

# European Union for Progressive Judaism

February 2019 Newsletter

© European Union for Progressive Judaism

## The spread of Revisionism

**A new EUPJ-supported study finds that many European Union governments are rehabilitating World War II collaborators and war criminals while minimising their roles in the attempted extermination of Jews.**

**H**olocaust Revisionism (the theory or practice of revising one's attitude to a previously-accepted situation or point of view) is worst in central European members – Poland, Hungary, Croatia and Lithuania – though west European countries are not free from infection. Italy, in particular, needs to improve.

The Holocaust Remembrance Project was launched at an event in Brussels on January 25 by William Echikson, Director of the EUPJ's European Union Office to coincide with the UN's International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27).

Researchers from Yale and Grinnell Colleges in the United States travelled throughout Europe to conduct the research.

"The report shows the difficult reality in which we live," said Sonja Guentner, EUPJ Chairman, who spoke at the launch event. "We need to take governments to task to ensure open and pluralistic societies."

On a positive note, the report shows that not all central European countries are moving in the wrong direction. Two exemplary countries living up to their

tragic history are the Czech Republic and Romania. The Romanians have gone as far as appointing an independent commission to study the Holocaust, an exemplary move that should be duplicated by all European countries.

"It was crucial to come to terms with our history if Romania was going to become a liberal Western country," said Sorin Ducaru, the former Romanian ambassador to Washington and NATO Assistant Secretary-General, during the discussion at the launch. "We must remain vigilant or the anti-Semitism that inspired the Holocaust could return," he said.

Other countries that are doing well include Austria, which has made a remarkable turn-around, and France, which stands out for its progress in accepting responsibility for the Vichy collaborationist government.

"This battle over history extends beyond the questions of mere historical accuracy; it carries important implications for Europe's present," said

Continued on page 2

**L-R: Katharina von Schnurbein, Sorin Ducaru, Sonja Guentner and William Echikson**



# Holocaust Revisionism cont...

Echikson, who is also the Director of the Holocaust Remembrance Project.

"Today's revisionism coincides with a rise of extreme nationalist and far-right political movements dedicated to rolling back democracy, the rule of law, and its modern-day beacon, the multi-ethnic, tolerant European Union.

"Before joining the European Union, countries had to show that they accepted responsibility for what happened in their jurisdiction during the wars. All recorded significant progress. Unfortunately, these advances are now being rolled back as illiberal, nationalist governments take power," he added.

The report is designed to help the European Commission (EC) defend the rule of law against populist, nationalist governments that flout it.



Katharina von Schnurbein



Sorin Ducaru

Katharina von Schnurbein, the EC Co-ordinator on combating anti-Semitism, told the Brussels audience that the Commission has also taken a series of important and concrete actions to support these words, including pressing internet companies to combat online anti-Semitism, and unlocking millions of euros in grants to fight anti-Semitism and finance interfaith initiatives.

She also spoke of the EC's Eurobarometer survey on Europeans' perception of anti-Semitism, an overview of which follows this article.

The full report and video of the launch event are available on the [Holocaust Remembrance Project](#) website.

Please contact [William Echikson](#) for more information on the project.



William Echikson

**HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE PROJECT**

## Chairman's Message: Nothing's quiet on the EUPJ front

I hope that wherever you may be, winter is enjoyable, at least most aspects of it. Where I live, we have seen substantial amounts of snow for the first time in many years and I find it quite wonderful. We all know, of course (unlike a certain president of a country that shall remain nameless), that the presence of cold, snow and ice do not make global warming a myth!

So let me share with you some of the things that are happening at the moment.

During the open Executive Board meeting at the Brussels Shabbaton in November, we asked delegates for input on communication. We have taken your comments to heart and we are making good progress on this front. Please watch out for announcements in the next few weeks.

Speaking of global warming, we have also given further thought to the eco-balance of our next biennial conference in Geneva in 2020. The issue will feature strongly during this conference.

But before we start talking about Geneva, let's discuss something much closer. This year's major event on the Continent is the Rome Shabbaton in May. We are looking forward to sharing this with all

of you and we hope you'll make a plan to join us for the weekend. Further details are included in this newsletter and registration will be available on our website soon.

Please also take some time to check out the website on the Holocaust Remembrance Project. There is so much to learn from the report that was published in January with the support of the EUPJ.

An article on the Brussels event marking the launch of the report with website links can also be found in this newsletter.

Keep the home fires burning. See you in May in Rome. All best wishes. – [Sonja Guentner](#), [sonja.guentner@eupj.org](mailto:sonja.guentner@eupj.org)



# Perceptions of anti-Semitism in Europe

**The European Commission released the results of a Eurobarometer survey on Europeans' perception of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust in honour of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The survey was carried out in the 28 EU Member States.**

Commissioner Věra Jourová, who serves as the European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality for the Juncker Commission, presented the work of the Commission in the fight and prevention of anti-Semitism, and spoke about the findings of the survey at the Jewish Museum of Belgium in Brussels.

"The Eurobarometer reveals that of all the anti-Semitic expressions, denying the Holocaust is seen by the general public as the most problematic... namely one in two (53%)," she said.

"The lower the education level, the lower the awareness. Education is key to not only understanding the Shoah as the abyss of humanity, but also to increasing

awareness of anti-Semitism and how it is still very much alive in Europe today. We need to be vigilant and recall the words of Primo Levi, the famous author and Holocaust survivor: 'Those who deny Auschwitz would be ready to remake it.'"

Commissioner Jourová said the fact that nine out of 10 Jews in Europe today again perceive a rise in anti-Semitism, as recently stated in a Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) survey, is Europe's shame.

"It stands in stark contrast to the perception of the problem among the general public where two thirds do not perceive an increase of anti-Semitism.

"Generally speaking, awareness is higher in countries with large Jewish communities (Sweden, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, United Kingdom, and Belgium), where many people state that they have Jewish friends (like in Sweden 45%) or where attacks on the Jewish community have taken place and have been reported in the media," she said.

"In fact, four in 10 Jews (once again) think about leaving Europe. When Jews have left Europe in the past, it has never been a good sign of the state of Europe. And I am – we are at the European Commission – determined to ensure a future for Jewish people on this continent; for the sake of the Jewish people and for the sake of Europe.



Commissioner Věra Jourová speaking in Brussels

"The European community has translated 'Never again' into law, into equality before the law, into non-discrimination, into criminalisation of incitement to hatred and violence, and into the right to make life choices according to each of our traditions and beliefs.

"This is our Europe. This is the Europe I want to defend," Commissioner Jourová said.

You can read the Commissioner's full speech [here](#) and see the full results of the Eurobarometer, Perceptions of anti-Semitism, including the report, factsheets and infographic [here](#).

## The White Rose movement honoured

A very moving and distinctive Holocaust Remembrance Day memorial service was held at West London Synagogue (WLS) in co-operation with the Council of Christians and Jews. The service honoured the memory of the leaders of the White Rose movement, who were executed by the Nazis. Many dignitaries were present including the German and Israeli ambassadors who addressed the reception afterwards.

The congregation was addressed by Markus Schmorell, nephew of Alexander Schmorell who was one of the White Rose leaders executed after a sham 'People's Court' trial in Munich on July 13,

1943. Markus is Vice Chairman of the White Rose Foundation. He made a special trip from Germany for this event.

This was a deeply emotional service honouring the memory of those brave students and a professor who raised their voices against the Nazi terror in 1942 and paid with their lives for doing so.

**"We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere." – Elie Wiesel, *The Night Trilogy: Night, Dawn, the Accident***



### Honouring the White Rose leaders cont...

The White Rose movement is well known in Germany and Austria and is part of their school curricula. It is the subject of many books and films and is ingrained in the post-war psyche of these countries. This movement and the efforts of those students are part of Germany's and Austria's moral inheritance alongside the shame of the Shoah and other acts of unspeakable horror. But in other countries, including the UK, this story and its meaning are barely known.

I found it meaningful and appropriate that this was the centrepiece of a synagogue Holocaust Remembrance Day service. Alongside our murdered kin, we should pay more tribute to those non-Jews who were murdered for who they were, what they believed in or their acts of resistance during the Nazi terror.

The bravery of students, their lives ahead of them, in standing up to a brutal totalitarian regime, knowing that they would almost certainly lose their lives for what they were doing, is worthy of commemoration by Jews, for these were non-Jews acting in the noblest traditions of Jewish ethical justice.

I felt a deep sense of personal honour and privilege to be at this service. – **Leslie Bergman**

**Markus Schmorell (right) wants many people to remember his uncle and the other members of the White Rose.**  
Photo: Sophie Rohrmeier / dpa



Hans Scholl, Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst



Alexander Schmorell

## The White Rose

When the mass deportation of Jews began in 1942, a group of students at the University of Munich realised it was time for action. They formed "The White Rose" (*Weiße Rose*), a non-violent, intellectual resistance group. It was led by Hans Scholl, his sister Sophie Scholl, Christoph Probst, Willi Graf, Alexander Schmorell and Kurt Huber, a professor of philosophy and musicology.

They conducted an anonymous leaflet and graffiti campaign on campus that called for active opposition to the Nazi party regime. The leaders were unwavering in their commitment to change and said: "We will not be silent. We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace!"

Eventually, they were caught and in 1943, were all executed.

Find out more about the [White Rose](#) (with links to all six leaflets), and the [White Rose Foundation](#).

Monument to the "Weiße Rose" in front of the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich



## Editor's Note: We will not go gently!

**T**his year is only six weeks old, but already, it has reminded us a few times of how great an impact World War II is still having on us nearly 74 years after it ended.

Just last week, Rome's Ciampino Airport was temporarily closed down when three World War II-era German bombs were discovered during maintenance work on the tarmac.

While this encounter with potentially dangerous bombs didn't have any lasting effect on anyone, some of the other revelations come with shock and sadness, as you've probably read by now.

The Holocaust Remembrance Project and the European Commission's Eurobarometer survey, which were launched last month in Brussels, show how attitudes towards the Shoah are changing in Europe and setting us back decades. Certain countries are shedding their responsibility for the tragedy that claimed so many lives.

While there are some countries that have owned up to their pasts, Shoah denial is on the rise and with it, growing anti-Semitism, a phenomenon that is flaring up the world over.

But new Jewish communities are springing up and existing ones are growing throughout Europe. Jews are involved in government, business, interfaith

organisations, arts and culture, education and more. We have a strong presence in the European Union and have many allies all over the continent. And we have Israel. We will not go gently into that good night and we will fight to eradicate anti-Semitism wherever we find it.

Almost every issue of the EUPJ newsletter

includes articles about the different Progressive Jewish communities that are involved in interfaith work with Christian and Muslim organisations, about our outreach and educational programmes, our fight for participation in the wider communities, and our efforts in *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world).

We know there are always Israeli and other Jewish volunteers – medical practitioners, soldiers, students and more – offering humanitarian aid in countries that have experienced natural or man-made disasters.

We will continue to show our altruistic nature as a people, we will continue to let the world know that we stand out, and we will continue to shine our light on the nations. Eventually, God-willing, everyone will see the light. –

Darryl Egnal, [newsletter@eupj.org](mailto:newsletter@eupj.org).

Copy Editor: Miriam Kramer. Translators: Bianca Bertola and Norman Conroy.



## Who's who at the EUPJ?

### Honorary Life Presidents

Leslie Bergman  
Ruth Cohen

### President

Gordon Smith

### Vice-Presidents

Miriam Kramer  
Robert Weiner

### Chairman

Sonja Guentner

### Vice-Chairman: Governance

John Cohen

### Vice-Chairman: Finance

David Pollak

### Vice-Chairman: Israel & Twinning

Michael Reik

### Vice-Chairman: 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

William (Bill) Echikson, Director

### Administrator

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

### Newsletter Editor

Darryl Egnal  
[newsletter@eupj.org](mailto:newsletter@eupj.org)





## Book now for the EUPJ Shabbaton in Rome

**T**he beauty of being part of the EUPJ is that you get to see European countries other than your own at least once a year when the EUPJ has its Shabbaton, European Assembly and Executive Board meeting.

American writer, Anatole Broyard, believed "Rome was a poem pressed into service as a city," while his compatriot, Nathaniel Hawthorne, stated that Rome is "the city of all time, and of all the world".

Well, you'll be able to find out just how true these statements are during the next EUPJ Shabbaton, which takes place in Rome from May 17-19. Beth Hillel Rome will be our hosts for the weekend.

The programme will start on Friday with a Kabbalat Shabbat service and dinner in the evening. Saturday will include a Shacharit service



for the community followed by different tours around the city. Rabbi Joel Oseran will lead all the religious services.

Sunday morning will begin with discussions and workshops, and the European Assembly and Executive Board meeting will be held after lunch. The EUPJ events will end on Sunday afternoon. In the evening, Beth Hillel will celebrate its fifth anniversary with a gala dinner. Seats to this dinner are limited, so if you would like to be there, please get in touch with [Beth Hillel](#) directly.

Registration for this exciting weekend will be open soon and more information will be posted on the [EUPJ's website](#) as it becomes available.



### EUPJ Newsletter Deadlines

MONTH	COPY/PHOTOS	PUBLISH
March	Wed 27/02/2019	Thu 14/02/2019
April	Wed 04/04/2019	Wed 17/04/2019
May	Wed 01/05/2019	Thu 16/05/2019

**Please note: These dates are subject to change.**

### 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.**

## Need help for the High Holy Days?

The High Holy Days are always a very important time in our congregational lives. If you are a community who needs a rabbi, cantor or student to help lead your services, please let us know. If you are a rabbi, cantor or student who is willing to work in a European Progressive community, please get in touch with us as well.

The [European Rabbinic Assembly](#) (ERA) will happily make the *shidduch* for you – and it doesn't have to be for the High Holy Days. It can be any time of year.

Please reach out to [Rabbi Pauline Bebe](#) and we will do our best to help you find the right person or the right community.



## Rabbinic Ruminations: Rabbi Floriane Chinsky

According to a well-known adage, “Being a rabbi is not a job for a Jew”. I originally wanted to be a teacher, but at an early age I became a rebel, organising a class revolt against school yard violence. Today, I have become a rabbi who is both teacher and peace activist.

**M**y Jewish background is very French. Part of my family is proud to have been registered in the census of Jews in Alsace before the French Revolution. Rabbi Yoselman from Rosheim, who represented the Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, influenced the emperor and helped avoid pogroms by dedication and humility, is a family hero and an inspiration for me today.

We are Jews of the Enlightenment. As a child, my grandmother, Marianne Chinsky, attended the first Reform synagogue in France, ULIF-Copernic, as the prayers were in French and her mother wanted her to understand what was being said. At the same time, she received Modern Hebrew lessons long before the creation of the modern State of Israel. Tradition and modernity were already the mantra.

Marianne was close to Robert Gamzon, founder of the Jewish scout movement in France in 1923; Edmond Fleg, who created the Judeo-Christian fellowship; and Emmanuel Levinas, who revived interest in Jewish texts after the Shoah, which destroyed his Lithuanian family. She was active in the Jewish Resistance during the war.

With such a heritage, it is easy to understand that my Judaism is “existentialist”. When we make a blessing, we say “God makes us special (sanctified) through his commandments...” The key message, for me, is that the way we choose to act (the commandments), makes us who we are.

We are not “Jews” or even “human” by birth or by fatality, but only by virtue of a constant choice to keep these qualities alive within us and how we choose to do this. In other words, what kind of human beings, Jewish men and women, are we becoming?

I was born in Paris in 1974 and like a good little girl, I followed my family traditions without too much questioning. I celebrated my Bat Mitzvah at ULIF, taught *Talmud Torah* from age 16, and became active in the Jewish scout movement as both monitor and teacher. Indeed, I remained a model child until some Orthodox rabbis (numerous in France) told me that my Jewish legacy was a fraud. I was naturally shocked by this “discovery” and decided to get to

grips with the question, which touched every aspect of my identity.

My response was to launch myself into the Israel course of rabbinic studies in Jerusalem at the Schechter Institute (Conservative). I also re-orientated my law studies toward sociology and the Jewish people. I received my rabbinical ordination in 2005.

I have been a rabbi in Israel, Belgium and France. For the past six years, I have been one of the three rabbis at the Mouvement Juif Libéral de France



(MJLF), one of the two large Reform communities in France, building up its more intimate Paris-East synagogue in Surmelin. Like my French colleagues, my work is both pastoral and public as we defend Jews and Judaism in the media and, more generally, in French society.

I believe I am helping to bring about change regarding the place of women in Judaism, which also affects other religions and the perceptions of the public at large. As a non-Orthodox rabbi, I defend the legitimacy of Reform Judaism, which is faithful to openness, intelligence, and respect for the other. *Tikkun Olam* and being

an activist in this world is hard work. Maybe it’s not “a job for a Jew”, but it’s certainly a job for Jews and the rest of humanity together.

Let’s travel this extraordinary road to the future together. Let’s visit each other’s congregations, join hands as Reform communities, and let us be *shevet achim gam yachad*, a team of siblings together. – Rabbi Floriane Chinsky [f.chinsky@mjlfr.org](mailto:f.chinsky@mjlfr.org)

### Calling all rabbis

We introduced this column recently 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](mailto:newsletter@eupj.org).



## In Memoriam: Keeping their memories alive

Over the past two months, the WUPJ has had to say goodbye to some of the movement's most inspiring leaders. These individuals played valuable roles in making the WUPJ the successful organisation it is today.

The EUPJ mourns with their families, the WUPJ and the communities they served. May their memories be for a blessing.

Their obituaries, from which these were extracted, were published by the WUPJ on behalf of Rabbi Daniel Freeland, WUPJ President, and Carole Sterling, WUPJ Chairman.

**Gerard Daniel** served as President of the WUPJ from 1980 to 1988. His legacy of leadership and vision blesses us to this very day. He and his wife Ruth were lifelong builders of Reform Judaism. Gerry's leadership changed the landscape of Reform Judaism in Israel.

During his tenure as President, Gerry partnered with WUPJ Executive Director, Rabbi Richard Hirsch, to design, fund and construct Beit Shmuel, the World Union's headquarters in Jerusalem.

Gerry then turned his attention to the creation of Beit Daniel in Tel Aviv, now the largest Reform congregation in Israel, and partnered with Rabbi Meir Azari to create Mishkenot Ruth Daniel in Jaffa.

**Betty Golomb** was a much-loved visionary leader and philanthropist who helped ensure the future of Progressive Judaism worldwide.

A former Vice President of the World Union of Progressive Judaism and a long-time member of its Executive Board and North American Advisory Board, Betty spearheaded the World Union's efforts to rebuild Progressive Jewish religious and cultural life around the world.

In 2006, the World Union honoured Betty with the International Humanitarian Award, its highest honour, bestowed upon individuals who embody exemplary service and leadership to our movement worldwide.

**Harvey Cohen**, husband of WUPJ's former chair, Ruth Cohen, leaves behind a legacy of incomparable commitment to the Reform Movement in Israel and around the world.

Harvey was a dear friend as well as a generous partner whose sage counsel and philanthropic support were essential to the financial success of WUPJ over many decades.

He was a wise, kind and thoughtful man who will be sorely missed by his friends, family and the international World Union community.

**Shai Pinto**, former WUPJ Vice President, served the World Union as Director of Operations and Vice President from 2007 until 2016, during a transitional period in the life of the organisation.

As General Manager, he guided us through these difficult times, and set the stage for the stability we enjoy today. His creativity blessed our WUPJ Connections conferences and our Beit Shmuel headquarters.

May their memories continue to bless and warm their families and all they loved, and may their legacies continue to be a source of pride for the WUPJ. *Baruch Dayan Ha'emet.*



Gerard Daniel



Betty Golomb



Shai Pinto



# Diversity, difference and inclusion

Veida Olami, the global summit of Netzer leadership, took place from January 15-20 at Beit Shmuel in Jerusalem. The Veida is convened annually.

This year, Veida welcomed 26 participants from 11 countries and 13 branches – Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, North America (NFTY), Brazil (Avahandava and Colonia Da-CIP), Germany, UK (RSY and LJY), Holland, South Africa, Israel and Australia.

These dedicated young people serve as educators, lay leaders, movement workers and volunteers. Their work continues to take our movement's connection to Progressive Judaism and Reform Zionism to new heights.

This year's focus was "Diversity, Difference and Inclusion" and comprised workshops, discussions, site visits and meet-ups with social organisations

helping marginalised populations of Israeli society. Delegates voted to add 'Inclusivity' as a value to the foundational document of Netzer Olami which informs the programmatic priorities of the global movement.



Veida's gala opening event celebrated 40 years of Netzer Olami with a presentation recapping the history and development of the movement around the world. Eighty people attended, many of whom are Netzer and Shnat Netzer (Israel Gap Year) alumni.

Veida Olami is grateful for the critical support of its sponsors: Arzenu Olami, World Zionist Organization (WZO), KKL-JNF, Arzenu and the WUPJ.

[Find out what participants had to say](#) about this year's Netzer Veida.

## Shnat Netzer gap year



[Registration for Shnat Netzer is now open!](#)

Shnat Netzer is the gap year programme of the global Progressive Jewish movement, bringing together post-high school young leaders from around the globe for a transformative Israel experience. It will start in January 2020.

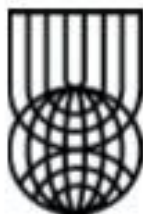
Our re-designed programme offers participants a chance to discover Israel through touring, learning, volunteer work, social action projects, and more.

Share this Shnat Netzer announcement with youth leaders in your communities.



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





World Union for Progressive Judaism

**INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AWARD DINNER**

*to honor visionary global Jewish leaders*

**LESLIE AND DEE BERGMAN**

London

&

**STANLEY AND MARION BERGMAN**



**SAVE THE DATE**

*Wednesday, May 29, 2019*

**THE PIERRE**

2 East 61st Street, New York

Six-Thirty in the Evening

*Invitation to follow*

For more information visit [wupj.org](http://wupj.org)

212.452.6530 | [wupj@wupj.org](mailto:wupj@wupj.org)

## Conference on Israeli-Palestinian conflict

On January 31, Arzenu France hosted a conference on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with stimulating speakers, thoughtful questions, and a convivial cocktail at the welcoming premises of ULIF-Copernic synagogue.

French-Israeli journalist, Stephane Amar, provoked the audience with a two-part argument.

First, there can be no Palestinian state because Israel cannot give the Palestinians what they most want – cities like Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem as well



as the Jordan Valley – while biblical sites in the West Bank are essential to many Jews.

Second, a single state that preserves both a 2:1 Jewish majority and full democracy is now possible as Gaza is headed for independence, while in Israel and the West Bank, the Arab natality rate has fallen below that of Jews. In addition, experience since 1948 shows that Jews and Arabs can live together under Israeli sovereignty.

Gil Mihaely, an Israeli historian and journalist living in Paris, warned that current favourable circumstances both domestically and externally could change suddenly – Christian Zionists, for example, might start to make awkward demands.

Questions from the floor focused on social cohesion, income inequality and foreign policy. Some worried that Jewish births were predominately ultra-Orthodox and that Palestinian Arabs under Israeli control since 1967 might integrate less well than those of 1948. – [Robert Ley](#)

Stephane Amar

## Jewish activities for French-speaking youth

ULIF Copernic and MJLF are promoting activities for young people in 2019, the first of which is a Liberal Jewish camp for 8-14-year-olds from April 28 to May 5 in France. The programme includes outdoor activities, games, sports, arts and crafts and evening events.

A weekend in Prague is planned for those who have celebrated or will celebrate their B'nei Mitzvah between April 2018 and December 2019. It will take place from May 30 to June 2. The programme includes an excursion to Old Town Prague, discovering the history of Prague, and visits to museums, the Jewish quarter and artists' studios. A meeting with the Prague Liberal Jewish community will encompass a Shabbat evening service and dinner.

A trip to Israel for 14-17-year-olds has been planned with ULIF, MJLF and GIL Switzerland. The



trip will take place from July 9 to 24 and the programme will include discovering Israel from the Negev to the Golan, a night in the desert with a camel ride, meeting our sister community in Modiin, several days in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, kayaking, a visit to the beach and climbing Masada at dawn.

Registration closes on April 4. Find out more by emailing [Talmud Torah](#) for French youth and [GIL Geneva](#) for French-speaking Swiss youth.

And finally, ULIF Copernic suggests you let your children discover [Cedar Lake Camp](#), a summer camp in the USA for 8-14-year-olds who have basic English-speaking skills. There are two sessions: the first from June 25 to July 22 and the second from July 22 to August 15.

To register your child, email [Talmud Torah](#) or phone 01 47 04 97 92.





## A French Taglit-Birthright experience

The Assembly of Liberal Judaism (AJL) has put together its own custom-made Taglit-Birthright trip, a free 10-day stay in Israel for young people aged 18 to 26.

On several dates this summer, AJL is organising trips off the beaten track to discover Israel through the lens of Liberal Judaism – a journey in the spirit of openness, tolerance and equality where each person will find his or her place.

We will plunge into the heart of Israel from Jerusalem to the Galilee and Golan passing through its kibbutzim and beaches, not forgetting beautiful Tel Aviv and the desert experience. Memorable visits, unique activities, extraordinary encounters. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime journey!

Young and experienced leaders will accompany the Taglit-Birthright AJL journey. They have great knowledge of both the history of the land and of the Jewish religion as well as knowing the best places for delicious humus and falafel. We are also arranging meetings with the country's leading people to ensure you experience the beauty, complexity and pluralism of Israel.



Find out more about [My Israel© – AJL](#) and book your spot!

**Taglit-Birthright has tour options for every Jewish youngster in every country. You can find out how to get in touch with Taglit-Birthright by clicking [here](#) to find your country's contact information.**

## The Netherlands

### New rabbi ordained in Amsterdam

On January 6, Rabbi Joram Rookmaaker became the eighth rabbi ordained by the Levisson Institute, whose first rabbis were ordained in 2008.

Rabbi Rookmaaker will work part-time alongside Rabbi Menno ten Brink of the Amsterdam Liberal Jewish congregation. He is already Jewish chaplain to the Dutch forces.

More than 500 people attended the ordination and installation service, among them representatives of the city of Amsterdam and the Israeli embassy, with special guest, EUPJ Chairman, Sonja Guentner.

Prof Dr Irene Zwiep, Chairman of the Academic Board of the Levisson Institute, gave a speech and



**L-R: Prof Dr Irene Zwiep, Rabbis Menno ten Brink, Joram Rookmaaker and David Lilienthal**



**Rabbi Menno ten Brink gives Rabbi Joram Rookmaaker *smicha***

handed the new rabbi his certificate. Ella Wijnschenk, Chairman of the Institute, and Rabbi Menno ten Brink, Dean of the Institute, gave Rabbi Rookmaaker *smicha* and a blessing.

After Hans Weijel, Chairman of the Amsterdam congregation, said a few words to Rabbi Rookmaaker, he was installed as rabbi. Rabbi David Lilienthal, founder of the Levisson Institute, made the trip from Israel especially to attend the ceremony.

The Amsterdam Liberal Congregation is the largest Jewish congregation in the Netherlands. – **Francine Püttmann. Photos: Michael Ballak**

## Italy

# Landmark agreement for Rome community

Beth Hillel, the Jewish Progressive community of Rome, has concluded an important agreement with the Rieti city government, which will allow the community to establish the first cemetery for Progressive Jews.

A Jewish section of the municipal cemetery was dedicated in 2001, following the attack on the Twin



The entrance to the Jewish cemetery



L-R: Prof Stefano Ridolfi, President, Beth Hillel Rome; Antonio Cicchetti, Mayor of Rieti; and Domenico Cricchi, Manager of Services of Rieti

Towers. It lies next to the Catholic and Islamic areas, and represents a sign of peace and civil co-existence among different religions. The Progressive Jewish cemetery will take over the original Jewish section.

The signing ceremony took place on Sunday, January 27.

## Poland

# A special Bar Mitzvah and Tu B'Shvat seder

On January 18 and 19, *Shabbat Beshalach*, a Bar Mitzvah and Tu B'Shvat came together for the Beit Warszawa community this year.

In his *drasha* (sermon), Max W, Bar Mitzvah of the day, delivered an impassioned plea for social and political activism as our ongoing contribution toward *Tikkun Olam*. The young attorney proceeded with the important lifecycle event in less than two years after his *giyur* (conversion).

Following a festive Kiddush sponsored by the Bar Mitzvah, the community reconvened for Havdalah followed by a Tu B'Shvat celebration-cum-study



Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild



Max W, Bar Mitzvah

session. Capitalising on the availability of Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild, we achieved our aim of gaining greater confidence in conducting a successful *seder* of this ever-evolving and highly-relevant holiday in ways infused with meanings from the past, present and future.

There was plenty of fruit, nuts and wine with great *ruach* (spirit). About 20 people attended and we studied from various materials on the holiday, including a booklet published in Manchester in 1943, a time when people in Warsaw certainly had other things on their minds, such as sheer survival. –

Marek Jezowski and Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild



# Supporting the homeless

Maidenhead Synagogue has acquired a purple double-decker bus – not dissimilar to the ‘night bus’ in the Harry Potter novels – which will live in its car park and be a source of both refuge and hope for homeless people in the area.

The bus has been converted into a mobile hostel with the seating taken out and 12 beds installed upstairs and a kitchen, desk and bathroom downstairs.

The most important part of the bus is the desk, as it will be used as a first step to help those who have fallen on hard times obtain employment and proper accommodation, with a warden on board, both to supervise and to give advice.

The bus is fully roadworthy and in the evenings will drive to Maidenhead town centre to pick up passengers for the night.

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain has spear-headed the project with other local groups.

“Many of the homeless are people who had jobs and homes until recently, but whose lives have now spiralled out of control and into the streets,” he said. “The bus is part of Maidenhead Synagogue’s involvement in the wider community and represents our commitment to social action.”

Synagogue members are becoming involved as drivers, donating items for use inside the bus and

fundraising to pay for a warden who will supervise the bus and give advice to those using it.



Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain and the Maidenhead Synagogue mobile hostel bus

# Reform and Liberal partner for teacher training

More than 170 people from 24 Progressive communities around the UK attended Reform Judaism and Liberal Judaism’s joint teacher training day at Alyth Synagogue on January 6.

The event included a track for *madrichim* (teaching assistants), an inclusion track exploring special educational needs skills, LGBTQ students, and mental health awareness for teachers and students, as well as crafting, Torah, Hebrew, Jewish technology, and *tefillah* (prayer).

“I have particular interest in special educational needs and safeguarding,” said Alison Dollow, a teacher of two- to five-year-olds at Brighton and Hove Reform Synagogue. “The day was a fantastic opportunity to learn and exchange views on issues in a relaxed and informative way with some excellent



sessions. I very much look forward to attending next year.”

According to Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers, Reform Judaism’s Community Educator, this was the biggest teacher training day yet. “It was really phenomenal to see so many of our amazing teachers and *madrichim* giving up even more of their weekend to invest in themselves and thus our communities’ futures.

“This year, there was an emphasis on mental health and inclusion, and each conference offers a huge diversity of sessions with fantastic professionals. We’d love to hear what teachers are looking for at next year’s training day! Save the date: January 5, 2020,” she said.





## Shabbat and Tu B'Shvat celebrated

Liberal Judaism communities across the UK celebrated Liberal Judaism Shabbat as rabbis swapped pulpits for the weekend. Timed to coincide with the *yahrzeit* of Lily Montagu, one of our movement's founders, many of the country's most senior rabbis took part.

Liberal Judaism's senior rabbi, Rabbi Danny Rich, led services at Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NPLS), where he honoured Lily Montagu by giving a sermon on the principles of Liberal Judaism that was also live-streamed on the NPLS website.

Ealing Liberal Synagogue (ELS) welcomed Liberal Judaism's President, Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, for an engaging Torah breakfast and service, alongside their regular minister, Rabbi Janet Burden.

After a lively discussion about the historicity of the Exodus story, Rabbi Goldstein sang the 'Song of the Sea' to the tune of 'Bendigamos' in traditional fashion from the Torah scroll. At the end of the service, Ealing member, Emily Eastmond, shared a special cookie-cake in honour of the festival of Tu B'Shvat.

Tu B'Shvat was also celebrated at Suffolk Liberal Jewish Community (SLJC), where Rabbi David Hulbert continued his 'Rambling Rabbi' sabbatical that sees him visiting a number of Progressive communities around the country.

Rabbi Hulbert led a breakfast study session around the meaning of the festival, followed by a Tu B'Shvat

*seder* that involved eating the different types of fruit to represent the different types of people: those who care only for others (and not themselves); those who care only for themselves (and not for others); those who do not care for others or themselves; and the balanced who care for others and also themselves.

"We are a very small community and really appreciated the visit by Rabbi David Hulbert, which

transformed a normal Shabbat into something truly special," said SLJC Chairman, Beverley Levy.

Birmingham Progressive Synagogue and Bristol & West Progressive Congregation swapped ministers, with Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi heading to Bristol and Rabbi Monique Mayer travelling in the opposite direction.

"I very much enjoyed the enthusiastic singing at Bristol, where I talked about Lily Montagu and heard memories from a member who remembered her," said Rabbi Jacobi. "I led a Tu B'Shvat *seder* afterwards, with lots of fruit, and the children joined with lots of questions and answers.

"Monique was very well received in Birmingham,

where she introduced people to *Mussar*, and I have heard some great reports from congregants," she said.

There was also a special Kabbalat Torah weekend, which saw teenagers from a number of Liberal communities get together at Finchley Progressive Synagogue. You can read more about it below.



L-R: Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, ELS Council Member, Emily Eastmond, and Rabbi Janet Burden

## Kabbalat Torah classes unite



Is it possible to get 43 teenagers to learn about Jewish theology, grow as young people and bond as a community, all in just under 36 hours?

As we learned on the Kabbalat Torah weekend at Finchley Progressive Synagogue, the answer is a resounding yes.

Run by a coalition of rabbis, *cheder* heads and LJY-Netzer movement workers, the Kabbalat Torah weekend is an annual tradition, during which various classes from more than half a dozen synagogues come together to further their learning and explore their identity.

Part of Liberal Judaism Shabbat, it included an exploration of London's Liberal Jewish history,

## Kabbalat Torah classes cont...

artistic and charitable projects and a full-blown, Shrek-themed movie night.

Whether it was cooking dinner for a local homeless shelter, learning about the life of Liberal Judaism founder, Lily Montagu, from Rabbi Jackie Tabick – who was the first female rabbi ordained in the UK – or studying the principles of *Torah*, *avodah* and *gemilut chasadim* (study, work and acts of loving kindness), everyone had an incredible time.

The centrepiece of the weekend was unquestionably the exploration of London's West End, where teams of young people followed the life of Lily Montagu, saw the original site of The Liberal Jewish Synagogue and found clues to the history of Liberal Judaism.

With contingents of young people representing everywhere from Brighton to London to Nottingham,



the future leaders of the Liberal Jewish community were inspired, engaged and enthralled by this fantastic event.

We can't wait for next year, hopefully with even more communities represented. – [Ben Combe](#)

## Out of the Blue

The “Out of the Blue” exhibition at the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem tells the story of the mysterious blue colour, *tekhelet*, starting with molluscs in the Mediterranean 3,500 years ago and snaking its way up to the flag of the modern state of Israel.

Anne Clark will share what she learnt at this fascinating exhibition using images and texts with members and guests of Sinai Synagogue Leeds.

Anne was the founder and director of the Jewish Resource Centre at the University of Roehampton in London. She has worked as a Jewish educator in the UK with Jews and non-Jews of all ages and is a UJIA Ashdown Fellow. Now semi-retired, she divides her time between Jerusalem and London.

The presentation will take place on Sunday, February 24 from 19:00 to 20:30. Booking is essential. [Send an email](#) or phone 0113 2665256.



Anne Clark



**Shirei Chagigah**  
Reform Judaism's  
Biennial Music  
Conference  
**11-14 July 2019**  
Save the Date!



# 15th European Maccabi Games

**The European Maccabi Games, the biggest Jewish community happening – and the largest adult multi-sport event in Europe – will take place for the first time in Budapest from July 29 to August 7.**

**T**he European Maccabi Games is the most exciting Jewish sports event that unites Jews in Europe. The event includes all aspects of Judaism – sport, culture and religion. More than 2,000 athletes are expected to attend with thousands of spectators from all over Europe.

These games are held every four years and are always held two years after *HaMaccabiah* (the [Maccabi Games](#)) are held in Israel. European delegations send their best Jewish sportsmen and women to compete.

The opening ceremony will take place on Tuesday July 30 and closing ceremony on Tuesday August 6.



A massive Shabbat service will be held in the largest synagogue in Europe on Friday August 2.

The Jewish Cultural Feast, which is the biggest Jewish festival in Europe, takes place in Budapest every year. The festival will coincide with the [European Maccabi Games](#) this year in order to provide several cultural and free-time activities for the guests and athletes. These activities will help to get everyone involved in the vibrant Hungarian Jewish life.

The first European Maccabi Games was held in Prague in 1929, but the games that made poignant history took place in 2015, when the 14th European Maccabi Games were held in Berlin.

It was the first time since before World War II that Jewish athletes from all over Europe competed on the territory of the former German Reich – in Hitler's stadium, the same stadium that held the 1936 Olympic Games!

Read the heart-warming story [here](#).



**If you want to compete as an athlete in the European Maccabi Games, please get in touch with your local Maccabi organisation. You can find the details [on this website](#).**

## Jewish Education

### Creating impactful Jewish learning experiences

Yesod is delighted to be partnering with [M2, the Institute for Experiential Jewish Education](#), to bring you an amazing learning and development opportunity – [a seminar for Jewish Educators](#). It will take place from May 13-16 in Jerusalem.

The seminar will focus on creating impactful Jewish learning experiences. Using M2's unique approach, we will learn the theory and practice of creating experiences that will make a difference in the lives of your learners, whether they are at camp, the Jewish Community Centre or *Talmud Torah*.

It will be an interactive and practical seminar. Some of the learning will be classroom-style and will include a theoretical approach to types of experiences. We will also use the city of Jerusalem as a lab in which to put the theory into practice.

There will also be time for sharing ideas with other participants and developing new ways to improve the experiences you provide for your learners.

The deadline is February 18, so [apply now](#). If you are interested in applying and need a short extension (one week), please [email Yesod](#).



### Grants for education programmes

The [Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe](#) aims to ensure that Jewish culture and heritage are actively supported, valued and looked after for generations to come. These grants assist universities, museums, libraries, archives and Jewish organisations who understand and appreciate that Jewish culture and heritage have a dynamic role to play in contemporary society.

The Foundation offers professional development opportunities and supports pan-European organisations that are able to offer collaborative and convening networks.

#### Jewish Education Grant Programme for Professional Development in Jewish Community Organisations – Enhancing Jewish Content

Across Europe, Jewish communal professionals and volunteers play a vital role in supporting and enhancing Jewish life – the Jewish summer camp co-ordinators, the programming staff at the Jewish Community Centre, the Jewish studies teachers, the synagogue and community lay leaders and the volunteer Sunday school parents are some of the examples of tireless individuals making a difference in their communities.

The Rothschild Foundation recognises and appreciates their contribution and yet, often, these same people have not had the opportunity to deepen their own Jewish knowledge or update their professional expertise to help them work within Jewish communities.

To address these needs, the Foundation is offering



communal organisations support to enhance the Jewish experience and education of its personnel – paid and unpaid, junior and senior. A strong Jewish learning component must be at the core of the programme and it is expected that this will in turn influence the breadth and depth of the activities offered within the community.

Applicants are also encouraged to visit the website of [Yesod](#) to learn more about available professional development opportunities for individuals, and the website of [Gesher L'Europa](#), a joint project of the Foundation and the National Library of Israel featuring educational resources and training opportunities.

[Other grants](#) offered by the Rothschild Foundation.  
– Photo courtesy Yesod

### Limmud events coming up in Europe

Diverse, grassroots Jewish learning 'Limmud' events will take place throughout Europe. The next few events are [Limmud Oresund](#) (Denmark/Sweden: March 3), [Limmud France](#) (March 8-10) and [Limmud Freiburg](#) (April 7). Keep checking the [Limmud website](#) to find out when Limmud takes place in your country.

Clockwise from left:  
Limmud Germany  
2018, Limmud France,  
Limmud Oresunds

