



# European Union for Progressive Judaism

October 2017 Newsletter

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## Chairman's message

The *chaggim* inaugurating 5778 have past and we can now resume our focus on the tasks ahead. As usual, there are many of them!

*The Strategic Plan*, which was launched at our Executive Board meeting in Lyon last December, is being implemented. As you know, there is more to do in some countries than in others, but the EUPJ leadership is determined to ensure that all our constituents are stronger and even more successful within the next couple of years. We welcome feedback and any suggestions, as always.

The establishment of a formal presence at the European Union headquarters in Brussels is something that has been on our minds for some time. Until now, Judaism has been represented by the ultra-Orthodox and, for most of the elected EU representatives and administrative staff, there was little, or no, awareness of other legitimate strands of Judaism. You can read more about this initiative on this page.

If you have been reading recent editions of the EUPJ Newsletter, you will know that Arthur Buchman has retired. He was an outstanding editor of our newsletter for more than a decade and he will be missed. However, I am delighted to announce the appointment of Darryl Egnal as his successor. Darryl is an experienced journalist who has worked with Progressive Jewish communities all over the world, but she'll tell you about herself in this issue. The newsletter's email address will remain the same so you'll be able to reach her easily. We look forward to working with her in the future and we wish her luck with the newsletter.

Miriam Kramer



## EUPJ establishes EU Office

The European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ) is delighted to announce that it has opened a European Union Office (EUO). The office has been established in Brussels and is located at the building housing both Beth Hillel and the International Jewish Center, our EUPJ affiliate congregations in Brussels.



William Echikson

This action has been contemplated for a number of years. With the ever-expanding presence of Progressive congregations in the EU, it was decided that the time is now right to establish such an office. It follows various meetings of EUPJ rabbinic and lay leadership with senior EU officials during the course of this year. The objectives of the EUO are as follows:

- To ensure that whenever the EU seeks Jewish representation, calls for a Jewish opinion on various matters and provides the opportunity for Jewish expert contribution in religious, social, educational and cultural matters, there will be a Progressive Jewish presence.
- To ensure that EU leadership and affiliated bodies are made aware of Progressive Judaism as a vital component of pluralistic Jewish life in Europe.
- To participate in EU projects that will benefit EUPJ affiliates and institutions by making use of our unique network of communities in 17 European countries.
- To make the EU aware of specific situations affecting our communities in various countries.
- To provide a conduit for our local communities to make their voices heard in the EU and for the EU to reach out to our communities.

The EUO will be led by William Echikson, Director, and Rabbi Ira Goldberg, Rabbinic Director. They will work in close collaboration with each other and will be accountable to the EUPJ leadership through a nominated officer, Leslie Bergman (Honorary Life President). The Rabbinic Director will work closely with Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim, the EUPJ Rabbinic Adviser, who also chairs the European Rabbinic

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## EUPJ Honorary Officers and Staff 2017

### Honorary Life Presidents

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### Rabbinic Adviser

Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim, Switzerland

### EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly

Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim, Chairman

### European Beit Din

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, UK, Chairman

Rabbi Dr Jackie Tabick, UK, Convener

### Administrator

Deborah Grabiner, UK

[administrator@eupj.org](mailto:administrator@eupj.org)

### Newsletter Editor

Darryl Egnal, Israel



## Editor's Note

Working with the EUPJ is an exciting new opportunity for me. I attended the World Union's Beutel Leadership Seminar in Israel in 2006 and since then I've been working with Progressive Judaism's leadership and different communities around the world. It all started in my home country with the South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ).

Not only did I manage the marketing of the organisation and its affiliates internationally, but I also created its website with a colleague and produced an annual 80-page, High Holy Days magazine for the Johannesburg and Pretoria communities. In addition, I produced a magazine in honour of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Temple Israel, the mother synagogue of Progressive Judaism in South Africa.



I decided to make Aliyah in 2009 and not long after, got involved with marketing Arzenu and helping out with its conferences, and took over as editor of the World Union's fortnightly newsletter, which I produced for a few years.

Since moving to Israel, I've written articles for many organisations, including the Jewish National Fund (JNF), Naale Elite Academy, *Ha'aretz's* English supplements, the *Jerusalem Post* magazine, and many Jewish magazines internationally.

Personal reasons took me back to South Africa at the end of 2015. Last year was Temple Israel's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and it was serendipity that I was in the country at the time. I was honoured to be asked yet again to produce a magazine for the occasion.

This made me realise how much I had missed being involved with the Progressive Jewish community. So when I was getting ready to return to Israel a few months ago, I was surprised and pleased to receive an email from Leslie Bergman, a long-time friend of my parents, asking me if I'd be interested in editing the EUPJ newsletter when Arthur retired.

Well, you're reading this so the answer is obvious. I look forward to working with the EUPJ leadership and communities, and getting to know all of you. Feel free to email me your news or just send comments and feedback ([newsletter@eupj.org](mailto:newsletter@eupj.org)).

Darryl Egnal



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BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL

## Earn priority status

*Shorashim-Israel with Israelis* allows all applicants to customise their Birthright Israel adventures and travel with Israelis for the entire experience. Spread the word so people [eligible](#) for Birthright Israel complete early [sign up](#) for a journey with [Shorashim!](#)

## History of the Progressive Movement

A two-part conversation between *Judaism Unbound* and WUPJ President Rabbi Daniel Frelander explores changes to Reform Judaism over the past two centuries. "Reform Judaism is that meeting point between the culture that we live in and our inherited tradition. It is our constant desire to reconcile the two -- not to reject either," Rabbi Frelander said. Listen to the first part [here](#) and the second part [here](#).

WORLD  
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PROGRESSIVE  
JUDAISM



האיגוד  
העולמי  
ליהדות  
מתקדמת

# Regeneration: Building the Future

EUPJ Biennial Prague \* Thursday 26 - Sunday 29 April 2018

It's six months and counting till the **EUPJ Biennial Conference**. When we started planning and preparing for it back in April, there were 12 months to go. Now there are **six months** left and before you know it, we'll be packing our bags. Have you ever wondered why time passes so quickly? It's because we lead such busy lives doing things that are fulfilling and spending time with our families and friends in addition to our hectic work schedules.

We opened **registration for the Biennial** at the beginning of September and the early bird rate will end on December 31. Over 50 people from 14 countries have signed up already, more than double the number that signed up during the same period before our



London conference. Our hopes and ambitions are more than fulfilled by this unprecedented demand, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that we will be sold out well before registration officially closes. In other words, there is only one way to avoid disappointment – **REGISTER NOW**.

Registration is simple and takes no time at all, so don't wait around?

Since my last article, we have **confirmed several charismatic, stimulating and inspirational key note speakers** and we are looking forward to their valuable contributions.

We have also agreed on the workshop themes and much of the content. Service structures are taking shape and we have a **fabulous programme** in store for the opening ceremony. More detail can be found on the registration website (see link above). While you're feasting your eyes on the exciting content of **'Regeneration – Building the Future'**, you might as well complete the registration form.

Many people have expressed interest in the **post-conference tours** we have prepared. Descriptions of these tours are now available on the website. If this high level of interest is maintained, we could be over-subscribed, so please **make a firm commitment** and let the organisers know your preferences. All those who have shown interest will receive an email asking for confirmation of their booking. These extraordinary tours are not to be missed. They'll be led by the erudite **Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein** and will be offered at very low prices.

Our rabbis will be invited to a **Rabbinic Kallah** very soon and their presence, together with what

we hope will be the largest number of young people to attend one of our conferences for many years, will ensure some

lively debate, motivating addresses and an energy that cannot fail to affect everyone present.

The conference committee, made up of members with many years of experience in planning and attending conferences around the world, is excited by **Regeneration** and what it will offer. Now it's up to you to **share this experience and make your contribution** to a conference which is sure to be informative, instructive, inspiring and memorable for all the right reasons.

But remember, while there might be six months to go, they'll disappear very quickly. So don't delay! **REGISTER NOW** and ensure that when, in years to come, your children and grandchildren talk about **Regeneration 2018**, you can say, "I was there," and your memories will be like the city... beautiful, lasting and unforgettable!



Top left: Leslie Bergman. Top right anti-clockwise: Rabbi Daniel Freelander, Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, Rabbi Joel Oseran, Sonja Guentner & Gordon Smith



## Developing partnerships that work

Community Connections' success over the past year has resulted in plans to establish more meaningful twinning projects in Europe in the near future. Over the past year, we have helped to maintain and support congregations in Progressive communities in the Ukraine. Two of these are Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NPLS) with Teiva, the Liberal Jewish community of Lviv, and Mosaic Liberal Synagogue with Hatikvah, a community in Kiev.

In the 1930s, Judaism and the Jewish communities in the Ukraine thrived. After the war, Jewish life was destroyed along with most of the Jews in the Ukraine. Today, Ukrainian Jews are determined to revive the Jewish spirit in the country.

The community of Lviv has initiated a number of learning programmes for people of all ages, started a kindergarten and *cheder* for a growing youth population, and opened a Jewish museum to honour its Jewish history.



**The chairman of Teiva surrounded by community leaders and the children**

This burst of activity has been strengthened by the twinning programme set up with NPLS in May 2017. The NPLS community has been on hand to offer support to its twinned community, and as a result, the Lviv Progressive Jewish community is flourishing. The relationship between NPLS and Teiva is now well-established and both communities are working together to share educational resources and ideas as well as build meaningful and long-lasting relationships that will benefit both communities.



**Rabbi Aaran Goldstein and his wife, Tammy, from NPLS with members of Teiva, the Liberal Jewish community of Lviv**

The Hatikvah partnership with Mosaic Liberal Synagogue (formerly Harrow and Wembley Progressive Synagogue) has been in place since the late 1990s and has benefitted many people along the way. Each year, funds are raised and donated to Hatikvah through the Mosaic Liberal Synagogue High Holy Days appeal and the Kiev Koppers campaign. These funds have been put to great use and have been used to help run the community's kindergartens, among other important projects.

Mosaic Liberal also provides regular donations of Jewish ritual items, such as Torah scrolls and Judaica. These gifts have enabled the community to continue their traditions and undertake important religious ceremonies. There is also a successful exchange programme where teenagers from the UK communities travel to meet Ukrainian teenagers and vice versa. In addition, there is a mutually-beneficial, ongoing relationship between the rabbis and their communities.

There is no doubt that twinning programmes help to strengthen communities and provide spiritual and educational gain to all involved.

Over the next year, we hope to establish some more links and set up other twinning projects between European communities.

If you are interested in being part of a twinning project, or would like any further information, please email [Community Connections](#) and [Michael Reik](#).

**Michael Reik, Vice Chairman**  
with special responsibility for twinning

## Travelling? Find a synagogue

Before you embark on your holiday, don't forget to find a Progressive congregation with which to share Shabbat services. You'll find at least one wherever you decide to go. Click [here](#) to find a synagogue in Europe and [here](#) for synagogues in the rest of the world.

**Bradford Reform Synagogue**



## Kingston Liberal Synagogue inducts new rabbi

Rabbi Dr René Pferzel was inducted as Kingston Liberal Synagogue's new rabbi on Saturday October 14. His induction service was attended by many local dignitaries including Councillor Rachael Lake, Mayor of Elmbridge, and Councillor Julie Pickering, Mayor of Kingston, Rt Hon Sir Edward Davey, MP for Kingston, and various Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders. Miriam Kramer represented the EUPJ. The congregation turned up in full force to support their new rabbi.

Rabbi Pferzel hails from Alsace, France. "Being born and educated in Alsace, I am quite comfortable between several cultures," he said. "My grandparents spoke German and Alsatian, my grandmother Yiddish, and everybody some sort of French."

He said he would bring his passion for the Jewish tradition, his interest in people and his desire to teach and learn to his new role as spiritual leader of the congregation.



(L-R) Craig Simmons, KLS Chairman; Councillor Rachael Lake, Mayor of Elmbridge; Rabbi René Pferzel; and Councillor Julie Pickering, Mayor of Kingston

### Helping refugees

Rabbi Danny Rich, the senior Rabbi of Liberal Judaism, helped to build a *sukkah* inside the East London Mosque, assisted by a refugee family and local Muslim leaders (pictured), as part of an event to launch a new foundation for those fleeing Syria.

*Sponsor Refugees* has been set up by Citizens UK to help resettle more refugees in the UK over the coming years. Read the full story [here](#).



### Lifelong Jewish learning

Leo Baeck College's Lehrhaus programme for adult Jewish lifelong learning is offering some fascinating courses in November.

Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith will run a four-week course entitled "Jews and Photography" at Leo Baeck College starting on Wednesday November 15 from 19:45 to 21:15. Participants do not need a camera or technical knowledge of photography, but they need to be visually aware and receptive to critical concepts.

Rabbi Larry Tabick will run a live, online course entitled "Zohar: Mystical Midrash? Early Novel?" It starts on Monday November 6 and runs for four weeks.

This coming year sees the return of many exciting courses plus the addition of online learning opportunities to enable even more people to study through the college.

You can sign up for the course/s of your choice [here](#). If you have any questions, please [email Jarek](#).

### Italian Jewish family who fought fascism

Author, Caroline Moorehead, will speak about her recently-published book, *A Bold and Dangerous Family*, at the [Edinburgh Jewish Literary Society's](#) literary evening on November 26 at 20:00 at the Italian Cultural Institute.

Drawing on a cache of untranslated letters and diaries in her book, Moorehead tells the story of an Italian-Jewish family from Florence – Amelia (the mother), Carlo and Neto (two of her sons) – who were prominent anti-Fascists during the inter-war period.

It is an amazing story of courage and tenacity that ends in tragedy when Carlo and

Neto are assassinated on Mussolini's orders in Normandy in 1938.

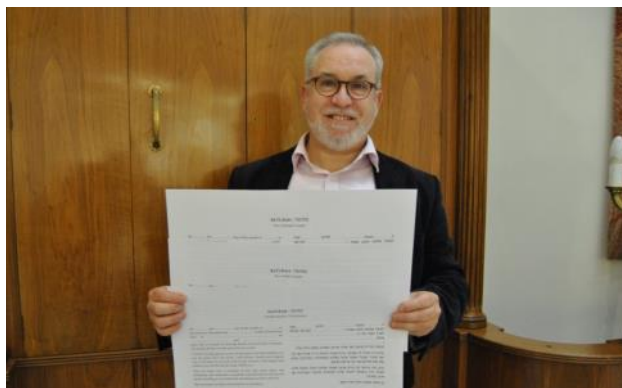
Moorehead is a biographer and human rights journalist. Her many books include *A Train in Winter*, which tells the story of 230 women in the French Resistance who were sent to Auschwitz, and *Village of Secrets*, which tells the story of how, during the Second World War, several thousand victims of Nazi persecution were hidden in mountain villages in the Massif Central and saved from deportation and certain death through the actions of a number of heroic individuals.



## United Kingdom

### Liberal Judaism to offer fully inclusive *ketubot*

Liberal Judaism has become the first Jewish movement in the world to offer *ketubot* especially written for same-sex couples and those who prefer a non-binary or gender-neutral format. Find out all the details [here](#).



Liberal Judaism's Rabbi Mark Solomon

### World Union chair visits Edinburgh



Carole Sterling with Isak Nesvitsky, Mark Solomon, Ricky Hogg and a few other congregants.

Carole Sterling, Chair of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ), and her husband Jay, visited Sukkat Shalom on *Shabbat Chol ha-Mo'ed Sukkot*. She was welcomed warmly by the community and enjoyed being in the *sukkah*.

### Reform youth celebration

More than 300 people celebrated 70 years of Reform Jewish youth movements at the Sternberg Centre for Judaism in Finchley on Sunday September 24. This year marks 70 years since the founding of the Youth Association of the Synagogues of Great Britain (YASGB), which was succeeded by Reform Synagogue Youth (RSY) and now RSY-Netzer. [Read all about it](#).

### A memorable learning experience

[Limmud Festival](#) is one of the biggest celebrations of Jewish learning and culture in the world. This year's festival in the UK takes place from Sunday to Thursday, December 24-28, at Pendigo Lake near Birmingham. Limmud Shabbat precedes the main Festival and starts on Friday December 22.

### Re-humanising public space

This year's annual [Younghusband Lecture](#) will take place at the Montagu Centre in London on Thursday November 16 from 18:30-20:30. The theme is "Re-humanising Public Space".

Professor Chris Baker from Goldsmiths University of London will raise very topical questions about the contribution of a renewed interest in religion and spirituality to political and civic regeneration. A formal response will be given by Rabbi Dr Tony Bayfield. Please email [Jenny Kartupelis](#) for further information.

**Please support the Friends of Progressive Judaism. They support us.**



### Missing Muslims discussion at West London Synagogue

More than 60 people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim and secular backgrounds attended 'The Missing Muslims' event at West London Synagogue on Sunday October 8.

Sir Trevor Chinn, Reform Judaism President and a member of West London Synagogue, discussed the findings of the *Citizens UK* report with Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger. Chinn was a member of the committee that authored the report.

"The Missing Muslims – Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit of All" describes the challenges facing members of Muslim communities in assimilating into mainstream Britain, and the steps needed to be taken to raise the contribution of Muslims to civic life. Read more about it [here](#).



Sir Trevor Chinn, Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger and West London Synagogue President, Stephen Moss

# A new beginning for Progressive Judaism in Italy

*Federazione Italiana per l'Ebraismo Progressivo (FIEP)*

The Federation of Jewish Communities in Italy.

Sunday, October 15, 2017 was the beginning of what history will record as the day when Progressive Judaism in Italy came of age. Representatives from all four Progressive congregations in Italy (Beit Hillel in Rome, Lev Chadash and Beit Shalom in Milan, and Shir Hadash in Florence) gathered in Florence to proclaim in one united voice: "*Hineinu*, Here we are", and to elect a leadership team to direct the newly-established *Federazione Italiana per l'Ebraismo Progressivo (FIEP)* – the Federation of Jewish Communities in Italy.

The General Assembly of FIEP elected as co-presidents Joyce Bigio (Lev Chadash, Milan) and Franca Eckert Coen (Beit Hillel, Rome), with Sandro Ventura (Shir Hadash, Florence) as Secretary. All three leaders have been tireless advocates of Progressive Judaism in Italy for many years and are not only well respected within the ranks of FIEP, but are also well-known by members of the general Jewish community in Italy.

The congregational delegates to this inaugural FIEP General Assembly meeting discussed the many challenges that confront the Progressive movement in Italy. The most pressing issues include: How can FIEP best utilise its national framework to encourage and benefit each local Progressive congregation?; how should FIEP relate to the established Italian Jewish Community umbrella organisation (UCEI), which has never officially recognised the legitimacy of Progressive Judaism?; and how should FIEP relate to the Italian governmental authorities, which, up until now, have only recognised UCEI as the representative body for all Jews in Italy?

Taking part in this historic gathering of Progressive Jews in Italy were the four Progressive rabbis currently serving the four FIEP-affiliated congregations: Rabbi Robert Levy (Shir Hadash); Rabbi David Whiman (Beit Shalom); Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild (Lev Chadash) and Rabbi Joel Oseran (Beit Hillel). Prior to the start of the General Assembly, the rabbis met to discuss how they could best help support the new FIEP agenda. This rabbinic meeting also represented a first-ever gathering of rabbis serving all Progressive congregations in Italy.

Acknowledgement should also be made of the fact that the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ), the umbrella organisation uniting all Progressive movement

bodies in Europe, was officially represented at the FIEP General Assembly by David Pollak, EUPJ Treasurer. No stranger to Progressive Judaism in Italy, he made the trip to Florence from London to chair the one-day meeting as a demonstration of the support and leadership the EUPJ is committed to provide to FIEP. And fortuitously, Rabbi Joel Oseran, who also serves as Vice-President Emeritus of the World Union, brought special greetings to the General Assembly on behalf of the worldwide organisation.

The stage is now set for Progressive Judaism, with the full backing of both the regional and international Progressive movements, to chart

its new course in Italy. This historic gathering, fully aware of the challenges that lay ahead, ended the General Assembly by singing the Israeli anthem – *Hatikva*.

Hope indeed filled the hall – hope for the thousands of Jews in Italy who are in search of a Judaism that will respond to their contemporary needs while preserving the noble traditions of Italian Jewry. This is the search that will lead to the doorway of Progressive Judaism in Italy. *Baruchim Habaim* – Welcome to all.

**Rabbi Joel Oseran**

*FIEP's mission is to support the growth of the four congregations and promote Progressive Jewish values in Italy with an emphasis on Tikkun Olam. The congregations can now speak with one voice in the Jewish media and the national press. Progressive Jewish Congregations in Italy are not recognised by the UCEI – the Union of Italian Jewish Communities – and it is our challenge to press for inclusion.*





# Innovative ideas from the Arava

Arzenu Hungary (the local Zionist organisation of the Reform movement) and the Israeli Cultural Institute invited two educators from the unique Arava region of Southern Israel, to offer Hungarian Jews a glimpse into the amazing intellectual capacity, wonderful green projects, research and entrepreneurship thriving in this wild and beautiful remote desert landscape.

Dr Avigail Morris, an anthropologist, teacher of gifted children and a researcher with wide international experience, who lives on the pluralistic, traditional Kibbutz Ketura, and Alex Cicelsky, an environmentalist, natural builder, recycling expert, organic gardener, international presenter and educator par excellence, who lives on the Progressive Jewish Kibbutz Lotan, spent a weekend in Budapest.



**Alex Cicelsky presented Kibbutz Lotan's environmental programme**

Kibbutz Ketura and Kibbutz Lotan have forged a new 21<sup>st</sup> century cutting-edge reality and have made a huge impact on the environment. This includes innovative and energy-efficient building, alternative energy projects, solar fields, pharma-quality algae plants and start-ups that use the newest marking technology to reduce sale of fake products.

Two events were held over the weekend. On Friday, Avigail and Alex delivered workshops for students with a focus on kibbutz community life, the decision-making process, eco-friendly ideas and how they relate to the Torah. On Sunday, to a mixed audience, they gave presentations about their *kibbutzim* and the incredible projects that attract



**Dr Avigail Morris gave insight into Kibbutz Ketura's innovations**

students, researchers, educators and scientists from around the world.

Topics included the scientific achievements they've made in implementing sustainable development projects, like renewable energy, energy-efficient building technologies, waste management and sustainable agriculture. They also talked about their communities' co-operation with Arab, Palestinian and African people aimed at promoting peace initiatives through global and common environmental aims. The workshops were a huge success.



**Ketura Sun, the first and largest solar park in Israel**



**Kibbutz Lotan's eco-friendly housing**

## Great start to the New Year

Sim Shalom Budapest held its first joint Kabbalat Shabbat service of the year with Bet Orim congregation. It was led by Rabbi Ariel Pollak, a recently-ordained young Hungarian Rabbi who trained at the Abraham Geiger College. Pollak is a charismatic young man with a large knowledge of neo-Hasidic music and ritual.

A delegation of Limmud Directors from various countries, who were having a small conference in Budapest, joined us for the service.

Sim Shalom had its annual congregational dinner after the Erev Rosh Hashanah service. It was a great buffet, topped off with some fabulous cakes.

Both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Services were led by our former cantor, Milan Andics, who is in his second year of Cantorial training at the Abraham Geiger College in Berlin.

Yom Kippur services were held in a Unitarian church that joins with us from time to time for various ecumenical programmes.

After the Yom Kippur morning services, we had two *shiurim*. Dr Rachel Korazin, an Israeli professor of literature, spoke about "Motives concerning Jonas in modern Israeli poetry". Rabbi Kati Kelemen spoke on the topic of fasting based on a text from Isaiah.

The day concluded with the Neila service and a bountiful Break Fast.

**Jess Weil, Treasurer**



## Hungary

### Picnicking in Pozsonyi Street

Last month, Hungarians gathered for an exciting and traditional Budapest festival – the Pozsonyi Street Picnic – which took place in the well-known XIII district. The event offered a diverse cross-section of classical and contemporary culture in various genres.

The Pozsonyi Street Picnic traditionally has a Jewish character and many Hungarian Jewish themes were presented. There was Jewish entertainment, theatre, culture and art, and plenty of mouth-watering, local Jewish and Israeli food.

Bet Orim, one of Hungary's Progressive Jewish congregations, was among the many Jewish organisations represented. Promotional and informational materials as well as typical Jewish jewellery and art designs were available for interested visitors. Dr Ferenc Raj, the founding rabbi of Bet Orim, offered the popular "Ask the



Rabbi" session.

The street was as crowded as usual, and the weather was perfect for a picnic. It was a superb day for a family to gather and to meet friends they have not seen for a long time.

## Portugal

### Inspirational beginning to the New Year

The High Holy Days with the Hebrew Community of Lisbon were very inspiring. Services were led by the Brazilian Hazzan, David Alhadeff, and his wife, Regina Szterenfeld, who came from Rio de Janeiro to spend the holidays in Lisbon. They led the congregation in prayer and meditation with an incredible feeling of *kavanah*.

We also had the pleasure of having an amazing

*Ba'alat Koreh* (someone who reads from the *Sefer Torah* during the service), Rachel Yeshurun, directly from Israel and the Women of the Wall group.

Many visitors from the USA, Canada, Brazil, France and Israel joined the community's traditional and delicious Rosh Hashanah dinner, which proved to be a remarkable success with people getting to know one another and sharing experiences.



### Project expansion of Progressive Judaism in Portugal

During Shabbat Shuvah, the Lisbon Hebrew Community launched its project, "Expansion of Progressive Judaism in Portugal", which is supported by the EUPJ.

The project has been spearheaded by the *Shaliach*, Dr Annette Boeckler, and Ana Scherer. It has also been launched in Porto, and is being co-ordinated there by Rosane Schonblum.

The project has two areas of focus: adult education in Lisbon and the creation of a youth movement in Porto.

In Lisbon, the *Shaliach* teaches the members of the community how to lead services and read Torah. In Porto, the youth movement focuses on the creation and development of a strong Jewish identity within the children.

The curriculum was developed by Dr Boeckler and Cynthia Levitan and makes use of art, music and play while teaching the children about the holidays, prayers, ethics, Israel and many other topics. Those involved in the project meet once a month in Lisbon and twice a month in Porto.

## Spain

### Weddings and masterpieces

The Bnei Israel community in Galicia, Spain, has experienced some exciting and unusual happenings recently, one of which could possibly have been the first Jewish wedding in Galicia since the banishment of the Jews from the area in 1492. Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz from Kehila Beit Shalom in Barcelona came to officiate at the wedding in Santiago and stayed on afterwards.

Rabbi Berkowitz visited Santiago and A Coruña with members of the Bnei Israel board. In A Coruña, they visited the remains of the old Jewish Quarter and had the opportunity

to view a copy of one of the masterpieces of Sephardi illustration in Spain, the *Kennicot Bible*.

The *Kennicot Bible* is an illuminated *Chumash*, one of the most lavish mediaeval Spanish manuscripts in existence. It was written in 1475, a few years before the banishment of the Jews from Spain. The scribe, Moshe Ibn Zabarah, and the famous draftsman, Joseph Ibn Hayyim, were commissioned to



A close-up of the pages of the *Kennicot Bible*



Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz holding the copy from the *Kennicot Bible*, joined by Bnei Israel board members, Asaf Pino and Fredy Sussman

write it by the son of Solomon de Braga (Isaac), a wealthy Jew living in A Coruña.

The result is a masterpiece. This completely vocalised Bible with Masoretic notes is hand-written in a clear Sephardi script of the Middle Ages, and lavishly illuminated with gold finishes and bound into a goatskin box binding.

Nothing was known about this extraordinary work of art until 1793, when it was bought by Benjamin Kennicot (1718-1783), the English Hebraist for whom it is named, and who continued the English tradition of studying the Hebrew bible. He was a canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and spent his life comparing textual variants of hundreds of Hebrew manuscripts worldwide. This treasure now resides at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

Fredy Sussman, Bnei Israel

### New beginnings

Bet Januká in Rota, Spain, celebrated the High Holy Days with excitement. Not only did they spend the Rosh Hashanah festive meal together as a community, but they also held Yom Kippur services for the first time ever.

The children were very involved in services, helping to open the ark and prepare the Torah for reading. These moments have given us the strength and determination to keep growing and do more and more together as a congregation.

Deborah Ríos Rey and Ahuvah Gipson



A first: Yom Kippur at Bet Januká



Bet Januká celebrates Rosh Hashanah

### Netzer needs you!

The Barcelona Flea Market is a great place to sell second-hand items, and the ATID Barcelona Netzer madrichim are looking forward to doing this in order to raise funds for *machaneh* in December as well as the Netzer project. They will also be participating in other exciting activities during the day.

Please help Netzer collect clothes, toys, books or anything you do not use (including electronics), as long as the items you choose are in good condition. The sale will take place on Sunday, November 5, so tell your friends to donate things they no longer use.



## Toulouse community celebrates 25 years



The Association des Juifs Libéraux de Toulouse (AJLT) marked their 25th anniversary with a gala evening on October 19. Many dignitaries of Progressive Judaism shared in the exciting event, including Miriam Kramer (EUPJ Chairman), Stéphane Beder (WUPJ Senior Vice-Chair), Rabbi François Garaï (GIL, Geneva), Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz (Beth Shalom, Barcelona) and Rabbi Marc Neiger (Beth Hillel, Brussels), a native son and founding member of our community.

This was also the opportunity to present officially AJLT Rabbi Lior Bar-Ami to representatives of Jewish and secular associations as well as to the Mayor of Toulouse, Jean Luc Moudenc, and his deputies.

During the evening's proceedings, AJLT President Patrick Laskar traced the history of the community and the increasingly important place it takes today in regional Judaism and French Liberal Judaism.

**Top: Back L-R: Rabbi Francois Garaï, head of Kerem, the Francophone rabbinic assembly; Sandrine Petizon, organiser of the event; Stéphane Beder, Miriam Kramer, Patrick Laskar, President of the Toulouse community; and Rabbi Lior Bar-Ami. Front right: Rabbi Marc Neiger, Rabbi of Beth Hillel Brussels**

**Bottom left: L-R: Georges Benayoun, Master of Ceremonies for the evening; Miriam Kramer, EUPJ Chairman; and Stéphane Beder, President of the Assemblée Liberal Français**

**Bottom right: Rabbi Lior Bar-Ami addressing the audience**



## Innovative new rabbis find a place in France

**UJLS Strasbourg:** Rabbi Dr Birgit Klein became the new rabbi for the Union Juive Libérale de Strasbourg (UJLS), the only Progressive Jewish congregation in Strasbourg, this month. She replaces Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz, who has moved to Barcelona to become more involved in the revival of Jewish life in Spain.

Rabbi Klein is the first female Rabbi of a Jewish congregation in Strasbourg, and the fourth female Rabbi to lead a French congregation. She is a professor at the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Heidelberg and an expert on the Jewish History.



The UJLS board and the congregation would like to thank Rabbi Berkowitz for his devotion over the past six years. He has taught us many diverse lessons, prepared our young members for their *B'nei/B'not Mitzvah*, and celebrated several marriages. He has also contributed to the inter-religious dialogue in Strasbourg, and initiated the idea of a trip to Prague to trace Czech Judaism, which took place in May this year. We wish him the best for his next chapter in Spain.

Elie David, President, UJLS

**Keren Or, Lyon:** Rabbi Haim Casas will be inducted as Keren Or's part-time rabbi on December 3 at 10:00. This is an important event in the Lyon congregation's calendar and all members and friends of the community are invited to participate in the official installation.

Rabbi Casas was ordained earlier this year from Leo Baeck College in London. He is the first Spanish-born rabbi since the Spanish Expulsion in 1492. After graduating from the University of Seville's Law



School, he committed himself to reviving Jewish life in his home country. Along with other Jewish leaders, he started Beit Rambam, the first Progressive congregation in the southern region of Spain. In 2010, he opened Casa Mazal, a cultural café devoted to Sephardic gastronomy. He is also working at Atid

in Barcelona, Spain as part of his 5th year placement.

Miriam Kramer, EUPJ Chairman, and rabbis/teachers who taught previous Keren Or rabbis at Leo Baeck College, will attend this auspicious occasion. We look forward to hosting you in December.

Pamela Vennin, President, Keren Or

### Simchat Torah in Lyon



On Erev Simchat Torah, at the initiative of Rabbi Haim Casas, Keren Or invited Christian, Protestant and Muslim communities to share in the festival of Simchat Torah. Solidarity for refugees was discussed during the evening.

### Interfaith relationship



Kehilat Geshar's Rabbi Tom Cohen and St Odile Church's Stéphane Biaggi, Kehilat Geshar's inter-religious study partner for the past few years. The two Paris leaders are committed to working towards peace and understanding in their communities.



## Memorial on site of burned synagogue

Gescher, one of the Jewish communities in Freiburg, helped the city council to create a fitting memorial to the victims of the Nazis and the synagogue that was burnt down in 1938. The memorial has been developed on the site of the former synagogue in Platz der Alten Synagoge (Square of the Old Synagogue) in the city centre.

Last year, during the re-development of the square, remains of the old synagogue were uncovered. Despite protests to preserve the historic stones, they were removed at the beginning of November, just days before the 78th anniversary of the destruction of the synagogue during Reichspogromnacht.

The re-designed Square of the Old Synagogue was inaugurated at the beginning of August this year. A pool with the exact dimensions of the synagogue now stands on the site of the former building. On hot summer days, passers-by cool down in the pool. While many are happy to let children paddle in the pool and fill it with life, there are some who understandably feel this is most disrespectful towards those who died. In protest, demonstrators meet on Sundays to form a human chain around the pool.

The Gescher community has welcomed the decision to erect a provisional plaque in the square next to the pool very soon. It is hoped that



Human chain around the site of the former synagogue

explaining the history of the synagogue and the square will raise awareness of its significance and encourage appropriate behaviour.

Proposals being considered for a permanent memorial include combining the old and the new with the help of modern technology. We are confident that the victims of the Holocaust and the building they worshipped in will be respectfully remembered and honoured, and that their memory will live on in this memorial.

## Excursion to Hamelin

For many years, the Jewish Congregation of Hamelin (JGH) has enjoyed a close relationship with the organisation "Begegnung (Encounters), Christians and Jews of Lower Saxony".

Prof Dr Ursula Rudnick and other members of the organisation visit Hamelin regularly and Hamelin's rabbis and other community members participate in their events.

Two years ago, Rachel Dohme, our congregational president was awarded the "Blickwechsel (Paradigm Shift) Prize" for her many years of promoting Judeo-



Christian dialogue. This year, Begegnung donated funds to equip our synagogue with new High Holy Day Torah covers. When presenting these gifts to us, they decided to combine it with an educational trip to Hamelin.

First, they had an historical tour around the city, and then were taken to the synagogue for a history of Jewish life, culture and religion, which included a discussion about the High Holy Days and the significance of the Shofar. Read more about the visit to Hamelin and the presentation of the gift donation [here](#).

Rachel Dohme

## The Beutel Seminar for Progressive Jewish Leadership

The Beutel Seminar is a 10-day seminar in Jerusalem run by the Anita Saltz International Education Center in Mercaz Shimshon-Beit Shmuel, the headquarters of the World Union. There are many opportunities to study ancient texts and history; discuss current political and social issues; explore spiritual pathways and concepts of Jewish

leadership – all within a Progressive Jewish context. Participants must be recommended by their community (ie, rabbi, Jewish professional and/or local lay leader) for their dedication and commitment to their communities (past and future). The next [Beutel Seminar](#) takes place in Jerusalem from February 15-25, 2018.

## Migwan and Or Chadasch switch *Sifrei Torah*

When Or Chadasch, Zurich was founded 40 years ago, the Memorial Scrolls Trust lent it a Czech Torah scroll that had been rescued during World War II from the area then comprising the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Silesia.

In the spring of 2011, Or Chadasch passed on one of its own Torah scrolls to Migwan, a young liberal Jewish community in Basel. After discussions with the Memorial Scrolls Trust, the two communities agreed to switch the *Sifrei Torah* and Or Chadasch now has its own scroll back while Migwan has taken over the borrowed Czech Torah.

This exchange confirms the ongoing constructive co-operation between the two communities. The transferring of the Torah scrolls was jointly celebrated by the two congregations in Migwan's

synagogue.

Various other rescued scrolls have been lent indefinitely to various small and new Jewish communities throughout Europe, including liberal Jewish communities, which are experiencing a period of expansion. The Memorial Scrolls Trust has thus made an important contribution to these communities.

During the ceremony, Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim and President Alex Dreifuss of Or Chadasch along with President Peter Jossi from Migwan, spoke of the importance of this occasion.

The celebration closed with music from Einat Kalitzky (trumpet) and Michael Ely (guitar). Afterwards, everyone enjoyed an aperitif while simultaneously confirming the relationship between the two congregations and discussing new ideas for future joint events.

Translated by David Feder, Or Chadasch



### Upcoming events in Geneva

GIL, the Liberal Jewish Community of Geneva, has a diverse selection of interesting events in November. These include a lecture by Annie Hodara entitled, "The Exodus of Jews from Tunisia" on November 6; a unique representation of "Alone with God" (1922), a poetic text by Janusz Korczak, on November 13; and a theatre production entitled, "The Voyage of Dranreb Cholb" on November 14, among others. Click [here](#) for a full list of events.

## Preparing for a New Year

LJG Rotterdam arranged a seminar (*Yom Iyun*) in preparation for the High Holy Days and to launch the Talmud Torah study year.

The seminar included classes on the importance of learning, the different ways Jews dressed through the ages in different countries, and Talmud study focusing on Rosh Hashanah. A nice surprise for the community was when an *ad hoc* choir sang a new version of *Oseh Shalom Bim'romav*, the song of peace.

There was a youth track during the seminar at which the younger members of the community were taught about *mezuzot* in a practical, entertaining way – through art.

Rabbi Albert Ringer



The beautiful results of the *mezuzot* project, taken by Hendele Naftali, one of the Talmud Torah teachers.



### Celebration of youth

Or Chadash in Vienna celebrated Rosh Hashanah with a focus on the youth. These photos show some of the wonderful, fun games and learning events that took place during Rosh Hashanah.



## EUPJ establishes EU Office cont...

Association, as well as Rabbi Dr Jackie Tabick, the Convener of the European Bet Din, on all matters where the EUPJ will express its opinion on European-wide religious issues.

Leslie Bergman, who has led the initiative on behalf of EUPJ, said, "We are a pan-European organisation representing liberal Jewish practice and values in Europe. It is important that we are known in the European Union and have the opportunity to make an impact on important issues affecting the role of religion in society.

"We have explored this possibility for some time and feel that we are now well-placed with the right resources to take this important step forward."

William (Bill) Echikson is experienced in government affairs and communications. For many years, he was a foreign correspondent for major US publications and then joined the Communications and Government Affairs Department of a major Internet-services provider. Echikson presently leads his own consulting company and his clients include the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. He is a founding member of the International Jewish Centre in Brussels.

Rabbi Ira Goldberg was ordained by the Levison Institute in Amsterdam where he worked as a congregational rabbi. He is currently the rabbi of the International Jewish Center. Rabbi Goldberg has Masters degrees in Judaic Studies, Organisational Management and Public Policy from universities in the US. He has worked for a variety of NGOs and international agencies in Europe, Africa and Asia in the areas of developmental and relief work. He has also worked with Jewish communities in India, Hungary and the US.



Rabbi Ira Goldberg

## Young leaders wanted

Are you a 21-30-year-old Reform Jewish leader looking for a way to strengthen your leadership skills and learn about global Judaism?

Do you have innovative ideas about how to strengthen Reform Jewish life and values in the 21st century?

Do you have the desire and capacity to create partnership with your peers from Reform communities around the world to become a change agent?

If you answered yes to these three questions, then the [URJ Roswell Klal Yisrael fellowship](#) is looking for you!



## Global Leadership Institute

This is an open call for young Progressive leaders currently in Israel with MASA for the Global Leadership Institute. The World Union's Leadership and Education Centre has partnered with MASA in training young adults for leadership roles in their congregations, schools or community organisations.



Together with HUC-JIR, we're looking for participants from your communities who are currently in Israel on a MASA programme and display leadership potential as Progressive educators, rabbis, community organisers, board members or congregational leaders.

If you know someone who may be a good fit for this type of training opportunity, please [send us an email](#) with their names and contact information and we'll reach out to them to apply.

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