

# New World Union President lays out his plans

RABBI SERGIO BERGMAN – an Argentinian social activist, public servant and Jewish community leader – has been installed as President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). He becomes the first ever head of the global movement from South America and has immediately advanced bold initiatives to drive impact and change.

Speaking during his installation at the WUPJ's Connections 21 event, in front of a worldwide online audience including many Liberal Judaism rabbis and members, Sergio said: "It is an honour and privilege for me to take on the presidency of the global Progressive movement. The World Union translates the sacred values of the prophets of Israel and our sacred texts into a new context to address new challenges.

"As we march toward the first 100 years of the WUPJ, we build together a unity and diversity – the strength of our Jewish people – and fulfil our shared vision to fix our world and to do it better."

The World Union is the international network of the Reform, Liberal and Progressive Jewish movements, serving 1.2 million members worldwide in more than 1,250 congregations and over 50 countries. It was created in the UK in 1926 and its first leaders were Liberal Judaism founders Lily Montagu and Claude Montefiore. Connections 21 was the WUPJ's first convening in four years.



Sergio used his installation to name four initial priorities for the WUPJ: **The Jewish Effective Giving Initiative**, equipping rabbis with tools to support life-saving charities working in the developing world and help young Jewish activists committed to *tikkun olam*; **Hebrew 2030**, using educational platforms to promote the study and use of Hebrew; **Values Education**, bolstering WUPJ's educational programming and partnerships to reach young Jews and bring them into the Progressive movement; **Israeli by Choice**, strengthening global Jewry's connection and ties to Israel through citizenship.

Other speakers at Connections included Rabbis Charley Baginsky, Tanya Sakhnovich, Lea Mühlstein, René Pfortzel and Elli Tikvah Sarah.

WUPJ Chair Carole Sterling said: "The 'Connections' theme is one that drives the WUPJ every day. Yet it is particularly critical during the global challenges we face – from growing our communities post-pandemic to extinguishing the rising scourge of antisemitism.

"Seeing more than 1,000 participants from around the world engaging with the issues and each other underscored the strength and cohesion of our global Progressive Judaism."

# Lapid promises to fight for Progressive rights



ISRAEL'S Alternate Prime Minister MK Yair Lapid used Connections to make a vow to fight for Progressive Jewish rights in Israel and beyond.

He said: "I know I am a guest at this conference but I don't feel like one. I feel at home. I feel at home because Judaism is my home, pluralism is my home, and you are my family.

a Jew in the 21st century, what connects us despite the ocean between us and what makes us one people."

He added: "I will defend your rights and your voice because it's part of my world view as a liberal. I believe there is absolute good and absolute evil in the world. I don't believe that everything is relative.

"I feel at home because this is where I can have the conversation we need to have. A conversation some people don't want us to have, a conversation about what it means to be

"There are things we are all obligated to do and things none of us should be allowed to do because they are immoral.

"When Israel attacks Muslims or Christians, I tell them it's immoral to attack someone just because they have different beliefs. When Israel attacks Reform and Conservative Jews, I tell them it's immoral to attack someone just because they have similar beliefs."

Responding to the remarks, new WUPJ President Rabbi Sergio Bergman said: "MK Lapid expresses the WUPJ vision that Judaism is a broad civilization that invites creative interpretation and that includes and does not expel.

"Beyond all denominations, MK Lapid affirms the unity of the Jewish people in its diversity. May his mandate in the Knesset be part of the challenge that we all assume in each of our communities to create more just, loving and humane societies. This is the Progressive Jewish legacy for the whole world."