



WORLD
UNION FOR
PROGRESSIVE
JUDAISM



האגודה
העולמית
ליהדות
מתקדמת

**INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND COMMITTEE
2009 ANNUAL REPORTS
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

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Steven M. Bauman, Chair

Dear Friends,

I am proud to report that despite the financial storm which we have had to weather, the World Union for Progressive Judaism has had quite a remarkable year. While some non-profit organizations have not fared well, our union of passionate committed progressive and Reform Jews around the world has not only survived but has grown. The reports contained in this binder should inspire you, and evoke delight and bring a smile

Rather than retrench and “batten down the hatches”, we were able to strengthen our position around the world, giving the traditions and contemporary values of Progressive Judaism an ever-increasing role in the development and future of Jewish life around the world.

Our programs have served us well – reaching tens of thousands of people from childhood to old age. Even so, our financial strength has been sorely tested over the past eighteen months, necessitating major reductions in professional staff – and burdening those remaining with increased responsibility and authority. Those to whom we bade farewell were hardworking, caring people whom we dearly miss.

Those who remained were able to guarantee our continued progress and have ensured that we maximized our impact on Jewish life while staying well within the reduced resources and budgets available. And, our lay leadership rose to the challenge by taking on more day-to-day responsibility to help our professionals meet their goals.

So todah rabah, thank you, to the lay and professional leadership for getting us through these trying times with panache, ruach and gemilut hasadim. The sacred mission that we all share is to support and strengthen progressive Jewish communities – new and old – wherever they are in need. With your spirit and continued support, we are being true to our mission and vision.

I hope you enjoy reading these moving reports, and that you will freely share the fruits of this good work with your friends, relatives and colleagues. Spread the word – Am Yisrael Chai.

L'shalom uvracha,



David Robinson, President, UPJ
Steve Denenberg, Executive Director, UPJ

The Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ) is the umbrella body and voice of Progressive Judaism in Australia, New Zealand and Asia, focused on the growth and development of Judaism in this region as well as providing support for Israel.

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers and our small team of dedicated professionals we have continued our work to strengthen Klal Yisrael by uniting our congregations and affiliates through their shared commitment to Torah-based Judaism, pluralism, equality and Tikkun Olam. Following the success of our last conference and its theme of Yachad ('Together') this year the focus has been on hemshech (continuity), particularly through the two regional gatherings of Presidents, Rabbis and Executive Committee members.

In our previous annual report we noted the priorities for 2009 to include:

- Raising the profile of Progressive Judaism, UPJ and its constituents.
- Completing the World Union edition of Mishkan T'filah;
- Representing the region at WUPJ and URJ conferences;
- Celebrating 80 years of Progressive Judaism in the region; &
- Increasing fundraising and support for Israel.

We are very pleased to report that all of these objectives – and much more – have been achieved during the year.

In addition to full participation in communal events, there have been a number of issues – both locally and in Israel – on which we have spoken out and received widespread publicity. We have also revamped the UPJ and ARZA websites and we send out an electronic newsletter every 2 weeks to more than 2,000 people. We are about to launch the first edition of our quarterly electronic magazine Gal Chadash (New Wave) and plan to distribute it widely throughout the region.

Mishkan T'filah: Thanks to the cooperation of the CCAR we have successfully adapted the Mishkan T'filah Siddur and created the World Union edition which is specifically aimed at the Southern Hemisphere. This is the first-ever Siddur prepared especially for the needs of this region, and it is a partnership between the UPJ and the South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ). The purchase agreement was signed at the URJ Biennial in November, and it is planned to launch the Siddur early in 2010.

Delegations to WUPJ conference and URJ Biennial: We sent enthusiastic delegations to the WUPJ Connections 2009 Biennial in Israel (in March) and to the URJ Biennial Conference in Canada (in November). Our movement was also very well represented at the World Parliament of Religions held in Melbourne in December, as well as benefiting from the visit of Rabbi David Saperstein. We also sent participants to the Beutel program and the Nahum Goldmann Leadership program.

Fundraising: Our annual fundraising campaign to support the WUPJ and the work of the IMPJ in caring for refugees and migrants included a visit by IMPJ Board member, Lior Zalmanson. Despite the global economic crisis, this year's campaign raised approximately A\$1.2 million, an increase on the previous year.

Other items: During this year other important events have included: the production of a 'package' of the options and procedures for the employment of a Rabbi; the continuing development of three new congregations; the celebration of the Wellington (NZ) Temple Sinai congregation's 50th Anniversary; the arrival of a new Rabbi for Western Australia; the return of another rabbi following his ordination; and the commencement of rabbinic studies for another in our region; the departure of Shaliach Sharon Shteinbock and the arrival of Shlichah, Anat Baruch.

During the time of our November Gathering, Rabbi Jackie Wexler of the Gold Coast congregation passed away suddenly and a memorial service will be held in the near future.

Conclusion: As this busy and exciting year draws to a close we are about to commence a year of celebrations – including the 80th anniversary of Progressive Judaism in our region. We warmly invite all members of the WUPJ International Assembly to come and join us for the very special **UPJ Biennial Conference** that will take place from **November 25 – 28, 2010** in Canberra and which will mark the culmination of this special year.



Ruth Cohen, President
Rabbi Dr. Andrew Goldstein, Chair

We can report another successful year with ever increasing Progressive Jewish activity across Europe. While the two UK movements (Movement for Reform Judaism and Liberal Judaism) are still, by far, the largest and most wide-ranging in their activities and contribute the lion's share of the Region's finances, we see a continuous growth and expansion of congregations on the continent. With this in mind we are attempting to increase the involvement of these communities in our decision making in the future, and we held a successful open Board meeting in Geneva in November which brought representatives from ten countries with a number of rabbis staying on for a rabbinic meeting.

The past year saw many **new and exciting achievements** throughout our region. Atid, our founding congregation in Barcelona, moved into a new building and appointed a graduate of Abraham Geiger College as its rabbi. New synagogues were also dedicated in Hannover and in Birmingham and Cheshire (UK). Geneva will soon open its exciting new building and work is progressing on the new Amsterdam Liberal Synagogue. There is interest in forming new Progressive congregations in Italy and Luxembourg and we are recommending at our AGM that Beth Shalom in Barcelona be accepted as a member. In July, we held the third annual Conference of Progressive Jews in the Czech Republic, led by Tom Kucera and Professor Paul Liptz and included some 47 participants from throughout the Czech Republic. Rabbi Moshe Yehudai served Beit Simcha in Prague as visiting rabbi for the High Holidays. Also in July, the UPJ (Germany) held its annual conference in Spandau, bringing together many people from around the country and outside.

The ER Rabbinic Training Fund continues to support rabbinic students from France, Hungary and Italy. The Geiger College – which celebrated its 10th anniversary in June – has been instrumental in setting up the Ludwig Ehrlich Fund that should allow Jewish students from any European Union country to study any subject in Germany with great financial support. The Leo Baeck College ordained eight new rabbis and Abraham Geiger College three, with three future graduates studying at the Levisson Institute in Holland.

The European Region is run on a tight budget and we are grateful to the support offered to us by our donors: to Arthur & Betty Roswell for their most generous endowment that will assist our work in Europe in the coming years; to Arthur Stern III and David Tiles for support on Beit Krakow; and to Jim Breslauer of the ongoing projects in Prague. We also thank the Friends of Progressive Judaism in Europe who have helped Ohr Chadash in Vienna to repair its Torah scroll, and contributed generally to our work.

Much time has been devoted this year in organizing the European Region Conference that will take place in Paris, March 4–7, 2010. This has involved ER Officers – led by Rabbi Andrew Goldstein, ER chair, and Kathryn Michaels, Administrator– working with a joint committee representing the Paris congregations led by Felix Mosbacher. Alongside this work, a Paris Steering Committee has met regularly to work on joint French projects and move towards a possible French Progressive Movement. The Conference will open our celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the opening of Israel Jacobson's school in Seesen, Germany – an event that marks the **birth of Reform Judaism**. We are planning (July 14–19, 2010) a tour based in Berlin and visiting Seesen and other German towns important to the early history of Progressive Judaism. We hope that all of our congregations and all in WUPJ will celebrate on Saturday July 17, 2010 the 200 years of Reform/Liberal/Progressive Judaism.

Our Youth:

- Yonatan Gozlan, the Netzer shaliach in **France**, is doing an excellent job His work is helping to unite our movement in Paris for the first time in decades. He is working on volunteer projects, Tu B'shvat and March of the Living future projects, as well as being involved in discussion on how Netzer will fit into the upcoming ER conference.
- Progress has been made on our plan to establish Netzer and TaMar groups in **Budapest**, with the guidance of rabbinic student Jorg Ahrens
- Five youngsters, four from Budapest and one from Warsaw, completed their successful stay at Kutz Camp as part of the leadership camp summer session, June 23-July 19, 2009. These youngsters received scholarship

support from the URJ Board Mission conducted last summer to Hungary and Poland. We hope to continue this project next summer.

- In **Spain**, Netzer conducted a successful summer camp outside Barcelona for approximately 100 youngsters, assisted by Yuval Nemirovsky, our Netzer worker for Spanish-speaking countries.
- Netzer's shlichah to Germany, Gali Reich, is running several successful programs including a youth group (Young & Yiddish), and a Netzer group.

Kathryn Michael, our one part-time employee, has achieved a great deal during this past year. Her regular Newsletter goes to over 600 subscribers and she is in personal contact with many across the European and world-wide Progressive network. She also runs Exodus 2000 – a program that encourages British communities to actively support Progressive congregations in the Former Soviet Union. As Chairman I am grateful to her, to the tireless efforts and support of my volunteer Officers and committee members, and to the support and assistance given by Rabbi Joel Oseran.

Finally, this will be the last report on behalf of the “European Region” as we propose at our next AGM to change our name to “European Union for Progressive Judaism”, conforming to the names and titles of other regions and our parent body.



Alex Kagan, Director, FSU

Many major events took place in 2009, the most exciting and significant of which took place in October 2009, when our two new centers in Moscow and St. Petersburg became fully operational. These centers serve as permanent homes for the Reform movement in the FSU, enabling these communities to offer religious, educational and cultural activities on a regular basis under one roof.

The dedication of our new **Moscow Center for Progressive Judaism** took place on October 8th, with the donors, World Union leaders and professional staff members, and other community leaders and dignitaries from the FSU and abroad. Celebrations continued throughout the weekend and coincided with *Simchat Torah* – the holiday of completing and restarting the reading of the Torah – further symbolizing the end of temporary venues and the beginning of a new chapter in a permanent home for the members of this community.

Discussions on the purchase of a property in Minsk are moving ahead. The Soref Breslauer foundation approved the \$1 million donation towards purchase and maintenance of the property. A property similar to that of the Moscow Center (a space in an established building) has been found. Due diligence is in final stages and contracts are being drawn up.

This year saw several congregational and twinning events:

Rabbi Helena Rubinstein, a native of Moscow and graduate of HUC-JIR, assumed her post as the new rabbi for Shaarei Shalom in St. Petersburg replacing Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz. Prior to her new post, Rabbi Rubinstein was the director of immigrant programming for the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism. She began her duties by leading High Holiday services in September.

The Torah Scroll donation for **Hatikva Congregation** in Gomel, organized by Ina Rae Levy of Sarasota, Florida, and donated by Congregation Rodef Shalom in Youngstown, Ohio, arrived in Belarus. Levy's son Jonathan and his wife Karen of Tampa donated funds for an Aron Kodesh, and the exquisite Ner Tamid for the congregation was designed by her daughter Cindy.

Community worker Julia Grishenko from Odessa began rabbinic studies at Leo Baeck. Julia is currently in Israel at HUC-JIR for her first year of studies. She has been replaced by Vladimir Torchinsky who worked for our movement in Chelyabinsk.

Hatikvah in Kiev celebrated their 18th anniversary as a congregation and 15 years of running kindergartens in Kiev. Over 60 children are enrolled in the Reform program that runs in 2 venues in the city.

Newly formed twinning relationships between FSU and UK congregations include the Emuna Congregation in Vitebsk with Finchley Reform Synagogue led by Debra Brunner, and Moscow Severnaya with Middlesex New Synagogue.

Rabbi Ken Weiss together with his wife spent a very successful month in Minsk, standing in for Rabbi Gregory Abramovich while the latter was on sabbatical in the US. Rabbi Weiss conducted prayers and ceremonies, led a seminar, and visited the Vitebsk congregations where he has family roots.

Moscow Severnaya, along with a government club, held a month long Jewish creativity festival in Moscow. The aim of the festival was to increase awareness, and promote and encourage Jews living on the outskirts of Moscow to become more involved in their local Jewish communities. This is the second year that this festival has been held.

A very moving Bnei Mitzvah ceremony was held in Kiev for Joshua Levberg and his daughter Chana during *Simchat Torah*. Joshua read the final chapter in the Torah, while Chana was the Bereshit Kallah. This family

celebration affirms the success of the Bnei Mitzvah program that not only trains the children for this very important life cycle event, but also involves their parents and encourages them to take an active role.

As part of the ongoing interfaith dialogue in Lipetsk, an International Tolerance Day was held in this city, and included an “Open Studio” (available on You Tube) and a panel discussion devoted to tolerance issues – “We are together”. Participants included Jewish, Armenian and Azerbaijani congregations, city authorities, the Federal human rights supervisor and members of the regional Public Chamber.

Pesach this year was felt in full force throughout the FSU, in spite of the financial constraints and difficulties facing these programs. For the seventh consecutive year, 16 HUC-JIR students visited and conducted Seders in our reform communities in 18 cities throughout the FSU. Additionally, some 5300 people participated in Seders held in our Reform communities in the FSU. These achievements attest to the needs of Jews in the FSU for traditional religious activities such as the Pesach project as well as the essential presence of the Reform movement in FSU.

Chanukah in 2009 was celebrated all over the FSU. Diverse activities took place in different cities. In Moscow nearly each day of Chanukah was marked by a different event such as: “*Chanukah Pancake Party*”, *Shabbat of Chanukah lights*”. Activities in other cities included: a family seminar in St. Petersburg, Chanukah celebrations and performances in the 2 kindergartens in Kiev, “Tea with the Rabbi” program and a discussion about Chanukah in Simferopol. Dignitaries were also part of the celebrations: in Minsk, three representatives of Israel, the USA and India were invited to light the Hanukah candles and on the last night of Chanukah, Mr. Borislav Yatvesky, the first secretary for the Israeli Embassy in Russia, lit the eighth candle in St. Petersburg.

This year was also marked by several successful seminars and conferences:

Family seminars continue to be a very successful mechanism for attracting young families to the different congregations. This year, a series of family seminars were held in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Chelyabinsk, Kiev, Odessa, and Minsk, focusing on different themes including the Jewish home, the Jewish life cycle, the Jewish calendar, and Jewish Reform tradition. Each seminar was held over a weekend and included Kabbalat Shabbat, Shabbat Shacharit and Havdallah services.

16 FSU representatives including rabbis, Netzer coordinators and lay leaders took part in the World Union's *Connections 2009* in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in March.

In April, 3 years of seminars sponsored by the Avi Chai Foundation concluded. Nearly 110 educational training seminars with a total of 740 participants took place in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, Siberia and Riga.

The second seminar for fundraising with Michael Steiner and 15 senior FSU staff was held in Moscow August 19-20. During both seminars, participants were provided with practical tools on how to raise funds in their respective communities, and have already experienced some success.

This year also saw successful youth summer camps and other programs:

A total of 971 young people participated in our **summer camp** program this year! This included nine regular summer camps for 750 participants, and day camps (in Simferopol and Tyumen) for 100 participants. The final camp, which concluded the summer season, was a special camp on wheels for 50 madrichim was held September 3-7, taking them to different Jewish sites in Ukraine (sponsored by the Claims Conference).

Three **Netzer** clubs from Moscow, Chelyabinsk and Minsk took part in the 12th annual international Chanukah short film Festival (sponsored by the Jewish Agency) in Minsk. As in previous years, Netzer's performance was most impressive and the Minsk group won a prize for best actress and best portrayal of Chanukah. Moscow's movie was voted audience favorite and Chelyabinsk received the prize for film of the year!

Four **Netzer** groups took part in the annual Purimshpiel in Vitebsk. Our Moscow group took 3rd place. The Avi Chai seminar led by Rabbi Grisha Abramovich took place at the same time as the Purimshpiel and all participants were invited to take part.

Netzer along with other youth groups such as Hillel and Israel Cultural Center participated in a JDC sponsored philanthropic quest: *Maasim Tovim Negishim le Kol Echad* (Good deeds that everyone can do) in the framework of *Tikkun Olam*. Participants provided different means of assistance (cleaning, clothing, etc.) to a number of need organizations such as Hesed FSU (children with special needs) and Hesed Sha'arei Hesed (for the elderly). Funds raised were donated to needy Jewish families.

A new **Netzer Moscow** initiative – “Havdallah all over Moscow” – was launched in October. The goal of this project is to bring Judaism out of the buildings and into the street, as well as to attract Jews from all parts of Moscow to the Reform movement and Jewish life as a whole. In January the group held Havdallah in Poklonnaya Gara, a favourite spot in Moscow, where many events are held. Over 60 people took part in the event that also included a tour of Jewish Moscow.

The **Machon** – Institute for Modern Jewish Studies in Moscow has ten first year students in Moscow, and seven second-year student who successfully completed the Israel portion of their second year program and returned to work in FSU communities.

The 6th **Masa** Program began in October 2009 with 4 participants from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

This year was marked by several missions and visits.

Donors Sue and Jimmy Klau, and Nani and Austin Beutel travelled to Simferopol and visited Reform congregations in the Crimea with Rabbi Misha Kapustin.

Linda Levenson, her parents and 2 sisters visited the congregation in Odessa and spent Shacharit with congregation members and Netzer madrichim who were in Odessa during their Camp on Wheels. Linda continued her visit to the Crimea.

Debbie Pulik, from the FSU Department in Jerusalem attended the Exodus 2000 annual meeting in London and gave an update about the communities in the FSU.

A Mission of FSU leadership travelled to Pittsburgh and San Francisco from January 28 – February 9. This was the second time such a mission has taken place. Many thanks to Cherie Half, Linda Levenson, Michael Steiner, Anne Molloy, Henry Posner and all others involved for their warm hospitality and efforts in organizing such a successful and effective visit.

Plaut Torah Commentary

Plaut Torah Commentary Russian Translation- We are continuing in the new phase of the editing and lay-out process - placing the Hebrew text (same publishing house is providing this Hebrew text as was used for the CCAR Plaut edition) into the final lay-out design. The anticipated publication date of the translation project is scheduled for Simchat Torah – September, 2010.



Professor Avraham Melamed, Chair, IMPJ
Rabbi Gilad Kariv, Executive Director, IMPJ

Highlights of IMPJ Activities for 2009:

Six new Reform Rabbis join the Reform Community in Israel: In December 2009 six graduates of the Israeli Rabbinical Program at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem were ordained –, joining dozens of new rabbis ordained in recent years. Most of the new rabbis were born in Israel and are alumni of the Israeli education system. Four are already serving Reform congregations throughout Israel; one female rabbi is working to establish a center and community for people with special needs while another has been active for years in the field of pluralistic education and Progressive education frameworks in Israel.

Over the past decade, the number of Reform Rabbis has been doubled, thanks to the establishment of the HUC Israel Rabbinical program. Today, there are 70 Reform rabbis in Israel; most have been ordained in Israel.

2009 High Holidays: The 2009 High Holidays marked a good beginning for the IMPJ. Thousands of Israelis attended High Holiday services at Reform Congregations throughout Israel. As in previous years, thousands of people were drawn to our congregations throughout Israel. Many of our congregations report increased numbers of participants in the services and study sessions – the outcome of the dedicated work by the congregations throughout the year. The growth in attendance reflects successful outreach by our communities. Several congregations conducted second—and even third—satellite minyanim to accommodate worshipers. There were also new minyanim, which introduced Reform and Progressive prayer to Israelis in cities, towns and kibbutzim across the country. The local activists who initiated these High Holiday prayer services in new locales are pleased to be advancing interest and affiliation with the Reform movement in communities throughout the year, throughout Israel.

IMPJ's Mechina gap-year program was recognized by the Tel Aviv-Jaffa municipality for excellence in volunteering, at a public ceremony held in December 2009. The Mechina, which was established in 2003 and recognized by Israel's Ministry of Defense since 2008, had a record 44 participants this year. The prestigious award recognizes the impact of the participants' community service on the lives of children, youth, migrant workers and elderly residents of Jaffa. The program, which combines study with community service, intentionally chose this socially and economically distressed city as its home, with the vision of making a meaningful contribution to the lives of the religiously and ethnically diverse residents. The municipal award recognizing the Mechina's excellence in volunteering is an important affirmation of the Mechina's mission.

IMPJ is building on the success of its Yachdav: School-to-School Educational Program. Reform educators and congregations across North America and the world are invited to deepen and strengthen their experience of Jewish identity, peoplehood and Israel by taking part of our School to School program which offers an in-depth, long-term curriculum targeted to the needs of fifth and sixth graders in overseas congregational schools and Israeli public schools.

This highly regarded program, established in 2003, has enabled educators to guide thousands of fifth and sixth grade students throughout the world and in Israel in a long-term shared learning experience. In the 2009-10 school year, there are some 30 educators and 2,000 youngsters in schools in North America and Israel participating in the Yachdav Program and we look forward to building on the momentum of this success.



Miriam Vasserman, Chair, World Union-South America
Raul C. Gottlieb, Vice-Chair
Hilda ten Brink, President, UJCL
Berta Zylberstajn, Executive Secretary

LATIN AMERICA

During the past year many events and activities have taken place to expand our presence in the Latin American region due to the efforts and dedication of World Union professionals and lay leaders as well as the support of the Yad B' Yad Task Force. Following are the highlights:

Liberal Judaism at Everyone's Fingertips - Outreach Program in Brazil

The region faces many challenges. The majority of Jews in the region are not orthodox, but outreach efforts and Jewish education (even in non-religious Jewish schools) comes primarily from orthodox institutions. The economic crisis has affected the Jewish population and weakened its institutions. Jews have moved from their communities and have not always integrated into new centers for many reasons; assimilation and intermarriage (approx. 60%) has resulted. There is a need to strengthen modern religious practice as an essential part of the contemporary Jewish identity. We need to build a legitimate Jewish space to welcome those families who are Jewish by choice or where only one parent is Jewish; and we need to face an increase in Anti-Semitism against the Jewish community in Brazil and in Israel.

The main objectives are:

To combat assimilation in our Jewish communities by creating religious, educational, cultural and social programmes that enable us, to target their needs;

To reinforce Jewish identity, and establish and strengthen the bond and cohesion of the community through its ties with Israel;

To create a network that promotes interaction, communication and support among the regional communities;

To train educators and community leaders (professional and volunteer) in Latin America, providing tools to create and distribute knowledge throughout the region, through training sessions and by broadening the content within the communities;

To demonstrate religious identification, not by excluding orthodoxy, but by explaining what Liberal Judaism is and its significance in helping to maintain the Jewish communities in Latin America.

Cordoba Meeting – formalizing the creation of a Regional Board

During Connections 2009, regional leaders initiated a discussion about ways to address the challenges we were all encountering in Latin America. A decision was made to hold a meeting to discuss the formation of a regional board structure that would consolidate the new administrative team and the Regional Committee and to become better acquainted with the work being done with small communities throughout Argentina. Rabbi Marcelo Polakoff from Cordoba, Argentina, warmly agreed to open his community to host the gathering which took place from December 3-6, 2009.

Some 30 leaders from around the region attended this historic gathering of Progressive communities in Latin America, including representatives from Argentinean communities in Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Misiones, Posadas, Coronel Suarez, Corrientes, Santa Rosa, Villaguay, Entre Rios, Avellaneda, Parana, and from Brazilian communities in Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo (while unable to attend, Belo Horizonte sent confirmation of their commitment to the regional structure), Santiago, Chile and from Panama representing the eleven UJCL communities. We sat together and sang Sh'hecheyanu, knowing that we were embarking upon a new venture, filled with many questions, yet decidedly convinced that our time had come to begin the journey.

Rabbi Joel Oseran's Trip to Argentina and Brazil

In December Rabbi Joel Oseran held several meetings with activists and leaders in the region, including: Fundación Judaica, and Congregation Mishkan in Argentina; David Igdaloff, president of AIP (Asociación Israelita de Las Pampas); Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, and meeting with the boards of SIBRA and the Centro Israelita in Brazil.

In Rio de Janeiro Rabbi Oseran spent time at ARI, including opening the shell representing 10 thousand meals served by IRAC's "Keren Bekavod" (Fund for the Dignity) together with local activists. He also visited CIP in Sao Paulo, the largest Jewish congregation in Brazil, met with their board, and participated in the Kabbalat Shabbat Service, the first night of Chanukkah.

Congregation Ruaj Ami from Santiago –Chile in process to affiliation

Congregation Ruaj Ami, from Santiago de Chile, through its president Victor Grimblatt Hinzpeter and with approval from its board began the process of affiliation to the World Union. Mr. Grimblatt Hinzpeter recently attended the first WUPJ Latin America Executive Board Meeting in Cordoba, Argentina.

Jewish Spirituality Center Mishkan joins World Union

As a direct result of Jerry Tanenbaum's visit to the region (see below), The Jewish Spirituality Center Mishkan of Buenos Aires became officially affiliated to the WUPJ. Mishkan is a Reform Congregation with 300 members, founded on April 4th, 1992 by Rabbi Reuben Nisenbom who belongs to CCAR.

The Asociación Israelita de Las Pampas – AIP

The World Union also works with Asociación Israelita de Las Pampas (AIP), created in 2007 to focus on the needs, problems and development of Jewish communities, not only in the area of the Pampas (interior of the country), but in struggling congregations throughout Argentina. With a staff of top professionals trained in various areas – rabbis, cantors, and educators – the AIP has been recognized as an integral provider of assistance in the social, religious, and educational life of its members.

Jerry Tanenbaum visit to South America

From July 26th to August 10th, 2009, Jerry Tanenbaum (USA), president of the Yad B'Yad Task Force (WUPJ's entity that supports liberal congregations in Latin America), visited both affiliates and communities who work in collaboration with the movement in Brazil - ARI-Rio de Janeiro, SIBRA and Centro Israelita in Porto Alegre, CIM-Belo Horizonte, CIP- São Paulo, and in Argentina - Fundación Judaica and Comunidad Mishkan in Buenos Aires.

The objective of his visit was to learn more about the reality of liberal congregations in the region, their needs and to strengthen relations among communities in the region.

The intensive and busy agenda included meetings with religious leaders, communities board of directors and councils, politicians and activists, Jewish Press, youth leaders and the presidents of Israeli Federations in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and the Brazilian Israeli Confederation.

Lashir Benefesh (Singing with the Soul)

Between December 20 and 22, the 3rd Lashir Benefesh (Singing with the soul) event took place in Rio de Janeiro, organized and hosted by chazanim Oren Boljover and André Nudelman from ARI – Associação Religiosa Israelita. This course was created by Philippe Manuard, from Congregação Israelita Mineira (CIM) in Belo Horizonte, and was offered for the first time in July 2008 at Associação Religiosa Israelita (ARI) in Rio de Janeiro. The second Lashir Benefesh event was held on March 15th and 16th at the headquarters of CIP - Israeli Congregation of São Paulo. The next meeting will be held in Porto Alegre, in 2010.

Latin America at Connections 2009

On March 18th to the 23rd, 20 representatives from Brazil, Costa Rica and Argentina formed the delegation from Latin America who attended Connections 2009 in Israel. During the presentations, each region was able to show a summary of the activities developed between 2007 and 2008. The video produced and exhibited by Latin America was a success and highly praised (go to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT_H-SEuyIQ to see it)

The program also offered an opportunity for representatives from each region to get together and the Latin American delegation took advantage of this opportunity to define their action program for 2009.

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

We have been very active in the Latin American region of the World Union, with the support and dedication of World Union professionals and lay leaders as well as the Yad B' Yad Task Force. Following are some of the highlights:

- Twenty participants from three UJCL Congregations spent the first days of 2009 in Israel – a first visit for most of the participants. This very successful visit was organized by Rabbi Joshua Kullock, Executive Director of UCL, and under the auspices of the World Zionist Organization, and was a first effort on the part of UJCL to collectively build a closer relationship between Israel and our communities. While in Jerusalem the group visited the WUPJ headquarters in Beit Shmuel/ Merkaz Shimshon and Rabbi Joel Oseran was a most gracious host. UJCL plans to organize trips to Israel every two years.
- Rabbi Gustavo Kraselnik from Panama organized a summer camp – called "Machakef 09" – for 10-16 year olds. "Machakef 09" brought together 31 chanichim and 8 madrichim – 2 of them from Spain - thanks to the joint collaboration of Noar Panama, Netzer Olami and Netzer Barcelona. Yuval Nemirovsky, Netzer's Coordinator for Netzer Spanish speakers and TaMaR, and Aliyah & Klitah Coordinator for Netzer Olami, traveled from Israel to assist at the Machakef. The Rosh Machane was Igal Entberg, Netzer Olami shaliach . This is the second youth machane organized by Panama, and UJCL hopes to see this become an annual project.
- Mifgash on line: Our Communications Department, headed by Martha Lichtenstein and Sara Gurevich, continued publishing our cyber bulletin. The publication of Mifgash on line has been made possible by the generous contribution of WUPJ. Please visit us at: www.mifgashonline.blogspot.com
- Rabbis Gustavo Kraselnik, Joshua Kullock, Daniela Szuster, Rami Pavolotzky, Pablo Berman and Mario Gurevich continued teaming to write commentaries on the weekly parasha. These commentaries are published in Mifgash and also in the bulletins of the various congregations. The commentaries written during 2008 are being published in a book. There will be editions of the Commentaries in English and in Spanish, in separate volumes and they will be sold by the various congregations. The launch of the book promises to be one of the highlights of our conference in Panama.
- Marvin and Rosario Sossin and Hilda ten Brink attended **Connections 2009**. Ernest Motta attended a meeting in Cordoba, Argentina, of the Latin American WUPJ region.
- UJCL held its biennial conference in Panama City, Panama, on January 27–31. The conference brought together the communities of the region and presented well known international Jewish personalities. The theme of the conference was "Building Community in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities." During the conference the memory of Pat Tanenbaum z"l was honored. The traditional Panamanian hospitality made all of us feel very welcome and the hard work of the Organizing Committee produced a most memorable 12th UJCL Conference.



Helene H. Waranch, Chair, NAC
Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, VP Philanthropy, Staff

In 2009 the North American Council (NAC) of the WUPJ expanded its membership, its donor base and its programs in order to build greater recognition throughout the continent (friend-raising) and to increase financial support (fund-raising). The NAC members are encouraged to participate fully in our activities and to continually increase their annual gifts in order to help offset the operational costs of the WUPJ so we can continue to offer, as well as expand, our programs and projects throughout the world.

The role and responsibilities of the NAC officers and members continues to become more involved. In addition to increasing their personal giving, in spite of the times, each person has been asked to serve as a World Union Ambassador to tell the World Union story within their communities, to identify new and potential donors, and to make contacts with their local federations. The officers are communicating through conference calls to establish policies and to launch programs and fundraising efforts.

The Rabbinic Circle has become a reality under the leadership of Rabbis Peter Rubenstein and David Gelfand. There is an extensive campaign to have rabbis throughout North America become part of the Circle, to provide personal financial support and to inform and involve their congregations and communities in the work of the World Union.

We are also expanding our friend-raising and fund-raising initiatives to reach out to local Jewish Federations in North America for financial support. Many Federations have a grant process or donor-advised foundations available for specific projects in the Jewish world, such as funding an overseas congregation or special programs that provide Jewish experiences and enrichment. Our process to engage these Federations is twofold: to write grants for funding of World Union programs and to involve NAC members in working with their local Federations.

In November 2009 at the URJ Biennial in Toronto the NAC held its annual meeting on Wednesday evening. Over 50 people from all over the world attended to meet, have dinner together, and receive updates on the WUPJ regions and their congregations and programs. The NAC officers for 2009-2011 were elected and installed in a very meaningful service prepared by Rabbi Bretton-Granatoor. The officers are: Helene H. Waranch, Chair; Nani Beutel, Rabbi David Gelfand, Rabbi Roberto Graetz, James Klau, Diane Marcus and Lois Zeidler, Vice Chairs; Lenore Mass, Secretary; and Arthur Roswell, Treasurer.

Also at the URJ Biennial, WUPJ held its luncheon on Thursday where over 400 attended. Matan Klein and Seeds of Peace provided most enjoyable music. Our featured speaker was Rabbi Dow Marmar, Rabbi Emeritus of Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto who gave a wonderful talk about the importance of the World Union. Our guest speaker, David Makovsky, director of the Washington Institute Project on the Middle East Peace Process and co-author of *Myths, Illusions and Peace: Finding New Directions for America in the Middle East*, provided us with an update on the latest developments in the Middle East. The luncheon was a well attended event that was informative as well as offering another opportunity to raise awareness of and funds for the World Union.

Under the leadership of Diane Marcus, Joan Cohen and Phyliss Dorey as co-chairs, planning has started for Connections 2011, scheduled for February 7–13 2011 in San Francisco.

The work and new initiatives of the NAC would not be possible without the full commitment and constant support of the staff of the New York office under the capable leadership of Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor with the assistance of Sharon Markowitz, Ron Wegsman and Ann Fields. Even with a reduced number of people, they have greatly expanded the fundraising efforts and are building good working relationships with our members as well as with the leadership and staff of the other Reform organizations. On behalf of the entire NAC membership we are most appreciative of their efforts and continued hard work.

To all participants in the NAC—lay leaders and staff alike—I personally say “Todah Rabah”. May the World Union continue to grow and expand to meet the many needs of the emerging congregations throughout the world.

SAVE THE DATES FOR CONNECTION 2011: FEBRUARY 7-13, 2011.



Steve Lurie, SAUPJ National Chair

Despite many challenges this year we are determined to grow and develop and have achieved many of our goals. One of the biggest problems we are facing is the onslaught by the right wing Orthodox against the Progressive Jewish communities within South Africa, so much so that we are looking to establishing a SA religious Action centre similar to that of IRAC. .

Steve Lurie, SAUPJ's National Chairman, held several significant and fruitful meetings during 2009: a luncheon at Beyachad, hosted by the Board of Deputies in honour of Mr Ronald Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress; meetings with the JNF and Zionist Federation; and a meeting with Ambassador Gershon Gan who is involved in 'Mashav' – an organization responsible for planning and implementing Israel's program of technical and humanitarian aid to the developing world.

In our communities:

- We sent Lynton Travis to the Beutel seminar January 2010. We have managed to send candidates now for the last four years.
- Our Rabbis hold regular Kallahs twice a year. The latest took place in January 2010. It is wonderful to have 7 fulltime Rabbanim in the country.
- The SAUPJ National Biennial Conference will take place in Durban on May 14 –17, 2010.
- The SA Jewish Board of deputies has created a website (www.jewishsa2010.com) to be marketed internationally for all those visiting the country for the 2010 FIFA World cup football. The SAUPJ will also be advertising the various Progressive synagogues on our website <http://saupj.org.za/> including phone numbers only (for security reasons) and will make our facilities open to all those visiting. Hospitality arrangements may also be done through our website.
- The SA Progressive Movement is busy with the development and publication of a new prayer book in conjunction with Australia and New Zealand, expected in early 2010. This is the World Union edition of 'Mishkan Tefila' which will hopefully service us for the next 30 years. It will replace the 'Gates of Prayer' prayer book which is currently in use.
- Anat Hoffman, Director of Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) paid a successful visit to the country. She was undoubtedly the leading light at Limmud and has given the Progressive movement untold amounts of publicity. She appeared on E-TV, SAFM, Chai FM and Kate Turkington on 702 as well as various press media. Limmud was once again an outstanding event where the numbers seem to have grown, despite the Orthodox rabbinic rejection.
- In June, Steve Lurie and his wife hosted a luncheon at their home for the new Israeli Ambassador Dov Segev-Steinberg to meet the Progressive Community in Johannesburg and Pretoria. It was a great opportunity for all of us to interact with him. The Ambassador has since been a guest at various services held at our other synagogues and it is always an honour to have his presence amongst us.
- The SAUPJ sent a message of condolence on the passing of Mendel Kaplan, a great South African Jewish leader, former chairman of the board of the Jewish Agency from 1987–1995, and honorary president of Keren Hayesod since 1995. We also posted a tribute in the Jewish Report.
- We wished Monica Solomon a hearty mazal tov on being inducted as a member of the board of Women for Reform Judaism, on Friday November 6th at Bet David in Sandton.

Our youth:

- We welcomed Rina Epstein as our new Netzer Shlichah for Cape Town and Jacki Maris has been employed as our youth worker for the Gauteng synagogues.
- We are very pleased that Mor Rubinstein, the Netzer Shlichah in Johannesburg will be staying another year with us.
- The summer camp participant numbers were down this year but the camps themselves were very successful. We also benefited from the presence of Netzer summer Shlichim to these camps.

Unfortunately, one of the results of this orthodox rabbinical attack on the Progressive movement was the fact that our youth worker Jacki Maris, who was appointed a madrichah on the Israel Encounter Tour (scheduled for January 2010), will attend as a representative of the Israel Centre and not Netzer. Rabbi Kacev, the Executive Director of King David Schools, has once again marginalized our youth by insisting that the Israel Centre send her on the Cape Town bus (and not the Johannesburg bus where she lives) as he does not want her to interact with the orthodox children. This situation is totally unacceptable and we intend to fight this. This issue will be on the forefront this year.



Overview

This year the Anita Saltz International Education Center has begun to move from its startup phase into a permanent, international destination for educational opportunities. These first few years allowed us to create a momentum advancing the World Union as an internationally recognized institution on the Jewish educational landscape.

In 2009 we augmented the Center's program by establishing a series of Israel seminars on the basis of the "Beutel Seminar". We fine-tuned our overseas seminars, targeting World Union communities that are in need of educational support and guidance. The Distance Learning program is up and running on our website, employing the mediums of written text, YouTube videos, and Podcasts. After being in the field for a few years our reputation has grown, and consequently we were able to run more programs for visiting congregations, as well as other Progressive Jewish programs coming to Israel.

2009 was the year the center created a far more comprehensive development plan with numerous grant proposals for all seminars and educational programs.

Programs at the Center in 2009

Israel Seminars and Strategy

We concluded that we were going to be far more successful by positioning the seminars in a way that would meet the specific needs and criteria of our broad constituency. We changed the focus of our seminars by clarifying the target audiences and educational approaches, together with evaluations, to best fulfill our goals.

In 2009 we began targeting more foundations and private donors to aggressively pursue funding and subsidies for all seminars and programs by developing a well-structured program menu. The Center's experience over the past five years has demonstrated that such subsidies are essential to ensure the kind of wide and diverse participation that maximizes each seminar's value.

Israel Seminars run in 2009

- January 7–10: Netzer Progressive Judaism Seminar:
 - Jewish Identity Seminar for young adults from Netzer Olami's northern hemisphere.
- January 29–February 7: The Beutel Seminar for Lay Leadership
 - Lay Leadership Seminar for Progressive Jews from 47 countries (subsidized)
- January 28–29: Netzer Australia Israel Seminar
 - Israel seminar for university students from Australia
- March 15–17: World Union Executive Board Study Seminar
 - Pre-World Union Convention study seminar for the Executive board of the World Union
- February 12–22: Project Understanding
 - Interfaith seminar for Catholics and Jews from New York (completely subsidized)
- March 13–14: Reform Judaism Seminar for College Students
 - Progressive Jews who are studying on a year abroad in Israel (partially subsidized)
- March 16–17: South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ)
 - Seminar for South African lay leadership in Jerusalem
- May 14–24: URJ Study Kallah
 - Each year seminars are based on a different theme. 2009 was based on Tel Aviv at 100.

Overseas Community Seminars and Strategy

The Saltz Center also operated seminars in Progressive Jewish communities outside of Israel. A significant number of these communities are emerging and experiencing a remarkable renaissance. By bringing its Jerusalem-based seminars to these important populations, the Center connects these communities on a global scale. In 2009 the center received a generous gift that will allow us to subsidize the cost of these seminars and consequently run many more of these programs.

Overseas Seminars run in 2009

January 15th-18th 2009 -European Region Study Seminar, held at South Gate, London, UK.

October 21st-27th 2009 Scandinavian Lay Education Project, held in Copenhagen, Denmark

November 6th -November 10th 2009- teaching at the "Lech Lecha" Seminar, in Germany

Educational Content Provision

As the educational arm of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the Saltz Center also provides educational content to programs operated by other arms of the World Union and the Reform movement. These include Netzer Olami, the World Union's international youth movement; the Machon program which trains Reform community leaders in the former Soviet Union; the Eisendrath International Exchange program in Israel for North American high school students; and other Progressive and Reform Jewish groups visiting Israel.

Educational Content Programs in 2009

February 24–March 1: CCAR Convention

March 27: Liberal Judaism program

March 12: Russian Machon Program

March 17–23: World Union Convention

April 21: Netzer Olami

April 23: Hebrew Union College

May 1: Warsaw Studium of Philosophy and Theology

May 12: Hebrew University

May 21: NFTY Birthright

May 24: NFTY Birthright

May 29: Hebrew Union College/Tikkun Leil Shavuot

June 15: ARZENU Conference

July 30: NFTY Birthright

October 7 B'Shaareych Program

November 4–8: URJ Biennial in Toronto, Canada

December 3: FSU Machon in Israel

December 14: Hebrew Union College

Programs with visiting congregations

February 15: Temple Sinai, Washington DC

February 21: Havurah of Southern Berkshires

March 10: Temple Beth Torah, Ventura CA

March 7: Temple Mount Sinai, El Paso Texas

March 21: Temple Beth Am, Los Altos

May 2: Temple Akiva, Clover City, CA

June 13: Congregation Children of Israel, Augusta, GA.

June 20: Temple Bet Shalom, Minnetonka, MN

June 27: Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA

June 27: Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, TX

June 27: Temple Beth Israel, Sharon, PA

July 18: Temple Emanuel, Waterford, CT

December 25, Westchester Reform Temple, NY



Since its inception in 1979 in Australia and South Africa, Netzer continues to grow, develop and meet challenges. On March 19, 2009, Netzer celebrated its 30th anniversary, staging a spectacular performance for the participants of **Connections 2009**. We took this opportunity to show that our young generation continues to spread the pluralist message of Progressive, Reform, Liberal Judaism throughout the Jewish world.

Netzer Olami – This year's highlights:

A mission of 28 *bogrim* (graduates) of the 5 Jewish youth movements in Australia visited Israel in January. Netzer Australia – with 10 participants – had the largest delegation. The visit was prepared and conducted by Netzer Olami in conjunction with the JNF.

In February, Netzer participated in a JNF-organized tree-planting ceremony near Kibbutz Ruchama (near the Gaza strip). Dozens of buses with hundreds of shnaties, representing all of the Zionist youth movements, drove through the town of Sderot in a show of solidarity with its inhabitants. The Netzer delegation, full of our famous Netzer enthusiasm and *ruach*, included shnaties from the FSU, USA, Britain, Germany, South Africa and Australia.

Netzer Veida (international conference): The Netzer Olami *Veida* saw the participation of 23 delegates from 12 countries. The *veida* took place from March 16–23, and all delegates participated actively in **Connections 2009** – it is safe to say they made their presence felt! Their participation in the entire conference was subsidized by the WU and was seen as critical in involving them in the future.

Shlichim (emissaries)

In June the Jewish Agency informed all youth movements of its intention to further cut the shlichut budget – substantially affecting the ability to send shlichim. The youth movements organized a campaign to fight the decision with active Netzer participation and WU support, but unfortunately cuts were implemented. For Netzer, this meant a \$50,000 cut for each year of 2009 and 2010.

As a result, discussions as to the model, scope and funding of relevant shlichut are developing, affected by the results of the cut in the shlichut map mentioned above. Netzer will do everything to maintain the current map of shlichut. Therefore, the current solution is based on maintaining positions but changing the status of some shlichim from professional to volunteers and from families to singles (thus reducing costs) as well as procuring further funds from local support and other bodies. Therefore, we have managed to maintain our shlichut map – an outstanding achievement in this climate (see list below).

The Netzer shlichim for 2009 are:

- a. Anat Baruch – community and Netzer Shlichah to Sydney Australia.
- b. Rina Epstein – graduate of Noar Telem in Israel, Netzer Cape Town, South Africa.
- c. Judith Weinberger – experienced birthright counselor who made Aliya from Frankfurt in 1993, returned to Germany as a reform Jewish educator and Shlichah for Netzer.
- d. Dana Friedman – experienced informal educator, replaced Noa Marom after 3 years of successful shlichut as the volunteer shlichah for LJY Netzer in UK.
- e. Judith Worochof, HUC-JIR student and former Netzer shlichah to RSY Britain, replaced Anna Kischlanski as the central shlichah for NFTY in NA.
- f. Igal Entberg – Panama
 - a. Hannan Siddor – NFTY, USA
 - b. Rachel Kaplan – student shlichah, Toronto
 - c. Mor Rubinstein – Johannesburg, South Africa
 - d. Dana Bar Tsur – Melbourne, Australia
 - e. Ben Yarden – RSY Netzer Britain
 - f. Yonatan Gozlan – Paris, France

- g. Nadav Lavi, a volunteer Community Shaliach, will be the first Shaliach to go on Shlichut to Adelaide, Australia. Nadav is a graduate of Noar Telem – Netzer of Israel

Whilst volunteer Shlichim usually go on Shlichut for one year only, ours tend to be asked to renew their contract for at least another year. The fact that the vast majority of the Netzer volunteer Shlichim stay on Shlichut for two years is proof of the quality of candidates we manage to recruit, of their success in general and of the meaningful contribution they make to both the youth movement as well as the community.

Summer shlichim - Netzer Olami concluded a successful operation to help Netzer South Africa by drafting, training and sending four Shlichim to the movement's summer camp there, accompanied by Rina Epstein, Netzer Olami Shlichah to Cape Town.

Shnat (year course in Israel)

Substantial work took place this year on the finalization of a vision, mission and cause for Shnat, as discussed at length during the *veida*. This is of crucial importance for future processes regarding year course.

- Netzer Olami operates 2 regional hemisphere Machzorim. Both machzorim offer 2 academic options for the first part of the program: the Netzer Olami Etgar program, living in the Beit Shmuel Netzer flat and studying in the MS/BS classrooms, and the Jewish Agency's "Machon Lemadrichim" institution for training youth movements' counselors. The next stages are combined, and all are operated in unique reform and communal setting.
- In mid-June Netzer Olami concluded the largest ever Northern Machzor, that started in September 2008, marking unique success in bringing together Netzer graduates from Europe, NFTY graduates from North America and even a few Israelis from the Galilee. 49 participants attended the program, with 43 graduating from the entire year. This was a tremendous challenge for Netzer and a learning experience of the highest degree – many lessons of which were incorporated into the next Machzor, which saw 26 participants. This is an 8 month program that still maintains the core elements, the quality of educational and communal processes, and the recognition as a MASA sponsored program. Parallel to this, the FSU Department ran its five months "Masa" program for 7 participants from the FSU.
- The Southern Machzor included 16 participants – 12 from Australia and 4 from South Africa. During their year, five shnatties flew to Europe and the USA, to serve as madrichim in the movement summer camps. Another four had the chance to work and lead the Israeli movement chanichim of Noar Telem – Netzer of Israel, in Machaneh Havaya – summer camp for 500 kids. The rest of the shnatties spent the month engaging in other optional programs, mainly volunteering with young children of refugee families from Africa, before the group moved to Kibbutz Yahel for the next stage, then culminated the year with a *sikum* (summary) seminar in Jerusalem.

Summer programs

- Israel tours – summer saw most of the affiliates send groups on Israel Experience tours, including 15 NFTY groups, 4 RSY groups, 1 LJY group, and – for the first time – a summer group from Netzer France, accompanied by their Shaliach, Yonatan Gozlan, and one of their Rabbis, Celia Surgette.
- Netzerfest – the annual summer gathering of all Netzer participants in Israel for a one-day event took place in mid-July. The event was held for over 300 participants (most of the NFTY groups had already returned home before the British and French groups arrived), and it was prepared and led by 11 shnatties of the Southern Machzor from Australia mentioned above. The day proved very successful in building connections and instilling a feeling of being part of a global movement. It was also lots of fun!
- Netzer groups also participated in a summer mega event organized for all of the teen summer groups from all over the world by Lapid, the newly established association of worldwide high school age organizations, by the Israeli Experience, and by Maccabiah youth. Over 5,000 youngsters participated in a fantastic event, celebrating 100 years of the first Israeli city of Tel Aviv.

- **Summer camps** were held all over the world by the Netzer regional branches: in the FSU 900 participants took part in the summer programs. (The lack of resources for summer camps had put the FSU summer camp project in jeopardy but thanks to enormous efforts by the FSU department, enough money was raised to run 13 summer camps in Russia, Belarus, and the Ukraine, making Netzer the only youth movement that succeeded in this task. The entire FSU department participated actively in these camps). RSY Netzer in Britain held 4 summer camps for ages 10 – 12, 13 – 14, 15 and 17. Several hundred chanichim participated in these camps. LJY Netzer Britain ran their KADIMA camp for 200 chanichim. Netzer conducted a successful summer camp outside Barcelona for approximately 100 youngsters, and Netzer Germany ran their summer camp for about 100 participants. Noar Telem – Netzer in Israel, held their summer Havaya camp for about 500 participants, and Netzer Panama ran a summer camp for 60 participants from Panama and El Salvador. In addition to all of these Netzer Summer camps, NFTY of North America conducted a busy summer for thousands of participants in the 13 NFTY camps all over North America.

Cross organizational

- Netzer was one of 17 worldwide Zionist youth movements which joined hands to establish a new organization aiming to ensure the future of the Shlichut enterprise as well as other functions of the youth movements.
- Lapid - the coalition for high school age programs in Israel issued its first directory for high school programs in Israel. Netzer Olami as well as NFTY – both members of the coalition –are represented, albeit still as separate entities. We hope that next year they will appear together as one, offering a verity of short and long term high school programs in Israel.

TAMAR

TaMaR, *Tnuat Magshimim Reformit*, is the young adult hagshama movement of Netzer Olami, currently active in Britain (through Tent), Czech Republic, FSU, Germany, Poland, Spain, USA (through Keshet), Brazil, Panama, San Salvador, South Africa, and Australia.

The **Tamar Veida** (conference) was held concurrent with Netzer Olami *veida* and **Connections 2009**, with 23 participants from 15 countries who participated in the WUPJ convention as well. It was a very successful conference that helped cement the role of Tamar within the larger movement.

Other yearly highlights include:

1. First ever TaMaR seminar in the Czech Republic was held in Prague in September 2009, for 20 participants from the community and with the participation of Yuval Nemirovsky, from the headquarters of Netzer and TaMaR.
2. The second Germany JUJ-TaMaR European seminar was held on the first weekend of November in Berlin for Reform young adults from Europe and the USA, attracting 50 participants, most of them from JUJ-TaMaR Germany and of Tent from Britain. Attending from Israel were Mark Lazar, Josh Weinberg and Maoz Haviv.
3. Three TaMaR seminars were held during December: The first in Australia for 40 graduates of Netzer. The second in Minsk, Belarus for 30 participants and the last in Indiana, USA for 10 members of Keshet.
4. First consultation took place regarding the establishment of TaMaR in Israel.

Substantial steps have been taken towards the cementing and development of Tamar activities in Spain, Hungary, Panama and Latin America.



Shai Pinto, VP and Chief Operating Officer

2009 was a year of growth, progress and improvement in all aspects of activity at Mercaz Shimshon / Beit Shmuel (MS/BS). The center went through a significant change in personnel as well as further staff reductions to adapt to the global financial climate. Shimon Shababo, who had taken over for Michael Wiesel as director of the center in November 2008, was replaced by Ruti Kaplan in December 2009.

The beginning of the year was dominated by the Gaza war, that affected all aspects of operation as both tourism and Israeli participation dropped significantly. Despite the economic and tourism slowdown in the world and in Israel, the center improved operations and reduced expenditures. Through drastic cost-cutting steps on all fronts (renegotiating supplier agreements, reductions on monthly utility bills, staffing levels and supply purchases), coupled with improved performances later in the year, the center has ended the year with an operational profit.

The Gaza war saw a series of initiatives from the staff of the MS/BS departments for families directly affected by the war, including free walking tours, reduced ticket prices for performances, hosting of families in activities, supporting food drives and more. The staff has placed MS/BS firmly at the forefront of those actively assisting our people in the south.

Culture Department

MS/BS experienced growth in the creativity, number and variety of courses, performances and educational walks and tours (*siyurim*), as well as the development of new areas of activity. We continued to be a major address for Reform Jewish celebrations in Jerusalem, using the Jewish and Israeli holidays as focal points for communal activities, and bringing participants from around Jerusalem and across Israel through our doors.

The culture department went through a restructuring process: the position of department manager was eliminated with those responsibilities now being handled directly by the MS/BS manager with assistance from Shai Pinto, COO, and the roles in each section within the department were expanded to include more responsibilities. Despite these changes, the culture department has shown wonderful achievements for the year:

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

- a. Purim activities saw a special "happening" that drew in over 550 participants, offering a range of activities for families and children, as well as theatre and arts performances. The highlight was a creation of 300 *mishlochei manot* for children from the south in cooperation with Keren B'kavod, and a giant wall painting "children of Jerusalem draw for children of the south". We also hosted children of refugees from Darfur, families of foreign workers, and underprivileged families from Jerusalem, for a day of fun.
- b. Pesach was marked with a unique and successful "Charoset tours" program, as well as widespread educational activities.
- c. Lag Ba'omer was marked with a very successful lecture by renowned scholar Professor Yoram Bilu on the "Hilula" (happening) at Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's grave in Mount Meiron.
- d. We celebrated Yom HaAtzmaut in style.
- e. Yom Yerushalaim was celebrated with special walks, a lecture, and a special performance in the BS patio which drew in over 400 people.
- f. Tikkun Lel Shavuot was held in conjunction with HUC-JIR. Over 300 people studied all night throughout the complex in this learning festival, conducted by HUC and Saltz teachers.
- g. Tisha Be'av was marked with a combined lecture and educational tour program. The lecture focused on destruction as a turning point for future growth, and the tour "remnants of heart and stone" took the participants to discover evidence of the destruction in Jerusalem.
- h. A special educational tour was created for the 17th of Tamuz. By contrast, a special evening was also held for Tu B'Av, including walks and a patio performance.
- i. Our Rosh Hashanah and Chagei Tishrei activities including a special lecture, Sukkoth activities and special lecture, and a wide program of "Sukkoth walks" were all very successful. We also built a large Sukkah which hosted guests and activities.

- j. Chanukah programs included lectures and wide program of "Chanukia walks" with over 1200 participants.

Educational Courses

This department offered over 710 participants two full semesters of various courses centered on Jewish and Israeli learning, inviting the public to further deepen their own Jewish journeys and connections. Some of the topics covered were: "In the Footsteps of the Talmud" with Rabbi Tamar Duvdevani; "Jewishness and Israeliness"; "Kabbalah-text study interpretations on the Zohar" with renowned expert Dr. Shenkar; "Archeology and sacred texts"; Calligraphy; "In front of the Jewish bookshelf" with renowned author Haim Be'er; and the highly acclaimed flagship course "Muses" (with 110 participants) in which Israel's leading cultural figures discussed their muse and source of inspiration. For the first time we operated a pilot summer semester which was very successful, and will be developed into a full program in summer of 2010.

Our program for the 2010/5770 academic year started in November to wonderful responses, operating 14 courses with 420 registrants (a 20% increase from the fall semester 2008), including 2 new flagship courses: "Authors reading Tanach" where leading authors discuss a bible portion through their individual interpretations; and "Discovering the scrolls" where leading bible experts offer their commentaries on the 5 scrolls. These courses have garnered much interest around Jerusalem.

In 2009 the courses department showed an increase of 54% in its activities, a remarkable achievement considering the economic environment and the competition from nearby institutions offering heavily subsidized activities.

Educational Walks (*Siyurim*)

Our educational walks and trips have developed tremendously, becoming a brand name in this field and a market leader in educational Reform content, despite growing competition from heavily subsidized organizations in the city. The walks department has been the most successful of this type of provider in Jerusalem this summer! Overall, our *siyurim* have grown in number, diversity and participation, and revolve mostly around the rainbow of cultures, religions and lifestyles in Jerusalem and Israel. Foreign language walks were developed and operated in partnership with the Anita Saltz International Education Center, and more are planned in the coming year.

Some examples: Pesach saw almost 600 people in a special walks program unique to MS/BS called "Charoset tours" – we were the most visible and reputable walks program throughout the chag. June saw specialized walks for Shavuot through Jerusalem; "In the Footsteps of the Paratroopers" for Yom Yerushalayim; into the Haredi neighborhoods for Lag Baomer and many more. October saw a full program of Jewish walks for the chagim ("Sukkoth"), based on our very successful walks booklet. The Chanukah program of "Chanukiot walks" had over 40 walks booked in December – we are the leading quality provider for this service in Jerusalem.

The unique educational Siyur veSiach program for soldiers of the Israeli Border Patrol (Magav), dealing with pluralism and equality, was extensively developed this year, and saw almost 40 groups and over 1200 soldiers participate in the program, a 48% increase.

We are increasing our cooperation with the Jerusalem municipality, and were a major part of the "Hamshushalaim" cultural events in November. We have also developed joint ventures with leading hotels, the Mamila complex and large workers unions to generate more customized programs for specific crowds.

We also operated a joint walk in Jaffa with Mishkenot Ruth Daniel in Jaffa, a first step in future program cooperation. We have been advising them on developing their walks department since the beginning of the year.

In 2009 the walks department showed an increase of 20% in the number of educational walks provided, a good achievement considering the economic environment and the competition from nearby institutions offering heavily subsidized activities.

Theater and Performances

The theatre continues to operate as a hired venue for various performances. Some of the biggest entertainment names in Israel performed to a full house last year. We increased the number and type of performances for children,

conducted the seventh season of children's theatre (this year in cooperation with the renowned Orna Porat Theatre), and further developed the unique "Children Creating Shabbat" morning activity, providing quality Jewish activities for families on Shabbat. We have maintained and deepened our cooperative efforts with other cultural organizations in Jerusalem. Other exciting music and theater performances included four performances as part of the "OUD festival", three as part of the Jerusalem Festival of Arts, "The 16th sheep" as part of the Israel Festival (the leading cultural event in the country), four renowned opera performances as part of the "Hamshushalaim" cultural events for tourists, a sell out "Stand up and laugh" comedy series, and the year-end school performances of Mehola and Hora dance schools. We also hosted a special musical cabaret show 'Las Vegas – Tel Aviv' for the US independence-day celebrations, as well as modern dance performances. In spite of all these activities, the theatre showed a decline in its overall performance, primarily due to the economic conditions.

Art Gallery

MS/BS hosted a range of lobby exhibitions by local artists throughout the year, including a very special art exhibition of works prepared by mentally handicapped artists from AKIM.

Other **special events** were held throughout the year, including:

- The "Prime Minister's Awards" evening, a highly publicized and prestigious event.
- A special evening celebration for "Shekel", an organization that supports people with special needs. It was a very moving evening in which we were awarded special recognition for the center's support of this organization and issues of special needs in general, including hosting events, providing free tickets, and also being one of very few locations with full access for handicapped performers (not just crowd access). Our culture department has been employing a special needs employee for several years now, and she is a full fledged and much valued member of the team. We will continue to practice the values of "Tikkun Olam" as described in our mission statement.

The Hotel

Occupancy at MS/BS hotel showed an average of 68% occupancy in 2009 (down from 72% in 2008), slightly lower than the 70% target rate for the year, but still considered a decent occupancy rate when compared to the other hotels in the area. The average price per room for the year showed a 3% increase, which helped offset the above. The overall income from rooms and meals showed an **8% increase**.

Staff at MS/BS concentrated their efforts in a variety of areas, e.g., development of new markets, improving working relationships with travel agents for both internal and external tourism, promoting our conference center to both public and commercial concerns in Jerusalem and across Israel, and an online marketing campaign.

The new hotel website including high quality virtual tours, multilingual services, and advanced online booking services, as well as links to leading hotel promotion websites was completed. This will vastly improve our ability to generate income from individuals.

After 25 years, the youth hostel rooms are looking worn and in need of renovations. We have formulated a renovations plan, which requires around \$250,000 for the entire complex. This will have to be formulated into a capital campaign around the "25 years of Beit Shmuel" campaign. In the meantime, we have started renovating 1 room at a time using our internal staff and resources and have completed six rooms so far.

Our Hotel wing offers great quality and service at a very competitive rate, in one of the best locations in Jerusalem, and we continue to improve the services we provide our guests in the Hotel wing and Youth Hostel.

We are also focusing on developing further educational and recreational activities in our complex for our hotel guests, such as those programs operated by the World Union's Anita Saltz International Education Center, which uses MS/BS as its base. During the year we continued to serve as a home for Reform groups from around the world, and hosted World Union-related groups, including the Netzer *veida* and our very own Beutel Leadership seminar.

Connections 2009 was hosted by MS/BS to much praise. The entire MS/BS staff – including, maintenance, security, housekeeping, and catering – demonstrated total commitment, flexibility, quality of work and a true desire to showcase our home. The center was teeming with life and full of action and I believe they have made us all proud.

As part of our support for Reform activities in Israel, MS/BS hosted free of charge a family of converts that IRAC is fighting their case for recognition as Jews for Aliya purposes. This is a family with very limited means from the UK that is being put through administrative impossibilities, and was forced to come to Israel for a hearing by the courts. IRAC is leading the charge and we were happy to provide them with a safe base of operations for a week.

Events

551 events took place in Blaustein Hall, on the Beit Shmuel patio, and in the dining hall and classrooms, adding to the vibrancy and vitality of our facilities. The quality and level of our catering and designers for events have brought Jerusalem and Israel's top events to MS/BS. The center continues to play a role in the lives of very many families in Jerusalem and the area, be it a family *simcha*, a group event or a special conference.

MS/BS is improving on all fronts, but still struggles with cash flow issues, a mirror of our larger financial challenges as well as past losses during the Intifada years and a large liability for past municipal taxes. We are taking significant steps to reduce these, as well as making an overall assessment of the future direction of the center. Our hope is that the improved operations and the operational profit achieved in 2009 will be duplicated and increased to allow for alleviation of these issues in the near future.



Dr. Philip Bliss, Chair

The WUPJ advocacy committee focused on drafting and releasing several statements relating to current affairs this year. As a result we realized that we needed to widen the reach and scope of our statements, to incorporate not only our own membership, but global partners and other media as well. A list was created initially of Jewish news services, both printed and digital, so that eventually any advocacy, or any WUPJ news item of general interest will be much more widely distributed. This list will be updated regularly, and requests will go out to our IA members to seek and feed back the most effective addresses in their region.

Statements made this year related to issues such as:

- Gaza operation
- The attack on the Gay and Lesbian community in Tel Aviv, resulting in death and serious injury.
- Raids on foreign worker churches in Israel during Christmas
- Anti-Semitic attacks against Jews in Venezuela.
- Iranian president visit to Latin America
- Joint appeal to UN to condemn Egyptian Imam's hate message.
- Attempted bombing at Progressive Synagogue in the Ukraine

Our regular delegates in the United Nation forums continue to bring much focus on the WUPJ both in New York and Geneva. The Human Rights Council, whilst providing almost continual criticisms of Israel, is constantly being questioned by our main delegate David Littman. David has raised with other groups, most recently the Wiesenthal Centre, the sheer hypocrisy in the huge number of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic statements allowed in the Council. David is just one of a very few Jewish voices that have constantly stood up for real human rights based on the teachings of Torah and the ethics of the WUPJ. It was gratifying to see David being honored by the Israel security services for his work in the late 50s when he was the front man bringing nearly 600 young Jewish people out of the then hostile Moroccan community to Israel. The delegates in New York will be supplying their own reports of activities in New York.

I am delighted to report that under the aegis of the Anita Saltz Education Centre, I will be bringing about 30 Christians and Jews to Israel in the summer for a 10-day interfaith education tour utilizing accommodation at Beit Shmuel in Jerusalem and Mishkenot Ruth Daniel in Jaffa.

It was a real boost to have Rabbi David Saperstein, from the RAC in Washington, as a keynote speaker in Melbourne in December for the World Parliament of Religions. Over 5000 people heard Rabbi Saperstein at the opening event talking on Jewish values in social action and on many related topics during the conference.

Following discussions with WUPJ chair, it has been suggested that the Advocacy and Interfaith committees be combined. The Advocacy, Interfaith and GSAN committees will focus on developing the WUPJ strategic priority of becoming a global voice on issues.



ASSETS COMMITTEE

Daniel Chinn, Chair
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

Mandate

The Assets Committee is an advisory committee that provides recommendations to the appropriate World Union bodies or executive staff concerning the purchase, sale, rental or lease of real estate, as well as the ongoing operations, maintenance and utilization of these properties. 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.

Major activities of the committee in 2009 include:

Mercaz Shimshon/Beit Shmuel

The committee provided ongoing support, advice and oversight to the MS/BS director and World Union staff. Much effort was invested in building a detailed and clear budget for 2009, which planned for increased profits from the campus as well as expanded programming. This effort is repeated for 2010. The committee maintained ongoing analysis of operations and periodic assessment meetings. The committee was also heavily involved in planning the renovations for the BS guest house. We are proud to report that after a few years, MS/BS is finally showing an operational profit for the year. Towards the end of 2009, the committee also played a key role in overseeing the process of change in management for MS/BS.

Shmuel Hanagid

The committee continued to be actively involved in all matters concerning the sale of a part of the World Union's property on Shmuel Hanagid Street. These are complex negotiations requiring many hours of analysis and discussions, and we focused primarily on trying to move this process forward in the best way for the organization under the guidelines set forth by the Executive Board of the World Union. Harvey Cohen spearheaded the negotiations for separation from the contractor of the original property development deal, thus freeing up the property to be sold. Danny Chinn led the very sensitive negotiations with the Harel community regarding their continued presence and activities on part of the premises. Michael Hoffman ably assisted in the difficult discussions with the Jewish Agency, which rents a part of one of the buildings, aimed at vacating them from the premises. These 3 tracks are in their final stages, and our plan is to be able to place the property for sale on the open market in the coming year. The committee will oversee the sale process as well.



CONSTITUTION TASK FORCE

Dr. Philip Bliss, Co-chair
Jerry Tanenbaum, Co-chair
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

The Constitution Task Force was set up three years ago to simplify and remove inconsistencies in the constitution that had been approved at the Moscow convention in 2005. The task force members were Dr. Philip Bliss and Jerry Tanenbaum (co-chairs), Judy Smith, Dolores Wilkenfeld, Jay Greenfield, Shai Pinto, and, by invitation, Steve Bauman and Rabbi Uri Regev.

Following an extensive process, the task force presented before the International Assembly in its March 2009 meeting in Jerusalem a proposal for the new WUPJ constitution and the new WUPJ By laws.

As a reminder, the focal points of the process were:

- A. Ratification of the constitution and bylaws structure, stressing that the constitution is the founding structure that is to remain in place, providing stability and a sound basis for years to come (and harder to change); whereas the bylaws are the rules and guidelines that can be adapted and amended due to changing times and circumstances. This allows for an easier process of implementing change while safeguarding the core values from passing trends and changing leadership.
- B. The framework of governance model –
 1. The new role of the IA has now been documented and laid out in the new constitution, to provide it with legal organizational status. It states the role of the IA as the representative body, charged with electing members of the World Union's executive board and its officers, and with voting on constitutional changes. IA membership, voting procedures (including proxy voting and adaptations to modern technology), legal quorums and protocols were clarified and simplified.
 2. If the IA is the representative body of the World Union, the executive board (EB), which meets quarterly, is where the governance lies. Fiscal responsibility, including budget approvals, rests with the EB and its management committee (MC).
 3. The EB nomination process was restructured to ensure that the IA elects the World Union officers who sit on the board. The structure of the Executive Board was clarified, guaranteeing adequate geographic representation, as well as the flexibility to strengthen the EB with influential positive members and organizational representatives.
 4. The composition and operation of the management committee (MC) was redefined. The MC is the advisory committee that acts on all issues in between EB meetings, following the priorities and mandates as directed by the EB.

The revised WUPJ constitution and WUPJ By laws were accepted by the International Assembly in the March 18th, 2009 meeting in Jerusalem.

The task force has completed its mission.



Gordon Smith, Chair/Treasurer
Danny Jaffe, CFO, Staff

The Tsunami Aftermath

It is clear that 2009 has been one of the worst years in recent records for the financial world. In the latter part of 2008, the financial indices in virtually all sectors dropped dramatically, yields and interest rates were substantially reduced and these have remained at historic lows, confidence in most financial institutions dissipated to new lows, and governments worldwide are still, today, and will be for years to come, grappling with the financial Tsunami aftermath.

In recent months matters have calmed down somewhat and stock markets, although still jittery, have made some recoveries in most sectors, even though interest rates, and therefore earnings, still remain at very low levels and there is no realistic expectations that these will rise in the foreseeable future.

As predicted in last year's report, 2008 ended with a very substantial deficit for the WUPJ of nearly \$800K. We were therefore forced to reduce our initial 2009 budget forecast by over \$1M to \$6.4M and this was further reduced in March 2009 to \$5.4M thereby reducing our income expectations from the \$7.8M achieved in 2008 to \$5.6M for 2009. As will be appreciated, this necessitated many very painful decisions and the inevitable actions of matching reductions in expenditure. We were forced to lay off a number of very valued members of staff and curtail swathes of activities and programs. These major cuts in expenditure proved both necessary and timely as even with all of these cost cutting measures we are nearing the end of 2009 barely intact.

On a positive note, through the efforts of our key staff, and in particular our Vice Chair – Philanthropy, Rabbi Gary Bretton Granatoor, our Chief Operating Officer, Shai Pinto and many Lay Leaders of the WUPJ, the fund raising efforts of the WUPJ have increased substantially and, in the main, successfully. At the same time, through the monumental efforts of our Chief Financial Officer, Danny Jaffe with the support of the Finance Committee, costs have been contained, controlled and managed.

We are entering 2010 still in a financially perilous state. All our financial reserves have been exhausted but we believe that we may be entering calmer waters. A number of our donors have expressed their hope and belief that they may be able to continue their support of the WUPJ at least at the same, if not increased levels, compared to 2009. Others have agreed, for which we are particularly grateful, to fund specific projects, in particular in the FSU which is an ongoing major financial department of the WUPJ.

We are still very cautious as to the possible recovery of fortunes and funding in 2010. It is far too early to be optimistic in the financial revival of the world economy. We have therefore set a 2010 budget which reflects even lower expenditure levels than those set for 2009. This has meant further cost cutting measures, but we are hopeful that our continued major financial constraints will result in a leaner but stronger WUPJ which, hopefully, may start a recovery and even an expansion plan in 2011.

I end by thanking and paying tribute to both the Lay leaders I have been fortunate to work with over the past year, as well as Rabbi Gary Bretton Granatoor who has led our fund raising efforts and, in particular, to the tireless team of our COO, Shai Pinto and our CFO, Danny Jaffe, without whom I would not have been able to function as Vice Chairman- Finance and nor would the WUPJ.



Anne Molloy, Chair
Alex Kagan, Staff

While 2009 was an extremely challenging year for WUPJ operations in the Former Soviet Union from a financial perspective, in many other respects it was a highly successful year. Since the accomplishments of our FSU operations are well documented in the FSU Region report, they will not be repeated here.

The FSU Committee, which supports the dedicated work of our staff, first and foremost extends our appreciation to the FSU staff, and in particular to Director Alex Kagan, for their extraordinary efforts this year to minimize disruptions in service to our FSU communities, despite the economic downturn and resulting decrease in funding from traditional sources. Not only did our programs continue, but also milestones were reached, new centers were opened and community roots were strengthened. Yasher koach to our incredible staff.

The committee both created opportunities to support our FSU communities and took advantage of related events to get together for review and planning. The year began with a visit of six members of our professional team in the FSU to Pittsburgh, PA and Los Altos, CA in January 2009. It was a very successful visit for all: a meaningful exchange of perspectives, the planting of seeds for lasting friendships, and some successful fundraising for the 2009 summer camp season. Special thanks to Cherie Half and Linda Levinson for trip planning.

The WUPJ international convention Connections 2009, presented an opportunity for the committee to meet in March in Tel Aviv with many members of our FSU rabbinic team in attendance. Rabbi Marc Saperstein was a special guest for the meeting and we welcomed Paul Liptz to the committee. The focus of our meeting was fundraising efforts for our summer camp programs

The FSU Committee met by conference call in June to begin planning for the fall dedications of our new homes in Moscow and St. Petersburg. A task force was put together to work with staff on these events. As the year progressed it was decided to postpone the formal dedication in St. Petersburg, as it was not possible for all donors to attend. However, Shaarei Shalom moved into its new home in time for the fall holidays and joyously welcomed its new spiritual leader, Rabbi Helena Rubenstein.

The Center for Progressive Judaism in Moscow was dedicated during Sukkoth with a full house, including a substantial international delegation and local dignitaries, and focusing on the youth of the congregation. A lively and joyous celebration of Simchat Torah followed on the next day, again with a full house. Of special significance, Nani and Austin Beutel carried into the new worship space the same Torah scroll that they had brought to the congregation ten years ago on behalf of their congregation, Temple Sinai of Toronto.

Finally, committee members met again in November, during the URJ biennial in Toronto, to focus on end-of-year fundraising as well as planning for 2010. Committee members delivered an informative workshop on twinning during the biennial. Kathryn Michaels and Cherie Half agreed to co-chair the twinning sub-committee for 2010 and will focus on bringing together European and American congregations that are twinning with an FSU community, in addition to continuing to grow the number of twins. At the same time, committee member Ina Rae Levy located a Torah scroll, which went to Congregation Kadima in Gomel, Belarus.

The FSU Committee had a productive year, and we are especially appreciative of the time we could spend together this year. We look forward to continuing our work in 2010.



HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Félix Mosbacher, Chair
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

The Human Resources (HR) Committee includes Félix Mosbacher from France, Ron Cohen from NY, USA, and Ron Hendin from Jerusalem, ensuring local (Israel and NY) as well as global representation.

During the past year the committee focused on supporting and following through with the changes in professional staffing and structure, based on the extensive reduction of personnel employed by the WUPJ by 32% during 2009. It also assisted in assessment and review of office practices, methods and moods related to these changes in the offices in Jerusalem and NY. The committee played a central part in the process of searching, screening and employing the suitable candidate for the position of the Beit Shmuel Manager in late 2009.

In addition, interventions have been limited to advisory roles on individual HR issues, to ad hoc issues such as the principles of sabbaticals for rabbis.

The committee continued to monitor the distribution and use of two main funds: the Racky Newman professional enrichment fund, and a revolving loan fund. We made sure that due processes secure transparency and fairness in applying these funds.

The committee has engaged in and hopes to play a bigger role in developing a systematic process of formal, yearly individual performance reviews, followed by participatory objective setting, ensuring a generalized objective-setting and performance review process

We plan to propose a set of objectives for this committee to the Management Committee, which should revitalize processes such as:

- Policies in personnel and management issues
- Development of a benefit and bonus system (that will also assist in expenditure control)
- Development of employee welfare services
- Succession planning

The committee will also actively be involved in the process of appointing a new president. This will not necessarily be a standard replacement process, but will deal with timing as well as possible alternative structures. This will be done in cooperation with the search committee established by the chair of the World Union.



INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH TASK FORCE

Rabbi Mark Winer, Chair

International Interfaith relations have suffered from the financial difficulties of the past year. Few religious organizations have made interfaith work a priority in decades. Regardless of the religious organization – local synagogue or church or an international body like the World Union – little has been allocated to interfaith activity in the years of economic plenty. In economic downturns, interfaith programs are often among the first cuts. The WUPJ does not currently fund interfaith activity from its budget, so nothing could be cut. However, our natural partners, some of which do have funded programs, have radically cut back on their interfaith activity.

The worst news on the international interfaith front for us as Progressive Jews is that the Vatican appears to have concentrated its interfaith relations with Jews to Orthodox rabbis, especially in Israel. Outside of its continuing relations with IJCIC (the International Committee for Interreligious Consultations), the Holy See's Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews has rebuffed attempts by Progressive Jewish institutions to continue some of the positive dialogues of the past decades. Despite that, Shai Pinto, WUPJ Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, represented us at a meeting with the Pope in Israel this summer. To be sure, the Holy See, under the leadership of Pope Benedict, has reduced the emphasis on all interfaith relationships, including even non-Catholic Christians.

Whatever positive relations have continued between Progressive Jews around the world and Catholics, have been with various national conferences of Catholic bishops. Obviously, those relationships become even more important in light of the apparent freeze in international Catholic-Progressive Jewish relations. The International Interfaith Task Force of the World Union looks to assist and enhance all national relationships, such as those in the United States through the National Council of Synagogues. WUPJ Vice President for Philanthropy Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor has continued his historic involvement in Progressive Jewish relations with the Catholic Church through his continuing contact with the United States Catholic Conference of bishops. Professor Rabbi Walter Homolka, Chancellor of the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam, has continued in his long history of positive engagement with the Catholic Church in Germany. Phillip Bliss, WUPJ Vice Chair, led a delegation of representatives to the World Parliament of Religions held in Melbourne in December and is bringing an Interfaith mission to Israel. Through IRAC and the WUPJ Saltz Center, we have engaged in interfaith programs and seminars in Israel. We would welcome positive reports of progress in other national relationships. Also, we would like to assist in any positive interfaith relationships with Protestants and Orthodox Christians. Most important of all, in terms of our Progressive Jewish commitment to building peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, we hope to report, partner, and multiply Progressive Jewish engagement with both local Muslim and national and international Muslim associations.



INVESTMENT AND ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

G. Leonard Teitelbaum, Chair
Danny Jaffe, CFO, Staff
Rabbi Gary Bretton Granatoor, VP Philanthropy, Staff

The Investment and Endowment Committee was reconstituted in the beginning of the year. Members are: G. Leonard Teitelbaum, Gordon Smith, Mike Grabiner, Ronald Cohen, Austin Beutel and Matt Sperber (representing IMPJ). Steve Bauman and Stephen Breslauer are ex-officio members.

There were three important tasks set before the Committee:

Reviewing and redrafting the WUPJ Administrative Fee policy (completion of process started in late 2008).

Creation of an Investment and Endowment Policy that would govern how the WUPJ would invest and distribute proceeds from endowment funds, and the guidelines for the creation and maintenance of such funds.

Evaluation and formation of investment policies, tools and service agents.

The committee has fulfilled all three tasks.

From January 2009 we are operating in accordance with a revised Administrative Fee Policy that governs how we assess gifts made through the WUPJ. This policy has been clarified to all partners and stakeholders. It is transparent and consistent.

An Investment and Endowment Policy statement is in place, and following year one will allow the WUPJ and the recipients forward planning on how to assess future proceeds. This policy is in line with best practices in endowment funds, and was developed in full partnership with the endowment providers.

It was decided to move our funds from a full-service (and full-price) brokerage house to a discount brokerage, and after extensive due diligence "TD Ameritrade" was chosen as our provider. We have obtained the services of the Roosevelt Investment Group to guide and monitor our investments. They are supplying the financial staff and the committee with daily, weekly and monthly reports. A quarterly earnings report and a half-yearly performance report will be presented to the Management Committee and the Executive Board respectively.

All previous funds, as well as the 3 major endowments received in 2009 for Eastern Europe, IRAC, and Rabbinical position in Israel, were transferred into our new brokerage account by mid-July, and since then our portfolio has managed a decent return. We expect the first distributions for Endowment funds to occur at the end of the third quarter of 2010 (as per our Investment and Endowment Policy).



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

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

The main change in the Marketing and Communications area for the WUPJ in 2009 was the decision to move the marketing department of the WUPJ from NY to Jerusalem, basing it in the hub of activities, to ensure immediate access to information and the ability to influence the WUPJ policies and activities. As a result, we let go of the Marketing & Communication Director, Vera Hollander in April 2009. Unfortunately, due to the cutbacks made necessary by the financial situation, this department has not yet been re-established.

The beginning of the year was focused on the planning and implementation of marketing activities and materials for **CONNECTIONS 2009** in March. For the first time ever, a World Union convention Web site was developed, providing comprehensive and updated convention information, full online registration and session booking. As part of the development work to ensure sponsorship for **CONNECTIONS 2009**, a World Union Marketing Brief was developed and used successfully to secure major funding. A CD with documents, reports and information for convention delegates, including IA reports and regional profiles highlighting the work and programs of our communities around the world was developed. Follow up materials including a Connections Video, photo slide show and a WUPJ information CD were circulated to all participants and regions after the event.

In the immediate subsequent period, Judy Smith met with both Shai Pinto and Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor to put in place strategies to deal with this new situation.

Several decisions were made:

- Materials required for fundraising will be generated by Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor out of New York in consultation with Shai Pinto and Judy Smith.
- Until such time when a Marketing and Communications appointment can be made in Jerusalem, Shai and Judy have developed a marketing plan to cover activities for 2010 in consultation with Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor.

The marketing plan will ensure the following:

1. WUPJ News will continue to be distributed to more than 10,000 recipients on a twice-monthly basis.
2. WUPJ News will move over to a new format and distribution service provider, Constant Contact. It will have a new look and by using Constant Contact we will be able to gather much more information on readers' requirements and make far greater use of our databases.
3. The new format will also direct people to our website to get further information on topics covered in the newsletters.
4. We have put in place plans to reprint an updated WUPJ brochure.
5. **CONNECTIONS 2011** will have full marketing and promotional support centered in the Jerusalem office and working in partnership with the **CONNECTIONS 2011** Steering Committee.
6. Regular Organizational Reports will continue to be distributed to the Management Committee monthly and the Executive Board quarterly.
7. The International Assembly will receive quarterly reports on activities of the World Union and its regions.
8. Regular contacts will be maintained with Regional Directors to ensure that we receive current news, information and reports
9. Plans are in hand for the production of the Annual Report and Brochure for 2009-2010.
10. The development and regular updating of international press lists will be maintained in Jerusalem to be used by the Global Social Action Network Committee and other committees as requested.
11. Fund raising will be supported with appeal letters and materials four times year (Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah & Chanukah)

So despite the lack of staff, you can see that the work goes on. I am extremely grateful to Shai Pinto and Shira Kestenbaum for their tireless work in Jerusalem, to Rabbi Bretton-Granatoor and his team in New York and to Larry Rifkin who works so hard to put together WUPJ News.



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

Betty Golomb
Judith Hertz
Norma Levitt
Janet Stovin

WUPJ has been an accredited and actively represented NGO at the United Nations for nearly 40 years. WUPJ accredited representatives regularly attend UN briefings and programs, and participate in NGO committees focused on issues that reflect the World Union's values such as education, ageing, women's issues, children's welfare, and interfaith activities.

Individual reports follow:

From Judith Hertz:

During the past year I have concentrated on global climate concern, health care in poorer nations as well as women's issues. I have attended conferences organized by UN Agencies on eliminating polio world wide (UNICEF), alleviating poverty among the world's poorest people as well as a special program focused on clean air and water as human rights. An educational forum on environmental justice and living free from pollution provided educational resources for use in all types of organizations. In June 2010, formal international steps will be taken towards agreement on a new legally binding global treaty to control mercury pollution. This is just one small step toward addressing larger environmental issues.

Religions for Peace International and *Religions for Peace Korea* mounted a day-long program entitled "Advancing Cooperation between the United Nations and the World's Religions". The conference began with a panel on religious contributions to peace. The second panel, which I was pleased to moderate, focused on development and human rights, and the final panel dealt with cooperation between the world's religions and the United Nations and strengthening mechanisms of cooperation between religions and the United Nations.

Each WUPJ representative in New York participates in NGO committees focused on issues that are important to the World Union. I recently concluded service as Vice-Chair of the NGO Committee on *Freedom of Religion or Belief* – one of the few NGO committees in New York that has a parallel group in Geneva. A benefit of working on this committee is the opportunity to make known some of the World Union's interests and concerns to NGO representatives of the ten or more religious groups that are members.

The work on Holocaust education I cited in a previous report continues, and there is now a permanent exhibit on the Holocaust at the United Nations headquarters, strategically located where every UN tour group sees it.

From Janet Stovin:

The 53rd meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2009 focused on the equal sharing of responsibilities of women and men including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS. Many of the panels and workshops focused on the prevalence of *Violence against Women (VAW)*. A WUPJ representative gave a report on the *Best Practices in Combating VAW in Nigeria* during one of these workshops.

The 62nd DPI/NGO Conference was held in Mexico City, September 7–9. The topic was "For Peace and Development, Disarm Now!" The conference covered both the global menace of WMD and the daily threat of small arms and conventional weapons. An action document on disarmament was developed by the NGO delegates and adopted unanimously at the conference. This document was subsequently presented to the Security Council by the government of Mexico.

Plans are underway for the 63rd NGO/DPI conference in Australia on the topic of global Health. The dates were adjusted to August 30– September 1 to enable Jewish NGOs to attend (the original date would have coincided with Rosh Hashana).

The informal Jewish NGO caucus continues to meet with representatives from the Israeli Mission and representatives of UN agencies to discuss issues of concern.

From Norma Levitt:

I have served as a WUPJ representative to the UN for nearly forty years in leadership positions, among them UNICEF (children), youth, protection of the environment, religion, human rights, and rights of women. I initiated a program on Multigenerational Relationships of the nongovernmental (NGO) Committee on Ageing in 1999, served as the committee's Chairperson, and currently serve as its co-chair. Each year, the subcommittee focuses on a subject relevant to the UN issues, and presents a program at the end of the year which is also open to the public. The programs are enthusiastically received by a large audience for their information and creativity and through the presentations of this subcommittee, as well as through numerous other programs, the WUPJ has become a well known and respected entity throughout the UN.

The theme for 2010 is “International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures.” Some of the programs which reflect multigenerational relationships have been: learning and teaching about human rights across the life span; perspectives on migration; indigenous people in a changing world; and care-giving cross culturally and internationally. The program will also include exhibit of photographs of super centenarians (over one hundred and ten years of age) around the world. The WUPJ UN/NGO subcommittee's efforts in learning and teaching about multigenerational relationships have illuminated and strengthened the awareness within the UN of the need for human rights for all.



OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Aaron Bloom, 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: Aaron Bloom, Steve Sacks (USA), Mike Grabiner (UK), Jim Heeger (USA), Anne Molloy (USA), Itche Vasserman (Brazil), with Gordon Smith Vice Chair Finance as Ex Officio.

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

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 purchase/disposals.
8. Ensure funds utilized in accordance with Executive Board criteria.

In 2009 the chairman, together with Gordon Smith and Danny Jaffe, reviewed the 2008 audited reports of the WUPJ Israeli branch and WUPJ-Beit Shmuel.

The chairman is in the process of adding additional members to the committee.



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Mike Grabiner, Co-chair
Jim Heeger, Co-chair
Shai Pinto, VP and COO, Staff

Michael Grabiner, UK, took on the leadership of this process with Jim Heeger, starting at the Executive Board seminar in March 2009.

The EB seminar was a face-to-face three-day event, focusing on the current status of the organization, a review of current achievements and challenges, and a suggested way forward. The outcomes were presented to the International Assembly in the March meeting in Jerusalem.

Following the seminar, the organization focused on a refined course of four priorities:

1. Connecting and strengthening communities worldwide (reducing our role in initiating and building communities, focusing more on the "enabling" process connecting between them, and assisting the regions with the help to develop them upon request): We are doing this through our International Development Department.
2. Advocacy – being a global reform voice on issues: This is being developed together with the committees headed by Phillip Bliss and Rabbi Mark Winer.
3. Enhance use of the Saltz International Education Center as the main educational body for WUPJ worldwide: A revised plan for Saltz has been produced for 2010, a first step in a long term move.
4. Strengthening Youth and Young Adult frameworks and activities: Within WUPJ frameworks, this is being led by the WUPJ YA committee. As for youth, we have begun with a process looking to get the end users involved. A group of key professionals and lay leaders is in the midst of discussions on these aspects, based on the original Netzer Olami Review ("Nort report").

(Please see the relevant committee reports for details of the specific achievements in each of the 4 priorities).

The Management Committee was entrusted with detailing these priorities, together with the professional staff. A series of conference calls, coupled with planning sessions took place during the year, aimed at fleshing out the meaning and implementation of these priorities in light of the financial situation and global developments. A further one-day strategic discussion took place during the URJ Biennial in Toronto in November 2009.

The focus then moved to incorporating these priorities into the World Union's work plan. The department heads were asked to review the revised Mission Statement for the World Union to ensure that it accurately reflected their areas of responsibility. They were also asked to make sure that in planning for the year, the activities reflected the strategic priorities in order to set departmental goals, benchmarks for success and the way in which each department oversees the work and assesses its execution.

This also included further steps towards increased efficiency, as well as reductions in personnel and activities not directly related to the strategic priorities, and later, unfortunately – within the core activities framework – less attention was given to the advocacy issue, and only towards the end of the year were we able to start focusing more on the youth frameworks. An example as such, the marketing department was moved from New York to Jerusalem – but has not yet been staffed, and is currently being covered by existing staff and lay leaders (see report). On the international development front, we focused more on shoring up the current activities, whilst taking a step back in investing in the initiation of new projects. All in all, the staffing levels in the WUPJ were cut by around 40% during 2009.

During the year the operations of the various departments of the World Union were monitored against the work plans created. Coupled with regular staff and department head meetings, quarterly reviews and ongoing assessment, we were able to improve the focus and efficiency of our operations, and successfully deliver according to our plans despite the above mentioned cuts and priority shifts.

Towards the last quarter of 2009, we initiated the planning process for 2010. Following individual planning meetings, each department prepared a detailed plan, focused on measurable and clear goals and targets for next year.

The departments were asked to identify their core activities, in anticipation of the further scaling down required. These meetings were followed by two full days of detailed round-table discussions, where each plan was presented and discussed, identifying synergy options and cross influences, as well as educating each other on various activities. The result was a comprehensive work plan for 2010. These plans were then scrutinized following budget discussions, and adapted according to the available budget and in light of severe cost cutting measures required due to the global financial situation and the lessening of resources in the year to come.

This is the third year that the World Union for Progressive Judaism has engaged in this process and it is clear that it is an extremely constructive and important process that will place us in a better position for the long term.

However, the major changes in the global economy and organizational world around us require us to continually review our priorities. To this end, the Executive Board will be meeting in Paris in March for a three-day seminar. The aims of the seminar are to focus on organizational issues, status of the President search and the strategic priorities. We also plan to review achievements, discuss the next steps, where will we be in three years time, and how these should be reflected in our staffing and fundraising priorities, as well as discussing priorities for the Saltz Center, education, and youth issues.



Rabbi François Garaï (Main Representative)
David G. Littman (Spokesman at UNCHR)

2009: List of oral and written statements presented at the UN Human Rights Council; some made jointly with Association for World Education (AWE), International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and other NGOs. This report includes joint appeals to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Director-General (Ge) Sergei Ordzhonikidze; Human Rights Council President Martin I. Uhomoibhi, High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay & UNESCO Director-General. This report was prepared by David G. Littman, in contact with Rabbi François Garaï, Geneva and Dr. Philip Bliss, Australia.

12 January –Joint statement by AWE and WUPJ to Human Rights Council, 9th Special Session

–Written statements on Hamas and its genocidal Charter (A/HRC/S-9/NGO/3). From UNSR John Dugard’s final report: “the seizure of power in Gaza by Hamas... the internecine conflict resulted in the death of several hundred Palestinians mostly belonging to Fatah... there is no immediate prospect of reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah”.

Conclusion: Why not a separate entity? Why should there not be four independent states within the former geographical area of Palestine, as designated by the League of Nations in 1921?

12 January – Public Complaint by AWE and WUPJ, Defamation of Judaism in 2 books

Islamic Educational Scientific Cultural Organization-ISESCO. Full documentation provided on 2 ISESCO books displayed at OIC event on 19 December 2008

20 January – Joint Urgent Appeal by AWE and WUPJ, on International Commemoration Day for Victims of the Holocaust, 27 January 2009.

Urgent appeal to "Heed the words of Iran’s new threat to launch an English and Arabic version of a book with 52 caricatures, plus satirical writings about the Holocaust...It is more writing on the wall."

30 January – Joint Urgent Appeal by AWE, IHEU, and WUPJ

Urgent appeal to condemn January 26 genocidal call by Egyptian cleric on al-Rahma TV: “This is what we hope will happen, but, Allah willing, at the hands of the Muslims.” (MEMRI)

6 March – Joint statements by AWE and WUPJ to Human Rights Council, 10th Session

– statement A/HRC/10/NGO/29 on ‘Defamation of Judaism & Jews by ISESCO (OIC): 60th UDHR Anniversary at the UN’; from the ISESCO book: “Jews are the enemies of Allah, the enemies of faith & the worship of Allah.”

– To Assistant Director-General UNESCO: “Why silence on this subject?”

March-April Joint Correspondence by AWE, WUPJ to Canadian Ambassador & Vice-President of HRC, Marius Grinius & UN Secretary Eric Tistounet, questioning decision to stop speaker on 6 March which received wide press coverage (AP and Canwest), and a phone call to Littman from prime minister’s secretary; government regrets published at a later date.

16 March, Statements by AWE, WUPJ, World Population Foundation to HRC, 10th Session

– Item 3, on FGM (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/NGO/27 background on ‘Traditional or Customary Practices’): “We again appeal to governments where FGM continues, to enlist the support of educators and religious and community leaders, in unequivocally condemning this barbarous practice.”

16 March, Joint Statements by WUPJ, IHEU, AWE to HRC, 10th session

– regarding Sudan and the hope that a decision by the International Criminal Court should not lead to reprisals in Darfur, and regarding the part played by the media in Nazi Germany and Rwanda that should be a warning about the use of media today, citing two examples (MEMRI): Egypt Al-Rahma 9 and 26 January.

Appeal: “We call on the Council, the OIC and the Egyptian government to condemn incitement to genocide unequivocally and to take steps to ban all such incitement from their media.”

10 April – Statement by AWE, IHEU, WUPJ to Working Group in preparation for Durban Review Conference 20-24 April

“We urge delegations to recognize that all are entitled to protection from discrimination, whatever their belief or lack of belief... We would respectfully suggest that either the reference to ‘anti-Arabism’ be deleted or that the list should be extended to including ‘anti-Westernism’.”

24 April – Joint statement by AWE and WUPJ to Durban Review Conference, item 9

- Condemning Iranian president antics at Opening Session, quotation from Omar Khayyam’s quatrain: "The moving finger writes and having written moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit shall lure it back..." - Article 60, re “neo-Nazi, neo-Fascist, violent national ideologies” – not “religious ideologies”
- “When referring to slavery, why omit the mass slavery for centuries of non-Muslims and the equally infamous Arab slave trade in Africa for over a century that continues today...”
- We await firm action by UNESCO and UN against hate publications. Now is the time to begin.

9 June, Joint statement by AWE and WUPJ to HRC, 11th Session, Item 4

- homage to veteran NGO human rights activist Daniel Lack.
- James Aguir Alic: "From 35,000 to 200,000 Southern Sudanese slaves remain in bondage in Northern Sudan. As we pointed out at the DRC, the Arab Slave Trade for over a millennium is ignored at the UN; it is now used by Sudan as a weapon of war in Darfur against Africans."

16 June – Joint statement by WUPJ and AWE to HRC 11th Session, Item 7: Palestinian and Gaza situation

- On Hamas and its Judeophobic charter (A/HRC/S-9/NGO/3)
- Concluding Appeal: “Surely, the time has come for this Council to condemn the Mein Kampf-like Jihadist Charter of Hamas, as well as all calls to kill in the name of God or religion – of any religion.”

17 June – Joint statement by AWE and WUPJ to HRC, 11th Session, Item 9: racism and defamation of religion

- on the defamation of Judaism and Jews by ISESCO (OIC), 60th UDHR anniversary at the UN. (A/HRC/10/NGO/29)
- Conclusion: “It is time for the International Community to act firmly against this widespread culture of hate. We look to the Council and to the OIC to act now in good faith.”

14 August – Appeal by AWE, WUPJ to SG, HCHR, UNESCO on media hate culture

- to condemn statements by Egyptian clerics on TV “Jews are offspring of snakes and vipers” (MEMRI)

30 September – Statement by WUPJ to HRC 12th Session, Item 7, on UN Gaza Mission

- with reference to NGO statements on Hamas (2003,2006, and 2009), “It is remarkable that in the 452 pages of the Mission’s Gaza Report and of the HCHR, there is not a single mention of the root cause of the Gaza tragedy: the 1988 Hamas Charter.”

30 September – Joint statement by AWE and WUPJ to HRC 12th Session, Item 9, on racism and defamation of religion

- on defamation of Judaism and Jews by ISESCO (OIC), on the 60th UDHR Anniversary at the UN. (A/HRC/10/NGO/29): “Why I will fight... upon this theme until my eyelids can no longer wag.” Hamlet

16 October – Joint statement by WUPJ and Simon Wiesenthal Center to HRC, 12th Special Session on Gaza Report and Resolution

- to note that report has no Hamas Charter mention
- Abba Eban’s observation: “The Arabs never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.”
- “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN” (Daniel, chapter 5, from verse 25) ... Thou art weighed in the balances & art found wanting..

27 October – Joint statement by AWE and WUPJ to HRC, 2nd Session, Ad Hoc Committee Elaboration Complementary Standards

- **condemning publications in Damascus**– "Mein Kampf "; "Unleavened Bread of Zion"; "Protocols of Elders of Zion"; "Jews of Damascus"
- “We have been denouncing this plague for 20 years here. Surely, it is time to act now?”

Syria declared that, as the speaker didn't know Arabic, his statements were not reliable. Colored illustrations from these hate books were then shown by speaker (Littman)

- **condemning incitement to Judeophobia:** "We wish to endorse what was said by the US representative regarding the endorsement of the 1948 Genocide Convention and an early warning system and national mechanism...It is time to recognize this general Judeophobia / Antisemitism incitement to hate that has already led to genocide and act now in this and other cases – often ignored at UN bodies."

- **on hate speech:** "the delegate of Pakistan referred to 'impunity for hate crimes'. This is the point we wish to make and we agree with the Canadian, and USA delegates and others that states should review curriculums in national school textbooks and human rights education in schools should be based on the International Bill of Human Rights – on nothing else!... Let us have less talk and more action by UNESCO, the Council and its Ad Hoc Committee."

- **on slavery:** An African delegate praised the Durban Declaration, stating that Western countries should be reminded constantly of the Trans-Atlantic slavery. But we should not forget the horrors committed elsewhere, and that the African Union never addresses the infamous Arab Slave Trade.

"Now slavery continues in Darfur with the worst of atrocities...Why should this be taboo?"

Sudan's reply criticized the speaker for provoking "an insidious discussion."

- **on the freedom to change religion or belief without restrictions.** The Swedish delegate spoke of our "religious, philosophical and humanist values" and Saudi Arabia's delegate stressed: "we are here to learn intercultural dialogue...we must live together, enjoying peace, Islam is a tolerant religion which rejects hate and Muslims respect the other religions and wish to dialogue with them." We asked delegates whether any citizen in their country can change their religion? "This is a crucial question that needs a clear reply otherwise we are turning back the clock."

10 December –Joint appeal by AWE, WUPJ to HCHR, UNESCO on Human Rights Day

– with reference to unanswered appeals of 12 January, 30 January and 14 August 2009 (A/HRC/10/NGO/29 on 'Defamation of Judaism and Jews by ISESCO' "We ask your Excellencies, individually and collectively, to condemn this culture of hate..."

25 December – Christmas Day Appeal by AWE, IHEU, WUPJ to HCHR Navanethem Pillay

"Last December we appealed to you on the tragic situation of the Christians of Iraq, with a 15-page Christian Solidarity International (CSI) Report ("Terror Reigns over Mosul Christians") ...on Christmas Day we again call for renewed efforts on the part of the entire UN system to monitor, to mediate and facilitate reconciliation among ethnic-religious communities of Iraq."

Commentary from Dr. Philip Bliss: While there has been some discussion as to our involvement at the United Nations, everyone I've spoken to has been adamant that the World Union must continue its advocacy role both in New York and at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. In particular, all the Israeli spokesmen have pleaded that the World Union should continue speaking up for Israel and against the anti-Semitic tirade that is rife within the U.N. The ambassadors and heads of mission have all independently spoken of the, at times, single voice of the World Union that has been brave enough to stand up against the pro-Islamic onslaught against Zionism and Israel.

It is now possible to report with pride that David G. Littman, the World Union's spokesman to UN bodies in Geneva, was awarded the Hero of Silence award by the Israeli Mossad. The award, which followed recognition by Israeli President Shimon Peres in 2008, was bestowed upon David at the Israel Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center at Gllilot, for his work in conjunction with the Mossad in "Operation Mural," the smuggling of 530 Moroccan children to Israel in the summer of 1961.



YAD B'YAD TASK FORCE

Jerry Tanenbaum, Chair
Ron Wegsman, Staff

The primary objective of the Yad B'Yad Task Force over the past year was to facilitate the establishment of a regional structure for the World Union in Latin America and to continue to support the activities there.

The reports submitted by the newly formed Latin American Council and by the Union of Jewish Congregations of Latin America and the Caribbean (UJCL) describe the establishment of the regional board, as well as the wide range of activities throughout the year in South America, Central America and the Caribbean. The new Latin American Council's first meeting was held in Córdoba, Argentina in December 2009; the second meeting was held at the end of January 2010 at the UJCL conference in Panama.

Numerous people visited our Latin American communities over the course of the year. Yad B'Yad will continue to facilitate connections between Reform Jews and our Latin American communities, and will continue to work to make Progressive Judaism a dynamic choice for Jews in Latin America.

Liberal Judaism continues to grow in this area of the world – something that would not have been possible without the cooperation of so many people who have become dedicated and committed to the cause of furthering Progressive Judaism in the region.



YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS TASK FORCE

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

The youth and young adults committee was established in order to ensure representation, involvement and inclusion of these age groups within formal WU structures and discussions, as well as engage the affiliates and regional organizations in promoting youth programming and development within their regional structures.

In 2008 the WU Executive Board and International Assembly voted to include the investment and development in youth and young adults as an integral part of the organization's mission statement, and the committee assisted in ensuring this issue is one of the major strategic focuses of the organization.

Following the successful presence of the Netzer youth and TaMaR young adult representatives during **Connections 2009**, the committee has stepped up discussions with various parties on improving such involvement. The young adults would like to be more involved but often feel overlooked by the adult committees, and we need to find ways to engage them in WUPJ activities.

As a first step, the committee sent out an appeal to all regions asking them to include young adults on their committees when they have their elections. This was to be passed on down the line to congregational level so that we can bring young leaders into the movement.

In 2007, the Netzer Olami Review Task Force was created, to look at ways of strengthening the global youth movement. The team published a report with a range of suggestions. Initial implementation on the board level has been achieved, as reported last year. Following the financial challenges in 2009, coupled with the understanding that there is now an increased commitment to further develop the global youth activities, together with a window of opportunity to engage with the partners and stakeholders around the world, a follow up review team has now been established. This team is led by WU senior vice chair, Mike Grabiner, Arzenu vice chair Andrew Gilbert and WU VP and COO, Shai Pinto. Together with lay and professional representatives of the various constituents, the team has engaged in a process aimed at reviewing the original recommendations and identifying the best ways of strengthening the global partnership centered on youth activities, under the notion of Klal Israel, Jewish peoplehood and Zionism. These discussions, incorporating both the parent organizations and the Netzer representatives will take center stage during the coming year.

The committee will continue to focus on the young adult aspects of activities, primarily the inclusion and elevation of young adult status and influence in the organization.