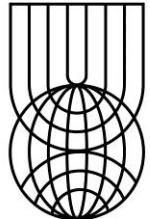




WORLD  
UNION FOR  
PROGRESSIVE  
JUDAISM



ה א י ג ו ד  
ה עו ל מ י  
ל ה דו ת  
מ ת ק ד מ ת

**INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND COMMITTEE  
2015 ANNUAL REPORTS  
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

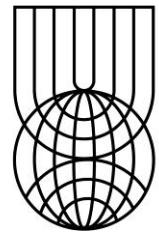
APRIL 14, 2016  
6 NISSAN, 5776

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM





W O R L D  
U N I O N F O R  
P R O G R E S S I V E  
J U D A I S M



ה א י ג ו ד  
ה עו ל מ י  
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## GREETINGS

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Carole Sterling, Chair  
Rabbi Daniel H. Frelander, President

Dear Partners,

2015 was a year of change. A new leadership team elected for office in May 2015 at the WUPJ international biennial conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, has committed to clarifying the mission strategy and stabilizing the sustainability of the WUPJ and its programs.

We want to thank Mike Grabiner who completed his term as WUPJ Chairman in May. We also thank the members of both the 2013-2015 Executive Board and Management Committee, who served diligently and devoted so much time and energy bringing about the growth of our global movement.

Both of us are proud of the WUPJ's many accomplishments this past year.

We gathered in Rio at our 37th international convention, CONNECTIONS 2015 and celebrated the vibrancy of the Latin American Progressive community and its ability to integrate the unique cultures of Latin America into Reform Judaism.

Our successful WUPJ efforts in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine continue. We now number over 40 Progressive Jewish communities in lands where Judaism was forbidden just 30 years ago. The FSU region is implementing a new strategic plan taking big strides towards determining and sustaining its own destiny. Most significantly, the new WUPJ-sponsored rabbinic training institute launched in September with seven full-time students. The program will provide generations of Russian-speaking locally trained professional leaders to the FSU community.

As a fiscal agent for IMPJ congregations and institutions in Israel, the WUPJ ensures 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. Through our new WUPJ Israel Capital Reserve fund, we have now created even more resources for the physical growth of our Israeli movement.

Our exciting growth in Asia and the solidifying of new centers in Shanghai and Bangkok place us at the forefront of Judaism of the future. In Europe, major strides towards recognition by state bodies for Progressive Jewish organizations promises to bring a new future to the growth of Progressive Judaism in the continent of its birth.

It is our privilege to lead the World Union from strength to strength. This compilation of reports reflects the dynamism and breadth of our movement. We look forward to greeting you as we mark the 90th anniversary of our 1926 founding in London at the EUPJ convention in April.

We are grateful for your support and commitment.

With appreciation,

Rabbi Daniel H. Frelander  
President, World Union for Progressive Judaism

Carole Sterling  
Chairman, World Union for Progressive Judaism



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

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Stephen Freeman, President, UPJ (until November 2015)

Roger Mendelson, President, UPJ

Jocelyn Robuck, Executive Officer, UPJ

### MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2015

2015 was a fruitful year for the movement within our region. The highlights were:

- We sent a seven person delegation to attend the WUPJ Connections 2015 in Rio de Janeiro.
- We also sent a 15 person delegation to attend the URJ Biennial 2015 in Orlando.
- The Shir Chadash music conference held in Sydney in November 2015 attracted 60 attendees and a highlight was the attendance of Rabbi Daniel Freelander, who was our special guest speaker.
- Meeting for the UPJ Executive, congregational presidents, vice presidents and board members and Rabbis which was held in Sydney in November 2015. Attendance exceeded 50 and again, Rabbi Daniel Freelander played an active role and provided great stimulation to the attendees.
- Our former Executive Director, Steve Denenberg was farewelled in November 2015.
- We assisted Netzer Australia in producing a *siddur* Mishkan Netzer which is based on Mishkan *T'filah*, for use at camps.
- We said goodbye to our *shlichim*, Yuval Nemirovsky in Sydney and Nadav Shachmon in Melbourne and have now welcomed Dudu Gotlieb in Sydney and Uri Levin in Melbourne.
- We produced a new prayer book based on Mishkan *T'filah* for use at *shiva minyanim*.
- The UPJ coordinated a *shaliach tzibbur* training course for lay leaders in Queensland.
- Support was provided to emerging Asian congregations, particularly Shanghai and Bangkok.
- UPJ awards were presented to the 2015 recipients at services held at their home congregations. Ner Tamid awardees were Tony Abo, Nathan Companez, Sandy Graetzer and Judy Myers; and Vatik awardees were Edwin Argy, Julie Contole, Howard Nathan and Phillip David Green.
- Our fundraising through the Progressive Trust campaign raised close to \$1 million.

### CHANGES WITHIN THE UPJ

- Following an extensive 18-month strategy process involving the constituents, the UPJ switched from the model of having a senior professional as Executive Officer (Steven Denenberg), to a model involving greater active lay involvement.
- Jocelyn Robuck stepped up into the role of Executive Officer which is carried out on a 25 hours-per-week basis, with the support of a part-time Administrative Assistant.
- The office facilities and support are provided, at a nominal cost, by North Shore Temple Emanuel in Sydney, for which we are extremely grateful.
- I became President in November after serving as Vice President for several years. I am strongly and actively supported by Stephen Freeman, the immediate Past President, who has taken on the role of

Vice President, with special focus on Sydney and also with active involvement in fundraising. The Senior Vice President is Brian Samuel with whom I have worked for many years in other organizations.

- The new structure is operating extremely well and, after a short settling period, I am confident that we are now becoming an effective organization with a much lower operating cost.

#### **PLANS FOR THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS**

- We have a diverse and enthusiastic Executive. Our diversity is in terms of gender, size of home congregations and geography.
- The immediate aim is to shape the new group into a smooth operating team and I am confident that this is well under way.
- Portfolios are being allocated and this process should be completed by the end of January 2016.
- As we have less professional staff, much more of the work needs to be done by volunteers and to this end, we are recruiting senior people within the Movement, to carry out allocated tasks such as mentoring smaller communities.

*The Union for Progressive Judaism can be contacted by telephone on +61 2 9413 1282; via the website [www.upj.org.au](http://www.upj.org.au) or by email: [upj@upj.org.au](mailto:upj@upj.org.au)*

*The UPJ biennial conference will be held in Perth, Australia on November 17-20, 2016.*

*Join us for WUPJ Travel Tour to China and Singapore from November 9-19, 2016 for more information - <http://www.ayelet.com/WUPJAsia16.aspx>*



## EUROPE EUROPEAN UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM (EUPJ)

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

In looking back over the past year my first task must be to report with enormous sorrow the sudden death in November of Dr. Leo Hepner, a past chairman of EUPJ. Leo personified devotion to Progressive Judaism coupled with a vision and energy which made his achievements far too numerous to list. I will, however, mention his vital role of advice and support concerning the establishment of communities in Denmark, Germany and Spain. His wisdom and good sense will be missed.

Last year has been challenging for many communities in Europe largely because of the increased number of terrorist episodes; not all targeted Jewish sites directly but most of them did. I wish to commend the police forces and governments for their swift reactions each time and for their public statements of intolerance towards these acts and those who support them.

One thing is clear: despite all the difficulties and challenges, not to mention sensationalist media attention, it is important to note that Jews are not leaving Europe in significant numbers. There may be a trickle but it is most certainly not a flood.

Our last Annual Assembly was held in March at GIL in Geneva and it attracted a large number of delegates from Europe and beyond. I am indebted to GIL's Rabbi François Garaï and President Alex Dembitz, as well as the community's administration for their warm welcome and their outstanding organisational skills over the weekend.

This year's WUPJ International Assembly is being held in London as part of the EUPJ Biennial Conference. London was chosen as the venue to celebrate the anniversaries of two vital institutions both established in London: WUPJ was founded in 1926 and Leo Baeck College in 1956. There were representatives of nine countries at the initial meeting which resulted in the formation of WUPJ. I am certain that these pioneers would be both pleased and proud that from those modest beginnings we now have an organisation which has more than 1.8 million members and spans some 50 countries in all corners of the globe.

Thirty years later, some of the academics from Berlin's Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums found themselves in London eager to continue teaching and training new Rabbis for the post-Shoah world. Rabbi Werner van der Zyl was the driving force and the college was endorsed by Rabbi Leo Baeck. Two months after its foundation Rabbi Baeck died, and the name of the Jewish Theological College was changed to honour him, and since then some 170 Rabbis have been ordained.

Each year that I have been privileged to serve as EUPJ Chairman I have mentioned two remarkable people: Betty and Arthur Roswell. They are staunch supporters, in words and in deeds, of WUPJ in general and of EUPJ in particular. Their financial support to the emerging and re-emerging communities in carefully targeted European countries is immeasurable. In addition to the actual fiscal benefit they demonstrate that we are all truly Klal Yisrael, the Roswells embody the saying that we are all responsible for one another. We are truly in their debt and I find it hard to find adequate words to express our gratitude to them.

The European Beit Din (EBD) operates in countries where there are not enough Rabbis to constitute the three-person panel. Under the leadership of Rabbis Jackie Tabick and Ruven Bar-Ephraim, with advice from Rabbi Andrew Goldstein and with administrative support from Pippa Suchet, this component of EUPJ sits both in the UK and in other European countries to interview scores of candidates each year. Each story is unique and, in its own way, very moving. We are all indebted to those named above and to the other Rabbis who constitute the EBD in different permutations and locations. Theirs is holy work and we are all the richer for it.

The EUPJ has created a full activities report to be shared at the EUPJ conference in London. We will gladly share this detailed report with the Assembly.

Finally I would like to thank my colleagues on the Management Committee: Leslie Bergman (president), Stéphane Beder and Michael Reik (vice-chairs), John Cohen (honorary secretary), David Pollak (honorary treasurer), Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim (rabbinic adviser), Gordon Smith (WUPJ representative), Sonja

Guentner, Rabbi Andrew Goldstein (immediate past chair) and Rabbi Joel Oseran. Without the dedication, wisdom and sense of humour of Deborah Grabiner, our administrator, we would accomplish much less. I am grateful to them all.

*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](mailto:administrator@eupj.org)*

*The EUPJ biennial conference will be held in London, England on April 14-17, 2016.*

*Join us for WUPJ Travel Tour to Berlin and London from April 7-14, 2016 for more information  
- <http://www.ayelet.com/WUPJApril2016.aspx>*



Alex Kagan, Director

#### Rabbinical College in Moscow:

On June 28, a delegation from the Moscow University of Humanities (RSUH) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Union of Progressive Judaism (WUPJ), Abraham Geiger College and the School of Jewish Theology of the University of Potsdam to launch the university-based Machon Rabbinic Leadership Institute in Moscow. Seven students began their studies in September. The official signing of the agreement between Potsdam University and RSUH took place on December 2. The agreement between the World Union and Geiger Kolleg has been approved and will be signed by both parties at a later date.

#### Congregations:

Despite continued uncertainty in the entire FSU, our congregations, youth activities, kindergartens, Sunday schools, seminars, and High Holiday/*chagim* programs continued offering a variety of religious, educational and cultural activities throughout the year to members and the Jewish community at large, providing joy and stability in these times.

Some highlights of activities in our regions this year include:

#### Ukraine

- Over 5,000 Reform Jews from Ukraine and their guests participated in the celebrations of the High Holidays. Kiev, Odessa, Lviv, Cherkassy, Kirovograd, Khmelnitsky, Korsun'-Shevchenkovsky, and other Reform/Progressive congregations in Ukraine held festive celebrations.
- **Kiev:** Hatikvah Religious Center for Progressive Judaism hosted Scott Faigen and Daniel Hyman, two American musicians, who officially premiered the "Bella" concerto, which celebrates the life of Bella Hirsch, (wife of Honorary Life President of the WUPJ Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch) and tells the story of how Jewish music developed over the course of centuries in the Former Soviet Union. The concert was made possible through a donation by Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch which also enabled the purchase of an electric piano and other musical instruments.
- Hatikvah held a roundtable "The Jewish people – the people of ideas". The Jewish and Israeli communities were discussed along with the major impact Jews have had on world history. Other topics included the rise in anti-Semitism.
- **Odessa: "Emanu-El"** held Passover related activities that included: a Seder for the Women's Club with Project "Kesher"; a Seder "Festival of Freedom" for the members of the Men's Club; a communal Seder which was televised on Odessa regional TV, and a youth Seder "At the Rabbi's Home".
- **Travelling Shabbatons in Ukraine:** A series of joint Shabbatons between Hatikvah and other Ukrainian Progressive congregations took place. In June Hatikvah held a Shabbaton on Wheels travelling to Uman, Cherkassy, Khlemnitsky and back to Kiev. In Poltava, the program included activities on Shavuot, and Israeli based activities such as folk dancing. Hatikvah also visited Lviv for a joint Shabbaton during the High Holidays.
- **Lutsk:** For the first time in 75 years, the Jewish community in Lutsk lit candles at what was once the central synagogue in the city.
- Alex Kagan travelled to Ukraine for a five-day intensive trip in September accompanied by Rabbi Alex Duchovny and Executive Director Alex Haydar, visiting six Reform communities in: Odessa, Kiev, Poltava, Cherkasy, Lutsk and Khmelnitsky. He went to provide support to the communities and discovered vibrant communities, Reform synagogues and Jewish-centers, a variety of projects, collaborations between different organizations. These are among the many examples that inspire, serving as a model for all, complementing and honoring our entire movement.

#### Belarus

- Mila Izackson was elected to Chair of Belarus congregations at the annual meeting of congregational chairs that took place at the end of February. This is Mila's second term in this positon.

- **Minsk:** For the first time, the National Public Television broadcast the Seder of the Sheket Congregation, in sign language. The number of singers at the International Minsk Cantorial Festival was the highest ever (over 30). Over 200 spectators attended the concert at Beit Simcha center and more than 300 spectators watched an on-line broadcast.
- **Grodno:** *Yom HaShoa* was marked with a Peace March, attended by over 100 participants. Progressive leaders, representatives from Chabad as well as the Russian Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran religious communities took part in the commemoration of over 29,000 Jews who perished. The ceremony was held in Grodno's Grand Synagogue. Reform leaders in the city presented the Jewish Museum with a new Haggadah and read a letter from Rita Fruman Netzer Coordinator FSU (and native of Grodno).
- Rabbi Grisha Abramovich was in Vitebsk July 25 to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Mark Chagall and his first wife Bella, conducting a model *Chuppa* of their wedding.
- **Minsk:** *Yom Yerushalyim* was marked by all three congregations with special guests from various embassies and other Jewish organizations in the city.
- Over 1,500 Jews celebrated the "Festival of Lights, Freedom and Miracle" in Belarus. Over 30 Hanukah events were held by leaders of the Progressive Jewish communities around the country.

## Russia

- **Moscow:** A new Progressive congregation in Moscow, *Or Chadash*, registered with the Russian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Professor Michael Chlenov, a well-known and respected figure in Russia in Jewish, academic and social circles, is the Chairman of the congregation. The congregation held their first Pesach Seder with 30 participants.
- *Le Dor va Dor* in Moscow initiated a new project this year: Ulpan Mega-Bayt a self-sufficient project which offers high standards of Hebrew-language teaching and Poetry of Hebrew Language using the Hebrew Alphabet as an inspiration for the congregation's annual calendar.
- Over 110 congregation members celebrated Purim. The theme was "The Celebration of Colors" inspired by Holi, an Indian festival of color.
- **St. Petersburg:** Over 300 people took part in the High Holiday celebrations at Shaarei Shalom led by Rabbi Helena Rubinstein with 180 people taking part in the different events held for Rosh Hashanah, including special guests from other Jewish organizations and visitors from the United States and Israel. Events included prayers with the participation of the St. Petersburg Boys' Choir.
- **Chelyabinsk:** Hava Nagila hosted a conference: *The 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a Century of National Disaster*, commemorating acts such as the *Shoa* and the Armenian genocide.
- **Krasnodar:** The Makor Congregation held their annual International Festival of Jewish Culture "Shalom, my friend, Shalom!" in October at the Centre of National Cultures with over 120 people attending.

## Crimea

- Machon graduate Kira Grublite continues her work in Simferopol serving as community and spiritual leader in the city and in other Reform Crimean congregations.
- Over 300 people took part in Passover celebrations in four communities in Crimea (Simferopol, Evpatoria, Kerch and Sevastopol).

## Twinning and missions

- A delegation from the Atlanta Federation visited Beit Simcha in Minsk and the inter-regional camp program in July. They met with staff and congregation members. The delegation completed the last letters of a mezuzah scroll and along with camp participants celebrated with a special ceremony, which included a *Mincha* service filmed live and watched by parents.
- Hava Nagalia in Chelyabinsk continues to strengthen the connection with their sister community "Menorah" in Manchester (UK). Once a month throughout the year, members of both communities conducted a shiur on Skype.

## Pesach in the FSU

- In 2015/5775, nearly 5,000 members of our congregations and Jews all over the FSU participated in Passover activities organized by our Reform Movement there, despite the financial and political instability in the region. Ten HUC students took part in the 12<sup>th</sup> WUPJ-HUC Pesach Project, travelling to congregations in Belarus, Russia and Crimea.

### **Netzer Winter and Summer Camps and Seminars**

- The Ivria day camp in Odessa held a winter version of the program in January for over 20 participants.
- A successful Netzer seminar for young Crimean leadership in Simferopol took place at the end of January.
- Three leadership Klau Conferences took place in Minsk in February, April and June with 40 participants from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.
- The Special Needs Integration camp took place outside of Moscow in June 2-8 with a total of 115 people taking part.
- The inter-regional summer camp program that included four successful camp sessions was held again this year in Belarus at a facility called Lidia located outside of Minsk. A total of eleven camps and seminars, day camps in Russia, Crimea and Ukraine were held with over 800 participants.

### **Conferences and Festivals**

- The Limmud conference took place in Moscow at the end of April. Our movement was very active. Rabbis Lyskovoy, Bimbat and Cantor Karpenko led Kabbalat Shabbat and Havdallah services that were very well attended.
- FSU leadership: Alex Kagan, Rabbis Helena Rubinstein, Grisha Abramovich, and Julia Gris, along with Rita Fruman, took part in the 37<sup>th</sup> World Union Connections conference in Rio in May updating conference participants on developments in the different communities, stressing the importance of connections with Reform congregations worldwide.
- Rabbi Alex Dukhovny participated in the AJC's Global Forum in Washington, DC on the most significant topics affecting the global Jewish community.
- Rabbis Gregory Abramovich and Leonid Bimbat, Netzer Coordinator for Belarus Artur Raisky and Alex Kagan took part in the URJ Biennial in Orlando, Florida, giving presentations, updating participants on activities and visiting different communities in North America to increase awareness of the Reform communities in the FSU.
- The 18<sup>th</sup> International Chanukah Festival of Short Films took place December 11-13 in Minsk. The festival was run by the Jewish Agency for Israel in Belarus. Once again, Netzer groups had excellent results winning five of the eight awards: Netzer Minsk won the main prize, movie of the year, best script and best editing. Netzer Kiev was voted audience favorite and also received a special prize from Rabbi Grisha Abramovich.

### **MASA**

- The 11<sup>th</sup> annual five-month MASA program in Israel with eight participants from the FSU began in September. Participants learn Hebrew, take part in lectures with Reform content and become acquainted with the different Reform institutes in Israel. The program has once again been chosen as one of the best offered by MASA.

*For more information about our activities in the FSU, please contact us at: [debbie@wupj.org.il](mailto:debbie@wupj.org.il)*

*The FSU biennial conference will be held on September, 2016.*



## ISRAEL ISRAEL MOVEMENT FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM (IMPJ)

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Reuven Marko, Chairperson, IMPJ  
Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Executive Director, IMPJ

This past year, the highlight of the WUPJ and IMPJ cooperation is manifested by the WUPJ-created Reserve Fund utilizing the proceeds of the sale of the Shmuel HaNagid building. This new fund which is managed cooperatively by lay leadership of the WUPJ and IMPJ is a fantastic model for new areas of activity that we are developing together. As we go deeper into the 21st century we are realizing more and more that the world is becoming an interconnected place and that it is global relationships which will ensure the long-term success of our work. It is with this in mind that in mid-2015, the IMPJ established "DOMIM" - Alike: The Israel-Diaspora relations initiative. DOMIM is dedicated to forming meaningful relationships between Reform congregations in Israel and those around the world. Since beginning its work in May 2015, and under the leadership of Rabbi Nir Barkin, DOMIM has proved to be very successful, having established 100 partnerships thus far.

The IMPJ remains committed to its central goal of significantly increasing the number of Israelis involved in Reform and pluralistic Jewish experiences. This happens in our congregations, educational programs, and activities throughout Israel, ensuring that every Jewish Israeli will have a pluralistic egalitarian Jewish option in proximity to where they live. We are expanding our activities every year according to the vision of our 2020 strategic plan.

The IMPJ's work continues to make an impactful footprint in Israeli society. 2015 saw 45 congregations and Minyanim across the country. One of the newest initiatives was established in the southern city of Ashdod, focusing on the Russian-speaking community in the city, following a grassroots initiative by residents. This minyan is led by an immigrant from the FSU who made Aliyah over a decade ago. Another new minyan in the city of Hadera had its first program over Simchat Torah and is expected to begin monthly Kabbalat Shabbat services in 2016. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Israelis are exposed to Reform Judaism, as practiced in the Holy Land, at Shabbat services, High Holiday services and programs, as well as through life-cycle events, including Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, weddings and even funerals.

Last year, the IMPJ hired a new rabbinic staff person, Rabbi Mira Regev, to head the content and culture department. This new position has led to a significant increase in the number of liturgical texts and cultural programs organized by the IMPJ. Programs and liturgy include topics such as tolerance and practicing the value of b'Tzelem Elohim, holiday programs on Tu b'Shvat, Lag b'Omer and Shavuot, and greater programming for young adults, such as a getaway Yom Kippur program for over 60 young adults at Neveh Shalom this past High Holiday season.

This past year, the IMPJ has also increased its programming in the field of tolerance and the promotion of a shared society. We expanded the "Meeting Neighbors" Jewish-Arab relations project, bringing together families from IMPJ congregations with their Arab neighbors. We also developed a tolerance educational curriculum titled "Adabranah Shalom – I Shall Speak the Word of Peace". Both of these initiatives, as well as others in the field of the promotion of a shared society in Israel, will be continued and expanded in 2016.

The Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), the IMPJ arm for public and legal advocacy, has continued to enjoy great victories in fighting racial discrimination and outlawing gender segregation in public spaces and on radio stations. Keren b'Kavod – the IMPJ Fund for Humanitarian Assistance and Social Responsibility - continues to provide hundreds of food packages for families in need in all sectors of Israeli society, empowerment programs for women from underprivileged populations, and tolerance programs for Jewish and Arab youth.

In last year's report, we stressed our commitment to developing new sources of revenue for the IMPJ in order to not be completely dependent on philanthropy. We are in the process of implementing initial feasibility studies on three potential projects that fit the ideology and mission of the IMPJ and have potential for bringing revenue to the movement. These include, Reform burial, a year-long seminar and summer camp facility, and "hostels" for challenged populations within the proximity of Reform congregations. This endeavor was embarked upon with professional due diligence and fiscal responsibility. Additionally we have instituted professional practices to ensure budget stability in the face of currency fluctuations.

We call on the leadership of the WUPJ to join us in developing the capacity to meet the needs of the next decade of growth of the Israel Reform Movement, and enable us to continue to create new congregations, educational projects, programs for young adults, shared society initiatives, and maintain our role as an authentic Israeli Jewish voice for democracy and tolerance. We further believe that the centrality of Israel in Jewish life further puts a responsibility to be even more involved and active with connections to our fellow Reform Jews wherever they are on the globe.

The impact of the IMPJ on Israeli society and world Jewry is becoming stronger every day. It is the combination of grassroots initiatives in Israeli society, together with stronger bonds with its partners overseas that ensures that this continues to happen. We are committed to continuing our efforts to promote a pluralistic and an egalitarian Jewish Israeli society. We count on a strong bond of friendship and true partnership with the WUPJ to ensure that we meet these goals in 2016 and beyond. And we further extend an invitation to join us at our 2016 Biennial which will take place 27-28 May 2016, in Shefayim.

*The Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism is located at 13 King David Street, Jerusalem 9410125, 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](mailto:davidb@reform.org.il)*

***The IMPJ biennial conference will be held in Shefayim, Israel on May 27-28, 2016.***



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

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Raul C. Gottlieb, President, Latin American Region (WUPJ-LA)  
Karin Zingerevitz, Executive Director  
Berta Zylberstajn, Executive Secretary

### **Connections Rio 2015**

With more than 300 delegates from 20 countries savoring inspiring speeches, excellent lectures and plenary meetings, innovating examples of *Tikun Olam*, enjoying exciting City Tours and a great deal of dance and music, our region has, for the first time, hosted the WUPJ Biennial Conference. The experience has made us proud, energized and connected, brimming with **Simchah, Soul and Solidarity**.

The WUPJ's President, Rabbi Daniel Frelander, and the new Chair, Carole Sterling, have sent out a letter which described the 37th Biennial conference which took place in May in Rio de Janeiro as "memorable". "We are very grateful to you, the WUPJ's youngest and most vibrant region, for your attendance and hospitality. We are anxious to strengthen this rich partnership which provides for the growth of progressive Judaism in the whole of Latin America, as well as fortifies the marvelous congregations represented by the WUPJ Latin America."

#### **Special Gatherings**

During CONNECTIONS, some groups held exclusive gatherings: the *Mifgash TaMaR Seminar*, in which 35 young adults and future community leaders met up and exchanged in new ideas and experiences; the 9th edition of *Lashir Benefesh - chazanim* gathering – more than 30 cantors enjoyed participating in workshops with Neshama Carlebach and Josh Nelson; the *Rabbinic Kallah* brought together 30 Rabbis and religious leaders from different communities worldwide.

All these groups received the support of WUPJ-LA, which offered scholarships for travel and registration for more than 35 professionals and volunteers of its affiliates.

#### **Rabbi Panken spoke of the challenges facing Reform Judaism**

During a trip to Brazil for Connections 2015, Rabbi Aaron Panken, President of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), participated in the *Kabbalat Shabat* and Saturday morning services at Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP) in São Paulo, also meeting with youth and community leaders.

*"Currently we have also witnessed several changes in society, thereby causing us to reflect on how it is possible to be part of a religion when many people no longer believe religion to be something good. I think that Reform Judaism is the best way forward."*

#### **Projeto Alcance (Outreach Project)**

Projeto Alcance aims to bring together WUP-LA affiliated communities by sharing human and educational resources enhancing study and learning opportunities. WUPJ-LA represents more than 35 communities in six countries.

Associação Cultural Israelita de Brasília – ACIB (Brazil) welcomed WUPJ Latin America's President, Raul Gottlieb, who was invited to give a lecture. During his presentation, Raul made an analysis of the evolution of the tradition of Judaism and Jewish wisdom in adapting – and reforming – the tradition whenever this was necessary, with the purpose of maintaining the importance of the religion and its values.

ACIB also receives a monthly visit by Professor Miriam Markus who is sponsored by WUPJ-LA. During each visit, Prof. Markus gives a sermon on the week's *parashah* and, after a communal dinner, chats with synagogue members on a variety of subjects. Prof. Markus also participates in planning activities in conjunction with the team which organizes the *Shabat leladim*, young groups and elderly members with whom she has an ongoing educational project.

This year *Ruaj Ami* Community in Santiago (Chile) received visits from Rabbis from Brazil. Rabbi Ruben Sternschein, of CIP, was there in January, and Rabbi Rogério Z. Cukierman in June. Each developed a series of activities in the community. The general feeling after the visits was that this initiative could be a model for cooperation between the progressive communities of Latin America.

Centro Israelita de Pernambuco (Brazil) received a visit from the Soferet Rachel Reichhardt to inspect the

condition of 15 ancient *Sifrei Torah* and to certify that they are kosher. On her visit to Pernambuco, she celebrated Saturday morning services, marking it the first time in Recife that religious services had been conducted by a woman.

Associação Israelita Catarinense (Brazil) welcomed Professor and Rabbi Joseph Edelheit from the St. Cloud University in the USA. During his stay in Florianopolis, he met with Roselane Neckel, Rector of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), where they discussed the advance of Anti-Semitism.

### **Seminars and International Gatherings**

Annually, WUPJ-LA sends regional participants to seminars hosted in Israel.

The Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators included the participation of five educators from our region.

*"It was a seminar which every educator and lover of Judaism should attend. I am sure that I'll take away with me several enriching and inspiring activities that I learnt during this event." Bety Diamant of Associação Religiosa Israelita from Rio de Janeiro (ARI-RJ)*

*"The group consisted of educators from all parts of the world, who broadened discussions with different points of view and experiences. In addition to the course, we formed a group which is now in touch and is able to share experiences, ideas and contents." Vivian Cukier, from CIP*

With the assistance of WUPJ-LA, CIP's summer camp was represented by its *madrich*, Ariel Kövesi, at the Tnuah Netzer Olami world seminar, held in January in Jerusalem. The young leader considered the Veida Netzer Olamit 2015 a "great opportunity to learn and exchange experiences."

More than five thousand people participated in November's URJ Biennial **2015**, organized by Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), which took place in Orlando, FL. Participants included: 540 Rabbis, 120 chazanim, a volunteer choir with 120 people, 250 heads of congregations, educators, and congregation members. The URJ and the WUPJ have always enjoyed very strong ties which today are being further strengthened under the direction of Carole Sterling and Rabbi Daniel Frelander, Chair and President of the WUPJ; and Daryl Messinger and Rabbi Rick Jacobs, Chair and President of the URJ.

*"To participate in a URJ Conference is something that every Jew should do at least once in his or her lifetime. I feel increasingly proud of being part of a Judaism which is inclusive, welcoming, modern and active." Miriam Vasserman Vice-president WUPJ-LA*

The Women for Reform Judaism Assembly 2015 enjoyed the participation of Ruth Bohm and Dora Lucia Brenner from Brazil. In their words: *"For the first time, the Group SHIRAT MIRIAM from CIP, has actively participated in a WRJ congress. It is very important to be part of such an active group, and to work so closely with the congregations."*

On another occasion, Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) for Latin America's representative, Ruth Bohm, made a presentation of the WRJ's activities for a group of women in Argentina, with the purpose of forming a sisterhood in Buenos Aires to plan projects for woman's groups, besides taking part in WRJ international assemblies.

### **Education - One of Our Major Goals**

#### Rabbinical Studies Mechinate in Buenos Aires

This year was one of much work and planning aimed at organizing a new training program for Reform Rabbis in our region. This project is expected to revolutionize the development of Jewish leadership in Latin America over the forthcoming years by facilitating the process of Rabbinical training both logically and financially, thus significantly broadening the scope of opportunities for those for whom Rabbinical studies is a personal aspiration. Through the mediation of the WUPJ-LA, Fundación Judaica (Argentina) in partnership with HUC-JIR of Jerusalem will be offering, as of March 2016, a two-year pre-Rabbinical program. This course is designed for students throughout Latin America who will be able to complete their credits either online or onsite.

#### Explaining Progressive Judaism in schools

The Executive Director of WUPJ-LA, Karin C. Zingerevitz, had an informal presentation with high school students at Colégio Renascença in São Paulo, as part of a school program to introduce different Jewish denominations. Karin spoke about how Reform Judaism can open up new horizons for individual endeavors to honor values and traditions.

### Young Leaders Course in São Paulo

Shidrug is a course promoted by CIP for renewing and deepening Judaic knowledge, resulting in a greater qualitative, quantitative and diversified impact on the development of young leader training and its personal relationship with respect to society. The WUPJ-LA is a stakeholder in this innovative and visionary project.

### Monthly Gathering of Young Adults

During the current year, in partnership with Jewish Congress in Latin America, WUPJ-LA promoted several young adult gatherings. At each meeting guest speakers shared their experiences with participants who also learned about the Jewish values involved in each project. To finish off the year, on December 24th, more than 30 volunteers organized and distributed over 100 Christmas dinners and hygiene kits to the homeless, thus giving a more dignified and joyful Christmas to this population. Volunteers finished the night feeling rewarded and satisfied with the opportunity to participate in this experience.

### **Publications**

One of WUPJ-LA's most important projects is the translation of the Torah – A Modern Commentary by Gunther Plaut, the *chumash* (five-book edition of the Torah) most used in the world. This project is in the translation phase and should be ready by the end of 2016. To date, approximately 50% of the project's total value has been raised both in Brazil and abroad. The team includes translators, Rabbis, volunteers and the support of the fundraising group in the US: Yad B'Yad Task Force.

The new edition of the *Devarim* magazine – a publication discussing Brazilian Judaism and beyond, of ARI-RJ, has already reached the homes of its subscribers. *Devarim* is proud to be revolutionizing the quality of articles and Jewish publications in Brazil which, including the present number, has reached its 100th edition, with articles which question and debate, challenging the reader.

***World Union for Progressive Judaism – Latin America (WUPJ-LA) is located at Rua Botucatu, nº 572, Edifício Paulista Liberal Center, 6º andar, cj. 6104023-061, São Paulo, Brasil, tel: +55 11 3206 1160***

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

***The WUPJ-LA biennial conference will be held in São Paulo, Brazil on June 23-25, 2016.***



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

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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 2015:

- **February 2015:** UJCL Executive Director Ileanah Carazo participated in the WUPJ's Beutel Leadership Seminar, 5-15 January, in Jerusalem.
- **May 2015:** UJCL President Phil Gelman attended the WUPJ Biennial Conference – CONNECTIONS 2015, 13-15 May, Rio de Janeiro. In addition to taking advantage of workshop and networking opportunities, the UJCL was pleased to participate in the tribute to Jerry Tanenbaum, Chair of the *Yad b'Yad* Task Force for Latin American Jewry. The UJCL is particularly grateful to Mr. Tanenbaum for believing in the concept of our regional grouping and to the WUPJ for its ongoing support.
- **December 2015:** The UJCL's seventh regional camp took place from 23-29 December. Rabbi Gustavo Kraselnik and Congregation Kol Shearith Israel, Panama successfully organized the camp. In total, nearly 60 young people, ages 8-16, enjoyed a week of fun, learning, and Jewish living. Children from Panama, El Salvador, and Costa Rica participated in the camp, and there were *madrichim* from Panama, El Salvador, Colombia and Venezuela. We thank *Netzer Olami* for sending a *shaliach* from Israel.

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



## NORTH AMERICA UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM (URJ)

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Stephen Sacks (Until November 2015), Chair, URJ  
Daryl Messinger, Chair, URJ  
Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President, URJ

In 2015, the Union for Reform Judaism made much progress toward its 2020 Vision ([2020.urj.org](http://2020.urj.org)) by re-aligning our resources and programs with our strategic priorities.

### **Strengthening Congregations**

We help congregations and communities stay adept and agile, allowing them to proactively respond to the needs of their members and expand the ways in which people can live Jewishly.

At the core of much of our work, a new grouping of staff and programs was developed to focus on this priority. 2015 accomplishments include:

- The launch of multiple Communities of Practice (groups of congregations who work closely together and with the URJ on issues of mutual concern and opportunity), which engage over 70 congregations;
- Thousands of Reform community leaders and professionals are using resources, sharing expertise, and getting answers to their questions about strengthening their congregation on the private networking platform, The Tent, or by contacting the URJ directly through the Knowledge Network, a team dedicated solely to congregational inquiries.
- Successful and positively reviewed in-person leadership training at the Scheidt Seminar for Congregational Presidents, the Had'rachah seminar for lay prayer leaders, URJ board workshops, and the URJ Biennial (attended by 5000 people).
- Key hires with Amy Asin, Rabbi Esther Lederman, and Rabbi Leora Kaye.
- 35 'URJ Communities' have been formed, grouping congregations geographically and allowing leaders to plan community events, share expertise, and come together for training and/or learning.

### **Audacious Hospitality**

We actively work to engage uninspired and unaffiliated Jews, partnering with our congregations and other Movement institutions, to eliminate the barriers that prevented these people from finding their place in Judaism earlier.

- April Baskin became the first Jew of color to serve as a Vice President of the URJ as well as the first person hired to help realize the vision of our new Audacious Hospitality priority.
- The URJ Ruderman Disabilities Inclusion Learning Center ([disabilitiesinclusion.org](http://disabilitiesinclusion.org)) was launched, providing an innovative and interactive online resource center to help Reform congregations to better welcome people with disabilities and their families.
- The General Assembly of the URJ overwhelmingly voted to approve a resolution about the inclusion of transgendered people in Jewish life, a first for the Jewish community as well as for many other major religious groups in North America.
- Our primary outreach website, [ReformJudaism.org](http://ReformJudaism.org), topped four million users since its launch in 2013.
- Dozens of congregations have joined together in communities of practice around the topics of reaching families with young children and engaging young adults.

### **Tikkun Olam**

Through advocacy campaigns, hands-on volunteering opportunities and training for leaders, we galvanize people throughout North America to ensure religious freedom, pluralism, acceptance and justice. Rabbi Jonah Pesner was installed as the new director of the RAC and Rabbi Julie Weill took the helm at Just Congregations, the community organizing project of the Movement.

Through the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in Washington, DC, thousands of Reform Jewish teens, lay leaders and clergy have attended advocacy trainings, met with their legislators, interned with advocacy organizations or attended sessions about social justice at the Biennial or NFTY Convention.

Additionally, networks of clergy organized and advocated for issues ranging from refugees and immigrant rights to voting rights, the environment to religious freedom and more.

Rabbi Seth Limmer, his colleagues in Rabbis Organizing Rabbis, and scores of congregants, joined the Journey for Justice (march for voting rights) during the September holidays marching with a Torah from Alabama to Washington, DC. The RAC also played an important role in helping to organize the journey.

### **Cutting Across Multiple Priorities and Organization Wide**

We celebrated the election of Daryl Messinger as Chair of the URJ, the first female to hold the position in the organization's history.

And while many aspects of our youth work are present in the aforementioned accomplishments, there are specific items worth noting about our Youth efforts.

- In 2015, several programs celebrated milestone anniversaries, including NFTY's 75th, Kutz Camp's 50, and Greene Family Camp's 40th.
- 2015 also marked the biggest year ever in Reform Movement programs with 17,000+ young people participating in more than 50 programs.
- URJ announced the opening of a 16th overnight camp in Southern California to start in Summer 2016.
- Rabbi Elizabeth Wood was hired as the NFTY Director of Learning and Innovation and Beth Rodin was named NFTY Managing Director.

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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](mailto:urj@urj.org)*

***The URJ biennial conference will be held in Boston, United States on December 6-10, 2017.***



## SOUTH AFRICA

### SOUTH AFRICAN UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM (SAUPJ)

Alvin Kushner, SAUPJ Chairperson

The South African Region consists of three sub-regions, each with its own Chairperson who serves as a member of the National Board of the SAUPJ. We have ten Synagogues served by seven Rabbis throughout South Africa.

**The East Coast Region:** (*Chairman: Prof Antony Arkin*) has three small congregations spaced over hundreds of kilometres along the East coast of South Africa. The well-run congregations run religious services and celebrations of festivals, with participation in broader Jewish Community events such as *Yom Hashoah*, *Yom Hazikaron*, and *Yom Ha'atzmaut*. The communities have shrunk to a third over the past few decades. Emigration has resulted in aging communities remaining, while the Jews by Choice program helps to top up the numbers. There is one Rabbi in the region. During the year, a successful Rabbinic *Kallah* took place in Durban with all seven Progressive Rabbis in the country attending. Due to Jewish migration the shul in Durban has had to be sold because it was so large and the congregation is building a new shul instead. Durban was supposed to host the SAUPJ Biennial but because the congregation will be without a permanent home in 2016, the July 2016 SAUPJ Biennial Conference will be held to Cape Town. Progressive leadership plays a significant role in communal structures in the East Coast and in the national leadership of the Progressive movement.

**Gauteng Region:** (*No current Chairperson*) There are four independent synagogues: Bet David in Sandton, Beit Emanuel in Parktown, Temple Israel in Hillbrow, and Beit Menorah in Pretoria. There has been considerable migration in the last 30 years causing a shrinking of congregations. Temple Bet David in Sandton, has sold acres of ground, and will be building a new Shul complex on the retained land. Gauteng shuls have embraced the worldwide Shabbat Project.

Our oldest Progressive Synagogue in South Africa is Temple Israel in Hillbrow which was recently honoured by the Historical Monuments Commission of the City of Johannesburg. The Region has three Rabbis, two at Bet David and one at Bet Emanuel. Rabbi Julia Margolis who is based at Bet David is the first and only female Rabbi in South Africa.

Kendyl Jacobson, the current Netzer Rosh, was appointed as Youth Leader and will relocate from Durban to commence her duties in Gauteng. One matter of concern is that the Jewish cemetery in Johannesburg will not allow Progressive Jews to be buried among the Orthodox Jews. They have a separate section for Reform Jews.

**Western Cape Region** (Cape Town): (*Chairperson: Linda Thorn*) The Western Cape comprises three synagogues, which are led by a President, an Executive Director and an elected Board with representation from all three congregations. The three resident Rabbis rotate over the three congregations. Each centre or synagogue has its own ethos and blend of styles of services and activities that bring opportunity for great diversity and individual preferences for the approximately 1,000 families who are currently members of the Cape Town Progressive Jewish Congregation.

The Progressive Jewish component comprises about 20% of the total population of Jewish people in Cape Town. The community faces many challenges, one of which is the traditionally Orthodox education at the Herzlia Jewish Day School attended by almost 2,500 Jewish children. Many of the children who attend the school come from Progressive Jewish homes. Inroads are being made to implement more open and inclusive forms of Jewish education. Temple Israel Cape Town has appointed a youth worker and together with the incumbent Netzer *Shlucha* we hope to attract more youth to become involved. The Jewish calendar has been filled with activities and celebrations connected to the various rites of passage and holidays.

Rabbi Richard Newman has started a successful satellite service on *Shabbat* mornings at Good Hope Park, a retirement home. This serves as a bridge-building opportunity, as many of the retirees who attend the services are from an Orthodox background.

The highlight of the past year was "The Shabbat Project". We had two visiting Rabbis, Rabbi Leon Morris and Rabbi Alyson Solomon, in addition to our own three Rabbis. The program included a communal Challah bake, Shabbat dinners and a weekend of services, *shiurim*, discussion groups and activities for all age groups.

**ARZENU:** (*Chairman: Prof Antony Arkin*) participated in the annual WZO meeting held in Israel. His overseas visits are useful and help us to retain our movement. We continue to face an enormous challenge of getting sufficient participation in the ARZENU movement throughout South Africa.

**Netzer:** Summer Camp was held in the Western Cape. Numbers need to be increased. Considerable funds are allocated by our communities to ensure that children attend the Netzer summer camp and participate in the seminars.

**TaMaR:** has not been active but with the new *shalicha* and youth leader we are hoping to activate this age group in South Africa in the coming year.

**Women of Progressive Judaism:** (*Chairperson: Giddy Lief*) The dedicated ladies of the WPJ have been active throughout South Africa with projects that have benefited our own Progressive congregation, and have participated in numerous activities and charitable causes outside the congregation.

**SACRED:** (*Chairperson: Rabbi Julia Margolis*) The South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity provides a progressive Jewish voice on relevant social, moral, ethical and religious issues in South Africa. It aims to counteract religious discrimination in all its forms. This includes discrimination against women as well as prejudice against people of different sexual orientations.

**General:**

South Africa received visits from BDF activists stirring anti-Israel/ pro-Palestinian sentiment which manifested itself in an undercurrent of anti-Semitism throughout South Africa. Graduates of Jews by Choice have proven to play a very important role throughout our South African Progressive communities. With the collapse of the Rand (ZAR) against the Dollar (USD) this year by over 35%, the Israel-based programmes, such as Shnat and Biennials, are becoming increasingly out of reach for many South Africans. Progressive Jews have a high profile in a number of organisations, playing an active role in the Zionist Federation, Jewish Board of Deputies, United Communal Fund, Interfaith programs, Union of Jewish Women, the Mensch Network as well as our own projects which incorporate many Tikkun Olam programs. The Progressive contribution is working hard at building bridges within and across the Jewish community.

The Johannesburg-based SAUPJ office has been closed and is being run from Cape Town. The administrative assistant will assist with the planning for the SAUPJ Biennial, a festival of Progressive Judaism in South Africa. This will take place in July 2016. We look forward to attracting attendees from all over South Africa and the world.

*The SAUPJ is located at Houghton 2041, Johannesburg, 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](http://www.saupj.org.za), or send an email to [saujp@worldonline.co.za](mailto:saujp@worldonline.co.za)*

*The SAUPJ biennial conference will be held in Cape Town, South Africa on July 15-17, 2016.*

*Join us for WUPJ Travel Tour to South Africa from July 6-17, 2016 for more information -  
<http://www.ayelet.com/WUPJSA2016.aspx>*



Rabbi Steve Burnstein, Director

### Overview

The Anita Saltz International Education Center is the educational arm of the WUPJ. In the course of the last few years, the center has developed a strong following and brand recognition for delivering exceptional high-quality educational programs. We offer a range of services: "branded" perennial seminars in Israel (subsidized and sponsored); seminars and training programs in communities outside of Israel; web-based educational content and distance learning initiatives; and programmatic content provision to WUPJ affiliates, regions, and other audiences.

During 2015 the Saltz Center held four Israel seminars in addition to multiple programs abroad including several programs in Hungary. We facilitated workshops with a number of strategic partners including the WZO/ARZA/ARZENU, NETZER, TaMaR, MARAM (Israeli Reform Rabbinic Association), and Reconstructionist Rabbinic Association. The Saltz Center offered nine distance learning programs. We also ran programs as part of WUPJ international and regional conferences in Rio de Janeiro, Orlando, and Atlanta.

### Seminars in Israel:

In February, twenty-one Reform Jewish leaders from ten different countries joined the Beutel Seminar for Progressive Jewish Leadership. They spent ten days traveling throughout Israel 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 the strategic planning process; analyzing leadership qualities; and addressing specific issues facing our communities as identified by the participants themselves. 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." This year was also special in that Austin Beutel joined the group for most of the program. Austin was pleased to see the program attracting such talented leaders from across the globe. 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 Jewish leadership.

In July, participants in this year's Bergman Seminar for Jewish Educators came from World Union communities in Argentina, Brazil, England, France, Germany, India, Poland, Spain, and the United States. They met with innovative educators and cutting-edge projects while exploring together how to use these experiences to enhance their own communities. This extraordinary seminar uses the sites of Israel to delve into issues vital to Jewish education, incorporating Jewish texts to include the voice of our tradition. Throughout, 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 Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators is sponsored by the Bergman brothers, Stanley, a longtime supporter of Progressive Jewish causes, and Leslie, President of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ), and we thank them for their ongoing support and commitment.

WUPJ's Roswell Klal Yisrael Fellowship was a year-long program in conjunction with the Union for Reform Judaism's (URJ) designed to nurture and inspire young leaders, ages 20-26, from North America, Israel, and Europe as they continue to serve their camps and home communities. Participants in the first cohort came from the United States, Israel, Hungary, Poland, Germany, and Belarus, and were nominated by URJ camp directors, the IMPJ and the WUPJ. The program included a week-long seminar in Israel, a second seminar in Budapest, and the third seminar in Orlando (in conjunction with the URJ Biennial). The fellows joined the WUPJ Jewish Southern Civil Rights Journey, alongside WUPJ leaders, for an in-depth case study of leadership and community activism in times of crisis, within the community and beyond.

In October the Saltz Center worked in close cooperation with ARZENU and ARZA to offer an International Reform Zionism Seminar for Young Adults in advance of the 37th World Zionist Organization Congress. The goals of the seminar were to acquaint participants with Reform/Progressive Zionist principles and ideals, enrich their Reform Jewish religious experience, and enhance their leadership skills with tools that would help them develop and strengthen existing ARZENU organizations or help them start ARZENU chapters in their countries or communities.

### **Seminars Abroad**

We ran two very successful programs in Budapest. The first was a series of meetings with local lay and professional leadership. This was the beginning of a process of strategic planning and leadership development for our two local WUPJ communities: Beit Orim and Sim Shalom. The second program was an intensive young leadership weekend retreat. These programs are part of an ongoing project in close cooperation with the EUPJ and West London Synagogue to broaden the impact of Progressive Judaism in Hungary.

Rabbi Burnstein and Paul Liptz also led programs and served as scholar in residence with several of our international communities including Spain, the Czech Republic, Brazil, Poland and in the United States.

### **Saltz online**

In addition to our ongoing Torah from Around the World, this year we offered nine webinars averaging 100 participants each. We also continue to use our Saltz Center Facebook page and individual seminar groups as tools to better engage our alumni.

### **Alumni Engagement**

During 2015, the Saltz Center significantly enhanced efforts to engage alumni. Peter Buchsbaum and Jim Cherney are spearheading this effort that includes enriching our webinar series, planning local and regional reunions, and the creation of an alumni board.

### **Educational content provision**

In addition to the importance of continually 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. This is aimed at augmenting and improving the product the various tour providers offer their groups by supplying an added value educational reform content element, tailor made to a general program.

The center also provided educational content and programs to the URJ, ARZA/ARZENU, Netzer Olami, TaMaR, Noar Hadash (Reconstructionist Youth Movement), HUC student groups, and various visiting tour groups.

*The Saltz International Education Center is located at 6 Shama Street, Jerusalem 94101  
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*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](mailto:saltz@wupj.org.il)*

*The Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators will be held in Israel from July 14-24, 2016. For information and registration - <http://saltz-center.org/page.aspx?id=46>*



## NETZER OLAMI AND TAMAR

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Maoz Haviv, Director

Both movements – Netzer and TaMaR - reach out to youth and young adults across a very wide age range, from 10 up to 35. We offer Reform/Progressive educational activities to strengthen their Jewish and Zionist identity through summer and winter camps, weekend seminars, trips (including trips to Israel), local, continental and worldwide gatherings and through *Shnat Netzer* – our successful gap year program in Israel.

### Where we operate today

Today Netzer and TaMaR are active in about twenty countries worldwide: In Europe – The UK, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, Poland, the Czech Republic; in the FSU – Russia, Belarus, Ukraine; In South and Central America – Panama, Brazil, Argentina and Chile; in North America – Canada and the USA; and in Australia, South Africa and Israel.

Our aim is for graduates of Netzer to join TaMaR, our young adult branch. However, in some cases TaMaR is established and functions where Netzer does not, such as in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Of course, we may reach much better educational results when we are able to work with younger children. But, we will work towards building a Netzer framework in those areas where Netzer is yet to function.

Netzer works closely with our NA affiliate NFTY, as well as with our Israeli Movement Noar Telem.

### Who runs the movements

Each *Snifff* (branch) is run by locally elected or volunteer team, sometimes with the support of a director appointed by the local community. The branches are supported by the youth movement headquarters in Jerusalem which includes: the movement director – *Mazkir, Chinuch* – Education coordinator, *Shnat* director, *Etgar* (challenge) coordinator, Spanish desk coordinator, FSU coordinator, office administrator and *Shnat* and *Etgar madrichim*.

### NETZER:

#### **Netzer Olami Veida:**

The most important worldwide gathering for the movement is its annual conference in Israel, *Veida*. Top delegates from each Netzer branch come together for a week to discuss relevant issues, to deal with the movement structure, policy and programming, and also to participate in field trips, volunteering enterprises and *Tikun Olam* activities. The *veida* exposes them to different aspects of Israeli society as well as developments in the Jewish and the Reform world. The 2015 *Veida* took place in January and was a great success with 27 delegates from 14 countries and 15 *sniffim* and the 2016 *Veida* will take place from January 14th to January 20th and will focus amongst other things on today's refugee problem.

#### **Shnat Netzer:**

*Shnat Netzer* (Netzer gap year program in Israel) is an eight to ten month program, offering its participants leadership training, high quality educational workshops, opportunities to immerse themselves in Israeli society and actively practice communal life combined with *Tikun Olam* and the values of Reform Judaism. Graduates of this program can be found in progressive communities worldwide as active and leading figures of their communities as Rabbis, educators, community leaders, teachers and committed synagogue members.

During 2015–2016 45 movement graduates participated in both programs – 35 in the English-language *Shnat* and 10 in the *Masa* program of the FSU.

Netzer also operates an *Aliyah* desk which supports Netzer Olim as they build their new lives in Israel, connecting them with our local communities and with people of their own age group.

#### **Shlichim (Emissaries):**

Netzer used to have nine *Shlichim* sent from Israel for one to three years to support the *Sniffim* both educationally and logistically. Their contribution to the movement is vital. Yet, with the deep cuts in the Jewish Agency budget, the allocation for *Shlichut* dropped sharply. In 2015 we had five *Shlichim* – two in

Australia, one in South Africa, one in Holland and one in China. As For 2016, the Jewish Agency budget will only allow us *Shlichim* to Australia and Holland. We are trying hard to find a way to get *Shlichim* to our *Sniffim* in South Africa and Germany as well.

**TaMaR:**

TaMaR is the *hagshama* young adult movement of the WUPJ. It is supported by the World Zionist Organization and is a part of the global youth and young adult Zionist Hagshama Movement's family.

The core philosophy of TaMaR, our young adult's organization for ages 20 to 35, is:

- **Am UMedinat Yisrael** (The people and the land of Israel): The centrality of Israel to the Jewish identity.
- **Progressive Jewish Community:** Embracing each member to be part of Progressive Jewish life.
- **Chinuch** (Education): Promoting and learning about Israel, Progressive Judaism and encouraging leadership training.
- **Tikun Olam:** Social action as a personal challenge.

During 2015 TaMaR ran 15 seminars worldwide – the two major ones were the seminar held in Rio parallel with CONNECTIONS 2015, and the European continental seminar which took place in October, Berlin, Germany. Other seminars, all organized by local young adult leaders and supported by the TaMaR head office in Jerusalem, took place in Australia, Belarus, Russia, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Israel and others.

TaMaR also held special activities in Israel for Netzer and TaMaR Olim, graduates of the movement who have made Aliya to Israel, in partnership with the Israeli movements.

We also work closely with young adult organizations in Europe and elsewhere such as Jenerations in the UK, Jung and Judischen in Germany, Tlamim in Israel and others.

*The Netzer and TaMaR headquarters are located at 13 King David Street, Jerusalem 9410125, 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](http://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](mailto:office.netzerolami@wupj.org.il)*

***The TaMaR Conference will held Jerusalem, Israel on March 30 - April 3, 2016.***



Boaz Ben Chayim, Manager  
Shai Pinto, VP and COO

Mercaz Shimshon-Beit Shmuel (MS-BS) hosted approximately 110,000 people during 2015: 36,000 people enjoyed and participated in our cultural and educational programs; 25,000 visited Jerusalem and stayed at BS-MS Hotel and Guesthouse and 50,000 celebrated events and participated in seminars or conventions.

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

- a. *Tu B'Shvat* was celebrated with tree planting activities and a ceremony for staff.
- b. Purim activities included family walks and a family oriented program.
- c. Pesach was marked with our traditional and successful "Charoset tours" program, as well as with a special *Pesach* lecture and a full screen movie.
- d. Tikkun *Lei Shavuot* was held in the Hirsch Theatre, with a musical performance by Daniela Spector combined with a conversation with Tamir Nir 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 Hasidic stories and thoughts.
- g. *Chanukah* events included a lecture on the topic of "The meaning of light in the Zohar" and a wide array of "*Chanukia* walks".

### Educational Courses

This department offered almost 690 participants three full semesters of various courses centered on Jewish and Israeli learning, as well as over 260 participants who took part in one-time lectures.

Our spring semester had 259 members, the fall semester had 300 members, and the summer semester hosted 128 regular members. In addition, we welcomed 150 participants in the spring semester and 45 participants in the summer semester, and 110 participants in the fall semester to our one-time lectures.

Courses continued to focus on Jewish and Israeli studies, along with interdisciplinary subjects such as literature, art, philosophy, architecture history, etc. Some course topics included: "Kings and Prophets and Whatever In-between" which analyzed the complex relationship between kings and prophets according to the Bible and the Talmud's interpretation; "Weekly Torah Portion according to the Zohar" with renowned author Dov Elbaum; "Spinoza's Philosophy" which explored Spinoza's thought on the subjects of God, the world, man and his happiness; "Mind/body Kabbalistic psychology" which explored medical signals and symptoms in our life story; and "Arabic for Beginners" which 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. Sessions included studies of Shabbat, Jewish holidays and ceremonies, Jewish prayers and various Jewish denominations, which were taught by Reform Rabbis and speakers. The weekend included walking tours and accommodation at the Beit Shmuel Hotel and Guesthouse.

Also, in spite of the complex situation in Jerusalem, we opened for the first time an intensive Arabic summer course which had full registration.

### Educational Walks (*Siyurim*)

Our educational walks and trips are a brand name in this field and a market leader in educational Reform content. The *siyurim* revolve mostly around the multitudes 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 cancellations due to the security situation, there were 127 "Hoveret tours" offered to the public, with 2893 participants, and 64 private group tours with more than 2,340 participants. All participants enjoyed a professional guided tour and uniquely crafted content.

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 Shpi" as well as Passover and Pascha walks; "Light Festival" tours; a series of political debates; an archeological tour at the city of David; specialized walks for Shavuot through Jerusalem; our "Slichot" and "Sukkoth" tours during the High Holiday season; "The Desert of the Holy City"; "Chanukiot walks" and more.

Our cultural activities were seriously affected by the security situation in the second half of the year. Since September, 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 we also offered tours to areas outside of Jerusalem (such as Jaffa and Tel-Aviv, Ramla, Kinneret and others), but an adverse impact was felt nonetheless.

We are continuing to develop unique tours further afield in various areas of Israel to help cope with the effects of this situation.

### **Theater and Performances**

The theater operates as a venue for hire, available for various performances including theatre, dance, music, stand-up comedy and many functions and conferences.

We are proud of our performances and plays for children, which are a known and requested brand in Jerusalem, now in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this program! These five plays from various leading theatres are carefully selected 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 Jewish holidays. This remains one of the few cultural activities offered to families in Jerusalem on Shabbat!

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"; "Tzamid Festival" for disabled people; "Hullegeb Festival" for Israel- Ethiopian arts; "The Mediteranean Orchestra for Andalusian music; and "Hamshushalayim" events. The theater also hosted some of the "Han" Theater's productions; The "Amateur Theater"'s productions; cultural events for tourists, dance performances, a sell-out "Stand up and Laugh" comedy series and the year-end school performances of dance studios.

Overall, we hosted over 33.000 people who enjoyed the above cultural activities.

### **Art Gallery**

MS-BS hosts a range of lobby exhibitions by local artists throughout the year. These exhibitions, planned by a volunteer curator, change every few weeks and adorn our theatre lobby and entrance hall. We are thinking of expanding the art exhibition area to the fourth floor lobby as well.

### **The Hotel**

In 2015 we were still affected by the events of summer 2014. However, our yearly returning groups helped keep us with a steady occupancy rate. In September, with the renewed outbreak of violence, we lowered our rates for individual travelers, which helped to increase our reservation numbers.

The average occupancy rate for 2015 was 59% (1% less than in 2014). The hotel's average occupancy rate was 58% and the guesthouse's average occupancy rate was 64%. Approximately 75% of our guests were tourists while the remaining 25% were Israelis.

The total room revenue for 2015 showed an increase of 3% from the total room revenue in 2014.

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

We continue 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 also serve as a home for Reform groups from around the world and host World Union-related delegations, including the Netzer Veida, the Beutel Leadership seminar and Bergman Educators seminar.

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

We continue to host food and clothing packing days for the holidays, organized by Keren B'Kavod – the humanitarian arm of IMPJ.

The Hotel is 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.

#### **General**

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

**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](http://www.beitshmuel.com) Reservations can be made online or by contacting our reservation desk at +972 2 620 3403**

**FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE – an exciting new program in cooperation with HUC and IMPJ offers a unique experience in the heart of Jerusalem for all of you visiting Jerusalem in the summer – a joint Kabbalat Shabbat, services, Friday night dinner and a special musical song leading session. All in the inspiring setting of our rooftop overlooking the old city. For more details and to sign up for this experience which is open to all, please visit <http://www.beitshmuel.com/en-us/kabbalat-shabbat>**



## ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

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Dr. Philip Bliss, Chair

Sadly, 2015 was still dominated by global terror in its ugliest manner. In addition, bitter fighting around the Middle East resulted in thousands of deaths and millions displaced, with a refugee crisis looming in Europe and elsewhere. Racism and Anti-Semitism were also on the increase, as was the BDS campaign. In Israel, internal violence, the Palestinian – Israeli conflict and rise of violence called for voices of reason. And with the election of a new right wing government, steps against pluralism continued to trouble us.

WUPJ issued a strong statement in January on the terrorist attack in France where twelve 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, these horrific attacks were only a prelude to the horrible violence in Paris later in the year. Our entire global family lowered its head in the face of the brutal actions and massacre by terrorists in Paris in the summer.

We also voiced our support for the Jewish and general community in Copenhagen in February, when two terrorist attacks at a cafe that was hosting a discussion on free speech and on a synagogue and Jewish cultural center, left three people dead and five police officers wounded.

In Israel, the changing political scene with new elections saw us issue statements on the elections in Israel. The remarks by Prime Minister Netanyahu on Arab-Israeli relations, and later on Jewish Pluralism necessitated a clear moral response. We also voiced our support for the Israeli President, Reuven Rivlin, who was under fire by ultra-orthodox representatives for his inclusive and liberal actions and statements.

Sadly, an outburst of extremist violence gripped Israel during the year: First with the murder of Shira Banki, an innocent 16-year-old Israeli teen, by an ultra-Orthodox man at Jerusalem's Gay Pride Parade; Then in July with the firebombing of the homes of two Palestinian families in the West Bank village of Douma, and the violent aftermath; And with the outbreak of the current wave of terror in Israel, the rash of stabbings and other terror attacks on Israeli citizens.

We condemned these acts which will not deter us from our efforts to strengthen the Jewish people and the State of Israel. We must not allow fear to rule us.

Elsewhere around the world, we joined our Latin American family by expressing shock and horror on the death of Alberto Nisman, lead prosecutor in the search for the truth behind the bombing of the AMIA (Jewish Community Center) building in Bueno Aires

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, as well as continue our successful partnership with our international affiliates in making our voices heard throughout the world.

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.

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. The development of our FSU centers presented a set of challenges to address. There were ramifications to the sale of the Shmuel Hanagid property, with the WUPJ Executive board asked to approve the establishment of Capital Reserve funds from the proceeds of the sale.

Major activities of the Committee in 2015 included:

#### **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 which was completed during the year, and the activity halls, which continued throughout the year. Many changes in safety, security, registration, operational and personnel regulations were enforced this year, requiring significant adaptations on all fronts, and imposing additional staff and resource burdens on the center. The Committee was involved in the replacement process of the BS-MS director, and the recruitment of Boaz ben Haim, a seasoned Hotel Manager, to the position.

Much effort was invested in building a detailed and clear budget for 2015, which planned for ensuring profits from the campus, as well as expanded programming as best possible, given the after-effects of the 2014 summer conflict in Gaza. Whilst the first quarter of the year saw these lingering after-effects, Q1 and Q2 saw improved results. Unfortunately, the security issues which broke out in Jerusalem in September severely affected the operations of the center, with a virtual halt in tourism (international and internal), as well as a significant slowdown in 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. Despite all the above, the center continued to show an operational profit.

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 2016 budget year. The Chair of the WUPJ plans to establish a specific task force that will look at various ways to best utilize the center and the entire complex.

#### **Shmuel Hanagid**

The World Union’s property on Shmuel Hanagid Street was successfully sold in late 2013. Since then, the committee oversaw the tremendously complex implementation of tax procedures and the careful liability clarifications and allocations related to this transaction, leading to the establishment of capital reserve funds as approved by the WUPJ Executive board in the meetings in May 2015. A joint WUPJ-IMPJ committee was set up to receive and review applications for the use of this fund, aimed at investing in capital projects in Israel. During 2015, the committee approved the use of approximately \$230,000 for capital and infrastructure projects in Israel. This marks an end to a very drawn out and complicated process marking over a decade of developments and challenges.

#### **FSU properties**

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

In Minsk and Kiev, the project itself included maintenance and operational costs that help ensure the upkeep and future of the building for years to come. This year, we focused on 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 committee oversaw the interpretation and implementation of revised property regulations, registration requirements and tax payments in each of the countries we operate in the FSU.

In 2016, the committee plans to initiate a global WUPJ asset survey, as well as a comprehensive community FSU asset review in the coming year.



## AUDIT & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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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, replaced by David Robinson who was elected to this position in May 2015, 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, David Robinson and Danny Jaffe, reviewed and approved the 2014 audited reports of the WUPJ Israeli branch and WUPJ-Beit Shmuel.

The Committee also reviewed the ongoing 2011 audit of WUPJ New York, received information on the development of the audit, and will oversee the completion of it. As part of this work, it was involved in the hiring of accounting firm Shalvi Kop to complete our NY audits.

The Committee will then oversee the completion of the 2012-14 NY audits.



Phyllis Dorey, Chair (until May 2015)  
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 2015, 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 aim 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 2016.

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 2015. 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 2016. 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, action-packed year in 2016.

The Committee has ended its activities following the WUPJ Biennial and the election of a new leadership team. A task force on education will be established by the WUPJ Chair during 2016 to look at the roles, opportunities and future services of the education department. We thank Phyllis Dorey who has diligently chaired this Committee for the last four years.



## FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Aaron Bloom (Until May 2015), Vice Chair, Finance  
David Robinson, Vice Chair, Finance  
Danny Jaffe, CFO, Staff

The Finance Committee consists of a small group of dedicated individuals, both volunteers as well as staff, whose roles include monitoring the finances of the World Union, ensuring compliance with numerous statutes from each country in which the WUPJ has a financial interest, receiving advice and guidance on sometimes complicated legal and taxation matters, and more.

Following the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the WUPJ in May 2015 we welcomed a number of new volunteers to the Finance Committee and their local knowledge and financial expertise has made a huge difference to the effectiveness of the Committee. Our thanks go to Anne Molloy, Donna Stein and Ed Burger for agreeing to serve on this Committee.

We also thank Aaron Bloom who completed his term of office as Vice Chair Finance at the AGM. Aaron then took a few month's break and has recently re-joined our Committee. His knowledge of the WUPJ finances as well as USA audit requirements has been invaluable and this has enabled us to complete a number of outstanding tasks.

Our thanks also go to Ron Cohen who served for many years on this Committee and retired from this role in May.

Without the knowledge, expertise, detailed understanding of almost every aspect of the WUPJ, keen financial eye and overall ability to "see the big picture" of Gordon Smith, the WUPJ and the Finance Committee in particular would really have struggled during the year. Every aspect of the WUPJ operations has a financial implication and having Gordon continue to give of his time and expertise so freely has been invaluable.

The staff of the WUPJ continued to work tirelessly on the often thankless tasks required to ensure the WUPJ was able to provide the many services it does throughout the world. Led by our President, Rabbi Daniel Frelander, and Chief Operating Officer, Shai Pinto, the staff at the WUPJ was able to deliver on many of the requirements necessary to ensure the smooth financial operation of the WUPJ.

While all the above people contributed hugely, without the amazing efforts of our Chief Financial Officer Danny Jaffe much of what has been achieved would just not have happened. In addition to dealing with the usual financial pressures of an operation with offices in numerous countries, often with people speaking different languages and having different financial requirements, Danny has had to adapt to the ideas and requirements of a new team of volunteers with the added challenge of having the Vice Chair of Finance reside so far away from the Jerusalem office. This he has done in his usual positive and enthusiastic way and I am personally grateful that Danny has been available at all hours of the day and night to assist the team.

2015 has been a very challenging year in many respects. Unfortunately, a number of events worldwide conspired to work against us from a financial perspective, the result of which was that we did not come close to achieving the 2015 approved budget. Extensive analysis of the shortfalls and variances in 2015 has taken place as the WUPJ cannot continue to incur the losses sustained over the past few years.

The 2016 budget has been very carefully constructed with detailed input from numerous people and the reporting templates revised to ensure the Finance Committee is able to identify challenges in a timely manner, thereby enabling the Management Committee to take appropriate action where necessary.

There are many challenges ahead for the Finance Committee. However, with a dedicated and positive approach we are confident that we will be able to make inroads into restoring the financial wellbeing of the WUPJ.

Our final thanks must go to our Chair Carole Sterling and the Management Committee for their support during this past year. Carole has been a constant source of encouragement and her insight into issues and clear guidance has been inspirational.

We look forward to all members of the WUPJ, whether serving on the International Assembly, Executive Board, Management Committee or any of our other Committees, contributing to the success of the WUPJ by making their personal donations and encouraging their congregations to financially support our efforts so that 2016 becomes a year of massive achievement.



## FSU COMMITTEE

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Anne Molloy, Chair (until May 2015)  
Masha Sheinin, 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**

After two years of research, writing, and analysis done by Masha Sheinin, the Strategic Plan was completed in early 2015. On the basis of the Strategic Plan, Alex Kagan presented the goals of FSU operations for the next five years before members of the Management Committee who were in Israel in November. One of the goals, the establishment of a Rabbinic College in Moscow, is currently being actively implemented. The Executive Board of the WUPJ will be discussing the potential implementation of other parts of this plan in the coming months.

### **Friend-raising and Fundraising Support**

Committee members continue to assist with friend-raising and fundraising for the FSU around Europe and 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.

Committee members were also active in supporting our FSU delegations' attendance at the WUPJ CONNECTIONS convention in Rio in May and the URJ Biennial in Orlando in November. Cherie Half and Linda Levenson activated the 'Smiles for Miles' program, collecting frequent flyer miles to bring as many FSU representatives as possible. Our heartfelt appreciation to both of them for continuing to lead this effort, and to all who have contributed their air miles to be used by our FSU Rabbis and young adults to attend activities elsewhere.

Twinning: Cherie Half continued to reach out to twinned congregations in North America to strengthen the twinning relationships.

### **Committee Meetings**

Anne Molloy and Alex Kagan updated the World Union Management Committee and the Executive Board on achievements and challenges facing the region in Rio in May during the 37<sup>th</sup> WUPJ Convention.

A conference call with new World Union Chair Carole Sterling, Rabbi Daniel Freelander, Anne Molloy, Masha Sheinin and Alex Kagan was held in September to discuss the future activity of the FSU Committee, goals, members and who should chair the Committee.

After years as chair of the FSU Committee, Anne Molloy has stepped down in May at the end of the term. Words are not enough to convey our thanks to Anne for her leadership, wisdom and commitment to the cause of growing the movement in the FSU and leading it down the road to self-sufficiency and independence. As such, Anne has always believed the Committee should be led FSU leaders. Masha Sheinin has taken over in filling the role and a joint chair from North America will join her.



## HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Gordon Smith, Chair (until May 2015)

Jim Cherney, Chair

Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

The Human Resources Committee ended its term in May 2015 with the election of new WUPJ leadership. The new Committee has been instated in September 2015, with Jim Cherney (Denver, USA) replacing Gordon Smith as chair of the Committee. It is now comprised of Jim, Gordon Smith (UK), Ron Hendin (Jerusalem). This composition ensures both local (Israel and NY) and global representation.

We want to thank Ron Cohen (NY, USA) for his many years of contribution to the HR Committee as well as on many other areas of activity.

In 2015, 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 President, COO and MC.

In 2015, 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, department restructuring, 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.

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 Committee members were involved in the recruitment of senior positions at WUPJ in Israel and NY, with the replacement of Rabbi Gary Bretton Grantor by Naomi Smook to head our fundraising office in NY; the selection of Boaz Ben Haim to replace Ruth Kaplan as the director of Beit Shmuel-Merkaz Shimshon, and the replacement of Gidon Ben Zvi as the Marketing Director towards the end of the year.

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

The new Committee headed by Jim Cherney has already held a few meetings, mapping out a detailed agenda for 2016. Our goals include support for the WUPJ strategic planning process regarding future organizational structure, ensuring personnel policies and procedures are in place and up to date with current requirements, and continued attention to good personnel management practices, which will help our organization to develop and remain healthy and efficient.

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 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, acknowledgments and distinction.
- Career planning.



## INVESTMENT AND ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

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G. Leonard Teitelbaum, Chair  
Danny Jaffe, CFO, 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 16 to review the portfolio performance and per protocol on October 27 for the annual assessment and distribution meeting.

In spite of a very difficult market our portfolio managed to exceed its benchmark. While our past performance was above our target of a 10% total return (6-7% appreciation and 3% yield) this past year saw a decline of -1.82% or \$78,000. The projections for 2016 are less than encouraging, the Committee is working hard to not only protect our assets but grow them as well.

Even with a lower portfolio value, the Committee felt comfortable in recommending a distribution of 4%. The overall total distribution this year was \$166,625. 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), David Robinson, and Carole Sterling. Our staff, Danny Jaffe, should be given special mention. And of course, Ann Fields, who puts up with all the requests, is our hero.



## MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

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

I am happy to report that this year saw developments on the marketing front. We began producing materials that are essential to the future of the World Union: a new WUPJ Brochure; new display materials for World Union booths at conferences across the world; and Saltz brochures.

We were very busy promoting CONNECTIONS 2015 in Rio de Janeiro. A full-fledged marketing campaign, both globally and locally in Latin America, including many content pieces, helped promote the event before and during the conference, and helped magnify the post-event influence and effects. The conference helped solidify and promote the WUPJ brand both in Latin America and around our global constituents.

We continued the production of WUPJ News, bringing a new look and dimension to our bi-weekly newsletter, which continues to attract many new subscribers. We updated our Facebook presence and made sure that new stories attracted new WUPJ Facebook friends. We also continued our successful distribution of Torah from Around the World throughout the year.

We reached out to all WUPJ regions to both build active relationships and to ensure that all regions' messages reach the widest worldwide audience.

In addition, we disseminated the organizational reports to both the Management and Executive Board on a regular basis.

We also began planning a new WUPJ website that will hopefully be launched within the next year.

We continued our close work with the Advocacy Committee during the year to help create and distribute WUPJ statements on various topics, press releases and other methods of distribution. Rabbi Frelander was involved in ensuring that WUPJ messages receive the widest possible distribution across the progressive and non-progressive Jewish world. We will remain actively involved in liaising with the media around the world to ensure that the widest possible audience hears the World Union's messages.

Towards the end of the year, we parted with Gidon Ben Zvi as our Marketing Director, and a new marketing professional will be in place by the time this report reaches you all.

This will be my last report as Chair of Marcom for the World Union. I had originally planned to stand down at the Rio Conference after ten years in the job, but at the request of the WUPJ Chair I will continue to support the marketing activities into 2016, when a new chair will be selected as the Committee is reinstated. 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.



## NORTH AMERICAN ADVISORY BOARD (NAAB)

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James A. Cherney, co-chair  
Joan Cohen, co-chair

The North American Advisory Board (NAC/NAAB) is about to enter its third year of operation as the successor to the former North American Council of WUPJ. The Advisory Board, which initially had 30 members, has now grown to over 50, largely through expressions of interest by engaged leaders in URJ and our North American congregations.

### **NAAB engages in the following activities:**

- a. Cultivating through education, travel, advocacy and programming additional interest in World Jewry and the activities of WUPJ in congregations and congregants in URJ congregations.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. Encouraging attendance at WUPJ global and regional conferences.
- e. Development of missions and trips to WUPJ communities in furtherance of the above goals.

### **Here are a few of the highlights of NAAB's work in 2015:**

The Travel Subcommittee, headed by Helene Waranch and Phyllis Levy, worked with staff to develop a two-year travel plan for 2016 including trips appended to various regional WUPJ conferences. Trips are scheduled for Berlin/ London in April 2016, South Africa in July 2016 (led by Rabbi Lennard Thal), and the Far East in November, 2016. The first trip took place immediately following the URJ Biennial in November: a Southern U.S. Civil Rights tour which was joined by young adults from the Roswell Fellows program representing five countries. A great success. A preliminary schedule of trips and missions is already in planning for 2017.

The highlight of the year for the Development Subcommittee was the incredibly successful International Humanitarian Award dinner in Orlando in November which was chaired by Subcommittee heads Tadd Schwab and Lynn Magid-Lazar. The dinner recognized Rabbi Lennard Thal for his long career supporting World Jewry and included the installation of Rabbi Daniel Freelander as WUPJ President. The Development Subcommittee is working closely with Naomi Smook, our new Development Director, on comprehensive plans for 2016. Rabbi Freelander continues to visit communities throughout North America to communicate the message of WUPJ and build broader support.

A final accomplishment of 2015 was the impressive North American participation in the CONNECTIONS meeting in Rio. There were many first timers at that meeting, some of whom have since joined NAAB in its work.

A final word of thanks to Joan Cohen, who stepped down as an NAAB co-chair in 2015. Joan was instrumental in the establishment of NAAB in 2013 and is a former Chair of the North American Council. Joan and her husband Ron have been North American leaders of WUPJ for many, many years and continue in that role as we move forward.

We look forward to continued success in 2016 as interest in and support of World Jewry continues to grow in North America.

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

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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 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. These representative members of WUPJ congregations worldwide are active in the UN entities in New York, Geneva, and Vienna.

This report highlights some 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 New York representatives attended many workshops leading up to the June high-level meetings on the next phase of benchmarks to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in 2000 to last until 2015. There were eight goals set by the member states. The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were determined by extensive input from NGOs and other areas of Civil Society and are expected to extend until 2030.

### **The Post 2015 Agenda: the 17 Sustainable Development Goals**

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition; promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Build resilient infrastructures; promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainably manage forests; combat desertification; and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all; and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Many reports were filed on the Commission on Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the NGO Working Group on Girls, the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN and UN Women, as well as of programs dealing with Anti-Semitism and with the importance of promoting young people.

Janet Stovin, the main New York representative who represents WUPJ as a Director of the Non-Governmental Organization/Department of Public Information Executive Committee, attended the NGO/DPI mission to Cuba to brief participants on the education, health and community services. Attendants also visited three synagogues in Havana.

Our members around the world can benefit from UN programs and we urge you to visit the website [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) for updates and more 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 2015 under the sponsorship of Or Chadasch, Vienna.

The main activities in 2015 remained: maintaining contacts with the NGO Liaison Service at the United Nations Office in Vienna and the United Nations Information Service Vienna (UNIS); continuing to observe the DESA News; and following the coordinating efforts of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative relationship with the United Nations (CONGO). They enjoyed 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. In 2015 they met the new Israeli Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations in Vienna, Talya Lador-Fresher. They also monitored communiques of the IAEA, which is based in Vienna.

John and Scott have also been involved with the Austrian Society for Foreign Policy and the United Nations which sponsors various event and public lectures on current world political affairs largely of interest to members of the international community in Vienna.

One of the UN activities is the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, observed on 27 January. The 2015 observance in Vienna centered around the theme "Liberty, Life and the Legacy of the Holocaust Survivors", organized by the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Israel to the UN (Vienna) with the screening of the documentary "May your memory be love – The story of Ovadia Baruch".

The goals for 2016 include: establishing contacts with the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) which 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 (Until May 2015)

Rabbi Roberto Graetz, Chair

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 2015, the Task Force focused on the following areas:

- **Supporting regional members to participate in CONNECTIONS 2015:** The WUPJ International Connections convention in Rio de Janeiro in May 2015 was a most successful gathering of international Progressive Jewish leaders. There were over 150 representatives from the region (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Central America) supported in many ways through the Yad B'Yad Task Force. The experience of connecting with delegates from around the world was a most enriching opportunity for the Latin American participants and helped create the unity which is a hallmark of the WUPJ.
- **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. This was the first full year of service by the newly appointed Executive Director of the region, Karin Zingerevitz. Karin's contribution to the success of regional activities has already been felt. 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.
- **SUPPORT FOR THE PLAUT TORAH COMMENTARY TRANSLATION PROJECT INTO PORTUGUESE:** Yad B'Yad has assumed a major role in providing resources for the translation project of the Plaut Torah Commentary into Portuguese. Task Force members have given personally to the project as well as helped with fundraising initiatives.
- **Operation of educational projects:** Yad B'Yad supported the development of the newly established rabbinic training project in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This exciting new project is committed to identifying and training a cadre of Progressive Rabbis for the region. The project includes a Mechina period of two years in Buenos Aires followed by a second period of study at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem. The rabbinic training project is a true partnership between the WUPJ and HUC-JIR.
- **Lashir Benefesh and Honoring of Mr. Jerry Tanenbaum:** A regional Chazanut seminar and concert ("Lashir Benefesh") took place in Rio as part of Connections 2015. The concert was dedicated to Mr. Jerry Tanenbaum, who retired as Chair of the Yad B'Yad Task Force after nearly two decades of devoted service to the Latin American region. Jerry Tanenbaum has been the undisputed heart and soul of the Yad B'Yad Task Force since its inception and his tireless efforts on behalf of the Latin American region are unparalleled. The concert honoring Mr. Tanenbaum was one of the highlights of the CONNECTIONS 2015 international convention in Rio.
- **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. A special Yad B'Yad Fund in the memory of Pat Tanenbaum z"l continues to support youth activities in the UJCL.

Members of the Yad B'Yad Task Force met in Orlando, Florida in November 2015 for updates on current and future activities.

Going forward, Yad B'Yad is honored to have as its new Chair, Rabbi Roberto Graetz who will retire from his rabbinic position at Temple Isaiah in the Bay Area this summer 2016. Rabbi Graetz is a native Argentinean who has served congregations in Argentina and Brazil prior to moving to the United States. He will bring a fresh spirit and energy to the work of the Task Force and his influence as a proven leader bodes well for the future activities of Yad B'Yad.

Rabbi Graetz will be attending the 2016 Latin American regional biennial in Sao Paulo in June 2016 along with members of Yad B'Yad Task Force.



## YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS COMMITTEE

Rabbi Danny Burkeman, Chair (Until May 2015)  
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

The Youth and Young Adults Committee included Rabbi Danny Burkeman (interim Chair, YA representative on the EB), Rabbi Danny Rich (UK), Maria Sheinin (FSU), Paula Edelstein (Israel), David Robinson (NZ) and Penny Jakobovits (Australia). It concluded its activities at the WUPJ biennial in Rio in May, with a fitting background of a successful TaMaR gathering.

This Committee had 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, looked at future gap year course models and funding. The Committee also assisted with staffing changes, with the replacement of the Netzer Shnat director. Michael Weinberg moved with his family overseas, and he was replaced by former Shnat Director, and Netzer *Shlichah* to Melbourne, Lior Argaman.

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 over 800 kids in summer camps across the region, despite the political turmoil. 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 *sniffim*, Shnat and *Shlichut* issues, which required some significant attention this year due to the general challenges to this enterprise.

The main focus this year of young adult activities and seminars was the TaMaR YA gathering in Rio de Janeiro, which began before the WUPJ conference and continued post event. The presence of the YA representatives and their contribution to the larger conference was well marked. Following the conference, renewed energy saw successful TaMaR activities in Poland, Germany, Israel, Australia, Minsk (Belarus) as well as other regional and local programs.

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

With a new task force on Youth and Young Adults to be established by the WUPJ Chair during 2016, the Committee recommends it will 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. 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 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.
- 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.
- Increase the visibility of youth and young adult activities and representation in the structures, and advocate for resource allocation for regional Youth and YA activities.

# **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).

Please visit our website at [www.wupj.org](http://www.wupj.org),  
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