



World Council of Conservative/Masorti Synagogues - Masorti Olami

**November, 2009 | Cheshvan, 5770**



**Berlin in pictures: past, present and future** - (from left to right) 71 years since Kristallnacht, Masorti Europe meeting at the Oranienburgerstrasse synagogue, Kabbalat Shabbat at the Masorti kindergarten, celebrating 20 years of reunification at the Brandenburg Gate

**Berlin - already 20 years since the wall came down !**



The Oranienburgerstrasse 'Neue Synagogue', location for this past weekend's shabbaton and retreat

*"I visited Berlin last weekend at a very significant time -it's 20 years since the Wall came down and 71 years since Kristallnacht. Amazingly, we are witnessing a miraculous Jewish revival among the Masorti community of Europe."--Rabbi Tzvi Graetz, Executive Director, Masorti Olami*

As the city of Berlin prepared to celebrate 20 years of reunification, representatives of Masorti Olami came together with leadership from all around Europe this past weekend for a weekend retreat and Shabbat at the Oranienburgerstrasse synagogue,celebrating Jewish renewal in Europe.

There was a tangible feeling of excitement in the city, over the reunification anniversary celebrations. This energy was mirrored amongst the representatives from the UK, France, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Hungary and Portugal as they convened in Berlin to bring news of their individual Kehillot and share ideas, resources and vision on the growth of Masorti Judaism around the region, which now has almost 30 different kehillot.

The weekend included Shabbat services at the Oranienburgerstrasse 'Neue Synagoge' in Berlin. Originally built in 1866 by the Prussian Jewish community, the synagogue was severely damaged by British bombs during air-raids in late 1943. Reconstruction and renovation began in 1988, and today this magnificent historial site once again houses a flourishing congregation, serving as the home for Berlin's Masorti kehillah.

The Shabbat program also included divrei torah from Berliner Rabbi Gesa Ederberg - key founder of the Masorti movement in Germany - along with Israeli Rabbi Michael Graetz, and UK based Rabbi Chaim Weiner - Director of Masorti Europe and the Masorti European Bet Din. In recognition of November 9th's 71st anniversary of Kristallnacht, the group participated in a



A visit to the Berlin Jewish museum by our Masorti Olami mission

workshop on Anti-Semitism in Europe, which focussed on battling Anti-Semitism in our communities and in the media.

Focussing on the tremendous development that the Masorti movement has seen in Germany, the Masorti Europe Board joined community members for Shabbat dinner and lunch, discussing local and regional progress. Key areas of expansion include the Masorti kindergarten which will grow to 5 parallel classes starting next summer, as well as the start of a new family education program based in the synagogue. Participants of a one-year program for volunteers from Europe as well as graduates from Ramah in the USA were also introduced over the weekend.

Joining Masorti Olami in Berlin this past weekend was a small delegation of Masorti Olami supporters as part of their mission to Budapest and Berlin. They visited the local sites, Jewish monuments and institutions, and met with local activists from the communities. The mission's participants were deeply moved seeing the blossoming of these communities and Masorti Olami hopes to give more supporters the chance to witness this growth by organizing another trip next year.

Masorti Olami and Masorti Europe representatives are enthusiastically preparing for the upcoming launch of MAROM Europe. MAROM Europe will serve as a network connecting the key age demographic of 18 to 30 year olds to their Jewish Heritage. The project will link local centers around Europe. Larger MAROM centers will mentor smaller centers, guiding them as they expand. MAROM Europe is creating dynamic new educational content and recruitment programs, along with a series of seminars to give MAROM Europe participants the chance to deepen their connection to their Jewish identity.

**As Jews in Berlin, and across Europe, explore their own paths in Jewish life, Masorti Kehillot are experiencing tremendous growth in interest, support and participation in their activities. The Masorti movement provides a traditional yet democratic and inclusive style of Judaism to Germany's Jewish community who are largely descendants of Holocaust survivors or immigrants from Eastern European countries and the former Soviet Union. Masorti Olami has the unique privilege of supporting the integration of this resilient community into the larger Masorti/Conservative Movement and the Jewish world-wide community.**

To read more information about all of the European Masorti communities, go to [www.masortiworld.org/molami/region2](http://www.masortiworld.org/molami/region2)

## Handing over books & tefillin to European kehillot



At a small handover ceremony at the Masorti Center in Berlin, Germany Rabbi Gesa Ederberg of Berlin received tefillin from Rabbi Chuck Simon, and Eszter Susan from Hungary received siddurim and chumashim. All of these were donated from the USA, and will go to kehillot in Germany, Hungary and Netherlands. Also pictured are Rabbi Chaim Weiner, Director of Masorti Europe and Mario Marcus, President of Masorti Germany.