



Annual Report

for the August 2007 – June 2008

Academic Year

Annual Financial Report

for the year 2007

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Introduction

It is with a sense of legitimate pride that we present our fifth annual report of the Robert A. Levisson Foundation for the August 2007 – June 2008 academic year together with the annual financial report for the year 2007.

Legitimate pride? Because we have been making demands on your confidence for the past five years. Your confidence that we truly could set up a programme of education whose level would equal that of the other progressive rabbinical training institutions across the world. Now, with one educational cycle completed, we can advise you that international recognition has indeed been awarded to the semicha, the certificate of rabbinic competence, that our Institute is to confer. This report carries further details.

Another reason for legitimate pride: because we see as the crowning finish to our work the presence of so many leading personalities drawn from our global Liberal Jewish community at the semicha award ceremony on 27 August. Attendees currently expected include the Principal and the Vice-Principal of the Leo Baeck College in London, together with an official representative of the President of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the Chairman of the Abraham Geiger Kolleg in Berlin, the President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and representatives of the Executive of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. The Dutch Minister of Justice has also indicated his intention to attend, as have some Mayors and Representatives from the major Dutch Churches and the Muslim Community and major Dutch Jewish organisations.

And a further reason for legitimate pride: for we hope that you, who have provided us with moral and financial support over the years, will attend as well. Our hope is that you will continue to support us over the years to come, aiding the three promising students who are currently half way through their studies and those students who, we hope, will follow in their footsteps.

Legitimate pride again for we completed this year the first part of our two year cantorial course for *shelichay tzibbur* who will serve our the congregations in the Netherlands.

And besides... but first go through the report at your leisure and pick out what takes your fancy. We appreciate your feedback and would be happy to give you more information in answer to your questions.



Robert A. Levisson was one of the outstanding Liberal Jewish leaders in The Netherlands and a leading spokesman for the State of Israel. He died in December 2001.

Yehi zichro baruch - יהי זכרו ברוך -

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1. The 2007-2008 Academic Year

We can look back on the academic year we have now completed with satisfaction. Both the fifth and the third year students performed well across the main lines of their obligatory modules. The backlog run up by our third year students will be made up before the start of the new academic year.

Academic Study Programme

This year we cut by half the number of conventional teaching hours for the **fifth year students** so as to give them time to complete their dissertations under the appropriate supervision. No lectures were given during a three month period; but it was none the less possible to complete in satisfactory fashion the prescribed course of study in the remaining period. The Institute's website (www.levisson.nl/studieprogramma_2003-2008) provides full details of this programme.

Appendix 2 features a listing of the theses and the supervisors involved.

Classical rabbinical texts formed the cornerstone of the academic part of the **third year course**, with an emphasis on acquiring greater skills in both Hebrew and Aramaic. Unfortunately this has proven insufficient to permit them to proceed at the level required that will allow them to tackle independent study of texts in these languages. Following mutual consultations, it was agreed to schedule an additional period that would be devoted more or less exclusively to intensive familiarisation with Hebrew and Aramaic. Dr Martin Baasten of Leiden University (who has earlier given a course on *Parshanut* to first group of students) was selected to lecture on the subject. As soon as that the students have attained the required level the regular programme will resume.

We should also report that these students made good progress in all other areas, performing at a level that is more than satisfactory.

The Professional Training

The fifth year practical training consisted primarily of independent periods of “on the job” work experience that these students underwent with various congregations. These sessions are not limited to running synagogue services, Bar and Bat Mitzvah and funerals and performing other ceremonies in the Jewish life cycle. They extend to participating in the work of the Rabbinical Assembly, attending its meetings and discussions and participating in sittings of the Beth Din, leading adult education courses and to perform pastoral work (personal talks with members of the congregation and providing other forms of assistance).

The rabbis of the various congregations also initiated the **fifth year students** into the finer points of rabbinic policy practiced by the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism.

Furthermore the students continued working on their personal development under the guidance of a professional Jewish **supervisor**.

With a view to better understanding how they were performing, two review meetings were held with those in the various congregations who were mentoring the students during these on the job work experience sessions. A list of penetrating questions drawn up in advance served as the template for these reviews, generating information that proved to be helpful further along the mentoring process. The findings had its influence in the coaching of the students and will remain so in the course of their first years after completing their studies when, as has been agreed, the mentoring is to be continued.

The **third year students** continued to find the time left over for their work experience sessions something of a challenge. Clary Rooda has been accumulating substantial experience assisting the rabbi of Beit Ha'Chidush, David Snuijf mainly took on the role of observer in The Hague and Joram Rookmaaker was active on occasions in Rotterdam.

The previous year's model was retained with the **Spiritual Care** module being given in the form of a supervised study to be completed by a presentation.

Given the exceptional character that will mark the upcoming period we shall take a fresh look at when and to what degree they can really start their active on the job work experience sessions.

The **third year students** continued working on their Portfolio Practice which has now become the well-accepted method allowing students to keep track of their practical experience both within and outside of their formal on the job work experience sessions.



As part of the course completion requirements the **fifth year students** finished their Portfolio for presentation to the Examination Committee. This showed that the Portfolios satisfies the requirements and that they provide a well-rounded picture of the individual and his or her personal development over the past years of study. The Portfolio has become an important component in the final assessment of the non-academic study results.

Dr. Ite Rümke was responsible for coaching the process.

Dr. Ite Rümke

Inauguration of the Academic Year

6 September 2007 saw the inauguration of the 2007-2008 Academic Year with a lecture delivered by the Chair of our Academic Committee, Professor Irene Zwiep. Entitled "... *Umetalmidai yoter mikulan (BT Ta'anit 7a), 5 years of the Levisson Institute*". A crowded audience had gathered in the community hall of the since demolished Amsterdam Liberal Jewish Synagogue to listen to a serious, yet witty, lecture about the challenges of training rabbis for today's world. The inaugural lecture threw the Levisson students some delightful bouquets and can be read on the website at <http://www.levisson.nl/content/view/281/323>. Recommended reading!



Prof. Irene Zwiep

Jewish Scholarship Week

Following an initiative taken by the University of Amsterdam a broad range of events, open to the general public, were organized to draw attention to the many opportunities available to acquire knowledge of things Jewish in the Netherlands. Held between 2 and 5 June 2008, some 20 universities and institutions took part in the Week. The Levisson Institute filled two time slots with one lecture on Talmud and another on Modern Responsa. Attendees not only listened attentively but also took part in the discussion.

Starting the week, a report reviewing the state of Jewish studies in the Netherlands was presented to Dr S. Noorda, Chairman of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands. Our Institute was mentioned a number of times in the report.

Guest Lecturer

With the study trip to the United States and the exceptional time constraints caused by the need to finish dissertations only one guest lecturer could be scheduled this year. In the week of 18 May Dr Michael A. Meyer, Professor of Modern Jewish History at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, came to Amsterdam to give a series of lectures on his particular subject. Of outstanding quality, they furnished the coping stone for the training course. His lectures sketched a clear developmental framework for the role students will play in helping to shape the future Jewish experience after graduation.



Prof. Michael A. Meyer

Study Trip

The students undertook their only study trip in December 2007. Personal circumstances meant that, in the end, only two of the fifth year students could accompany the three third year students to the Biennial, the major conference of the US-based Union for Reform Judaism held every two years. For more about this conference, held in San Diego (CA), see <http://biennial.urj.org>.



The purpose of the visit was to give students a feeling for the issues currently of significance to the Jewish community in the US and for them to gain a hands-on impression of the strength of the US Reform Movement. Bringing together 6000 leaders from 1000 US Reform communities across the United States for study and conference sessions about the Movement's direction, the conference left a profound impression on our students. A good half day was needed to get to grips only with what was on offer in the cavernous exhibition hall: a huge mix of publications and the like, covering study materials, synagogue architecture and appurtenances, Jewish art, computer programmes and DNA testing of a future spouses to avoid a genetic predisposition to disease.

The picture was one of a scale of resources utterly unimaginable in the Netherlands.



The visit also sparked a great deal of thought about what we are doing in the Netherlands and how things might be done differently. Though much was unattractive in our eyes the total impression was extraordinarily inspiring. The next Biennial is scheduled in November 2009 in Toronto, Canada. All those interested in taking on a leading position in a Jewish community are definitely well advised to attend!

Relocation of the Library

November 2007 saw the Amsterdam Liberal Jewish Community – and by extension, the Institute - leave its old building on the Jacob Soetendorpstraat to move two miles “down the road” to a temporary location on Stadionweg 267-269. Since then part of the Library’s collection has been housed in premises located on the Synagogue’s inner courtyard. Most of our lectures are given there. The reference section not in general use has been safely stored in premises some 30 kilometres from Amsterdam, together with works owned by the Amsterdam Liberal Jewish Community.

As had been expected, work on the catalogue has suffered to a degree from the move. More delays are inevitable given the need to retrieve and return the books from and to storage. Nevertheless we are operating on the assumption that the important project of identifying and cataloguing the works of the three libraries will be completed before the Amsterdam Liberal Jewish Community moves into its new, and definitive, premises.

In the course of this year the Library received bequests from the estate of Andreas (Ronnie) Dessaur z.l. (Amsterdam) and Joop Boas z.l. (Rotterdam). These important additions have been included both in the collection and the catalogue both of which also include that section of the Library we received last year from the estate of Bob (Robert A.) Levisson z.l. whose name our Institute bears.

Graduation procedure for the senior students

The major project of the past academic year was that of drawing up the protocol, procedure and criteria defining the graduation requirements for fifth year students, a task to which both the Academic Committee and the Professional preparation (pastoral and spiritual care) Sub-Committee devoted great attention. It was decided to appoint two Examination Committees, one for academic disciplines and the other for professional (vocational) training. A further Committee was set up to subject the students to rigorous review of their dissertations.



Rabbi Prof. Marc Saperstein

Rabbi Prof. Marc Saperstein, Principal of the Leo Baeck College in London, agreed to sit on this last Committee as External Examiner.

Appendix 1 features the protocol, the details of the procedure and the composition of the examination committees.

See also below for details about the international recognition of our Institute's semicha.

The students completed the academic section of their studies with more or less complete success. At the time of writing two students have still to hand in two or three papers before the semicha can be definitively granted.

They have all complied satisfactorily with all the professional training requirements, as appears from an investigation into the results of the Competences and the Portfolio as well as from the individual discussions with the Examination Committee. In his report on the students' defence of their dissertations, Rabbi Prof. Saperstein noted: "all of the candidates for Ordination impressed me in their ability to handle themselves in a context that would not be easy even for a professional academic, and in a language that is not their native tongue. (...) I very much enjoyed the opportunity to participate in this process."



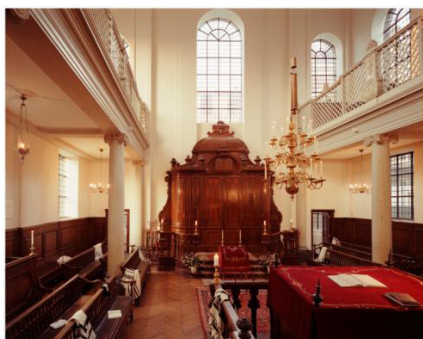
Defence of the dissertations:

The Examination Commission from left to right around the table:

drs. Carolyn Levisson, Prof. Irene Zwiép, Rabbi Prof. Marc Saperstein, Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp, Prof. Reinier Munk, Dr. Ite Rümke, the student, mr. Ernst Numann.

Not in photograph: Rabbis Menno ten Brink and David Lilienthal.

Semicha Award Ceremony



A small Committee has been set up to cover the arrangements for the graduation ceremony. This will be held on 27 August 2008 in the Synagogue of the Liberal Jewish Community in The Hague.

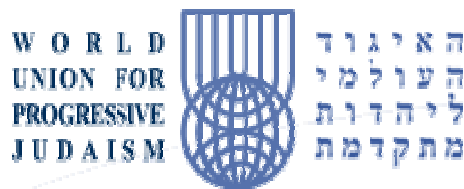
Unfortunately space considerations have limited the number of invitations we were able to send. Those invited include students, their friends and family, members of the Institute's Board, Committees and its Lecturers, Friends of the Institute and Representatives of Foundations that provided the Institute with financial assistance, Representatives

from the Dutch Government, Israel, Churches and Muslim Organisations. The Presidents or their Representatives from similar institutes of learning outside the Netherlands will also attend as will the President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and Representatives from the World Union (See introduction).

We would have preferred the ceremony to be open to all the Liberal Jewish Communities in the Netherlands. In order to provide a degree of openness the ceremony will be broadcast live through a streaming live video link on the Internet. A DVD recording of the ceremony will be available after the event.

International recognition

Since the founding of the Institute we were often asked about the international status of the rabbis we were to graduate. Our answer was that it was difficult to ask for recognition before the first group was graduated so permitting inspection of the end result.



Autumn 2007 witnessed a considerable degree of confusion and unrest when the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) published a document outlining guidelines for congregations wishing to appoint rabbis. The list of recognised training institutions omitted the Levisson Institute, an omission that at the time was correct in so far that we had yet to apply for recognition.

Spring 2008 saw the start of the procedure requesting recognition from the WUPJ's Rabbinic Review Committee. Our programme was minutely examined, the quality of our lecturers reviewed, feedback from the congregations was analysed and a Committee member came to Amsterdam to interview the students. The final assessment is that our training programme is indeed of a level comparable to that of other recognised institutes. As a result, the semicha we are awarding in August 2008 will enjoy international approval.



During the previous Academic Year the dean was in contact with the board of the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis) about the admission of Levisson rabbis to this major professional organisation which, in practice, enjoys world-wide reach. The CCAR advised its intention of carrying the necessary investigation in the course of 2008. This process has been delayed, since the CCAR still needs to carefully complete their new recognition procedure that has to be coupled to the newly defined clear criteria that contemporary standards require.

The board of the CCAR has some time ago set in motion the arrangements designed to formulate the procedure and the criteria. The second item in Appendix 3 features the letter from President of the CCAR explaining this delay. That letter expressly invites the new rabbis to apply for CCAR membership. We have reason to believe that these applications will be approved, especially in the light of the recognition the World Union Rabbinic Review Committee recently granted. We still need to see to what extent that recognition can serve as a substitute for a CCAR procedure but we expect the next few months to provide an answer.

Cantorial training (*shelichay tsibbur*)

Our annual report for the Academic Year 2006-2007 (available on our website) carried an extensive report detailing the origins and set-up of this, the Institute's second training course. The first year of the training has been completed. Sad to say, two of the 18 students dropped out as they were unable to fulfil the requirements set.

In line with its design, the programme is given at two levels: for advanced students with experience and for students lacking experience. In spring 2008 these students commenced their on the job training with Dutch congregations acting as cantor for Sabbath services.

Prof. Eli (Eliyahu) Schleifer, who chairs the Cantorial Training Department at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, is the course's principal lecturer. He has been present each weekend and will be making the same valuable contribution over the next year. One of the lecturers at London's Leo Baeck College is also taking part as a student in order to have the opportunity of studying under Prof. Schleifer. She is also making a substantive contribution to the lecture segment of the course.



The Institute's website features the complete programme and a list of the students.

Unfortunately, in December Maror informed us it did not wish to contribute to the costs of the second year of training. The reason given was that we had already provided training for 18 cantors and that it seemed superfluous to proceed immediately to train an additional 18



people. Although we responded by advising that a misunderstanding must have arisen as it had been clear from the start that this was to be a two year course and that the people of the first year are the same as those in the second year, Maror's board has provisionally stuck to its judgment. In January 2008 we filed for a review and at the end of March a hearing took place at which we further stated our case. At the time of writing we are still waiting for a response to our request for review.

The Friends

The Friends of the Foundation and of the Institute give us both the moral and the financial support that is indispensable for the work we undertake to achieve our objective, that of training competent religious and lay leaders to serve the next generation of the Jewish community in the Netherlands. We are most grateful to them.

Most Friends made five year undertakings, a period of time that corresponds to the training period for the each group of students.

The original five year period has now expired for our first group of Friends and over the coming years the same will be the case regarding Friends who made their commitments later. We have begun to approach these Friends with a request to renew their undertakings, so that the training for second group of students can also be assured. The response has been unanimously positive as of now, a reaction we find particularly encouraging.

Over the years to come we would like to extend the circle of Friends, especially outside Amsterdam. This will be all the more necessary because Maror has advised us that they intend to wind down the amount of funding they provide for the rabbinic training over an unspecified period of time. While this has yet to be finalised, we are expecting that it may mean that, over time, this source of funding will dry up so that we will need to find a way of replacing the missing financing.

Maror nevertheless made a grant for both 2007 and for 2008 for which we are most grateful. These grants testify to Maror's belief that the Institute's work is of great importance for the Dutch Jewish Community. Many thanks are also due to the Levi Lassen Foundation that has made a fresh undertaking covering the next three years, and to the Makaria Foundation which has also supported us from the very beginning. Their commitment also terminates in 2008; we have applied for a continuation grant for at least the coming three years.

We also wish to thank the Harry Philips Fund, not only for their annual donations, but also for acting as main financier for the semicha award ceremony scheduled for 27 August 2008. Their funding will allow us to organise a worthy ceremony. We have received other contributions for this "historic" occasion from the Nettie van Zwanenberg Foundation and from the Stichting Maatschappij tot Nut der Israëlieten in the Netherlands, as well as from others who prefer to remain anonymous. We are very grateful for all these donations.

Reappointment of Board Members

The Executive Board of the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism appoints the members of the Board of the Foundation. All board members currently in office have recently been reappointed for a new term of service.

*The Board: from left to right:
Wilma Stein, Leo Frijda, Henk Wagenfeld,
Stephen Kahn and Marja Hené.*



Plans for 2008-2009

The section above noted that there will be a hiatus in the regular programme for the second group of students who start their fourth year of study. These students will first pursue an intensive course extending their skill and knowledge of classical and modern Hebrew before resuming further studies on the programme.

The Cantorial training will follow the planned arrangements with, once again, four study week-ends during the coming year. If finances allow, some extra single days of study will be added to the programme after June 2009.

The Institute also intends to investigate options for putting in place the planned teacher training program beginning September 2009. We shall also examine the design and shape of training that may be appropriate to members of boards and committees serving Jewish communities and organisations.

Research for a book about Dutch Jewry and Progressive Judaism

Research for the Jubilee volume (“*In de Tenten van Jacob...*”) of the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism revealed the existence of a great deal more material than had been expected. This prompted a request to the author of the first book, the historian Chaya Brasz to work on a history of nineteenth and twentieth century developments in Dutch Jewish life, both religious and otherwise.

Seeking the most comprehensive scope possible, the work will adhere to modern standards of historiography. The Hebrew Union College Press has expressed its willingness to publish the book and bear the costs. Maror has undertaken to make a restricted grant for the work and Drs. Brasz has received a scholarship from the American Jewish Archives to undertake the necessary research there.

Unfortunately financing for the project still requires an additional € 30,000. Efforts are under way to find this sum so that the project can start.

2. Finances

2007 annual accounts

The annual accounts for 2007 have been drawn up by JAN Accountants of Landsmeer. The details featured below are designed to serve as a summary. Those wishing to receive a complete copy of the accounts (which are only available in Dutch) are kindly requested to advise the Foundation.

Balance as at 31 December 2007

Assets		Liabilities	
Accounts receivable/prepayments	€ 3,131	Founding capital	€ 63,836
Cash	€ 317,388	Appropriated reserves	€ 155,651
		Advance receipts	€ 92,113
		Debts / deferrals	€ 8,918
<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 320,518</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 320,518</i>

Notes

The anomaly in the assets total is only due to a rounding difference that unfortunately persists in the annual accounts. After rounding all three figures are correct.

The appropriated reserves fall into five funds:

Students' fund	€ 25,000
Israel seminar fund	€ 15,000
Scholarly research fund	€ 10,000
Three libraries' accessibility fund	€ 14,869
Cantorial training	€ 90,782

The Students' fund (€ 25,000) is designed to provide an allowance for costs directly linked to their studies for those students whose personal financial situation renders that necessary. The first sums making up this fund were collected when the Dean retired as Rabbi of the Amsterdam Liberal Jewish Community. The fund appears to cater to a growing need. In 2007 allowances in the amount of € 9,521 were granted. An amount of € 8,214 has been added to the fund.

The Israel seminar fund (€ 15,000) was set up in 2005 so as to facilitate the organisation of regular seminars in Israel without drawing on the regular budget.

An amount of € 10,000 has been reserved for scholarly, including social science, research primarily outside the Netherlands.

In 2007 the work of cataloguing and rendering accessible the libraries of the LJG Amsterdam, the Yiddish Foundation and the Levisson Foundation began. A cataloguing specialist has been appointed for the purpose. A Maror grant was received for 2007.

Although LJG Amsterdam filed the request with Maror on behalf of the three legal entities, the Levisson Foundation manages these funds. A separate bank account has been opened for the monies designated for cataloguing and accessibility.

The amounts paid into this bank account have also been posted to the Appropriations Reserve, resulting in a corresponding debt incurred by the LJG Amsterdam for an identical value. An amount of € 5,000 had already been reserved by Levisson in 2006. Receipts for 2007 (€ 26,323) which included the Maror instalment, therefore came to € 31,323. After deduction of expenditure in 2007 (€ 16,454) the remaining amount thus stands at € 14,869.

The two year cantorial training programme began on 1 August 2007. A separate budget was set up for the purpose. Its timing does not coincide with the calendar year. Partly with a view to enhancing transparency, the decision has been taken to administer the revenues and expenses of this training separately as an appropriations reserve for which a separate bank account has been opened. The Board is examining the desirability of a financial year that coincides with the Academic Year. This requires some preparation and amendments to the Institute's Articles, such that these arrangements can only first take effect in 2009. An appendix to the annual financial report features expenditure and receipts relative to budget (for two years). A summary follows below.

The level of advance receipts appears relatively high. This is a function of the lack of coincidence between the financial and academic years and the (fortunate) circumstance that those granting funds and several Friends paid part of their contributions in advance.

Profit and Loss Account for 2007

Receipts		Expenditure	
Friends and other Donations	€ 44,234	Dean / Administrative Support	€ 38,769
Grants	€ 68,555	Expenses for Dean/Boards/ Advisory Bodies	€ 7,080
Tuition fees	€ 16,027	Lecturers and courses	€ 51,893
Interest	€ 6,982	Seminars	€ 12,081
		Books and course materials	€ 4,560
		Communication	€ 5,580
		Payment into Students' fund	€ 8,214
		Accountant/salary administration	€ 6,646
		Miscellaneous	€ 7,318
<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 135,798</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 145,562</i>

There is a negative balance on the profit and loss account of € 9,764.

Notes

The negative balance specifically results from a claim (€ 8,845) by Maror relating to the year 2006 that was set off in 2007 against an instalment of € 20,000 (which instalment amounted to 80% of the grant [€ 25,000] allocated for 2007).

Maror's claim arose from the positive balance posted in 2006 (€ 26,213). When the definitive Maror grant account was drawn up this was allocated in part to the grant made by Maror for the year 2006. It is expected that the reverse will be the case for 2007 and we can thus look forward to receiving an amount in addition to the 80% instalment.

The charges totalling € 145,562 correspond more or less to the budget drawn up for 2007 (€ 146,900). Only the charges for the dean/ administrative support and miscellaneous / unforeseen expenses came out significantly above their respective budgets (€ 35,000 and € 5,300). In the case of the first, the Dean also gave some lessons for which he received a fee which had to be incorporated into his salary. Moreover, an administrative assistant was appointed in the course of 2007. Relocation charges caused the costs in the second item to exceed budget.

Funds and foundations devoted to supporting educational establishments do not exist in the Netherlands. Even a professional fundraiser was unable to identify any such sources for funds. Education is seen as a responsibility of government. Its restricted scale and target group disqualify an institute such as ours from direct government support.

We nevertheless consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have found, once again, support in 2007 from Maror, from the Levi Lassen Foundation and from the Makaria Foundation, the Harry Philips Fund, the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism and some Liberal Jewish congregations, some private funds and the Friends of our Institute. We are extremely grateful to all of them for their help. This has allowed us to lay a sound financial basis for our Institute. It is unclear whether this will continue to be the case in the future and we are looking for more Friends who are willing to support us over a longer period by means of a fixed annual contribution. We regularly provide our Friends with updated information about the course of events and they are from time to time invited to attend events, many of which are substantive sessions with speakers from within the Netherlands or abroad.

2008 budget (rabbinical training)

Expenditure

Salary charges	€ 44,000
Communication	€ 3,500
Office accommodation and teaching premises	€ 4,500
Expenses for Dean/Boards/Advisory Bodies	€ 4,000
Accountant / salary records / insurances	€ 8,000
Lecturers and courses	€ 70,000
Books and course materials	€ 3,000
Seminars and events abroad	€ 10,000
Miscellaneous and unforeseen	€ 2,500
<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 149,500</i>

Receipts

Maror contribution	€ 21,500*
Levi Lassen grant	€ 25,000
Makaria grant	€ 25,000
Donations from private individuals	€ 50,000
Other contributions	€ 8,000
Students' tuition fees (and from course attendees)	€ 15,000
Interest	€ 5,000
<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 149,500</i>

* Maror has since granted an amount of € 17,500.

Cantorial training

The cantorial training program began on 1 August 2007 and lasts for two years. Given that the numbers of those who registered and were admitted to the course exceed our forecast, a supplementary budget has been drawn up.

The following budget items cover the two years the training lasts.

Dean and coordinator	€ 23,000
Lecturers	€ 28,150
Course materials	€ 1,600
Costs of the weekends	€ 58,480
Coordinator's miscellaneous expenses	€ 2,400
Other costs	€ 1,400
<i>Total</i>	<i>€ 115,030</i>

Expenditure in the value of € 27,578 was already incurred in 2007 for this programme.

For the first year of the programme Maror granted us a sum not to exceed € 26,025 of which we have received an 80% instalment. Maror has not continued the grant for the second year (for the reason, which we believe to be erroneous, that the training was supposed to last only one year, for which a grant was made). We have filed for a review of Maror's decision and await the outcome.

Come what may, to a large extent we shall be able to draw on other means to finance this training. We have succeeded in attracting funds totalling € 118,360 including the Maror contribution for the first year and the contributions made by the students. These funds come from private funds and funds administered by Liberal Jewish Congregations. Hence it is clear that the financing also of the second year of the cantorial program is guaranteed.

Appendix 1:

Protocol Completion of Rabbinic Study

A. Rabbinic Thesis

1. The student will select a topic and – in consultation with the Dean and the agreement of the Academic Committee – a first supervisor and a second supervisor according to the subject.
The first supervisor must be academically recognized, for example by a fixed appointment at a recognized university or by having emeritus status. The second supervisor must be an expert in the subject, but need not necessarily have a doctorate.
2. In consultation with the second supervisor and approval of the first supervisor the subject is defined.
3. The student sets up a study plan, in which he/she explains his/her approach and attaches a bibliography of primary sources as well as a basic list of secondary literature. At the same time a schedule for submission of the various chapters is established.
4. The thesis should have a length of 10,000-20,000 words (20 ECTS) and should demonstrate the student's ability to handle primary texts in Hebrew.
After approval of the plan and the schedule by the first supervisor the student can begin work.
5. The first supervisor reads each submitted chapter and comments on it.
(The chapters must therefore be submitted separately one by one.)
6. When writing is completed the student submits the whole thesis for approval.
7. Once the thesis has been approved by the first supervisor, it is passed to the second supervisor, who has 4 weeks to render judgment.
8. The second supervisor can request improvements between weeks 4 and 6 to be incorporated in the final and completed version of the thesis.
9. The integrated thesis must be submitted in its definitive version in four copies to the Examination Committee Academic Subjects (see B) at the latest in week 8 after submission of the first complete version.
10. The first supervisor suggests a suitable grade for the thesis.
The second supervisor may or may not agree with the suggestion.
If both supervisors agree on the grade, this is communicated to the Examination Committee Academic Subjects at the same time as the definite version of the thesis is submitted.

This committee can accept the suggestion or make another proposal, accompanied by the arguments therefore. If no agreement is reached, the Academic Committee will decide.

If the supervisors cannot agree on the mark, they communicate this to the Examination Committee Academic Subjects at the same time as the definite version of the thesis is submitted, after which this committee will decide on the mark.

11. There are fixed criteria for evaluating the thesis and deciding on the mark for it.
The supervisors of all the students, possibly together with the Examination Committee Academic Subjects, should consult together in order to arrive at a uniform value of the marks for the different theses.
12. The criteria include amongst others the following elements:
 - the degree of difficulty of the materials researched
 - the originality and complexity of the research question posed
 - the consistency of the argumentation
 - the consistency of the methodology
 - how well the student has followed instructions and digested criticism
 - the measure of independence in doing the research and in the writing
 - the measure in which the student has mastered the languages necessary for the research
 - the measure in which the student has critically read and handled secondary sources about the subject.
13. The thesis will then, some time later, be discussed as part of a concluding conversation of the complete training with both Examination Committees (see B, C and Addendum 1). This conversation will take place in public unless the Academic Committee decides otherwise following a request by the student.
The members of the commission and the date of the conversation will be decided by the Academic Committee and notified in a timely manner to the student.
14. The thesis may be illustrated if this serves a real function but not merely as decoration, even on the title page.
15. The title page of the thesis must include the name of the student, the title and the date, as well as the names of the first and the second supervisor.
16. Each thesis must contain a list of contents and a bibliography at the end in a form approved by the supervisor.
17. Footnotes must be in accordance with an academically approved method which has been accepted by the first supervisor.

B. Examination Academic Subjects

1. In its meeting on June 4th 2007 the Academic Committee decided that no special final examination would be necessary for the academic subjects in this training (this in agreement with general practice of the Dutch universities). It will be sufficient a) to review and evaluate the results of the individual modules and examinations as reported by the lecturers, and b) to review and evaluate the content of the subjects and modules studied, again as reported by the lecturers and the dean. The level should, as a whole, correspond to the definitions in the Dublin Descriptors.
2. The Academic Committee shall appoint an Examination Committee AS, consisting of at least three members, to review and evaluate the results of the study as far as the academic subjects are concerned. This committee should be appointed within the first two months of the calendar year in which the training will be completed.
3. The Examination Committee AS reviews and evaluates the documentation specified in 1. above. If the committee so wishes it can consult with the dean and/or the respective lecturers and/or the student concerned. The committee has two month time to complete its work.
4. The Examination Committee AS will report its findings to the Academic Committee no later than May 1st in the calendar year in which the training will be completed. The Academic Committee can accept the results and declare that they suffice or that they do not suffice for the completion of the training.
De Academic Committee may also choose to investigate the matter further. It may do so in any way it chooses.
The Academic Committee should have the final evaluation of the academic results of each student individually ready and communicated to the dean and the Board no later than June 1st.

C. Examination Vocational Training

1. The Academic Committee shall appoint an Examination Committee VT, consisting of at least three members plus a chair for the meetings, to review and evaluate the results of the study as far as the vocational subjects are concerned. This committee should be appointed within the first two months of the calendar year in which the training will be completed.
2. The Examination Committee VT reviews and evaluates the documentation relating to the vocational subjects studied. These are:
 - a. Results of the studies in the area of interpersonal communication as reported by the lecturers and trainers;
 - b. Results of the studies as reported by the lecturers of the educational programs in the areas of pastoral work, life cycles/passages and exploration of the practical work in care and social services;
 - c. Reports of the feedback from the internships, both from the congregations and from the conversations held by the members of the subcommittee VT with the people concerned and with the mentoring Rabbis.
 - d. Reports from the individual supervisors, that are contain no more than the information if the student has been co-operative and put in the effort required.

The reports about the internships should be submitted to the Examination Committee VT no later than April 30th in the calendar year in which the training will be completed. The committee then has one month time to evaluate the information and to formulate its judgment.

3. The student shall submit a report to the Examination Committee VT no later than April 30th. The content of the report should consist of the exhibits that the student chooses to present to the committee from the materials in the Portfolio Rabbinic Practice to show that he/she has acquired and digested a sufficient amount of the competences from all areas of competence in the document “Competences as required by the Rabbinic training of the Levisson Institute”.
For this purpose the student may if he/she so wishes use the Competence meter and the accompanying list of Levels of Competence (Addendum 2).
When choosing the exhibits the student may consult with the Portfolio supervisor.
The Examination Committee VT shall evaluate the exhibits and decide if the results demonstrated are sufficient. Furthermore the committee shall evaluate in what measure the student has integrated the materials studied and practiced and if the integration of knowledge, insight and skills has reached a sufficient level.
4. When the student submits the report under 3. it shall be accompanied by a letter in which he/she explains:
 - a. how she/he views “being the Rabbi”;
 - b. what kind of Rabbi she/he wants to be;
 - c. how the skills needed for this office have grown over the years of the training;
 - d. what he/she has learned, and what he/she has overcome or learned not to do;
 - e. where his/her strong and weak points lie.
5. Having studied the materials under 2, 3 and 4, the Examination Committee VT shall have a conversation with the student about the whole of the material of the Vocational Training. This conversation serves to evaluate the development of the student in the light of the vocational professional competences. An extra point of attention is the manner in which the student communicates over this development with the committee. In this conversation the added chairperson for the discussion plays a vital role in making certain that everything takes place in a friendly, correct and fair manner.
6. The work of the Examination Committee VT shall be completed no later than at the end of the month of May in order that an Evaluation Advice VT can be submitted to the Academic Committee by June 1st. The Academic Committee can accept the results and declare that they suffice or that they do not suffice for the completion of the training.
De Academic Committee may also choose to investigate the matter further. It may do so in any way it chooses.
The Academic Committee should have the final evaluation of the academic results of each student individually ready and communicated to the dean and the Board no later than June 15th.
7. Objections against the evaluation or against the manner in which the conversation under 5 was conducted shall be directed to the Academic Committee. This is the case both for the student and for the Examination Committee VT

* * * * *

Addendum 1: Additional notes

Composition of Examination Committee AS

One Rabbi	-	Menno ten Brink
Chairperson Academic Committee	-	Irene Zwiep
One member Academic Committee	-	Ernst Numann
The Dean	-	David Lilienthal

Composition of Examination Committee VT

One chairperson of conversation	-	Ted Young
The chairperson of the subcommittee VT of the AC	-	Fanny Heymann
One Rabbi	-	Avraham Soetendorp
The Portfolio supervisor	-	Ite Rümke

Composition of Committee Final Conversation (see A 13)

The members of both Examination Committees AS and VT.

One additional member: prof. dr. Marc Saperstein, Principal of the Leo Baeck College
(NB. At the Final Conversation Ted Young and Fanny Heymann were replaced by respectively Reinier Munk and Carolyn Levisson)

* * * * *

Time schedule examination procedure 2008

- 14 February: The Academic Committee appoints the Examination Committee AS
The Academic Committee appoints the Examination Committee VT
The Academic Committee appoints the Committee Final Conversation
- 2 March (week 10): start evaluation results of the academic studies
if necessary request additional information
- 16 March (week 12): submit theses (1st round)
- 6 April (week 15): last feedback consultations subcommittee VT with congregations
- 29 April (week 18): all reports VT submitted
- 5 May (week 19): start evaluation of reports VT
if necessary request additional information
- 5 May (week 19): report final evaluation academic subjects submitted to AC
- 11 May (week 20): submit definitive version thesis to the Examination Committee AS.
- 15 May (week 20): final evaluation reports VT completed
- 25 May (week 22): final conversations Examination Committee VT with the students
- 1 June (week 23): final reports VT submitted to the Academic Committee
- 11 June (week 24): final assessment study results by the Academic Committee
- 17 June (week 25): Final Conversation over the training and the Rabbinic Thesis, to be followed by the announcement of the complete assessment of the students.

Wednesday 27 August, 15.00 in LJG Den Haag: Semicha ceremony

Addendum 2: Levels to be used for evaluating the competences

- Level 0 = The student has *not* mastered the competence in any way.
The student does not know the matter concerned and goes to work without a plan and without direction
- Level 1 = The student has mastered the competence at an *operational* level.
He/she works according to fixed rules, as instructed by others. He has the necessary knowledge to do the work and he is able to work systematically according to the rules.
- Level 2 = The student has mastered the competence in a *singular* way on a *complex operational* level.
The student chooses him/herself the way to go about the task at hand and acts at his/her own initiative. He/she is able to make a personal contribution and sees when a task needs doing.
For limited tasks he/she can give him/herself the necessary instructions, whereby he/she has the necessary knowledge and acts in a methodical manner.
- Level 3 = The student has mastered the competence in a *pluriform* way on a *complex operational* level.
The student works on the basis of his/her own insight and at his/her own initiative. He/she has a good insight into the various elements and aspects of the process as a whole. He/she oversees the whole that is done in relation to the contributions of others.
- Level 4 = The student has mastered the competences at an *academic* level.
The student is able to develop the work necessary to deal with questions and/or problems that arise. He/she has a personal view of the tasks and the groups of tasks. He/she is able to comment critically on the methods and strategies used.

At **Motivation**, add the relevant reference to the documents or other material in your portfolio, that prove that you satisfy the required competence.

At **Action**, add the relevant reference to the documents or other material where the description is located of the **elements** you still have **to improve on**.

THE METER OF COMPETENCES

Competence	Table of Scores	Motivation & Action
A.1.1	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.1.2	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.2.1	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.2.2	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.2.3	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.2.4	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.2.5	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.3.1	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.3.2	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	
A.3.3	Level 4 <input type="radio"/> Level 3 <input type="radio"/> Level 2 <input type="radio"/> Level 1 <input type="radio"/> Level 0 <input type="radio"/>	

Report Form

How to assess the results of the Portfolio Rabbinic Practice

The Portfolio Rabbinic Practice is used when assessing the final results of the Vocational Training (VT) in the Rabbinic training program of the Levisson Institute.

In a conversation with the Examination Committee VT the student is to demonstrate

- That the various competence areas have been covered during the training;
- That the Portfolio contains material that shows this to be so
- Which level he/she has reached in the various areas (see the Competence Meter)
- From the discussion itself it should become apparent if the content corresponds to the manner in which the student communicates during the conversation, or not.

Name student
Have the various competence areas been covered?
Comments
Exhibits
Comments
The students own assessment of the various areas of competence
Comments
Correspondence between thinking, feeling and talking during the conversation
Comments
Conclusion
Particular details

Appendix 2: Theses and Supervisors

Tamarah Benima:

”Categories in language, not processes in life - Kabbala in 19th Century Germany”
(Including Adolph (Aron) Jellinek: het Bildungsideal, 19th Century Philosophy and the Kabbala.)

Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Irene E. Zwiep, University of Amsterdam

Drs. Leo Mock, University of Amsterdam

Navah-Tehila Livingstone-Shmuelit

”Reform feminist prayers in Israel - New and renewing elements in their contents and form as a further step in the development of Jewish prayer.”

(Contemporary Development in Liturgy composed by Women in Israel.)

Supervisors:

Rabbi Tamar Duvdevani, Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem

Drs. Bart T. Wallet, University of Amsterdam

Marianne van Praag

”Between Renewal and Tradition - Liberal Jewish Liturgy in the Netherlands.”

(The Development of the Liturgy in the Dutch Liberal Congregations.)

Supervisors:

Drs. F. Chaya Brasz, Jerusalem

Drs. Bart T. Wallet, University of Amsterdam

Albert Ringer

”A Persecution was Decreed - Persecution as a Rhetoric Device in the Literature of the Ge'onim and Rishonim.”

(Persecution and Oppression Used as Motivation for Changes in the Liturgy, the Siddur and the Minhag.)

Supervisors:

Drs. Leo Mock, University of Amsterdam

Prof. Dr. Wout J. van Bekkum, University of Groningen

Kine Sittig

”A certain Mathematical Problem in the Calendar.”

Supervisors:

Dr. Resianne Smidt van Gelder-Fontaine, University of Amsterdam

Drs. Leo Mock, University of Amsterdam

Appendix 3: Two Communications about the Recognition of the Semicha

Below are the most important parts of the text of an e-mail informing the Institute of the decision by the Rabbinic Review Committee of the World Union for Progressive Judaism to recognise the Levisson semicha.

Where the symbols (...) are indicated certain paragraphs have been removed. These are directed personally to the dean or contain technical observations that are only of interest to the Academic Committee.

----- Message from Joel Oseran <joseran@wupj.org.il> -----

Date: Wed, 02 Jul 2008 10:46:56 +0200

Dear David,

(...) Yesterday the Executive Committee of the Rabbinic Review Committee convened a conference call to review the applications of the 5 Levisson students who are completing their studies this year. The Committee discussed in a most comprehensive fashion all aspects of the Levisson academic and vocational training components and each individual candidate's strengths and weaknesses based on all the materials you have previously sent to us, the personal interviews which Leslie Bergman conducted, and the review of the thesis defence which Rabbi Dr. Saperstein sent us.

This review process was certainly a challenge, not only for the Committee but for you and the Levisson Institute as well. (...)

The bottom line, however, is clear and positive. The Executive Committee of the RRC recommends that subject to the formal approval of the Levisson Academic Committee authorizing each student's ordination, the RRC will recognize the rabbinic status of the Levisson graduates. In other words, the RRC will recognize the rabbinic status of each of the five Levisson graduates after the Levisson Academic Committee has formally approved the ordination of each student. I would appreciate receiving from you a written confirmation indicating that the Levisson Academic Committee has formally approved ordination for each student. (...)

I would be remiss, however, if I did not end this communication with a hearty Mazal Tov to you and to all the faculty and leadership of the Levisson Institute for your historic achievement upon the ordination of this first class of students. I know this has been a labor of love, but nevertheless, it has been a labor which has exacted a tremendous toll on you, professionally and personally. You have carried it through with great leadership and determination and I applaud your efforts and accomplishments.

I shall look forward to hearing from you with the confirmation from the Academic Committee of final approval for ordination.

B'vracha,

Joel

Rabbi Joel D. Oseran
Vice President, International Development
World Union for Progressive Judaism

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

Founded in 1889



April 9, 2008
4 Nisan 5768

Rabbi David Lilienthal
Dean
Levisson Institute
in De Wolken 45
1186 BG Amstelveen
The Netherlands

Dear David:

Mazal Tov on the upcoming ordination of your first rabbinic graduates! Thank you for the kind invitation to participate. I will see if it is possible.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis is thrilled that you have students who are successfully completing your program and will be serving the Dutch Progressive Jewish Community as rabbis. The CCAR is re-evaluating the way in which it conducts evaluations of seminary programs both in the United States and in other parts of the world. Unfortunately, at this time, we cannot provide either a process or a team to evaluate the Levisson Institute. As with the graduates of other seminaries we welcome your graduates to apply to the CCAR for membership, where our Admissions Committee evaluates each applicant individually.

What you have done in the Netherlands is truly exciting. I know that you have been facing a significant shortage of trained leadership. As you shared with me, your students do not have the means to leave home and attend either Leo Baeck or Geiger.

We congratulate you on your achievement and look forward to helping your graduates become our colleagues.

L'shalom,

Rabbi Peter S. Knobel

Appendix 4: The First Congratulations on the Occasion of the Semicha



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

היברו יוניון קולג' – מכון למדעי היהדות

● CINCINNATI ● JERUSALEM ● LOS ANGELES ● NEW YORK WWW.HUC.EDU

RABBI DAVID ELLENSON, PH. D.
PRESIDENT

July 21, 2008 - 18 Tammuz 5768

Stichting Robert A. Levisson
Stadionweg 267-269
1076 NZ Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Dear Friends:

As President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, it gives me the greatest satisfaction to send you these greetings on the occasion of the first ordination ceremony of the Levisson Institute. While my schedule precludes my being with you in person, I am delighted that Rabbi Yoram Mazor will represent the College-Institute and offer our warmest greetings to you at this moment of unmitigated joy.

The significance and influence of Dutch Jewry upon the rise and course of modern Judaism has been profound. After all, it was Amsterdam that served as a bridge between the medieval and modern Jewish experiences, and the thought of Baruch Spinoza ushered in modern Jewish philosophy. The establishment of the Adat Yeshurun Synagogue in your city in March, 1797, bespoke a “cultured modern Jewish sensibility” that served as a forerunner and model for thousands of other such congregations that would be formed over the next two hundred years. It is therefore most fitting – particularly after the cruel tragedy of the Holocaust – that Amsterdam and the Netherlands should now boast of its own rabbinical training school. Indeed, I salute all those who graduate today and express my gratitude to you for the role you will play in assuring the ongoing vitality of Progressive Jewish life in the Netherlands. I also offer my colleague and friend Rabbi David Lilienthal my heartiest *yasher koach* on this great achievement on behalf of the Dutch and the world Jewish community.

Rabbi Leo Baeck, the last head of the Berlin *Hochschule*, writing in *This People Israel*, captured perfectly the meaning and challenge of this day and this event. He observed, “An inheritance cannot be fabricated, let alone forced. It can only be assumed by a freedom that has the ability to build upon it.” We are not “born into community as if by fate,” but we are now “called to the task of molding it.”

May this day of hope be one of blessing for your graduates as they receive the title of *Rav b'yisrael* and meet the tasks and challenges of molding a liberal Jewish community for the Jews whom they will come to serve as rabbis. As they assume this responsibility for the heritage and life of our people and mold the Jewish community, may the Holy One of Blessing prosper “*ma'asei yadeihem* – the works of their hands.”

In deepest respect and friendship,

Rabbi David Ellenson



The first rabbinic leaders of Dutch Progressive Judaism came from outside the country, primarily from Germany. In this respect, they were similar to the first rabbinic leaders of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam in the first decades of the 17th century. Rabbi Jacob Soetendorp was the first of the Dutch Liberal rabbis born in the country, but he was not a product of the Liberal movement. A generation later, for the first time, the Liberal Jewish community in the Netherlands began to be served by rabbis who had grown up in a Progressive Jewish environment: Rabbis Awraham Soetendorp and David Lilienthal. The Leo Baeck College is proud of the contribution it has made to Dutch Liberal Judaism by providing the training and ordination for these distinguished rabbis; this is a role it continues to play, as evident in our own recent Ordination ceremony, when Rabbi Hetty Groeneveld was ordained.

The ordination of five Dutch Liberal rabbis by an institution created in the Netherlands represents the opening of an important new chapter in Dutch Jewish history. It might be considered analogous to the ordination by Saul Levi Morteira (probably in 1624) of Menasseh ben Israel: the first Dutch rabbi educated in the Netherlands.

Well aware of the difficulties and challenges in creating a successful rabbinical programme, we have extended our arms to support the endeavours of the Levisson Institute in many ways. We are proud to be part of this historic occasion celebrated by our younger sister institution. On behalf of the entire Leo Baeck College community, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Rabbi David Lilienthal, the governors and teaching faculty of the Levisson Institute, and especially to the five talented new rabbis, trained by its rabbinic programme. May their years be successful and fulfilling, devoted to the service of God, the Jewish people, and the Dutch Progressive Jewish community.

Rabbi Professor Marc Saperstein, Principal
Rabbi Dr Michael Shire, Vice-Principal

WORLD
UNION FOR
PROGRESSIVE
JUDAISM



ה'אגוד
העולמי
ליהדות
מתקדמת

Dear Friends,

"זה היום עשה ה' נגילה ונשמחה בו"

"This is the day which the Eternal has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

Please accept our heartfelt congratulations on this very special and festive occasion when the first class of the Levisson Institute reaches ordination.

Today, this event is a tribute to the vision and determination of Rabbi David Lilienthal, his colleagues and co-workers and the leadership of the Dutch Union for Progressive Judaism. They have taken up the initiative and created a new cadre of rabbinic leadership for Liberal Judaism in the Netherlands. The future of the Jewish community in the Netherlands as a whole and the Progressive communities in particular, is better secured today, as rabbis are essential to the creation of a strong religious and spiritual backbone in a healthy Jewish community.

Being able to train new rabbis from within the community is a sign of strength and foresight and a testimony to the vitality of your movement.

We salute you on this auspicious day. Even though we are physically remote our hearts and minds are with you as you gather for this historic *smicha*.

B'Shalom UB'vracha

Steve Bauman
Chair

Rabbi Uri Regev
President



EUROPEAN REGION

Dear Friends,

I am aware that the Dutch Liberal Jewish community has been an integral part of the European Region of the World Union for Progressive Judaism since its inception. I am also aware that after the community's near destruction in the Shoah a miracle occurred, the Movement did not die and was reborn after 1945 and has continued to grow since then. Throughout these years it has been a refuge for the survivors and their families seeking meaning after their ordeal, and it has been an inspiration to others seeking a traditional but creative and intellectually satisfying Judaism. So often I heard the cry, "if only we had more rabbis".

It was my privilege to be at Leo Baeck College with Rabbis Awraham Soetendorp and David Lilienthal, and I know that College has produced other Dutch rabbis since then. But it was always clear that a Dutch based College was need to fully answer the need. This the Levisson Institute has succeeded in doing and I congratulate the Institute, its lecturers and leaders, and especially its founder and constant guide Rabbi David Lilienthal on the graduation of five new rabbis for the Dutch Liberal movement.

May they give added strength to the congregations and the Movement they will serve and may their semicha and their rabbinate give them much satisfaction.

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein
Chairman,
European Region of the World Union for Progressive Judaism"

Dr. Jerry Hochbaum
Executive Vice President

Dear Rabbi Lilienthal,

Many thanks for inviting me to the ordination ceremony for the first class of graduates of The Levisson Instituut on August 27, 2008. I deeply regret that I will be unable to join you on this auspicious occasion.

At the Memorial Foundation we take special pride in Albert Ringer, Marianne van Praag and Tamarah Benima achieving smicha. All three were participants in the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship program many years ago when we instituted the program in Europe. I remember very well their dedication and commitment to Jewish life.

It is a source of great nachas to the Memorial Foundation to see them now on the threshold of assuming religious and communal leadership in the Dutch Jewish community, two of them with the help of the Foundation's Community Services scholarships, to support their studies at your institute.

We are proud too of the close connection we established decades ago with the Dutch Reform community through our Nahum Goldmann Fellowship program. Tens of members of your Jewish community participated in Nahum Goldmann Fellowships in Europe, many of whom are now active in Dutch Jewish life.

Please extend our personal congratulations to your graduates, with our best wishes for success in their new careers.

With warm regards.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Jerry Hochbaum
Executive Vice President

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים
CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS
Founded in 1889



July 30, 2008

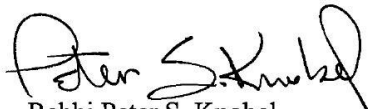
Rabbi David Lilienthal
Levisson Institute
Stadionwed 267-269
1076 NZ Amsterdam
Nederland

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, we wish you a very hearty *mazal tov* on your ordination. Today marks an important milestone in the life of the Dutch Progressive Jewish Community as the Levisson Institute ordains you as its first group of rabbis. The strengthening of progressive Judaism in Europe is vital to the future of the Jewish people. Your decision to study Torah and prepare to become rabbis places you in the midst of an exciting revival of the Jewish people in Europe in the post Shoah era.

We, your North American colleagues, are honored to be able to participate in this historic event and to welcome you as partners in pursuit of *Talmud Torah, Ahavat Yisrael* and *Tikkun Olam*.

Sincerely yours,


Rabbi Peter S. Knobel
President


Rabbi Steven A. Fox
Executive Vice President