

●●● **WORLD UNION  
FOR PROGRESSIVE  
JUDAISM**

**STRENGTH THROUGH UNITY 2005/2006**



WORLD  
UNION FOR  
PROGRESSIVE  
JUDAISM



האיגוד  
העולמי  
ליהדות  
מתקדמת



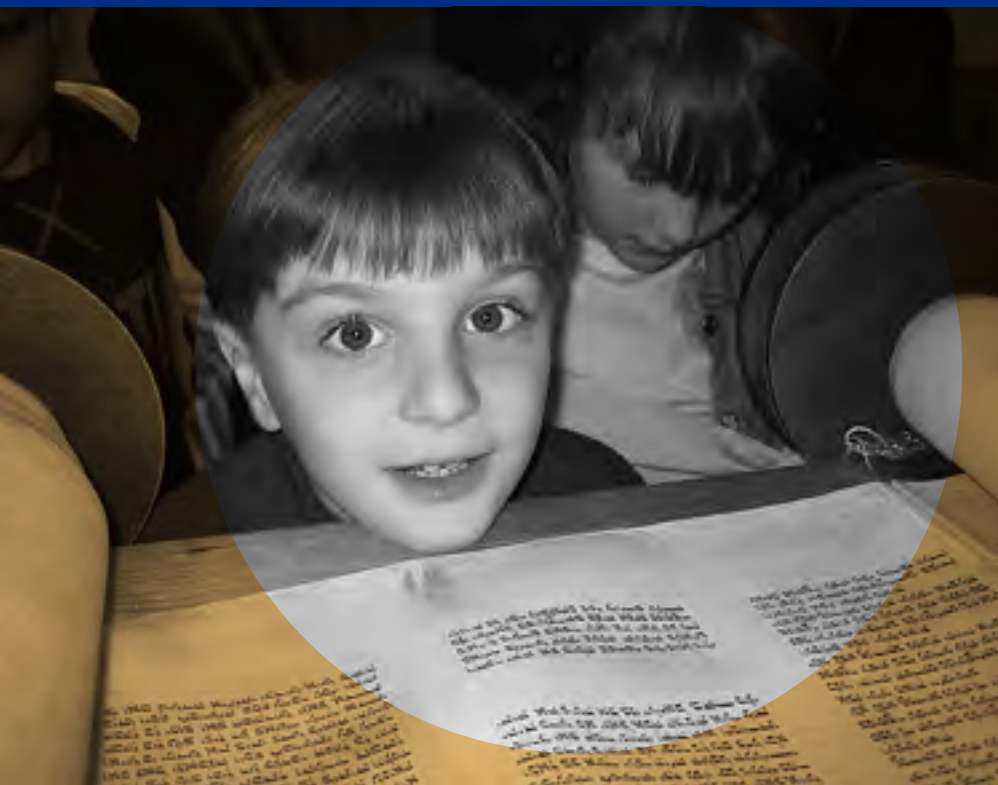
## The World Union for Progressive Judaism

Strengthens modern, pluralistic Jewish life throughout the world by establishing and supporting congregations and other communal institutions;

Actively participates in building Israel as a democratic and pluralistic Jewish state;

Unites Jewish religious tradition, inclusiveness, gender equality and individual autonomy;

Advances social justice in the spirit of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).



# SHALOM FRIENDS,

As Reform and Progressive Jews, we are united by our belief in the need for Judaism to be dynamic, modern, pluralistic and egalitarian, even as we fervently honor our heritage, keep our traditions and strive to live by the timeless values of our faith that have brought us to this day.

In this forward movement in Jewish life, the World Union for Progressive Judaism plays a vital role. Through a combination of individual and collective efforts, and in an ever increasing number of ways, the World Union inspires, supports and guides the birth and development of communities, the nurturing of lay and professional leaders and the engagement of youth and young adults around the world. In this process, it has created a global family that strengthens, and is strengthened by, the unity of its nearly two million members.

We take very seriously both our responsibility as global citizens and our special commitment to *Klal Yisrael*, and so provide programs that enrich the lives of Jews living in Israel and throughout the Diaspora, of current and future generations, of Jews and non-Jews.

We are forever indebted to the leaders and supporters of the World Union for Progressive Judaism for the tremendous work they do and their heartfelt dedication to building the Reform, Progressive, Liberal and Reconstructionist movements in Israel and elsewhere throughout our Union – 42 countries strong. This brief report is a tribute to their achievements and, we hope, an inspiration for others to join our endeavors in the years ahead.



Steven M. Bauman  
Chairman



Rabbi Uri Regev  
President

# LOOKING BACK

**When leaders from Liberal, Progressive and Reform congregations** in Europe, North America and other parts of the world gathered in Berlin in August 1928 to convene the first World Union for Progressive Judaism international conference, little could they have imagined that in less than a century the World Union would become the largest Jewish religious movement in the world, with over 1.7 million constituents in 42 countries.

Two years earlier, in 1926, the World Union had been established in London, under the dynamic leadership of Lily H. Montagu, its honorary secretary, and Dr. Claude G. Montefiore, its first president. The mandate of the newly formed organization was to unite into a permanent union the Progressive Jewish movements already in existence in various countries of the world, and to establish a presence wherever there were Jewish communities prepared and committed to undertake such a challenge.

There is little wonder that the World Union's first international conference took place in Berlin. Germany was the birthplace of Reform Judaism, having nourished since the 18th century such preeminent Jewish thinkers as Moses Mendelssohn, Leopold Zunz, Abraham Geiger and others, who laid the foundations for a respected and recognized Progressive movement in Judaism.

From Europe, the pioneers of Progressive Judaism spread the message of the movement to the far corners of the world: Australia, South Africa, Latin America and, of course, North America.

The Reform movement in North America, having been built upon German roots, has been from its inception a stalwart constituent of the World Union. The North American Reform movement is today the largest and



Delegates gathered in Berlin in 1928 for the first international conference of the new World Union for Progressive Judaism.



most dynamic Jewish movement on that continent, and has contributed generously, both materially and through leadership, to the success of the World Union over the decades.

In 1973, with the growing commitment to building a Progressive movement in Israel, the organization moved its international headquarters to Jerusalem under the leadership of its then executive director, Rabbi Richard Hirsch. The Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, an affiliate of the World Union, has established synagogues and community centers, kibbutzim, kindergartens and schools, a youth movement and a religious action center that has championed the cause of social justice and equal rights for all Jews and non-Jews in the state of Israel.

The last decade has witnessed exponential growth in Progressive congregations and regional movements, from the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe to Australia, Latin America and South Africa.

Rooted in the soul and soil of the Jewish People, the World Union for Progressive Judaism, under the current leadership of Rabbi Uri Regev, is a strong, internationally recognized umbrella body of some 1,200 Reform, Liberal, Progressive and Reconstructionist Jewish congregations. It strengthens Jewish identity and education, promotes liberal Judaism and provides institutional and financial backing for emerging Jewish communities seeking to renew Jewish life in a modern and egalitarian way.

During this past year, the World Union has worked to revitalize its North American Council and expand its base of extraordinarily talented, energetic and committed lay leaders. This restructuring was undertaken as a result of the separation from ARZA in 2003 and the affirmation of the World Union's role as the central fund-raising organization for building Progressive Judaism in Israel and internationally.



**From top:**

Polish congregants worship and celebrate at Beit Warszawa.

American Reform college youth visit peers in Argentina.

Mercaz Shimshon/Beit Shmuel, World Union headquarters in Jerusalem



# LOOKING

# AHEAD

Proud as we are of the World Union's progress and accomplishments to date, we look forward to further expanding the scope and depth of our work and of the growth of our movements around the world.

Our vision for the future is based on the development of local, regional and international programs in new and established Progressive Jewish communities – from Israel to Russia to Argentina – while developing the tools that allow communities everywhere to share in each other's successes, learn from each other's challenges and experience the strength and unity of *Klal Yisrael*.

Young and enthusiastic members of Netzer Olami, pictured here in Jerusalem, are among those who will lead the movement into the future with the World Union's help.



## In the months and years ahead, you will see the World Union's

- **Leadership development programs** expanded and intensified to ensure the continued forward momentum of our movement through the training of professional and lay leaders;
- **Israel Development Commission** implementing an ambitious and strategic initiative to advance Progressive Judaism in Israel, based on the comprehensive study it initiated;
- **Asset building** through the acquisition of additional properties for synagogues and community centers in the former Soviet Union;
- **Global social action network** established to better realize its humanitarian and social justice objectives in both the local and international arenas;
- **Interfaith dialogue initiatives** helping liberal Jewish communities put programs into practice that further the cause of peace and understanding;
- **Expanded youth and young adult programs** to engage and foster Jewish identity and community leadership among activists of the next generation;
- **Strategic communications** efforts dramatically increase public awareness, raise its profile on issues such as religious pluralism, social justice and modern Jewish identity, and revitalize and expand its Web site and global resource databank;
- **Strengthened regional alliances** to ensure better cooperation and support of national advocacy for establishing the legitimacy and recognition of all liberal streams of Judaism wherever they are challenged.

“It’s not enough to plant a seed;  
you have to make sure it grows.”

Julia Grishenko  
Community worker in Odessa, Ukraine

# BUILDING COMMUNU

**At the core of the World Union’s mission** is its commitment to promoting and strengthening Progressive Jewish life worldwide. As communities are born and develop, the World Union for Progressive Judaism is there to provide the spiritual, financial and programmatic support they need.

The Hebrew calendar, and its many holidays, so central to the lives of Jews, is one opportunity used to cultivate communal Jewish identity and reinforce religious tradition.

Physically and symbolically, affixing the mezuzah on this synagogue expansion in Holland represents the growth of Reform communities now underway throughout Europe.

Each year, for example, the World Union coordinates a program for American students in their first year of rabbinic studies at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem to travel to the former Soviet Union during the week of Passover to lead seders and educational activities in our Progressive communities. This past year alone, more than 7,450 people attended seders held by 53 students in 43 communities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Congregational activities for children, youth and adults are another opportunity used to solidify community ties.

In Israel, where fully one-third of the Jewish citizens state that they identify with Progressive Jewish principles and values, the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) guides new professional and lay leaders in community outreach with



# NITIES

special programming for families on Shabbat and holidays as well as a broad range of educational, cultural and religious programs, life-cycle celebrations and services for those in need.

Today, with the recent addition of two new communities, there are 25 Progressive congregations in the Jewish state. A detailed market analysis, undertaken by the World Union's new Israel Development Commission, will further facilitate the success of community development efforts in the near future.

Community building often takes place across many, many thousands of miles or kilometers.

Regional conferences – such as those held last year in Mexico, by the Union of Jewish Congregations in Latin America and the Caribbean (UJCL), in Germany, by the European Region, and in Australia, by the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPI) – provide opportunities for leaders and volunteers to come together as a truly international community, participate in focused, skill-building workshops and share best practices in everything from liturgy development to social action to festival celebrations.

Sometimes the community's needs are very tangible – to move out of basements and other make-shift quarters and establish a permanent spiritual and physical home. Here, too, the World Union offers assistance with the purchase and construction of properties and synagogues, most recently acquiring a building for Congregation Sha'arei Shalom in St. Petersburg, Russia.

German chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel, welcomed leaders of the international and German movements of Reform Judaism, joined by the Executive of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat).

## Reform Judaism Celebrates Revival in the Land of its Birth

If the adage is true, that "It takes a village to raise a child," then it might also be said that it takes the world to raise a community.

Progressive Judaism experienced tremendous growth in Germany over the past decade, primarily due to the influx of Jews from the former Soviet Union. But without formal recognition as a legitimate stream of Judaism, Progressive Jews there have encountered obstacles when dealing with the existing Jewish establishment and trying to access government resources.

World Union leaders answered the call for support from their colleagues in the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany, and collaborated on advocacy efforts that, over the past two years, have led to full acceptance of several Progressive communities by the Zentralrat der Juden im Deutschland (Central Council of Jews in Germany).

More than mere diplomatic formalities, these efforts signal a transformation in the relationship between the liberal Jewish movement and the local political establishment in the land where Reform Judaism was born some two centuries ago.

They also demonstrate how, advocating together with its affiliates, the World Union is able to strengthen Reform Jewish life and obtain equal recognition in other countries around the world where it is still lacking.



DEVELOPING

# LEADERSHIP

“What do I leave with? First, a special group of friends from all over the world, a community of leaders ... with whom I can share and draw from. Second, a better idea of what and who makes a good leader, and feeling stronger in my capacity. Third, I leave with a greater commitment to *Klal Yisrael*. Fourth, I leave with a renewed spirit, a fire in my bones!”

Beutel Seminar graduate,  
Jason Hagger, New Zealand

The Anita Saltz International Education Center combines liberal Jewish text study with unique and meaningful Israel experiences.

**The keystone of a vibrant Jewish community** is its leadership – both professional and lay – and the World Union has directed great energy and resources towards the training and placing of future leaders of the Progressive movement.

While some congregations can attract and afford their own rabbis, many cannot. The World Union has increasingly assisted as a resource network, connecting communities in need with recent graduates from Reform seminaries, such as the Leo Baeck College-Centre for Jewish Education in London and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the U.S. and Israel. Many retired rabbis also seek the World Union’s help in finding temporary posts abroad to provide spiritual leadership for developing communities.





The Beutel Leadership Seminar class of 2005

The World Union has recently expanded its work in training paraprofessional and lay leaders. Its Institute for Modern Jewish Studies in Moscow (Machon) now operates full time to locate, train and place community workers throughout the former Soviet Union. Recent program upgrades have greatly enhanced the quality of the Machon and its attraction for individuals committed to serving as leaders in their respective Progressive communities. The first year of the program has been integrated with the prestigious Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow, allowing students to receive academic credit for their Machon courses.

Other wellsprings of Jewish leadership are the new Anita Saltz International Education Center (see sidebar) and the annual Beutel Leadership Seminar for progressive Jewish development. An intensive 10-day experience, the Beutel Seminar enables lay leaders from different

countries and Jewish backgrounds to interact and learn skills that they can use to benefit their communities at home. Participation in this selective program grew to 20 individuals in 2005 and 25 in 2006. They studied models of ancient as well as modern leadership, Progressive or Reform Judaism in the Diaspora, collective Jewish responsibility and more.

The World Union's Australian affiliate, the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPIJ), has been providing yet another model of leadership development. In 2005, it formed the Progressive Jewish Professional Network for the region's rabbis, cantors, educators, *shlichim* (emissaries), general managers and youth workers. These leaders will convene annually to study together and share both their successes and their challenges as they work to build and sustain their respective communities.

## Reform Jewish Learning in the Heart of Israel

The new Anita Saltz International Education Center is an exciting and innovative initiative of the World Union for Progressive Judaism that is satisfying the intellectual and spiritual needs of Reform and Progressive Jews from around the world in a manner that more closely resembles the way they see and practice Judaism.

Sharing the campus with the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, home to some of Israel's most accomplished and respected scholars and teachers, the Saltz Center uses the land of Israel and its heart, Jerusalem, as classroom and living text. Participants enjoy in-depth learning experiences that interweave spiritual, intellectual and sensory experiences, guided by prayer, text analysis, field study and the arts.

In addition to its Jerusalem-based seminars, the Saltz Center also offers regional programs, community symposia, workshops and a range of opportunities for intensive Jewish study throughout the world. The Saltz Center provides curricula and stimulating educational tools that help Progressive Jewish communities construct models of vibrant Jewish learning.

Among the hundreds who have already participated in these exciting programs are Torah study groups, synagogue missions, members of the board of the Union for Reform Judaism, Dutch rabbinical students from the Levisson Institute, young congregants from the Mouvement Juif Liberal de France, birthright participants from the United States, college students on their study abroad programs in Israel and youth leaders from Germany and the United Kingdom.

“We are all grateful to you and the World Union for helping to cement the bonds between our congregations that are so distant, and yet so alike, in many ways.”

Kehilla Esh David in Ashdod in thanking Temple Oheb Shalom in Baltimore, Maryland, for a donated Torah

# CONNECTING LIVES

**As an international umbrella organization** of liberal Jewish movements, the World Union is committed to facilitating the connections that generate spiritual sustenance and practical support for its constituents.

This energy and strength was apparent in abundance at the World Union’s 32nd International Convention, which took place in Moscow in July 2005. More than 400 participants representing 24 countries made history together as the first international Jewish organization to hold its central convention in Russia and as the largest gathering of Jewish leaders ever assembled in Moscow.

Many participants had spent a lifetime steeped in the values and practices of one form or another of Progressive Judaism, while others were learning about them for the first time. Yet all came together to celebrate the advancement of Progressive Jewish life and institutions in the former Soviet Union (FSU) and to share their past, present and future as a true world union for Progressive Jews.

Similar motivations inspired a record number of delegates to attend the March 2006 European Region’s convention in Hannover, Germany, where they shared experiences common to the rebirth of Progressive Judaism in their respective countries.

A feeling of warmth and camaraderie is evident at this conference of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism in Tel Aviv in May 2006.



The World Union also facilitates communal and personal connections in other ways. Twinning and Torah donation programs have linked congregations and individuals across thousands of miles in ways that complement face-to-face encounters. Over 20 congregations in the FSU are actively involved in a twinning program with counterparts in the United States and the United Kingdom. Three Torah scrolls were donated during the November 2005 URJ biennial in Houston alone by American congregations (B'nai Sholom Congregation in Huntington, West Virginia; Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Temple Sinai in Oakland, California), and many more international donations took place over the past year. (See sidebar.)

Cyberspace is, perhaps, the most accessible venue today for individuals and communities to connect with one another, and these encounters are happening with ever-increasing frequency. The World Union regularly uses Interwise, a web-based learning and conferencing service, to conduct its international business, often spanning more than a dozen time zones. The Australia, Asia and New Zealand region uses it to hold rabbinic Moetzah conferences, leadership study sessions and executive meetings.

The World Union also keeps in touch with constituents globally through its weekly e-mail newsletter, WUPJ*news* (<http://www.wupjnews.org>), and is launching a completely remodeled web site in fall 2006 ([www.wupj.org](http://www.wupj.org)). Each region has its own web site (see back cover of this report), as do most individual congregations, along with multiple forms of electronic correspondence.

Members of Congregation Emanu-El in Odessa, Ukraine, celebrate the arrival of a Torah from Chile.

## A Tale of Three Cities

In April 2004, three members of Temple Emanu-El in San Jose, California, carried an historic Torah scroll from their congregation to Odessa, Ukraine, where it was received by that city's only Reform congregation in a festive celebration.

A year and a half later, the unimaginable happened – that Torah was stolen from the ark *erev* Rosh Hashanah. Undaunted, their rabbi, Alexander Dukhovny, told his congregants, “No one can steal a Torah. Even without a physical Torah, you can have Torah in your hearts. With the help of your sister congregations and world Jewry, you are not alone.”

A few short months later, World Union leaders were in Santiago, Chile, visiting Congregation Or Shalom, which had received a donated Torah when it became a movement affiliate in the late 1980s. Over time the congregation acquired a number of scrolls, and decided to donate one to Congregation Yakar, a younger World Union affiliate in Chile in need of a full-sized scroll. Then came word about the Odessa Torah and both congregations knew what had to be done.

In February 2006, that Santiago Torah made its way to Odessa where it was brought under the *chuppah*, into the sanctuary to its new home in the *aron kodesh*. Said Rabbi Dukhovny: “This is Reform Judaism which offers a spiritual bridge between our brothers and sisters in Jerusalem, San Jose and Santiago, New York and Odessa, and many other places, where Judaism is not merely words, but rather, [the] work of hearts and souls, improved by our actions.”



# NURTURING YOUTH



The Arlene Fern School in Buenos Aires exemplifies the World Union's collaboration with local communities to ensure a Jewish education for future generations.

**The World Union believes strongly** in providing continuous Progressive Jewish education and experiences for children, teens and young adults in order to ensure the future of liberal Judaism in Israel and throughout the world.

In developing Progressive communities, more and more movement-affiliated preschools and education programs offer creative educational alternatives for instilling Jewish identity. In Israel, the number of affiliated preschool classes has grown to 41, serving approximately 1,500 children. Under the direction of Progressive educators in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, there are now 13 Progressive Jewish preschools, 12 congregational religious schools and one day school.

In Israel, during the 2005-2006 school year, 45 secular public schools – an increase of 30 percent over the previous year – used the IMPJ's Jewish Studies program to educate teachers and help them impart Jewish identity and heritage from the Progressive perspective to 16,000 students and 60,000 members of their families. In the same year, the IMPJ organized 35 class bat mitzvah ceremonies within public schools, an uplifting and emotional experience not only for the girls but for their parents as well, whose interest and involvement in Progressive Judaism have increased as a result.

“I feel I have been given the tools to formulate my own opinions on issues regarding my Israeli and Jewish identity.”

Vered Rothenberg,  
student in Israel's pre-army *Mechina* program

In Argentina, the World Union's commitment to childhood Jewish education is expressed by support, through its Yad B'Yad task force, of the Arlene Fern School for children in preschool and elementary grades. Established in 1994 to ensure the continuity of Jewish education for the children in this Buenos Aires community, the school now enrolls nearly 550 students and continues to receive scholarship funds for students in need.

Netzer Olami, Reform Judaism's international Zionist youth movement, has also enjoyed dramatic growth and success in recent years. Netzer Olami now has *sniffim* (branches) in every World Union region from Israel to Russia, Brazil to Germany, Australia to South Africa, as well as connections with Reform Jewish communities in India, Singapore and Hong Kong.

With the affiliation of NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth) in 2005, there are now approximately 16,000 young people involved in the movement worldwide, with 3,500 participating in its summer and winter camps. (See sidebar.) Hundreds of members visit Israel every year on short-term summer tours, on a ten-month program for high school graduates, Shnat Netzer, and for various other seminars and conferences that celebrate their global connections and prepare them for future leadership.



## Success Breeds Success

Building on the time-tested experience of Reform summer camps in North America, and adapting it to local interests and situations, the Netzer Olami youth movement has created an extremely valuable and effective program for instilling Jewish identity and a love of Israel in campers around the world.

Every year, Netzer Olami runs summer camps from Israel to Australia that attract thousands of youths interested in an experience combining social interaction with an opportunity to learn and live Progressive Judaism in a community setting.

In the former Soviet Union, attendance at World Union summer camps reached an all-time high this year of 1,130 *chanichim* (participants). This is a dramatic jump from 340 campers five years ago, and plans are to at least double attendance over the next five years. An external evaluation of the camping program, conducted last summer, found that as a result of their camp experience, those who identified very strongly as Jews rose from 41 to 67 percent, and 66 percent considered Reform Judaism, as experienced at camp, the most suitable for themselves.

“My parents, who were completely secular,” said one camper, “started going to synagogue after I told them a lot of things I learned about Judaism and showed them films from the Netzer camps. Through me, they have also become interested in Jewish life.”

Above: An independent study reported that 85 percent of the youths at World Union-sponsored Netzer Olami summer camps in the FSU significantly increased their knowledge of Judaism and expressed a desire to enhance their Shabbat experience.

# ADVOCATING JUSTICE

**Tikkun olam (repairing the world)** has been a core value of Reform Judaism throughout its history. Feeding the hungry, helping victims of terrorism, settling new *olim* (immigrants) in Israel, fighting for gender equality, promoting interfaith dialogue and preserving our environment are all causes that are high on the World Union's international humanitarian agenda.

Ongoing examples of this work include a number of campaigns that the movement coordinates with the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), such as providing food, as well as heating equipment during the winter, for Jews, Muslims and Christians in need. A joint program with the Masorti movement, Kehilat Tzedek, supports congregations in providing social services to local communities that help the elderly, the poor and children and youth at risk.

While the economic situation in Argentina has improved, the World Union's Yad B'Yad task force continues to support the work of Fundación Judaica in providing emergency assistance – in the form of hot meals, clothing, medicines and help in finding jobs – to those still living under the poverty line.

In furtherance of its commitment to *tikkun olam*, the World Union commissioned a comprehensive analysis and proposal in 2005 for the creation of a global social action network. This initiative aims to increase advocacy in areas such as religious pluralism and equal rights, and to create “hands on” social justice projects for individual communities throughout the World Union family. The Religious Action Center (RAC) in Washington, D.C., is a valued partner in this endeavor.

The World Union, through its NGO (non-governmental organization) representatives, also has a distinct presence and voice at the United Nations. It has been



Building the Reform movement often means literally building homes to help those in need, as exemplified by these volunteers of the URI's Pacific Southwest Council in California.

“In our difficult situation, the attention that we receive from Congregation Or Hadash and Rabbi Nof is for us a light in the darkness.”

Ora Lafer-Mintz  
Bereaved Mothers' Group – Victims of Terror, Haifa

active in developing the International Covenant on the Rights and Dignity of People with Disabilities and fully endorsed the implementation of the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals in a resolution passed in Moscow at its 32nd international conference.

A series of oral and written statements were presented last year by World Union representatives at the 61st session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva on topics that included Israeli/Palestinian relations, terrorism, anti-Semitism and slavery in Africa. Increased activity is planned with the U.N. Commission, as well as with other NGO committees on which World Union representatives hold leadership positions, such as those on aging, girl-child protection, disarmament, the environment, women's issues and religious NGOs. Action taken by the Jewish NGOs since the Seminar on Anti-Semitism in June 2004 has been credited with speeding up the designation (by General Assembly resolution) of January 27th as the annual U.N. Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust.



## Leading by Example

When it comes to living and practicing *tikkun olam*, at home and abroad, few can rival the sisterhoods of South Africa's Reform communities. In Johannesburg, they have expressed this commitment by helping struggling Jewish single mothers and children, providing activities, food and entertainment for the elderly, paying for medications and hospital transportation for the sick, and feeding some 3,000 children daily, including many with HIV/AIDS who are given high protein breakfasts to strengthen their immune systems.

Sixty years after founding the first primary school for the children of Alexandra Township, the United Sisterhood of Johannesburg, with assistance from their sisters of the Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ) in North America, continues its members' involvement. Last year they installed a kitchen to sustain their feeding program as well as to serve as a parent teaching facility.

After a recent visit, Sherry Levy-Reiner, development director for the North American Reform movement's Religious Action Center, was moved to write: "Liberal Jews played an important role in [South Africa's] painful movement toward freedom, and the Progressive Jewish Movement, as a community, continues to help ensure that its future remains bright."

The sisterhoods' helping hands reach many other places as well. For example, they contribute to the World Union in support of the "Rabbi's Shabbat Tish" in Buenos Aires, Argentina, feeding the poorest of the poor on Friday nights, for a total of roughly 4,500 Shabbat dinners a year.

Above: The United Sisterhoods of our movement in Johannesburg, South Africa, provide much needed food, clothing and other support to many local schoolchildren, such as those pictured here at the Rabbi M.C. Weiler School in Alexandra.

# BUILDING

## ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2005/2006

The World Union for Progressive Judaism is at a significant crossroads in its history. We are witnessing the dramatic growth, in number and size, of Progressive Jewish communities throughout the world, as well as many exciting new initiatives and programs, reflecting the enthusiasm and ingenuity of our worldwide leadership.

The brief summary below highlights just a few of the activities made possible by the contributions and efforts of World Union supporters, leaders, activists and staff.



### Israel

- The IMPJ's *Mechina* received official accreditation from Israel's defense ministry, paving the way for increased participation in this highly successful pre-army leadership program that prepares selected high school graduates for service through text study, ethics discussions, visits to army outposts and engaging in social action projects. In 2005 there were 16 participants; 25 are expected for the 2006-2007 term.
- The Israel Development Commission, a blue-ribbon panel chartered by the World Union to provide strategic focus for the realization of Progressive Judaism's potential in Israel, began its mandate with a comprehensive market survey and analysis to guide future marketing and development efforts.
- The Anita Saltz International Education Center opened its doors at World Union headquarters in Jerusalem, offering individuals, congregations, tour groups and families an unprecedented venue and format for Reform Jewish learning and experiences in Israel.
- The Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) successfully fought for state recognition of the movement's conversions abroad, petitioned for equal state recognition and funding for Reform rabbis, and provided legal assistance to some 5,000 *olim* (immigrants).
- Israel's largest Progressive center, Beit Daniel in Tel Aviv, celebrated the dedication of **Mishkenot Daniel** in neighboring Jaffa, which will serve as a community center, youth hostel, synagogue and place of gathering, learning and social action for the local neighborhood and the Reform movement at large.



### Former Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia)

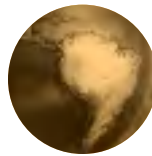
- In July, 2005, the World Union held its 32nd international convention in Moscow, attended by some 450 Progressive leaders from 24 countries, marking the first time such an event was ever held in Russia and a profound milestone in the renewal of Jewish life in the former Soviet Union. The number of congregations there has now reached 70, with six native-born rabbis, 40 paraprofessional leaders and educators and 1,500 youth movement members.

- The World Union sponsored **the largest number of Netzer Olami summer camps ever** in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Latvia. Attendance grew from nearly 900 children in 2005 to 1,130 participants in 2006.
- The purchase of a **building for Congregation Sha'arei Shalom in St. Petersburg** was successfully concluded after a multi-year effort; plans are in the works for buildings in Moscow and Minsk
- The online **Russian translation of *The Torah: A Modern Commentary***, edited by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, was launched at Rosh Hashanah 5766, providing Russian speakers around the world with the unprecedented ability to engage in independent Torah study through critical, liberal-oriented commentary.



## Europe

- Over 200 delegates from 17 countries participated in the **European Region's most successful biennial conference ever**, held in March 2006 in Hannover, Germany.
- The European Region won funding for "Memory of the Past and Attitudes to the Future," a major **Holocaust research project** involving survivors, their children and hidden Jews from communities in Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland and the United Kingdom.
- At the initiation of the World Union's International Interfaith Task Force, a delegation of 28 Reform and Progressive rabbis and lay leaders from six countries held **meetings with leaders of the Vatican** in March 2005 to mark the 40th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the Catholic Church's 1965 statement disavowing anti-Jewish teachings, and to plan future interfaith initiatives.
- The World Union and the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany won a landmark victory in the campaign for equal recognition with their **acceptance by the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Zentralrat)**. Chancellor Angela Merkel and other government officials also congratulated movement leaders on the upcoming first ordination of rabbis since 1942 by the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam.



## Latin America/Caribbean

- A **regional office was opened in São Paulo, Brazil** with the support of World Union funds, greatly enhancing the movement's organizational presence on the South American continent.
- The World Union strengthened its ties with the **Union of Jewish Congregations in Latin America and the Caribbean**, the umbrella organization of Progressive communities in the region, providing funds for the establishment of their first staff position, based in Aruba. World Union delegates attended the 9th UJCL Encounter in Mexico in January 2006, where roughly one-third of the participants were youths who organized a parallel encounter.
- **Yad B'Yad** continued to provide humanitarian assistance for those in need in Argentina, and broadened the World Union's religion and education outreach to Jewish communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Plans are underway for the World Union's first **area conference jointly sponsored with the Conservative movement**, scheduled for November 16-19, 2006 in Punta del Este, Uruguay.



## North America

- The North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) joined Netzer Olami in 2005, resulting in a truly worldwide youth movement operating in Reform communities of some 20 countries.
- The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) advanced its commitment to international Jewry with its board's approval to create a standing World Jewry Committee, working in partnership with the World Union to support and promote its mission.
- The World Union was both participant and presenter at the URJ Biennial in Houston, November 2005, where North American delegates had the opportunity to learn about the challenges and success of their counterparts abroad.



## Australia, Asia & New Zealand

- From its headquarters, the region launched *ProjeNews* – a free e-newsletter with weekly columns by regional clergy and Jewish professionals as well as breaking local and international news of interest.
- Congregational standards – board manuals, professional staff guidelines, conversion procedures, roles for consulting rabbis – were developed and made available to be shared with other communities.
- The Zera'im-UPJ Leadership Institute was inaugurated with an initial 15 participants, to combine Jewish learning with leadership skills training, and has grown to 25.

- Seminars have been held for the past two years for Jewish educators, focusing on the latest trends, research and strategies in Jewish education.



## South Africa

- The region held its biennial national assembly in September 2005 in Cape Town, successfully combining learning and communal experience for several South African communities, and welcoming World Union representatives.
- Activities of the Netzer Olami Zionist youth movement include expanded relations with other Jewish streams as well as deeper connections to Israeli society, marked last year by the first ever trip of 14 South African *madrachim* (leaders) to Israel for a two-week program of leadership training, education and community work.
- The United Sisterhood, an umbrella body of Johannesburg sisterhoods, received Absa bank's Jewish Achiever's Humanitarian Award in July 2005 for their many service projects that have helped to transform and build the greater local community.

## WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

### Selected 2005 Financial Highlights (in thousands, U.S. Dollars)

With the help of our international community of donors, the World Union for Progressive Judaism achieved \$6.65 million in total income in 2005, nearly 9 percent more than the year before.

Expanded outreach to our constituents resulted in a record \$1.84 million raised to support the burgeoning Progressive movement in the former Soviet Union. Following meetings in 2005, donors from West London Synagogue in the U.K. enabled the World Union to purchase property in 2006 for a community center/synagogue in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Funds for the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism totaled over \$1.5 million, and supported a variety of initiatives, including helping Kehilat Mevasseret Zion to move into its new synagogue/community center and ensuring the continuity of the innovative Mechina pre-army service program. Contributions for congregations in Latin America, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India and Italy strengthened Progressive Jewish life in those areas. Increased revenues generated by Mercaz Shimshon-Beit Shmuel, the World Union's cultural/education center and hostel, resulted in a positive financial outlook for its activities in Jerusalem.

#### INCOME

General Undesignated Income	\$ 2,449	(36.8%)
Designated for former Soviet Union	\$ 1,835	(27.6%)
Designated for the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ)	\$ 1,544	(23.2%)
Designated for Netzer Olami	\$ 466	(7.0%)
International Programs	\$ 359	(5.4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,652</b>	<b>(100.0%)</b>

#### EXPENDITURES

IMPJ and Rabbinical Salaries	\$ 2,101	(31.1%)
For activities in the former Soviet Union	\$ 1,980	(29.3%)
Programming and Fund-raising in North America	\$ 1,184	(17.5%)
Anita Saltz Education Center and international programs outside US/Israel/FSU	\$ 746	(11.1%)
Netzer Olami	\$ 546	(8.1%)
One-time expenditures	\$ 196	(2.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 6,753</b>	<b>(100.0%)</b>

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The World Union for Progressive Judaism gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and organizations whose pledges and new gifts in 2005 made the many achievements described in this report possible.

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