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Mission Statement



The Mission of the World Union for Progressive Judaism is to preserve Jewish integrity wherever Jews live; to encourage integration without assimilation; to respond to modernity while perpetuating the Jewish experience; to pursue social justice and equal rights for all.

The World Union for Progressive Judaism strives to:

- strengthen Jewish life around the world by promoting Progressive Judaism as an authentic yet modern, pluralistic, and democratic form of Jewish expression;
- promote inclusiveness and gender equality within the Jewish community;
- advance social justice and equal rights for all (regardless of religion or political affiliation), in the spirit of *Tikkun Olam*;
- bring the message of liberal Judaism to international forums, Jewish and non-Jewish, and to take an active role in addressing the challenges of contemporary life;
- link Progressive Jews around the world, enhancing international cooperation and sharing resources and ideas among our constituents, in the spirit of "*Kol Yisrael Areyveim Ze BaZe*" ("Every Jew is responsible one for the other").

Established in London in 1926, the World Union for Progressive Judaism is the only worldwide body combining a commitment to the Jewish religious tradition with modern liberal values. The World Union serves congregations and communities in nearly forty countries, encompassing more than 1,200 Reform, Progressive, Liberal and Reconstructionist communities and over 1.5 million members.

Of the thirteen million Jews in the world today, nearly one-third live in countries where Jewish life is weak and opportunities for meaningful Jewish practice scarce. It is the World Union's goal to see that all Jews have access to the vibrant Jewish life that can best inspire them spiritually and bring their communities together.

The World Union for Progressive Judaism stands committed to this sacred task.



Rabbi Grisha Koylar (Russia) receives Sefer Torah from Rabbi Sergio Bergman (Argentina)

Letter from the President



Friends,

You will read, within these pages, very full reports of the activities and achievements of our World Union family, so in order to avoid pre-empting this detail I would like to share with you some more general, and personal, highlights from 2003.

Doubtless the most dramatic and far reaching discussions, and eventual decisions, centred on the relationship between WUPJ and ARZAWWUNA. These began in April 2003 as we all came to recognise that the existing arrangements were not providing WUPJ with anything close to the income required for our ever-expanding programmes.

Several situations matured at the same time early in January 2004 when a committee of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) concluded a report analysing its own role in support of WUPJ, and we received the report and recommendations of the fundraising consultant appointed in the autumn. It is now agreed that ARZA will revert to its original name and focus on Israel advocacy, education and Zionist activities; and the WUPJ will take full responsibility for fundraising in North America for Israel; the States of the Former Soviet Union and all other international activities. URJ will work closely with us to help increase awareness in North America of the international mission of WUPJ.

As these new arrangements are finalised we look forward to close co-operation with ARZA as we mutually support each other's work in the future, as in the past.

In September 2003 we 'took over' the Development Department staff from ARZAWWUNA in New York and we are happy to have them on our team. This year also saw many staff changes and additions in Jerusalem when we welcomed Lesley Sachs as Associate Director joining Rabbi Joel Oseran whose designation changed to this same title. Lesley oversees Administration and much more, while Joel continues to be responsible for Overseas Development. Todd Warnick joined us as Financial Officer filling a post that has long been needed in our organisation.

giving immense support to the Treasurer and taking our financial management to a new level of timely efficiency. Debbie Pulik is now our very cool and efficient Administrative Associate.

Our Executive Director, Rabbi Uri Regev, continues to lead his team with great dedication and energy and we all echo the conclusion of our fundraising consultant who said that Rabbi Regev is unanimously regarded as WUPJ's greatest asset. We all recognise, and are appreciative of, the commitment shown by our staff at all levels - always far beyond simply doing their job. They have become a real team focused on the purposes of the World Union.

Many of us were present at the UAHC Biennial in Minneapolis - in the course of which their name was changed to Union for Reform Judaism - and, as always, that was an interesting and stimulating event. Along with a number of Israelis, we were happy to share the programmes with WUPJ affiliates from European and FSU countries and even from Australia. Our members have recognised the value of this Biennial, which attracts up to six thousand members of URJ, as a learning and sharing tool.

At the traditional WUPJ lunch during the Biennial we were happy to honour Philip and Barbara Meltzer as Philip reaches the end of his term of office as President of ARZAWWUNA. The lunch was a social and financial success and was the scene of a special World Union moment when Rabbi Sergio Bergman presented a Torah scroll to rabbis from the Former Soviet Union. This scroll had been taken to the Argentine more than one hundred years ago by a group that Sergio described as "Jewish Gauchos" fleeing persecution, and now that this community was dispersed and no longer formed a viable congregation their descendants wanted the scroll to return to Jews in the land from which it came. Such an emotional moment!

Our members in Israel suffered yet another difficult and, for many, tragic year. In particular the members of Or Hadash in Haifa, where we held our Governing Body meeting at the opening of the Convention in February, were traumatised by losses in bomb attacks. The support of the community for the bereaved families was the only positive outcome, together with the messages of sympathy and love received



Letter from the Executive Director

from our members around the world.

A small anecdote that illustrates the wonders of belonging to a world-wide family: during the year I received a call from a friend in Ratanana's synagogue, asking "Do we have any connections in Adelaide, Australia?" A fellow member was on a trekking holiday and suffered a terrible fall. He was in intensive care in hospital and his wife and son were flying out later in the day - travelling to the other side of the world and an unknown city full of strangers.

One e-mail to Rabbi John Levi in Melbourne and by the time they arrived in Adelaide the chair of the local Progressive synagogue was at the airport to meet them with an up-to-the-minute report from the hospital, an invite for Shabbat dinner, and constant support and friendship. The husband recovered and is now home in Israel and the world wide Jewish family turned the nightmare into a warm and heartening experience.

So there is more than *shul* business and fundraising to be found in unexpected situations within WUPJ!

I welcome the return of the WUPJ Annual Report and hope that you will find it a helpful and informative tool. The World Union is about people living and working together towards a common aim - bringing to all who seek it a modern, egalitarian Judaism always open, always questioning; a Judaism within which the value of ritual is recognised and celebrated but ethics and moral behaviour between man and man are paramount.

2003 was a memorable year in our history with wonderful moments of celebration and devastating moments of sadness - being a family made the celebrations more joyful and brought comfort at times of sadness. Of course I hope that we will build on the considerable successes of this year and also that we will never lose sight of the importance of individual people within all that we do.

Ruth Cohen



*"...spread out to the west and to the east,
to the north and to the south. All the families
of the earth shall bless themselves by you
and your descendants."*

Genesis 28:14

Dear Friends,

This report describes a year filled with challenges and accomplishments. It was only two years ago that I took on the position of Executive Director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. During this short time, my sense of the tremendous global and historical importance of the World Union has been strengthened further. We possess great potential to expand, and to broaden our influence in both the Jewish and international arenas.

This year we have witnessed significant growth of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism. A record number of Israeli families has chosen to mark lifecycle celebrations in our congregations; their children are participating in our youth activities and summer camps as never before. We have seen an increase in synagogue membership, even as new congregations have opened and construction begun on additional permanent synagogues/community centers. Our Progressive Jewish educational program is thriving in both Movement and secular public schools, and the Israel Religious Action Center's influence and visibility increase as it promotes religious pluralism and a just society in Israel - rooted in our prophetic tradition.

We can look, for instance, at the dynamic expansion of the Israeli Rabbinic Program at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. It is evidence of the growing attraction and relevance of Progressive Judaism in Israel. I was the fifth graduate of this program; in the twenty years following its inception, a total of twenty rabbis have been ordained. At present, over forty (!) students study in this framework. With their broad educational backgrounds and impressive skills, they represent the best of young Israeli intelligentsia. The spirit of Progressive Judaism is gaining understanding and acceptance.



Similarly, we have seen an impressive increase in our activity in the Former Soviet Union (FSU). Our youth movement, Netzer Olami, has become the largest Jewish youth movement there despite significant budgetary limitations. We have enlisted the services of two additional rabbis (complementing the three who have been working there on our behalf in past years), enabling us to revive activity in St. Petersburg and to expand the education and mentoring of our students at the Machon (our institute for the training of Jewish para-professionals) in Moscow.

Peak events this year included the publication of the High Holidays *Machzor* in Hebrew with transliteration and Russian translation (expanding on the Israel Council of Progressive Rabbis *Machzor* edition), and the participation of dozens of Hebrew Union College students from North America who volunteered to forgo their Pesach vacation to help lead *Sederim* in congregations in the FSU and assist them in celebrating Passover. The transforming and emotional experience for all involved, led to the continuation of this initiative this year, with an increased number of students. North American and Israeli alike, organizing to take part in this sacred mission. Studies have proven that Progressive Judaism has outstanding potential to strengthen the connection between the Jews of the FSU and their Jewish heritage: the only limitation impeding expanding our activity there is a lack of resources.

During the past year we have worked to renew the World Union's vision. We are charting paths for increasing our impact in both Jewish and international arenas, improving our ability to assist our constituents, enhancing our internal communications and sharing of resources, investing in leadership development, and increasing our involvement with the re-emerging Jewish communities in Continental Europe and Latin America. However, we have had to contend with a number of obstacles. These are mainly economic, resulting from the continuing *Intifada* with its ramifications for the operation of Mercaz Shimson/Beit Shmuel, and the change in organizational structure in North America that gives the World Union sole responsibility for fundraising there.

We recognize the significant contribution ARZA has made to our Movement, and look forward to both organizations' ongoing strength as we continue to co-

operate in the promotion of our shared principles, and as we redefine our respective areas of responsibility. In this new organizational framework, the direct relationship between the World Union and the Union for Reform Judaism was restored and revitalized, as we work together to increase the awareness of and participation by North American congregations in the World Movement. This will include an increased commitment for programmatic and financial aid—as witnessed by the launch of the *Hineni* Project at the Union's 2003 Biennial.

The World Union very much appreciates the contribution of the Australian Movement to our international efforts, and we intend to increase fundraising efforts in other countries.

We are proud to present you with this summary of the activities of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in 2003 (5763). I would like to express my gratitude to the exceptional volunteer leadership of our international movement and in all of our constituencies. Great thanks are due as well to the dedicated staff of the World Union, who work tirelessly to promote the well being of the Jewish People.

A year of exciting breakthroughs and further growth awaits us. We look to our own Movement's activists and to like-minded leaders in the wider Jewish community to partner with us in making a reality the Biblical charge to build a strong Jewish community in the "east, west, north and south".

B'shalom,

Rabbi Uri Regev
Executive Director
World Union for Progressive Judaism



The World Union for Progressive Judaism has been investing in the Jewish future for over 75 years. The World Union

- Strengthens Israel by enriching its soul through the creation of a liberal Progressive Jewish alternative for masses of Israelis who have been alienated from their heritage, making a unique contribution to Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state and building bridges between Israel and the Diaspora.
- Strengthens world Jewry by supporting the growth and development of Progressive Judaism in places where individuals and groups are seeking authentic yet modern ways of expressing themselves as Jews.
- Helps Jews in the Former Soviet Union renew Jewish life and observance after nearly a century of brutal oppression.
- Provides humanitarian and educational assistance to Jews in need in Argentina and elsewhere.
- Promotes democratic values as an authentic expression of the Jewish prophetic tradition.
- Supplies organizational support and resources to emerging congregations which otherwise might not survive.
- Provides a powerful voice in countries where Progressive Jews are discriminated against, advocating for the full recognition of Progressive Judaism as a valid expression of Jewish heritage.

The World Union for Progressive Judaism is the worldwide organization building Jewish life and renewing Jewish historic tradition according to the values of Reform and liberal Judaism:

- Pluralism and Tolerance
- Gender Equality and Inclusiveness
- Social Justice and Human Rights
- Modernity and Respect for Tradition

We are the largest Jewish religious movement in the world today.

We represent many thousands of dedicated rabbis, educators, professional leaders and volunteers in congregations and communities numbering over 1.5 million adherents in forty countries and on six continents.

We are an international network of seminaries, schools and institutions training the next generation of Reform, Liberal and Progressive rabbis, cantors, educators and congregational leaders.

We are a worldwide youth movement, Netzer Olami, nurturing a generation committed to the Jewish People, Zionism and the State of Israel, pluralism, social action and democracy.

We are an official Non-Governmental Organization accredited at the United Nations and speaking on behalf of the interests of Jews in every part of the world.



Rabbi Irit Shillor of Congregation Or Hadash in Vienna, Austria

Regional Reports



Israel

This has been a year of growth and development for the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ). Against the background of continuing terror and an ever-worsening social and economic crisis, the IMPJ strove to reach all sections of society. More than ever, being a Reform Jew in Israel - and being a Reform Jewish movement - was about meeting needs.

Meeting the Needs of Terror Victims

IMPJ congregations responded directly to the tragedy of terror and the needs it brings. Or Hadash Congregation in Haifa, which has lost several members and friends in terror attacks, has provided practical and moral support for families. Kibbutz Lotan hosted a group of children from families struck by terror attacks.

Meeting Social Needs

The prevailing social problems led to a much greater focus on social justice than in previous years. This change was galvanized in part by the work of the Department of Public Policy and Social Action in the Israel Religious Action Center - the IMPJ's legal and public wing. In cooperation with Progressive congregations throughout the country, IRAC's Food Fund has provided food parcels for hundreds of hungry people in Israel, regardless of nationality and race (recipients have included new immigrants, Christian and Muslim Arabs, migrant laborers, single mothers, and others).

A national IMPJ convention in June 2003 focused on the subject of social justice, acclaiming existing efforts in congregations and encouraging the expansion of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism's efforts in this field. Kol Haneshama Congregation in Jerusalem uses its English-language and educational resources to help students from local schools (Orthodox and secular) to improve their English. Or Hadash Congregation in Haifa provides a Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience for orphans and other children who would otherwise be unable to mark this milestone. In diverse ways, all congregations are trying to meet needs in the broader community. The financial and security crisis has also struck their own members, of course. Several congregations offered courses on such subjects as stress management and debt avoidance.

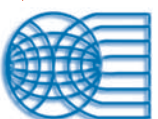
The Young Adult Leadership Forum ran a unique social justice workshop in Tel Aviv. Over a four-month period, participants studied relevant Jewish sources, acquired practical tools for running grassroots activities, and planned and implemented a hands-on project. One group of participants in this groundbreaking workshop ran a summer day camp for some 90 children in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Tel Aviv, in cooperation with Beit Daniel Congregation in the city.

Focus On:

Kindergartens

The World Union for Progressive Judaism established its first kindergarten in 1987. 100 children now attend the school, which operates in conjunction with Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion and the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, and is housed on HUC-JIR's Jerusalem campus and in Beit Shmuel.

The kindergarten's aim is to reveal the diversity of the Jewish culture and tradition and impart it to the next generation in a pluralistic, humanist and egalitarian manner. To accomplish this, children experience the festivals and rituals through Bible stories. Heroes of the Jewish People and the Hebrew calendar. Equally important is the integration of the principles of equality, tolerance, and social action. In 2003, for example, the kindergartens adopted "lone" soldiers - individuals serving in the Israeli military with no family in the country. The children raised money to send care packages and Purim baskets. The children, in turn, came to visit the children in their classrooms, and told them about their lives. The children enjoyed this contact immensely and learned the significance of respect for their fellow citizens.



Meeting the Needs of Children and Youth

Education has always been a top Jewish priority. Progressive and pluralistic Jewish education is not a luxury - it is essential if young Israelis are to avoid the traps of apathy and nihilism, on the one hand, and fanaticism and intolerance, on the other. Since September, the IMPJ's Education Department has been running school involvement programs in thirty-five public schools around Israel - twice last year's number. At a public school in Zikhron Ya'akov, for example, students and teachers now come together each month to celebrate and study the new Hebrew month - an event that used to go completely unmarked in the life of the school. Students and families who have had no contact with Judaism have enjoyed Bar/Bat Mitzvah programs and met Progressive rabbis and synagogues. For younger children, there are now forty-four pre-school classes around Israel affiliated with the IMPJ, in addition to training programs for pre-school staff, and a monthly forum of pre-school principals to discuss practical and pedagogic issues.

In the field of informal education, over 400 youngsters attended the Rechter Havaya summer camps. The Noar Telem youth movement is developing new branches at IMPJ congregations, ensuring that informal programs continue throughout the year. Over the past year alone, new branches have opened in Nahariya, Haifa, Mevasseret Zion and Tzur Hadassah.

In September, the Movement launched the Mechina - a one-year program between high school and the army providing Jewish study, communal living and involvement in social and community projects. The participants live in Jaffa, work in IMPJ congregations and programs and volunteer in a wide range of frameworks with all sections of the local population, Jews and non-Jews alike.

Focus On:

Inaugural Beutel Leadership Seminar Convenes in Jerusalem

"Intense, exciting and challenging" and "invaluable and unforgettable" were just two comments by participants in the first Beutel Leadership Seminar, a ten-day study and developmental experience held in Jerusalem in late February, 2003. The Seminar fund was established to recognize the outstanding leadership contribution to the WUPJ of Austin and Nani Beutel. Austin Beutel served as President of the WUPJ for two terms in the 1990's and Nani has been one of the key leaders moving the World Union FSU Committee forward.

The seminar provided the participants (Saul Ryan, Gabriella Ladowsky, Jim Cynghler, and Helen Bryant, from Australia; Melissa Gregory, from North America; and Ari Merom, from Israel) a balance between academic and textual study sessions, on the one hand, and, on the other, field visits and experiences using Jerusalem as a learning setting. Overall study themes included the nature and meaning of Jewish community, ideological dilemmas in Progressive Judaism, Israel-Diaspora relations, the role of Progressive Judaism in sustaining Jewish life worldwide, and the characteristics of Jewish leadership throughout history.

"After years of acknowledging the importance of creating a future generation of WUPJ leaders, we have finally taken a concrete step to realize that goal," said Rabbi Joel Oseran, WUPJ Associate Director and architect of the seminar. An important component of the seminar was the opportunity to meet with current leaders of Progressive Judaism in order to share concerns and strategies for the future, and to learn how World Union leaders view leadership responsibilities.

At the conclusion of the seminar, the participants were awarded a certificate and the title Beutel Fellow. Plans are underway to conduct the second Beutel Leadership Seminar from January 20-30, 2005.



Meeting the Needs of Immigrants

Immigrants from the FSU, Argentina and elsewhere have been disproportionately affected both by terror attacks (because they are more likely to use public transport) and by the economic depression. They are also in particular need of programs that reinforce their Jewish identity and their sense of belonging in Israel. Esh-David Congregation in Ashdod, run by and for FSU immigrants, continues its impressive work in this field. Late in 2003, the first girl from a Russian-speaking family had a Bat Mitzvah in the congregation. During 2003, the IMPJ's Communities Department launched a new congregation in Carmiel reaching out mainly to Argentinian *olim* in the city. Ra'anana Congregation in Ra'anana has developed a youth program for a large group of young immigrants from Argentina. One of the members of this group was killed in a terrorist attack, and the congregation's warmth and support formed the basis for this ongoing relationship.

The IMPJ also expanded Jewish studies and conversion classes, which are now attended by some 200 immigrants on an ongoing basis. The Israel Religious Action Center's Legal Advice Centers for *Olim* continue to help immigrants from the FSU, Ethiopia and other countries to secure their rights and navigate the maze of Israeli bureaucracy. In 2003, such help was provided for 6,336 *olim* through several offices around the country.

Meeting Future Needs

The IMPJ is justly proud of its achievements in 2003. However, the needs of its own members and Israeli society at large continue to grow, and the Movement must redouble its efforts in response. The Israeli Reform Movement faces a unique challenge as it seeks to influence and mold not only Progressive congregations, but also the society and state of Israel.

The above achievements would not be possible without the help of the Movement's many supporters. The Jewish Agency for Israel continues to provide substantial and generous support, as does the World Union for Progressive Judaism, ARZA, ARZI (Australia) and Reform, Liberal, Progressive and Reconstructionist individuals, congregations and organizations across the world. Great thanks are also due to the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund

of San Francisco; the United Jewish Appeal - Federation of New York; the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago; United Jewish Communities of MetroWest; the New Israel Fund; Kerem Keshet; the Blaustein Foundation; the Gold Family Foundation; the Koret Foundation; the England Foundation; the Morton and Beverley Rechler Family Foundation; the Ford Foundation; and the Ames Foundation. Space prevents acknowledgment of all grants and donations, but all are greatly appreciated.

To learn more about the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, or to subscribe to a monthly e-mail newsletter in English, visit www.reform.org.il



Mercaz Shimon/World Union Headquarters, Jerusalem



Focus On:

Mercaz Shimson/Beit Shmuel - The World Union's Educational and Cultural Center, and Guesthouse in Jerusalem

Mercaz Shimson/Beit Shmuel is one of Jerusalem's leading educational and cultural centers. Sharing the magnificent King David Street campus of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, it features the 400 seat Hirsch Auditorium, classroom and meeting facilities, an art gallery, offices of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, and a guesthouse, all designed by world renown architect Moshe Safdie. Through its Beit Midrash, cultural activities and programs, children's programming and field trips, Mercaz Shimson/Beit Shmuel reaches out to Jerusalemites of all backgrounds, and invites them to encounter Progressive Judaism in a non-coercive, dynamic context.

The year 2003 marked several impressive accomplishments at the Mercaz Shimson/Beit Shmuel Center. The *Beit Midrash* study program had its largest enrollment ever with 85 students participating in beginner, intermediate and advanced tracks. A new component of the Beit Midrash in 2003 was the addition of a community service project for all students.

Religious and cultural programs expanded during this year. For the first time Mercaz Shimson hosted Shabbat morning drama performances for children and families - all focusing on various Jewish themes. A unique drama series on Biblical subjects was conducted for children who are victims of terror, a project supported in part by members of The Jewish Center of the Hamptons, New York.

Mercaz Shimson/Beit Shmuel's popularity is growing. In 2003 its mailing list was 40% larger than in the previous year... In 2003 the Center hosted events that included the Jerusalem International Film Festival, the Jerusalem Art Festival, the Thespis Festival, the Ud Festival, the Jerusalem Festival, and the Israel Festival.



Celebrating Sukkot

Regional Reports



Australia, New Zealand and Asia

The Union for Progressive Judaism/ANZA (UPJ) is the World Union in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, and India. With nineteen member congregations, two Day Schools and numerous affiliated institutions, the UPJ ensures that Jewish values and education flourish across its vast geographic area.

2003 was a year of accomplishment for the UPJ.

Principal amongst these was the growth of the UPJ electronic newsletter, *ProjectNews*, sent weekly to over 3000 recipients in Australia and abroad. *ProjectNews* includes a *drash* on the *Parshat HaShavua*, provides congregants of small, Rabbi-less congregations with contemporary and meaningful sermons, and creates opportunities for dialogue on the key issues facing Progressive Jews in the Region. *ProjectNews* brings this diverse Jewish population together for study and activism.

Demonstrating strong support for the State of Israel, the UPJ trained its leadership to speak out on behalf of Israel and World Jewry. The Region's support for the UJA campaign increased yet again in 2003, through an effective campaign under the exceptional direction of Ian Samuel and other dedicated volunteers.

Social Action groups have sprung up in several UPJ congregations recently. These groups strive to be of service to the community through Jewish/Christian/Muslim Dialogue, Outreach to Refugees, and assistance to other disadvantaged groups.

The UPJ is proud to report that Australian Jewish day schools King David School (Victoria) and Emanuel School (New South Wales) continue to expand their attendance and facilities. Netzer, the Reform Zionist Youth group, has upheld its fine record of enjoyable and educational outreach to young people – including programming at home as well as trips to Israel.

Rabbi John Levi, esteemed Regional Director for the past seven years, retired in November 2003. Rabbi Levi has been instrumental in bringing spiritual guidance and enrichment to thousands of UPJ members with no access to a full time rabbi. His

wise counsel and erudite teachings are much appreciated by all those he touched.

In November 2004, the Governing body of the World Union for Progressive Judaism will hold its annual meeting in Sydney, Australia, and advance preparations have already begun. Leaders from all continents of the globe are expected to join UPJ leadership for this momentous occasion.

For more information on the Union for Progressive Judaism - ANZA, visit www.upj.org.au

Focus On:

World Union 31st International Convention Held in Jerusalem

Neither the *Intifada*, the threatened war in Iraq, nor a wintry snow storm which cut Jerusalem off from the rest of the country prevented the World Union from conducting one of its most successful ever International Conventions, taking place in Jerusalem and in Haifa from February 26-March 2, 2003. This 31st International Convention, on the theme "New Realities - Renewed Vision," marked thirty years since moving the WUPJ's headquarters to Jerusalem. Out of the nearly 200 delegates who attended the Convention, 115 came from abroad, including representatives from newly established WUPJ communities in Denmark, Italy, and Poland.

Convention Chair Paula Edelstein, who is also Chairwoman of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, remarked, "The convention went extremely well. There was immense satisfaction that we went ahead with the convention (despite war jitters) and that so many came from abroad. The overriding feeling was 'we're in this together.'" Ruth Cohen, President of the WUPJ, commented, "It was a truly successful convention. Many said it was the best ever. We feel fully vindicated in that we took the decision against many contrary views that we should skip Israel at this time in favor of another venue." Among the many decisions taken by the WUPJ Governing Body during the course of its deliberations at the Convention was to schedule the 32nd International Convention for Moscow in June 2005. Everyone, please mark your calendars for this truly historic event!



Europe

The European Region of the World Union for Progressive Judaism is the umbrella organization for Progressive Jewish communities across the Continent, and is pleased to witness the resurgence of Jewish life throughout Western and Central Europe. The Region's work flourishes at the local level, where communities in cities and towns build Jewish lives rich in meaning and activity, and also internationally, where these organizations work together in governmental advocacy, strategic planning, young adult programming, and in support for the State of Israel.

The World Union is working to enhance its involvement and impact in the European Union, the UN Human Rights Commission, UNESCO and other international institutions located in Europe. It has begun building paraprofessional training programs in Europe, designed to empower local communities and to augment the limited availability of rabbinic and educational professional staff to serve them.

In the United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Belgium, Progressive Jewish communities are fully recognized and play an important role within communal bodies. In many other countries, notably Germany, Hungary, France and Italy, Progressive communities suffer discrimination, such as the State's refusal to provide them with direct funding on the same basis as Orthodox communities, and exclusion from participation in communal organizations. This occurs on the basis that there must be a single Jewish address, and this remains the long established Orthodox body which does not wish to recognize non-Orthodox Judaism

In November 2003, representatives from many of the European Region's congregations met to discuss these problems, and to coordinate the European Region of the WUPJ's efforts to overcome this discrimination, in a highly successful seminar entitled "Challenges for Recognition Facing Progressive Communities in Europe." Another conference, wider in scope, "Changing

Europe - a Challenge to European Judaism," will be held in The Hague in March 2004, to coincide with the WUPJ Governing Body meeting. The conference will also include a European Rabbinic Kallah, designed to combat the isolation experienced by many Progressive rabbis in their home communities.

Marking the 75th Anniversary of the first World Union Conference, which took place in Berlin in 1928, the annual Conference of the Union for Progressive Jews in Germany met in Berlin in July 2003. A special program commemorating that anniversary marked an important step in the World Union's efforts to secure governmental recognition and funding for German Progressives Synagogues, and was attended by Mr. Otto Schily, Minister of the Interior.

Last year's European Regional Board Meeting was held in tandem with the German Liberal Union Conference: some 60 delegates attended. Six congregations were admitted as associate members: International Jewish Center (Brussels), Shir Hadash (Florence), Union Juive Libérale de Lyon (Lyon), Centre Judaica (Marseille), Beth Shalom (Milan), and Beit Warszawa (Warsaw). The World Union is pleased to welcome these fine new communities.

The website of the European Region can be found at www.europeanregion.org



Candle Lighting Ceremony Remembering Victims of the Holocaust at the Conference of The German Union for Progressive Jews, held in Berlin.



Focus On:

WUPJ Advocacy in Support of Progressive Judaism in Germany

The importance of Germany in the history of Reform Judaism is unquestionable. It is therefore of special meaning that Progressive Judaism is growing so quickly as a part of the overall Jewish renaissance in Germany today. Over the last ten years more than 100,000 Jews have chosen to live in Germany, most from the countries of the former Soviet Union. According to the Berlin Jewish newspaper *Judisches Berlin*, 45% of the members of the Berlin Jewish community identify with the Liberal or Reform movements (September 2002, January 2003).

In light of these facts it is all the more disturbing that Reform Judaism in Germany today is not granted equal status as a formal member of the Jewish community. Germany's Jewish community is represented by the *Zentralrat*, an umbrella Jewish community structure which receives and distributes funds channeled to it from the German Government. Much to the detriment of the Progressive Movement in Germany, the *Zentralrat* does not recognize Progressive congregations as legitimate members of the Jewish community and therefore these congregations are not entitled to Government funding.

The World Union is determined to redress this discriminatory situation and has begun efforts to change both the German Government's policy with regards to funding the Jewish Community and the *Zentralrat's* orientation vis-à-vis Progressive Jewish congregations. High-level World Union delegations, led by World Union Executive Director Rabbi Uri Regev, have met with German Government officials and leaders of the *Zentralrat* in an attempt to put the Progressive Movement in Germany on an equal footing with Orthodox congregations. This advocacy role of the World Union is one of the most important ways worldwide Progressive Judaism can support local Progressive movements.

The World Union, working in close cooperation with the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany, is determined to see the day when Reform Judaism returns to its rightful place of esteem and importance in Germany. The numerous Progressive movement congregations, youth and educational activities, and the newly established Abraham Geiger Rabbinical Seminary, all deserve no less.

Former Soviet Union (FSU)

Progressive Judaism is on the move in the Former Soviet Union, fueled by myriad activities undertaken by devoted, indigenous staff and volunteers. In 2003, some one hundred congregations and groups took part in World Union-sponsored programming, under the auspices of the Associations of Progressive Jewish Congregations in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine.

Of special note, The Religious Union for Progressive Judaism in the Ukraine and Congregation Hatikva of Kiev moved into new facilities that include a synagogue hall, activity and computer rooms, and offices for the Rabbi and other staff. In Minsk, Congregation Simcha, led by its new Rabbi Gritsha Abramovich, began using one of the halls in that city's new Joint Distribution Committee-sponsored community center for Shabbat and holiday services.

Staffing in 2003 has increased as well. Two newly ordained Rabbis from the Leo Baeck College in London began work in the FSU: Rabbi Sasha Lyskovoy in St. Petersburg and Rabbi Abramovich in Minsk. Ira Zachozaya, the first professionally trained Progressive Jewish educator to serve in the FSU joined the WUPJ staff as well, and is based in Kiev. Rabbi Nelly Shulman assumed the new position of Director of Community Worker's Program, responsible for the professional development and supervision of those serving Progressive congregations throughout the FSU.

As part of the WUPJ's commitment to Jewish Education, a series of over twenty annual leadership training seminars, as well as Special Education and Jewish Identity Seminars, were conducted in 2003. The seminars were supported, in part, by the Dutch Humanitarian Fund, the L.A. Pincus Committee, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Joint Distribution Committee, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation, and many Federations and Reform and Liberal congregations and private donors from around the world.

As of 2003 there were seven full time, Progressive kindergartens in operation, as well as numerous religious school programs training scores of Bar/Bat



Mitzvah children. In 2003, Progressive congregations held Shabbat and holiday celebrations for thousands and hosted a wide array of Jewish cultural, social, and educational programs. They also conducted *Tzedakah* programs for the community at large.

A major accomplishment of 2003 was the publication of the long-awaited WUPJ Russian-Hebrew High Holy Day *Machzor*. The prayer book, based on the Hebrew text of the Israel Progressive Movement *Machzor*, "Intentions of the Heart," includes critical notes and explanations of the prayers as well as considerable transliteration.

An additional accomplishment of 2003 was the creation of an instructional CD in Russian demonstrating how to conduct a traditional Passover seder. This CD guide was produced by the World Union with financial assistance from the Joint Distribution Committee. It is being distributed free of charge through World Union affiliated institutions and congregations throughout the world, wherever there are Russian speakers.

With both symbolic and tangible impact, several Torah scrolls were donated to congregations throughout the FSU in 2003 by sister World Union congregations.



HUC-JIR Students Celebrate Pesach in the Former Soviet Union.

Focus On:

Passover in the Former Soviet Union: A Remarkable Joint Project of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

Fourteen students from the Jerusalem campus of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) traveled to Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus - at their own expense - to help lead Passover *sedarim* and services in 2003 on behalf of the World Union. The participants were divided into groups of two and three and sent to World Union congregations in smaller communities. During their week in the FSU, they also taught in kindergartens and Sunday schools, and led *b'nei mitzvah* and Netzer youth movement activities.

Other Pesach activities in the FSU were led by the local leadership and staff of the three main movements in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, including three *sedarim* conducted at the OROSIR Progressive congregation alone (where each *seder* could accommodate only 50 congregants), two for members of Holocaust survivor groups, and one for an organization of Jewish writers, musicians and theater artists held at the Joint Distribution Committee's Moscow Jewish cultural center, which heralds a new era of cooperation between OROSIR and the JDC.

In addition, students of the World Union's Institute for Modern Jewish Studies conducted four *sedarim* for "Yad Ezra," a center for the elderly and handicapped in Moscow.



Latin America and Caribbean

Caribbean and Central America

The Union of Jewish Congregations of Latin America and the Caribbean (UJCL) was formed in 1998, and strives to preserve the continuity of Judaism through its support of small, liberal congregations throughout the region. Without the UJCL and WUPJ, these Jews would otherwise remain ignored and isolated, left by themselves to face the multiple challenges to survival inherent in micro-communities. Youth is the top priority, and the Union concentrates its efforts on education, so that children in the region inherit the incredible richness of the Jewish tradition. Through outreach to unaffiliated Jewish communities in the Caribbean and Central America, the UJCL endeavors to assist others of common aspiration and to further the goals of Progressive Judaism.

In 2003, five rabbis joined congregations in the region: Rabbi Marcelo Bater to Aruba's Congregation Beth Israel Israelitische Gemeente; Rabbi Michael Holzman joined Congregation B'nei Israel Costa Rica; Rabbi Mordechai Rotem assumed the leadership of Temple Beth Shalom in Puerto Rico; Rabbi Daniel Zang runs the Comunidad Israelita de El Salvador; and Rabbi G. Kraselnik arrived in Kol Shearit Israel, Panama. 2003 marks the second year of operation of the Isaac Rabin School in Panama, currently 190 students strong, and dedicated to humanistic education in order to "transmit the ethical values of the Jewish people, and to form men and women of integrity, with great spiritual and ethical sensitivity."

The UJCL's website may be found at www.ujcl.org.

South America

The year 2003 witnessed a continuation of WUPJ efforts to support the educational and humanitarian work of the Progressive Movement in Argentina. Under the inspiring leadership of Rabbi Sergio Bergman and his colleagues

in the network of liberal communities in Buenos Aires, and other Argentinian cities, thousands of Jews received material and spiritual sustenance.

Working through the framework of the *Yad B'Yad* ("Hand in Hand") Task Force under the leadership of WUPJ Senior Vice President Jerry Tanenbaum, the World Union reclaimed a central role of involvement in Argentina in 2003. There were numerous rabbinic and lay leadership missions to the country under the auspices of the World Union, fostering personal connections and increased involvement in our movement activities.

Progressive communities in Brazil were also active in 2003, succeeding to raise the profile of liberal Judaism in many important ways. Rabbi Leonardo Alanati, of Congregation Israelita Mineira (CIM) in Belo Horizonte, initiated *Project Aviv* to combat the devastating economic downturn in the country. The project's main goal is to assist unemployed professionals in finding new positions. Thirty people were helped in the last nine months of the year.

The *Associação Religiosa Israelita (ARI)* in Rio broke new ground in 2003 with the hiring of Rabbi Sandra Hochmann, the first female rabbi to be hired in a Brazilian congregation. Rabbi Hochmann joins senior Rabbi Sergio Margulies to form the rabbinic team in the ARI and to continue the congregation's growth and development in the city.

Congregation *Israelita Paulista (CIP)*, with senior Rabbi Henry Sobel, also concluded a most successful 2003 with expanded youth programs, social welfare projects, and inter-faith gatherings. World Union Executive Committee member Miriam Vasseraman, member of CIP, assumed the leadership of the first ever Latin America Conference of Liberal Judaism to take place in Sao Paulo in April 2004.

The World Union is gearing up for an expanded role in Latin America during 2004. The region has tremendous potential in terms of rabbinic and lay leadership and the World Union, together with partners in North America (URJ) is committed to providing organizational and programmatic support in the future.



North America

If nothing else, the year just ending will be remembered as the year the Union finally succeeded in changing its name to Union for Reform Judaism: Serving Reform Congregations in North America.

It has been 131 years since Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, visionary of a unified Jewish community in North America, founded the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. While his hope that all Jewish denominations could be united under one organizational umbrella did not materialize, the Reform Movement has more than realized his dream for a vibrant and strong union of congregations.

Today, the Reform Movement's 920 congregations constitute the largest, most dynamic, and most forward-thinking Jewish denomination in North America. Adapting to the changing needs of the times, Reform Judaism continues to attract new members, including Jews who grew up in other denominations, formerly unaffiliated Jews, and those from other faiths who are drawn to Judaism's enduring message.

K'hal Yisrael

In a year marked by rising anti-Semitism in Europe and elsewhere, Union for Reform Judaism President Rabbi Eric Yoffie called on Reform Jews to understand that the best way to combat "the monstrous canards that continue to circulate" is not to withdraw into a ghetto but to build better interfaith bridges. Four Christian denominations have joined the Union in launching *Open Doors, Open Minds: Synagogues and Churches Studying Together*, a program of interfaith dialogue introduced at the Minneapolis Biennial. Churches and synagogues began implementing the seven-session curriculum in the spring; others are planning to introduce it this fall.

To bolster support for Progressive Judaism in Israel and the Former Soviet Union, the Union has asked every Reform congregation to adopt the grassroots

initiative entitled *Hinei: Embracing Our People, Embracing Our Future*, funded by annual \$18 donations from synagogue members. By spring, many congregations had pledged their commitment; others have been considering how to incorporate *Hinei* into their existing partnerships with Reform communities in Israel. Congregations with a high level of participation will be recognized as "Builder Congregations" in *Reform Judaism* magazine and on the web with a variety of opportunities for education and partnership, including online chats, newsletters, and videos.

The bond between North American Reform Jews and world Jewry was evident at the 2004 Biennial, which brought 4,500 Reform Jews from the U.S. and Canada as well as a large delegation of congregational representatives from throughout the World Union for Progressive Judaism to Minneapolis to study, pray, and take action. North American Jews also journeyed to Israel in increasing numbers on Movement-sponsored missions.

In the spring, a record sixty-six high school students spent a semester in Israel as part of the Eisenrath International Exchange program. Many of the students are leaders in their congregations or participants in *Me'lav: The Youth Fellowship for Reform Jewish Leadership*, which engages the Movement's most spiritually curious and intellectually motivated teenagers in a three-year program of significant Jewish study and leadership training. In addition, more than 200 Reform college students visited the Jewish state as participants in "birthright Israel" or leadership trips organized through Hillel.

For More Information on URJ Programs go to their website at www.urj.org



Focus On:

Jewish Population in the United States

In 2003, the United Jewish Communities published the results of the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey, outlining significant trends in Jewish Life in the United States. These have important implications for Progressive Jews in the U.S. and around the world.

The Jewish population of the United States in 2001, as defined in the Survey, is 5.2 million individuals, with 6.7 million people living in Jewish households (these including intermarried families). Of the 40% of households that belong to synagogues, a full 79% are non-Orthodox (39% Reform, 33% Conservative, 5% Other, 2% Reconstructionist).

Most American Jews observe some holidays and rituals, including lighting Hanukkah candles (72% of all Jews), and attending Passover Seder (67%). A minority (27%) attend synagogue at least monthly, or keep kosher at home (21%).

Disturbingly, but not surprisingly, younger U.S. Jews are less engaged with Judaism than are older Jews, and 44% of Jews are not affiliated with any Jewish organization. Nearly two thirds, however, feel emotionally attached to Israel and 45% have friends or family there - indicating that the World Union's global approach is a powerful means of reaching non-affiliated Jews. Jews with organizational affiliations report significantly higher rates of attachment to Israel.

For more information on the 2000-01 National Jewish Population Survey, visit www.ujc.org

Southern Africa

The Southern Africa Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) enjoyed a successful 2003.

Highlights revolved around the activities of three rabbis. A special celebration was held in honor of the seventieth anniversary of the arrival in South Africa of Rabbi M.C. Weiler z.l., the first rabbi to serve the Movement there. The evening honored the Sisterhood, celebrating also the seventieth anniversary of its founding. Rabbi Uri Regev, Executive Director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, made his first official visit to South Africa, inspiring a great deal of learning and teaching. Student Rabbi Greg Alexander initiated a Community Weekend full of study sessions, special services, festive meals, and activities for children and young adults. Several hundred people attended.

It must be noted, however, that the fulltime rabbinare in the Progressive movement in South Africa is currently quite spare, and new recruits are actively sought.

The newly inaugurated Adult Education Project included a series of lectures and discussions on Jewish and other topics, and *Hakol*, the SAUPJ newsletter, was launched, to be published three or four times each year. Southern Africa's *Netzer snif* continued to grow, spurred by the active participation of local young leaders.

Through the exceptional dedication and hard work of its rabbis and lay leaders, the Progressive Movement remains an integral part of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, the SA Zionist Federation and on government consultative committees. Rabbi David Hoffman plays a prominent role at the Western Cape Councils of the Board and the Federation, as does Rabbi Michael Standfield in Durban and Rabbi Charles Wallach in Johannesburg, the headquarters of the communal organization.



The World Union's Programs for Youth and Young Adults

Sustaining the Future

Netzer Olami (Reform Zionist Youth) is the international youth movement affiliated with the WUPJ. Since its founding twenty five years ago in South Africa and Australia, Netzer has spread to meet the divergent needs of many thousands of Progressive youth across the globe. Through its international headquarters located in Jerusalem, Netzer co-ordinates international programs, while the local branches ("sriffim") arrange seminars and camps in over eleven countries serving as a vital link between Diaspora youth and Israel. Netzer has expanded its activities through the creation of "TaMaR - the Movement for Zionist Fulfillment" targeting Netzer graduates and unaffiliated college students in an effort to further the cause of Progressive Zionism and strengthen their Jewish identity.

Some significant accomplishments marked in 2003:

Former Soviet Union: 700 youth participated in four different summer camps, in addition to a winter camp. 1000 Movement members participated in some twelve weekend seminars in Russia, Siberia, Belarus, Ukraine and the Baltics. Also, forty-four young adults participated in the first ever Netzer mission from the FSU, visiting Progressive communities in Poland and the Czech Republic.

The Netherlands: Four years after its establishment, Netzer Olami Holland opened its first summer camp.

Germany: 2003 saw the launch of Netzer Olami activities in Germany, with a summer camp and several highly successful seminars for TaMaR-UJJ.

Great Britain: Amidst a flurry of activity throughout the year, four camps of RSY Netzer provided 700 British youth with significant Jewish summer experiences, and the "Kadima" camp of Ulpsync Netzer did the same for another 250 participants.

Argentina: Despite the lack of paid leaders, the local movement's commitment and dedication managed to sponsor successful summer and winter camps for more than 225 participants.

South Africa: With the help and support of Netzer Olami, 125 young South African Jews enjoyed a summer camp, and weekend activities throughout the year.

Australia: Buoyed by the fantastic cooperation of local communities, Netzer Olami/TaMaR continues to expand into mid-sized Australian cities, and also into New Zealand. Major operations include three summer camps, the same number of major annual seminars, and a group trip to Israel.

Spain: The Barcelona operation, now four years old, conducted a special intensive seminar for twenty five participants, as well as a highly successful summer camp.

Israel: *Noar Telern*, the Israeli branch of Netzer Olami, expanded to nine centers across the country. It conducted summer camps in 2003 for twice the number of youngsters as the year before-420, in total. Israel also hosted delegates from eleven countries for a twelve-day gathering.

Netzer Olami has been running, in spite of the geo-political difficulties, its year-long course in leadership (called "Sinat-Netzer") for Movement graduates from the United Kingdom, South Africa, Australia, Argentina, and The Netherlands in Israel. Netzer Olami also conducted its international gatherings in Israel for Movement leadership from around the world.

The World Union plans to expand the work of Netzer Olami, opening it to more worldwide youth, facilitating greater cooperation with the North American Reform youth programs (NFTY), enhancing participation of youth and young adults in WUPJ, reviving young adult trips to Israel, and developing frameworks for young adults from different parts of the world to interact.

WUPJ New Initiatives



During the 2003 WUPJ Convention in Jerusalem, Rabbi Uri Regev presented six new initiatives, areas of significant expansion in the near future. They are:

International Advocacy

The World Union believes that it is vital to give expression to the progressive Jewish commitment to *Tikkun Olam* throughout the world. The World Union will undertake a three-pronged approach to build upon past achievements and make a significant and lasting contribution to *Tikkun Olam*. These will both reflect and give further credence to the fact that the World Union is the largest international Jewish religious organization.

- Advocacy in international institutions such as the United Nations Human Rights Commission, UNESCO, and the European Union.
- Mobilization of members of World Union-affiliated congregations on matters of international importance such as defending human rights, protecting the environment, and combating anti-Semitism, poverty and human trafficking.
- Advocacy on behalf of Progressive communities in areas where they are denied rights or equality, such as Israel, Germany, Hungary, and Italy.

The International Advocacy, *Tikkun Olam* Task Force, led by Evely Lazer Shansky and staffed by Ariella Thal from the Religious Action Center, has already begun to work on these issues.

International Interfaith Activity

With fundamentalist voices on the rise and threatening the stability of the world, a liberal religious voice, conducive to co-existence, social justice and human equality is needed now more than ever. The World Union will assume a more

active role in this critical field by establishing a global interfaith network of Progressive congregations.



Netzer Summer Camp in Europe

WUPJ New Initiatives



Leadership Development

The key to securing Jewish continuity and strengthening Progressive Judaism is high-quality professional, para-professional and lay leadership. Many developing and often isolated communities cannot afford professional support to develop and educate their members. There are communities that have some professional support, but not enough in specialized areas such as youth work, family education and outreach, liturgy and song leading, and Hebrew, among others. The World Union intends to create the infrastructure to provide training for interested leaders by assisting in recruitment and placement of Jewish professionals, initiating programs for leadership development and training, and mobilizing teachers and resources from established Jewish communities to serve the needs of their emerging and challenged counterparts. Project *Hineini*, which is creating opportunities for lay leaders in Eastern Europe to gain worship and management training, and is also establishing leadership-training programs for young adults in many countries, will aid in this mission.

Information Technology

As the largest body of religious Jews in the world, the WUPJ is the umbrella organization with the responsibility of bringing together and supporting more than 1.5 million members of the 1200 Reform, Progressive, Liberal and Reconstructionist congregations in over forty countries. It is crucial that all advantages of the most up-to-date Information Technology (IT) systems be utilized effectively and creatively in fulfillment of the World Union's mission: social and intellectual stimulation, stronger bonds between participating constituencies, and a dynamic dialogue between Progressive communities worldwide. The World Union is deeply committed to aiding small and remote congregations by providing them access to IT tools not otherwise available.

WUPJ will develop a central, web-accessible data bank of the best available materials and resources relevant to our congregations and membership, including educational curricula, liturgical materials, synagogue administration, and outreach, among others. It will make distance-learning programs available to the global Progressive Movement and ensure ongoing dialogue between

Israel and Diaspora constituencies, and facilitate the work of international committees and task forces. Netzer and TaMaR will have a vibrant, active presence within the WUPJ site.



Netzer Camp in Belarus.

WUPJ New Initiatives



Youth and International Young Adult Forum

Dynamic and motivated youth and young adults are essential for Judaism's future. The World Union intends to build and maintain an international Young Adult forum of Reform, Progressive, Liberal, and Reconstructionist movements worldwide. This forum will conduct leadership training activities on the local, national, and international levels, creating a worldwide network of young adults who are bonded to the World Union and who will subsequently become an active part of its future leadership.

The joint ARZENU/WUPJ Task Force is headed by Barrister Mark S. Anshan, President of ARZENU and staffed by Lesley Sachs, Associate Director of the WUPJ. The task force initiated discussion between the different bodies of the Movement - especially North America, Great Britain and Israel - to coordinate and join forces and enhance our activity for young adults in Israel. In addition, a Netzer Olami Israel Committee was re-established, headed by Ari Merom, a graduate of the WUPJ's Beuteil Leadership Program.

Affinity Groups

While World Union congregations are separated by geography and language, they are united by their shared commitment to Jewish tradition and the Jewish future. The World Union will endeavor to facilitate several trips and meetings between congregations each year in order to bring Jews from different parts of the world together to enhance ties, whether professional, personal, spiritual or financial, between World Union member congregations around the world; to study their joint and unique histories, and to engage in significant projects. These missions will, in particular, be designed to help strengthen smaller, less advantaged congregations.



Children in WUPJ-sponsored Kindergarten in Kiev relate to Torah.

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