

European Union for Progressive Judaism

May 2018 Newsletter

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Prague pride in Progressive Judaism

My pride in being a Progressive Jew living in Prague could not be greater in the wake of the EUPJ Biennial conference. It was an act of true inspiration by the Management Committee to select our great city as the venue for this important occasion.

In a country where it was almost impossible to enjoy a Jewish life until the fall of communism in 1989, the opportunity to so publicly celebrate our Jewishness together with like-minded people from across Europe and the world meant so much.

Before the Shoah, Prague was one of the most vibrant Jewish cities on the globe. It was so poignant to be joined Ruth Hálová, an impressively-youthful and warm-hearted

93-year-old lady whose life was saved by Sir Nicholas Winton in 1939. Her words of thanks, written to me after the event, so perfectly reflect the sentiments of so many of us.

"I found the idea of your Progressive European Judaism a very interesting and necessary step towards bringing the old Jewish faith to life again. The atmosphere amidst these enthusiastic people was great and just proved once more, that – however great was the sacrifice – Hitler failed."

The designated theme of regeneration could not have been more apposite. This event provided us with the opportunity to showcase our essential brand

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Photo: Dale Lazar

Ruth Hálová with her grandson, Tomáš Kocourek, and Sir Nicholas Winton's son, Nick Winton (Right)

A fresh and exciting start

Our sensational biennial conference left me, and I know all of you who were able to join us in Prague, filled with motivation and inspiration. Once more, I would like to thank most warmly everyone who contributed to making our time together so special and memorable.

Personally, I would like to express my admiration of, and gratitude to, Miriam Kramer. Not only was she a truly outstanding, consummate chairman who gave our organisation much greater visibility and representation, but she also set another very good example by generously organising the smoothest hand-over imaginable. Hers are very big (supremely elegant black) shoes to fill! Read our tribute to her later in the magazine.

The new board's term could not have had a more energetic start. I am thrilled that my colleagues and I have been able to hit the ground running by addressing the many complex and exciting tasks that lie ahead. As reflected in the constitutional

changes that were unanimously adopted in Prague, we intend to develop EUPJ's structures to reflect the growing diversity and geographical reach of our movement and – more importantly – bring them to life. I sincerely and most cordially invite all of you to be an active part of this process.

I am happy to announce that at the first meeting of the Management Committee, Rabbi Menno ten Brink from the Netherlands was co-opted onto the board with "Education and Interfaith Work" as his portfolio. Welcome, Menno!

A "Save the Date" will go out shortly, but please

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Photo: Dale Lazar

Prague pride in Progressive Judaism cont...

of Judaism. It certainly helped to strengthen our determination to re-establish Progressive Judaism in the part of the world from where it originated over a century ago. Standing shoulder to shoulder at the



Photo: Dale Lazar

opening ceremony in the historic Smetana Hall, a national treasure, was an evening of pure joy.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all who came. Your presence represented a vital physical manifestation of the strong support being given to the rebuilding of Reform and Liberal Judaism in Prague and throughout the Czech Republic. The conference was an experience that so many of us involved in rebuilding Jewish life in the Czech Republic will cherish forever.

With the conference now over, it is vital we fully capitalise on its success by doubling our efforts in the renewal of Progressive Jewish life in the Czech Republic.

Meanwhile, everyone is warmly encouraged to visit us. You will always be welcomed with open arms.

Thank you, EUPJ, for entrusting us with hosting this wonderful conference! – **Jonathan Woolliff, Chair of the Prague Organising Committee**

Chairman's Message

A fresh and exciting start cont...

mark the weekend of November 9-11 in your calendars. Planning has begun for an outstanding weekend in Brussels, which will include the official opening of the European Union Office (EUO) of the EUPJ in that city, as well as our annual European Assembly.

Finally, we must talk about GDPR. There are many different views on what exactly the new regulations are saying. As an organisation spanning all of Europe, we want to be absolutely sure that the personal data we are holding are in full compliance with the new regulations. This requires you to take action and "opt in". Our new privacy policy can be found [here](#).

Please do not miss out on replying to the emails you have already received (on May 18 and May 23) from Deborah Grabiner. Thank you so much for allowing us to stay connected!

All best wishes, Sonja Guentner, Please note my new email address: sonja.guentner@eupj.org



Photo: Darryl Egnal

Miriam Kramer and Sonja Guentner

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Editor's Note

Prague's Franz Kafka said that by believing passionately in something that still does not exist, we create it. In my years of working as an editor and journalist, I have met and interviewed many extraordinary people who believe passionately and have changed the world as a result.

The EUPJ Biennial Conference opened my eyes to more individuals and groups who fall into this category. Whether they were rabbis who started communities 50 years ago like Rabbi François Garaï, or rabbis who brought Progressive Judaism to small towns like Seville as Rabbi Haim Casas did recently; whether through embarking on the literal challenge of repairing the world (*Tikkun Olam*) by starting an eco-synagogue and getting involved in sustainability or finding ways to fight oppression, anti-Semitism or racism, the Progressive Movement is, and continues to be, passionate, creative, determined and innovative.

Participating in the Biennial was entertaining, exciting and rewarding, and I found the plenaries and workshops interesting and enlightening. Sharing Shabbat services in the magnificent Spanish Synagogue (outside which a Franz Kafka memorial statue stands) with 350 Progressive Jews was a spiritual, uplifting experience. But most of all, I thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone involved. It was great to finally get to know the people who belonged to the photos and names on the pages of the newsletter.

However, as a result of this experience, this has been the most difficult newsletter I've put together for you since I started as editor. It was extremely hard to choose what to include and what to leave out. I could easily have put together an 80-page magazine just on the weekend. So I had to be really strict and reduce the amount of content, not only

because there is a limit to what people have time to read, but also because the conference isn't the only event that took place over the past month.

Therefore, I have restrained myself (with difficulty) and simply edited what delegates have supplied

me from their experiences of conference, with a few additions here and there. I'm sure that those of you who were not in Prague will be able to get a feel for the spirit and camaraderie that prevailed as well as an overview of what went on.

Thanks to all those who were there for reminding me how much passion still exists in the world. –
Darryl Egnal (newsletter@eupj.org)



EUPJ Biennial Photographers: Dale Lazar, Darryl Egnal

Marriott Hotel Prague: Lost and found

Deborah Grabiner has been informed by the Marriott Business desk that items belonging to conference delegates were left in the hotel. If you would like to try to reclaim missing/lost property, please contact [Dita Vejsadova](mailto:Dita.Vejisadova@marriott.com), Marriott Hotel, Business Centre Supervisor. Please note there are no personal items left with the EUPJ.

Who's who at the EUPJ?

Honorary Life Presidents

Leslie Bergman
Ruth Cohen
Jeffery Rose

President

Gordon Smith

Vice-President

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein

Chairman

Sonja Guentner

Vice-Chairman: Governance

John Cohen

Vice-Chairman: Finance

David Pollak

Vice-Chairman: Israel & Twinning

Michael Reik

Education and Interfaith

Rabbi Menno ten Brink

EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly

Rabbi Dr René Pfterzel, Chairman

European Beit Din

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

EUPJ's European Union Office

Bill (William) Echikson, Director
Rabbi Ira Goldberg, Rabbinic
Director



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Darryl Egnal, Israel
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A new generation of leaders

If the enthusiasm, dedication and involvement of the youth leadership at the pre-conference New Generation Leadership Seminar and during the Biennial are anything to go by, the future of the Progressive Jewish community in Europe is in good hands!

A dynamic group of 25- to 35-year-olds from 15 countries around the Progressive Jewish world gathered together to spend time sharing challenges, ideas and developing new leadership skills. Each an established leader and voice within his or her own community, the discussions were vibrant, interesting and entertaining.

Questions of the impact of Aliyah on European communities, challenges in creating vibrant prayer spaces, and the attitude of the established community to millennial resistance to join synagogues animated our discussions.

As a generation that is globally-minded, this group represents a new cohort of leaders who move freely between countries and between institutional and grassroots Jewish life.

Of the 35 participants involved in the seminar (making up 10% of the overall conference participants), more than half of them have lived in



more than one country in the past five years and a quarter have embarked on long-term travel or to work outside their home countries.

This emphasises the potential role that strong international relationships can play in cross-pollination between Progressive communities and in enabling people to find community wherever they live.

Etienne Kerber, a rabbinical student from Paris, France spoke of his experience during the conference. "It is absolutely amazing being aware that all of these people exist and do such great things." He said. "It gives what I do every day

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EUPJ Biennial Conference

A new generation of leaders cont...

another dimension. A huge feeling of belonging. A sense of being part of a real movement.”

According to Tzvi Tosetti, a board member of Beth Shalom in Milan, this kind of gathering is extremely important for young adults who live in new emerging European communities where they are often the only young people.

“United with those from more established communities, we are a force,” he said. “We learn from each other and are pushed out of our comfort zones. Attending this seminar was an enriching experience to me: I met people with whom I particularly bonded and I returned to Milan full of ideas for my community.”

The EUPJ AGM provided a meaningful close to the conference with the passing of a resolution affirming the EUPJ’s commitment to the next

generation of the movement’s leadership. This resolution was put forward by Tzvi moments before Dan Rattan, a youth leader from Germany, was elected to the EUPJ board.

The youth leadership seminar was made possible

by the generous support of Arzenu, KKL, the WZO and the EUPJ. In a fast-changing economic and social landscape, the investment in developing versatile, resourceful and creative leaders who are in tune with the evolving needs of younger adults is essential.

The group has committed to ongoing work with the EUPJ to build on the relationships made at the conference and the areas in which there is real potential for collaboration. – [Deborah Blausten and Andrew Keene](#).

Photos: [Deborah Blausten](#)



Photo: Dale Lazar



Training future rabbis

Combining the wisdom of rabbinic leaders from all over Europe with the hunger of student rabbis from various rabbinic colleges, the EUPJ Rabbinic Kallah turned into a hotbed of interesting discussions and deliberations.

More than 40 rabbis from the EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly (ERA) attended the Kallah, which followed the “Regeneration” theme by looking at the past in order to strengthen the future. The gathering took place before the EUPJ Biennial.

Created during the EUPJ Conference in April 2016 in London, the ERA includes all Progressive European rabbis (Europe is understood in its large sense, from the Ural Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean).

Rabbi Dr René Pfertzel (Kingston Liberal Synagogue) was elected the new Chairman of the ERA with Rabbi Menno ten Brink (Amsterdam) as Secretary and Rabbi Marc Neiger (Brussels) as Treasurer. Other board members are Rabbi Colin Eimer (London), Rabbi Pauline Bebe (Paris), Rabbi Jackie Tabick, Convener of the European Beit-Din in London, Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim (Zurich) and Rabbi Ira Goldberg from the EUPJ Office in Brussels and Rabbi of the

Geiger College, Berlin), Rabbi Garaï (who chairs Kerem, the Francophone rabbinic association) and Rabbi Pfertzel (Leo Baeck College, London).

The session gathered together rabbis who are involved in rabbinic training for the next generation.



The workshop raised a variety of issues including:

- Is the training of Progressive rabbis evolving and adapting to new realities such as radicalism, the numerical revolution, lack of or too much faith and multiculturalism?
- How do we balance scholarly input and practical rabbinics (eg. pastoral care, leadership skills, managerial skills and fundraising)?
- And are the rabbis we are training today addressing the needs, priorities and interests of our future congregants?

During the Kallah, the rabbis were invited by Charles University to attend an event at which they could share their views on the topic, “Can religion save Europe?” Student Rabbi David Maxa offered some introductory thoughts on the subject and a panel discussion brought together two rabbis (Rabbi Jackie Tabick and Tom Kučera) and two academics (Peter Morée and Jakub Šenovský).

Other topics that were discussed included: “New horizons in Israeli (Progressive) Prayer and Beyond”

with Rabbi Professor Dalia Marx (Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem); “Jewish identity and Jewish status” chaired by Rabbi Neiger with Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg (Hamel) and Rabbi Nathan Alfred (Singapore); and “Liturgy writing for the working rabbi” with Rabbis Eimer and Sylvia Rothschild. The Rabbinic Kallah ended with the ERA AGM and a fabulous lunch.– **Rabbi Dr René Pfertzel**



(L-R) Rabbis Menno ten Brink, Ruven Bar-Ephraim, Marc Neiger and René Pfertzel

ICJ community in the same city.

The Kallah was opened by Rabbis Ruven Bar-Ephraim, immediate past ERA Chairman and François Garaï, who oversees the French Rabbinic Programme. The first session focused on future generations of rabbis and was entitled: “Rabbinic training in the European countries” chaired by Rabbi Bebe with Rabbi ten Brink (Levisson Institute, Amsterdam), Rabbi Edward van Voolen (Abraham

The EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly (ERA)

The ERA is designed to provide an additional support network for rabbis working in Europe and serving EUPJ communities and institutions. It has no mandate to replace local and national European rabbinic assemblies that already exist and are recognised by the EUPJ. ERA's board and membership reflect the rabbinic diversity among the Progressive European Rabbinate that adheres to the various platforms of Progressive Judaism.

Conscious of the necessity to preserve our European diversity, ERA has four missions:

- To express our Jewish Progressive voice in Europe, whether before the various European



institutions through the European Union Office (EUO) of the EUPJ in Brussels, or before the other States that are not members of the EU.

- The following list is not exhaustive, but gives

some areas of interest: fight against anti-Semitism; protection of religious freedom; environmental issues, promotion of Progressive Jewish values that enable a free and open European society in which every life is sacred and freedom of expression is preserved.

- This Progressive Jewish voice is expressed by a group of rabbis constituted through a task force that will issue press statements if and when necessary. The EUO in Brussels advocates for Progressive Jewish values before the EU institutions.

- Through regular meetings, the Rabbinic Kallah, ERA strives to promote exchanges between Rabbis. Each EUPJ conference is preceded by a European Kallah. Every other year, a Kallah is held in various places in Europe to continue this dialogue.

• ERA is a place where rabbis from all the Progressive denominations can meet, discuss, share their views, and co-operate in spite of their differences.

- To support the work of the European Beit Din in countries where no Beit Din is yet established. – [Rabbi Dr René Pfertzel](#)

Regeneration – Building the Future

The beautiful city of Prague saw the culmination of nearly year of planning for an event that was to exceed expectations and enable more than 350 delegates from 28 countries to experience a weekend filled with excitement, entertainment, debate, discussion and celebration.

On Thursday April 26, the EUPJ Biennial Conference opened with an elaborate ceremony in the Smetana Hall within the Municipal House. It included welcome messages from the President of the Jewish Federation, Petr Papoušek, the Mayor of Prague, Adriana Krnáčová, the Israeli Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Daniel Meron, outgoing EUPJ Chairman Miriam Kramer and the President of the WUPJ, Rabbi Daniel Freeland. David Pollock (right) was Master of Ceremonies.

During the evening, we were entertained by the children's choir of the Lauder School and were treated to a world premiere of an organ arrangement

of Smetana's Vltava by organist, Ian Shaw. A short video recording the history of the Jews in the Czech Republic was shown and Mark Podwal, the world-

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Photo: Dale Lazar

Regeneration – Building the Future cont...



Singers and musicians from the Lauder School Prague

renowned illustrator and artist, gave a fascinating presentation.

The ceremony was enhanced by a nostalgic welcome to the stage of Ruth Hálová, one of the children saved by Sir Nicholas Winton, her grandson, Tomáš Kocourek, and Sir Winton's son, Nick Winton. The ceremony was followed by cocktails and canapés .

After such an uplifting opening, the conference was in full swing on Friday with plenaries presented by eminent sociologist, Dr David Hirsh and Jean-Marc Liling, Executive Director of the Centre for International Migration and Integration in Israel.

Sixteen workshops were offered covering a wide variety of subjects including anti-Semitism in Europe,

awesome setting of the world-famous Spanish synagogue.

The synagogue has rarely, if ever, witnessed a service such as this, attended by more than 350 worshippers. The theme of the conference, Regeneration, could not have been more appropriate. The day ended with a Kabbalat Shabbat dinner in the ballroom of the Marriott Hotel when all delegates sang, danced and enjoyed the music of a seven-piece Klezmer band.

The food and wine at the dinner and throughout the weekend reached heights that none of the delegates could recall at any previous conference. In fact, throughout the conference, from breakfast to morning and afternoon coffee breaks and dinners,



(L-R) Miriam Kramer, Petr Papoušek and Ambassador Daniel Meron

leadership across the generations, social entrepreneurship, creating a sustainable future, an examination of whatever happened to the European ideal, education matters, emerging communities and interfaith issues.

Needless to say, with so many people coming from as diverse a selection of backgrounds as can be imagined, the questions asked and discussions that took place were provocative, thought-provoking and inspiring.

Friday came to a moving conclusion with a service led by Rabbi Tom Kučera and ably assisted by Student Rabbi David Maxa, Cantor Jaroslava Maxova and Student Cantor Ivan Kohout in the truly

everyone enjoyed a gastronomic extravaganza.

On Saturday, after morning study sessions, we celebrated Shabbat once again in the Spanish synagogue. Highlights of the service, which was led by Rabbi Aaron Goldstein and Cantor Zoe Jacobs, included Rabbis Dr Andrew Goldstein and Joel Oseran delivering a *d'var torah* and sermon, rabbis and conference chairman, David Pollak, chanting the week's portion and Haftarah, and an historic handing over of a scroll provided by Rabbi Katz of Hendon Synagogue to František Fendrych, Chairman of ZLU, one of the two local Progressive synagogues. The morning service was truly magical.

After lunch, tours set out across Prague and

Regeneration – Building the Future cont...

beyond, and the day was brought to a triumphant close when approximately 250 delegates gathered together for Havdalah, led by delegates who had attended the New Generation Leadership Seminar prior to conference. Rarely has an EUPJ Biennial Conference witnessed such an uplifting conclusion to the Shabbat.

Two events took place after Shabbat. A farewell for Dalya Levy, Executive Director of Arzenu, who retires in June, and the traditional late-night cabaret featuring as wide a variety of acts, performed by the delegates. Both events celebrated the talents and skills of the individuals in the Progressive world. Sunday morning offered a final plenary session with Michael Zantovsky, Czech diplomat and politician. This was followed by a lively discussion and debate that reflected on the 70 years since Israel Independence and questioned the fulfilment of the promises made by the Israel State.

Ambassador Daniel Meron, Reuven Marko, Chair of the IMPJ, Rabbi Lea Mühlstein, Chair of Arzenu, and Rabbi Daniel Frelander all combined their thoughts to defend, justify and, on occasion, apologise for the activities of the State of Israel.

After such a rousing morning, which also featured the presentation of an Honorary Fellowship to Rabbi François Garai by Rabbi Charles Middleburgh, Dean of the Leo Baeck College, all that was left was the Annual Assembly. During the Assembly, the



kulo, gesher tsar meod – The whole world is a narrow bridge, but the essential thing is never to be afraid."

Hugo is speaking to us now. "In the coming months, maybe years, you will have many narrow bridges to cross, but never be afraid."

Incidentally, at 92, Rabbi Jacobi was the oldest delegate at this conference and has attended each one since 1949 .

We'd like to thank the organising teams. Without their amazing skills, commitment, moral support, friendship, sense of humour and love of Judaism, this conference would not have been possible!



(L-R) Mark Podwal, Rabbi Andrew Goldsmith and Rabbi Daniel Frelander

EUPJ bid a fond farewell to outgoing Chairman, Miriam Kramer and welcomed the new Chairman, Sonja Guentner.

Proceedings were brought to a successful conclusion by Rabbi Harry Jacobi with a closing prayer delivered in his own, inimitable style. He paid a tribute to Rabbi Hugo Gryn. Born in Czechoslovakia, he survived Auschwitz and became a most respected and beloved rabbi in Britain. He was also a past Chairman of the WUPJ European Board (as it was then known).

He mentioned Rabbi Gryn's appearance on Desert Island Discs radio programme, where he chose Mozart's Prague Symphony and quoted Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav with the words, "*Kol Ha'olam*

EUPJ Biennial Organising Committee: David Pollak, Chairman, Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, Deborah Grabiner, Sonja Guentner, Miriam Kramer, Rabbi Lea Mühlstein, Michael Reik, Gordon Smith and Jonathan Wootliff, Chairman of the Czech Republic Local Committee.

Czech Republic Local Committee: Eliška Bridges, Yael Brunner, František Fendrych, Bonnie Hagen, Eva Janáčková, Petra Kopplová, David Kraus, Lukáš Kypta, Jiřina Nováková, Erik Richard Hromádko, Jaromír Rux, Jiří Soukup, Michal Spevák, Linda Štucbartová, Kateřina Weberová, Eva Wichsová and Sylvie Wittmannová. – **David Pollak, Conference Chairman.**
Photos: Dale Lazar

Farewell to a great leader

Miriam Kramer stepped down as EUPJ Chairman at the recent EUPJ Biennial Conference to applause and high praise.

Carole Sterling, WUPJ chairman, said a few words and presented a gift to Miriam on behalf of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

"I'd like to offer personal and collective thanks to Miriam Kramer," she said. "We've had the opportunity to work closely together with Miriam, Sonja and Gordon and it's such a pleasure to see the calibre of leadership that comes out of the EUPJ, but Miriam, this is about you. So, on behalf of the World Union, this is a small token of our appreciation and in recognition of all your good work. May you go from strength to strength as you help to strengthen our people."

EUPJ President Gordon Smith spoke highly of Miriam, adding some humour to the proceedings. "I have the privilege and the honour to make a presentation to Miriam Kramer who, having served six years as Chairman of the EUPJ, comes to the end of her term and relinquishes this hot seat in favour of another," he said.

"Miriam took up the reigns of the board of the EUPJ in 2012 and we were all very fortunate that she agreed to do so. The EUPJ has taken great strides over the past six years under her very able chairmanship. These have been both challenging and pleasurable times. Regardless of the circumstances, Miriam has always been a caring, considerate, generous, hardworking, committed and diplomatic person," he continued.

"She has been a great ambassador for the EUPJ, willing to travel to the ends of the earth on behalf of the EUPJ at the drop of a hat and has represented the EUPJ across the globe. Miriam is also able to spot a missing comma or superfluous full stop at 20 paces. A rare talent," Gordon said with a smile, garnering laughter from the audience.

He then handed her a

beautiful trophy with a special message engraved on it: "To Miriam Kramer in appreciation of six years of devoted service as chairman of the European Union for Progressive Judaism."

Miriam's emotional reply included a light-hearted quip in response to Gordon's. "Thank you very much, Gordon, for that extremely generous and undeserved tribute. I am delighted, having had a

quick look at the text on this, that there are no missing commas," she said.

A little about Miriam in her words

Miriam Kramer was elected to the EUPJ board at the Amsterdam Biennial Conference in April 2012 with, in her words, "no run-up". In other words, she came in "cold" with no experience as an EUPJ board member.

However, Miriam warmed to the position very quickly and has approached every challenge with aplomb and every experience with enthusiasm and passion.

"Chairing the EUPJ has been both a most enjoyable and challenging job," Miriam said. "Enjoyable

because meeting people in the 17 constituent countries – and beyond – has been a great pleasure. It is a privilege to experience the many and diverse ways in which we are Progressive Jews. Behind every person there is a story and they are often riveting. To celebrate milestones with a community is one of many joys.

"The challenges come from two places, external and internal," she said. "In the former category are governments in some of the countries who do not

recognise us as a legitimate strand of Judaism. This has an impact because in those countries, 'official' religions have an element of state funding as well as a certain status. Fortunately over the years, EUPJ has been able to support various legal battles, which have largely been successful. However, we are still struggling in a few cases.

"The internal challenges,

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which are more difficult to



(L-R) David Pollak, Miriam Kramer and Gordon Smith

Farewell to a great leader cont...

resolve, come when there is much disagreement, usually between two local communities, and then neither is able to reach its full potential,” said Miriam.

While Miriam was new to the EUPJ board, she had many years to hone her skills as her commitment and dedication to Progressive Judaism has seen her participating in many leadership roles.

Miriam is a member of Wimbledon and District Synagogue in London and has served the community as Chairman of the Education committee, Senior Warden, Chairman and Honorary Vice-President. She has served on the board of the Movement for Reform Judaism and as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Leo Baeck College, the position she held for four years immediately prior to the EUPJ.

After six years of successfully helping the EUPJ's growth and development, we can see how much her prior involvement in the Progressive Movement stood her in good stead. She helped facilitate two new additions to the EUPJ and was part of the team



that widened the reach of the EUPJ.

“On my watch, we added two countries to the EUPJ family – Spain and Portugal – and achieved a higher profile throughout our region,” Miriam said. “But I do not take the credit for this because I have been fortunate to work alongside an outstanding team.” – Photos: Dale Lazar

Rabbi François Garaï honoured

On the final day of the EUPJ Biennial, Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh, Dean of Leo Baeck College London, conferred upon Rabbi François Garaï of GIL Switzerland, the Fellowship of Leo Baeck College “in recognition of his outstanding service to the House of Israel as a rabbi and teacher”.

This Fellowship is Leo Baeck College's highest honour, and Rabbi Garaï is the first Francophone to receive it in the history of Leo Baeck College (LBC).

“Leo Baeck College has enjoyed excellent relations with colleagues serving Progressive synagogues on the Continent, even when they were trained elsewhere, and many bridges have been built that have been mutually enriching,” said Rabbi Middleburgh.

“A perfect example of this is our new relationship with the French communities, epitomised by the six French rabbinic students currently studying at LBC: part of their inspiration has been our colleague Pauline Bebe (a student of Rabbi Garaï), but the golden threads that connect us all have been immeasurably enhanced by another rabbi, François Garaï.



Rabbi François Garaï with his children, Benjamin and Sophie

“François is a rare human being, a combination of energy, positivity and hope, with a fearless commitment to the Jewish world. His dynamism and determination, not to mention his charm, have strengthened Progressive Judaism throughout

Europe and won him the respect and love of congregations and colleagues,” he said. Once alumni of Leo Baeck College have served for 25 years, they are given Fellowships of the College as a mark of respect and appreciation of their devoted work for the Jewish people. “Very rarely, and

in exceptional circumstances, the Fellowship of Leo Baeck College may be awarded to someone who is not an alumnus,” Middleburgh said.

According to Alexander Dembitz, President of GIL, the moment was propitious since Rabbi François

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Rabbi François Garaï honoured cont...



Rabbi Charles Middleburgh presents Rabbi François Garaï with the Fellowship of Leo Baeck College. (L-R) Alexander Dembitz, Rabbi Garaï's children, Benjamin and Sophie, Rabbi Middleburgh, David Bernstein, Rabbi Garaï, Michel Benveniste, Antoine Leboyer and Rabbi Haim Casas.

received his Smicha (rabbinic ordination) in June 1968 – 50 years ago. This moving moment acknowledges Rabbi Garaï's commitment to our people during these past 50 years.

In his speech, Alexander borrowed from William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* to describe Rabbi Garaï.

"Some people are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Born great... exceptional people who have qualities such as Mozart, Einstein, Chagall. Achieve greatness... through skill, competence, commitment, sensitivity, measured determination, people who help to change our world. Leo Baeck was one such individual as is (Rabbi) Dick Hirsch," Alexander said.

"And then we come to the last category... greatness thrust upon them. And this is a special person who happens to be at the right place at the right time. And your legacy, François, what you

have achieved, is to have created a congregation from nothing."

François was born in 1945 in Paris of Hungarian roots. He was trained in Paris and spent a year at HUC. He got smicha in June 1968 and more or less at the same time, there was a nascent community of English speakers in Geneva who were looking for a rabbi. Since his English was almost as good as his French, he held his hand up and off he went to Geneva.

"A year later, together with a number of families who realised that their embrace of Progressive Liberal Reform Judaism was what they wanted to pass to their children, François saw to the creation of GIL in December 1969," said Alexander. "This means in one year from now, hopefully many of you will be able to join us in Geneva to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of GIL with

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L-R: Rabbi Haim Casas, Celia Naval, Antoine Leboyer, Benjamin Garaï, Rabbi François Garaï, Sophie Garaï, Alexander Dembitz, Michel Benveniste, Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh and Suzette Reiter-Slama

Arzenu send-off as Dalya Levy retires

Dalya Levy will retire next month after nearly 20 years as Executive Director of Arzenu. The leadership of the organisation decided to host a special farewell for her at a restaurant near the hotel.

A few people who have worked closely with Dalya over the years spoke of her dedication to the organisation and the Progressive Movement in general.

“We will miss the fact that her determination and her commitment are not going to be on the frontlines, but it will be felt, I’m sure, for many, many years to come,” said Rabbi Joel Oseran. “She is really a gem of a colleague and we salute you. L’Chaim.”



Rabbi Lea Mühlstein, Arzenu Chair, gave a toast and praised Dalya. “There aren’t enough words to thank you for everything you’ve given to Arzenu. We really appreciate the many, many years you’ve worked in the organisation and we hope this is definitely not goodbye,” she said.

IMPJ Chair, Reuven Marko thanked Dalya on behalf of the Israeli Progressive Movement. “We have decided to honour Dalya at our



biennial conference with the honorarium award for people who have committed their allegiance to the movement over long periods of time. Dalya is a well-deserving person of this award,” Reuven said.

In response, an emotional Dalya said: “I see so many faces from so many places all over the world, people I’ve come to know, not only as volunteers of the organisation that I hold dear, but as personal friends.

“I feel like we are all one big family and I want to say that I salute **you** because **you** are the volunteers that make the organisation work. You’re the ones who contribute day in and day out, making Zionism meaningful all around the world. And I don’t know how to thank you enough,” she said.

– Darryl Egnal



Arzenu send-off as Dalya Levy retires



Photos: Darryl Egnal

WUPJ-Saltz Center reunion

The WUPJ Center for Leadership, Development and Education (formerly the Saltz Center) held a reunion for its alumni during the conference.

In attendance were alumni of the Beutel Leadership Seminar and the Bergman Jewish Educators Seminar.

The aim of the reunion, besides connecting with old friends (four of whom attended Beutel with me

in 2006 including Sonja Guentner), was to discuss new ways to connect with potential leaders in the Progressive communities around the world. An online learning programme from a Progressive viewpoint was the most prominent idea that came out of the session, one that would help those who were unable to attend seminars in Israel.

– Darryl Egnal



Perspectives: Re-connecting and sharing

I and two other Sim Shalom members attended the Biennial Conference. It was a wonderful long weekend of talks, workshops, Shabbat services and hobnobbing with old friends from all over Europe, Israel, and the US, and even as far away as Singapore and South Africa.

The Singapore rabbi, Nathan Alfred (from the UK), had spent a year with Sim Shalom in Budapest before his rabbinical training, where he helped organise an international European youth group called EuroJews. It was great to see him again.

With 40 or more Rabbis in the congregation, the Shabbat services were pretty enthusiastic; sort of a busman's holiday effect, so they were a great experience.

The EUPJ continues to grow steadily. New national Reform Jewish Federations were reported from Spain with six congregations and Italy with four. Sylvie Wittman, a tour guide who was the founder of the first Progressive Jewish community in Prague, led an outstanding walking tour of Jewish Prague, ending up in her congregation's premises.

The other newer Reform congregation in Prague, the Jewish Liberal Union (ZLU), was presented a



(L-R) Jesse Weil and Rabbi Nathan Alfred

Torah with an historic past. It was one of the many Czech Torah scrolls collected by the Nazis as they deported the Jews to concentration camps, and were found in Kolin after the war. The scroll that was passed onto the Prague congregation had spent many years in England and the Brits were returning it to its homeland, to a community that desperately needed a Torah. – [Jesse Weil](#)

Perspectives: A symbiotic relationship

Personally, what I retained from the conference was the strong message that Israel and the Diaspora are highly inter-dependent and that we need to be a strong voice for Israel around the world with our vision of things; we need to support the IMPJ and make our voices heard within Israel – in support of, but also when we do not approve of or feel at ease with certain stances.

In the same way, it is clear that Israel is a major element in our definition of ourselves as Jews.

The workshop on Israel and immigrants was superbly interesting and encouraging, despite the weighty challenges and tough times.

The post-conference tours to discover Jewish life outside the capital, past and re-awakening, ably led by the so-involved Rabbi Andrew Goldstein and his wife Sharon and a very competent and knowledgeable guide, Sylvie Whitmann, were as fine as anticipated. – [Celia Naval](#)

Continued on page 14

Rabbi François Garaï honoured cont...

its founding rabbi, François Garaï, at the helm.

"François, in the 49 years he has been with us, has celebrated every imaginable lifecycle event, which is why all our congregants look to him for guidance and for leadership," he said.

After Alexander finished his introduction to Rabbi Garaï, Rabbi Middleburgh presented him with the Fellowship certificate.

An emotional and surprised rabbi mentioned two important figures in his life who were missing from this auspicious occasion; his wife and his mother, and spoke of his mother's influence on his choice.

"When I was starting my rabbinical studies, I was also starting at the scientific university," he said.

"My mother knew that I was not a very 'studying guy' and that I was not able to follow two tracks at the same time.

So she said to me, 'You will stop the rabbinical

school and you will go to the university.'

"I said to my mother, 'I'm sorry, but I will do the opposite of what you say.' She looked very pleased. And then I realised that knowing I would say no, she told me the opposite of her wish. And this is how I became, four years later, a rabbi.

"We had the immense *bonheur* (happiness) to build congregations and to see today the outcome of it. There are several students (from the GIL community) learning today in Leo Baeck College, and I know one in Geiger College too.

"The rabbinical body for French-speaking communities in Europe is now able to gather together and have more than a minyan, which is the proof that there is a future everywhere for Liberal Jews, and that this future is building the life and the strength of Judaism for the world of tomorrow," Rabbi Garaï concluded. – [Photos: Dale Lazar](#)

Perspectives: A great opportunity

I was in Prague from Wednesday night for the pre-conference Rabbinic Kallah until Monday morning. It was a wonderful, yet intense time and a great opportunity to get together with old friends and get to know as many of the 350 representatives as I could.

Without forgetting the quality of the conference and the workshops, I must say that for me the most important part of these meetings is the opportunity to meet with rabbis and leaders from all over Europe. It is an effective way to get to know the reality of our communities on the continent, of learning from what others do and for exchanging ideas.

Since I live in a city where I am the only Progressive rabbi, it was especially important for me to have private meetings with other rabbis such as Rabbis Charles Middleburgh, Daniel Rich, Stephen Berkowitz, Daniel Lichman, and many more.

The meeting with the French-speaking communities was especially interesting because it helped me to get to know other leaders of the French Jewish communities better.

It was a real honour to represent Keren Or and contribute to its internationalisation. Thanks to my contacts and good relations with leaders of countries such as the USA, Spain, Italy and the UK, I believe that KO is today more international than ever.

I also had the opportunity to meet with the group of young leaders several times. This group had parallel



During the conference, Beit RamBam, the new community in Seville, was welcomed as a member of the EUPJ. (L-R) Rabbi Haim Casas and Jorge Gershon

activities during the conference. It seems to me a very good idea to incorporate more and more future generations in this type of meeting.

Lastly, I think that it is vox populis (the opinion of the majority) the joy I experienced on Sunday, the day on which we honoured Rabbi François Garaï and the day on which my community in Seville (I am the founder of Beit RamBam) was welcomed as a member of the EUPJ. – [Rabbi Haim Casas](#)

A sustainable future

In November 2017, the EUPJ Executive Board decided to make Sustainability a major element of the movement's strategic development. The workshop, "Ensuring we have a sustainable future" during the EUPJ conference in Prague was a direct result and from that a Sustainable Development Working Group has now been established.

If "Regeneration – Building the Future" is to mean anything, we must first protect the future environmentally, socially and ethically. This aim was the driving force for the workshop led by Rabbi Jeffrey Newman together with Jonathan Wootliff and Peter Jossi, who are both members of

[Rabbi Jeffrey Newman](#)



the EUPJ Executive Board and experienced sustainability consultants.

Most encouragingly, 12 participants from 10 different countries, including a number of young leaders, signed up to support the continuing development of Sustainability in the EUPJ and our communities.

Tikkun Olam, Repairing the world

At this time, the world – humanity in particular – faces its greatest challenge ever. Future generations depend on our swift adherence to the definition of sustainability where we must "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The greatest challenge of all is the rapid phasing out of fossil fuels, which are contributing to planetary warming. At present, we are likely to exceed the maximum safe limit of 2°C (or better still 1.5°C) of the Paris Agreement.

Putting sustainability into communal practice

Our workshop explored the 17 Sustainable Development (or Global) Goals (SDGs) that were adopted in 2015 by 193 countries as targets to be reached by 2030, including Goal 17: "Climate

Continued on page 15

A sustainable future cont...

Action". We quickly agreed that the SDGs were entirely in line with our Jewish values and teachings. Gender equality, for example, is at the very forefront of our Progressive approach and women and children are highly vulnerable throughout the world. As Jews, we are particularly aware of migration and the needs of refugees, and many of our communities are especially engaged here.



Countering hunger and poverty, fostering health, well-being and education demonstrate our commitment to the first four SDGs, even unknowingly! The workshop discussed the [Eco Synagogue](#) and how this might help us – as individuals, in our communities and in our businesses – reduce carbon emissions. We were reminded that we could contribute most by eating less meat, driving less, flying less and focusing on the wellbeing and education of our children rather than on their quantity.

There is one project that is already underway. In December 2018, there will be a [meeting of world leaders](#) in Katowice, Poland, to assess progress on Emissions Reduction. Rabbi Jeffrey Newman and Jonathan Wootliff have committed themselves to ensure there will be a Jewish presence alongside other faith groups. – [Rabbi Jeffrey Newman \(Rabbi Newman is an adviser to the International Secretariat of the Earth Charter Initiative.\)](#)

(L-R) Peter Jossi, Jonathan Wootliff and Yael Brunner

Seen at the opening ceremony



Once the opening ceremony had concluded, a light dinner was served and old friends had the opportunity to reconnect while others had the chance to get to know each other. It was a festive evening and a great start to the conference. – [Photos: Darryl Egnal](#)



Seen at the opening ceremony



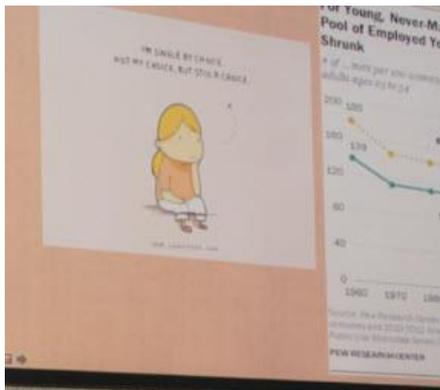
Photo: Dale Lazar

Plenaries and presentations



Photos: Dale Lazar

Plenaries and presentations



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Plenaries and presentations



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Social networking



Photos: Dale Lazar

Social networking



Photos: Dale Lazar

Social networking



Photos: Dale Lazar

Social networking



Shabbat dinner



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Shabbat dinner



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Shabbat dinner



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Shabbat dinner



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Shabbat dinner



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Shabbat dinner



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Shabbat dinner



Photos: Darryl Egnal

Shabbat dinner



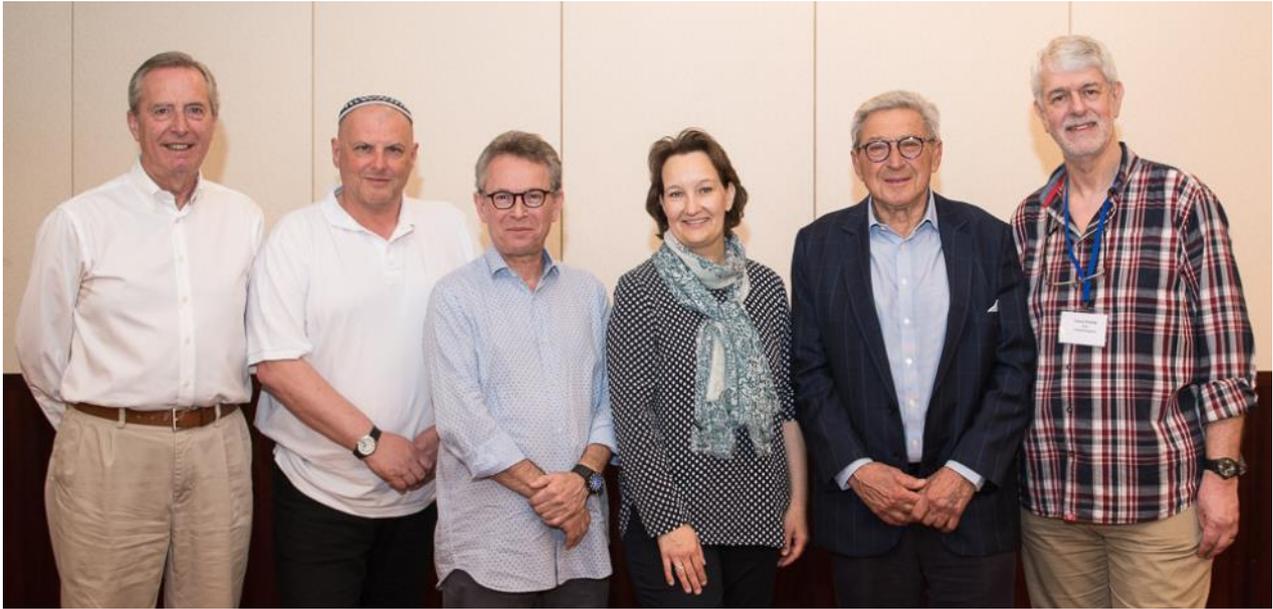
Photos: Darryl Egnal

Havdalah: A beautiful ending to Shabbat



Photos: Dale Lazar

EUPJ Board Members



EUPJ Board Members: (L-R) Gordon Smith, President, Rabbi Dr René Pfertzel, Chairman, EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly, John Cohen, Vice-Chairman: Governance, Sonja Guentner, Chairman, Leslie Bergman, Honorary Life President and David Pollak, Vice-Chairman: Finance. Missing: Ruth Cohen and Jeffery Rose, Honorary Life Presidents, Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, Vice-President, Michael Reik, Vice-Chairman: Israel & Twinning, and Rabbi Menno ten Brink, Education and Interfaith



Above: Closing panelists: (L-R) Rabbi Joel Oseran, Reuven Marko, Rabbi Lea Mühlstein, Daniel Meron, Israeli Ambassador to Czech Republic and Rabbi Daniel Frelander. Below left: Deborah Blausten, Andrew Keene and Carole Sterling. Below right: Rabbi Harry Jacobi making the closing prayer



Yom Ha'atzmaut

Celebrating hope and unity!

The State of Israel represents the greatest achievement of modern Jewish history, reuniting millions with the land that gave birth to the faith and people of Israel.

Following nearly 1900 years of exile – centuries of persecution and expulsion that culminated in eras of both catastrophe and creative growth and innovation – the Jewish people are again sovereign on Jewish soil.

As the *Declaration of Independence* states, the establishment of the State of Israel “is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State”.

The Zionist dream has been fulfilled with the ingathering of Jews who

sought refuge and fulfilment in a land holy to our people, and is continually renewed by ongoing technological, medical and economic miracles. We are continually inspired by Israeli creativity and contributions to Jewish life and culture. We will not yield in our pledge to strengthen our ties to the Jewish state and to be strengthened by her.

Across her first seven decades, Israel frequently has been forced to defend herself against stronger and more numerous enemies that have sought her destruction. Israel has sacrificed for peace while maintaining the only democracy in the Middle East.

At this critical milestone in Israel and Jewish history, we recommit to working for a secure and just



Israel that exists side-by-side with a future state of Palestine. Additionally, we must work for the future, securing an Israel that fulfils the aspiration of its Declaration of Independence as Israel's founders imagined when they wrote that the Jewish State will “uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of race, creed or sex”.

As tireless advocates for religious pluralism, we recognise that religious equality has been far too elusive for Israel's growing Reform and

Conservative Jewish movements and we remain committed to an Israeli society that recognises the rights of all Jewish movements – and all Jews.

In the presence of both triumph and challenge, hope remains our compass.

We join with Jews throughout the world, celebrating joyously this milestone anniversary of Israel's independence. We pray for the fulfilment of Israel's promise as a thriving democracy, an exemplar of security and peace, a beacon of light and hope for all the world.

This statement was issued jointly by various Reform Jewish organisations. Read the full statement [here](#).

Music and Jewish life

The Jewish Community of Hameln commemorated the 70th anniversary of Israel's founding with a

concert by [Cantor Svetlana Kundish \(vocals and guitar\)](#) and [Patrick Farrell \(accordion\)](#).



Cantor Kundish spoke about Jewish life in Ukraine and in the former Soviet Union. Her personal experiences mirrored those of many immigrants before emigrating. She shared family photos and performed Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Ukrainian and German songs.

The members, who themselves had had similar emigration experiences were very touched. “It was a concert that brought us back to our homeland – the good and the bad,” said one member.

We'd like to thank Cantor Kundish and Patrick Farrell as well as the Central Council of Jews for their kind support. – [Rachel Dohme](#).
Photo: [Manuel Miethe](#)

70 Shades of Blue

The Belgian Jewish community in Brussels celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut in style on May 13. About 1500 people attended this special day, with the Israeli Embassy playing a leading role. The event included stands, restaurants, Israeli dances, conferences, karaoke, workshops and a Matti Caspi concert.

Beth Hillel rented a stand at the event, which was manned by Beth Hillel member volunteers. We entertained the visitors with quizzes and a held a drawing workshop for children. This was a great opportunity to welcome new friends and add new names to our mailing list.



(L-R) Marc Brichaux, Gilbert Lederman, Ilan bar Zohar, Olivier Wexsteen, Benjamin Dobruszkes and Josiane Goldschmidt



We'd like to thank David Baltuch, one of our Board members and co-ordinator of Beth Hillel's participation in Israel's 70th anniversary celebrations, and all our volunteers. Happy birthday Israel! – Gilbert Lederman

David Baltuch leading the Renanim choir

Celebrating Israel

Keren Or in Lyon held a full day of events to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. This included a highly interesting talk by Gérard Panczer, a professor at the University Lyon 1, who spoke about the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement as well as numerous Franco-Israeli co-operations and scientific projects over the years.

A very moving service was held afterwards. All the Talmud Torah students participated and the older ones read a special Amidah written by rabbis who are part of Sh'ma, a rabbinical human rights association.

An Israeli lunch was held in a well-decorated room with an Israeli theme. I prepared a special platter based on a Yom Ha'atzmaut Seder produced by the American Reconstructionist Movement, which student Rabbi Daniela Touati had passed on to us.

It was a symbolic tray made up of with cheese and honey for the land flowing with milk and honey, olives, grapes, oranges, dates, figs and a variety of spices to evoke the origins of the Jews from around the globe who make up Israeli society.

Seven of our members lit seven candles symbolising the Israeli emblem, a Menorah, while saying seven blessings for Israel related to the symbolic food on the tray.

At the end of the lunch, one of our former chairs entertained us with a quiz. The questions were specifically related to Israeli history, geography,

culture and more.

Four young leaders from HaShomer Hatzair Paris were present all day and created specific activities for the Cheder. Their presence symbolised the kick-off of the Lyon branch of HaShomer Hatzair.

We finished the day dancing to Israeli folklore music with the youngsters. It was a wonderful celebration of Israel. – Celia Naval



Robert Ley, Arzenu France, who joined us for the day.



Yom Ha'atzmaut

From remembrance to revelry

A 3000-strong crowd gathered at the Palais des Congres in Paris on April 18 to mark Yom Hazikaron and then celebrate the 70-year-old Israeli state.

As with many Jewish communities throughout the world, the big night was enjoyed by Orthodox and Liberal Jewish communities alike. It was organised by the Federation of French Zionist Organisations, of which Arzenu is a member.

The evening started with a Yom Hazikaron ceremony, remembering those who fought and died for Israel. Thereafter, the Yom Ha'atzmaut

celebration began. The entertainment included a short film showing the main events of Israel's 70 years, a group of Israeli dancers called "Nachalat Yehuda" and a set of video clips from the different communities.

A 30-second video featuring Robert Ley, who produced it on behalf of Arzenu France, was included. This was the first time they screened a video from a Liberal community at a Yom Ha'atzmaut event! It was pretty much drowned in other videos, but at least it existed! – **Robert Ley**



Nachalat Yehuda dancers



A traditional celebration

Yom Ha'atzmaut was a very intense and emotional holiday for Beth Hillel in Rome.

The congregation met for Kabbalat Shabbat service during which our Rabbi, Joel Oseran, gave a moving speech on the 70th anniversary of Israel. At the end of the service, after singing the Israeli national anthem, Hatikvah, we all enjoyed dancing to traditional Israeli tunes.

The dining room was decorated with Israeli flags and Israeli food was served. Afterwards, a delicious cake made especially for the 70th anniversary was appreciated and enjoyed by all participants. – **Fabio Benjamin Fantini**



Yom Ha'atzmaut

Dutch style

The LJJ Twente celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut this year in style with a short evening service, the singing of Hatikvah and then a concert by a regional duo called "Niet In Het Zwart" (Not In Black). The attendees filled our small synagogue and clapped along with great music ranging from a 1920s song and Yiddish music to wonderful Israeli songs. Because of the warm weather that day, everyone was able to enjoy the refreshments outside to complete a wonderful evening. – [Wilhelmina Hein](#)



Germany

Minister President Bodo Ramelow honoured



Left: Rabbi Walter Homolka, Dr Charlotte Knobloch, Minister President Bodo Ramelow and Deborah Tal-Rüttger, Deputy Chair, UpJ. Right: Dr Charlotte Knobloch



The Union of Progressive Jews in Germany (UpJ) bestowed its prestigious Israel Jacobson Award on the Minister President of the Free State of Thuringia, Bodo Ramelow, earlier this month.

The award is given every two years in commemoration of Israel Jacobson (1768-1828), one of the founding fathers of Progressive Judaism.

This year, the UpJ award acknowledges Minister President's Ramelow's manifold efforts and achievements in advocating and fostering Jewish diversity and pluralism, especially his support of rabbinical training at Abraham Geiger College.

The recipient is Germany's first socialist state governor since reunification.

The laudation was held by the Grande Dame of German Jewry, Dr Charlotte Knobloch, President of the Jewish Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria and former President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

UpJ chair, Rabbi Walter Homolka, welcomed about 140 invited guests to Erfurt's historic Town Hall, including Sonja Guentner, newly-elected EUPJ chair, Dr Josef Schuster, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and Deborah Tal-Rüttger, Deputy Chair of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany, as well as government officials, rabbis, Jewish lay leaders and senior clergy. – [Hartmut Bornhoff](#). Photos: ©TSK/Jacob Schröter



Rabbi Walter Homolka, Sonja Guentner, Petra Pau, Vice-President of the German Bundestag, Katrin Göring-Eckardt, Co-Chair of the Green Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag, Germana Alberti-vom Hofe, wife of the awardee, Minister President Bodo Ramelow, Prof Dr Reinhard Schramm, Chair of the Jewish Community of Thuringia and Dr Josef Schuster, President, Central Council of Jews in Germany

Limmud comes to Freiburg

Chavurah Gescher was one of the organisers of the very first day-Limmud in Freiburg. This event was part of Limmud on Tour 2018, a series of Limmud days taking place in cities throughout Germany.



In April, more than 100 people from four different countries and from all over Germany gathered in sunny Freiburg to learn, discuss and celebrate Jewish culture. The day began with two parallel Rosh Chodesh services – one traditional and the other egalitarian.

The Freiburg Orthodox community offered its rooms for Limmud at no cost. This was the first time that an egalitarian service took place there; it was led by Dr Annette Böckler, a rabbinic student from Leo Baeck College.

The sessions encompassed Jewish learning in all its variety, from history and ethics to religion and philosophy, from education to culture, crafts, music and Hebrew songs, with presenters from right across the Jewish community. There were also tours through Jewish Freiburg, and activities for children and teens.

This Limmud event was a wonderful opportunity for the participants to make new contacts, learn in a friendly, vibrant atmosphere and to "go one stage further on their Jewish journey". The Freiburg Limmud team, together with the presenters and the festival-goers, created an incredible Jewish experience, the first of many. – **Brenda Waffel**

The Freiburg Limmud team

Hameln's children step out

In April, we took the children of the Hameln Jewish community on a special group outing. It was our fourth trip and it took place on April 14. Nine children accompanied by two adults, myself and Stelian Mima, hiked to the city centre. On this day, the city marathon took place and two of our members participated. We cheered them on in the large crowd.

Afterwards, we decided to go for ice cream. Then the children visited a small exhibition entitled 'Witnesses of the Prehistoric Times' and played in a small indoor playground.

"At 17:00, we went to the city park for a picnic. It was very relaxed among the flowers and fountains and the children continued playing together until it was time to go home.

It's great that we are able to create so many opportunities for our children as it strengthens their sense of identity and belonging. – **Olga Trieskunova**



Germany

A new home for student rabbis

"It is from here that we shall continue the enormous task of contributing to the renaissance of German and European Jewish life and learning," said Carole Sterling, Chair of the World Union for Progressive



Judaism, at the dedication of the new building of Abraham Geiger College and the School of Jewish Theology in Potsdam on April 23.

She conveyed a message of thanks from the WUPJ for the support that Progressive Judaism has received in Germany – and in the State of Brandenburg especially – over the past two decades.

Many guests of honour joined her in wishing the building project well, including WUPJ Executive

Board member, Sharene Hambur, and WUPJ Vice President of Operations, Eyal Ronder, as well as the Vice President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, government officials and senior clergy.

College rector, Rabbi Walter Homolka, explained that the conversion of the building complex to university use will be completed in the autumn of 2019, with a construction budget of €11,5 million. – Hartmut Bomhoff. Photo: © Tobias Barniske / AGK



Rabbi Walter Homolka shows Carole Sterling the new building

Laura Kam visits AGC

On the eve of Lag BaOmer, Abraham Geiger College had the privilege of welcoming Laura Kam, a leading international communications and media strategist and the wife of Israeli Ambassador to Germany, Jeremy Issacharoff.

Laura shared her thoughts about Reform Judaism in Israel and its role in Israeli society with our students, focusing on her latest research results on the standing of both the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) and the Masorti, which will be published soon.

President of Kam Global Strategies, she has spent decades working in the US and Israel with press, politicians, diplomats and think-tanks locally and from across the globe. She also worked for the Anti-

Defamation League in New York, Washington, DC and Jerusalem for 17 years, including as co-director of the ADL's Israel office.

Laura is a member of Kehilat Kol HaNeshama in Jerusalem.

– Hartmut Bomhoff. Photo: © Tobias Barniske



EUPJ Newsletter Deadlines

Please note: These dates are subject to change.

MONTH	COPY/PHOTOS	PUBLISH
June	Wed 13/06/2018	Thu 28/06/2018
July	Wed 18/07/2018	Tue 31/07/2018
August	No newsletter	
September	Wed 22/08/2018	Thu 06/09/2018
October	Wed 03/10/2018	Thu 18/10/2018



TAGLIT · תגליט
BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL

An experience of a lifetime

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

Hungary

US teenagers raise funds to visit Europe

In April, Rabbi Joel Abraham from Temple Shalom in Scotch Plains, New Jersey made his annual visit to Sim Shalom with his current Confirmation class at the end of a week's tour around Jewish sights in Europe.



The young people conduct their own fundraising to pay for the trip, which this year included Berlin, Prague and Budapest. Poland was removed from the tour due to the new laws of the Polish government that punish people who attempt to censure Poland for participating in the Shoah.

It's always a very joyful visit for the students, who see a living, functioning Jewish community after visiting all the museums that show the demise of the Jews of Europe during the war.

We had a wonderful musical service led by Sim Shalom's Cantor Diana Senechal. Thereafter, a Shabbat dinner took place where the visitors could mix with our congregants.

It's always a pleasure to talk with the young people about what they've experienced on their trip as well as hearing about their lives back in the US and their plans as they start to think about college. — [Jesse Weil](#)

Spain

Variety and diversity in Cordoba

[Makom Sefarad](#) is a non-denominational project that provides is space for encountering diversity, a place where Jews from all denominations come to learn, to pray, to live together.

Despite this, the reality is that as I am a Progressive rabbi, most of the participants of our Cordoba Shabbaton in April came from Progressive Jewish communities in Spain. There were, however, some people from other communities and 20 people from Seville, Cadiz, Valencia and Mallorca gathered together for the weekend.

We started on Friday afternoon and activities were held until Saturday night. We had *shiurim*, *tefilot*, a guided tour to the Jewish museum, Casa de Sefarad, a workshop of Ladino songs and a guided tour to the Mosque-Cathedral.

We also met Sebastian de la Obra, a scholar of Spanish Jewish heritage and founder of Casa de Sefarad. In addition, there was an opportunity to reflect on the needs and future of our communities.

The weekend included an opening ceremony in the Casa de Sefarad, a shiur entitled, "Between Black Fire and White Fire, Finding our Own Voice in the Torah", a wonderful Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by Shabbat dinner in the Casa Mazal and a "Shabbat songs" workshop, a moving Shabbat morning service, followed by a Shabbat lunch, also



in Casa Mazal and shiur entitled "From Pesach to Shavuot: Paths of Freedom".

The Shabbaton ended with a very beautiful and meaningful Havdalah ceremony at the monument of Maimonides, after which we held a very special Mimouna* in an Italian restaurant, with a lot of pizza and beer and a Flamenco Concert.

* [Mimouna](#) is a North African Jewish celebration related to the ancient [Seharane](#). It is held the day after

Passover, marking the return to eating chametz.

The weekend was an enormous success, one which we look forward to repeating at our English Shabbaton in Andalusia at the end of June. Please [contact us](#) if you'd like to join the next Shabbaton. — [Rabbi Haim Casas](#)



Spain

A summer of strong women

Drawing inspiration from ancient celebrations of Rosh Chodesh, marking the new moon and the start of the month in the Jewish calendar, we invite you to share in a spiritual event for women this summer.

The first meeting will be Rosh Chodesh Tammuz and will take place in Barcelona on Wednesday June 13 at 19:00.

If you would like to support the organising team or register for the event, please email Nati Acuna.



The summer of strong women
Rosh Jodesh para mujeres
Barcelona, Miércoles 13 de Junio. 19:00hrs

Inspirados en las antiguas celebraciones de Rosh Jodesh, que marcan la luna nueva y el inicio del mes en el calendario judío, este verano te invitamos a compartir un espacio para conectarnos a través del bienestar integral y la espiritualidad judía.

El primer encuentro será en Rosh Jodesh Tammuz. Inscríbete!

▶▶ Reserva la fecha y mantente atenta para saber todos los detalles. Si quieres apoyar al equipo organizador y para inscribirte ponte en contacto con Nati Acuña, donas@betsalom.cat

English Shabbaton in Andalusia

Join Makom Sefarad for an exciting and entertaining weekend filled with prayer, study, fun, entertainment and friends. If you're interested in attending, please [contact us](#).



Shabbaton in Andalusia

Join us for a weekend of study, celebration, flamenco and much more.



Tefila-Study-Cultural Tours-
Music-Food-Flamenco in Seville and Córdoba.

Program lead by Rabbi Haim Casas and
With the Participation of Sonja Guentner, Vice-
Chairman of the EUPJ.

29th of June- 1st of July 2018

Info & Booking:
info@makomsefarad.org

United Kingdom

Anti-Semitism and politics

Rabbi Charley Baginsky, Liberal Judaism's Director of Strategy and Partnerships, and Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, Senior Rabbi of Reform Judaism, have created a video addressing the concerns about anti-Semitism in politics and how we can respond as part of The Alliance for Progressive Judaism.

Reform Judaism and Liberal Judaism work together through The Alliance, contributing to joint projects that are more impactful to do together. Click [here](#) to watch the video.



Rabbis Charley Baginsky and Laura Janner-Klausner

Did we save your family?

World Jewish Relief is organising a very interesting evening on Wednesday June 6 from 7-9pm at Giffnock and Newlands Synagogue in Glasgow.

This event will reveal information that has only just come to light about Scotland's Jewish refugees, with

contributions from the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), Gathering Voices and the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.

This event is free, but please reserve a space by clicking [here](#).

United Kingdom

A Progressive first for British Jews

Marie van der Zyl has been elected the new President of The Board of Deputies of British Jews, the first time a Progressive Jew has occupied this position. Marie serves on the management board of Reform Judaism's West London Synagogue.

Stuart MacDonald, a member of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, was re-elected unopposed as Treasurer.

Marie and Stuart will be joined on the Board of Deputies by Sheila Gewolb, Amanda Bowman and Edwin Shuker, who were elected Vice-Presidents.

Continuing with firsts, this is the first time in the Board of Deputies' 258-year history that most of its officers are women. Marie is only the second female president, following Jo Wagerman (2000-03).

"Liberal Judaism wants to congratulate Marie van der Zyl on her election as President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews," said Rabbi Charley Baginsky, Liberal Judaism's Director of Strategy and Partnerships.

"It is a significant moment for the Board of Deputies as it elects a woman and a Progressive Jew to its helm. We wish her much luck and strength in her new role and look forward to working with her in the future.

"We are also delighted that Stuart MacDonald is continuing as Treasurer. He is a fantastic representative of our movement and has done much to manage the Board's finances effectively and efficiently," she said.



The new team with Board of Deputies Chief Executive, Gillian Merron, a member of Lincolnshire (Liberal) Jewish Community and Finchley Progressive Synagogue. L-R: Amanda Bowman, Stuart Macdonald, Marie Van der Zyl, Sheila Gewolb, Edwin Shuker and Gillian Merron

Northwood fills with music

The Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue's Kabbalat Torah class recently led a Shabbat with a difference, bringing beatboxing into NPLS services for the first time alongside a piano, guitar and a traditional choir.

The 12 teenagers also used poetry, sermons and film to express both their diverse characters and unity as a group in the very well-received Saturday morning service.

The Kabbalat Torah group, made up of mostly 15-year-olds, is led by Leo Baeck College Student

Rabbis Elliott Karstadt and Anna Posner, with support from the NPLS rabbinic team of Rabbis Aaron Goldstein and Lea Mühlstein.

The Kabbalat Torah (Confirmation) ceremony is unique to Liberal Judaism and takes place at an age when it is believed students are able to affirm their commitment to Judaism through a personal decision.

"Kabbalat Torah is one the jewels in Liberal Judaism's crown... keeping girls and boys enthusiastically engaged in Jewish education for years after their Bat or Bar Mitzvah," said Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, Liberal Judaism's President and

the proud grandfather of two of the group, Jemima Colin and Liora Goldstein. Liora, daughter of Rabbi Aaron Goldstein and Tammy Kustow, added: "Our Kabbalat Torah experience was so special because 12 very different individuals came together as a group.



"We had trips to the Czech Republic, learning about the Shoah and our Torah Scrolls, and the East Midlands to learn about Jews in Britain. During these trips, we really bonded and our service was a huge celebration of that. We are now all looking forward to being assistant teachers in the NPLS cheder."

Click [here](#) for more about Kabbalat Torah.

United Kingdom

Rainbow Pilgrims joins the call

Liberal Judaism's pioneering LGBTQI+ project, Rainbow Pilgrims, has joined the call for the repeal of anti-gay laws in the Commonwealth.

To coincide with the discussions on overturning global homophobic and transphobic legislation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London, Rainbow Pilgrims teamed up with Queer London Tours for a heritage journey through iconic spaces that contribute both to the oppression and freedom of LGBTQI+ people worldwide.

Working with other partners – including Micro Rainbow International, African Rainbow Family, African Equality Foundation and the Peter Tatchell Foundation – a large crowd equipped with placards and flags marched from the Indian High Commission



(L-R) Peter Tatchell and Shaan Knan



Rainbow Pilgrims equipped with placards and flags

to the Commonwealth Headquarters. They stopped at some high commissions to hear stories from LGBTQI+ artists and activists from places of conflict.

"With 36 out of the 53 Commonwealth member states criminalising same-sex relationships, it is a

gruesome fact that 70% of Commonwealth nations are bastions of homophobic and transphobic prejudice, discrimination and violence," said Rainbow Pilgrims' Project Manager, Shaan Knan.

"It was a life-changing experience listening to the story of a Nigerian lesbian in front of the Nigerian High Commission, among others, and marching with such a diverse group through the streets of London chanting 'We shall overcome!'

"Today, I am very proud to be a Liberal Jew and support this campaign via our Heritage Lottery Fund-supported initiative Rainbow Pilgrims," he said.

During the tour, human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell told those gathered that at least 100 million people living in Commonwealth countries are at risk of imprisonment, violence and social discrimination.

Click [here](#) to find out more about Rainbow Pilgrims.



Turning to politics

Rabbi Danny Rich has been elected a local councillor for West Finchley in Barnet. He is currently on Sabbatical from his position as Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism and will serve as a

councillor in his personal capacity. Liberal Judaism would like to congratulate Danny on his new position.

Tikkun olam, a key value of our movement, teaches that Jews should engage in social action to improve the communities within which we live. For

some of our members, this means becoming directly involved in politics.

Liberal Judaism is not aligned with any political party and we have members who are involved across the political spectrum, as well as with activist groups. We welcome and encourage this as a reflection of our values.

Rabbi Rich will return to working at Liberal Judaism next month, but will play no part in any work where there may be – or be seen to be – a conflict of interest between his two roles.

The Liberal Judaism Board of National Officers and senior leadership will carry on supporting Danny in his work as a magistrate, prison chaplain and now local councillor, and continues to value the work he does not only for Liberal Judaism, but also for the larger community.

Liberal Judaism biennial events

The Liberal Judaism biennial weekend takes place from Friday June 29 to Sunday July 1 at the St Johns Hotel in Solihull just outside Birmingham.

Barbara Winton to deliver session on refugees

Barbara Winton will speak about how we can build on her father's legacy. Barbara is the daughter and biographer of the Sir Nicholas Winton z"l (1909-2015), who organised the Czech and Slovak Kindertransport in 1939 to rescue children facing danger from the Nazis.

Her session at the Biennial will be titled, "Sanctuary, Sukkot and the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport".

At the time of the biennial, Barbara will be on a humanitarian mission to a refugee camp in Athens alongside Lord (Alf) Dubs, Eve Leadbeater and Ben Abeles, all of whom came to the UK as Kindertransport children. Her session will therefore take place via a live video link-up. Read the full article [here](#).

Barbara Winton with her famous father, Sir Nicholas Winton, who saved the lives of hundreds of children



Gillian Merron

Keynote speaker

Gillian Merron, the Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, will be one of two keynote speakers. She will tackle contemporary issues facing Jews in Britain, including the disturbing rise in anti-Semitism and the recent #EnoughIsEnough campaign.

"It's an honour to be a keynote speaker at this year's Liberal Judaism Biennial Weekend, and I'm especially looking forward to catching up with old friends and making new ones," she said.

Gillian is a member of Lincolnshire (Liberal) Jewish Community and Finchley Progressive Synagogue.

"The relationship between The Board of Deputies and Liberal Judaism is stronger than ever. The biennial will also provide a great opportunity for me to get direct feedback from Liberal Jews around the UK on what they would like to see from the Board of Deputies over the year ahead."

To book your place, please click [here](#).

The Listening Service

Sukkat Shalom in Edinburgh is participating in an Edinburgh Interfaith Alliance project called "The Listening Service". If you are a good listener with some time to spare and you live in Edinburgh, then this is for you.

The Listening Service can help anyone who finds themselves at Edinburgh Sherriff Court and who may need support in an unfamiliar and often daunting setting. This project has been running for about 18 months, complementing the services provided by the Sherriff Court and other agencies and during this time, it has become a valued asset.

The Listening Service is provided by volunteers who get good training and support and who work as part of a small team in the court environment. They must be able to commit to a three- to four-hour shift twice a month.

"Who would think that just 'being there' with someone at a difficult time can make a difference? The smiles, the thank yous and the occasional hug suggest that it does," said Merri, a volunteer.

This service is an Edinburgh Interfaith Alliance project. If you're interested in finding out more, click [here](#) or email courtchaplancy@gmail.com.

United Kingdom

Rich Belarusian cultural experience

The Together Plan Charity, in partnership with Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue, held a Belarusian Cultural Evening complete with Belarusian vodka, herring and black-bread, which was attended by more than 80 people, on April 8.

The event was a journey through the rich history, culture and traditions of Belarus and 120 years of Jewish life from pre-revolution through the Holocaust and Communism, bringing participants to

modern day Belarus. The aim was to show how [The Together Plan](#) is helping to revive Jewish life in the former Soviet Union.

This fascinating interactive revue was conceived and written by members of The Together Plan's Youth for Youth Project: Jonathan Clingman, Sonia Richardson and Jake Goldman with production support from Sam Behrens, Jack Baum, Sam Brunner and Sophie Teff.



(Left) Anna Parijskaia, born in Belarus, and her daughter Sonia Richardson born in London, read a poem in Belarusian and English by Jewish Belarusian poet, Zmitrok Biadula (Right) Rabbi Steven Katz welcomes participants

Harrow Citizens launched

Members of Kol Chai Hatch End Jewish Community joined members of Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue (NPLS), St Alban's, St Peter's and St John Fisher Churches, Stanmore and North Harrow Mosques and the parents and students of Northwood School for the launch of Harrow Citizens.

Harrow Citizens is part of [Citizens UK](#), a charity whose work is based on the principle that when people work together, they have the power to change their neighbourhood, cities and the country for the better.

The launch was attended by Councillor Sachin Shah, leader of the Harrow Council, Councillor Norman Stevenson, Conservative Group Chief Whip, Gareth Thomas, MP for Harrow West, representatives from some local businesses and leaders from the voluntary sector in Harrow.

Councillors Shah and Stevenson were quizzed on whether the two main political parties would support a number of proposals for change. The proposals were presented by four Harrow Citizens 'action teams' on Mental Health, Low Wages, Affordable Housing and Supporting Refugees. The proposals were put together by the teams after months of research and consultation. Members of Kol Chai and NPLS were represented on every team.

The evening ended with a presentation to Rabbi Michael Hilton, Emeritus Rabbi of Kol Chai, for his

hard work and dedication in starting Citizens UK in Harrow.

According to Rabbi Lea Mühlstein of NPLS and co-chair of Harrow Citizens, the launch was a resounding success with over 300 local residents from across the diverse communities in Harrow coming together with one aim in mind – to make Harrow a better place to live in for the sake of the health and well-being of all its residents.

Rabbi Naomi Goldman of Kol Chai said: "This is only the beginning. I know that after the election, the dedicated action teams will press Harrow Council Leaders to work with Harrow Citizens to make those positive changes.

"Social justice and *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, lie at the heart of Judaism. As a Jewish community, it is fantastic to be part of an interfaith alliance making real change in our neighbourhood," she said.



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Prayer House re-dedicated

Glasgow Reform Synagogue (GRS) held a re-dedication ceremony for its newly-refurbished Prayer House at Cardonald Cemetery in April. It is now connected to the electricity grid, enabling new lighting and heating, plus the installation of fixed seating, painting and other repairs.

Members and invited dignitaries were in attendance, with the re-dedication service led by Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, Senior Rabbi of Reform Judaism, who came up from London especially for this event. Ruth and Donnie Leighton also spoke at the event. Donnie has been the GRS Burials Director for many years.

After the re-dedication, those assembled



Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner



Ruth and Donnie Leighton

adjourned to the synagogue for a reception that ended with recognition by GRS Chair Babeth Naddell of the long service of members Philip Kraven, Natalie Millar and Eileen Carroll, as well as GRS' 50 years in its current building on Ayr Road.

Rabbi Janner-Klausner then presided over a Q&A session entitled: "GRS: The Way Forward". Discussions included the congregation's search for a new rabbi and community development worker to engage with young families and its relationship with

the Movement for Reform Judaism and the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council.

"Many thanks go to project managers Steven Anson and Philip Kraven, as well as Simon Taylor and Jonathan Green, for spearheading the event and seeing the refurbishment through to completion, and to all whose efforts made for a successful celebratory day," said Babeth Naddell. – [Scott Curland Chase](#).



Highlights of Reform Judaism's Chagigah

Chagigah 2018, which will take place from June 22-24 at Eastwood Hall near Nottingham, is around the corner and we are delighted to share some of the incredible speakers and learning sessions you'll experience.

Money for Values: Re-thinking Synagogue Finance

Don't miss our distinguished scholar in residence [Rabbi Lou Feldstein](#), who is an expert on synagogue finance and will teach us how relational communities increase membership engagement resulting in increased financial commitment. Lou heads a consulting practice in Atlanta focussed on strengthening congregations as well as coaching rabbis and congregational chairs.



Communities that Care Initiative

A special play entitled: [Don't Leave Me Now](#) by Brian Daniels will be staged over the weekend. The play is inspired by two real stories and explores with insight and humour the impact of early onset dementia on family life. The question stemming from the show: Where does love end and duty begin? Or does it? "The play is subtly powerful, sympathetic and sharp, sad and funny... where dementia is the villain, words are priceless," said Howard Jacobson, Booker Prize-winning author.

Beit Midrash: Deepening our learning/ loving your neighbour

The [Beit Midrash](#) (House of Learning) offers dedicated time to enter deeply into our sacred texts. Learning styles will shift between pair-study (*chevruta*) and coming together with a teacher (*shiur*). We will focus our exploration on one particular *pasuk* (verse/idea) – "Love your neighbour as yourself". (*Vayikra/Leviticus* 19:18).

Discovering a New Path in Congregational Education

[Dr Keith Kahn-Harris](#), writer and sociologist, will explore demographic predictions in order to get us to think now about where we want to be in 10, 15 or 20 years, and how we will continue to inspire people of all ages to engage in Jewish learning.



Find answers to all your Chagigah questions [here](#). And don't delay your [booking](#)! We can't wait to see you there. – Sarita Robinson and Amit Handelsman, Chagigah Co-chairs and Reform Judaism Community Partners.



United Kingdom

RSY-Netzer summer camps are almost here!



Machane Shemesh (Summer Camp)

Shemesh, RSY-Netzer's summer camp, is a chance for your child to spend two weeks (or 10 days if they are on Briyah) in a Reform community. On each camp, there will be a range of fun activities as well as space to chill out and relax!

Our volunteer leaders have all been participants on Shemesh and have been involved in RSY-Netzer for a number of years. They provide a friendly and fun way for all children to experience Jewish education, community, culture and more.

Shemesh 2018: Tuesday July 31 to Tuesday August 14.

Garinim (Summer Day Camp)

RSY-Netzer's Garinim is an occasion like no other. It will be bursting with activities such as adventure games, singing, creative sessions about Israel and Reform Judaism, and sports. The excitement never stops. Whether you are cooking, playing football, training to be an acrobat on a bouncy castle, testing your rock star skills, creating masterpieces in our arts and crafts groups or becoming a pirate on a treasure hunt, there will be something for everyone on Garinim this year!

Find out more about both camps [here](http://www.rsy-netzer.org.uk).



United Kingdom

Theresa May opens Maidenhead walkway

British Prime Minister and local MP, Theresa May, visited Maidenhead Synagogue to open a major new development. The shul's walkway through Jewish history is a 45-metre stretch of paving, which has carved into it the different stages of Jewish history on successive paving stones. It starts with the Patriarchs and Matriarchs and covers other key moments over the next 4000 years including Mount Sinai, Babylon, the Maccabees, the Talmud and the presence of Jews in England.

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain said: "It is both a decorative addition and an educational tool, as it will form part of school Religious Education lessons and general talks with school-children and other visitors literally walking along the paving stones travelling from 1800 BCE to today."



General

Anti-Semitism: A survey of European Jews

As you may have read in the press, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is currently conducting a survey about anti-Semitism across Europe.

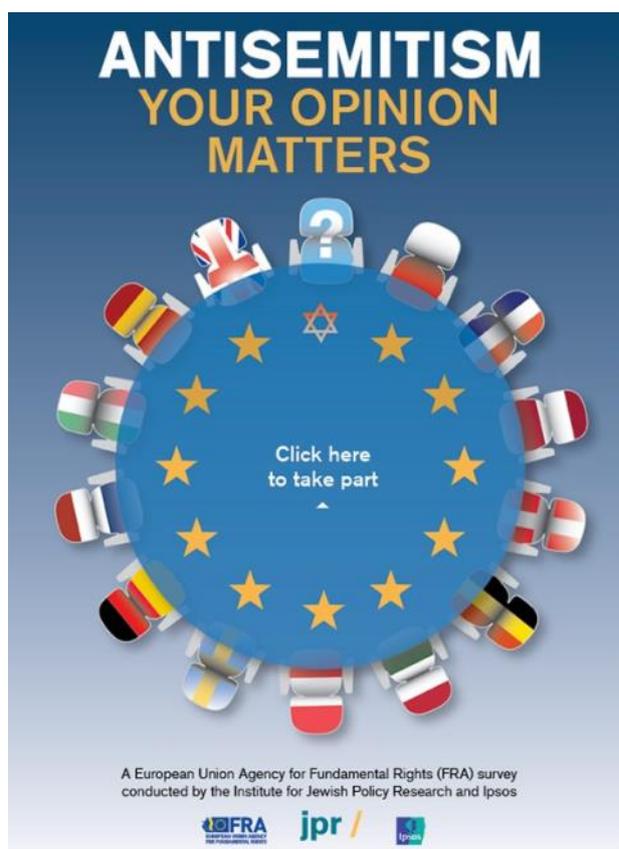
You may receive requests to complete surveys on a regular basis, but we urge you to act on this one in particular. The FRA intends to use the data to enable the European Union to develop its policies on combating anti-Semitism in the future, and it will be encouraging national governments and Jewish communities to do likewise.

This is a very important exercise, and it is vital that as many Jews as possible fill it in. We rarely have an opportunity to genuinely help tackle anti-Semitism and completing this survey is one small way you can play your part.

In addition to completing the survey yourself, please forward this link on to eligible Jewish friends, family members and colleagues to encourage them to participate too.

If you are involved in a Jewish organisation or group and can promote the survey among its members, we would also appreciate your help. Just note that in order to participate, respondents need to consider themselves to be Jewish, be at least 16 years-old, and currently live in one of the 13 participating countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom. The survey is available in all languages.

The FRA is eager to hear about the thoughts and experiences of people who live in Europe, consider themselves to be Jewish, and are aged 16 and over. If this applies to you, we would specifically like to



invite you to complete the survey by visiting [the website](#).

You can read more about the project by clicking [here](#). Thanks in advance for your help. Your opinion matters!

March of the Living

Members of both Progressive communities in Budapest, Bet Orim and Sim Shalom, joined thousands of people in the March of the Living in April to remember those who were murdered during the Holocaust in Budapest.

The event, which has taken place for the past 15 years, began at the "The Shoes on the Danube Bank" memorial on the Pest side, which honours the Jews who were killed by the ruling Arrow Cross Party militiamen during World War II.

People placed stones, candles and flowers at the memorial before beginning the march, which went across the Chain Bridge to Clark Adam Square on the Buda side.

Speakers warned of the dangers of discrimination and strengthening anti-Semitism as well as the importance of remembering and learning the lessons of the past.



Yosef Amrani, Israeli Ambassador in Budapest, emphasised the importance of remembrance, noting that it all began before Hungary's first anti-Jewish law of 1938, with fear, hatred and prejudice. More than 10,000 people participated in the event. Read the full article [here](#). – Miklós Gárdos

Sukkat Shalom commemorates the Shoah

The Edinburgh memorial service for victims of the Holocaust was well attended, despite the freezing weather. For many years now, Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation has organised this event at the Holocaust Memorial Stone in the Princes Street Garden and as usual, it was attended by the Lord and Lady Provost of the City of Edinburgh.

This year, for the first time, Sukkat Shalom and the Association of Jewish Refugees were asked to participate. Our founding chairman, Maurice Naftalin, read an extract from the writings of Rabbi Hugo Gryn z'l reminding us of the need to fight racism, intolerance, bigotry and all betrayals of humanity.

"Human rights are either the rights of all people or else they become a meaningless facade for a bankrupt conscience. Civil liberties are an empty

slogan unless they guarantee every citizen freedom of opportunity to work where their talents best suit them, to live wherever they may choose and to enjoy an equal partnership in the brotherhood – and sisterhood – of humanity."

As at the Passover Seder, there is an imperative to teach children these lessons from the past.

"Time is short, and the task is urgent. There is a choice. And we are not so much chosen as choosers."

Francoise Robertson spoke on behalf of the Association of Jewish Refugees, telling the moving story of her mother's flight from Nazi-occupied Belgium with her three-month old daughter.

The service concluded with the Memorial Prayer, *El Malei Rachamim* (Prayer for the souls of the departed),

for those who were murdered during the Holocaust, recited by Julian Goodman.



Yom Hashoah

A personal Yom Hashoah story

Thirty members and guests of the Hameln Jewish Community gathered in their sanctuary to commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom Hashoah, on April 12. Rachel Dohme welcomed the attendees to the special ceremony.

The memorial service began with Rebekka Dohme's recording of "Ani Ma'anim" (I believe). Her voice and the lyrics touched everyone's heart.

Rachel shared a personal family story, that of her Aunt Miriam, in German and Russian: "For me personally this day is of deep significance. My Aunt Miriam was one of the few Holocaust survivors released on April 15, 1945 from Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp. She was moved to a DP camp near Celle after the liberation."

Rachel read Miriam's story, which described her life from being rounded up in her hometown of Vilna in 1941 until her marriage a decade later. The congregants felt her pain when told about her daily life and survival in several concentration camps. This story of this one person made the loss felt by the Jewish



people and the whole world tangible. Miriam, who survived the horror of the Nazis and immigrated to America in 1950, was miraculously reunited with Rachel's family and married in 1951.

When she died last December at the age of 90, she left behind a son and daughter and two grandsons. We will all never forget her.

Six yellow candles were lit by six members, Polina Pelts, Maria Bilau, Aron Kaplan, Dieter Vogelhuber, Feana Engler and Mark Ovsievych, in memory of the Six Million murdered European Jews. – Rachel Dohme



Holocaust Survivor's Centre's Testimony Project

Are you a survivor of the Holocaust? Or do you know someone who is? If so, perhaps you or they might be

interested in recording your/their story as part of the Holocaust Survivor's Centre's Testimony Project.

The Testimony Project, which has now been in existence for more than 16 years, wants to speak to anyone who survived the Shoah, including people who came to Britain before the outbreak of the Second World War.

Interviews are carried out by a small, but dedicated, group of volunteers, who are trained and supervised. They usually take place at the interviewee's home. Liberal Judaism's Lesley Urbach helps to co-ordinate the scheme.

"These testimonies try to reflect the full and broad lifetime of the interviewee, giving a detailed description from early memories of childhood right up to the present day, encompassing the effect that the Holocaust has had on their life," Lesley said.

Please read the full article [here](#).



In memory of Rabbi Aaron Panken z”l

We are a proud, strong and supportive global Jewish family. On May 5, 2018, a leading and much loved member of our family – our beloved teacher, mentor, friend, visionary inspiration and partner, Rabbi Aaron D Panken, died tragically and prematurely in a plane crash.

Rabbi Panken served as the President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) since 2014. In addition to his many accomplishments, he was a stalwart and consistent supporter of the World Union. His travels took him around the world, and he always found time to visit our congregations.

Rabbi Panken touched many lives in a meaningful and impactful way. He encouraged his rabbinical



and cantorial students to explore new opportunities of serving Jewish communities in every part of the world.

His love and devotion to Israel ran deep, and is well known. He was extremely proud that he had the opportunity to ordain the 100th Israeli Reform rabbi in November 2017. It was a sign of his deep-held belief in raising up exceptional and learned leaders who would lead a more vibrant Reform/Progressive Judaism steeped in Jewish values and pluralism.

In tribute to Rabbi Panken, we encourage you to dedicate your prayers, learning and doing of good deeds to his memory and keep his family close in your hearts.

May his good name and good works be an abiding blessing to us all as we continue his legacy. *Zecher Tzadik Bracha* – Rabbi Daniel H Frelander, WUPJ President, Carole Sterling, WUPJ Chair

Read the full WUPJ tribute [here](#). Read the HUC-JIR tribute [here](#).

The EUPJ remembers Rabbi Aaron D Panken with fondness. Not only was he was a featured speaker at the London 2016 Biennial, but he was also a great friend to our many communities and visited them regularly. We share the pain of this loss with his family, friends, the WUPJ, HUC-JIR and the rest of the Progressive Jewish world.

Meaningful connections

The Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators, “Creating Meaningful Connections”, an intensive 10-day programme for educators from around the world, takes place from July 12-22.

Run by the WUPJ Center for Leadership Development and Education, it combines classroom and text study with site visits in Jerusalem and around Israel that bring the texts and ideas to life. Read more about it [here](#).