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INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND COMMITTEE 2014 ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MAY 13, 2015
24 IYYAR, 5775

RIO DE JANIERO, BRAZIL





TABLE OF CONTENTS

GREETINGS.....	5
REGIONS.....	6
AUSTRALIA, ASIA, NEW ZEALAND	6
EUROPE	9
FORMER SOVIET UNION	11
ISRAEL.....	15
LATIN AMERICA	17
CENTRAL AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN (UJCL)	21
NORTH AMERICA	22
SOUTH AFRICA.....	24
INTERNATIONAL OFFICE.....	27
ANITA SALTZ INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CENTER	27
NETZER OLAMI & TAMAR	29
MERCAZ SHIMSHON/BEIT SHMUEL	31
COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES.....	34
ADVOCACY.....	34
ASSETS.....	35
AUDIT & OVERSIGHT.....	37
EDUCATION	38
FINANCE	39
FSU.....	40
HUMAN RESOURCES.....	41
INVESTMENT & ENDOWMENT.....	42
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS	43
NOMINATIONS.....	44
NGO REPRESENTATIVES TO THE U.N.....	47
YAD B'YAD	49
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS.....	50
MISSION STATEMENT.....	52



Michael Grabiner, Chair
Rabbi Daniel Freeland, President

Dear Partners,

During 2014, our family of passionate, committed Progressive, Reform and Liberal Jews not only coped with a seemingly endless array of challenges, but simultaneously continued to grow and thrive. Perhaps, that is the true meaning of Jewish community: when political, social or economic woes unsettle our lives, our synagogue communities provide the stability and meaning that we crave.

As Danny completes his first six months as our President, Mike prepares to hand over the chairmanship of the WUPJ to Carole Sterling. Danny comes to us after 39 years at the North American Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). Mike is retiring from his position, having first served as Chair of the UK's Movement for Reform Judaism (MRJ), and then four years as the WUPJ's chair.

Both of us are proud of the WUPJ's accomplishments through these tumultuous years. Our WUPJ efforts in Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine continue, even as troops of one country invade another and the economy falters.

We now number close to 40 Progressive Jewish communities in lands where Judaism was forbidden just 25 years ago.

In addition, a new WUPJ-sponsored rabbinic training program will soon provide generations of Russian-speaking leaders to this community.

As financial agent for our IMPJ congregations and institutions in Israel, the WUPJ ensured that Jews worldwide are able to support the important work of these communities. The IMPJ now includes almost 60 congregations, and the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) continues to change the face of Israel, propelling Reform values into societal reality.

Even during the Gaza War, our movement provided aid and refuge to thousands of Israelis forced to flee their homes.

We will all be gathering in Rio at our 37th international convention, CONNECTIONS 2015. This is a time and place to celebrate the vibrancy of the Latin American progressive community, as well as Reform Judaism's unique ability to integrate the cultures in which Jews live into Judaism itself.

Our deepest appreciation goes to our local community for hosting us in this exciting city, and sharing their love of life - and of Judaism - with all of us.

It is our privilege to participate in leading the World Union from strength to strength. May we each find "Simcha, Soul and Solidarity" in Rio at CONNECTIONS 2015.

The reports in this compilation reflect the dynamism of our movement. Read them, and borrow ideas from them to bring back to your home communities.

Then, by all means, share our movement's mission, values and work around the Jewish world with your friends and colleagues.

B'simcha,

Rabbi Daniel Freeland
President, World Union for Progressive Judaism

Michael Grabiner
Chairman, World Union for Progressive Judaism



AUSTRALIA, ASIA, NEW ZEALAND UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM (UPJ)

Stephen Freeman, President, UPJ
Steve Denenberg, Executive Director, UPJ

One of the key activities of the past year has been a Strategic Planning exercise to review the current structure and operations of the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ). The recommendations now include a smaller central UPJ; the creation of regional UPJs with delegated responsibilities; an increased profile for the Moetzah; a more independent JRAAC; an autonomous and strengthened ARZA; and an independent UIA Progressive Trust.

Australian Reform Zionist Association (ARZA): The UPJ provides administrative support, enabling ARZA to continue its work of promoting Israel and Progressive values in the World Zionist movement.

Awards: Each year, the UPJ presents awards to outstanding and long-serving volunteers in our congregations, as well as to potential future leaders. These awards reflect the wonderful spirit of enthusiasm and dedication that permeates our congregations.

Centre for Living Judaism: Our partnership with the King David School (KDS) and Progressive Judaism Victoria (PJV) in maintaining the excellent Centre for Living Judaism (CLJ) has continued during 2014.

Congregations and affiliates: The overall range of activities and programs provided by congregations has continued at an amazing rate. We have been pleased to offer publicity and support for them via our regular email distributions and through special notification on our website.

Community representation: The UPJ and its affiliates are represented at every level of community leadership and involvement at state, federal, regional and international levels. In addition, we have been involved with numerous interfaith and lobbying groups, where members of our movement hold positions of leadership.

Conference 2014: The biennial conference theme *Ani v'Atah* ("You and I can change the world") was a perfect opportunity for people from across the region to meet the leadership of our world movement; to learn and leyn with like-minded people; and to celebrate our achievements and aspirations in the beautiful city of Adelaide.

Gatherings: Gatherings of UPJ presidents, executives and rabbis took place at the Leo Baeck Centre for Progressive Judaism in Melbourne in November 2013.

Leadership development: The excellent programs of the WUPJ's Anita Saltz Centre were again enjoyed by a number of people from our region, with our financial assistance.

New Congregations and groups: At the biennial conference in Adelaide, it was a pleasure to welcome three new congregations to the UPJ family: the Sunshine Coast Jewish Community; Kehillat Shanghai and the Jewish Community of Japan.

The Millim Institute for Progressive Jewish Learning: Rabbi Emeritus Fred Morgan AM has led the way in the development of an innovative institute for adult Jewish learning, commencing with two programs to equip lay leaders with the skills and knowledge required to lead Shabbat Services.

MAZON: Under the enthusiastic leadership of Rabbi Gary Robuck, MAZON – the Jewish Response to Hunger – has held a number of campaigns, including the annual food drive over the High Holydays. During the year, Mazon made grants to a number of worthy causes in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, as well as to an aged care facility in Mumbai, India.

Moetzah: The Council of Progressive Rabbis is a vital and integral part of the UPJ, reviewing religious practice and policy in order to remain relevant to our congregations via involvement in interfaith activities and social advocacy issues. It has been a pleasure to welcome Rabbi David Kunin from the Jewish Community of Japan (Tokyo) and we look forward to welcoming Rabbi Nathan Alfred as he assumes his position as Rabbi to the Singapore congregation in the near future.

We have also been pleased to assist with the placement of Rabbi Adi Cohen in Temple David, Perth following the completion of his contract in Wellington, New Zealand. Rabbi Kaminsky steps down from the position of Chairperson and we pay tribute to her dedication, patience and the spirit of partnership that she has championed over her two years in this position.

Mission to Poland & Israel: Further to the great success of the initial Mission to Poland and Israel in April 2012, the UPJ, ARZA, TBI and Emanuel Synagogue co-hosted a second trip in April 2014. Rabbi Steve Bernstein from the WUPJ's Anita Saltz Centre joined the group as and spiritual leader and helped make the trip the overwhelming success that it was. The next Mission will be in October 2015.

Music Network: Network Chairperson, Cantor Michel Laloum led a delegation of 15 people to Israel to participate in the biennial conference of the American Conference of Cantors – Guild of Temple Musicians in June 2014.

Netzer: The UPJ's support for Netzer has been maintained, including financial support and involvement in many aspects of the lives of UPJ congregations. We continue to be impressed by the dedication and talent of the Netzer leadership, and they are respected and valued members of the UPJ family. The Netzer outreach programs to smaller communities continue to be very well received and the state and federal camps become more popular each year.

Professional Development: We remain committed to maintaining and developing a high calibre of professionals to serve our community as rabbis, cantors and educators. We continue to encourage young people to attend the various programs provided by the WUPJ's Anita Saltz Centre, including financial assistance. In addition, we believe that the Milim Institute will greatly assist in the development of Jewish professionals and Jewish literacy.

Visitors: In February 2014, Rabbi Benjie Gruber visited Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Hong Kong as part of his trip as Guest Speaker for the UIA Progressive Trust appeal, with each function being an undeniable success.

Rabbinic Search & Mediation: As our congregations have developed, there have been a number of searches for new rabbis, cantors and educators. We have been delighted to offer assistance and support in each case. At the same time, there have been a number of disputes and differences of opinion within congregations, wherever possible, we have tried to offer positive and objective mediation and support.

Shlichut: We have continued the tradition of having the very highest calibre of community shlichim, and we are deeply appreciative of the support provided by Netzer Olami and the Zionist Federation of Australia to achieve this. NSW Community Shaliach, Yuval Nemirovsky and Victorian Community Shaliach, Nadav Shachmon have both done outstanding work for Netzer and the entire community.

Social Action & Advocacy: Our involvement in speaking out on a number of important issues, including: climate change, patrilineal descent, marriage equality, religious discrimination, the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. The plight of indigenous Australians and attempted genocide in various parts of the world continues.

UIA Progressive Trust: Thanks to the tireless work of volunteers and staff, we continue to send significant amounts each year to the WUPJ in Israel via the UIA Refugee Relief Fund, providing the financial means for absorption programs and freeing up resources to develop Progressive congregations across Israel. The success of the UIA Progressive Trust is a tribute to our donors who understand the special goals of the campaign, as well as to the dedicated volunteers.

World Union for Progressive Judaism: Our commitment to the work and mission of the WUPJ is undiminished. Philip Bliss is Vice-Chairman, Phyllis Dorey and Ian Samuel are on the Board. Immediate Past President and Treasurer David Robinson remains the official UPJ representative on the WUPJ Board. Our Honorary Secretary, Sharene Hambur was co-chair of the CONNECTIONS conference held in Jerusalem in May 2013 and former President, Phyllis Dorey is on the Planning Committee for CONNECTIONS 2015.

Conclusion: The UPJ's position in the region, within the community and in the world movement remains vital, even as we consider how to re-structure and increase the overall reach of Progressive Judaism across the Australia-New Zealand-Asia region. We look back with pride on what has been achieved and look ahead towards some significant changes to our organisation that will, hopefully, assist in the promotion and development of pluralistic Judaism in our region.

The Union for Progressive Judaism can be contacted by telephone on +61 2 9413 1282; via the website www.upj.org.au, or by email: upj@upj.org.au



EUROPE EUROPEAN UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM (EUPJ)

Ruth Cohen, Jeffery Rose, Life Presidents
Leslie Bergman, President
Miriam Kramer, Chairman

This report is being written just after the terrible events in France of early January 2015. In conjunction with our WUPJ colleagues, the EUPJ leadership sent messages of support and sympathy to our French communities. We are of course united in condemning any violence, particularly that of attempting to stifle free expression and aimed at specific ethnic groups. My fervent wish is that between now and when we gather in Rio de Janeiro, there will have been no further abominable acts committed in France or anywhere else.

In April, EUPJ held its Biennial Conference in Dresden. We knew it was an attractive city and that we would have an interesting and stimulating programme. We didn't anticipate that we would have to close registration because so many people wanted to attend. My personal thanks go to David Pollak, who chaired an excellent organising committee.

As part of my last report to CONNECTIONS 2013, I highlighted the generosity of Betty and Arthur Roswell. Their continued commitment to supporting Progressive Judaism in the countries of Eastern Europe as well as the emerging communities in Spain and Italy is a shining example of the truly worldwide nature of WUPJ. The Roswells' vision is truly remarkable and we continue to be very grateful for their understanding and support of the work we do.

Since CONNECTIONS 2013, we revised our constitution so that we are more in line with the WUPJ structure and to ensure that our organisation runs more smoothly. John Cohen, our honorary secretary, and Andrew Hart, our former honorary secretary and current legal adviser, did the hard work necessary to complete this project.

The European Beit Din (EBD) continues its work throughout Europe. In countries where there are not sufficient rabbis to constitute a Beit Din, our EBD – convened by Rabbi Jackie Tabick, chaired by Rabbi Reuven Bar-Ephraim and advised by Rabbi Andrew Goldstein – traveled or met in London to participate in this vital work. Each year, we have dozens of conversion candidates and the EBD's work ensures that the required standard is met; they act with equal measures of wisdom and compassion.

In my last report, I mentioned Community Connections, the group that works on twinning congregations in the Former Soviet Union with those in Europe, primarily in the UK. The part-time administrator retired in September. Since then, with the guidance of the chair of Community Connections, Rabbi Janet Darley, we have been discussing how to move the programme forward. It is my hope that by the time we convene in Rio, I will have some firm news about this.

In the EUPJ region, there are three rabbinic colleges: Leo Baeck College in London, Abraham Geiger College in Berlin/Potsdam and the Levisson Institute in Amsterdam. I am pleased to report that the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinic organisation covering North America, visited the Levisson Institute in January and after a rigorous academic inspection decided that the seminary's graduates, like those of Leo Baeck College and Abraham Geiger College, would be eligible for membership in CCAR.

In the past year, all three colleges have held ordination ceremonies for rabbis and – in the case of Geiger College – cantors.

The work of the EUPJ is varied. For example, with the assistance of Rabbi Joel Oseran, I have been involved in the formation of an Italian national association of our four communities there. This has involved a number of visits as well as countless emails and conversations. We are delighted that the communities are working together on this as well as creating a national website. Another aspect of EUPJ's work, much of it done out of necessity behind the scenes, is advising congregations in rabbinic searches and rabbis who are seeking appointments. It is always gratifying when we can help arrange a suitable match.

The EUPJ is steadfast in its determination to support communities in Hungary and Poland, which are struggling to gain recognition for Progressive Judaism in those countries. In Spain, the EUPJ has assisted communities to establish a nationwide programme for teaching Progressive Judaism that, in cooperation

with the European Beit Din, will enable participants to become members of our growing Spanish movement.

The officers of the EUPJ travel throughout our region. Last October, I travelled to Luxembourg to be present as Esch-sur-Alzette celebrated 50 years of communal life in their current building. In January, I was accompanied by EUPJ vice-chairman Stéphane Beder at the inaugural event to mark the 50th anniversary year of Beth Hillel in Brussels.

And now, some 'thank yous'. The Management Committee and Executive Board of EUPJ comprise a magnificent team. Arthur Buchman continues to produce an outstanding monthly newsletter. Our administrator Deborah Grabiner shows unstinting dedication and professionalism in what is, frankly, an impossible job. Rabbi Joel Oseran, despite being based in Jerusalem, has his finger so firmly on the European pulse, that our efforts become easier as a result. Last but certainly not least, our President Leslie Bergman continues to provide sound counsel, an extraordinary breadth and depth of vision, and uncompromising commitment of our movement.

Finally, an advance notice of the 2016 EUPJ Biennial Conference: it will be taking place **April 14-17 2016** in London. The year marks the 90th anniversary of the foundation of the WUPJ in London, so the event will be truly global in scope.

The European Union for Progressive Judaism offices are located at The Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY, UK. The telephone number is +44 (2) 20 8349 5651.

For more information about the EUPJ please visit our website at <http://www.eupj.org> or send us an email to administrator@eupj.org



Rabbinical College in Moscow:

In 2014, the process of opening a Rabbinical College in Moscow as a branch of Geiger Kolleg began. A delegation from Geiger, Dr. Anne Brenker and Prof. Admiel Kosman, travelled to Moscow in September and met with representatives of the Russian University of Humanities Prof. Pavel Shkarenko and Prof. Leonid Katsis, together with World Union staff: Alex Kagan, Rabbi Alexander Lyskovy and Rabbi Leonid Bimbat.

The productive discussion between Geiger Kolleg, RGGU and the World Union in Moscow concluded with a meeting with RGGU Rector, Prof. Yefim Pivovar, who endorsed the program.

The ultimate goal is to open the Moscow Rabbinical College in September 2015. The first stage of studies will continue for 4 years – the two first years in Moscow, the 3rd year in Israel and the 4th in Moscow.

At the end of this program, students will receive a BA. The MA and rabbinical study component of the program will take place in Germany, at Geiger and Potsdam and will result in an MA and rabbinic ordination.

Strategic Plan

During the year, Masha Sheinin created a questionnaire that was distributed to World Union lay leadership and professionals in the FSU and abroad. The results were collected, analyzed and the first draft of recommendations was distributed. The final version of the plan is being completed and will be published at the beginning of 2015.

Congregations

Despite the crisis in Ukraine resulting in economic and political ramifications in all our FSU communities, our congregations, youth activities, kindergartens, Sunday schools, seminars, and *chagim* programs, continued to operate successfully, offering members and the Jewish community at large a welcome respite from the current situation.

Some highlights of activities in our regions this year included:

Ukraine

During the year, a number of steps were taken to improve the security systems in all our Ukrainian congregations in response to the political crisis that began in November 2013. This initiative was possible thanks to a special fundraising campaign and the generosity of Reform congregations, Jewish organizations and individuals worldwide.

- **Kiev:** The HaTikvah Center is a center of Jewish life in the city, hosting a number of exhibitions and lectures that attract a large, diverse crowd.
- Rabbi Alex Dukhovny and Alex Gaydar were representatives of the Ukrainian Jewish Community, in a television series comprised of 25 programs on the national channel.
- A new collaboration with the Jewish Agency for day camps for ages 7-14 began in March. This is a new tool for revitalizing Jewish life, providing four days of stimulating activities for young children.
- Chanukah celebrations led by Rabbi Alex Dukhovny included performances by the children and Netzer youth. Another noteworthy event was the opening of the exhibition of well-known artist Herman Gold.
- **Odessa:** Rabbi Julia Gris was officially ordained at Leo Baeck College in June. Following the ordination, Rabbi Gris began her duties at Emanu El as the congregational rabbi. A special celebration in her honor took place at in December.
- **Lutsk:** The congregation in Lutsk established a project to find and document places in the Volyn region affected by the Holocaust, with the aim of restoring Jewish cemeteries.

- **Travelling Shabbatons in Ukraine:** This was a series of joint Shabbatons between Hatikvah and other Ukrainian Progressive congregations. In June, Hatikvah members travelled to Lutsk; Shabbat and Rosh Hashanah were celebrated in Khleminitsky in September and in November, Kiev members travelled to Poltava.
- **Interfaith:** Congregations in Lviv, Lutsk, Kiev and Khmelnytsky took part in interfaith dialogue throughout the year.

Belarus

- **Minsk:** "Beit Simcha" held five events led by Rabbi Gregory Abramovich for the High Holydays for over 250 participants. The annual Bar/Bat mitzvah celebration was held on Shabbat Zahor.
- 110 community members of Simcha, Sheket, Tamar, along with diplomats from Israel, Belgium, Kazakhstan and a delegation from Austria, celebrated Yom Yerushalim with a service followed by speeches and a toast with champagne, the same golden color as the walls of Jerusalem.
- The first Chanukah candle at Beit Simcha was lit with diplomats from Israel, Belgium and Germany. One of the highlights was the performance "Shalom Aleichem" created by artists of the Belarusian State Academic Musical Theater.
- **Lida:** The "Shalom" Congregation celebrated its 20th anniversary. The congregation is currently running a project, Jewish music as a means of interfaith dialogue involving other religious organizations in the city. The "Shalom" choir performed in Poland and Lithuania during the year.
- **Mogilev:** For the first time in 60 years, members "Keshet" were able to fulfill the commandment of hearing the shofar in the great hall of the former synagogue in Mogilev, currently the "Spartak" boxing club.

Russia

- **Moscow:** Two new projects were initiated in Moscow. One, 'Shulchan Orech' is a Jewish Culinary Project. The other, the initiative of Machon graduates, caters to young people ages 30-40 who wish to maintain contact with the community. They met during the year to discuss music, art and literature.
- Le Dor va Dor in Moscow held Rosh Hashanah celebrations September 24-25, led by Rabbi Alexander Lyskovoy and Rabbi Leonid Bimbat. 150 people took part in both events. Kol Nidre services were attended by 70 people, while 150 took part in the Yom Kippur services in the center on Saturday. Sukkot celebrations coincided with a family seminar, with over 60 participants. Another highlight during the holiday was a Bat Mitzvah held on Shabbat with over 100 participants.
- **St. Petersburg:** Over 400 people took part in the High Holyday celebrations at Shaarei Shalom, led by Rabbi Helena Rubinstein. The various celebrations were frequently televised on the central TV channels Russia-1 and Russian-Culture. The guest of honor was General Consul of Israel in St. Petersburg Michael Lotem. Additional guests included students of the Academy of Theatre.
- Shaarei Shalom took part in a day of global Jewish learning in St. Petersburg in November. This is the 5th year of this event, in which over 400 Jews from all over the world gather to learn together.
- **Lipetsk:** The Rosil Congregation continued to be a leader in interfaith dialogue, participating in regular panel discussions on tolerance during the year.
- **Chelyabinsk:** Purim celebrations were held at the Hava Nagila Congregation along with members and special guests: First Secretary of the Israeli Embassy (Shlomo Voskoboynik) and Russian Jewish Congress President (Yury Kanner)
- **Krasnodar:** The Makor Congregation marked Yom HiZikaron by dedicating the day to Nikolai Rappaport a soldier in the IDF and native of the city who was killed in Lebanon in 1998.

Crimea

- Due to political developments, Rabbi Michael Kapustin left his position as rabbi of the region. Rabbi Leonid Bimbat visits the congregations on a regular basis to provide spiritual support. Machon graduate Kira Grublite is working in Simferopol and serves this and the other Crimean congregations.
- A special fundraising campaign resulted in enough money raised to renovate the roof in Simferopol and improve security systems at our Crimean congregations. More funds are required to renovate Simferopol's synagogue.

Twinning and missions

- A delegation from the Atlanta Federation visited Beit Simcha in Minsk in October and met with staff and congregation members. The highlight of the visit was a community Bar Mitzvah. Atlanta representatives were impressed with the positive changes in Minsk made possible by a dedicated staff.
- Rabbi Alexander Dukhovny had a successful 3-week speaking tour in the USA, visiting congregations in New York, Pittsburgh, and Florida. He attended meetings with rabbis, rabbinic and cantorial students, professionals, and lay leaders of different congregations and Federations presenting updated information on the current situation, successes and challenges faced by the Reform Movement in the FSU and Ukraine. Rabbi Dukhovny also spoke about the great value of a united Jewish family, thanking everyone for the financial, social and moral support provided by the twinning Reform congregations, Federations, and individual donors. This visit raised awareness of the necessity to continue developing connections and support of FSU congregations.

Pesach in the FSU

- Over 5,200 people from all over the FSU came together to celebrate the Passover holiday in a variety of Reform Seders in our communities.

For the 12th year, our Pesach project, in conjunction with HUC, took place with eight rabbinic, cantorial and educational students who assisted our local staff in conducting 25 Seders in 11 communities in Belarus.

- Rabbi Leonid Bimbat and three Machon students travelled from Moscow to Crimea to assist in leading Seders in the region. A total of **580** people took part in a variety of Seders in Simferopol, Evpatoria, Feodosia, Kerch and Kirovograd

Netzer Winter, Summer Camps & Seminars

- The interregional summer camp program was held in Belarus at a facility called Lidia, outside of Minsk with four successful camp sessions. A total of 11 camps and seminars, day camps in Russia, Crimea and Ukraine were held with 806 participants.
- The 5th annual winter camp took place outside of Moscow in January with 101 people, 27 families with children ages 2-6, and 9 adolescents ages 14-17 who took part in a separate leadership camp. This was the first time a joint camp of this nature took place.
- The Special Needs Integration Camp took place outside of Moscow June 2-8, with 115 people taking part.
- Three leadership seminars supported by Sue and Jimmy Klau took place. Seminars in St Petersburg and Minsk attracted 35 participants from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. The third seminar in Minsk in October had 110 participants from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

Conferences and Festivals

- A successful interregional leadership seminar for FSU leadership took place at the end of October in Minsk with 115 participants. WUPJ leadership attending included WUPJ President, Rabbi Daniel Freeland, WUPJ VP Rabbi Joel Oseran, FSU Director Alex Kagan and Netzer Coordinator for FSU Rita Fruman. It is everyone's hope that such a seminar will take place every two years, if not more frequently.
- January marked the annual World Netzer Conference in Jerusalem with 35 participants, among them three Netzer coordinators from the FSU.
- The FSU movement played an active role in the *Limmud* conferences in Moscow and Vitebsk. The Reform presence was especially strong during prayers and lectures.
- Alex Kagan, Rabbi Helena Rubinstein, Alex Gaydar, and Irina Belskaia were FSU representatives at the EUPJ Conference in Dresden at the end of April. They updated participants about developments in the FSU and the various congregations.
- Over 1,000 people took part in the 20th annual Purimshpiel in Vitebsk. A joint Netzer-Jewish Agency group, the Netzer group from Minsk, and a Netzer group from Kiev competed. The team from Kiev made the biggest impression, with their emotional interpretation of the Purimshpiel embodying all the hurt, frustration and hope for a better future in their country. Kiev won the most prizes with three awards: best actor, judges' prize and audience favorite for best play.
- The 17th International Minsk Chanukah Festival of Short Films took place in December with 17 youth groups, eight of them from Netzer and the Reform movement. Netzer was very successful with Netzer Odessa winning the main prize, movie of the year; Netzer MASA Israel received the prize for best screenplay of the year, and Minsk Netzer won the prize for being the judge's favorite!

Machon – Institute for Modern Jewish Studies

- Igor Zinkov, a Machon program graduate, began the rabbinic program at Leo Baeck College.
- Eight students began their studies at the Machon in Moscow.
- The 10th annual 5-month MASA program in Israel began in September. The five participants studied Hebrew, attended lectures and become acquainted with different Israeli Reform institutions. It was once again recognized as one of the best MASA programs.

FSU Calendar

- Annual calendars for the year 2014-15/5774-5 were printed in Moscow and issued prior to Rosh Hashanah. The calendar is the product of the Le Dor va Dor Moscow Congregation "Kings" project. Led by Rabbi Alexander Lyskovoy, children and adults drew bible-themed pictures, took part in discussions, lectures and questions raised by some of the Bible's most famous stories. At the end of the project, pictures were professionally touched up by Anna Kogan, an artist currently living in Jerusalem, once a member of Shaarei Shalom in St. Petersburg.

In the busy year ahead, just as in years past, the FSU will benefit immeasurably from the guidance and support of FSU Committee Chair Anne Molloy. Everyone associated with the FSU's activities is deeply appreciative of Anne's dedication to the sacred task of enhancing the quality of Jewish life in the region.

For more information about our activities in the FSU, please contact us at debbie@wupj.org.il



ISRAEL ISRAEL MOVEMENT FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM (IMPJ)

Yaron Shavit, Chairperson, IMPJ (until June 2014)

Reuven Marko, Chairperson, IMPJ

Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Executive Director, IMPJ

This past Yom Kippur, a first-ever Reform Kol Nidreh service took place in the town of Kfar Yona, not far from Netanya. Some residents of this town were less than excited that a Reform service was to take place in the city and tried preventing them by sabotaging the lock of the pre-school where services were to take place. This did not deter our Kfar Yona activists and after breaking that lock, services commenced as planned. Since then, these activists have taken initial steps to form a new IMPJ congregation. They held successful Simchat Torah and Hanukah events, and are geared to become one of our newest community initiatives, joining 44 existing congregations and communities throughout Israel, from Rosh Pina, Carmiel and Nahariya in the North to Sha'ar Hanegev, Beer Sheva, Lotan and Yahel in the south.

This new initiative is yet another manifestation of our movement's extraordinary success since the adoption of the **"2020 Strategic Plan"** only **five years ago**. The stated objective of that plan was to increase our presence in Israel by 100%, from the 25 congregations that existed then to 50 by 2020, and to expand all aspects of our operations in the field of education.

At present, our endeavors in that field impact more than 100 schools, youth and young adult programs, as well as our pre-Army Mechina. But that's not all. We're making inroads into the heart of Israeli society with growing numbers of Reform life cycle events taking place in our synagogues, peoplehood programs, legal and advocacy work at IRAC, our conversion classes and other programs for new immigrants. We work with people in need all over the country through Keren BeKavod (our humanitarian relief arm), as well as the efforts of all IMPJ departments in ensuring Israel's democratic character through a variety of programs that are facilitating co-existence and understanding between all sectors of Israeli society. In short, our success in this field is unmatched. **As a result, we are on track to achieve the concrete objectives set in the strategic plan.**

At present, the Israel Reform Movement directly touches the lives of over a quarter million Israelis, with our rabbis, communities, and wide range of activities becoming more accessible all the time. This past summer, our impact throughout Israel enabled us to be a leading force in providing relief, respite, and resilience to thousands of residents of Israel's south during Operation Protective Edge. This campaign took full advantage of the professional staff and wonderful volunteers at our communities, institutions, and particularly at Keren BeKavod.

Our movement, congregations, rabbis, and lay leaders are committed to ensuring that every Israeli has access to pluralistic egalitarian Judaism near to where they live. We are now poised to expand activities and broaden our impact on Israeli society as well as on Reform Jewry worldwide.

To continue our momentum and growth, and to meet the growing demand for our activities throughout Israel, the Reform Movement must succeed in expanding its financial resources. At present, nearly all our budget is based on philanthropy. We continue to actively seek new avenues to Israeli government funding, coming on the heels of some of IRAC's brilliant legal successes, such as the landmark Rabbi Miri Gold Supreme Court decision and other important battles in the courts.

However, our financial needs are growing quickly and we must meet those challenges head-on. Ever expanding activities have quite literally come at a price and have impacted the IMPJ's cash flow. We take this opportunity to call upon you, our **leadership partners at the WUPJ, to join us in helping develop the capacity to meet those growing needs here in Israel, by focusing on ways to expand existing resources and develop new ones.**

We are therefore committed to the development of: **Additional Resources** to provide facilities for our new communities and for physically upgrading some of our older communities, whether through building, renovation, or rentals; **Additional Resources** to cover the growing costs of providing rabbis to the rapidly growing number of established and new congregations; **Additional Resources** to enable us to further expand our reach into educational institutions throughout Israel; **Additional Resources** to ensure the expansion of the crucial work of IRAC so that our movement's advocacy and legal activities continue to impact Israel's democratic and Jewish character positively; **Additional Resources** to enable us to build on the success of our pre-military Mechina in Jaffa and to create additional Mechinot and a variety of other programs for post high school youth and young adults prior to and after their military service; and **Additional resources** to create a peoplehood center that will ensure Liberal and Progressive congregations worldwide have IMPJ partners for the mutual benefit of all sides, using the Yachdav school twinning program and other existing programs for all ages.

To achieve all of this and more our budget will have to grow from roughly US\$5 million per annum at present to over US\$8 million by the year 2025. **The lay and professional leadership of the IMPJ is committed to developing new income generating projects that will provide resources above and beyond our ongoing philanthropic efforts.**

We call on you, our friends at the WUPJ, to become active participants and partners in these efforts to plant even more seeds for a successful Reform Judaism in Israel and to see those seeds grow into fruition.

This year, the IMPJ celebrated its jubilee anniversary. To mark this important event, on the last weekend of May 2014, some 1,200 Reform Israelis gathered at Kibbutz Shefayim for an unforgettable biennial that included worship, workshops, learning, good music, good food, good friends and much more. During that conference we also paid tribute to the founders of the Israeli Reform Movement including partners from the WUPJ who were instrumental in bringing us to where we are today.

We came away from that wonderful weekend filled with pride in what has already been done here in Israel and humbled by the knowledge of what has yet to be achieved.

The Israel Reform Movement is committed to continuing its mission to promote Israel's character as a Jewish and democratic state by nurturing the values of Jewish pluralism, religious tolerance, gender equality, and Tikun Olam.

It is with this firm belief in our ability to have a meaningful impact on Israeli society, and the Jewish people as a whole, that we invite you to join us in achieving those future goals.

The Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism is located at 13 King David Street, Jerusalem 94101, Israel, tel: +972 (0)2 620 3448, fax: +972 (0) 2 620 3446.

For more information please visit our website at <http://www.reform.org.il/Eng>, Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/IsraelReformJudaism> , or send us an email to: davidb@reform.org.il



LATIN AMERICA WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM IN LATIN AMERICA (WUPJ-LA)

Raul C. Gottlieb, President, Latin American Region (WUPJ-LA)
Miriam Vasserman, Vice-President
Sergio Napchan, Executive Director (until October 2014)
Karin Zingerevitz, Executive Director
Berta Zylberstajn, Executive Secretary

WUPJ-LA has a new president

Raul Cesar Gottlieb was brought in as new president of the WUPJ-LA for the 2014/2016 term. Previously, as a member of the management team, he contributed to the organization of regional events and in the areas of religion and communication. Raul is an engineer and businessman in the field of technology as well as an active member of the Associação Religiosa Israelita (ARI-RJ), in Rio de Janeiro. Raul is also director of the Devarim magazine whose main mission is to disseminate and discuss topics related to Progressive Judaism.

In addition, a new Regional Board of Directors and Management was elected to provide support for the work that will be developed by the organization.

WUPJ Latin America professionalizes leadership

The new executive director **Karin Cukierman Zingerevitz** began her tenure in November 2014. She lives in São Paulo with her family. She has ample experience working with São Paulo's communities, as well as kehilot in Latin America and the United States.

Karin is an engineer and designer and has a Master's Degree in Public Management from USC and another in Jewish Non-Profit Management from the HUC-JIR in Los Angeles. She also studied in various Jewish seminars throughout the world. Karin will continue the WUPJ's work with volunteers, professionals, all affiliated entities and their members.

Karin is dedicated to expanding and publicizing the projects and programs offered by our organization.

WUPJ-LA meeting shows strength of Progressive Judaism in the region

Close to one hundred people from various countries participated in the WUPJ-LA meeting held at the Sociedade Israelita Brasileira de Cultura e Beneficência - **SIBRA**, in Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) from August 17 to 19.

Besides Brazil, Jewish congregations and communities from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, the United States, Israel, Guatemala, Spain and Panama were represented.

Professor **Joshua Holo**, PhD and Dean of the Hebrew Union College and Rabbi **Joel Oseran**, vice-president of the WUPJ came from Los Angeles and Jerusalem respectively so as to attend the meeting.

The debates raised at the meeting brought to light topics relevant to Judaism in contemporary society. The activities were divided as such: the Rabbinical Kallah for rabbis and religious leaders; Lashir Benefesh for musicians and chazzanim; meetings for leaders; and the Mifgash for young people.

Besides stimulating the formation of a network to promote the effective exchange of experiences, projects and content, some of the topics discussed deserve a special mention: education, *tzedakah*, cult, integration, citizenship, community development, leadership and participation.

Rabbinical Kallah: The Fourth Regional Kallah meeting focused on rabbis educated at the Reform Movement's rabbinical schools. The rabbis studied, analyzed texts, deepened their knowledge and exchanged practical experiences. Professor Holo served as Scholar in Residence for the Kallah.

One of the new additions this year was the formation of a Council of Progressive Rabbis in Latin America, which will help to oversee all matters related to issues of Jewish status and provide a rabbinic voice in the region.

Lashir Benefesh: For the eighth time, this event focused on *Chazzanim*, *Schlichei Tzibur*, musicians and cantors. It was an opportunity to study new melodies and exchange stories experienced at respective congregations, specifically concerning teaching bar and bat mitzvah students. The host community was treated to a special recital as a gesture of appreciation.

Meeting of Leaders and Board of Directors: Organized for activists and leaders, this was an excellent opportunity for activists to meet with peers from other congregations and through this to exchange experiences, share best managerial practices and search for solutions to common problems.

New programs in Latin America - Mifgash (Young adults / leaders):

This program was organized for young adults ages 20 to 35. The first meeting was held in Argentina in 2013. With the theme “**Latin American Judaism: Traits, Characteristics and Relationship with Israel**”, a group representing Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Panama participated in a conference at the beginning of November at the Avigdor Colony in the Province of Entre Ríos in Argentina.

Mifgash-Beit Midrash Judaica: was jointly organized by the **Fundación Judaica** (Argentina) and **TaMaR** – WUPJ's young adult movement, and sponsored by the Fundación Judaica, TaMaR, WRJ (Women of Reform Judaism), WZO (World Zionist Organization) and WUPJ-LA.

The program was coordinated by Rabbi Karina Finkielstein, Adrian Mirchuk of the Fundación Judaica and Anabella Esperanza, TaMaR coordinator for Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. Miriam Vasserman participated via Skype.

Mifgash in Porto Alegre, Brazil, August 2014: One of the main objectives of the event was to produce synergies between the programs being developed for young people. The challenge faced by all congregations is to awaken the interest of the younger generation with regards to maintaining traditions and modernizing them when necessary, in such a way that makes sense in today's world.

The next meeting will take place during the **CONNECTIONS 2015** international conference of the WUPJ, in Rio de Janeiro.

Bergman Seminar – the strength of Jewish education:

The 2014 edition of “The Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators” brought together Jewish educators from the Reform, Progressive and Liberal movements with the theme “Creating meaningful connections”.

Communities throughout the world sent their representatives to participate in classes, reading of texts and visits to various sites where the content of the studies could be experienced firsthand. Eleven participants from nine different countries were present including Panama, Israel, Czech Republic, United States, South Africa, France, Argentina, Australia and Brazil. Ricardo Cavalcanti, from the ARI-RJ, Brazil and Karin Meischenguiser, from the Escuela Arlene Fern, of the Fundación Judaica, Argentina, participated in this year's edition.

Scholars in Residence:

This is a program that promotes seminars, lectures and meetings with leaders of the WUPJ and other institutions affiliated with Progressive Judaism. Since 2004, close to twenty scholars, especially from the USA, Israel and Europe, have come to Latin America. Visitors in 2014 were:

- **Professor Joshua Holo**, Ph. D. – Dean of the HUC-JIR Los Angeles, USA
- **Rabbi Joel Oseran** – Vice President, International Development, WUPJ, Israel
- **Rabbi Joseph Edelheit** - St. Cloud State University, MN, USA

Chumash Project- Translation of the Torah with a modern and accessible language.

The WUPJ-LA began the translation of Rabbi Gunther Plaut's *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* into Portuguese. This Chumash is composed of the five books of the Torah as well as the Haftarot and original liberal commentary and is used in almost 1000 congregations in the United States and around the world. This project was initiated by Rabbi Gunther Plaut as a way to offer an alternative commentary for Progressive, Reform, Liberal congregations and is a great success.

One of the main objectives of the WUPJ in supporting this translation into Portuguese is to provide the Brazilian Jewish community a book with interpretations in a modern, interesting, relevant and attractive language.

Yamim Noraim Project – finding rabbis and chazzanim for the High Holydays:

Finding and matching rabbis and chazzanim with Latin American congregations for the High Holydays takes much time and energy as well as luck.

We know that this time of year tends to be critical for many Jews who may only go to the synagogue during this period. As such, one heart-warming service can lead to heightened interest by some individuals who may have distanced themselves from Judaism or from the Jewish community.

It is worth mentioning that in some cases one positive experience has led some professionals, who had arrived from abroad to participate in the High Holydays, to remain active in local congregations throughout the year.

Leadership Institute / Training program for Rabbis in Latin America:

Our future depends on the creation and education of religious and educational leaders with strong ties and knowledge about the reality of Jewish life in Latin America. In order to reach this goal, we began planning and structuring a two-year program with the support of the local Liberal communities.

The program will train teachers, volunteer religious leaders and liturgical cantors. In addition, this initiative will train rabbinical candidates, who will go on to conclude their studies in partner schools such as the HUC-JIR.

We are excited about the potential to create a group of rabbis, cantors and other Latin American Jewish professionals to fill a growing need in our region.

Shirat Miriam / Rosh Chodesh program– CIP/ Women in Judaism/WRJ:

Founded in 1913 the Women of Reform Judaism (www.wrj.org) is dedicated to promoting and empowering the women of Reform Judaism. Rabbi Karina Finkielstein, from Fundación Judaica, Argentina, was one of the invited speakers at the WRJ centennial celebrations. She emphasized the advancement of the status of women in Judaism worldwide, but underscored the challenges faced by communities in Latin America to accept and recognize the presence of female religious leaders.

It was on this occasion that Dora Lucia Brenner, representing the Congregação Israelita Paulista – CIP/Brazil, officiated the first group meeting in Latin America that was affiliated with WRJ, a gathering that was coordinated by Ruth Bohm: Shirat Miriam of the CIP, São Paulo.

This group now meets monthly and is enabling women and men to study Judaism from a feminist perspective, enriching the Jewish narrative and promoting women's inclusion in the community and religious leadership.

The WRJ also has important functions such as facilitating fund subsidies for Rabbinic students, youth activities and social action projects in the region. We want to congratulate everyone behind the initiative and hope that this group will grow and become a leading example in the community.

Outreach Project:

The main objective of the program is to generate proposals and programs that allow us to respond in a religious, educational, cultural, social and organizational manner to the needs of the smaller Jewish community centers located far from the large cities.

In partnership with the Federação Israelita do Estado de São Paulo (FISESP) and Confederação Israelita do Brasil (Conib) this project intends to:

- Reinforce Jewish identity, establish and then strengthen ties with the community.
- Create a network that facilitates interaction, communication and support among the regional communities.
- Train educators and community leaders (professional and volunteer) in Latin America, providing tools to create and distribute knowledge in the region.
- Throughout 2015, we have planned numerous trips for rabbis, community leaders, chazzanim and volunteers to Brasília, Recife and other cities. This exchange of experiences is an important way to learn and grow together.

Devarim Magazine:

Published since 2006 and in its 26th issue, Devarim Magazine is dedicated to Brazilian-Jewish thinking and is financially sponsored by the ARI-RJ, WUPJ Latin America and a group of people who share the vision of spreading Brazilian, contemporary and religious Jewish culture.

The publication is distributed for free by mail to all those who are registered through the website, www.devarim.com.br.

Communications

Newsletter: sent regularly to approximately 12,000 subscribers throughout the world, in Portuguese, Spanish and English. Those interested in receiving the newsletter can sign-up by email at contato@wupj-latinamerica.org

Regional Website

Created to promote Progressive Judaism and all WUPJ-LA activities. Visit us at www.wupj-latinamerica.org

Fan page on Facebook

www.facebook.com/wupjamlat

Save the date!

CONNECTIONS 2015: May 13 to the 16, Rio de Janeiro

World Union for Progressive Judaism – Latin America (WUPJ-LA) is located at

Rua Botucatu, nº 572, Edifício Paulista Liberal Center, 6º andar, cj. 61
04023-061 São Paulo Brasil / Phone # +5511 3865 9492

For further information please visit our website at <http://wupj-latinamerica.org> or send us an email to: contato@wupj-latinamerica.org



CENTRAL AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN THE UNION OF JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (UJCL)

Phil Gelman, President
Ileanah Carazo, Executive Director

Following are the key activities of the Union of Jewish Congregations of Latin America and the Caribbean (UJCL) during 2014:

- **January 2014:** Congregation B'nei Israel of Costa Rica hosted the XIV UJCL conference, held from January 29 to February 1, 2014 in San Jose. The conference theme was "Israel and the Diaspora: Strengthening Our Ties." Costa Rican Vice-President Luis Liberman and Israeli Ambassador to Costa Rica Abraham Haddad spoke at the opening session. Featured speakers included Gil Hoffman, chief political correspondent of the Jerusalem Post, Peggy Cidor, member of the Board of Directors of Women of the Wall, and Dr. David Breakstone, Vice-Chairman of the World Zionist Organization.

In all, representatives of ten major regional or worldwide Jewish organizations participated in the conference. Alongside the main conference, the UJCL held its third annual Young Adults Encounter for participants ages 18-30 years old.

- **May 2014:** Gerardo Schwarz, president of *Comunidad Hebrea de Guadalajara*, represented the UJCL at the 5th Congress of *Keren Kayemet Lelsrael/Latin America*, 18-21 May, in Mexico City.
- **June 2014:** Therie de Sedas, a member of Congregation B'nei Israel (Costa Rica) participated in the International Nahum Goldman Fellowship, sponsored by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, 10-16 June in Uruguay.
- **August 2014:** Executive Director Ileanah Carazo represented the UJCL at the *Bnai Brith* Policy Forum, 30 August-2 September, in Panama.
- **December 2014:** The UJCL's sixth regional camp took place from December 22-28. Rabbi Gustavo Kraselnik and Congregation Kol Shearith Israel, Panama successfully organized the camp. In total, over 50 young people ages 8-16 enjoyed a week of fun, learning, and Jewish living.
- **Communications Department:** Publication of the monthly newsletter *Mifgash* was interrupted in July, as Fernando Lapiduz, spiritual leader of *Comunidad Israelita de El Salvador*, resumed his rabbinical studies. *Mifgash* will return in early 2015, under the direction of Executive Director Ileanah Carazo.

For more information about the Union of Jewish Congregations of Latin America and the Caribbean (UJCL), please visit our website: www.ujcl.org



NORTH AMERICA UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM (URJ)

Stephen Sacks, Chair, URJ
Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President, URJ

Under the leadership of Rabbi Rick Jacobs and his senior team, the Union for Reform Judaism took a leading role in conversations about several significant policy issues during the year:

- As the Presbyterian Church (USA) considered its stand on divesting from Israel, Rabbi Jacobs addressed the church's convention in Detroit.
- In conjunction with Israeli leaders, he continued to encourage a plan to allow egalitarian prayer at the Kotel.
- After J Street was denied admission to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Rabbi Jacobs undertook efforts to reform the governance structure of the organization.
- The RAC, Just Congregations, and Rabbis Organizing Rabbis spearheaded advocacy and policy initiatives on a wide range of issues including immigration reform, affordable housing, and the minimum wage.

In its efforts to serve Jews at various levels of engagement, the URJ:

- Launched The Tent, a collaborative workspace for Reform Jewish congregational leaders.
- Provided information, resources, and creative content to ReformJudaism.org (which had more than 1 million visitors in 2014). Through email subscriptions, the URJ also supplied news and pertinent content to the Weekly Update and Ten Minutes of Torah (which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year).

In the arena of **Engaging the Next Generation**:

- The URJ launched the '6 Points Sci-Tech Academy', which offers scientific and technological programming to 159 campers.
- The URJ opened 'Harlam Day Camp', with 127 campers enrolled.
- Despite violence and political unrest in the Middle East, record numbers of students attended 'Israel Experience' programs throughout Operation Protective Edge.
- In 2014, the URJ Added NFTY programming for 6th-8th graders.
- The URJ launched new 'Mitzvah Corps' programs in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Expanding Our Reach Initiatives included:

- Facilitating communities of practice, which brought groups of congregations together to learn, study, and experiment around a common theme, e.g., engaging early childhood families and reimaging financial support.
- Partnering with WRJ and the Grinspoon Foundation to provide PJ Library subscriptions to early childhood families through congregations in select areas across the country.
- Launching the Ruderman Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center to promote audacious hospitality within congregations

Efforts to strengthen ties with Israel included:

- Supporting the Jewish Federation of North America's (JFNA) community-wide "Stop the Sirens" campaign during the summer's violence.
- A Rosh Chodesh celebration with Women of the Wall attended by lay leaders who were visiting Israel during a board mission.
- The launch of Roswell Fellowships, which inspire, nurture, and engage our movement's young adults from North America, Israel, and Eastern Europe as leaders and change agents committed to global Jewish peoplehood, Reform Judaism, and Israel.
- Numerous position statements issued by Rabbi Rick Jacobs and other URJ leaders about bus segregation, egalitarian prayer at the Kotel, anti-Progressive leaders, and the upcoming WZO elections.

In addition, much of 2014 was devoted to an in-depth strategic planning process that has refocused the URJ's priorities on three specific (and overlapping) areas:

- Strengthening congregations.
- Audacious hospitality.
- Tikkun olam.

In 2015 and beyond, the URJ looks forward to strategically implementing an array of meaningful programs and initiatives around these priorities.

The Union for Reform Judaism is located at 633 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6778, USA, tel.: +1 212 650 4000. For more information please visit our website at <http://urj.org/about/contact/>, or send us an email to: urj@urj.org



SOUTH AFRICA SOUTH AFRICAN UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM (SAUPJ)

Steve Lurie, SAUPJ Chairperson (until June 2014)
Alvin Kushner, SAUPJ Chairperson

Our SAUPJ Biennial meeting took place in Cape Town during June 2014. This was the last event chaired by **Steve Lurie** who had served as our National Chairman for the past 10 years.

The following people were elected to our National Executive:

Alvin Kushner
(National Chairman)

Prof Antony Arkin
(National Vice-Chairman) East Coast and (Arzenu Chairman)

Linda Thorn
(Regional Chairperson) Western Cape

Lynton Travis
(Regional Chairperson) Gauteng. (**Reeva Forman** was subsequently appointed following emigration of **Lynton Travis**.)

Rabbi Greg Alexander
(Chairman) SA Association of Progressive Rabbis

Lewis Kaplan
(Chairman) SA Foundation for Progressive Judaism

Giddy Lief
(President) Women for Progressive Judaism-SA

Kendyll Jacobson
(Mazkir) Netzer South Africa

Leah Livni
(Chairperson) SA Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity

Hayley Brown
(Administrator)

The year marked the retirement of two of our rabbis in the Gauteng Region: Rabbi Robert Ash and Rabbi Robert Jacobs. They were succeeded by Rabbi Sa'ar Shaked and Rabbi Adrian Schell respectively.

Our 2014 highlight was the ordination of Rabbi Julia Margolis, the first female Rabbi in South Africa. We were honoured to have been visited by Rabbi Joel Oseran, Miriam Kramer as well as Rabbi Shoshana Boyd Gelfand. Rabbi Shoshanna was the keynote speaker at the annual Rabbi Sherman Memorial Lecture.

This year, the Cape Town Progressive Jewish Congregation reached its 70th year. This event was celebrated at a well-attended function at a unique beach club venue in the Cape Town harbor.

Temple Beit Emanuel, Johannesburg celebrated their 60th year. This happy occasion was feted at a lavish gala dinner that was held at the synagogue venue. An eye catching Jubilee publication was distributed to mark the occasion.

We also saw Temple Israel, Hillbrow – our mother synagogue in Johannesburg – honoured with the prestigious status of being declared a National Heritage Site. A plaque was presented and unveiled during November. Subsequently, a dedication ceremony was attended by congregation members and civic dignitaries.

Our Johannesburg synagogues have, in spite of strong leadership, not experienced any significant growth during the past year. This is mainly due to the strong and active Orthodox community in the region. The need for a pro-active membership recruitment campaign is well recognised. In the near future, more will be done in that regard. During the past year, the Johannesburg Progressive community has no Netzer Shaliach but has made an effort to ensure that Netzer is active.

The size of the Cape Town community has remained constant, with just under 1000 families (20% of Cape Town's Jews) attending our three Shuls. Efforts are being made to upgrade Shuls where needed and to encourage youth participation. High Holydays and Friday night services are relatively well attended. Numerous *shiurim* as well as other communal activities are also received enthusiastically. Education, including Lishma, is prioritised. The annual Jews-by-Choice classes all have been well attended.

The East Coast has a smaller Jewish Community than the other regions. The large, impressive, but obsolete Durban synagogue building has been sold and a new site has been acquired to build a Shul that will be more appropriate to the current size and needs of the Progressive community. The Durban Progressive congregation prides itself on the establishment by Durban's Sisterhood of a hospice at Mavela – the award-winning creche and education centre. In addition, the community received a visit by the Premier of Kwazulu Natal, Durban's Mayor, and the Catholic cardinal to Durban's Temple David, which sometimes serves as a centre of religious outreach.

I had the pleasure of visiting Temple Israel, Port Elizabeth (800 km from Cape Town) together with Rabbi Richard Newman, for a Shabbaton during November. What I found was a well organised, happy community. Members are particularly involved in ongoing community projects in the townships. In the future, we hope to visit this community from time to time.

We have a small but committed congregation in East London. I understand that the breaking of the fast function at the conclusion of Yom Kippur in East London always attracts the entire community. However, the smaller congregations need our support. I hope to visit each of them as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Netzer is active but there is a need for wider youth participation. The youth movement had a very successful annual summer camp in Simon's Town, 30 km south of Cape Town, which was attended by members from throughout South Africa.

Women for Progressive Judaism (formally the Sisterhood) WPJ has been active in all of our regions. They have recently held their local AGMs and have some new, highly qualified people in positions of management.

Regarding SACRED, the South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity, 2014's highlight was an inter-religious event that was held at the Women's Jail at Johannesburg's Constitution Hill. SACRED presented a programme titled "The Role of Women in Religious Leadership." Representatives of the Protestant and Baha'i faiths, along with Cape Town's Open Mosque addressed the meeting, together with Rabbi Julia Margolis. The meeting was ably chaired by Reeva Forman.

On the downside, we had a handful of vocal members who did not support Israel in the recent Israel-Palestinian conflict. As some of them are well known members in leadership positions, the media elected to misconstrue their statements as representing the views of our Progressive movement. We had to counter the disinformation through radio interviews and articles in the Jewish Report as well as other media. After finally putting in paid notices in the media and addressing Zionist Federation meetings in our different regions, I do believe that we made the Progressive Movement's support for the Zionist enterprise clear.

The SAUPJ's running cost is totally dependent on a contribution programme based on small amounts donated by our communities' members. We are no longer subsidised for shortfalls as we were in the past. Our vision remains clear: to provide the Progressive Movement with more exposure and undertake various projects to that end.

Regrettably, funding of the SAUPJ is limited, so many of our good intentions will have to be put on hold until we can strengthen our financial position.

We wish to express our appreciation to all our volunteers who serve our community, whether within or outside of the various committees.

Six of our ten South African synagogues have their own rabbis while other congregations have to depend on our many capable volunteers, who willingly serve as lay readers, run services and occasionally even officiate at lifecycle events.

We cannot function as a South African Progressive community without these dedicated people.

The SAUPJ is located at PO Box 1190, Sandton 2140, South Africa, tel: +27 11 646 7903 fax: +27 11 646 7904

For more information about the SAUPJ please visit our website at: www.saupj.org.za, or send an email to saupj@worldonline.co.za



Rabbi Steve Burnstein, Director

Overview:

The educational arm of the WUPJ, the Saltz Center is recognized for delivering exceptional, high quality educational programs. Specifically, we organize and manage perennial seminars in Israel (subsidized and sponsored) and outreach seminars in Progressive Jewish communities outside of Israel. In addition, we offer web based educational content; distance learning programs such as the "Torah from Around the World" initiative; and programmatic content provision to WUPJ affiliates, regions, and other audiences.

During 2014, the Saltz Center held five Israel seminars in addition to multiple programs abroad including in Poland and Hungary. We facilitated workshops with a number of strategic partners including the American Conference of Cantors, NETZER, Tamar, Maram (Israeli Reform Rabbinic Association), the Reconstructionist Rabbinic Association, and Truah. We also held several Kabbalat Shabbat programs and a number of webinars.

Seminars in Israel:

In January, the **Roswell Social Justice Seminar** was a tremendous success, and an example of cooperation with the larger Reform community as we worked closely with the Israel Religious Action Center. The seminar focused on a variety of issues and challenges in Israeli society including ecology, coexistence, foreign workers, refugees, gender segregation, and pluralism. We examined texts providing a Jewish framework before heading out to meet individuals and organizations operating in the field. Then, we explored how to enhance relevant initiatives that are addressing these same issues in the home communities of the participants. Betty and Arthur Roswell, longtime supporters of Progressive Jewish causes, generously sponsor the Roswell Social Justice Seminar, for which we are extremely grateful.

In February, 24 Reform Jewish leaders from twelve different countries joined the **Beutel Seminar for Progressive Jewish Leadership** for ten days of grappling with critical issues facing their own communities, Israel and the Jewish People. This year's program included sessions examining the lifecycle of a congregation; understanding strategic planning; analyzing personal leadership qualities; and addressing specific issues facing our communities.

One participant remarked "the seminar was a unique blend of leadership development; connection with community leaders in progressive Judaism from around the world; and insight into the issues facing Israel today." The Beutel Seminar is designed to empower participants and strengthen them as individuals as well as their communities and the WUPJ. We extend our special appreciation to Austin and Nani Beutel and their friends for their dedication to and investment in the Jewish leadership.

In July, participants in this year's **Bergman Seminar for Jewish Educators** received and gave much more than they expected. It was no surprise that they met with innovative educators and cutting-edge projects while exploring how to enhance their own communities. However, being in Israel during Operation Protective Edge added unforeseen meaning to the experience. Participants learned about the resilience, courage, compassion and strength of Israelis – and themselves.

The program included encounters with some of the top leaders in Jewish education. One participant remarked that the Bergman Seminar "has been my single most valuable experience in 25 years as a Jewish educator." The Bergman brothers sponsor the Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators: Stanley, a longtime supporter of Progressive Jewish causes, and Leslie, president of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ). We would like to express our deep appreciation for their support.

Also in July, twenty-five members of the **Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association** came to Israel for an intensive eight-day seminar: deep, challenging learning combined with bonding in stairwells and bomb shelters as they struggled with the realities of life in the Jewish State. The seminar included study sessions with members of the Israeli Reform Rabbinic Association who joined the RRA for a panel discussion about making Judaism meaningful, leading IMPJ professionals, Member of Knesset Ruth Calderon and WUPJ leadership. Together, they explored possibilities for increased collaboration and connection with the WUPJ and our communities around the world.

In April, the Saltz Center assisted the UPJ (Australia, Asia and New Zealand) in running a **Poland-Israel Mission**. The group wept at Auschwitz, Birkenau, Belzec and Majdanek; were shaken at the defilement of holy Jewish religious objects; physically, emotionally and spiritually overwhelmed at the piles of shoes,

eyeglasses, clothing and ash. In addition, they were inspired by the people they met including members of local Progressive Jewish Communities Bet Warszawa and Beit Krakow, who shared their stories of rebuilding a vibrant Progressive Jewish Community in the shadows of the Holocaust. In Israel, participants continued to be inspired, encountering programs and leaders of the IMPJ, IRAC, and Mechina (army preparatory program).

The entire mission was professionally run and organized by group leader Sandy Hollis, in cooperation with the Saltz Center of the WUPJ. The program was sponsored by the Australia Union for Progressive Judaism, the Australian Reform Zionist Association, Emmanuel Synagogue and Temple Beth Israel.

Saltz online:

In addition to our ongoing "Torah from Around the World", this year we offered several **webinars** that averaged 100 participants each. Moreover, we continue to use our Saltz Center Facebook page as a tool to more effectively communicate with our alumni and others.

Educational content provision:

In addition to acknowledging the importance of creating new programs and initiatives, we continued to offer educational workshops, sessions, day programs and lectures for various educational programs, community visits and tours to Israel. These are aimed at augmenting and improving the product, the various tour providers offer their groups by supplying an added value: educational reform content that is tailor made to a general program need.

The center also provided educational content and programs to the WUPJ's international youth movement, Netzer Olami, as well as the WUPJ's FSU department's Machon Leadership in Israel program, Noar Hadash, HUC student groups, the American Conference of Cantors and various visiting tour groups.

The Saltz International Education Center is located at 6 Shama Street, Jerusalem 94101

Tel: +972-2-620 3622, fax: +972 2 620 3525

For more information about the Saltz Center, please visit our Web site at: <http://www.saltz-center.org> or send an email to: saltz@wupj.org.il



Maoz Haviv, Director

Netzer Olami and TaMaR – our young adult organization - reach out to youth and young adult's ages 10 to 35. We offer Reform/Progressive educational activities to youth right when their Jewish identities are being formed. Through our summer and winter camps, weekend seminars, trips (including trips to Israel), local and regional activities, and the highly successful Gap Year in Israel program (Shnat Netzer), we focus on strengthening Jewish identity, Zionism, and Progressive Judaism.

Where do we operate?

Today, Netzer and TaMaR are active in 20 countries throughout the seven World Union regions: Europe (Britain, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, The Czech Republic, and Poland); FSU (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia); North America (USA and Canada); South and Central America (Panama, Brazil, Argentina and Chile); South Africa; Australasia (China and Australia) and Israel.

Some activities are local and others – like the highly successful TaMaR weekend seminars – are regional, bringing participants from several countries to one location for well-planned activities that offer high level content.

Who runs this ongoing operation?

Each *snif* (branch) is run by a locally elected team, sometimes with the support of a director appointed by the local community. These branches are supported by the central youth movement office in Jerusalem which includes: the Netzer Mazkir; Chinuch/Education worker; Shnat Director; Etgar coordinator; Spanish Speaking Desk coordinator and FSU coordinator; and Administrator. Additional staff includes Shnat and Etgar madrichim.

Shlichim (Emissaries):

In addition to the valuable work carried out by the Netzer staffers, we send Shlichim (emissaries) from Israel to serve in various communities around the world.

Today, Netzer's Shlichim operate in Australia, China, South Africa and Holland. In 2015, we hope to offer Shlichim to Netzer Germany and Johannesburg, South Africa.

Netzer Olami Veida:

An annual weeklong gathering in Jerusalem that serves as a forum for discussions on movement structure, policy and programming, worship services, field trips, and hands-on Tikkun Olam activities. Each *veida* focuses on a Zionist/Progressive theme, leading the young adults on an amazing cultural and spiritual journey, and exposing them to different aspects of Israeli society. The 2014 *Veida Olami* was a big success, with delegates from 14 countries attending and across the board positive feedback. It was prepared by the Netzer Olami staff and addressed the issues of living life under the constant threat of bombardment. The itinerary included visits and meetings with Israelis living in communities near the Gaza strip.

Shnat Netzer:

Shnat Netzer (Netzer's gap-year program in Israel) is an eight-ten month program, offering participants leadership training, high quality educational workshops, opportunities to immerse themselves in Israeli society and actively practice communal life, combined with Tikkun Olam and the values of Reform Judaism. Our gap year is a success and is recognized as a MASA sponsored program. The graduates of this program can be found in Progressive communities around the world, including on Progressive *Kibbutzim* and *kehillot* throughout Israel. The contribution of these Shnat Netzer graduates to their communities - as rabbis, educators, community leaders, teachers, and active synagogue members - is substantial.

For the past 13 years, we have also been running a MASA sponsored program for participants in the FSU Machon project who spend a semester in Israel, studying, building a community, gaining leadership skills, and immersing themselves in Israeli culture

During 2014 – 2015, close to 50 movement graduates participated in both programs – over 40 in the English-language Shnat and five in Masa of the FSU.

One of the movement's outstanding successes took place during the recent Gaza War. Throughout the conflict, some 300-movement members from Britain and all of our Southern Australian Shnatties followed through on their plans to arrive in Israel. Of course, we rapidly implemented needed changes to the programs to ensure participants' safety. All of the participants completed their stay in the country despite the war. Of course, Netzer expressed its appreciation, both to the participants as well as to their parents.

TaMaR

Tnuat Magshimim Reformit (TaMaR) is an international movement of Progressive Jewish Young Adults, ages 20 to 35, mostly graduates of Netzer. TaMaR aims to strengthen Reform Jewish identity. The main values TaMaR stands for are:

- **Am V'Medinat Israel (The People and Land of Israel):** The centrality of Israel to the Jewish identity.
- **Progressive Jewish Community:** Frameworks that are warm, inclusive, responsible and connected - enabling each member to be part of Progressive Jewish life.
- **Chinuch (education):** Facilitating educational opportunities for members related to Israel, Progressive Judaism and leadership training.
- **Tikkun Olam:** The responsibility of each member to Repair the World.

During 2014 – 2015, major gatherings and activities took place in Western and Eastern Europe. Specifically, regional meetings were held in Berlin (Germany), Krakow (Poland), Minsk (Belarus), Porto Alegre (Brazil) and Israel.

We see Netzer and TaMaR as the future of our movement and we are proud to share these significant moments with you.

The Netzer and TaMaR headquarters are located at 13 King David Street, Jerusalem 94101, Israel, tel: +972 (0)2 620 3510, fax: +972 (0)2 620 3511.

For more information please visit the website at: www.netzerolami.org/Eng, Netzer Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/netzer.olami/> and TaMaR Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/tamar.olami/> or send an email to: office.netzerolami@wupj.org.il



Ruth Kaplan, Manager
Shai Pinto, VP and COO

2014 was a challenging year. It had begun with great expectations, but changed at midyear with the beginning of Operation Protective Edge. Nevertheless, Mercaz Shimshon/Beit Shmuel (MS/BS) hosted approximately 110,000 visitors during 2014; 36,000 people enjoyed and participated in our cultural and educational programs; 25,000 visited Jerusalem and stayed at BS/MS Hotel & Guesthouse and 50,000 celebrated events and participated in seminars or conventions.

Culture Department

The MS/BS Culture Department staff continued to develop creative programs, courses on various topics, Jerusalem tours (*siyurim*) and theatre shows, all focusing on high quality, multidisciplinary areas of study, Reform Judaism values and Pluralism. We continued to be a major address for Reform Jewish celebrations in Jerusalem, using the Jewish and Israeli holidays as focal points for communal activities.

The "**Tanach of the Chagim**" program included events during the *chagim* that created a multi-faceted Jewish communal experience – a combination of lectures, educational walks and performances.

- a. *Tu B'Shvat* was celebrated with tree planting activities and a ceremony for staff.
- b. *Purim* activities included family walks and "*Midrash Mischakim*" with a young theatre group, learning midrashim, putting on costumes and drinking wine.
- c. *Pesach* was marked with our traditional and successful "*Charoset tours*" program, as well as with a special Pesach lecture titled "Remember in Order to be Able to Forget" that described the uniqueness and meaning of the Seder ceremony.
- d. *Tikkun Leil Shavuot* was held in the Hirsch Theatre, with a musical performance by Alma Zohar combined with a conversation with the Raba Mira Regev from HUC. The successful performance was followed by a special walking tour in Jerusalem, as well as *chevruta* learning.
- e. *Tu B'Av* was marked with a special walking tour.
- f. Our *Rosh Hashanah* and *Chagei Tishrei* activities offered a lecture on the topics of synagogue music and *Chazanut* and of course our traditional family "*Slichot*" educational tours. Succoth was also marked with family "*Arbaat Haminim*" walks.
- g. *Chanukah* events included a "*Midrash – Seret*", a full screen movie followed by a lecture on the topic of heroism and a wide array of "*Chanukia walks*".

Educational Courses

This department offered almost 575 participants three full semesters of various courses centered on Jewish and Israeli learning, as well as over 300 participants who took part in one-time lectures.

Our spring semester had 262 members, the fall semester had 245 members and the summer semester hosted 66 regular members. In addition, we welcomed 130 participants in the spring semester, 150 participants in the fall semester and 36 participants in the summer semester to our one-time lectures. Course topics continued to focus on Jewish and Israeli studies, along with interdisciplinary issues such as literature, art, philosophy, architecture, etc.

Course highlights included "The Double Mirror," which analyzed the portrayal of biblical characters in Jewish writings as well as Christian texts; "Open Doors" explored the great trials of history; "A Family Story" delved into the lives of families in Hebrew literature and "Arabic for Beginners" provided a comprehensive overview of the language.

Moreover, the department tailor made a Jewish study weekend for future diplomats of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The sessions included studies of Shabbat, Jewish holidays and ceremonies, Jewish prayers and various Jewish denominations. Reform rabbis and speakers gave the lectures. The weekend included walking tours and accommodation at the Beit Shmuel Hotel & Guesthouse.

Educational Walks (*Siyurim*)

Our educational walks and trips are a brand name in this field and a market leader in educational Reform content. Overall. The *siyurim* revolve mostly around the rainbow of cultures, religions and lifestyles in Jerusalem and Israel. This year, the department developed a new series of walks emphasizing several topics.

We offered many tours and eventually, after many cancelations due to Operation Protective Edge, there were 148 "Hoveret tours" offered to the public, with 3651 participants, and 102 private group tours with 3585 participants. All participants enjoyed a professional guided tour.

Some examples of the trips we organized: a unique tour to the "Herodion"; a special guided tour of "Yad Vashem" on Holocaust Memorial Day; for families, we provided "Purim Shpil" as well as Passover and Pascha walks; "Light Festival" tours; a series of political debates; an archeological tour near Jaffa gate; specialized walks for Shavuot through Jerusalem; our "Slichot" and "Sukkoth" tours during the High Holiday season; "Little Chic Museums in Jerusalem"; "The Desert of the Holy City"; "Chanukiot walks" and more.

Our cultural activities were seriously affected by Operation Protective Edge.

From the beginning of July, we had to cancel all walks that were planned in the Old City and east Jerusalem. We managed to shift some of these tours to west Jerusalem and even offered tours to areas outside of Jerusalem (such as Jaffa and Tel-Aviv), but an adverse impact was felt nonetheless

Even December, which is the peak season of our *siyurim*, experienced a 50% decrease compared to the same period the previous year.

Theater and Performances

The theater continues to operate as a hired venue for various performances and this year we added a main activity, a new cinema for Jerusalem at Beit Shmuel.

We are proud of our children performances and plays, which are by now a known and requested brand in Jerusalem. These five plays from various leading theatres are carefully chosen by us and are shown to a full house auditorium of children and parents.

We continued the highly regarded "Children Creating Shabbat" series, providing quality Jewish activities for families on Shabbat. Each month, the workshop focused on a different subject, based on the time of year and relevant holidays.

The "Orlando Cinema Beit Shmuel" opened its doors in September and had an official opening gala in January 2015. The cinema operates seven days a week, whenever the theatre is not reserved for outside private clients.

Our daily work includes deepening our relationships with other cultural organizations in Jerusalem as well as with the Jerusalem municipality's cultural department

We continued the tradition of hosting top cultural events, such as the "Israel Festival", "Oud Festival", "Jerusalem Festival of Arts", "Hamshushalayim" cultural events for tourists, a sell-out "Stand up and Laugh" comedy series and the year-end school performances of dance schools.

During most of July and August, the theatre was not active due to Operation Protective Edge.

Overall, we hosted over **28,000 people** who enjoyed the above cultural activities.

Art Gallery

MS/BS hosted a range of lobby exhibitions by local artists throughout the year. These exhibitions, planned by our volunteer curator, changed every few weeks and adorned our theatre lobby and entrance hall.

We are thinking of expanding the art exhibition area to the fourth floor lobby as well.

The Hotel

At the beginning of 2014, we completed a series of minor renovations to the guesthouse rooms. As a result, we were able to slightly increase the rates for these rooms (by 5%). We also increased hotel room rates by 10%, beginning in March. Our main strength in the rooms division and hospitality department is our prime location and intimate service. Our aim is to accommodate groups or low budget guests in the guesthouse and foreign or Israeli individuals paying rack rates in our hotel rooms.

The first half of the year was promising. However, in late June we started to receive cancelations. IN addition, some groups reduced their amount of reserved.

During July and August, we hosted, either free of charge or at a 50% reduction depending on circumstances, many families from the south of Israel who could no longer stay in their homes due to the security situation.

Average occupancy for 2014 was 60% (2% less than in 2013). The hotel's average occupancy was 62% (2% less than in 2013) and the guesthouse's average occupancy was 59% (8% less than in 2013). The total average rate was 6% higher than in 2013. Approximately 80% of our guests were tourists while the remaining 20% were Israelis.

The total room revenue for 2014 showed an increase of 1.5% from the total room revenue in 2013.

Marketing of the hotel & guesthouse is done mainly through online resources for individuals and a strong network of travel agents for group reservations.

We continued to develop educational and recreational activities for our hotel guests. For example, we made use of programs organized and managed by the World Union's Anita Saltz International Education Center, for which MS/BS is a base of operations.

During the year, we continued to serve as a home for Reform groups from around the world, and hosted World Union-related delegations, including the Netzer *veida* and our very own Beutel Leadership seminar and Bergman Educators seminar.

This year, we implemented a questionnaire for hotel guests, called "Howazit", which enables us to check the level of satisfaction of our guests and to reply immediately with a personal mail from the General Manager. It is a very user-friendly tool, which appears on the guest's smart phone after checkout.

We continued to host food and clothing packing days for the *chagim*, organized by Keren B'Kavod – the humanitarian arm of our movement in Israel.

The hotel was part of the Jerusalem Hotels Authority summer and winter campaign for Israelis that included major exposure in press releases, newspaper ads and more.

Events

Blaustein Hall and the Beit Shmuel patio continue to be prime locations for Jewish family celebrations, although this department was adversely influenced by the worsening security situation during the year as families from around the world decided to cancel or delay their visits to Israel.

MS/BS continues to play a role in the lives of very many Israeli families in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas, by way of family *simchas*, group events or special conferences.

General

MS/BS website is daily updated and optimized and our Facebook page posts news and developments related to current activities. We wish to increase virtual marketing next year and implement an upgraded version of the hotel's software program in order to enable on-line reservations.

MS/BS continues to deal with outstanding debts to outsourced maintenance companies. Although we had planned to pay off these remaining liabilities in 2014, we were not able to do so because of the very difficult year for the Israeli tourism industry in general.

We aim to have all remaining debts paid off by midyear 2015.

Nevertheless, we closed this challenging year with a small profit and the development of a variety of new compelling content.

MS/BS is located at 6 Shama Street, Jerusalem 9410806, tel: +972 2 620 3455

For more information about MS/BS please visit our Web site at: www.beitshmuel.com Reservations can be made online or by contacting our reservation desk at +972 2 620 3403



Dr. Philip Bliss, Chair
Gidon Ben-Zvi, Staff

2014 was depressingly similar to the previous year when bitter fighting around the Middle East resulted in thousands of deaths and millions displaced. Racism and anti-Semitism are also on the increase and attacks against the Reform movement continue in Israel.

Sadly, 2015 has not started any better and the WUPJ issued a strong statement in January on the terrorist attack in France where 12 were killed at the Charlie Hebdo offices. This statement was released before we knew that four Jewish shoppers were murdered at a Kosher Deli. Unfortunately, it seems that these sorts of horrific attacks will become worse before they get better.

For the WUPJ, two important changes have occurred. First, the appointment of Rabbi Danny Freeland as the organization's new president, and then Gidon Ben Zvi as its new marketing professional. This combination should ensure that our advocacy statements reach a much wider audience and be directed towards the most relevant contacts.

Some of our statements over the last year included the heralding of payments by the Israeli government for some of our regional rabbis. While efforts are being made to widen these payments, the WUPJ recognised the enormous progress made to date. The WUPJ also condemned MK David Rotem, who made the outrageous statement in the Knesset that Reform Jews do not belong in Israel. In addition, we released a statement on the crisis in Ukraine, a conflict that has affected some of our members and placed the wider Jewish community in danger.

We also congratulated the new Israel President, Reuven Rivlin, on his appointment. Whilst we had initial concerns that he would be antagonistic to our movement, we have been very pleasantly surprised with many of his inclusive and liberal actions and statements.

We produced several statements around the latest Gaza war supporting the State of Israel, the IDF and the plight of Israelis facing the thousands of rockets reigned down during the war. The WUPJ also gave several updates on the war to keep our members aware of the ever-changing situation.

In November, the WUPJ expressed its horror at the murders of four rabbis and one policeman at the Har Nof synagogue in Jerusalem. This despicable act has been mirrored around the Middle East and elsewhere, where fanatics carry out their murders on innocent people - more recently in Sydney and Pakistan.

With this increase in violence and the dramatic rise in anti-Semitism, the WUPJ will need to provide support and comfort to the wider community around the world.

This report was written five months before the May 2015 Connections in Rio. Let us hope and pray that 2015 sees a turnaround in this increase of mindless extremism and hatred.

This year's committee was made up of Rabbis Danny Burkeman, Walter Homolka and Mark Winer, as well as Mike Grabiner, Penny Jakobovits, Miriam Kramer, Steve Lurie, Mario Ruschin, Yaron Shavit, Maria Sheinen, Judy Smith, and Carole Sterling. Their fast and almost universal responses have been most welcome and I thank one and all for their support.

WUPJ staff Rabbis Daniel Freeland, Gary Bretton-Granatoor, Joel Oseran, Gidon Ben-Zvi and Shai Pinto supported our efforts,

Philip Bliss (Chair WUPJ Advocacy Committee)



Gordon Smith, Chair
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

Mandate

The Assets Committee is an advisory body that reviews and monitors all properties owned and/or leased by the WUPJ in Israel, the FSU and the rest of the world. It provides recommendations to the Management Committee, appropriate World Union bodies and senior executive staff regarding the purchase, sale, rental or lease of real estate, as well as the utilization of these assets including leasing, renting, maintaining, renovating, renewing and updating these properties in line with the Strategic Mission of the WUPJ.

When relevant, the committee works to maximize income while considering both the purpose for which the property was built and the mission of the organization.

It was an extremely busy and challenging year on the WUPJ assets front. Security issues affected our assets and centers in Israel and the FSU. There were ramifications to the sale of the Shmuel Hanagid property and the development of our FSU centers presented a set of challenges to address.

Major activities of the committee in 2014 include:

Mercaz Shimshon / Beit Shmuel

The Assets Committee provided ongoing support, advice and oversight to the MS-BS Director and World Union Jerusalem staff on budgetary cost controls, property maintenance and renovation and the maximization of profits on property utilization. The committee also assisted in planning the refurbishment of the hostel rooms and the activity halls, which continued throughout the year. Many changes in safety, security, operational and personnel regulations were enforced this year, requiring significant adaptations on all fronts, and imposing additional staff and resource burdens on the center.

Much effort was invested in building a detailed and clear budget for 2014, which planned for increased profits from the campus, as well as expanded programming.

The Gaza conflict in the summer, as well as the heightened security issues in Jerusalem in October-November severely affected the operations of the center, with a virtual halt in tourism for many of these months, as well as a significant slowdown in internal tourism and participation in enrichment activities. Coupled with a background of continued financial and economic difficulties, this resulted in serious operational and financial implications for the center, preventing it from meeting the yearly targets as set. This is the first year since 2008 that the center is not showing operational profits or meeting its expected results.

There are many challenges resulting from the operations of a “for profit” center within a nonprofit entity, which have been the focus of various reviews by municipal and state authorities in Israel. As a result, the center also faced significant tax regulatory changes that will affect future operations.

Much effort and attention are being invested in analysis and planning for the changing realities and their implications for the 2015 budget year.

Shmuel Hanagid

The committee continued to be involved in all matters concerning the sale of a part of the World Union’s property on Shmuel Hanagid Street. These required many hours of meetings, analysis and discussions, coupled with significant staff efforts, which led to the successful agreement and sale of the property in late 2013.

This year, the committee oversaw the tremendously complex implementation of tax procedures and the careful liability clarifications and allocations related to this transaction, leading hopefully to a finalization of all proceedings in 2015.

This will mark an end to a very drawn out and complicated process marking over a decade of developments and challenges.

The committee was fortunate to be advised by the dedicated, prudent and wise Michael Hoffman. Our team of legal advisors, tax experts and others likewise proved invaluable. I would also like to thank Daniel

Chinn for his continued counsel and, in particular, for his positive engagement with Har El. Towards the end of 2014, we completed the agreed upon steps with the community to everyone's satisfaction. Finally, all our efforts would have been in vain without the vigilance, tenacity, super human efforts and the superb negotiation skills of our COO, Shai Pinto. Over many long years, Shai's total commitment, through thick and thin, to the sale of this part of our property on Shmuel Hanagid proved essential in bringing about a successful conclusion.

FSU properties

With the dedication of the Kiev center in September 2013, we have completed the long-term strategic process for the WUPJ in FSU, which called for the purchase of centers in the four main cities – Moscow, St Petersburg, Minsk and Kiev.

In Minsk and Kiev, the project itself included maintenance and operational costs that will help ensure the upkeep and future of the building for years to come. This year, we turned our attention to ensuring the proper legal, regulatory and tax standing of all four centers, and to the next phase of development that includes turning these centers into fundraising and income generating opportunities.

The fast developing situation in Ukraine significantly affected our communities and centers in the country, primarily in Crimea, with possible threats developing to the physical facilities and their future ownership and legal status. Safety and security systems were installed in our centers, with the assistance of various organizations and the WUPJ emergency campaign. Where possible, support systems were created to assist the local community.

For 2015, the committee will oversee the interpretation and implementation of revised property regulations, registration requirements and tax payments in each of the countries we operate in the FSU. The committee also plans to initiate a global WUPJ asset survey, as well as a comprehensive community FSU asset review in the coming year.



Steven M. Bauman, Chair
Danny Jaffe, CFO, Staff

The Oversight Committee was established in 2009 to review the work of the WUPJ Treasurer, the Finance Committee and the CFO.

Members of the Committee are Steve Bauman (Chair-USA) and Stephen Breslauer (USA), together with Aaron Bloom vice Chair Finance as Ex Officio and Gordon Smith.

The Charter (Terms of Reference) of the Oversight Committee is to:

1. Provide independent oversight of WUPJ financial issues.
2. Review structure and reporting procedures.
3. Review auditors' reports, management letters and certificates.
4. Review annual accounts.
5. Review long-term financial plans of the WUPJ.
6. Review all major financial decisions.
7. Review major asset purchases/disposals.
8. Ensure that funds are utilized in accordance with Executive Board criteria.

The Committee is called upon to finalize the approval of the yearly accounts for the organization, once these have been approved by the Finance Committee.

The chairman, together with Stephen Breslauer, Aaron Bloom, Gordon Smith and Danny Jaffe, reviewed and approved the 2013 audited reports of the WUPJ Israeli branch and WUPJ-Beit Shmuel.

The Committee also reviewed the ongoing 2010 audit of WUPJ New York, received information on the development of the audit, and will oversee the completion of the 2010 audit for WUPJ New York. The Committee will then oversee the completion of the 2011-13 audits.



Phyllis Dorey, Chair
Rabbi Steve Burnstein, Saltz IEC Director, Staff

Education is a key priority for the WUPJ. The Education Committee was established at the end of 2011, and is chaired by Phyllis Dorey. Members of the committee are Ruth Cohen, Rabbi Danny Rich, Rabbi Walter Homolka, Jim Cherney, Paula Edelstein, Sonja Guentner, and Professor Paul Liptz. The committee is staffed by Rabbi Steve Burnstein. The Education Committee's primary role is to assist, advise and support the development and operations of the WUPJ Education Department, primarily through the Anita Saltz International Education Center.

In 2014, the committee met with Rabbi Burnstein to:

- Evaluate the activities and programs run by the Saltz IEC (including the 'branded' seminars held in Israel: Beutel Leadership Seminar, Bergman Educators' Seminar and Roswell Social Action Seminar) with the view of ensuring that they reach their target audiences; assisting in the development of new audiences and identifying new fundraising opportunities (e.g., working with alumni);
- Identify areas where these programs could be enhanced to appeal to a global audience;
- Identify where strategic partnerships could be developed to strengthen and manage key relationships (e.g., with URJ, UPJ – Australia);
- Explore the development of new products that could be delivered using a range of technologies, personnel (e.g., regional affiliates, program alumni) and locations;
- Plan a full and exciting program for 2015.

Please read the report prepared by Rabbi Burnstein on the seminars, programs and activities run by the Anita Saltz IEC this year to realise how much was achieved in 2014. The Center continues to explore a range of opportunities, networks and groups (within and outside the WUPJ family) in Israel, America and Australia/Asia. The ultimate goal is to ensure that there are tailor-made educational programs to meet the needs of a number of different groups, which will flesh out the already full program for 2015. These include but are not limited to:

- A menu of customized programs and formats for the delivery of current and new Saltz seminars in Israel and for regions, communities and congregations overseas (e.g., regional alumni events, taster programs and Saltz abroad);
- Provision of educational content and support for movement affiliates (including Beit Shmuel, NFTY, Netzer, Shnat, Tamar, Etgar, Machon and other Israel youth and young adult programs);
- Enhancing and adding to existing online/distance learning offerings such as webinars on various topics, educational emails, website and use of social media to network with Saltz program alumni;
- Creation of new and strengthening of existing relationships with individuals and organizations to assist with marketing and fundraising opportunities.

We look forward to another successful, activity packed year in 2015.



Aaron Bloom, Vice Chair, Finance
Danny Jaffe, CFO, Staff

The committee meets monthly throughout the year to monitor the financial performance of the organization, review monthly reports, assess trends and developments and identify issues for the staff and leadership to follow up on. The Committee also provides the CFO with a sounding board on various accounting, reporting and procedural issues.

I wish to thank the other members of the Finance Committee, David Robinson (New Zealand), Ron Cohen (USA), Carole Sterling (Canada) and Gordon Smith (UK), for their input, support and commitment.

The task of chairing this committee would not have been possible without the amazing and dedicated team of professionals with whom I have had the good fortune to work. First, I would like to thank Danny Jaffe, our Chief Financial Officer (CFO), who reorganized the financial operations in Jerusalem prior to my arrival with the assistance of Gordon Smith and continues to improve the finance department. The financial affairs of the WUPJ worldwide are complex and complicated and Danny has managed to impose strict time limits in order to provide the Management Committee (MC) with clear, understandable and valuable monthly financial spreadsheets detailing the key financial figures that assist the management team in running the World Union.

This year, even more so than in previous years, the deadlines for reporting on financial issues were very tight in order to be able to submit the reports to the Finance Committee (FC) by the 9th of each month, enabling us to submit the full report by January 20, 2015.

My job has been made easier by the hard work of Shai Pinto, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the WUPJ, who from the Jerusalem office manages all of the various aspects of the World Union. Shai is tireless, dedicated and always striving to move the World Union forward. We are very fortunate to have him in charge of the operations of the World Union. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with both Shai and Danny and I look forward to working with them for many years to come.

My thanks also to the New York staff, led by Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, Vice President-Philanthropy. Gary has led the fundraising team of the WUPJ during difficult times, and continues to push the lay leadership forward.

The arrival this year of Rabbi Danny Freeland as the President of the WUPJ has made an immediate and major impact on the World Union. Although he joined our team only in September, his vital input is already being felt, especially in his taking ownership of the budget. We feel very blessed to have him on our team and look forward to a more fruitful 2015.

Beit Shmuel-Mercaz Shimshon, in spite of a difficult political and economic climate including Operation Protective Edge in the summer, continues to remain profitable - although they did not meet their targets. Beit Shmuel-Mercaz Shimshon makes a valuable contribution to the finances of the WUPJ, allowing us to pay out long term liabilities from past years.

2014 was a very difficult year. Negative results were brought on by a major fundraising event not taking place, as well as currency changes around the world. With that, we also approved the 2015 budget, which offers its own challenges. The financial support of all our dedicated friends and members around the world, as well as the close attention of the Committee and finance team, will be required in the year ahead.

As we enter 2015, we must all continue to look for additional support from new sources for the important work that we do all over the world. Whilst we have many financial challenges, just as every organization has, we have much to be proud of and celebrate in our accomplishments.



Anne Molloy, Chair
Alex Kagan, Staff

The mission of the FSU Committee is to support the work of the World Union's professional staff, developing strong Progressive Jewish communities in the FSU. The primary functions of the committee include promoting our FSU communities around the world, building relationships between communities, and raising funds.

Highlights of Committee activity this year include:

Strategic Plan

With the opening of the Kiev Center, we have completed the major components of our 2007 strategic plan. WUPJ Executive Board and FSU Committee member Masha Sheinin agreed to lead the development of a new strategic plan for the region. This process had its kick-off at the FSU Committee meeting during CONNECTIONS 2013 in Jerusalem. During 2013, Masha led the process of conducting: (1) A detailed analysis of the last plan vis-a-vis our accomplishments, (2) A detailed snapshot of our current FSU operations, (3) A draft design of a survey soliciting input for future priorities.

During the past year, the survey was finalized with input from FSU Committee members and WUPJ professionals. The survey was broadly distributed to FSU local lay and professional leadership, as well as WUPJ leadership and FSU Committee members. All the data from the 2013 analyses and the 2014 survey has been tabulated.

Masha issued a draft plan to the FSU Committee in July. Based on feedback, a second draft was prepared in October for the FSU local leadership seminar in Minsk. As a follow-up, Masha prepared and issued a second survey targeted to the four FSU centers (Kiev, Minsk, Moscow, and St. Petersburg).

Friendraising and Fundraising Support

Committee members continue to assist Rabbi Bretton-Granatoor with friendraising and fundraising for the FSU around North America, specifically for the summer camp program and local community needs. The summer camp program costs increased as a result of the political situation in Ukraine, which necessitated a relocation of the inter-regional camp program from Ukraine to Belarus.

Committee members were also active in supporting and setting an itinerary for Rabbi Alex Dukhovny's fall visit to New York, Pittsburgh, Washington D.C and Florida. Cherie Half and Linda Levenson activated the 'Smiles for Miles' program, collecting frequent flyer miles to bring as many FSU representatives as possible to CONNECTIONS in Rio in May 2015.

Committee Meetings

We did not gather during 2014 for an in person committee meeting, although a small group of us met in Dresden in April during the EUPJ Biennial Conference. We also held a conference call in July for the full committee. The main topics on the agenda were: (1) The situation in Ukraine and its effects on our communities and programs, (2) The summer camp program and need for additional funding, (3) The strategic plan, (4) A possible expansion of the Machon program in cooperation with Abraham Geiger Kolleg.

Other Items

1. Twinning -- Cherie Half continued to reach out to twinned congregations in North America to strengthen the twinning relationships.
2. NCSEJ Board of Governors -- Anne Molloy continues to represent WUPJ on the NCSEJ BoG. She attended both meetings of the BoG in 2014 in Washington, D.C. NCSEJ is the National Coalition Supporting Eurasian Jewry, formerly known as NCSJ.



Gordon Smith, Chair
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

The Human Resources team is comprised of Gordon Smith (UK) – Chair, Ron Cohen (NY, USA), Charlie Rothschild (California, USA) and Ron Hendin (Jerusalem). This composition ensures both local (Israel and NY) and global representation.

In 2014, the committee continued to focus on three main aspects:

- Ensuring good personnel management practices: setting objectives, conducting performance reviews and holding staff meetings.
- Providing support on HR issues: hiring, implementing significant job changes, dealing with issues related to salaries and terminations – ensuring that the correct processes are being applied.
- Serving as a sounding board: supplying ideas and feedback, as requested by the COO and MC.

In 2014, the two local members continued to act as listening, counselling and decision partners for the local management teams. In New York, Ron Cohen supported decisions that had to be made on staff reviews, support and enrichment. In Jerusalem, revised government regulations, maternity leave, and some staff turnover necessitated the attention of the HR team. Shai Pinto was supported by Ron Hendin, who provided crucial advice on the general working environment as well as specific aspects of individual cases (such as regulation changes, loans, tax issues and employee enrichment). Ron also continued to assist in implementing employee evaluations and processes in Jerusalem.

I would like to thank everyone involved for their valued contributions, be it through personal counseling or attendance at group meetings.

In the past year, attention was also directed towards staffing issues in the Former Soviet Union, primarily by the chairman of the committee, in cooperation with the FSU committee chair and regional leadership.

The HR Committee continued to monitor the distribution and use of two main funds: the Ricky Newman Professional Enrichment Fund, and a revolving loan fund. We made sure that due processes were in place to secure transparency and fairness in applying these funds.

The Chairman and committee members were involved in the recruitment of a president, with Charlie Rothschild leading the search process. This resulted in the successful hiring of our new president, Rabbi Frelander. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Charlie for his leadership of this sacred task.

I would also like to thank our COO, Shai Pinto, for his invaluable advice, common sense and constant vigilance on all matters relating to staff welfare.

Our goals for 2015 include support for the WUPJ strategic planning process regarding future organizational structure, and continued attention to good personnel management practices, which will help our organization to develop and remain healthy and efficient.

Not all parts of the organization are at the same level of excellence, and we have identified some areas where change is in order. We plan to pay further attention to the fundraising unit and services, as well as the personnel needs and structure of the FSU, in line with the new strategic plan being developed for and by the region.

We also intend to further focus on processes such as:

- Planning of employee welfare services.
- Succession planning.
- Employee development.
- Career planning.



INVESTMENT AND ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

G. Leonard Teitelbaum, Chair

Danny Jaffe, CFO, Staff

Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, VP Philanthropy, Staff

The WUPJ Investment Committee is charged with the management of the various WUPJ endowments, which include the WUPJ Roswell endowment for IRAC; the WUPJ Roswell endowment for Eastern Europe; the WUPJ Blaustein fund and the WUPJ Emanu-El Rabbinic salaries endowment. We hope additional endowments will be included as appropriated in the near future.

We use the excellent services of an investment management firm, Roosevelt Investment Group.

During the year, the committee chair held monthly meetings with the WUPJ CFO to monitor the results of the portfolio, and maintained continuous communication with the investment managers. The full committee met on April 10, to review the portfolio performance and per protocol on October 21, for the annual assessment and distribution meeting.

This past year has been a successful year for us, with a yield of approximately 15%. Our portfolio grew by approximately \$582,000.

Our investment manager, Roosevelt Investment Group, continues to be active in opportunistically moving our assets into different areas allowing us to achieve and surpass our target of an annual total return of 10% with approximately 6%-7% appreciation annually and 3% annual yield.

Due to the excellent results, the committee was able to recommend for distribution the maximum our investment policy allows us, set at 5%. The overall total distribution this year was \$197,186. The allocations were transferred to the recipients prior to the new fiscal year as directed.

Our principal donors are without question outstanding in every way. The committee strives to earn their trust and respect every day.

I would be sincerely remiss in not thanking our dedicated committee members for their advice, counsel and availability. Gordon Smith, Ronald Cohen, Austin Beutel, Matt Sperber (representing IMPJ), Aaron Bloom and Mike Grabiner. Our staff, Danny Jaffe and Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, should be given special mention. And of course, Ann Fields, who puts up with all the requests, is our hero.



MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Judy Smith, Chair
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff
Gidon Ben-Zvi, Marketing Communications Director, Staff

I am delighted to report that 2014 was a year of change.

After many years without any professional support, in May we appointed Gidon Ben Zvi as full-time Marketing Communications Director.

Gidon rapidly took over the production of WUPJ News, bringing a new look and dimension to our bi-monthly newsletter, which continues to attract many new subscribers. Gidon also updated our Facebook presence and made sure that new stories attracted new WUPJ Facebook friends. Gidon has also reached out to all WUPJ regions to both build active relationships and to ensure that all regions' messages reach the widest worldwide audience.

September saw the arrival of our new WUPJ President, Rabbi Danny Freeland and his appointment was accompanied with a full media campaign. Rabbi Freeland is very actively involved in ensuring that WUPJ messages receive the widest possible distribution across the progressive and non-progressive Jewish world.

We continued our close work with the Advocacy Committee during the year to help create and disseminate WUPJ statements on various topics, press releases and other messaging.

We also continued our successful distribution of Torah from Around the World throughout the year. In addition, we disseminated the organisational reports to both the Management and Executive Board on a regular basis.

In last year's report, we spoke about looking forward to 2014, hoping that we would be able to begin producing materials that are essential to the future of the World Union. I am delighted to report that in the coming months will see the distribution of a new WUPJ Brochure, a Donor Annual Report and the creation of new display materials for World Union booths at conferences across the world.

We will also begin to look at developing a new WUPJ website that will hopefully be launched sometime in late 2015.

Furthermore, we are currently very busy promoting CONNECTIONS 2015 in Rio de Janeiro. We will remain actively involved in liaising with the media to ensure that the widest possible audience hears the World Union's messages.

This will be my last report as Chair of Marcom for the World Union as I will be standing down at the Rio Conference after 10 years in the job. I would like to thank everybody who I worked with over this period - especially the staff in the Jerusalem and New York offices. Special thanks go to Shai Pinto for his commitment and professionalism and for keeping the marcom show on the WUPJ road.



NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Steve Bauman, Chair

Chairman, Steve Bauman (immediate past Chair), Austin Beutel (Canada), Jim Heeger (USA), Miriam Kramer (Europe), Alvin Kushner (SA), Rabbi Danny Rich (UK), David Robinson (Australasia), Stephen Sacks (NA), Yaron Shavit (Israel), Anne Molloy (FSU), Miriam Vasserman (Latin America), Rabbi Dan Freeland (WUPJ President).

The Nominations committee was empanelled in accordance with WUPJ protocol in October 2014.

The committee was provided with a copy of the current WUPJ Constitution and By Laws as well as a list of the current members of the Executive Board highlighting those who indicated they wished to stand down at the end of this session.

The committee worked in stages: first, it discussed the regional representatives as recommended by the regions. The ensuing meetings focused on recommendations for the WUPJ chair and officers. Finally, it reviewed additional nominations for positions on the board.

The committee concluded its deliberations and presented its agreed upon recommendations to the chair in February.

All nominated parties have agreed to serve, should the appropriate bodies elect them.

These will be circulated to the IA in accordance with protocol before the meeting.



NORTH AMERICAN COUNCIL/ NORTH AMERICAN ADVISORY BOARD (NAC/NAAB)

James A. Cherney, co-chair

Joan Cohen, co-chair

Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, VP Philanthropy, Staff

In our report last year, we explained the reasons for and the process of the transition from the former North American Council to the newly formed North American Advisory Board for WUPJ. We have now completed our first full year of operation and are pleased to report on our initial success and further plans.

The North American Advisory Board initially had approximately 30 members and has now grown to almost 50, largely through expressions of interest by engaged leaders in the URJ and our North American congregations. The NAAB is assisted in its work by a further group of Yedidim (“precious friends”) comprised of longstanding friends and supporters of WUPJ.

From its inception, it was envisioned that NAAB would engage in the following activities:

- Cultivating through education, travel, advocacy and programming additional interest in World Jewry and the activities of WUPJ in congregations and congregants in URJ congregations.
- Raising financial support for WUPJ and WU communities and programs from existing and new donors in North America and working to support the WUPJ staff in New York and elsewhere to further these goals.
- Seeking to maximize opportunities for North American congregations and congregants to have person-to-person exposure to Progressive communities outside North America through existing (e.g. twinning) and new programs.
- Encouraging attendance at WUPJ global and regional conferences.
- Consideration of missions and trips to WUPJ communities in furtherance of the above goals.

The six person NAAB Executive Committee held a two day in person meeting in March 2014 for organizational and recruitment purposes. It was determined that the group should initially create three subcommittees or working groups to develop specific goals and tasks in furtherance of the above-mentioned plans.

Several months later, when Rabbi Dan Frelander agreed to assume the role of President of WUPJ, the leadership met with him and Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor for several days to refine these plans. After a series of webinars and conference calls, the three subcommittees were formed and the entire NAAB held an in person meeting in New York in November.

Here are the results:

The Travel Subcommittee, which is headed by Helene Waranch and Phyllis Levy, met at length during the New York meeting, and has been holding regular conference calls since then. It is creating a two-year rolling forward calendar of travel missions that NAAB will promote and support.

The first of these will be connected to the EUPJ Biennial in London in the spring of 2016. In addition, the subcommittee is also working on a tour of Civil Rights venues in the U.S. Southeast to be offered as a pre-trip to the URJ Biennial in November 2015. Of course, the travel group is seeking ways to encourage and increase North American attendance at CONNECTIONS in Rio.

Finally, the group is researching ideas for a series of available freestanding trips to WUPJ communities that would be marketed to Movement affiliates as well as individual congregations and groups of communities in North America.

The Development subcommittee is headed by Tadd Schwab with assistance from Ron Cohen. Its task is to support the professional fundraising efforts of our NY staff, to seek new ways to build support for WUPJ and to create model programs to expose North American communities, clergy and individuals to the work of WUPJ and its dynamic community leaders throughout the world.

In late 2014, Tadd led an extensive effort to create congregational visits and exposure for Rabbi Alex Dukhovny in numerous South Florida communities. Tadd accomplished this through networking with URJ

leaders in these communities, and his model is being made available to others. The Development subcommittee will also interface with the newly formed worldwide Development Committee of WUPJ.

The final subcommittee is Communications and Marketing, led by Cherie Half and Jim Cherney. Its broad mandate is to improve the marketing of WUPJ in North America and improve visibility and awareness in our communities. One way to do this is to leverage our relationships with URJ. For example, by the time this report is published, NAAB members will be using the Tent, URJ's internal networking site to promote WUPJ and to communicate more effectively with friends and interested parties.

This subcommittee is also exploring the possibility of a new membership initiative where North Americans could join a WUPJ congregation and members of other communities would have a vehicle to join a North American congregation. It will also support existing twinning relationships with WUPJ congregations where those are viable and ongoing.

All three of these subcommittees have been filled with highly competent people. In addition, a series of concrete goals and deadlines have been developed to measure the subcommittees' progress. In short, the NAAB is off to a fantastic start and looks forward to the next year of work, creating greater awareness and support for the WUPJ in North America.

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For more information please visit our website at: www.wupj.org, or email us at: wupj@urj.org



GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO) REPRESENTATIVES TO THE U.N.

Betty Golomb, NY
Judith Hertz, NY
Norma Levitt, NY
Janet Stovin, NY
John Clark, Vienna
Scott Fertig, Vienna
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

For over forty years, the World Union has appointed annual non-governmental representatives to the United Nations. These representatives are members of World Union congregations worldwide and are active in the UN entities in New York, Geneva, and Vienna, where they work to promote the joint agendas of the WUPJ and the UN in areas of Human Rights, Social Development, International Cooperation, Advancement of Women, Inclusion, and more.

This report gives some highlights of the activities of these individuals. It should be noted that in the last few years the UN has increased the support services for NGO representatives. Simultaneously, NGO representatives have expanded the opportunities to engage with experts on subjects and issues that are the focus of United Nations representatives.

In New York:

- The New York representatives continue to be active in the area of Women's and Girls' Human Rights, with attendance at the Commission on the Status of Women and membership in the Non Governments Organization (NGO), Working Group on Girls (WGG), the NGO Committee on Human Rights as well as the NGO Committee on the Status of Women. The WGG has been working with the Brazilian Mission on ways that local South American affiliates can coordinate efforts to prevent sexual trafficking during the World Cup and with various local rights groups to identify and prevent sexual trafficking during the Super Bowl.
- Meetings, briefings, conferences and commissions on the issue of Persons with Disabilities, and participating in the preparation committees leading up to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Representation at several high-level meetings of "The World We Want: Millennium Goals Post 2015" panel that address absolute poverty, maternal health, environment, healthcare, violence against women and girls, among other issues.
- Janet Stovin has been elected to the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, and has also served as co-chair of the Sub-Committee on Workshops for the 2014 DPI/NGO Conference. The theme of the conference was The Role of Civil Society in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The purpose of the Conference was to harness strategies, expertise and resources across the broadest spectrum of civil society to move poverty eradication, sustainability, human rights and climate justice into the mainstream discourse.

The ultimate goal is to spark a sustained public demand for lasting political action in support of an ambitious outcome from the post-2015 sustainable development process. A Conference Declaration, designed to frame an ambitious Action Agenda, was produced and presented to the General Assembly.

- Participation in the Jewish NGO (JNGO) caucus, with a representative of Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) who served on a panel at a meeting in San Francisco that put forward the concept of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to monitor and report on the work of the United Nations to their constituents.

One proposal is to ask our constituents to initiate commemorations celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations on October 24, 2015.

Click on <https://academicimpact.un.org/content/seventieth-anniversary-united-nations-0> to learn more about the purpose and vision of the commemoration.

- Participation in the session on Globalization and Sustainable Development: The Role of Governments, NGOs and the Private Sector.
- Worked on plans for Interfaith Harmony week, which will take place in February 2015. The committee discussed a number of possible collaborative events including sustainable development, environment, and the importance of women to these issues.

The DPI holds various programs for NGO representatives and others on key topics including homelessness, world hunger and the environment. Especially noteworthy was an excellent program on Judaism presented by leaders of several major Jewish organizations.

Our members around the world can benefit from UN programs and we urge you to visit the website. We hope you will consider participating in some UN sponsored programs in your region. The UN website (www.un.org) provides updated descriptions and detailed information about these programs.

In Geneva:

For over 25 years, the World Union has been represented on the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva by David G. Littman z"l. David was the spokesperson of our delegation, which also includes Rabbi Francois Garai as the main representative, Alex Dembitz and Eliel Masson. David's passing in May 2012 has left a large gap, as his shoes are impossible to fill. We have been in touch with various country delegations to further assess how we can leverage our long-standing presence in this committee to continue the sacred work David led.

In Vienna:

John Clark and Scott J. Fertig began the arduous task of building a WUPJ presence at the UN-NGO Project in Vienna, Austria in 2013 and continued to develop this in 2014, under the sponsorship of Or Chadasch, Vienna.

The main activities in 2014 continued to be the maintaining of contacts with the NGO Liaison Service at the United Nations Office in Vienna. The Vienna team continued to follow the DESA News and stay abreast of the coordinating efforts by the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO).

Our Vienna representatives also strengthened contacts with other NGOs with representation in Vienna, such as the International Council of Jewish Women, and with representatives of the Embassy of the State of Israel. They also monitored communiques of the IAEA, which is based in Vienna.

An important UN activity is the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, observed on January 27. The 2014 observance in Vienna centered on the theme "Journeys through the Holocaust". This theme recalled the various journeys taken during this dark period, from deportation to incarceration to freedom, and how this experience transformed the lives of those who endured it.

These are stories of pain and suffering, yet ultimately also of triumph and renewal, serving as a guiding force for future generations (*text adapted from the official communique of the United Nations Information Service*). There was also a special exhibition marking the 70th anniversary of the deportation of the Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust.

The goals for 2015 include establishing contacts with the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) that has accredited representatives in Vienna, intensifying relations with representatives from Israel, and networking with other Or Chadasch members who work at the UN Headquarters in Vienna.



Jerry Tanenbaum, Chair
Steve Goldberg, Staff

With the establishment of the World Union Latin American region (WUPJ-LA) in 2010, the role of the Yad B'Yad Task Force shifted to providing support in a variety of ways. At the time, Yad B'Yad adopted a statement of purpose that includes a mission statement – “to comprehensively support the needs of the Progressive Jewish Communities in Latin America, which includes South America, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean Basin.”

This statement also defined the criteria for membership on the Task Force and the expectations of Task Force members.

During 2014, the Task Force focused on the following areas:

- **Supporting regional members to participate in CONNECTIONS 2015:** The presence of members from the Latin American region at the WUPJ biennial is crucial. Participating in the International Convention will enable them to connect with members from around the world, share regional success stories, and connect with global leadership.
- **Operations of the Latin American regional office:** The regional office is essential in Latin America, where many communities are geographically isolated, far from one another and from local Jewish resources. The regional office connects communities and individuals, helps promote regional projects and activities, and provides much needed professional and lay leadership. Specifically, the regional office promotes Progressive Judaism, Zionism, and the celebration of Jewish and Israeli holidays as well as Jewish liturgy. In addition, the regional office facilitates the teaching of Hebrew and the connecting of peripheral communities to the larger cities.
- **Provision of educational resources for the region:** We remain focused on assisting the Latin American region obtain educational resources such as Jewish calendars, prayer books, materials on conversion, and more.
- **Operations of educational projects:** We supported the development of a leadership project, in cooperation with HUC/WUPJ/WUPJ LA, for the training of Reform rabbis in the region.
- **Porto Alegre regional leadership meeting:** leaders of the region came together to discuss and plan ahead. Yad Byad assisted with scholarships and staff support.
- **Lashir Benefesh:** A regional Chazanut conference (“Lashir Benefesh”) was held in Porto Alegre, bringing together dozens of professional Chazzanim in a festival of song, music, liturgy and lectures.
- **Support for UJCL:** the task force continues to support the activities of the region in both development of regional activities and in cooperation and strengthening of the relationship with the other regions, primarily the Latin American region, and WUPJ programs in Jerusalem.

We are pleased to announce that there is a new Executive Director for the Latin America Region, Karin C. Zingerevitz. We wish her every success in her new post.

Members of this Committee met in San Jose, Costa Rica at the beginning of 2014. Jerry Tanenbaum, Stephen Breslauer, Shai Pinto, Rabbi Joel Oseran, and Jane Siegel took part in the meeting. They discussed planning for 2014. The entire committee was saddened by the tragic shock passing of Jane z”l later in the year – her contribution to the lives of Progressive Jews in the region and around the world was unique and she will be sorely missed.

Going forward, Yad B'Yad will continue to pursue ideas and activities that support institutions and programs in Latin America that promote pluralism and opportunities for nonaffiliated and secular Jews to embrace a meaningful stream of modern Judaism.



Steve Lurie, Chair
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

The Youth and Young Adults committee includes Steve Lurie (Chair, SA), Rabbi Danny Burkeman (YA representative on the EB), Rabbi Danny Rich (UK), Maria Sheinin (FSU), Paula Edelstein (Israel), David Robinson (NZ) and Penny Jakobovits (Australia).

This committee has three major focus areas:

- Advice, support, oversight on Youth and Young Adult activities of the WUPJ, primarily through Netzer, TaMaR and local affiliates.
- Responsibility for promotion of YA inclusion in WUPJ structures globally.
- Ensuring that youth are engaged in these processes.

During this year, the committee supported the Netzer Shnat Year Course staff in the planning of programs in response to various issues that had arisen.

It also engaged with the staff in encouraging the development of new programs, concepts and products for youth via Netzer Olami. The Netzer Shnat think tank, led by Rabbi Burkeman and including regional Netzer representatives, was set up to look at future gap year course models and funding, and engaged in various conversations with stake holders. The think tank also assisted with staffing.

In the FSU, the committee assisted in planning and monitoring the growth and development of Netzer activities, the succession of Netzer regional coordinators, and a successful summer with 1000 kids in summer camps across the region, despite the political turmoil.

The situation in Ukraine necessitated a relocation of our summer camp activities to a new home in Belarus, whilst still maintaining the concept of a campsite coupled with local smaller ventures. In general, this was a good camping year and we saw over 3000 kids in Netzer camps globally.

The international makeup of the committee, which includes representatives of regions of the WUPJ, resulted in advice and assistance being provided to the Netzer Olami head office, working with specific Netzer branches on issues related to the snifim, Shnat and more.

Attention was given this year to support young adult activities and seminars - especially those centered on WUPJ gatherings in each of the regions - and ensuring WUPJ lay and senior staff participation in these programs. We saw successful Tamar activities in Costa Rica, Dresden (Germany), Israel, Porto Alegre (Brazil), Adelaide (Australia), Poland, Minsk (Belarus) as well as other regional and local programs.

The committee members also assisted on Netzer Shlichut issues, which required some significant attention this year due to the new locations and success of our shlichim.

In all cases, it assisted them in widening their scope to include working with young adults locally and regionally.

(Please see details in the Netzer Olami and TaMaR reports).

The committee will continue to focus on:

1. Y&YA activities:

Identifying the best ways of strengthening the global partnership centered on WUPJ youth activities through Netzer, guided by the notion of Klal Israel, Jewish Peoplehood and Zionism. Then, we will facilitate discussions, incorporating both the parent organizations and Netzer representatives globally in cementing the standing and development of Netzer, both within the WUPJ and the affiliate and regional structures.

- Assistance in developing new programs, concepts and products for youth via Netzer Olami.
- Assistance in fundraising and advocating for resource allocation for WUPJ Youth and YA activities, as reflected in the WUPJ 2015 budget proposal.
- Assistance in planning for the Tamar age group, framework, seminars and operations.

2. Young Adult Promotion:

- Ensure representation, involvement and inclusion of these age groups within formal World Union structures and discussions, as well as engage the affiliates and regional organizations in promoting youth programming and development, as well as youth initiatives, within their regional structures.
- The committee also hopes to increase the visibility of youth and young adult activities and representation in the structures, and will assist in advocating for resource allocation for regional Youth and YA activities.
- Steve Lurie, who served ably as chair of this committee for many years, has stepped down following completion of his tenure as the chair of the SAUPJ and member of the WUPJ Executive Board. Steve will continue to offer his advice, and we wish to thank him for his many years of leadership, loyal service, wisdom, and his commitment to the issues of youth and young adults.

A new chair will be appointed following the election of a new executive board in 2015.

WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the World Union for Progressive Judaism is to strengthen Jewish life and values in Israel and Jewish communities throughout the world by supporting and advancing a Progressive approach to Jewish tradition.

The World Union for Progressive Judaism, in collaboration with its constituents and affiliates, works to accomplish its mission by:

- Building and connecting Progressive Jewish communities worldwide.
- Partnering in the development of Israel as a democratic and pluralistic Jewish state.
- Securing the Jewish future by investing in youth and young adults.
- Developing lay, rabbinic and other Jewish professional leadership.
- Advocating social justice and fostering interfaith understanding.
- Supporting the foundation of Judaism: Torah (study), Avodah (worship), and G'millut Chasadim (acts of loving kindness).

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