



European Union for Progressive Judaism

July/August 2018 Newsletter

© European Union for Progressive Judaism

Our future in the European Union

Following the Brexit referendum, it became clear that the EUPJ should send a signal to its members and the rest of the world that it is not just a UK-based organisation. An important step is the creation of the EUPJ Foundation, based in Amsterdam. It was established officially in May and ensures our institutional and legal presence outside the UK.

Last year, the EUPJ decided to open an office in Brussels and asked me to become involved. Our goals in Brussels include obtaining EU funding, fighting for equality for Progressive Judaism in Europe, and making sure that our progressive voice is heard in the corridors of European power. Eventually, we aim to generate enough funding to hire staff and pay for work done by member synagogues throughout the region.

I have lived in Brussels for more than two decades

and believe the European Union to be essential to the future of European Jewry. By taming destructive national demons, the Union has secured peace on

a previously fractious continent. The EU embodies respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.

Today, however, populists of both left and right are putting these values under siege. The European project's success or failure will do much to determine

whether Jews may live comfortably in Europe.

Not everyone within EUPJ will agree. At our recent meeting in Prague, some members criticised the EU calling it a bureaucratic monster; others have wondered whether it gobbles up identities, including our Jewish identity.

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Creating a fairer world

Chairman's Message: Last week, my husband and I went hiking for a few days and, as usual, we took our four greyhounds with us. On the first evening, recovering from a long tour in blistering heat, we were joined by a very bubbly young girl who didn't wait for our permission to talk to the dogs and engage with them, which she did expertly.

It turned out that she was six years old and had just completed her first year at primary school. Utterly striking were her language, vocabulary, social skills, knowledge and total ease at interacting with adults. Being familiar with the national curriculum, my guess was that she had to be at least three years ahead of her peers.

Very sweetly, she sort of adopted us and over the next days joined us whenever possible. I thoroughly enjoyed her company, but when I cautiously inquired about her days, it seemed she was not doing much more than zooming around on her bicycle and rather desperately trying to find someone to talk to.

Eventually, she told me that she was waiting for her brother and father to return from a bike trip across the Alps and that until then not much was going to happen.

By that time, this fantastically gifted girl had grown miserably bored and frustrated with her first-ever summer break.

Now, I may very well not know the whole story and am most definitely in no position to form an opinion on this family's plans but what really got to me was the girl's resigned acceptance of the fact that her break was on hold and that no alternative activities were offered to her

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EUPJ European Office cont...

I disagree, and so does the EUPJ Management Committee. The present European Commission has done much more to protect and promote Judaism than any of its predecessors. In speech after speech, European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans underlined how only a Europe with Jews can fulfil the goal of a liberal, tolerant multi-ethnic and multi-national Europe. "There is no Europe without the Jewish community," is something that Timmermans repeats often.

He has taken a series of important and concrete actions to support these words, including appointing the first-ever European co-ordinator against anti-Semitism. He has pressed Internet companies to combat online anti-Semitism. He calls out countries for trying to rehabilitate Holocaust war criminals and minimise their own guilt. And he has unlocked millions of euros in grants to fight anti-Semitism and finance interfaith initiatives.

Given this support, the EUPJ is moving forward with its EU ambitions. We have already applied for EU funding and have been wait-listed for an interfaith project, Emouna, bringing together rabbis, priests, imams and other religious leaders to fight extremism and promote tolerance.

Another project created by the EUPJ's European Union Office aims to tackle online hate speech. The hope is to leverage the many EUPJ local communities around Europe, winning funds to support their activities.

Another aim of the European Union Office is to represent EUPJ communities to the EU and to help them address Europe-wide issues. Please contact us if you need support in raising an issue in Brussels or want help from the EUPJ in addressing national or local issues of concern.

The official opening of the office is scheduled for November 10 as part of the EUPJ's Executive Board meeting that weekend. We look forward to seeing many of you in the European capital this autumn. –

William Echikson

William Echikson a former Bureau Chief of Dow Jones Newswires and Senior Manager at Google, is the Director of the EUPJ's EU Office in Brussels.



William (Bill) Echikson

Chairman's Message cont...

while her brother was enjoying an exciting trip.

It is one of Progressive Judaism's greatest strengths that it is synonymous with full equality, embraces every individual's right to fully unfold and develop one's talents and potential.

The experience from our trip reminded me that this is not a matter of course and that it requires active effort and commitment to create families, teams and congregations that have these ideals woven into

their very structures and provide equal opportunity to every single member.

As we all enjoy our summer breaks and start reflecting on this Jewish year, which is nearing its end, may I invite us all to devote a moment to considering what each and every one of us in our daily lives can contribute to making this world a little fairer, a little more egalitarian. With all good wishes.

– **Sonja Guentner**

Getting to know your rabbis

Last month, we introduced a new column entitled "Rabbinic Ruminations" to enable readers to find out a little about the EUPJ rabbis who serve our communities.

This is not a column for the *parsha* of the week or religious studies. It is a way to get to know the various rabbis across Europe.

If you would like to contribute to this column, please email me at newsletter@eupj.org.

Read this month's issue on page 4

EUPJ Newsletter Deadlines

MONTH	COPY/PHOTOS	PUBLISH
September	Wed 22/08/2018	Thu 06/09/2018
October	Mon 08/10/2018	Thu 18/10/2018
Nov/Dec	Wed 14/11/2018	Thu 29/11/2018

Please note: These dates are subject to change.

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Editor's Note

While Israel's controversial Nation State Law implemented ahead of Tisha B'Av illustrates how divided the country has become, it has also shown how united the non-Orthodox world remains in its determination to find a more pluralistic and egalitarian path for all Jews.

The fact that Tu B'Av, the festival of love and acceptance follows the mourning of the destruction of the Temple gives us hope that the status quo will change if we constantly work together to achieve these goals.

Internationally, the EUPJ's European Union Office in Brussels will go a long way to ensuring equality among the different Jewish streams in Europe and we wish Bill Echikson and the EUPJ all the best in achieving the EUPJ's goals through this innovative move.

We hope that the official opening in Brussels in November will see representation from the WUPJ and all communities within the EUPJ. It promises to be a landmark event so don't forget to keep the weekend of November 9 marked off in your

calendars.

As August is traditionally a quiet period in Europe, we will not have a newsletter next month.

However, even though many of you will be taking a break and your communities may not be planning events, we hope that you will still send us news that we can include in the next issue, which will be published just before Rosh Hashanah at the beginning of September.

May you return refreshed and ready for a month of reflection, repentance and celebration. – Darryl Egnal (newsletter@eupj.org)



Please Note: While every effort is made to provide accurate information and correct spellings of names in this newsletter, sometimes gremlins step in and mistakes appear. This is not intentional and we apologise in advance if we have offended or upset anyone.

Who's who at the EUPJ?

Honorary Life Presidents

Leslie Bergman
Ruth Cohen
Jeffery Rose

President

Gordon Smith

Vice-President

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein

Chairman

Sonja Guentner

Vice-Chairman: Governance

John Cohen

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Education and Interfaith

Rabbi Menno ten Brink

EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly

Rabbi Dr René Pfertzel,
Chairman

European Beit Din

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

EUPJ's European Union Office

Bill (William) Echikson, Director



Administrator

Deborah Grabiner
administrator@eupj.org

Newsletter Editor

Darryl Egnal, Israel
newsletter@eupj.org

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Rabbinic Ruminations

Sitting in my home in Jerusalem and reflecting back on my 42 years in the rabbinate (I was ordained in 1976 at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York), I come up with one clear observation (in addition to the fact that I am getting older by the minute): I am continually amazed at my good fortune and the many blessings that have accompanied me along my rabbinic journey.

It is no accident that I am now in Jerusalem and that I chose to make Aliyah and to become a citizen of Israel. I had fallen in love with Israel during my first year of studies at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem and eagerly accepted my first professional position after ordination to be Director of Student Affairs at the Jerusalem campus.

Without a doubt, spending these early years of my career in Jerusalem, the gathering point of world Jewry, implanted in me a profound attachment to and fascination with the Jewish People in all our various ethnicities, languages, customs and traditions.

After marrying my wife Rachelle in Jerusalem, herself an olah (immigrant) from Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), and spending a few years in Los Angeles, California, serving in my first and last US congregation as rabbi-educator for University Synagogue, I returned to Israel in 1986 to assume what was to become a 30-year career with the World Union for Progressive Judaism as Vice President for International Development.

This was a position made in heaven for me and it enabled me to assist our worldwide Progressive Jewish communities to realise their full potential and growth. I was privileged to have been among the founders of our Progressive Jewish movement in the Former Soviet Union; to have helped develop Progressive Judaism in the Far East/Asia (in particular in India, Hong Kong and Shanghai); to have helped establish our regional framework of Progressive Judaism in Latin America working with lay leaders in Argentina, Brazil and Chile; and towards the latter years of my career, to have devoted considerable effort in developing our Progressive Jewish movement in Europe (in particular in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic).

One of the last challenges I undertook before retirement from the WUPJ in 2016 was to help establish a Progressive Jewish congregation in Rome, Italy. Living in the shadow of the Vatican, the established Jewish community in Rome learned early on how to exert powerful influence over all

aspects of Jewish life in the city. It was no wonder, therefore, that Rome was the last major European capital city not to have a Progressive Jewish congregation.

Working together with a core of dedicated Jewish leaders who were committed to the principles of egalitarianism, humanism, inclusivity and preserving Jewish life for the future, a new Progressive

congregation, **Beth Hillel**, was founded. And to my sheer delight, upon my retirement, I was asked to serve, on a part-time basis (one extended weekend a month plus all major Jewish holidays), as rabbi for the congregation in Rome.

As an indication of the important role Progressive Judaism must play in Italy, a national Federation of Progressive Jewish congregations in Italy (FIEP) was established in October last year. FIEP unites the four Progressive congregations in Italy (Beth Hillel, Rome; Shir Hadash, Florence; Beth Shalom, Milan and Lev Chadash, Milan) and will raise the profile and advocate for the rights of Progressive Judaism throughout the country.

Beth Hillel has taught me the profound meaning of a successful "retirement": keep busy, keep teaching, keep connected with a Jewish community filled with wonderful people, and keep strengthening Jewish life for the future.

Our Beth Hillel congregation is growing in number, in programmes, and in influence within the Rome Jewish community. As I begin my third year of service, I reflect on the powerful words of Rabbi Tarfon (*Pirke Avot* 2:21): "It is not your responsibility to finish the work [of perfecting the world], but you are not free to abstain from it either."

We at Beth Hillel look forward to welcoming you to Rome, which is, apart from Jerusalem, perhaps the most beautiful city in the world! – **Rabbi Joel D Oseran**, Rabbi, Beth Hillel Congregation, Rome; Vice President Emeritus, WUPJ joeloseran@gmail.com



"It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but you are not free to abstain from it either." – Rabbi Tarfon



A taste of Brussels

Beth Hillel, IJC and Bill Echikson (Director, EUPJ office, Brussels) hosted EUPJ Chairman, Sonja Guentner, and EUPJ Honorary Life President Leslie Bergman in Brussels in June.

They were in the city to meet with European officials and Jewish associations as well as to prepare for the November Shabbaton, during which the EUPJ will officially open the EUPJ European Union Office.

This Shabbaton will be a weekend of celebrations beginning on November 9 and running through the board meeting on November 11, with the opening taking place on November 10.

After a full day of meetings, everyone participated in a Kabbalat Shabbat service led by Rabbi Marc Neiger (Beth Hillel) and Student Rabbi Brian Doyle



L-R: Gilbert Lederman, EUPJ Executive Board Member; Student Rabbi Brian Doyle, IJC; Sonja Guentner, EUPJ Chairman; Rabbi Marc Neiger, Beth Hillel, and Bill Echikson, Director, EUPJ European Union Office, Brussels

(IJC). It was the first time a joint Beth Hillel/IJC service was held in French and English. – **Gilbert Lederman**



A presidential event

Charles Michel, Prime Minister of Belgium, will be the guest of honour at the Coordinating Committee of the Jewish Organisations of Belgium (CCOJB) gala dinner on September 6 at 19:30.

The CCOJB, the federation and voice of Jewish organisations in Belgium, carries the message of successful integration, promotion and defence of the values of solidarity, education and memory in the respect of pluralism.

If you'd like more information or to book your tickets, call +32 (0) 2 537 16 91 or email ccojb@scarlet.be.

Celebrating innovation

At the request of the Israeli Embassy in Belgium, Charlotte Gutman edited a magazine celebrating Israel, its 70th anniversary, its multicultural society and its innovations.

The magazine looks at Israeli society and its innovations in many areas. It also shows how each of our actions can help inform the world about the richness in, and true diversity of, Israel's daily life.

You can read the magazine in [English](#) or [French](#).



Honouring Herzl, celebrating Israel

Arzenu France hosted the riders of the Paris leg of the “[Ride4Solidarity: Herzl 2018](#)” over the weekend of June 15-17 2018. The group of 12 liberal Hungarian Jews had travelled across Europe on their Harley Davidsons, following the main cities of Theodore Herzl’s life. The main aim was to support Israel on its 70th anniversary.

The bikers left Budapest from Herzl’s birth place on Sunday June 10 (also the anniversary of the end of the Six-Day War in 1967) and moved on to Vienna, Basel, Geneva, Paris, Brussels, Berlin and finally Edlach, the place Herzl died.

The Hungarian bikers attended the Friday Kabbalat Shabbat at MJLF Beaugrenelle, where they received a warm welcome from Rabbi Yann Boissière and MJLF board members, Jean Zetlaoui and Didier Tessier. The group was then treated to a dinner chaired by Marc Konczaty, MJLF Board Member and former President, funded by the World Zionist Organisation (WZO) in France.

On June 16, Arzenu France members, Pierre Elkaïm, Michel Kahn and Arielle Bouaniche, guided the Hungarian visitors through the Historic Jewish Quarter known as the “Marais”. The climax of the tour was reached at Theodore Herzl Square, where they were officially welcomed by Pierre Aidenbaum, Mayor of Paris, 3d arrondissement. The Consul General of Hungary and Moshé Cohen from the WZO were also in attendance.

The Herzl Ride bikers resumed their journey on Monday June 18 and headed for Brussels. – **Michel Kahn and Pierre Elkaïm**



Riding through Paris



Ceremony at Theodor Herzl Square (L-R front): Revital Shloman; two Hungarian bikers; Pierre Aidenbaum, Mayor of the 3d district of Paris; the Consul General of Hungary in France; Michel F Kahn; Pierre Elkaïm; and Moshé Cohen, OSM France. (L-R back): 3 Hungarian bikers; Arielle Bouaniche; Eve Kahn and Jozsef Horvath, leader of the bikers

Uniting Progressive communities

The executive boards of ULIF and MJLF met separately, but simultaneously, in June to discuss the value and timeliness of bringing the two institutions together. With 2000 families, the new entity would have the ability to make views known, be heard and become an attractive and indispensable feature of French Judaism.

We will be working throughout the summer to examine the project in detail. We will, of course, keep everyone informed and involved.

If you have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us: rapprochement@mjlfr.org or rapprochement@copernic.paris. – MJLF and ULIF Executive Board Members



ULIF COPERNIC
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mouvement juif libéral de france

France

Montpellier's Bar Mitzvah year

This summer, more than 30 individuals gathered to celebrate the Communauté Juive Libérale de Montpellier's (CJLM) "Bar Mitzvah" anniversary with a barbecue and pool party at the home of one of its members.

The CJLM, Montpellier's first Progressive community, was founded in 2005 by Frederic

Calfond (today Honorary President) with the support of Rabbi Pauline Bebe.

In recent years, under the leadership of Youssef Hourrizadeh, the CJLM has cultivated close ties with the Jewish Cultural and Community Centre of Montpellier. Earlier this year, a conference on "Ecology and Judaism" featured Youssef and the

Consistorial (Orthodox) Rabbi of Montpellier, a first in the history of the community.

The CJLM has benefited over the years from the spiritual guidance of a number of rabbis including Avraham Dahan, Michel Liebermann and Stephen Berkowitz.

If you are visiting Montpellier and would like to participate in our services or other events, please contact us at cjlm.net@gmail.com. – Youssef Hourrizadeh. Photo: Olivier Williams



The CJLM community celebrating its 13th anniversary

Germany

A decade of dialogue

Hamelin celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Jewish-Christian-Muslim Women's Group on Thursday, June 21. The get-together was held at the Lutheran Reformed Church's social hall.

Pastor Sophia Sander spoke at the event. "Women from the Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities of the city come together in the various places of worship three to four times a year and exchange ideas," she said.

"Many topics have been dealt with in the past 10 years. Among them were biblical figures, questions of tradition, religious music, and holidays in Judaism, Islam and Christianity. There were often (sometimes surprising) commonalities and exciting differences."

We are happy to be part of this open initiative. The group is open to women of all ages, whose goal it is to seek communication with other denominations and cultures.



Interfaith city tour

A day trip to the city of Hamburg was enjoyed by members of our community and the Society of Christians and Jews. The trip was organised by the Society under the direction of HansGeorg Spangenberg.

The two-hour bus ride whizzed by as HansGeorg held a fascinating lecture about the history of the city.

Wolfgang Georgy, Vice Chairman of the Hamburg Liberal Jewish Congregation, offered our group a tour of Jewish Hamburg and the early sites of Reform Judaism, and in the afternoon, we visited its synagogue. We were welcomed by Rabbi Moshe Navon, who gave a presentation on the community's religious life.

We'd like to thank the Society of Christians and Jews, HansGeorg and Polina Pelts for organising this wonderful excursion.



Germany

Returning home

The Liberal Jewish Community of Hamburg (LJGH) often holds its services in the former gymnasium of what was the "Israelite Girls' School" as LJGH doesn't have its own synagogue.

This gymnasium, which is owned by the Hamburg Council Department for Schools and Training, was refurbished with funding from the European Union to serve as a Jewish cultural centre.

On Friday July 6, we had yet another visit from our Honorary Member Lilli Greenebaum and her husband James, from Illinois. Lilli used to have sports lessons in this very gymnasium (Flora Neumann Strasse 1) in 1937/38, before she left Germany 'at the last minute' with her family.



Eyal Navon, James Greenebaum, Rabbi Dr Moshe Navon, Lilli Greenebaum, Miriam Navon and Ellen Georgy

We were very happy that she visited us again and hope that both Lilli and James will visit us often in the future. – [Ellen Georgy](#)

Maintaining relationships between faiths

The Abraham Geiger College, under the auspices of the Encyclopaedia of Jewish-Christian Relations (EJCR), a research and publication project initiated by the college, participates in various interfaith events during the year.

Two recent events included a panel discussion entitled: "Jewish Jesus Research and Questions of Christology" and the 10th Enoch Nangeroni Meeting on "Gender and Second Temple Judaism in Rome".

The panel discussion took place at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and included Professors Daniel Boyarin, University of California, Berkeley, Amy-Jill Levine, Vanderbilt University, Adele Reinhartz, University of Ottawa, Etienne Vetö, Pontifical Gregorian University, and Walter Homolka, Abraham Geiger College/University of Potsdam.

Professor Homolka focused on how theologians of all Christian faiths can find and implement a Christology that satisfies the new reality between Christians and Jews and is able to express Christian identity in a way meaningful to Christians today.

A reception was held afterwards in order to mark five years since the establishment of the School of Jewish Theology at the University of Potsdam.

The Enoch Seminar is an open and inclusive forum of international specialists in early Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Scholars with different methodologies and approaches have the opportunity to meet and share the results of their research, thereby fostering diversity in all its forms and promoting communication and mutual understanding among Jews, Christians and Muslims about their common roots.

At this particular meeting in June, more than 40 international experts brought into sharp focus the need for a discussion of gender in general and women in particular in light of the evidence and scholarship from the Second Temple Period, broadly conceived.

Both events were well attended and enjoyed by all. – [Hartmut Bornhoff](#). Photos: [AGK/PUG](#)



Panel (L-R): Professors Daniel Boyarin, University of California, Berkeley; Etienne Vetö, Pontifical Gregoriana University; Gabriele Boccaccini, University of Michigan; Adele Reinhartz, University of Ottawa; Amy-Jill Reinhartz, Vanderbilt University and Walter Homolka, University of Potsdam

A progressive assembly

The Annual General Assembly of the Union of Progressive Jews (UpJ) in Germany was held in June at Bad Segeberg's Mishkan HaTzafon.

"In 2007, the Jewish community in Bad Segeberg was able to buy a former mill that was renovated and re-purposed as a synagogue," explained Walter Blender, President of the Bad Segeberg Jewish Community.

"In addition to a sanctuary, our synagogue complex houses a community centre, a library, a kindergarten, and a mikveh."

In this unique ambiance, the UpJ's President Rabbi Prof Walter Homolka and board members, Deborah Tal-Rüttger, Alexandra Khariakova, Inna Shames and Dan Rattan, welcomed more than 80 delegates of Progressive congregations and institutions.

Among the guests of honour were former WUPJ President, Rabbi Stephen L Fuchs, and his wife Vickie.

On Shabbat, Rabbinical Student Isak Aasvestadt and Cantor Dana Zeimer led the congregation in prayers. Isak is doing an internship in Jewish communities in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany's northernmost state, including Bad Segeberg.

To mark the 250th birthday of Israel Jacobson (1768–1828), one of the pioneers of Reform Judaism in the wake of the Jewish enlightenment, Hartmut Bomhoff gave a talk to the delegates, discussing



Jacobson's legacy and its impact on Progressive Judaism today.

On Sunday, the Board provided a report of the past year's activities, which was approved. Chairman Homolka and Secretary General Irith Michelsohn presented three new projects and programmes for the upcoming year on which the General Assembly unanimously agreed.

In August, the Union, in co-operation with the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, will sponsor an encounter between young Muslim refugees from Syria and Iraq and young Jewish adults from Germany. The programme will take place in Kraków, Poland, and at the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial. The group will be accompanied by two leading German politicians, the premiers of the German states of Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia.

To mark 200 years of Progressive Judaism in Germany and to present the achievements of the UpJ and its affiliates, a book will be published in spring 2019. The most exciting news is that the 24th conference of the Union will take place in the spa town of Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic from May 30 to June 2, 2019.

Rarely has an UpJ General Assembly witnessed such an uplifting sense of cohesion and inspiration, and we thank Walter Blender, Chairman of Bad Segeberg's Jewish community, and all his volunteers, for their hospitality. Kudos to the Union's Secretary General Irith Michelsohn whose dedication and commitment made all this possible. – **Hartmut Bomhoff**. Photos: © **Walter Blender**

Poland

Lamenting the Temple

Tisha B'Av in Warsaw, Poland, saw 14 people gather together at the new rooms used by the Beit Warszawa congregation for an Erev Tisha B'av commemoration on Saturday 21 July. The Book of Lamentations was read in Hebrew, English and Polish by participants who sat together in a circle.

– **Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild**



Sustaining our planet

Beth Hillel Rome, the American Jewish Committee and Religions for Peace recently co-sponsored a talk on Jewish Morals and Ethics in relation to the universal concern for the future of humanity and the environment. Rabbi Yonatan Neril, Founder and Executive Director of the [Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development](#) (ICSD) in Jerusalem, made the presentation to the community.

Rabbi Neril's talk, which attracted many members of the community, included various anecdotes and explained the challenges our planet faces.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught about people on a boat. One of them took a drill and began to drill a hole beneath himself. His companions asked him, "Why are you doing this?" The man replied, "Why do you care? Am I not drilling under my own place?" They said to him, "But you will flood the boat for all of us!"

The person drilling a hole on the boat may have valid reasons for doing so: to fish, to drink water, to cool his feet, but no matter how rational the reason, Rabbi Shimon's story warns us of the destructive power of letting our selfish desires overtake all other considerations.



Furthermore, everyone on the boat needs to work together to ensure this type of behaviour doesn't continue. The man drilling the hole is dangerous, but if the boat sinks, it is the fault of the driller as well as all those who didn't convince him to stop.

On the communal ship we call earth, billions of people are drilling holes. Some dig bigger holes than others. We might measure the holes by the amount of resources each person consumes or the amount of climate change-causing gases they put in the atmosphere. For hundreds of years, the oceans, boreal forests and rain-forests have absorbed tremendous amounts of carbon emissions. But as the human population continues to increase, we and the next generation will pay a steep price for our excess consumption.

Ensuring our children inherit a liveable planet is an issue on which we can all come together. Our global environmental challenges represent opportunities for people of faith to unite and put aside our differences. A crisis created by humanity, which affects all of humanity, demands a co-ordinated response from faith communities around the world. – [Rabbi Yonatan Neril](#)

If you would like to read Rabbi Neril's full speech, please email newsletter@eupj.org.

Switzerland

Jewish music and culture

Dr Annette M Böckler, scholar in Jewish liturgy, will give a musical presentation on Jewish music and culture at a full-day workshop at Migwan in Basel on Sunday August 19 from 10.30 to 15.30.

The programme will be split into two sections. The morning session will focus on "Religious service music from the different Jewish movements" while the afternoon session will look at "The musical clock in religious services".

Dr Böckler is the Head of Department of Jewish Studies at the Zurich Institute for Interreligious Dialogue

(ZIID). She spent 10 years at Leo Baeck College in London where she was Head Librarian and a

lecturer in Jewish Biblical Interpretation and Jewish Liturgy.

The ZIID provides knowledge about Judaism, Christianity and Islam and their intertwined relationship in a multicultural society.

Registration closes on August 14 so don't delay. Email orah@migwan.ch for more information and to reserve your space.



International Shabbaton in Seville

Makom Sefarad celebrated its first international Shabbaton in Seville at the end of June. The Shabbaton united members of the local Progressive Jewish community, Beit Rambam and friends who travelled from Germany, the UK and France.

EUPJ Chairman, Sonja Guentner, was an honoured guest and joined other attendees on a visit to the Jewish quarters of Cordoba and Seville, the



Royal Alcazar of Cordoba, the Casa de Sepharad and the Mosque of Cordoba.

They also discovered, thanks to various *shiurim*, workshops and guided tours, the rich Jewish history



of the Iberian Peninsula and important elements of Sephardic culture such as the varied tradition of *piyutim* (Jewish liturgical poem) for Shabbat.

The Shabbat services were held at the Beit Rambam Synagogue, located inside the palace of the Marquises of the Algaba and were led by Rabbi Haim Casas.

Being in Seville, the capital of Flamenco, the Shabbat could not have ended in any way other than with a traditional Flamenco show and Havdalah on the banks of the Guadalquivir River.

It was a rich weekend of Torah, prayer, gastronomy, music and friendship in the heart of Andalusia.

We would like to thank Sonja for her active participation during the Shabbaton as well as Leslie Rutman, President of Beit Rambam, for her warm welcome. – [Rabbi Haim Casas](#)

Auschwitz exhibition extended

The Auschwitz exhibition in Madrid has been extended after attracting more than 350,000 visitors since its launch in December 2017. The exhibition will now remain open throughout the summer until October 7 at the Canal Art Exhibition Centre.

Interest among schoolchildren has been so high that all the 55,000 free tickets were quickly taken up. An extra 30,000 free tickets will be available for schools and youth camps during the extension.

The free tickets are provided by Canal de Isabel II and Musealia. They will allow more than 3,000 school groups in Spain to find out more about the period and learn about the importance of defending human rights and respecting global diversity.

For the first time ever, an exhibition co-produced by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is traveling to the main capital cities of the world to show an extraordinary collection of more than 600

original exhibits of inestimable historic and human value. The great majority of the objects, pictures and audio-visual materials in this exhibition have never been shown to an audience before.

After Madrid, the exhibition will visit six more cities in Europe and seven in North America. Tickets for the extension can be purchased from the Canal Art Exhibition Centre ticket office or [online](#).



Friends of Progressive Judaism

The [Friends of Progressive Judaism in Israel and Europe](#) supports Progressive Jewish Communities in Israel, Europe and the former Soviet Union. It also supports projects in Israel and Europe that are in accordance with the principles of Progressive Judaism whether or not any Progressive Jewish Organisation is a participant.

One of the projects is the remarkable Sir Charles Clore Jewish-Arab Community Centre in Akko (Acre), a unique model of co-existence in action. It affirms through all its activities that alternatives do exist to the culture of separation and mistrust. Indeed, participants are enriched through their involvement with people from other cultures.

Akko is a truly mixed city and the primary objective of the Jewish-Arab Centre is to meet the needs of local people regardless of culture, ethnicity or religion. In so doing, it is paving the way to a better future locally and provides a hopeful model for many other places in Israel.

The maxim "Give me the child until the age of seven and I will show you the man" (widely attributed to St Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Brotherhood) underlines the importance of the mixed day care facilities, the summer camp and after-school provision where children build relationships, share experiences and learn to live together with respect for one another and understanding of sibling cultures and languages.

In addition to the various key projects, the organisation provides support for the WUPJ,



[Bedouins from the Negev learning leadership skills](#)



[Oud players at the Community Centre](#)

EUPJ, IMPJ and the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) to enable them to advance in their work.

United Kingdom

Finding a home in Liberal Judaism

Liberal Judaism members from all around the UK and beyond took part in an inspirational Biennial Weekend at the end of June. Discussions focused on the next steps in liturgy, theology, policy, outreach work and shared values that will drive Progressive Judaism forward both in Britain and around the world.

For the first time in its history, the Biennial weekend was completely sold out with more than 300 delegates representing 37 communities and eight countries. There was not one spare room in the St Johns Hotel, Solihull, which hosted the conference. One third of the delegates were attending their first ever Biennial.

"The Biennial weekend had a very special atmosphere and spirit," said Rabbi Danny Rich, Senior Rabbi of Liberal Judaism. "Every person

I met over the three days – covering all ages, areas and backgrounds – had his or her own different Jewish story, but all had the same thing in common... finding their home in Liberal Judaism.

"This event was a sign of a Liberal Judaism that has a real confidence going forward – one with inspirational music, liturgy and rabbinic leadership and a radical message of true modernity and inclusivity to take back out into the world," he said.

Keynote speaker, Rabbi Daniel H Freeland, President of the WUPJ, praised Liberal Judaism's work welcoming mixed-faith families, patrilineal Jews and Jews by Choice, its outreach work setting up new communities in far-flung areas and its consistent campaigning for equality including LGBTQI+ rights.

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Finding a home cont...

He then laid down a challenge for Liberal Judaism to shout about these successes, move towards an even more inclusive and open Judaism and never be cowed by criticism that may come from the Orthodox world.

Other speakers at the Biennial Weekend included Reuven Marko and Anna Kislanski, Chairman and Chief Operating Officer of the IMPJ respectively, Samia Diab and Student Rabbi Dahlia Shaham from Israel's Leo Baeck Education Centre, and Gillian Merron, Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Read the full article [here](#).

Rabbi Daniel H Frelander



Shining lights

Liberal Judaism is proud to announce the winners of its 2018 Chair's Awards.

Handed out every two years at the Liberal Judaism Biennial Weekend, they honour members who have gone above and beyond while serving the movement at a national and/or local level.

Winners were nominated by their communities and then selected for an award by a specially-selected panel including Liberal Judaism Chair Simon Benscher.

Presenting the awards, Simon said: "This opportunity to celebrate these shining lights of Liberal Judaism, who do so much to support our movement's values and principles, is a real highlight of my role."

Read about this year's winners [here](#).



Simon Benscher with Ruth Colin of Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue, one of the winners

Periodic table unveiled



Liberal Judaism unveiled its Biennial Weekend community project – [a periodic table](#) of the wonderful congregations that make up the movement – at the Biennial conference.

Designed to fit the theme of the weekend, "The Formula for Truly Progressive Judaism", the communities were given material to create their own chemical symbol.

These were then combined into the final product by Liberal Judaism staff and put on display at the end of the Biennial.

"This periodic table represents everything that is great about Liberal Judaism and our communities – from the rose that represents York and the lighthouse that symbolises Eastbourne to the music of Finchley and interfaith work of Bedfordshire," said Rabbi Danny Rich, Liberal Judaism's Senior Rabbi.

"I would like to thank all the Liberal Judaism members, who put a lot of time and effort into creating these elements, and our staff who worked late into the night at the Biennial to put everything together."

There is still a chance for communities not yet featured to be added before the periodic table goes on display. If you would like your congregation to feature, please contact Tom Rich on t.rich@liberaljudaism.org.

Kingston Pride Seder

Kingston Liberal Synagogue (KLS) held a special Pride Seder on July 6, attracting 30 people from all over London to a celebratory Friday night service and dinner.

It was a joyous occasion led by Rabbis Dr René Pfertzel and Janet Darley, and KLS members were joined by friends and guests from both north and south of the river.

Attendees brought a variety of rainbow-coloured food dishes to share, the colours representing the flag of the LGBTQI+ community. The room was also decked in rainbow banners and the table was set with rainbow plates, cups and decorations.

Songs included a version of Hinei Ma Tov specially adapted to celebrate the diversity of the LGBTQI+ community.

"The Shabbat evening service and dinner celebrated the fact that we live in an area

that is accepting and open, but acknowledged that there is still much work to do to achieve this in other parts of the world," said KLS Press Officer Barbara



Celebrating four decades

The Reading Liberal Jewish Community proudly celebrated its 40th birthday this month with a special Shabbat service and celebratory lunch.

The small community's numbers were swelled for the event as current members were joined by seven rabbis as well as old friends, officers and dignitaries of Liberal Judaism.

The service was led by Reading's Rabbi Miri Lawrence with the sermon delivered by Rabbi Danny Rich, the Senior Rabbi of Liberal Judaism.

Rabbi Rachel Benjamin led the singing alongside Liberal Judaism Board Member Graham Carpenter, while Rabbis Richard Jacobi and Hadassah Davis shared their memories of serving the community in times past.

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, President of Liberal Judaism and one of the first rabbis to take services at Reading, led Kiddush with the younger members of the community. Read the full article [here](#).

Running for a cause

Two young Progressive Jews took part in the Maccabi GB Community Fun Run at the weekend to raise money to help others attend LJY-Netzer events.

Talya and Noa Fetterman, who are six and nine, completed the course, raising £50 for the LJY-Netzer bursary scheme, which assists families who are not able to pay the full cost of LJY-Netzer camps, tours and other events.

"It was a really hot day, but the girls were determined to get to the end to raise money for this important cause," said proud mum Becca, Liberal Judaism's Director of Youth.

"Talya and Noa have experienced the joy and togetherness of coming on LJY-Netzer events and feel very passionately that no one should miss out due to money."

Click [here](#) for more details on bursaries.



Liberal rabbis ordained



Dr Jeremy Schonfield, Rabbis Roberta Harris-Eckstein and Nathan Godleman

In a moving ceremony on July 2 at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, Nathan Godleman and Roberta Harris-Eckstein were ordained rabbis by Leo Baeck College's Dean, Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh.

As part of the College tradition, they were presented for ordination by teachers and loved ones who had shared their journey. Nathan was presented by Rabbi David Hulbert, Dr Linda McDonald and Rabbi Mark Solomon, with Roberta presented by Jeremy Eckstein, Pamela Neil and Prudence Tyler.

Many other leading figures in Progressive Judaism played a role in the service, including Rabbis Danny Rich and Laura Janner-Klausner, the Senior Rabbis of Liberal Judaism and Reform Judaism respectively. The address was given by Dr Jeremy Schonfield, John D Rayner Lecturer in Jewish Liturgy. Read the full article [here](#).

Soaking the rabbi

At a special Cheder fun day, members of Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NPLS) raised money to help local homeless and vulnerable people.

Activities included games, arts and crafts and, most popular of all, a chance to throw wet sponges at Rabbi Aaron Goldstein.

"The one consistent complaint of NPLS parents is that they wish Cheder in their day had been as meaningful and joyful as it is now," Aaron said. "I think a part of that is the opportunity once-a-year to throw sponges at one of the rabbis! The whole day was lots of fun and it had a beautiful ending – a final song session and blessing under a *tallitot* 'chuppah' with children, teachers and parents all taking part."



Money raised from the day will go to New Hope, a charity that serves individuals who are homeless or vulnerably-housed through the provision of accommodation and opportunities to transform lives.

Making a commitment

More than 200 people attended Chagigah, Reform Judaism's Biennial celebration weekend, which took place at the end of June at Eastwood Hall near Nottingham. Chagigah means celebration and this expressed the special atmosphere of the weekend.

Programming at the Biennial reflected a strong emphasis on responding to the needs of communities and developing leadership, and

Reform Judaism's 41 communities made significant commitments on mental wellbeing, financial sustainability and the environment.

"I am proud that Reform Judaism is leading the way in talking about matters of life and death, mental health and loneliness, and long-term financial sustainability of communities. I cherish the vibrancy that this conference represents," said Rabbi Laura

Janner-Klausner, the movement's Senior Rabbi.

A new initiative focussing on synagogue finances was launched and endorsed with a vote from delegates. "Money for Values: Re-thinking Synagogues' Finance" is designed to help synagogues consider new models of

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Making a commitment cont...

financial stability looking at membership models, fundraising and budgeting that reflect the priorities and values of the community.

According to Rabbi Mark Goldsmith of Alyth, this initiative is all about understanding that our members are giving to a Judaism that brings them meaning.

"It is about fostering relationships with synagogue members that help them to feel that their membership commitments are appreciated and encourage them to support their synagogues to be ambitious for Jewish life. Much of this feels obvious, but it is way too common for synagogues to become transactional," he said.

Martin Dives, Chairman of Shir Hayim Reform Jewish Community in Hampstead added that the initiative is a very well-designed programme that



addresses the most urgent and important challenges of our communities.

"Full of relevant and useful information and recommendations, it should be an essential next step for all synagogue leaders to participate in," Martin said.

Entering the next phase of the Communities that Care initiative launched at Chagigah 2016, Reform Judaism committed to adopting the NHS's recommended five steps to mental well-being. During the next two years, Reform congregations have committed to making communities safe, welcoming and open to all people with mental well-being problems and to partnering the Reform Movement on the journey to being a mental well-being, friendly movement using these steps.

In his speech at the closing session of Chagigah, Reform Judaism Chairman, Geoffrey Marx, noted that Reform Judaism is making an enormous difference to our communities, delivering invaluable partnerships and laying the foundations for a bright future. Read the full article [here](#).



Recognised by the Queen

Members of Reform Judaism's communities were recognised in the Queen's 2018 Birthday Honours in June.

West London Synagogue member Lloyd Dorfman CBE was knighted in recognition of his services to philanthropy and the arts. He is the founder of the Travelex Group, the world's largest provider of retail foreign exchange services, which he started in 1976 from one small shop in central London.

Sir Lloyd Dorfman, as he will now be known, is also the Chairman of the Prince's Trust and of Prince's Trust International, and serves on the boards of a number of other charities. He has received various other awards over the years.

Three other members of Reform Judaism were also recognised and were given the British Empire Medal.

They were Sandra Matlow of Menorah Synagogue for services to the community in south Manchester, Barbra Rosenberg of Maidenhead Synagogue for services to the community in Maidenhead, and Jill



Sir Lloyd Dorfman. Photo courtesy The Prince's Trust

Todd, a West London Synagogue member and Chairman of Leo Baeck College, for services to the community in Tower Hamlets.

Milton Keynes Open Day

Milton Keynes & District Reform Synagogue (MKDRS) held its first-ever Open Day on Sunday, July 1, attracting more than 200 people. MKDRS is 40 years old this year and to celebrate, the management decided to open its doors to the wider community.

The free event attracted people of all faiths from across Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas. Many people had never been in a synagogue before and were curious to learn more about Judaism. Others were Jewish families who hadn't realised that there was a synagogue in Milton Keynes. The Mayor of Milton Keynes, Councillor Martin Petchey, joined the celebrations and cut the 40th anniversary cake.

Guests were treated to a skit performed by the Cheder children, Hebrew songs sung by the MKDRS Choir and a play written and performed by the post-Bnei Mitzvah children, "The service that goes wrong". To round off the day, Crossroots, a five-piece band led by member Andy Gilbert, got people on their feet dancing.

Throughout the day, members were on hand to show visitors the Torah scroll and answer any questions. Displays provided information on Judaism

and Jewish holidays as well as the history and activities of the Synagogue.

The Reading Group gave away used books in return for a donation and raised more than £80, which will be split equally between Willen Hospice and the East Anglia Air Ambulance.

"The Open Day exceeded all our expectations," said Priscilla Dorrance, Chairman of MKDRS. "From the moment we opened our doors at 11am right through to the finish, the whole Synagogue was buzzing. It was tremendous to be able to share our friendly community with so many people."

