of the summer slowdown in our programme, Rabbi Kelemen is back in Berlin for three weeks studying at the Jewish Theological Faculty of Potsdam University, where the rabbinical students of Abraham Geiger College get their academic education. It was such a good experience during her sabbatical last year that she returned to top up her knowledge on Talmud and Midrash in preparation for her Adult Education courses next year. We're both enjoying the high level of culture available here in Berlin, the museums, operas, and the Jewish Film Festival currently going on. Berlin is a great place to visit! And it's very nice to renew friendships with some people we met last year.

Jess Weil, Treasurer

Rabbi Ferenc Raj honoured

Dr Ferenc Raj, Founding Rabbi of the Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation, was awarded the Golden Diploma



Rabbi Ferenc Raj in 1967 and today

On June 4, 2017, exactly 50 years after receiving his rabbinic diploma, Dr Ferenc Raj was awarded the Golden Diploma from the Budapest University of Jewish Studies, formerly known as the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary. The ceremony was held in the university's synagogue, where the awardee's family, friends, members of Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation, representatives of the Federation of Jewish Communities and other congregations, university professors, students and diplomats of several countries were present.

Dr Alfréd Schöner, Rector and Chief Rabbi addressed the awardee with earnest words – he reminisced lengthily about their mutual adventures and experiences, talked about the times they lived and studied together at the Rabbinical Seminary, where Rabbi Raj also taught him and other students. Dr Schöner cited him as a role model for Hungarian Jewry who passed on to the next generation of rabbis what he learned from his mentor: the love of Torah, God and the Jewish people.

Dr János Oláh, the Deputy Rector reflected on how Ferenc Raj remained in Hungary, trying to help others keep their faith in the late 1960s, how he then left the country five years after his ordination and how, after decades, he returned to Hungary to continue his work at Bet Orim, "The House of Lights," a Progressive congregation in Budapest. Gergely Nógrádi, the chief cantor, sang about the Tent of Peace, symbolically elevated above the invited guests.

Amidst the long applause of those present, the awardee delivered his speech in Hungarian and English from the pulpit, in which he thanked the Almighty for everything he has achieved and received throughout his life. He also emphasised the importance of the freedom and the knowledge he obtained not only from his masters, but particularly from his students. Rabbi Raj pleaded for a tent so big, that it one day would cover all Hungarian Jewish organisations, from the orthodox all the way to the Progressive.

The ceremony was closed with Oseh Shalom, the anthem of peace.

See the Hungarian page with photos [here](#).

New Yorkers in Budapest

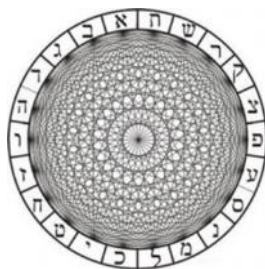


Beit Orim, Budapest, welcomes
Beit Simcha Torah, New York

The progressive Congregation Bét Orim, Budapest was honoured to meet the members and Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum of the New York based Congregation Beit Simchat Torah on June 7. During a shared Kabbalat Shabbat service a letter from Bét Orim's founding rabbi Ferenc Raj was presented. He wrote he was happy with the presence and active participation of Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in Budapest Pride 2017. This would galvanize not only the Progressive Jewish community but all good-hearted Hungarians who cannot tolerate prejudice and discrimination. Rabbi Raj added that Rabbi Kleinbaum had taught them lessons that one could not find in textbooks, how to create a community that champions a Judaism that rejoices in diversity, denounces social injustice wherever it exists and strives for the human rights for all people. The members of Bet Orim should take this teaching to heart so that they may stand together with the LGBTQ community at the coming Pride Shabbat and loudly and clearly every day say "no" to bigotry and hatred.

Jewish Meditation at Lev Chadash

Thursday June 29 at 20:45 was the most recent meeting for Jewish meditation with Sergio Donati at Lev Chadash Milan. The session was followed by a pot-luck dinner.



Beth Hillel Roma events

On Friday June 23 at 18:30 Rabbi Joel Oseran met the younger generation in Via dei Salumi 51. At 19:30 he officiated at a special Kabbalat Shabbat service with a personal greeting of appreciation to the outgoing Governing Board and the introduction and welcome of the incoming one. The new officers are Fabio Benjamin Fantini, Vice President; Pamela Harris, Secretary; and Maria Carla Ballo, Treasurer. Then followed a community dinner to which all were invited to contribute with vegetarian food, or as a second option with kosher deserts or wines, or alternatively with a contribution of €10.

Shiru l'Adonai shir chadash

The most unique experience of my lifetime occurred on Shabbat Chukat, July 1, when I had the privilege of officiating my first bat mitzvah at the Jewish Community of Liberec. Never have I been so inspired to fulfil the community's needs by officiating at this simcha. What made this recipe successful was that the bat mitzvah girl Anna's Weberová's mother, Kateřina, helped to coordinate the Progressive Jewish Community of Bejt Simcha in Prague and provided the ingredients for me to pursue my rabbinical training, thereby allowing me to play an integral role in the Jewish communities of the Czech Republic.



Anna Weberová and student
rabbi David Maxa

Anna's drash highlighted the notion that we must thrive, prosper and attain our goals as a community. And this must be intergenerational.

As a rabbinic student officiating my first bat mitzvah, I thought how three most important virtues of Judaism were fulfilled: teshuva, tefilah and tzedakah. These virtues were highlighted by our community and by the family's willingness to show their long-term commitment to help rejuvenate Czech Progressive Judaism.

It should also be noted that the day's spirituality was enhanced by Dr Ralph Selig, my teacher at Abraham Geiger College in Berlin, who brought together a sense of community by accompanying our service on the organ. The kavanah that this brought, stirred a yearning to revitalise a tradition that was very common prior to the Shoah.

I reflected, as we recited the *Tzadik Katamar* from Psalm 92, on the true meaning of those words: "*The righteous shall flourish like the palm, grow tall like the cedar of the Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Eternal One, they shall flourish in the courts of our God.*" May these seeds of Lebanon be the *etz chaim* for our community, so that I may continue to rebuild it, bless its new-born children, officiate at their bnei mitzvot, bring them under the chupah and sanctify the names of our loved ones just like Rabbi Dr Richard Feder z"l (1875–1970). As Rabbi Feder wrote in his farewell in the book *The Jewish Tragedy*: "*I stood by you and loved you with all my heart for the 25 years I spent with you.*" I hope that I, too, may build the bridge with the Czech Jewish community, so that its foundation will never be destroyed again.

David Maxa
Student Rabbi
Abraham Geiger College

Switzerland

GIL events

Photographs of a very lively Progressive synagogue, Communauté Juive Libérale de Genève, GIL



May 8: Jewish music with the Prague choir Michpachah



May 29: Carl Lutz who saved 62000 Hungarian Jews



June 12: Author Metin Arditi attracts a crowd



June 19: Author Michèle Sarde presentation



GIL rabbi: François Garaï, president: Alexander Dembitz

Migwan in Switzerland and the world

Migwan in Basel is actively connected as part of the Progressive Jewish world community. This yields a positive effect: we regularly receive inquiries from traveling guests or newcomers - often on the recommendation of community representatives of partner communities. The Platform of Liberal Jews of Switzerland (PLJS) represents the interests and values of the three Swiss Progressive communities: Basel, Zurich and Geneva. The PLJS cooperates closely with the Swiss Israelite Community Confederation (SIG) on common concerns.

The PLJS represents the three liberal communities in the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) and the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). In mid-May at the Connections 2017 conference in Jerusalem, 450 delegates from 30 countries represented around 1200 Progressive communities with some 1.8 million members. A strong presence was shown by Netzer-Olami, the World Youth Federation of WUPJ. This Jugendbund is already established in 15 countries including Germany and France - maybe soon in Switzerland? On May 9 Nicole Poëll retired after 15 years as PLJS President. At the AGM in Geneva, the PLJS delegates unanimously elected Jean-Marc Brunschwig and Peter Jossi as their new co-presidents.

For further information about Progressive Jewish life in the region you can visit the following links:

www.ofek.ch, www.gescher-freiburg.de,
www.jewishstudies.unibas.ch

Swiss views of Zionism

A contribution of the Swiss Jews to the 120-year Jubilee of the First Zionist Congress in Basel.

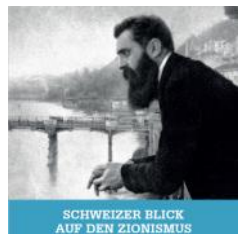
Monday, August 21, 5:30 pm

Hotel Les Trois Rois

Blumenrain 8, Basel

Speeches and discussions in German and an apéro. A

jointly sponsored event by confederations SIG and PLJS as well as the communities of Israelitische Gemeinde Basel (IGB) and Migwan. Please see the detailed program [here](#).



New Sefer Torah for Migwan

On Sunday August 27 in the morning (exact time to be announced) Migwan in Basel will return the Sefer Torah borrowed from JLG Or Chadash

in Vienna and at the same time will receive from JLG Or Chadash one of their [Memorial Czech Torah Scrolls](#). We plan to celebrate this with speeches from representatives of both communities, cultural contributions and an apéro.



Poland

A full weekend at Beit Warszawa

On Friday and Saturday July 7 & 8 Shabbat services at Beit Warszawa Synagogue were led by Rabbi Walter Rothschild from Berlin and Rabbi Haim Beliak. During the services Cantor Cindy Paley from Los Angeles joined us and taught us new melodies to famous and well-known songs.

On Saturday July 8 after lunch we had a programme of joint singing and learning of Shabbat songs with Cantor Paley. After a coffee break there were lectures and workshops led by Rabbi Beliak and Rabbi Rothschild. At the same time Cindy Paley gave a workshop for the participants preparing to become lay cantors (schatz).

As a cantor-soloist Cindy Paley is a leading figure in creative services of Lev Eisha and N'shama Minyan in Valley Beth Shalom congregation in Los Angeles. She performs beautiful interpretations of folk songs in Yiddish, love songs in Ladino and cheerful melodies of present-day Israel.



Cantor Cindy Paley



Rabbi Haim Beliak (seated left) and Beit Din preparation class

Following these activities, there were consultations with the rabbis for those preparing to go before the Beit Din. At 8:00 pm we held Havdalah at Beit Ki Tow on 12 Nowogrodzka Street. All who play instruments were invited to bring them along.

On Sunday afternoon July 9 we offered a family singing workshop with Cantor Paley at JCC at 9a Chmielna Street.

In the programme we had Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino songs. The event was attended by many individuals with friends and family, including kids.

That evening from 7:00-8:30 we had a concert by Cantor Paley and Piotr Menachem Mirski with accompanying musicians at Prom Kultury at 23 Brukselska Street.

On Sunday July 16 at 5 pm Dr Gerardo Ojeda gave a workshop on Jewish Meditation & Kavannah

We practiced three types of short meditations and worked on our own kavannah (intentions), to manifest our personal "Promised Land". This work was based on guidelines by Rabbi Olivier BenHaim www.betalef.org. The workshop was free.

Beit Polska leader to be a rabbi

Menachem Mirski, one of Beit Polska's prayer and community leaders will be moving back to California soon to begin his rabbinical studies at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles. LA residents are very excited to have Menachem back and hope that while he grows and studies, more communities in California will have a chance to enjoy his musical talents and beautiful Polish and Yiddish songs.



Menachem Mirski

Beit Polska at Connections 2017



R-L: Marek Jezowski, President of Beit Polska; unidentified representative of Ec Chaim; Artur Oledzki, member of Beit Polska; Dominika Zakrzewska, Beit Polska's Coordinator; Mati Kirschenbaum, rabbinical student from Poland; unidentified representative of Ec Chaim

Beit Polska's President, Marek Jezowski, Coordinator, Dominika Zakrzewska and two members of our Warsaw communities Artur Oledzki and Joe Smoczyński participated in this year's Connections Conference organised by the World Union for Progressive Judaism. This year's focus, Milestones & Innovation, honoured 200 years of Progressive Jewish history while exploring innovation in Jewish life and its impact on the future of our Jewish peoplehood.

Exciting Summer at Beit Polska

June and July are busy months for all our communities in Poland. Apart from Cantor Cindy Paley Beit Polska will also host Rabbis Alan Iser and Avi Havivi for series of lectures, as well as Rabbi Haim Dov Beliak for special Shabbat celebrations and meetings with 23 conversion candidates from Poland, who will soon meet with the Beit Din and complete their conversion process.



Rabbis Avi Havivi (left) and Alan Iser



Germany

AGK at Germany's Limmud Festival



The AG team at Germany's 10th Limmud Festival

"Who is wise? The one who learns from every person..." At Germany's 10th Limmud Festival, students, alumni, faculty and staff of Abraham Geiger College joined a 300+ crowd for a long weekend of Jewish learning, prayers, debate, and fun.

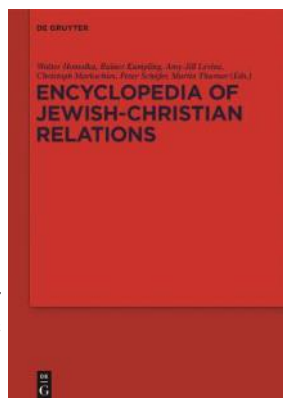
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Encyclopedia of Jewish-Christian Relations - Project Launch

The research and publication project "Encyclopedia of Jewish-Christian Relations" (EJCR) aims to create an overview of the centuries-long history of Jewish-Christian interaction up until the present day. This project was conceived to serve as a standard source for interdisciplinary research in the field of Jewish-Christian relations and up to 200 contributions by renowned international authors are planned. These authors will address their topics through the specific lens of Jewish-Christian relations; i.e. they will not examine Christian and Jewish aspects in isolation from one another but rather will highlight their points of interaction. Kathy Ehrensperger, Research Professor of New Testament in Jewish Perspective at Abraham Geiger College, serves as the EJCR's Executive Editor.

Abraham Geiger College is the initiator and recipient of the funding. We are grateful that the project has been granted €1 million for the next five years by the German Federal Ministry of Research and Education as well as other funding agencies. This will allow us to fund two junior researchers and a non-tenured professor for Christian-Jewish relations. The project is a joint initiative with the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

Rabbi Professor Dr Walter Homolka
Rector, Abraham Geiger College



News from LJG Hamelin



Poised for Shavuot at LJG Hamelin

During the last days of May, we celebrated the joyous festival of Shavuot. Rabbi Ulrike Seifert led our holiday observance, attended by many of our members. Our synagogue was decorated with boughs of green, fresh flowers and sheaths of wheat. Rabbi Seifert gathered us to the Torah to hear the reading of the Ten Commandments. We listened and heard and felt as if we too had stood at Mount Sinai. The sweetness of the moment was translated into a luscious cheesecake and blini buffet, created lovingly by Liubov. With our hearts and stomachs full, we began our Tikkun Leyl Shavuot. We read the book of Ruth aloud in Hebrew, Russian, German and English, as is our tradition. This old text is ever new and addresses personal identity and community inclusion. Once again we celebrated our beautiful holiday, easily finding a bridge between tradition and modernity.



Celebrating LJG Hamelin's 20th anniversary

Our 20th Anniversary

The Mishna teaches us that the age of 20 is a time of striving, driven by ambition to achieve something important. This certainly describes our first 20 years! On June 11 we opened our synagogue doors to over 400 guests. We offered a full day of programmes, including synagogue tours, an Ask-the-Rabbi session, workshops in Israeli dance, Jewish music, an Israel information table, Rabbi Seifert offered an Introduction to Hebrew, and the children were entertained at an arts and crafts corner.

Hamelin's mayor, Claudio Griesse, greeted everyone and thanked the congregation for "re-establishing Judaism in Hamelin and for giving the city this beautiful house of God."

The celebration ended with a foot-stamping concert from the Hannover Duo, "Stellena."

Rachel Dohme

Read the June newsletter [here](#).

Germany

Mazal tov!

On May 26 Abraham Geiger College celebrated the 20th anniversary of the ordination of Rabbi Walter Homolka with a festive Kiddush after a very special Erev Shabbat service at Berlin's Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue. Some two hundred friends and dignitaries joined us in wishing our rector a hearty *mazal tov*. To mark his twenty years in the rabbinate, Professor Homolka has shared his reflections on religion and modernity in a new book, "Übergänge" (Transitions).

© Patmos Verlag



Rabbi Dr Walter Homolka

Bat Mitzvah at Chawurah Gescher



Bat Mitzvah at Chawurah Gescher, Freiburg

On Saturday July 8 Celia Ma'ayan was called up to the Torah at Chawurah Gescher, Freiburg. Under the guidance of her teacher, Celia chanted her Torah portion beautifully. Her mother and her sister also chanted Torah portions, making it a true family occasion. Celia delivered a very thoughtful drasha linking her Torah portion, Balak, to her Bat Mitzvah project, preserving the Stolpersteine, 'stumbling stones', in Freiburg, as well as overcoming stumbling blocks in life. Celia's project is about continuity and future generations, and it shows that becoming a Bat Mitzvah, an adult according to Jewish law, also extends to family, friends and community.

It was a weekend of celebration. Our Rabbi, Diane Tiferet Lakein, and Chazan Daniel Kempin from the Egalitären Minjan Frankfurt, led the beautiful Kabbalat Shabbat and Shacharit services together with our Bat Mitzvah, Celia. Guests from Israel, Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain and all over Germany attended the event. It was wonderful to see so many young people participating and enjoying themselves. The festivities continued in the family's garden with more good food, interesting conversations, laughter and activities for Celia and her friends. A weekend to remember.

A Russian Progressive tour in Europe



Shaarei Shalom's bikers in Germany

The Shaarei Shalom community in St. Petersburg, Russia has begun a new project, the idea of which is to touch upon Jewish history and gain a better understanding of the life of today's Jews in Europe, starting with the Progressive communities in Prague and Berlin this May and June.

The founder of this project is Ilya Gurevich, a member of the Community Council and a well-known traveller and talented guide. We were 14 people: current and potential members of the community, residents of St. Petersburg and friends of the congregation from Moscow, Israel and Canada. During nine days of bike riding, our group visited many famous Jewish historical places in the Czech Republic and Germany including the Jewish Quarter of Prague, the Theresien-Teresienstadt camp and the Jewish ghetto museum, the Jewish cemetery and the Progressive community in Dresden. In Berlin we were at the Holocaust Memorial, the Jewish Museum and other important places that are related to world history including Potsdam, Reichstag, Checkpoint Charlie.

Our group celebrated Shabbat at the Beit Simcha congregation in Prague and Sukkat Shalom in Berlin, where we had the privilege to meet with rabbis and active members. The hosting communities were very warm and welcoming – they even held a reception in our honour!

There was a remarkable celebration for Shavuot, including a Tikkun Laile Shavuot led by our rabbi, Elena Rubinstein. The Yizkor prayer and the reading of the Ten Commandments seemed to have a special sense of community for all the Jews of the world.

Throughout the trip, we studied and learned about Jewish history, traditions, and the development of Judaism – including, of course, Progressive Judaism. Rabbi Elena Rubinstein was responsible for the Jewish educational theme of this trip, which was a new and very interesting experience.

The last stop of the bike tour was Berlin, a very symbolic ending. After going through the difficult road of the history of the Jews of Europe, our goal is to declare once again: "Am Israel Chai!"

Rabbi Rubinstein said, "We are already planning a new bike tour next year. We hope that representatives of other Progressive communities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus will join us."

Click [here](#) to view the full album of photos from this trip.

Leo Baeck College
SIXTY YEARS
AT THE HEART OF PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM



Leo Baeck ordination continued from p 1

The full list of new rabbis is:

Rabbi Haim Casas to communities in France, Switzerland and Spain
Rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen to Manchester Reform Synagogue (Jackson's Row)
Rabbi Kath Vardi to North West Surrey Reform Synagogue
Rabbi Hannah Kingston to North Western Reform Synagogue (Alyth)
Rabbi Naomi Goldman to Kol Chai Hatch End Jewish Community
Rabbi Danny Newman to Finchley Reform Synagogue
Rabbi Daniel Lichman will be working for Student Chaplaincy and acting as a rabbi for new and emerging Reform Judaism communities



Leo Baeck College's seven new rabbis with Rabbis Charles Middleburgh (Dean) and Deborah Kahn-Harris (Principal) at the centre

The ordination of Rabbi Casas, who was born and raised in Córdoba, was especially poignant, as the Jewish community in Spain has only re-emerged very recently. Jewish people were expelled from the country or forced to convert to Christianity in 1492, and it has taken five centuries for Judaism to return in a meaningful way – either through Spanish people discovering their Jewish roots or Jews from other countries moving there.

Speaking on BBC Radio 2, Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger DBE said: "The accepted wisdom that Jewish life in Spain has ended has been overturned. Haim's ordination was both a sign of hope and a statement of belief in a Jewish future in Spain."

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

The College previously made history with the ordination of Britain's first woman, openly gay and transgender rabbis, as well as the first Progressive rabbis to take up post in the former Soviet Union.

Reform Youth 70th Anniversary



Save the date! Sunday 24 September, the Reform Youth 70th Anniversary Celebration

Were you part of YASGB or RSY or RSY-Netzer?

We would you like to join us to celebrate 70 years since the start of Reform Youth. Nostalgia may not be what it used to be, but this is a chance to catch up with friends from the past and remember.

[Register your interest here.](#)

For more information, email Sonia Leigh on sonia.leigh@rjuk.org or call her on 020 8349 5674.

Do you know others that have been involved over the last 70 years?

For many of us our friends now were also friends then. Please let them know about this event by forwarding the link to the registration form as we would be delighted if they could join us too!



Edgware & Hendon
Reform Synagogue
ק"ק לדור ודור

Merging and celebrating with Edgware and Hendon

Edgware & District Synagogue (EDRS) and Hendon Reform Synagogue held their first service together as a new community on Saturday, July 15. This was a special Shabbat and Civic Service.

Many local and national dignitaries joined the members in this memorable celebration.

Members of the two synagogues are forming Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue based at the current home of EDRS at Stonegrove in Edgware. The new community is thought to be Europe's largest synagogue and this enables them to be an amazing hub for the area. They offer a huge range of activities aimed at meeting the diverse religious, cultural, social and educational needs of their members. The community is open, friendly and welcoming.

Geoffrey Marx, Reform Judaism Chair said: "Reform Judaism wishes the new synagogue mazal tov and we look forward to journeying with and supporting the new community as it develops and grows. This is a fantastic example of communities working together in creative and innovative ways and we wish them every success".

Progressive rabbis speak out



LJ's Rabbi Danny Rich and RJ's Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner together at the Kotel at Connections 2017

Israel's reversal on egalitarian prayer at the Kotel is a betrayal say UK Progressive Jews

Israel's freezing of a government decision to create an official egalitarian prayer section at the Western Wall has been harshly criticised by British Reform and Liberal Jews.

The decision comes after the Haredi United Torah Judaism party and the Sephardi Orthodox Shas party, both members of the current government, put pressure on Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to scrap the agreement, including threatening to leave the coalition government.

In a joint statement, Rabbis Laura Janner-Klausner of Reform Judaism and Danny Rich of Liberal Judaism, on behalf of Britain's Alliance for Progressive Judaism Israel Desk, branded the decision a "betrayal of Israeli and Diaspora Jewry." The two rabbis condemn "this reversal of a promise made by the Israeli Government", and adds that "the Diaspora stands with Progressive Jews in Israel in continuing the fight for an egalitarian prayer space at the Kotel.

"We once again stand with the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism as they take this legal battle to Israel's Supreme Court.

"In any democracy, promises are but for a moment and when the leaders who made them fail us, we must take up the banner once again and march on in the direction of equality, justice and inclusion."

[Times of Israel](#)

Click the logos for more news of our UK movements



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.

New Liberal Judaism board members



New officers of Liberal Judaism, L-R: Rosie Ward, treasurer; Amanda McFeeters; Simon Benscher, chairman; Ros Clayton; Ruth Seager, vice chair

New vice president, vice chair and officers elected at LJ AGM

Ruth Seager has been elected as the new vice chair of Liberal Judaism, being voted into the position at the recent Liberal Judaism AGM on July 12.

Ruth is a member of East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue and has dedicated most of her life to Liberal Judaism. She has taken on various roles in her community, and the national movement, including serving on the Board of National Officers (BoNO) for the last five years.

Ruth replaces long-term vice chair Jackie Richards, who has stepped down from the role and been elected to the position of officer with responsibility for small communities. Deputy chair Lucian J Hudson has left BoNO and takes the role of honorary vice president.

Liberal Judaism chairman Simon Benscher said, "Ruth is someone I have known, and worked with, for a long time. She has always been a driving force in our movement and I know she will now help us achieve great things as my vice chair.

"It's been a pleasure working alongside Lucian for many years. As both a former chair and deputy chair of Liberal Judaism, Lucian helped make our movement what it is today, and he continues to be a source of support and advice."

Amanda McFeeters of South Bucks Jewish Community and Ros Clayton of York Liberal Jewish Community were elected as new Liberal Judaism officers at the AGM, while Rosie Ward was re-elected as treasurer and Robin Moss as officer with responsibility for youth and education.

Liberal Judaism's other officers are Dr Howard Cohen, Graham Carpenter, Amelia Viney, Tamara Schmidt, Ed Herman and David Hockman.

For more details, please [visit our website](#).



IJC Brussels

On July 7 we held a Rooftop Kabbalat Shabbat Evening Service at a member's home in Leuven. The short service was followed by a potluck dinner. Everyone brought some food to share.



On August 11 at 7 pm we will hold a BBQ & Havdalah Service at a member's home near Antwerp. It's a potluck BBQ, so for suggestions on what to bring, the address and to RSVP please email ohelyachdav@gmail.com.



First day of Hebrew School: September 2
Welcome Back Services: September 8 and 9
Rabbi Ira Goldberg and the board of the IJC wish everyone a wonderful summer.



Beth Hillel Brussels creates a children's service

Beth-Hillel is making room for your kids. The regulars of the Ledor Vador services (held on the first Friday of the month) already know the games and accessories that are made available for little ones during these services. Children aged three to eight will benefit connecting to Judaism through this reading and colouring corner. You can support this space by bringing children's books with a Jewish theme that you no longer use. We hope to facilitate the participation of young parents in the services and count on them to create a pleasant space for their children. This experiment will be evaluated over the coming months. If you wish to express your opinion, please email vice-president@beth-hillel.org.



MJLF infos

To read the digital version of our newsletter **MJLF infos** (en français) for July and August online, download it and take it anywhere with you (computer, tablet, phone, USB key), [follow this link](#).

Dates past and future

Tuesday July 4

Beaugrenelle at 19:30

Tuesday Minyan with Rabbi Yann Boissière

Friday July 7

Beaugrenelle at 18:00

Shabbat Aleph Service

18:45: Special Graduates Service and community kiddush.

Saturday July 15

Surmerlin at 10:30

Last service before summer closure

Tuesday August 1

Beaugrenelle: Tish'a B'Av

On the 9th of Av 586 BCE the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple in Jerusalem, and around the 9th of Av in 70 CE the Roman army destroyed the Second Temple. Insofar as Tish'a B'Av symbolises several dramatic events in Jewish history we will read the Book of Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah as well as psalms and other poems.

Friday August 25 at 18:45

Surmerlin reopening

Education

Monday July 3 - Friday July 28

Beaugrenelle: Targum Seminar,

The 10 Commandments: a talmudic lecture series with Rabbi Marc-Alain Ouaknin

Wednesdays from July 5

until July 19 in Beaugrenelle

Modern Hebrew Ulpan with Revital Berger-Shloman

Tishri: The reservation period for the High Holidays is now open. Kindly make your reservations with the MJLF secretary at 01 44 37 48 48.

Enjoy the whole newsletter!

Danielle Cohen
President



Rabbi Yann Boissière



Rabbi Marc-Alain Ouaknin



Revital Berger-Shloman



Danielle Cohen

News from Keren Or, Lyon



Rabbi René Pfertzel leads singing at Keren Or, Lyon

For the Shabbat of June 16-17 we experienced magical moments in Keren Or. Timothé Azoulay led the service with Rabbi René Pfertzel and read from the Torah in front of his friends and his family gathered for the occasion of his Bar Mitzvah. It was very moving to see how he now seems ready, like his grandmother, father and elder brother, to take on new responsibilities in our community, especially in the Talmud Torah.

There was also the farewell feast for our Rabbi René who is settling on the other side of the Channel: a joyful moment where we sang and danced after Havdalah. This was also an opportunity to convey a message of Progressive Judaism, based on a rigorous and human ethic. The teaching of our Rabbi René will continue to enlighten our community and we know that we can count on our future rabbi Haim Casas to be part of this dynamic. Finally, I would like to bring a message of support to the Muslim community affected by terrorism in London. May we preserve peace in this world so that everyone can live serenely, without fear for his life or that of his relatives.

Pamela Vennin
President

MahaNetzer photos



The French summer camp is full of learning, fun and friendships.



ULIF News

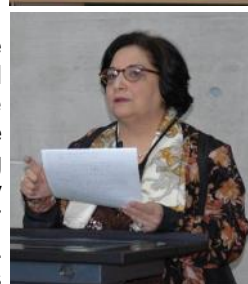
On June 26 Rabbin Marc-Alain Ouaknin held, in cooperation with ULIF Copernic and the Association pour le Développement de l'Education Française en Israël (DEFI), a talk on the topic "Journey into Talmud VIII: The Tales of a Thousand and One Days. Narrative Dimensions of the Talmud".

On June 27 Professor Liliane Vana gave the last Biblical Hebrew lesson before the summer break. If you would like to participate in the upcoming year, don't forget to sign up by either calling 01 47 04 37 27 or emailing accueil@ulif.org. The cost for non-members is €350. For members of Copernic the class is free.

On June 28 Cantor Armand Benhamou gave his last cantillation class before the summer break. If you would like to join this special course for the 2017/2018 year sign up by calling 01 47 04 37 27 or emailing accueil@ulif.org.

On June 28 Rabbi Philippe Haddad gave a class on the topic "The thought of Israel: its exegetes and its philosophers of yesterday and today".

On June 28 Elliott Cohen gave ULIF Copernic an Israeli Dance lesson.



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

(Apologies that the link did not work last month. If it still does not work in this PDF, please type the address into your browser and you will succeed.)

- Editor



WUPJ statement

We are profoundly disappointed in the decision of the Government of Israel to deny the Jewishness of Israeli citizens not converted under the authority of the chief rabbinate, and its refusal to honour its commitment to uphold the right of Jews to pray at the Kotel as they do in their own synagogues.

These decisions deliver a divisive and insulting blow to the millions of Jews who passionately believe in Jewish pluralism. By implementing its agreement, relations between Diaspora Jews and the State of Israel would have improved. Sadly, the Government violated the trust between us by changing the rules of conversion.

We are currently in Jerusalem attending the board meeting of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) as Progressive Judaism's international representatives. This morning, the board passed a resolution calling on Knesset members to reverse these decisions of the Cabinet. In protest, JAFI also cancelled our scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu.

The sacred civil right "to live as free people in our land" has been sold to maintain a weak political coalition. The unity of the Jewish people, a central pillar of Zionism, has been seriously harmed by these decisions.

With our [movement partners in Israel](#), we must commit ourselves anew to defend religious rights in Israel. We urge you to contact your local Israel representatives, ambassadors or counsel general to express your outrage.

We will not allow others to tell us how to live as Jews.

June 26, 2017

Rabbi Daniel Frelander, President, WUPJ

Carole Sterling, Chair, WUPJ

Rabbi Lawrence Englander, Chairman, ARZENU



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.

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WUPJ 2017 Calendar

July 13-23 - Jerusalem

[The Bergman Seminar for Jewish Educators](#)

July 19-30 - Europe

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

IMPJ Statement

"We, together with our many partners in Israel and around the world, entered into this embarrassing and dangerous lack of governmental leadership – our voices loud and varied, yet announcing in one chorus: no more! No more blind hatred! No more hypocrisy! No more redundancy! No more signing of agreements, only to then turn them into empty promises! No more being rewarded for despicable acts! No more speaking about unity on the one hand and acting divisively on the other! No more making one statement in English in Washington and a completely opposite one in the government offices in Jerusalem. No more!"



Rabbi Gilad Kariv

Rabbi Gilad Kariv

IMPJ President and CEO

We invite you to continue following the IMPJ on Facebook and on our website, where you will find a [detailed explanation](#) of these events, a [prayer for unity](#) in Israel by Rabbi Yehoyada Amir, chairperson of MARAM – Reform Rabbinic Council in Israel, the full text of the [speech](#) made by Rabbi Gilad Kariv at the rally on July 1, a [video](#) from the rally, and more. *Kol Yisrael arevim zeh l'zeh*, all the people of Israel are responsible for one another.

IMPJ Newsletter

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



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For EUPJ, IMPJ & WUPJ educators

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