



ACTIVITIES REPORT / DECEMBER 2011

During the past year many events and activities took place to expand our movement's presence in the Latin American region, thanks 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.

RABBINIC KALLAH (November 2010)

For the second time, the World Union for Progressive Judaism – Latin America very successfully conducted its Rabbinic Kallah. This most recent edition was held on November 23rd to the 25th at the headquarters of the Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP).

The meeting, whose objective is rabbinic study, the exchange of experiences and the reinforcement of pluralist Jewish values, besides integrating the institutions that participated, also counted on the invaluable support of the CIP, the Israeli Federation of São Paulo (FISESP) and the Israeli Confederation of Brazil (CONIB).

As special guest, Rabbi Levi Weiman Kelman, founder of the Kol HaNeshama Congregation and Professor at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, led the study sessions and experienced spiritual moments and reflections with a group of 31 rabbis and religious leaders in from Latin America who participated in the Kallah.

Passages from the Torah and Talmud were studied by the group, as well as new melodies for traditional prayers. A varied program brought very special sessions on subjects such as Jewish spirituality, music, healing and redemption, and many others. In addition there was the exhibition of the documentary "Eyes Wide Open" by Paula Weiman-Kelman.

Female Rabbis were also present. The Progressive and Conservative movements, that accept women for rabbinical duties, were represented by the Rabbis Luciana Pajecki Lederman, from the Shalom Community, from São Paulo, and Karina Finkelstein, from the NCI-Emanu El Synagogue, in Buenos Aires.

Also as part of the Kallah program, the Jewish community of São Paulo was able to experience a very special moment on the evening of the 24th, when a meeting was held with the participants of the event. With a format developed by Ari Rehfeld and Sergio Napchan, the audience of 180 people debated together with 31 rabbis and spiritual leaders. In a respectful atmosphere with mutual learning they discussed issues such as the duties of a rabbi, becoming closer to or moving away from Judaism, love versus Jewish continuity, the relationship between the Jewish community in the Diaspora and that in Israel, among others.



Rabbis and Religious Leaders Participants



Rabbis and the Community

CONNECTIONS 2011 - Strong Latin American Presence



Approximately 300 Reform Jews from all over the world got together in San Francisco, California, for five days at the beginning of February to participate in the 35th Bi-annual Conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism – an umbrella organization for Reform Religious Jewish Congregations. Approximately 10% of the participants were from Latin America – our delegation had 31 members, including rabbis and volunteers, from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico, all under the leadership of Miriam Vasserman, President of the WUPJ Latin America.



Latin America Delegation

Video introduces the work of the WUPJ- Latin America:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt6BZAKPySE>

The next WUPJ Conference will be held in 2013 in Jerusalem. We hope to take an even bigger and if at all possible more enthusiastic delegation.

LASHIR BENEFESH – Singing with the soul



The fifth edition of the Lashir Benefesh was held at the end of March in São Paulo, at the headquarters of the Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP) congregation with the support of the WUPJ-LA. The meeting brought together 30 chazanut professionals and sympathizers from 6 states within Brazil, regardless of their religious movement, with the objective of training the participants and providing an exchange of experiences.

The event counted on the special participation of the Argentinean conductor and composer Prof. Dr. Zeev Malbergier, who approached such topics as the different origins of Jewish liturgical music; the richness of the *nusach* (style) and its versions; the role of the *chazan* nowadays; and new compositions for a millennial liturgy.

As part of the program there was the Lashir Beiachad, an event open to the community and which offered our whole community the chance to sing and play Jewish songs with the participants of this 5th Lashir Benefesh. All were invited to bring their songs and instruments to sing with the group.

We already extend an invitation to the 6th Lashir Benefesh between Purim and Pessach 2012, in Belo Horizonte at the Congregação Israelita Mineira – CIM congregation.



Participants/ 5th Edition

SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE PROJECT

Rabbi Clifford M. Kulwin visits Communities in Brazil

The WUPJ-LA, in partnership with the Brazil's Israelite Confederation (Conib), makes possible the presence of renowned scholars from USA, Israel and Europe to visit and deliver speeches or conduct religious services in many communities in Brazil.

In April Rabbi **Clifford M. Kulwin**, spiritual leader of *Temple B'nai Abraham*, New Jersey, since 1999, visited communities in Brasília (ACIB), Fortaleza (SIC), Rio de Janeiro (ARI) and São Paulo,

Rabbi Clifford, accompanied by his wife Robin, attended Pesach Sedarim in Fortaleza, delivered a speech in Brasilia, participated in several activities in Rio de Janeiro, ending his visit in Sao Paulo where he was meeting with the board and participated in the CIP a Kabalat Shabbat in the Renaissance School's synagogue.



SIC-Fortaleza

ACIB/Brasília

Rabbi Roberto Graetz Visit

In November, WUPJ-Latin America will also promote the visit of Rabbi Roberto Graetz, who will carry out activities in communities in Manaus, Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre (Brazil). Rabbi Graetz joined Temple Isaiah in 1991 after having served as rabbi in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for almost 20 years. Presently he is vice-chair of the North American Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and serves on the Executive Committee of the North American Board of Rabbis for Human Rights.



Belo Horizonte



Porto Alegre



Manaus



Rio de Janeiro

OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Outreach Program, fruit of an initiative of the WUPJ-LA, counts on the important support of the FISESP - Jewish Federation of Sao Paulo and CONIB- Brazilian Jewish Confederation, and has as main objective to support the smaller community centers, promoting Judaism, encouraging and facilitating the formation of progressive Jewish institutions, besides stimulating the study of Judaism and the recognition of its place in modern life.

It is scheduled for the year to perform services for Kabalat Shabbat and other activities for the communities of Ribeirao Preto and Santos.

Lecture for the community in Santos

In September, the Outreach Program of the WUPJ Latin America, in partnership with FISESP (Israeli Federation of the State of São Paulo), went to the CCIB- Centro Cultural Israelita Brasileiro (Israeli Brazilian Cultural Center) in Santos, on the coast of the state of São Paulo, and took the Assistant to the Rabbinat of the CIP **Uri Lam** – student rabbi at HUC-Jerusalem, to conduct a lecture on “The Book of Jonah – An intense preparation for the Iamim Noraim”.

Present at the lecture were the president of the Israeli Brazilian Cultural Center, Branca Kives Ostronoff and its vice president, Ricardo A. Schmitman, as well as the president of the Bet Jacob synagogue, Jaques Zonis, and other people from the local community. The WUPJ-LA was represented by its executive secretary Berta Zylberstajn, and the FISESP (Israeli Federation of the State of São Paulo), by its executive advisor Marcelo W. Secemski.



Cabalat Shabbat in Santos

An animated Cabalat Shabbat, in early June, was conducted in the synagogue Bet Jacob, in Santos, São Paulo coastline, which has a community with approximately 150 people.

The religious service was conducted by *Sheliach tzibur* **David Leo Eisencraft**, accompanied by musician Marcelo Frenkiel. Present were the President of the synagogue Bet Jacob, Jaques Zonis; the President of the synagogue Beit Sion, Carlos Homs; the President of the Israeli Cultural Center, Brancan Kives Ostronoff and the Vice President, Ricardo A. Schmitman. The WUPJ -LA was represented by its President, Miriam Vasserman, and the FISESP (Israeli Federation of the State of São Paulo), Executive Secretary Marcelo W. Secemski.



In December, another Cabalat Shabbat, this time in conjunction with the Synagogues Beit Jacob and Beit Sion, and the presence of about 60 people. The religious service was conducted by *Sheliach tzibur* David Leo Eisencraft accompanied by musicians Marcello Frenkiel and Claudio Souza. Present were: the President of the synagogue Beit Jacob, Jaques Zonis; the President of the synagogue Beit Sion, Carlos Homs, WUPJ-Latin America Executive Secretary Berta Zylberstajn and FISESP (Israeli Federation of the State of São Paulo), Executive Secretary Marcelo W. Secemski.



The AIC Pessach Seder

Sibra's (Jewish affiliated congregation from Rio Grande do Sul) spiritual leader, **Guershon Kwasniewski**, on the initiative of both the WUPJ-LA and Israelite Confederation of Brazil (Conib), conducted the Community Pessach Seder at the Catarinense Israelite Association (AIC), in Hotel Jurerê Beach Village, in Florianópolis.



Singing Echad Mi Iodea

Lecture in Florianópolis

Also as part of the Outreach Program, the vice president of the WUPJ-LA **Raul C. Gottlieb** visited the AIC in Florianópolis where he delivered a lecture about the historical mission of Jewish Reform and discussed the development of the AIC as an entity.

High Holidays

In partnership between CONIB and WUPJ- Latin America, the Sheliach tzibur **David Leo Eisencraft** conducted the ceremonies of Rosh Hashanah to AIC- Associação Israelita Catarinense, the affiliated Jewish community of Santa Catarina.



AIC / Florianópolis

TORAH SCROLL DONATIONS

Affiliated congregations in Argentina, Brazil and Chile received Torah scrolls as part of the WUPJ's Shomrei Torah program. Donors **David and Nilma Igdaloff** made gifts with support from WUPJ-LA.

Israeli Society of Ceará receives a donation of sacred books

The Sociedade Israelita do Ceará (SIC) was contemplated with a priceless gift: the couple **David and Nilma Igdaloff**, in partnership with the WUPJ-Latin America and the Israeli Association of the Pampas (AIP), from Argentina, donated a new Sefer Torah to the entity.

The SIC management and community received the incumbency of caring for the new Sefer Torah, that just like the older one, is being revered with the respect that is due during the religious services with the community in Fortaleza.

The Igdaloff couple also donated a Megillat Esther to be used in the Purim services.

The donors were honored and thanked during the Kabbalat Shabat on October 22nd and during the religious services of Shabat, with the reading of the Torah conducted by the Rabbi Leonardo Alanati, who participated in the Shabat in another joint activity with the Congregação Israelita Mineira (CIM), from Belo Horizonte.



SIC /Fortaleza

Congregation Êshel Abraham (Belém do Pará) receives new Sefer Torah

The Êshel Abraham Congregation, in Belem, state of Pará, Brazil, received a new Sefer Torah on June 12th. It was donated by the couple Nilma and David Igdaloff in partnership with the WUPJ-LA,

the Israeli Association of the Pampas (AIP – Argentina) and the Conib (Confederação Israelita do Brasil). The Sefer was chosen according to the customs of the Sephardic rite and with a mantle made especially for this synagogue.

The delivery ceremony was conducted by the Rabbi Ruben Sternschein of the Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP), who made an analogy of the Parashá of the week, read at the occasion, with the trip of the Sefer Torah and the transfer of knowledge and the coming together of the peoples.

The president of the Centro Israelita do Pará, Iana Pinto, emphasized the importance of the Sefer Torah in ensuring the transmission of Jewish values to the new generations and thanked the WUPJ-LA and the Igdaloff couple.



BERGMAN Seminar brings together WUPJ educators in Israel

WUPJ –Latin America representatives participated in "The Bergman Seminar for Progressive Jewish Educators", in Israel, 14 to 24 July. The meeting combined classes, reading texts and visits to various places where the content of the courses can be experienced in practice.

The multi subject program included concepts related to culture, spirituality, language, history and memory, in addition to dealing with common issues and differences among Jewish communities in Israel and the Diaspora. The three core components of Jewish existence-- the Jewish people; the Torah and the State of Israel, will also be explored.

Participants were also encouraged to exchange experiences, keeping in touch even after the completion of the course; organized by "The Anita Saltz International Education Center", it had representatives of institutions affiliated to the WUPJ in 42 countries. From Latin America attended: *Eva Romarowski*, Professor of Jewish studies at the Community School, Arlene Fern Jewish Foundation, Buenos Aires, Argentina; *Miriam Gerber*, Coordinator of the Lafer School, Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP), Sao Paulo, Brazil; *Selma Rodrigues de Castilho*, Coordinator of the educational programs, Associação Religiosa Israelita of Rio de Janeiro (ARI-RJ); and *Ruth Kraselnik*, Kol Shearith Israel, Panama.



Participants / Bergman Seminar

YOUTH

Brazil is featured in the Netzer Olami movement newsletter

The Netzer Olami youth movement, that has programs for the young people of the institutions affiliated to the WUPJ, emphasized in the last edition of its newsletter the official establishment of a *snif* (headquarters) in São Paulo.

The publication also has a whole page dedicated to the activities conducted in Brazil, with an article signed by the *madrichá* Olivia Birman Haiat, of the Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP). She emphasizes the non-formal educational method adopted by the summer camps with the objective of sharing Jewish values with the *chanichim*.

In its twelve pages, the newsletter, entitled *Kol Netzer* also presents information about activities developed by the youth movement in Israel, USA, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, South Africa and Germany.

<http://www.netzerolami.org/Assets/news/kol%20netzer%205.pdf>



Netzer Brazil

TaMaR Argentina (Tnuat Magshimim Reformit)

TaMaR Argentina, linked to the Mishkan Jewish Spirituality Center in Buenos Aires, affiliated to the WUPJ-LA. was established as part of the WUPJ's international young adult movement. TaMaR, which has *sniffim* (branches) around the world, serves college students and young professionals

between the ages of 18 and 35 who are seeking a progressive Jewish space to strengthen their connections.



BEUTEL SEMINAR

Just as it did earlier this year, the WUPJ-Latin America also wants to send participants to the 2012 Edition of the Beutel seminar. **Maria Antonieta Cohen** (Tilah) of the Congregação Israelita Mineira – CIM is already accepted.

It is a major seminary that forms lay leaders of Jewish communities around the world, which will take place in early 2012, in Jerusalem, at the International Institute for Education Anita Saltz. The Seminar provides an opportunity for the study of ancient texts and Jewish history, in addition to providing the discussion about social and political problems of the Jewish world; spirituality and community leadership in a progressive Jewish context. Participants must be nominated by their respective communities.



NEW REFORM RABBIS TO THE REGION

At the present time, three people who are members of entities affiliated to the WUPJ in Latin America are taking courses at the *Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion*, with campuses in Israel and the USA, where reform rabbis study and graduate from. **Uri Lam** and **Beni Wajnberg**, from Brazil; and **Tati Schagas**, from Argentina, participate in the HUC-JIR. The Argentinean **Jordán Raber** began his rabbinical studies in October.

“TORAH - FROM AROUND THE WORLD” PROJECT

Rabbis and religious leaders from Latin America published teachings based on the weekly Torah portion as part of the WUPJ’s “Torah from around the World” project. **Guershon Kwasniewski** (SIBRA, Porto Alegre) and Rabbi **Michel Schlesinger** (CIP, São Paulo) from Brazil, and Rabbi **Guido Cohen** (Tarbut Jewish School) from Argentina contributed to the project in 2011. The project’s objective is to present the vision and interpretation of Progressive Jewish religious leaders throughout the world on the weekly Torah readings.

4th CONFERENCE OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF LATIN AMERICA / Buenos Aires 2012



Buenos Aires, Argentina, will be the venue of the fourth Latin America’s Conference of Jewish Communities, between 8 and 12 August 2012. The meeting will show how Latin American Jewry is increasingly stronger and more vibrant, repeating the success of previous meetings in São Paulo (2004), Punta del Este (2006) and Rio de Janeiro (2008).

Arrangements for the 4th WUPJ-LA regional conference have begun to be made. The board of Congregation Mishkan in Buenos Aires has accepted the invitation to be the host congregation for this conference, which is being scheduled for May 2012.

The conference is being prepared very carefully and the committee has already confirmed the name of one of the main guests: the **Rabbi Michael Marmur**, vice president for Academic Affairs at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. Previously, he served as Dean of the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of religion in Jerusalem. In recent years he has taught courses in Theology, Homiletics and Pluralistic Jewish Education.

WUPJ LEADERS VISIT LIBERAL COMMUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

The meeting of the Board of Governors da Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI-BOG) held in November in Argentina was attended by important leaders of the WUPJ international: the chairman Mike Grabiner; the president of the institution, Rabbi Stephen Fuchs; Rabbi Joel Oseran, vice president for international development of the WUPJ and Stephen Breslauer, honorary member of the executive board of the WUPJ and co-chairman of the *Yad B' Yad Task Force*, group that

encourages activities in the congregations in Latin America and Roberta Herman, president of the Jewish Community Foundation, EUA.. The representatives of the WUPJ took advantage of the opportunity to visit other progressive communities in the region, including São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.



Buenos Aires



São Paulo



Rio de Janeiro

DEVARIM MAGAZINE IN ITS 16TH EDITION

Associação Religiosa Israelita (ARI) in Rio de Janeiro published three issues of Devarim magazine in 2011. The publication is now in its 16th edition. The magazine, distributed free to both organized communities and individuals, is devoted entirely to Jewish thought and is one of the expressions of our community's cultural creativity. It is supported financially by ARI and a group of people and institutions (including WUPJ, which provides approximately 6% of its budget through support by the

World Zionist Organization) that share the ideal of spreading religious and contemporary Brazilian Jewish culture. The full content of Devarim (in Portuguese) can be accessed online at <http://www.docpro.com.br/devarim/>.



COMMUNICATIONS

New Website

The WUPJ-Latin America updated the website, seeking to broaden the information available, with an area for news, the relationship of affiliated institutions and texts which transmit our values about Progressive Judaism. The e-mail address remains www.wupj.latinamerica.org and the content is available in Portuguese, Spanish and English.



Newsletters

A regional monthly electronic newsletter has been going out regularly to approximately 12,000 subscribers around the world. A regional website is being rebuilt to promote Progressive Judaism and all World Union activities. Both the website and newsletter are translated into three languages: Portuguese, Spanish and English. Please visit at <http://wupj-latinamerica.org> or email contato@wupj-latinamerica.org to subscribe to the newsletter.



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