



European Union for Progressive Judaism

May 2017 Newsletter

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From the Chairman

As you can see from the accompanying photo I attended the WUPJ Connections 2017 in Jerusalem. One of the many highlights was the *shacharit* service held on Thursday 18 May at the Kotel when 13 women from our Latin America region celebrated their *bnat mitzvah*. They read beautifully from the Torah and some 400 of us from 30 countries – women and men – prayed lustily and joyfully. Most of the service was held in the egalitarian section but for *Aleinu* and *Kaddish* we moved to the main plaza with our Torah scrolls and were able to complete our prayers there without intervention.



Miriam Kramer at the Kotel during Connections 2017

This was moving on so many levels. First of all Connections is an event which more than lives up to its name. It is a gathering of the WUPJ family and it is a joy to meet old friends and meet new ones. Secondly these women, ranging in age from their 20s to their 80s, did not have a *bat mitzvah* at the traditional age so were making up for this now. They were surrounded by their families and all the delegates and this occasion the celebrations were genuine and emotional.

I have always thought Connections a most appropriate name for the WUPJ conference. Delegates from the seven regions make contact with each other, sharing our experiences but also as individuals: in one afternoon alone I was able to establish a link between an American rabbinic student who will be in Paris this coming Shabbat as well as a Canadian congregant who will be in Madrid over the High Holydays. If this is representative of what goes on at Connections, and I'm sure it is, then that alone justifies the gathering. There is, of course, so much more and I urge you all to look at the WUPJ website in the coming days.

There was much interest in the 2018 EUPJ Biennial Conference in April for two reasons: the first is that Prague is a very attractive destination as a city in its own right and especially as a place of considerable Jewish interest. The second is that we now have a reputation for excellence in our conferences. The EUPJ conference team looks forward to seeing many delegates from many countries in Prague 26-29 April.

Miriam Kramer

Making history during Connections 2017



Progressive Torah service at the Western Wall, May 18
Haaretz photo by Yuli Goren

On Thursday May 18 we made history again. Men and women joined together in the upper plaza of the Kotel and led an egalitarian service that included reading from our own Torah scrolls. This was led by the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) as part of the World Union for Progressive Judaism's (WUPJ) Connections 2017 conference, attended by more than 450 Reform Jews from around the world.

We were not sure if it was going to happen. We were the first people to show up at the entrance with a Torah in hand. Security guards stopped us and asked whether we knew that it was against the Kotel rabbi's regulations to let a woman carry a Torah to the Kotel. We told them that we knew about the regulation, that it was in fact illegal, and that they should let us pass.

After a few moments of hesitation they backed down. With WUPJ's help, we had five Torah scrolls enter the plaza and we used them to read together (men and women) in front of the Western Wall.

We came, we prayed, and we read from the Torah. There was no conflict, and this day shows that there is no need for conflict between Jews who simply want to pray and read Torah in their own way.

We want to thank all of our friends and partners at WUPJ for their help and support. No matter what happens next time you can count on IRAC to be there to continue fighting for equality at the Kotel.

Anat Hoffman
Rabbi Noa Sattath

Read more in [Haaretz](#)

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EUPJ at the European Commission in Brussels



Johannes Börmann, Leslie Bergman, Katharina von Schnurbein, William Echikson, Rabbi Marc Neiger, Rabbi Pauline Bebe

It was a great pleasure for me and my colleagues, Rabbi Pauline Bebe, Rabbi Marc Neiger and William Echikson to have the opportunity to meet with Katharina von Schnurbein, Co-ordinator for Dialogue with churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations of the Directorate General for Justice and Consumers at the European Commission and her assistant Johannes Börmann.

For the EUPJ this was an extremely useful meeting in terms of understanding how we can participate in programmes of the European Commission and establish a more visible presence for the EUPJ in Brussels. We will be putting together a framework for achieving these objectives in the coming months.

We hope the European Commission gained some benefit from this meeting in terms of deepening its understanding of Progressive Judaism, and particularly its position in Europe and certain of the challenges we face. We believe we have a distinctive role to play in the multifaceted European religious and social scene.

Leslie Bergman
Honorary Life President

[Excerpted from a letter to Ms von Schnurbein - Editor]

Synagogues everywhere

Progressive congregations and Shabbat services can be found nearly everywhere during your travels. Click on a blue link to find a synagogue near your destination: [Europe](#) — [Worldwide](#)



Or Chadasch, Zurich

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Letters

Another good Newsletter. As I get less involved in the Management Committee it so helps me get more involved in the EUPJ.

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein

We'd like to share an article to be published in the EUPJ newsletter. Thanks so much for the energy that you all put into the publication!

Deborah and Ahuva
Congregation Bet Januká, Rota, Spain

EUPJ website, click on www.eupj.org

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

We would love to receive interesting photos relating to your community for use on the website. Please send these to Deborah with a caption too.

L'Shanah Habaah b'Prague

Well, what a conference that was. I am, of course, talking about the WUPJ Connections 2017 in Jerusalem which has just ended. I'm sure there will be plenty written about this conference elsewhere but with my conference organiser's hat on, it's definitely hats off and a hearty mazel tov to Sonja, Yair and Andrew, the co-chairs of conference, who delivered a fantastic four days to 450 delegates from 30 countries.

We are so lucky to have the services of Sonja Guentner on our EUPJ conference committee together with some colleagues from previous conferences, namely Miriam Kramer, Rabbi Lea Muehlstein, Gordon Smith and, of course Deborah Grabiner. We also have our local man in Prague, Jonathan Wootliff, Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, who probably has as much experience with conferences as the rest of us put together, and Michael Reik, who is bringing imagination and ambition to our planning process. We have a team that is both confident and extremely competent.

No final decision has been made on our title, which will point us towards the theme of the conference, but *Regeneration* will certainly be one of our central themes and our mission will be to take our movement forward and to build for the future.

Contracts have now been signed with the Marriott Hotel in the old town of Prague which, on a second trip to Prague a couple of weeks ago, provided Miriam, Deborah and myself with hospitality that left us confident that we had made the right choice and that we will be well looked after.



The Spanish Synagogue in Prague

We are also very happy to announce that we have secured the world famous and truly beautiful Spanish synagogue for our Kabbalat Shabbat and Shabbat morning services. Built on the same site as the Altshul, probably the oldest synagogue in Prague and used by the Reform Jewish community of Prague in the mid 19th century, the old synagogue was replaced in 1867 by the current synagogue with its Moorish designs and richly decorated mosaic interior. We are very grateful to the President of Federation of Jewish Communities, Petr Papoušek, and the Jewish museum authorities for providing us



Interior of the Spanish Synagogue in Prague

with such a spiritual and awe-inspiring setting for our services.

In speaking to delegates at Connections, it has become clear to me that the city of Prague, coupled with the reputation gained from recent EUPJ conferences, will result in a sell-out conference. Early registration is strongly recommended. We shall do our best to accommodate everyone and provide a rich blend of inspiration and motivation which will send us back to our communities better equipped to face the future and build on what we have achieved already.

L'Shanah Habaah b'Prague!

David Pollak

EUPJ Annual Report 2016 available for download

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



Portugal, Spain

Bruhim habaim, bruhot habaot



Welcome, arrivals. Newly converted Jews from Portugal and Spain in London with Rabbi Alona Lisitsa (standing, 2nd from l)

On May 3 I had the great pleasure to present 10 candidates from Spain and Portugal before the European Beit Din in London. Half of them were children. It was a very moving day, a culmination of a long process. Joy and tears and the waters of mikveh. Blessings, hugs and good wishes.

But that was not all. On Shabbat morning congregation Shir Hayim and Rabbi Larry Tabick welcomed one of the converted families for the celebration of a Bar and Bat Mitzvah. The mother, Yael, and her children, Moshe and Miriam (above, sitting on the bench), were called to the Torah; and they not only read the blessings, but also chanted the Torah portion. This was a moment we had been working and hoping for during many months.

This is the second time Shir Hayim has opened its doors for my students from Iberia after the Beit Din. With a warm and welcoming Kabbalat Shabbat, tasty family-like seudat and Shabbat morning service the converts were publicly acknowledged and embraced as members of the people of Israel, called to the Torah and blessed. I cannot think of a more moving and meaningful ending for the long and challenging process of return and conversion these candidates have gone through. For many of them it was a rare opportunity to pray with a minyan and to see a real Torah scroll. This is a moment of true peoplehood, a moment when Jews from different geographic and cultural contexts are united in prayer, in Torah and in being a part of something bigger than each one of them.



Rabbi Alona Lisitsa, Naomi, Matan and a little Mordechai, Portugal

Congratulations to our sisters and brothers who returned and joined the people of Israel. *Bruhim habaim, bruhot habaot*. [Welcome, welcome] Many thanks to Rabbi Jackie Tabick, Convenor of the European Beit Din, for her support and guidance. I would like also to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to the congregations Ohel Yaakov in Lisbon, Portugal, Beit Emunah in Oviedo and Bnei Sefarad in Valencia, Spain, for supporting the candidates and providing a place to learn and practice Judaism.

Rabbi Dr Alona Lisitsa
HUC-JIR, Jerusalem



Yom HaShoah at Congregation Bet Januká, Rota, Spain



Yom HaShoah at Congregation Bet Januká, Rota

On the 26th of April, members of Bet Januká commemorated Yom HaShoah with the help and organisational efforts of the US Naval Station Diversity Committee in Rota. Besides lighting the traditional candles, we commemorated the day by planting a tree in memory of the victims. We felt that a tree was appropriate as symbol both of humanity as well as the Torah.

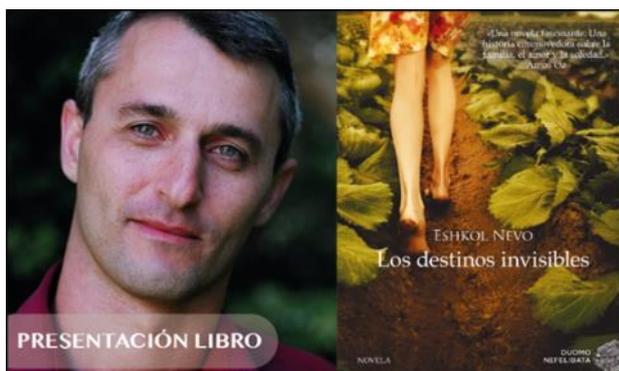
Using the symbolism of the four main parts of the tree - its roots, trunk, branches and fruit - we compare this tree to our roots who are our ancestors, to our trunk which is the whole of our nation, with our branches which are the communities that thrive throughout the world and with the fruits of our labour which are the good deeds that are done every day by the righteous among us. The tree that we chose to plant is a small but bountiful citrus that offers its fruit twice a year: we take it as an example of action.

Several members of our community helped plant the tree, each adding a few handfuls of soil. This event was especially moving thanks to the presence of several US military units based in Rota, as well as the active participation of the Diversity Committee in their dress blues who carried out the commemoration with great solemnity.

Deborah Ríos Rey

Spain

Eshkol Nevo at Bet Shalom



Israeli author Eshkol Nevo presented his new book The Invisible Destinies on May 5. Copies were available for purchase and the author signed dedications.

Netzer celebrates Lag B'Omer at ATID



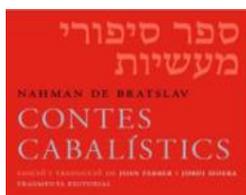
On Sunday May 14 we enjoyed a community barbecue which we had not done for a long time. We ate richly, enjoyed beautiful scenery and played games with the chanichim and madrichim (and even some parents who had signed up).

Matías Szarfer, Madrij Netzer BCN

At the barbecue everything went very well thanks to the collaboration of all the madrichim, the parents and the new faces. From ATID, we thank those who organized and above all those who participated in this special day. **Paula Melamed, Vice President**

Kabbalistic tales at ATID

On Tuesday May 30, Moriah Forcano, Director of Education and Culture at ATID, will moderate a presentation by Joan Ferrer, one of the authors of a book of stories by Rabbi Nachman of Bratislava.



Sabadell memorial with ATID



Sabadell memorial

In the middle of May in Sabadell, there was a floral offering in memory and honour of the victims of Nazi barbarism with the presence of LICRA, Comunita Jueva ATID and Massada Sabadell.

Barcelona observes Yom HaShoah



Barcelona intercommunity observance of Yom HaShoah 2017

On Sunday April 23 all the Jewish communities of Barcelona including the EUPJ's Bet Shalom and ATID commemorated Yom HaShoah in a joint ceremony in the Fossar of the Pedrera of Montjuïc. The mood was solemn and very emotional. There were different readings of texts, which paid tribute this year to the efforts of teachers and students of the Warsaw Ghetto. Also candles were lit in memory of the six million Jews killed and in memory of the other groups persecuted by Nazism. To conclude the event, the smaller children launched white balloons, symbols of a message of the future and of working for peace, while the whole public intoned the Hatikva. We thank the organizers, participants and helpers who made it possible to perform an act full of emotion and memory.



Hungary

Passover at Bet Orim, Budapest



Passover 2017 at Bet Orim, Budapest

Bet Orim Reform Jewish Congregation of Hungary celebrated Passover Seder on April 11 in a renowned restaurant in central Budapest. 170 guests took part in the festivity, including members of Bet Orim and representatives from the Hungarian Zionist Association. Distinguished people from the Hungarian Jewish social and cultural life were also present. The evening was somewhat influenced by the current political situation in Hungary, namely the government's efforts to exercise tighter control over the higher educational system in general and over the Central European University (CEU) in particular. We were delighted that Michael Ignatieff, President and Rector of the CEU, was among the guests. The acting ambassador of the United States to Hungary, Chargé d'Affaires David J Kostelancik and his delegation also joined our event. (Read more about the diplomatic visit [here](#).)



US Chargé David J Kostelancik addresses Bet Orim Seder guests

The ceremony, accompanied by lively music, was led by Rabbi Dr Ferenc Raj, Founding Rabbi of Bet Orim, with – as many times before – the active participation of children throughout the ceremony.



Sim Shalom Budapest news

April was another very busy month, with some celebration happening almost every week. It started with our congregational Seder, attended by 130 people, including many guests from other faiths and organisations. Rabbi Kati Kelemen has become involved with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), a non-profit, non-partisan organisation founded by Madelaine Albright working to strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation. In Hungary the NDI is preparing several projects to lessen discrimination against minorities. Several of the guests were the Hungarian leaders on the project Sim Shalom will work on, including a few women theologians, both Christian and Jewish. Some of them participated in the Pesach service, for which the theme was Welcoming the Stranger.



Baby naming in Sim Shalom Budapest

The following weekend we had the first of two baby naming ceremonies. The one pictured was for Anavi, the daughter of Noemi Gonda, one of our long-time members and her husband Vivek Voora. Both were or are graduate students at Central European University, the institution founded by George Soros. The family members came from many distant places, including Toronto and Sweden, and it was a very joyful and innovative ceremony.

A week later, Rabbi Ariel Pollak was in Budapest for one of his Budapest Project weekends, and he led the Friday night services at Sim Shalom. Quite a few new people showed up, most of them young adults, whom we are trying to attract. As usual, Ariel's neo-Hasidic service was much appreciated for its spirituality and interesting music.

And the first weekend of May we had a baby naming ceremony for Sara Mayer, daughter of Judit and Tamas. Judit has been a Sim Shalom member for several years. A special feature of this ceremony was that the father, who had never been given a Hebrew name, finally received one complete with certificate.

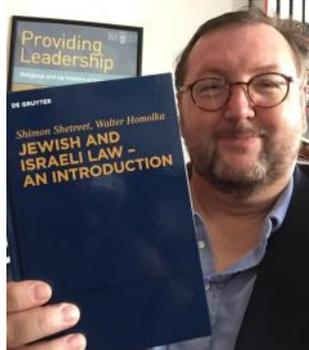
Jess Weil

Germany

Baby delivered!

Weight 1.010 kg. The happy parents: Shimon Shetreet and Walter Homolka

Mazal tov to prolific author Rabbi Prof Dr Walter Homolka, Rector of Abraham Geiger College.



More honours

The Director General of the Austrian Television, Dr Alexander Wrabetz, has appointed Rabbi Walter Homolka to the Cultural Advisory Board of ORF III. Mazal tov once more!

Chawurah Gescher, Freiburg Round-up



Passover at Chawurah Gescher, Freiburg

This year about 60 people celebrated Pesach at Gescher. The beautiful Seder was led by our accomplished chair, Cornelia Haberlandt-Krüger. We were especially pleased with the large number of children who actively participated. After the afikomen was found, the children and youth group were promised an excursion in May.

To commemorate Yom HaShoah a play, called "Ich will keine Blaubeertorte, ich will nur raus" ("I don't want any blueberry pie, I just want to get out"), was staged. After the performances for the general public and for schools, there was a discussion with the author, Gabriel Heim, whose play is based on the correspondence between his mother in Basel and his grandmother in Berlin, culminating in the latter's failed attempt to flee Germany in 1942.

In May, a visit to the exhibition, "Nazism in Freiburg" was organised for our members. Alongside the questions "WhoWhyHowWhat", with the biographies of 30 perpetrators and victims, this regional exhibition demonstrates just how topical the issue of right-wing populism is today.

On a very positive note, an event which happened shortly after Pesach shows the importance of international connections within the WUPJ. We received an urgent request from a community in Israel to check on a member who had been taken ill in Freiburg. An hour later after one of our members had visited the patient in hospital, the family was reassured that all was well, and a new friendship was formed between the two communities.

Hamelin turns 20



A musical celebration of LJG Hamelin's 20th year

The month of April was a celebratory one.

This year, 2017, is our 20th year. Who could have believed in 1997 as Rachel Dohme and Polina Pelts met with recently immigrated FSU Jews that what they would establish that day in the rooms of the St. Elisabeth Catholic Church would change their lives and the religious landscape of their new home in Hamelin forever. The vision, love of Judaism and determination has more than paid off for that small group and the 200 members who would follow throughout the two decades. The city of Hamelin has been bettered with the establishment and development of our Progressive congregation.

We were blessed to have the hand of Rabbi Irit Shillor guiding us religiously through the years. The jewel of our vision was the construction and dedication on February 20, 2011 of the first Reform synagogue built in post-Shoah Germany, which stands on the very ground where the city's synagogue stood until its destruction on November 9, 1938. This synagogue has become the focal point of our members' lives.

The congregation has grown on many levels over the last 20 years. The members are secure in their faith, educated about their religious roots and active in all facets of congregational life. Some are drawn to opportunities for prayer, observance and religious study; others find their place in the liturgy, culture and history of our people; for others the accent is on social justice and community service. There are many ways to be Jewish.

Rachel Dohme

Read the May newsletter [here](#).

JASSBERLIN is 31/07 - 20/08

Jewish Activism Summer School: Professor Jonathan Schorsch of Abraham Geiger College is organising a Jewish Activism Summer School for young adults aged 18-3. [Click here](#) for information.

GIL events



On May 4 Prague's Mishpacha Choir gave a concert.



Yom Ha'atzmaut: On May 5 Yom Ha'atzmaut was celebrated by a communal dinner followed by music and dance with Miri Kreimer and Yitzik Lechman.



Yom Ha'atzmaut with GIL's Talmud Torah

Migwan co-organises Hillel Neuer lecture

Hillel Neuer spoke on Monday May 8 at the University of Basel on 'Israel at the United Nations: from Herzl's dream to today's reality. Has Israel achieved the idea of a Jewish homeland secured under public law as it was formulated in the Basel Programme in 1897? An examination of the unique challenges Israel faces at the U.N. and its Human Rights Council today – 120 years after the First Zionist Congress in Basel.'

Hillel Neuer is executive director of UN Watch in Geneva. The Tribune de Genève described Neuer as a human rights activist who is "feared and dreaded" by the world's dictatorships. Israel's Ma'ariv newspaper named him one of the Top 100 Most Influential Jewish People in the World.



Hillel Neuer

Leadership change at PLJS



L-R: Jean-Marc Brunshwig, Nicole Poelle, Peter Jossi

This year's Platform of Liberal Jews in Switzerland (PLJS) AGM was held in Geneva on May 7. EUPJ President Gordon Smith and Judy Smith joined delegates from the Migwan (Basel), Or Chadasch (Zurich) and GIL (Geneva) for this meeting. Their presence in Geneva underlined the importance to the EUPJ of the PLJS and almost 15 years of leadership by outgoing President Nicole Poell.

The PLJS was founded in 2003, in response to a rejection by the SIG (umbrella organisation of Swiss Jewish Communities) to an application for membership by the Progressive Swiss Communities in Zurich and Geneva. The application was rejected by a narrow margin of ultraorthodox member communities and against the recommendation of the larger, more liberal orthodox communities. At that juncture, it was suggested that the Progressive communities should establish their own umbrella organisation, which the congregational presidents in Zurich and Geneva promptly took to heart.

In the ensuing years, a solid working relationship has developed between the SIG and the PLJS in the areas of political lobbying, responding to anti-Semitism/racism, inter-Jewish dialog and security issues affecting Switzerland's Jewish population. The respect earned by president Nicole Poell and vice-president Jean-Marc Brunshwig (GIL, Geneva) in all these areas was apparent with the participation of Dr Herbert Winter, SIG President, Dr Jonathan Kreutner, SIG General Secretary, and Alain Lévy, CICAD Director, (Geneva) at our AGM and the dinner that followed in honour of Nicole and her many years of service to Swiss Jewry.

Elections were held for a new president of the organisation: Peter Jossi (Migwan) and Jean-Marc Brunshwig (Geneva) were elected co-presidents. Both men have experience in the Swiss political system, with Jean-Marc representing continuity to the recent past and Peter a fresh input to build for the future. Further, it was announced that the by-laws would be reviewed in the coming year and possibly up-dated for a leaner governing structure.

The delegates and members of all three Progressive communities in Switzerland thank Nicole for all her efforts on our behalf and wish her all the best for a well-deserved retirement.

Events at Beth Hillel Roma



Rabbis Joel Oseran and Haim Cipriani

Thursday May 11: Tefilah course with Rabbi Joel Oseran.

Friday May 12: Kabbalat Shabbat led by Rabbi Joel Oseran. A community dinner followed, to which all were invited to contribute with vegetarian food, or as a second option with kosher deserts or wine, or alternatively with a contribution of 10 euros. Special works of art, prepared and offered by Yosef Solazzo to Beth Hillel Roma, were presented during the evening.

Saturday, May 13: Shacharit and Mussaf directed by Rabbi Joel Oseran with the participation of the students of the ghiur course. Rabbi Oseran then met with participants of the Bat and Bar Mitzvah courses.

Tuesday May 30 from 18:30: Shavuot celebration with Rabbi Haim Cipriani. Community dinner and conversation on 'Homosexuality in Jewish Law'.

Wednesday May 31 at 10:00: Shavuot Tefilah with Rabbi Haim Cipriani.

Thursday June 15 at 21:00: Annual General Assembly for members and election of the Board of Directors.

Lev Chadash Shabbaton

On the weekend of May 12 and 13 Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild led Lev Chadash in Milan in a full program. Kabbalat Shabbat offered a potluck vegetarian dinner with special guest Serafino Marco Fiamelli, president of the Jewish LGBT association Magen Keshet



Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild

Italia, who spoke about national and international activities of the group.

On Saturday, Rabbi Rothschild led a long day. She began with a morning study during breakfast before the Shacharit service for parashat Emor. Then followed Kiddush and lunch. She concluded the Shabbaton with a talk on halacha and LGBT themes.



Marco Fiamelli



Triple Bar Mitzvah at Beth Shalom

It is not often that three brothers are called up to the Torah together for their Bar Mitzvah. Well it happened at our congregation on May 13. Gad, 18, David, 17 and Aryè Catucci, who were converted almost two years ago along with their parents Roberto and Rachele also wanted to become Bar Mitzvah. Under the guidance of our rabbi, David Whiman, the boys beautifully conducted the entire service and read their portions from the Torah. The Catucci family began their voyage to convert with Rabbi Leigh Lerner three years ago. It was wonderful to see the continuation of their studies result in Bnei Mitzvah.



Triple Bar Mitzvah of Gad, David and Aryè Cantucci with Rabbi David Whiman at Beth Shalom Milan

Our president Carey Bernitz spoke eloquently in her remarks as she gave the brothers their kiddush cups, which were gifts from Rabbi Whiman's former synagogue, North Shore Reform Synagogue in Syosset, New York:

"The Bar Mitzvah of these brothers is not only about their Bar Mitzvah but also about family, friends and community. It is about dreams and hopes. It is about tradition and values and the passing of these traditions and values down through the ages. We at Beth Shalom have seen you grow from little boys to young men. Today according to Jewish law, you have become young men. I remember you when young as always ready with smiles and kisses as you helped pass out our books for Shabbat, pour the wine for kiddush and hand out the challot. May you always be blessed and grow from strength to strength. Mazel tov and l'chaim."

That evening Carol and David Ross offered a catered dinner at the rabbi's home in honour of the Catucci Bar Mitzvot. There was a Havdalah service before dining.

Belgium, Poland

Final rest in Flanders Fields

The IJC performed its duty and paid a debt to the larger Jewish community on Friday April 28 in a ceremony at the British War Cemetery at Heverlee, near Leuven. It was for a Jewish World War II UK airman, Sidney Smith, who died very close to the end of the War. [Read more.](#)

Steven Brummel, IJC President



Steven Brummel

Yom Ha'atzmaut in Brussels



Beth Hillel celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut in the evening of May 1 with a religious service followed by a communal dinner of Israeli specialties. Members and guests brought salads, falafels, pittot, humus, tahini, grilled vegetables, chakchouka, halva and more. Poultry was also permitted, and the poultry dishes were clearly identifiable.



Hebrew: Sacred Alphabet

Tehima with Natacha Simmonds at Beth Hillel. This special workshop was designed to teach its participants in four sessions how to harmonise body and mind by dancing sacred Hebrew letters. Each Hebrew letter is associated with an area of the human body, the concept which helped give birth to Tehima, a type of Hebrew Tai Chi.

The last session will take place on June 17. For more information call 02.332.25.28.

What is Tehima? Download the press kit [here](#). All information is in French.



Natacha Simmonds

Havdalah at OY: Ohel Yachdav

On May 6 the Leuven Havurah Ohel Yachdav held a Havdalah celebration followed by two short films by OY member Sarah Lederman.

'Miriam' is a short story about a girl coming from the Jewish Orthodox environment of Antwerp. This story is a day in her life when she'll have to make an important decision that will shape the rest of her life. Official selection at Miami Jewish Film Festival 2017. Won the award for the Best International Short 2017 at BFI Future Film Festival.



'Tales of the Shadow' is about the third generation asking for the first generation's stories. Stories about their life when they were hidden as Jewish children in the war. Stories they have never told, not to their children and not even to each other. They start talking about their pushed-away-past, and with that information Sarah Lederman makes a road trip, to search for their memories. Official Selection at Eindhoven's Film Festival 20.



Events at Beit Warszawa



L-R: Beit Warszawa's lay cantors: Rivka Foremniak, Avigail Geniusz, Miriam Klimova,

The congregation continues to flourish with regular activities. The weekend of April 28 & 29 our guest leader at Beit Warszawa was Rabbi Walter Rothschild from Berlin. Cantor Miriam Klimova led Shabbat services May 12 & 13, with a dinner Friday night and a lunch and learn session on Saturday. Cantor Avigail Geniusz followed the same weekend schedule for May 19 & 20 and Cantor Rivka Foremniak will repeat the pattern for the weekend of May 26 & 27. Our Judaism Step by Step Course meets regularly on Tuesday evenings.

'Mein Gott Walter'



Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild

[Here](#) is a link, valid for six months, to a 30-minute film about my life as a rabbi wandering around Europe, especially my latter months in Vienna and for Purim there. It is mostly in German, but some sections are in English. **Rabbi Walter Rothschild**

Shir Hatzafon ratifies 2017 Board



Shir Hatzafon in Copenhagen, 2017 Board
L-R: Robert Selig, David Frankel, Lene Attia, Franck Attia, Carsten Skov, Jesper Yoel Andersen, Larry Landman (AGM moderator)

A celebration for Rabbi Rothschild

On May 14 Or Chadasch, Liberal Jewish Community in Vienna, wished farewell to their long time cleric, Rabbi Walter Rothschild. We wanted to do this with style: during a happy, festive party with a vegetarian meal (potluck), cheerful music and, hopefully, quite a lot of friends, who over the years will have benefitted from Rabbi Rothschild's religious knowledge, humour and human warmth. And we wanted to take advantage of a chance to chat, laugh and celebrate with him. Rabbi Rothschild saved his best jokes for this opportunity. His religious knowledge, humour, and warmth, will be missed by many.



Kiddush at Rabbi Walter Rothschild's farewell party

Having served Or Chadasch from 1995 to 1997 and then again from 2005 to 2017, a farewell weekend was held for Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild with services, a dinner, a book launch for his collections of short stories 'Tales from the Rabbi's Desk', and a formal service and reception on Sunday to mark the congregation's gratitude. In addition the Board nominated him as 'Ehrenrabbiner' of Or Chadasch and expressed the wish that he will continue to visit as requested and required.

Rabbi Rothschild is now directing his attention to developments in Poland and has recently visited the communities Beit Warszawa in Warsaw and Beit Trojmiasto in Gdansk.

Shir Hatzafon's many rabbis

In the past year Shir Hatzafon, The Progressive Jewish Community in Denmark, has been blessed by the presence of several wonderful rabbis. We are a small community and meet once a month for a weekend consisting of a Friday Erev Shabbat pot-luck dinner with a rabbinical talk or discussion, a Saturday Shacharit service and a Sunday Adult Study Group. Plus there are the Jewish holidays. Rabbi Tirzah Ben-David has been our regular rabbi for many years, coming to Denmark from Israel six times a year, and Rabbi Sandra Kviat is our newest contracted rabbi, coming to Denmark from London four times a year, though Sandra is happily on maternity leave right now. Here are some photos showing our regular and guest rabbis during the period between Pesach 2016 and Pesach 2017.



Rabbis Tirzah Ben-David, Sandra Kviat, Rebecca Lillian



Rabbis Deborah Kahn-Harris and Danny Rich, student rabbi Roberta Harris

News from Keren Or, Lyon



Couscous, Kids4Peace interreligious group at Keren Or

On Sunday May 14 we shared an unforgettable moment with our Christian and Muslim friends involved in the Kids4Peace project. More than 60 people joined us at Keren Or to share our joy at being and doing together. I would like to thank those who participated in this event, especially Daniela Touati and David Mellet, who were the passionate initiators of this beautiful project.



Blessing the children at Keren Or, Lyon

It is our desire to take action and to grow, which was discussed at our general meeting on Sunday, May 21. Keren Or owes its existence to those who engage. I hope many of you will join us at this important moment in our community. We also discussed how to strengthen the spiritual aspect of Keren Or (such as the blessing of the children during the last Shabbat), in particular by setting up a fundraising campaign for the recruitment of a full-time rabbi. **Pamela Vennin, President**

Celebrating Rabbi René Pfertzel



Rabbi René Pfertzel

On Saturday, June 17 from 19:00 on Keren Or Lyon is going to honour Rabbi René Pfertzel, who will be moving to the UK. Rabbi Pfertzel has participated in Keren Or's communal life since the High Holidays in 2004.



ULIF News

Events at Copernic, Paris

May 15: Rabbi Marc-Alain Ouaknin held a seminar on the topic "Journey into Talmud VIII: The Tales of a Thousand and One Days, narrative dimensions of the Talmud."



May 15: Cantor Armand Benhamou conducted a course in cantillation.



May 16 at 14:30: In the reading circle, led by Lilian Guignier, The group discussed the awarding of the literature prize by Café des Psaumes.

May 16 at 16:00: With Monique Goldberg, the narration of the lives of some of the Moroccan Jews who came to settle in France in the 1950s and the 1960s; the end of occupation, the creation of the State of Israel and the Arab League, the rise of Arab Nationalism, etc.



Colette Zeif

May 18: Colette Zeif narrated her history of a Jewish girl who was hidden during WW2. "Ne dit pas ton nom et cache-toi" (Don't Say Your Name and Hide) is the title of her book.

Ne dis pas ton nom et cache-toi

Une enfant en 1942

May 24: Rabbi Philippe Haddad and Father Michel Guéguen of the Saint-Honoré Parish in Eylau held a seminar on the topic 'If Sunday simply is a Shabbat that shifted'.



AJTM & Talmud Torah in Paris

Supervised by Rabbi Gabriel Farhi. AJTM's Talmud Torah welcomes, every Sunday morning, children aged 7 - 13 from 10:00 to 12:30. The Talmud Torah consists of two classes (7-10 and 11-13) preparing children for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, teaching them values of traditional and modern Judaism, and taking part in different cultural activities. Building a Jewish foundation that will stay with the children for the rest of their lives, the active participation of parents is encouraged.

Kehilat Gesher and The Parable of the Prodigal Son

After the keen interest in the meeting last year between Rabbi Tom Cohen of Kehilat Gesher, the Franco-American progressive Jewish community and Pastor Denis Heller on the theme "A Jew named Jesus," we promised to renew this time of fraternal exchange. On Thursday May 11 at 8:30 pm at the United Protestant Church of the Annunciation we held a new dialogue about The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke XV). The fascinating evening lasted to 10:30.



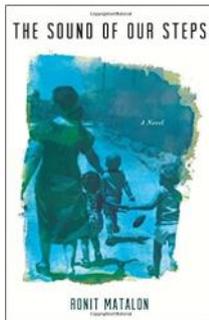
Rabbi Tom Cohen

Apéro Littéraire – Kehilat Gesher Book Club

On Sunday May 21 at 4pm at Kehilat Gesher we met to continue to explore great Jewish literature together. Our book this time was *The Sound of Our Steps* by Ronit Matalon.

In the beginning there was Lucette, who is the mother to three children. The youngest of them recounts her years in Lucette's house, where Israel's wars do not intrude and hold no interest.

The book and the discussion were most enjoyable.



MJLF youth activities

Spring break in Normandy. Mahane made the most of the April school holidays to take 56 children aged 7-17 to Dieppe, Normandy for a week of activities by the sea. The kids went fishing at low tide, hiking, ice skating and even swimming, inspired and supervised by an enthusiastic group of seven youth leaders, all with the values of Progressive Judaism! A highlight was a special day shared with Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur.



Mahane in Normandy

May in Berlin. A group of 17 Bnei Mitzvah visited Berlin for four days in May to discover its unique history and share with the Jewish community there.

Three trips for Liberal Jewish Youths

Don't be late, make your choice ... and register!

Under the aegis of the AJL (Assemblée du Judaïsme Libéral) three trips are being organised this year. These trips are open to all children of AJL's communities in France, Belgium, and Switzerland. AJL will be delighted to enable them to discover France and Israel.

July 4 – 27: CJL's super "MahaNetzer" for 6 – 17 year olds, wonderfully organised by Etienne Kerber. For further information call: +33 6 48 20 80 89.



Israel trip summer 2016

July 11 – 25: The super trip to Israel for 14 – 17 year olds, organised by the MJLF (Oren Giorno). The trip combines sporting activities, cultural visits, voluntary work and even a few precious moments of complete rest! The travellers will meet with Israelis and explore the country from the Negev through Galilee to the Golan Heights and from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv and meeting our friends at "Yozma" our sister community in Israel. They will discover the magic of dawn walks and desert nights under the stars, camel rides and kayaking. The programme includes a swim in the Dead Sea, a climb up Masada and several days in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv at the beach. [Click here.](#)

August 1 – 11: The FREE TAGLIT trip for 18 – 26 year olds, jointly organised by the MJLF (Oren Giorno) and CJL (Etienne Kerber). [Click here.](#)

2017 PROJECT INCUBATOR
STOCKHOLM, 31.7-9.8.2017
July 31 – August 9
Stockholm, Sweden
Applications deadline: May 20
Develop your project for European Jewish culture in Stockholm this summer

2017 Paideia Project Incubator

The Project Incubator is a method-oriented 10-day summer programme focusing on acquiring the necessary tools and support structures for getting projects off the ground. It provides some eight hours of scheduled activities each day, cultural and social programming at night and four hours of individual tutoring time for each participant during the 10 days.

The first programme of its kind, it is still by far the leading scheme for supporting social innovation in Jewish Europe. Since its inception in 2006, over 220 individuals have participated, bringing over 180 projects for Jewish life and culture in Europe. Project Incubator gives participants the keys, the inspiration and the networks needed to convert their ideas into action. These projects have reached hundreds of thousands of individuals across Europe, and their managers are active in over 30 different countries. [Apply here.](#)

Liberal Judaism's Day of Celebration

LIBERAL JUDAISM'S DAY OF CELEBRATION



Sunday June 11, 2017 Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue

There's just one month to go until Liberal Judaism's Day of Celebration: Is Liberal Judaism Political Judaism?

We kick off proceedings on the Friday night with 'Kabbalat Shabbat Britannia' in East London - then continue our musical journey across town to Northwood for Saturday's 'Day of Liberal Jewish Music'.

When Sunday finally arrives, so does the main event: With over 150 people already signed up, a multi-format programme with fantastic presenters, and a theme so topical the government decided to arrange an election around it, the Day of Celebration is shaping up to be a great day.

There will also be youth programmes on the day catering for all ages staffed by our outgoing and experienced youth department, LJY-Netzer. For the littlest Liberal Jews, we will also have a professionally run crèche.

Tickets are selling fast so click [here](#) to buy yours today!

York community hosts first ever Liberal service in Leeds



Student rabbi Deborah Blausten leading the first Liberal Judaism service at YLJC in Leeds

York Liberal Jewish Community (YLJC) has held the first ever Liberal Judaism Shabbat service in Leeds this April. Every year, the Leeds Jewish Housing Association invites Masorti, Reform and Orthodox Jewish Groups from within the city to worship in their premises. This year, for the first time, YLJC – which has recently become a member of the Leeds Jewish Representative Council (LJRC) – were invited to join them.

LJRC president, Laurence Saffer, said that he aims to ensure that the voice of all parts of the Jewish community "continues to be loud and proud."

Reform Judaism Musical Conference



We are delighted to open bookings for [Shirei Chagigah](#), our music conference on July 6-9.

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

Reform Shabbaton sleepover



On the weekend of April 28-29, RSY-Netzer, together with Reform communities from across London and the South East, piloted a new event: Shabbaton Darom – a Shabbat sleepover for 8 to 11 year olds.

The event was a huge success with 22 young people coming together from Alyth, Radlett, Finchley, North West Surrey, Brighton, and Wimbledon. The sleepover itself happened at North West Surrey Synagogue, and although very little sleeping was achieved, a tremendous amount of keif (fun) was had by all. Everyone got to know each other and the atmosphere was one of inclusivity and real joy. We're hoping to build on the success of this event and expand our programming for young people.

[Find out more about RSY-Netzer and their events.](#)

New librarian for Leo Baeck College

Leo Baeck College is delighted to announce the appointment of Marton Ribary as the new librarian of the College. Marton is in the last stages of his PhD and will be starting at the beginning of September. He has been teaching rabbinic history and literature at the College for the last few years and is well known to most of us. We look forward to working with him in his new role.



Marton Ribary

Rhona Lesner
Head of HR & Support, Leo Baeck College

United Kingdom

Czech Memorial Shabbat 2017

Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue's Czech connection started in 1964 with the loan from the Memorial Scrolls Trust of a Torah scroll and in April 2017 led to the most impressive Memorial Shabbat to date. For over 30 years a Shabbat has been set aside to remember the Jewish communities murdered in the Holocaust. In time NPLS came to possess three MST scrolls from Kolín, Třeboň and Kladno, and from 1978 the community has been most active in researching and commemorating the history of the Jewish communities of these towns. Over time scrolls, not via MST, from Plzeň and Spišská Nová Ves in Slovakia were also gifted to NPLS. Every year a different scroll is featured in the Memorial Shabbat. This year it was the scroll from Kolín, which in preparation was thoroughly restored by scribe Bernard Benarroch. Over the years there have been many congregational visits to Kolín, and a close relationship has been built up between NPLS and the leaders of the town including successive mayors, museum directors and school principals. This has led to the restoration of the historic 1695 synagogue, extensive permanent exhibitions telling the history of the town's Jewish community, other frequent exhibitions and books and leaflets published on the Jewish history and achievements in Kolín.

In addition local schools are heavily involved in activities about their former Jewish pupils, and a significant Stolpersteine route around the town has been established, with over 50 Stolpersteine dedicated by NPLS members.

The current mayor of Kolín, Mr Vit Rakušan, and his wife were invited over to Northwood as guests of honour for this Shabbat. The Friday night service was fully choral with the synagogue choir mastering the Czech National Anthem to follow Mr Rakušan's address. The Czech Embassy was represented by Mr Aleš Opatrný, head of the Cultural section. The service ended with a song from Judy Herman's musical "Stones of Kolín" based on a Czech classic folk song *Koline, Koline*.

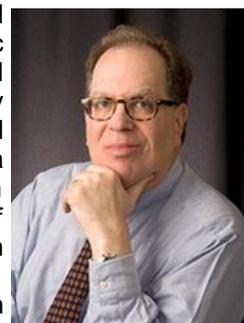
During the service Mr Miles Laddie, Treasurer of the Memorial Scrolls Trust, presented to Mayor Rakušan the first certificate jointly awarded by the MST and the Jewish Museum in Prague to Czech towns that have done much to preserve and publicise their Jewish heritage.

The Saturday morning service was largely taken by the younger members of the congregation. It included poems written by Kabbalat Torah pupils following their visit to Kolín, Terezín and Prague. The day had started with the Religion School children involved in a number of activities. The younger classes walked to the Terezín tree in central Northwood. The older classes researched the history of some of the Kolín children murdered in the Shoah. Messages were written on cards shaped as butterflies, saying what it is like being a Jewish child in Britain today. They will be presented to pupils in Kolín when a large group from NPLS and other congregations with an MST scroll from Kolín will visit the town for Shavuot 2017. [Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein](#)

Progressives combine for Shavuot

The Liberal, Reform and Masorti branches of Mosaic Jewish Community, Harrow, will unite for a discussion on Erev Shavuot. Led by Liberal Judaism's Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith, the study session is titled 'The Practice of Compassion and Kindness in Times of Hatred and Lies'.

The session begins at 7pm on Tuesday May 30, and will be followed by tea and cheese-cake. A joint service will then begin at 8:45pm. All Liberal Judaism and Reform Judaism members are welcome. For more details, or to reserve your place, please [email here](#).



[Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith](#)

Liberal rabbi walks 103km in memory of congregant

Rabbi Yuval Keren, of Southgate Progressive Synagogue, walked 103km and raised more than £2,000 in honour of congregant Simon Cooper.

Simon died in July 2016, aged 33, of lung cancer after a lifetime battling cystic fibrosis. Throughout his life, Simon never let his illness hold him back. As well as his non-stop charity work, Simon was a brilliant drummer and musician, devising Liberal Judaism's Friday Night Rock service.

Half of the money Yuval raised will go to the North London Hospice, where Simon was wonderfully looked after and where, as he neared the end of his life, he married his sweetheart Claire. Yuval conducted a Jewish blessing for the couple after the ceremony.

The other half of the funds will go to the Cystic Fibrosis Society, helping to fund research for a cure for the terrible debilitating illness from which Simon suffered.

Read the full story [here](#).



[Rabbi Yuval Keren](#)

Click the logos for news of our UK movements



WORLD
UNION FOR
PROGRESSIVE
JUDAISM



האיגוד
העולמי
ליהדות
מתקדמת

WUPJ 2017 Calendar

July 13-23 - Jerusalem
The Bergman Seminar for Jewish Educators
July 19-30 - Europe
WUPJ/Netzer Summer Youth Camp Mission

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

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



Bergman Seminar participants

Read the WUPJ Annual Report



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

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

Pictures from Connections 2017

Many more next month!



Every week, WUPJ emails *Torah from around the World*, a commentary on the Parashah (Torah portion) of the week by a rabbi from one of its congregations. Please click [here](#) to subscribe.

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