

# The Reform Advocate

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THE SOCIETY FOR  
CLASSICAL  
REFORM  
JUDAISM

Renewing the Heritage  
of American Liberal Judaism  
for the 21st Century

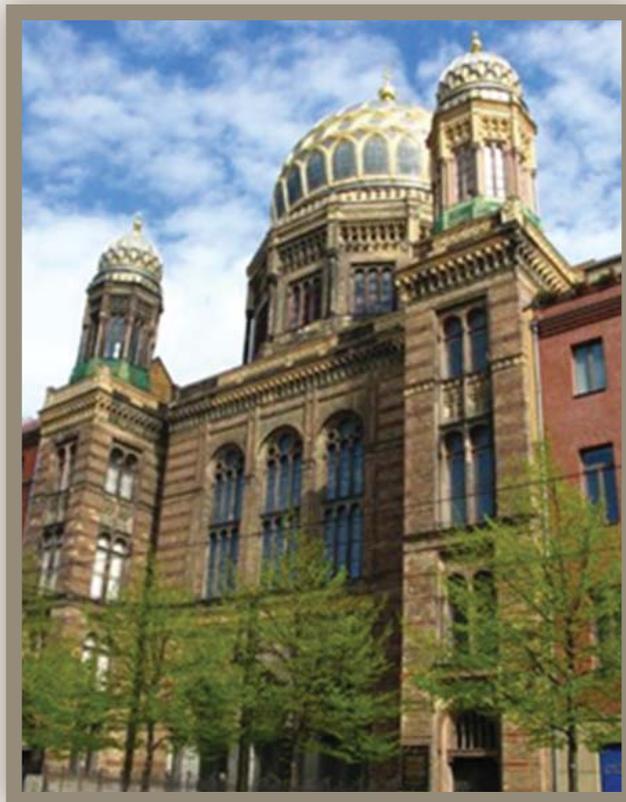


*A Special Issue*

## The 200th Anniversary of Reform Judaism The SCRJ “Roots of Reform” Pilgrimage to Germany July 14-20, 2010

The broad, progressive, humanistic ideals of the Reform Movement – embracing Judaism’s capacity for dynamic change and renewal; the freedom of individual conscience and intellect in formulating personal belief and practice; and a universal vision of peace and justice for all people as our Faith’s ultimate goal, are all timeless values as old as Judaism itself – and found creative expression in every generation of our history. The dawn of the modern era in the 19th century, and the emancipation of the

Jews of Europe from centuries of ghetto segregation and oppression, led to the critical need for new understandings of Jewish belief and observance, in response to the challenges of modern life. It was at this juncture in history that Reform Judaism emerged as a distinctive force in Jewish life and thought. The Reform Movement reclaimed those timeless core values of a universal social vision and an emphasis on the Torah’s eternal ethical mandates – rather than on ritual or ceremonial laws that had lost their meaning and relevance for modern minds and hearts.



The “New Synagogue”, Oranienburgerstrasse, Berlin.  
This magnificent temple, built in 1857, was Germany’s largest, and has recently been restored as a museum.

While many key developments and personalities were part of this process of renewal over the 19th and early 20th centuries, it was a singular event that marks the formal birth of the modern Reform Movement as a distinctive tradition of Jewish belief and practice. Israel Jacobson, who lived from 1768 to 1828 and was a prominent German Jewish community leader, educator and philanthropist, founded the first modern Jewish school in the small Westphalian town of Seesen in 1801. For the first time in modern history, Jewish

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children, both boys and – radically – girls, were offered an opportunity to receive an education in Jewish religious studies and Hebrew language- as well as a thorough grounding in modern secular studies – history, language, science and the arts. So renowned did Jacobson’s School become for its educational excellence, that it soon attracted progressive Christian families as well – and all students, whether Jewish, Catholic or Protestant, undertook the same curriculum of Jewish and general studies.

The School’s approach to religious education reflected Jacobson’s involvement with the new liberal understandings of Judaism that were emerging at that time – primarily inspired by the teachings of the famous German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn taught that Jews could remain faithful to their religious tradition and identity, while fully embracing the opportunities afforded by their newly achieved civil rights and entry into modern European culture. As these ideas coalesced into an organized religious movement, they were embraced at the Jacobson School in Seesen. The daily worship Services at the School reflected the liturgical reforms that began to spread throughout the German Jewish community – reclaiming what had actually been earlier historic traditions in Judaism in previous centuries. Among these reforms, fully rooted in Jewish law and custom dating back to Biblical times, were worship Services in both Hebrew and the vernacular, accompanied by choral and instrumental music – including the organ.

After years of planning, the School’s new chapel was built and dedicated in a ceremony that attracted wide attention on July 17, 1810. This building came to be regarded as the world’s first Reform synagogue. In a radically bold move, Jacobson called the chapel not a “synagogue”, but a *temple* – the first use of that term in Judaism since the destruction of the Biblical Sanctuary in Jerusalem by the Romans in the First Century. This was a profoundly revolutionary statement – explicitly proclaiming that Jews were no longer in exile – and that our places of worship, wherever we lived, were as sacred as the ancient shrine in Jerusalem. Among the other path-breaking innovations of the new Temple was the first installation of a full pipe organ in a synagogue in modern times. As Jacobson argued – and later pioneer Reform rabbis would eventually demonstrate with scholarly analysis of Jewish law – pipe instruments – mentioned often in the Torah and the Book of Psalms, were used regularly in the Services in the Biblical Temple in Jerusalem, predating the adoption of the organ in Christian worship by over 2000 years. The reclaiming of the beauty and majesty of the organ in the synagogue was merely a renewal of a long – if suppressed – tradition in Jewish practice.

It was this historic event that marked the formal birth of Reform Judaism – which would grow and develop as the major force in modern Jewish religious life – both in its gradual spread throughout Germany and the rest of Europe, and eventually in America. It was in America that Reform Judaism became the dominant expression of the Jewish religion by the late 19th century. This country nurtured a distinctively American expression of liberal Judaism that flourished in the free, open, democratic and pluralistic society of the United States.

Of course, it was a singular act of Providence that led hundreds of thousands of German Jews to America in the mid 19th century, in the face of continuing oppression – bringing with them the liberal Reform ideals that had been nurtured in Seesen and later in Berlin, Hamburg and other major cities. Tragically, the rich thousand year-old Jewish culture and tradition of Germany, that gave rise to the Reform Movement, was brutally destroyed in the 20th century. The great Reform temples and institutions of learning that stood prominently and proudly in every German city – including the original 1810 Jacobson Temple in Seesen – were among the first of all of the synagogues to be desecrated and destroyed by Nazi mobs on *Kristallnacht* – November 9, 1938 – ushering in the unimaginable horror of the Holocaust.

And so, it was both to commemorate this great milestone Anniversary, as well as to pay reverent tribute to the memory of this shattered legacy, that a delegation from the Society for Classical Reform Judaism undertook a special pilgrimage to our movement's birthplace this past summer. 27 SCRJ members from around the country joined 25 delegates from the European Union For Progressive Judaism, representing Reform congregations in Great Britain, Germany, and Poland – both prominent rabbis and lay leaders – to share in this special commemoration. For all of us, it proved to be an incredibly powerful and emotional experience that changed our lives forever. This journey brought us back to the places that witnessed the birth of our modern Jewish consciousness – Berlin, Hamburg, and Seesen itself. We visited the sites of the great synagogues and schools of early Reform Judaism – all now gone, and commemorated by the ubiquitous monuments, memorials and museums that are the heartbreaking remnants of this sacred heritage.

The journey brought us face to face with the stark reality of the Holocaust – in deeply personal ways that few of us, as American Jews, had ever experienced so viscerally. But our pilgrimage was also very consciously one of positive affirmation and celebration of the vibrant spiritual life that created and nurtured the modern progressive Jewish spirit. And it also brought us together in solidarity and support for the miraculous rebirth and renewal of Jewish life in Germany today. In a transformation that could hardly have been imagined even 25 years ago, Germany is today the fastest growing Jewish community in the world – now numbering over 100,000 – with over 25,000 in Berlin itself. Most of these are families who left the former Soviet Union, and were warmly welcomed to settle in Germany – a reflection of the complex dynamic of atonement and positive, supportive and even deeply reverent preoccupation with Jews and Judaism that characterize every aspect of German life today. We wanted to experience this renewal – and the rebirth of a growing Reform Movement in the country of its birth – offering a uniquely meaningful spiritual experience for those Russian Jews who had been cut-off from their faith and heritage. And yet while we were determined to celebrate the milestone anniversary, and enthusiastically witness this miraculous renewal, the reality was never far from our consciousness that in our own generation, Germany had once been home to a totally integrated and uniquely acculturated Jewish community of over 600,000. We were always painfully aware that where monuments and memorials now stand, great centers of Jewish faith and life once flourished...and that what is now displayed – however meaningfully and effectively – in elaborate museums, was once a living human presence and a dynamic spiritual force. As we came to realize very quickly...in Germany today, every *Shehecheyanu* – every prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving...every blessing...must always be followed by *Kaddish*.

This Special Issue of *The Reform Advocate*, is dedicated to this Bicentennial Anniversary of our liberal Jewish religious tradition. It includes a number of personal reflections by those who participated in this pilgrimage. We hope that some of the deep emotion, inspiration, and broader significance of this experience will help our readers to mark this great milestone.

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## A Jewish Journey to Germany

*Rabbi Howard A. Berman, Executive Director  
The Society for Classical Reform Judaism*

It is very hard to express in words the incredible depth and variety of emotions of what for me personally was a life-transforming week of exhilaration and inspiration. I have devoted my entire life to the practice, faith, teaching and advancement of the liberal spiritual ideals of Reform Judaism and its historic heritage. From my earliest teenage years, I have been enthralled with this history and tradition...and have come to know its personalities and landmark places as major influences in my spiritual and intellectual life. Despite the ambivalence we all feel toward Germany, I have revered the landmarks of our Movement's birth – particularly the great synagogues and the magnificent musical heritage – from reading and imagining what the “glory-days” were like prior to the tragic destruction of German Jewry. I truly never dreamed I would be able to actually go and stand in these places- mainly because I have felt that the pain would be too great. As we worked to make this journey a reality, I could not believe it was actually going to happen...and it did not truly dawn on me until we landed in Frankfurt on July 14. While I have traveled to the other major sites of the Holocaust – Warsaw, Krakow, and Auschwitz itself, somehow, stepping foot on German soil seemed emotionally insurmountable. I always wondered how I would feel walking along the streets of Berlin and looking into the faces of any adult old enough to have been alive at that time. I always imagined how I would be silently screaming the questions...

*“Where were you?”*

*“What were you doing...what were you thinking... as houses of God were burning on the elegant avenues of Berlin... as your friends and neighbors were being dragged from their homes?”*

When the Society began to consider ways in which we would commemorate the Bicentennial, a number of our leaders suggested what would obviously be the most effective way to mark the milestone – an actual pilgrimage to the places where Reform Judaism was born. I struggled with this – we all did – but we also all came to realize that being there – to bear witness to our own heritage and to the great legacy of Jewish life and culture that had flourished in Germany for over 1000 years before Hitler, was a moral and spiri-

tual obligation. We also felt strongly that we wanted to see for ourselves the miracle that has unfolded in Germany in the past 25 years – the rebirth of Jewish life in the place that everyone thought would never again be anymore than a graveyard for our People. We wanted to stand in solidarity with those 100,000 Jews who live in Germany today, and who are rebuilding the community and renewing the Jewish presence and contribution to German life – to see the new synagogues and schools that have literally risen out of the ashes- usually on the very sites of those that were destroyed. We felt that it was incumbent upon us to experience and affirm the inescapable reality that every Jew in the world today must confront – that in the face of the boundless grief and the unspeakable tragedy that will forever be a dark place in our hearts – that we are, in spite of it all, here... alive... in the 21st century! While we will never cease our grieving for the 6 Million lost, we must also be forever grateful that the Jewish People and Faith still live and flourish, in every corner of the world... in America, in Israel, in Europe and even in Germany itself... long after Hitler's dream of a 1000 year Third Reich is nothing more than a universally reviled memory. We felt called to reaffirm that transcendent truth of Jewish history- that just as the crushed and vanquished victims of Imperial Rome 2000 years ago, survived and went on to create a renewed Jewish life throughout the world, continuing to enrich and shape world civilization long after the great Roman Empire was reduced to ruins, so too have we triumphed over the cruelty and evil of the Nazi terror.

And so we embarked on our pilgrimage determined that it not be primarily a Holocaust memorial experience- but even more, a celebration of our distinctive Reform heritage and an affirmation of the eternal miracle of Jewish survival.

However, we came to realize, almost immediately, that it would be impossible to totally separate these dimensions of our experience – as we constantly encountered the echoes and the counterpoint that are the reality of Germany today. We arrived on July 14, and as we landed in Frankfurt, I felt a pang in my stomach... a physical sense of anxiety. This anticipatory response proved to be warranted. As the plane-

load of passengers from our flight –which included a number from our group- myself and two other rabbis – made our way through the arrivals terminal, we reached Passport Control. A stern, large framed, uniformed woman, the security officer, came forward and barked an order in a clipped voice-whose accent I am not mimicking as a stereotype, but am replicating to give you a sense of how it sounded and felt to us:

*“You vill form two lines – one vill go the right and one vill go to the left...”*

The three of us looked at each other- ashen faced – we did not have to articulate the emotions we felt, or the vicarious memories that were evoked.. of Jews hearing these same orders in another time... when, each morning, those very orders were given to the inmates of the Death Camps – determining who would live and who would die that day. If we had any illusions that we were going to keep the demons at bay, at that moment we inescapably realized that we were indeed in Germany – and that the dark shadows would be pervasive.

In the course of our visit, these echoes never ceased... and that stark counterpoint was constant. Every positive, inspiring, fascinating encounter and experience was tinged. We met so many wonderful and warm people- were welcomed with incredibly gracious hospitality by German officials, Christian religious leaders, and common people- whose knowledge of Jews and Judaism- and whose respect and even reverence was heartfelt and heartwarming. However the underlying context was always mutually understood and, at times, explicit. So many of the political and civic leaders and dignitaries we met with, openly – and sometimes tearfully – acknowledged their own sense of shame and responsibility as Germans – even young people who had no reason to feel such guilt.

Our itinerary in Berlin included all of the major sites- both of Jewish and general interest. Among the major Jewish sites, visited by every tourist to Berlin and widely regarded as major landmarks in the city, is the famed new Jewish Museum, with its spectacular, contemporary building redolent with graphic symbolism

of the complex streams of the German Jewish experience. Another landmark is the devastatingly impressive – and oppressive – Holocaust Memorial. This monument is a two acre field, next to the Brandenburg Gate that historically was the separation point between East and West Berlin and is the symbolic heart of the city. The Memorial consists of over two thousand black marble rectangular slabs and cubes of varying sizes – forming a labyrinth of walkways that draws visitors into a maze that encompasses one with a disorienting sense of confusion and anxiety. Personally, I found the Jewish Museum to be a meaningful immersion in Germany Jewish history and culture- emphasizing the thousand years of creativity and faith that preceded the Shoah. The criss-cross design of its various wings were effective symbolic reflections of the complex intersections of German and Jewish culture that were both a creative synthesis and ultimately a tragic illusion. The Holocaust Memorial on the other hand, while impressive in its sheer scale and intended symbolism, evoking a vast cemetery in the heart of Berlin – did not touch me deeply. It was perhaps the oppressive heat – in the nineties the week were there- unprecedented for Germany – that was magnified by the vast field of stone... but it was also very disconcerting to see children playing hide and seek among the slabs and office workers sunbathing on them or using them as picnic tables.

Of course one must inevitably confront the reality that these are the two major symbols of Jewish life in Berlin today – a Museum and a Memorial. Less than a century ago, the city’s Jewish landmarks were the 50 magnificent synagogues that stood proudly and prominently on the major boulevards and avenues of the city – grand, cathedral scale landmarks whose domes and towers graced the skyline. In living memory, a visitor seeking to experience Jewish Berlin would have been barely been able to see all of these great sanctuaries – and the other extensive network of community institutions that served the city’s 120,000 strong Jewish population – schools, colleges, libraries, seminaries, hospitals, orphanages and old-age homes. Today, the sites of every one of these great buildings are marked by memorial plaques or monuments. Every major street – every neighborhood – brings even the most casual, oblivious visitor face to face with any number of these countless markers...

*Here stood the Fasanenstrasse Synagogue  
– built in 1912- destroyed November 9, 1938...*

Here stood the *Prinzregenstrasse Synagogue*  
– built in 1930 – destroyed November 9, 1938...

On this site stood the *Berlin Jewish Hospital...* the *College of Jewish Studies...* the *Jewish Community Center...*

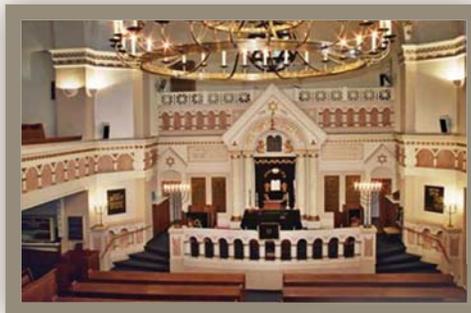
But even more powerful and incredibly poignant are the thousands of brass plaques embedded in the sidewalks of Berlin and many other German cities – on the streets in front of rows of pre-war apartment buildings or private homes...

Here lived the *Goldschmidt Family, Heinrich and Johanna, and their children, Max, Rosa and Lise. Perished at Auschwitz 1944.*

All of these plaques and markers, the Jewish Museum and the Holocaust Memorial, were paid for by the German Federal Government or the municipality of Berlin...which also subsidize the present day synagogues and institutions of the reborn community. They represent only a small dimension of the pervasive sense of national remorse and atonement- and the collective German resolve to confront its history and attempt to make some restitution. It is ironic that no other country in the world- not America, with its church-state separation, nor even Israel, expends so many resources in support of Jewish life as the Federal Republic of Germany.

For me personally, the most meaningful and inspiring – if again – poignant – of the monuments was the newly restored “New Synagogue” on Oranienburgerstrasse in the Eastern part of the city. Built in 1857 and, in testimony to the prominence and profile of Jews in Germany at that time, dedicated by the Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck, this was Berlin’s major temple. Its soaring golden ribbed domes dominated the skyline as they do once again today. Called the New Synagogue when it was built – and still referred to by that name although it was superseded by other equally grand temples in later years, its Sanctuary was the largest in Germany- seating over 3000 worshippers. Its exotic, romantic Moorish design, meant to evoke the glories of Jewish history in the ancient

*The Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue, where the 200th Anniversary Commemorative Service was held.*



*The Choir of the Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue, which performs the great music of the German Reform musical tradition.*

Middle East, became the inspiration for the design of virtually every Jewish house of worship in Europe and America for the rest of the 19th century. Like every other temple in the country, the Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue was desecrated and dynamited on *Kristallnacht*- the night of November 9, 1938. It’s burned out walls were further bombed by the Allied air raids in 1944, and for the next 50 years, it stood as a hulking, haunting ruin in East Berlin under Communist rule and after the Reunification...an entire city block boarded up as a hideous reminder. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the German Government began restoration as a museum, and the rededication took place in 1995. But this magnificent building is today a monument, not a living sanctuary. And, most significantly, it is only a façade. What was merely the entry lobby of the temple is today the museum – but 50 feet past the grand entry doors, is a glass wall-looking out onto an immense stadium sized open lot paved in stone – tracing the outline of what was the magnificent sanctuary... it is a devastating sight to behold.

And yet there was always that counterpoint... and our determination to meaningfully and affirmatively celebrate the Anniversary, encompassed many vivid encounters with the rebirth and renewal of Judaism in Berlin today.

Of the 50 major temples, and the hundred more smaller synagogues that flourished in Berlin prior to 1938, five other historic buildings in addition to Oranienburgerstrasse still stand- either having survived

damaged but structurally intact, and newly restored as active congregations today. One of these is the Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue- saved from destruction on *Kristallnacht* only because it had been built in 1914 in a courtyard in an exclusive section of the city,

surrounded by elegant apartment buildings, housing prominent German families, that the Nazis were reluctant to damage. Today, fully restored, this is one of the two active Reform Temples in the city – and it was at this impressive Art-Nouveau designed sanctuary that our group of pilgrims joined the congregation and leaders of the Berlin community in the special Commemorative Sabbath Service to mark the 200th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Jacobson Temple in Seesen and the birth of the Reform Movement.

That Service was like a time warp – reversing 85 years of tragic history- as we all felt we were back in time, experiencing the dignity and majesty of what German Reform Judaism was like before the Destruction. The elegant sanctuary, with its soaring domes and columns, mosaics and stained glass – the formal robes and four cornered hats of the rabbi and cantor – and above all, the last surviving preservation of the great organ and choir music that was the glory of the German Reform tradition – all combined to make this setting the fulfillment of what we had come to Germany to experience.

The Service itself, by American Reform standards, was rather conservative and traditionalist – as the liturgy of German Reform had been before the War: very liberal in the extensive use of German prayers, the grand organ and choir, and the progressive preaching from the pulpit; but very conservative in the use of *kippah* and *tallit*, the Hebrew chants – and surprisingly and disconcertingly for us American Reform Jews- the separation of men and women. The sermon on this special Sabbath paid tribute to the Anniversary and particularly to the creativity and visionary pioneering efforts of Israel Jacobson. The well-known Israeli Rabbi, Tovia Ben Chorin, spoke of Jacobson's remarkably broad and universal values- pathbreaking in the early 19th century. Particularly fascinating in the sermon was Rabbi Ben Chorin's embrace of this broad vision of liberal Judaism for today. Most of post-Holocaust European Jewish life today is predominantly Israel-centered and extremely Zionist oriented. This is understandably true in Germany as well. But on this Sabbath, commemorating the birth of a Judaism that sought to integrate Jewish life in every society around the world, this Israeli born rabbi surprisingly declared that this milestone Anniversary must inspire our generation of Reform Jews to build

strong communities in our own countries, and offer a meaningful progressive religious alternative that is welcoming to all. The Anniversary on July 17 was also the week of Tisha B'Av, the annual Fast Day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in the First Century. In a startling pronouncement of an explicitly Classical Reform perspective, Rabbi Ben Chorin called on all of us to remember that God's presence, and the destiny of the Jewish people, are not limited to the land of Israel, but must be nurtured everywhere...and that our sacred duty is to build God's House wherever we dwell.

This moving Service was followed by another deeply inspiring experience that reflected not the tragedy of the past but the hope and promise of the future of German Jewry. Our group was hosted for a special Shabbat afternoon study session at Abraham Geiger College- the new Reform Rabbinical Seminary that was established in 1999 as the first rabbinical seminary in Germany since the Shoah. Named for one of the pioneer rabbis and theologians of the Reform Movement, Geiger College is raising up a new generation of young men and women who are leading the renewal of Jewish life in Germany and throughout Europe. The faculty and staff of the College, led by Dr. Walter Homolka, had worked closely with the Society for Classical Reform in planning the trip, and had arranged all of the official meetings and programs with both Jewish and national government leaders to mark the Bicentennial. We had the opportunity to get to know some of its gifted students- who



Israel Jacobson (1768-1828)  
"The Father of Reform Judaism"

come from many European countries, and will return to their homelands to lead Reform synagogues throughout the Continent, as rabbis and cantors. In addition, the College is the official Department of Jewish Studies for the famed University of Potsdam, with hundreds of non-Jewish students taking courses in Jewish religion and history – reflecting the virtual hunger for knowledge about Judaism among young Germans today. In the coming year, Abraham Geiger College will move to a beautiful new home at the University campus on the outskirts of Berlin – ironically, a historic former villa of the Prussian Imperial family... which will now serve as a center of the study of Torah. Again... yet another dramatic example of the counterpoints and contradictions that symbolize Judaism in Germany today.

#### *Standing at the Birthplace...*

While it was understood that our stay in Germany would be centered in Berlin, a major highlight would be a pilgrimage to Seesen on the exact 200th Anniversary. A few days before, the City of Berlin itself held its own official commemoration of this historic milestone, with a special ceremony to dedicate a plaque on the site of Israel Jacobson's house in the city – where he moved from Seesen in 1815 – to broaden his efforts to participate in the building of the new Reform Movement. He held Berlin's first Reform Services in his home, near what is now the Brandenburg Gate. It was at that site – now a new office complex, that we gathered for this occasion with major German civic, political and religious leaders on July 16. The mayors of Berlin and Seesen spoke eloquently and with great emotion paying tribute to Jacobson's role both in German Jewish history and in the broader cultural heritage of the country. Our group from the Society for Classical Reform was invited to formally participate, and I had the honor of unveiling the new commemorative plaque, assisting the Mayor of Berlin. The crowd that gathered for this occasion, representing the Jewish community and the city and Federal Government, was a reflection of the high profile that all Jewish events in contemporary German life are given – and the continuous commitment of the Government to celebrating the country's Jewish heritage beyond the overwhelming focus on the Holocaust.

Because the actual day of the Anniversary was the Sabbath – Saturday, July 17, it was not appropriate

to schedule our travel to Seesen for that date itself. That was the day we participated in the Official Bicentennial Commemorative Service of the Berlin Jewish Community, at the historic Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue, as described above.



*The SCRJ delegation gathered in front of the original Jacobson School in Seesen*

Our pilgrimage to Seesen began the following day – with our two hour drive to the town. We passed the lush farmland and forests and small medieval villages that are every tourist's post-card image of the German countryside. Seesen is today a quintessential prosperous country resort town of 20,000 – with ancient buildings reflecting its long history, complemented by new development in the town center. Its major claim to fame, aside from its importance in

Jewish history, is as the ancestral home of the Steinway family, and the birthplace of its international piano-manufacturing empire. But as we approached the town, we were immediately struck by what was clearly being proclaimed in billboards and banners along the streets – as the major source of pride in this small German country municipality... its role as the birthplace of Reform Judaism!

Banners bearing pictures of Israel Jacobson and the Temple lined the avenues, proclaiming the Anniversary. The week prior to our visit, a major cultural festival with lectures by leading historians and performances by major German choirs and orchestras of Jewish music had been held in the regional Convention Center. And on the day we arrived, a significant gathering of local civic and religious leaders were on hand to welcome us and share in our own ceremony. We gathered at the site of the 1810 Temple – in the very center of the town. The original building, like every other synagogue in Germany, had been desecrated and burned down by Nazi mobs on *Kristallnacht* – November 9, 1938. The site is now an open plaza – surrounded by shops and cafes – and dotted with plaques and memorials. Dominating this square

is the 19th century building of the Jacobson School itself - shut down by the Nazis, but not destroyed – and now restored and used as the Municipal Center. For many older citizens of Seesen today, this building- and its Jewish heritage – is their beloved Alma Mater. The School continued to be the most prestigious academy in the region until the Nazis closed it in 1936. For all the people of Seesen, the memory of Jacobson, the school building- and the memorial plaza where the Temple stood, remain the city's major civic and historic landmarks and the source of immense civic pride. The Mayor of the town, Burgermeister Hubert Jahns, who personally coordinated all of the Anniversary events, had himself begun kindergarten at the Jacobson School, and was a pupil there until the Nazis closed it. He has made it his life's mission to keep alive Jacobson's legacy and Seesen's Jewish history and heritage. The pride and gratitude he felt by the presence of this major international delegation of leaders of Reform Judaism in his little town on this of all days, was reflected in his shining smile and often visible emotion.

We shared together in a deeply moving memorial ceremony at the monument at the Temple site – joining various local groups in placing floral tributes at the base. And as we stood and prayed at that site- sacred for us as Reform Jews – our minds went back to the dramatic events at that very place two centuries earlier. Passages were read from various newspaper reports at that time, offering a first hand account of what transpired on July 17, 1810... we were all moved by this fascinating contemporary narrative:

*“On the day of the dedication, on the seventeenth of July, at 7:00 in the morning, lovely music resounded from the roof of the New Temple and announced to the city the approaching festivities. At 8:00, all who had come to participate in the festivities assembled in the school hall of the well-known educational institution which President Jacobson had founded in Seesen. One could see persons of distinguished noble rank, scholars, Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic clergymen, officials, businessmen of all kinds, all walking together in complete concord; and*

*a spirit of unity and understanding seemed to permeate all members of this numerous company.*

*At 9:00, the ringing of bells announced that the ceremonies would begin. The procession was led by two flags and by the students of the Jacobson Institute and the teachers. Then came Israel Jacobson, civic officials, leaders of the Jewish Community, all the rabbis of the region walking in pairs and followed by the leading Christian clergymen – both Catholic and Protestant – from all the surrounding cities, the mayor of the town and numerous other public figures and dignitaries.*

*After this, the scrolls of the Five Books of Moses, called the Torah, which were elaborately ornamented, were taken from the Ark with great ceremony, and carried around the temple seven times, preceded by boys with burning wax candles. Several chapters of the Torah were read, first in Hebrew and then in German. Then came a chorale accompanied by organ and full orchestra, and this was sung first in Hebrew and then also in German, in the singing of which both Christians and Jews participated with deep emotion.*

*The festivities were original and unique. Where else would one have seen a similar day on which Jews and Christians celebrated together in common worship in the presence of more than forty clergymen of both religions, and then sit down to eat and rejoice together in intimate company?*

*President Jacobson then gave an eloquent and inspiring address, concluding with the following prayer:*

*May we, conscious of our dignity, never forget our fellow-man: the high destiny of a being whom Thou did not create to be a soulless machine, but hast gifted with reason and freedom; that he might think for himself, and act for himself, in the plan of Thy creation.*



Model of the 1810  
Jacobson Temple, Seesen

*Let us never despair of the good cause of the true religious spirit of mankind. Let us not lose heart when new obstacles will be thrust across our path, when we find that the uplifting and enlightenment of our dispersed people, as with any beginning, can proceed but slowly and with many difficulties.*

*Above all, O God, make us vividly conscious that we are brothers and sisters with all the adherents of other divine teachings; that we are descendants of one humanity which adores Thee as their common Father, and must learn love and gentle tolerance.*

*And we are brothers and sisters, finally, who under Thy guidance walk toward a common goal and who, in the end, when the mist will have been dispelled from before our eyes – and all the errors gone from our spirit – and all doubts removed from our reason – will meet each other on one and the same road. Amen.”*

This was what we had journeyed to the remote little country town of Seesen to remember and reaffirm on that historic Anniversary day. We can barely imagine how miraculous – how unprecedented – how prophetic – this event and these words were in 1810. In most other German states, and most of the other



*Our Commemoration Ceremony at the Monument on the site of the Seesen Temple*

countries in Europe and the world, Jews still lived humiliated and scorned, persecuted and oppressed – locked behind ghetto walls. They would not – even in America, the only place where they were free citizens – achieve this degree of equality, security and acceptance in society for many decades to come. And this is why we felt compelled to be there to witness and to pay tribute to this precious memory. Not even the ever-present and ever stark reality of the brutal dashing of these idealistic hopes in Germany 125 years later, can diminish the inspiration- and the challenge- that what happened on that July morning in 1810 still hold for us to this day.

A final impression to share...after our own ceremony at the site of that original Dedication, the pastor of Seesen's main Roman Catholic Church came up to me...he just stood there, and then, his eyes filled

with tears, shook his head and spoke of his personal sorrow and shame- as a Christian and a German – for what had happened to this precious legacy. We embraced and prayed together that Israel Jacobson's noble vision would someday be fulfilled... and that we would work with our respective faith communities to bring that hope to reality.

It is, inevitably, a tragic footnote to the hopeful, inspiring, and even joyful spirit of our visit, that despite all of the civic pride – the signs and banners – the commemorations and the celebrations – there are no longer any Jews left following the Shoah. There have been no living Jews in Seesen since the deportation of the entire 250 member community to Auschwitz in 1943. It is all a memory... a precious and cherished memory...but ultimately, a memory... of a world long gone. But this memory is also our proud – and living heritage as American Reform Jews in the 21st century... and it is now our privilege and our responsibility to keep this legacy of a broad, universal, idealistic, liberal faith alive in our own hearts, and in the life of our Movement today. Let each of us reaffirm the words of the Biblical Prophet Malachi that were inscribed – in Hebrew and German – over the entrance of the Seesen Temple...

*Haloh Av echad l'chulanu?  
Haloh El echad b'ra-ehnu?*

*Haben wir den nicht alle einen Vater?  
Hat nicht ein Gott uns geschaffen?*

*Have we not all one Father?  
Has not One God created us all?*

#### *Our Pilgrimage to Hamburg*

For me personally, the most emotional part of our visit was our pilgrimage to Hamburg, to visit the famed Hamburg Temple on the last day of our journey. The Jacobson Temple, essentially a school chapel, was indeed the site of the first Reform worship and ideas, but it was the Hamburg Temple, established in 1818, that was the first actual Reform Congregation to be organized in the world. The Temple itself has, for me, always been a virtually mystical symbol. I recall first seeing photos of the building, described

as “The Mother Temple of Reform Judaism” in a Religious School magazine when I was a teenager, and somehow, it became deeply a part of my own spiritual consciousness. The congregation built this magnificent sanctuary in 1931 – it was the last synagogue to be built in Germany before the Destruction. A beautiful modern building in the pure Bauhaus style, it was a tragic embodiment of the pride, hope and confidence that German Jews felt as late as two years before Hitler came to power. On *Kristallnacht*, November 9, 1938, it was considered too new and expensive a structure to be burned by the Nazis. While the sanctuary was ransacked – an event very movingly depicted in a bronze sculpture in front of the building, depicting the Torah Scrolls being thrown out of the Ark, the building survived intact. After the war, the Hamburg Temple was taken over as the North German National Radio Network, as its main headquarters and broadcast studios, and serves this purpose today. There is a reborn Jewish community and two new synagogues in Hamburg – but this sacred shrine is usually not open to the public and no Jewish groups or tourists are allowed entry. Through the intercession of Abraham Geiger College, our group received permission to visit and have a Service – the first Jewish Service to be held in what had been the beautiful Sanctuary, since 1938.

Our three hour trip to Hamburg was reserved for the last day of our week-long program. Despite all of the many powerful emotions and inspiring experiences we had shared, the realization of this impending encounter was always in my consciousness. As we entered Hamburg, we saw the beauty and vitality of this lovely city – a small, compact mix of historic neighborhoods and a prosperous, modern downtown with commercial buildings and stylish shopping bou-



*The Hamburg Temple*

levards. The Temple is located on Oberstrasse, a lovely tree-lined street in the fashionable residential area of Rotherbaum, where most of the congregation had lived in elegant apartment houses and villas prior to the Deportation to the concentration camps. As we turned on to the street and approached our first view of the building, I literally began to tremble...the façade came into full view—the image that I had known and had this mystical relationship with since my childhood. We stepped off the bus, and gathered in front of the building— at the very striking monument on its steps. In a nation filled with countless Holocaust monuments and memorials of every possible design and concept— few match the stark emotional power of this one. The three dimensional bronze sculpture depicts the Temple Ark on *Kristallnacht*... the curtains torn open and the Torah Scrolls falling out onto the ground... with the simple inscription, “November 9, 1938-In Memoriam”



*Monument in front of the Temple*

We stood there, gazing up at the massive front of the still very modern looking edifice – the single round window puncturing the otherwise solid front – in the shape of a seven branch Menorah... and that timeless universal invitation emblazoned in Hebrew across the entry doors... “My House Shall Be a House of Prayer for All People”...painful in its ironic poignancy.

It is remarkable that aside from sparing the building, that the Gestapo also did not destroy these Jewish symbols. Photos of the building during the War do indicate that wooden boards were nailed over the Hebrew inscription...but the Menorah design of the front window was left untouched, even while the rest of the walls were covered with obscene graffiti by the Hitler Youth, and garbage was piled on the plaza in front.

I had shared some of the very personal meaning of

this place with the rest of our group on the bus ride from Berlin, and had requested their forbearance in allowing me to enter the building alone to spend a few moments to process the experience. I walked into the cavernous space... unrecognizable as the Sanctuary it had been, except for a part of the marble wall that had been the Holy Ark. At that moment, all of the years of the memory of what this place had represented for me, came crashing into my consciousness, and I was overcome. I am a passionate person and feel emotions deeply and openly...but I do not cry easily...even when I feel grief. But there in that place, I found myself crumpling onto a seat and breaking into heaving sobs. I have not cried like that – gasping for air with such gut-wrenching physical pain – in my life. It was perhaps 10 minutes before I was able to breathe normally again. It all dawned on me in that moment – I was experiencing my own personal release of all the profound sadness that had been building throughout the trip. After a lifetime of rational, intellectual understanding of the Holocaust as a historic event, I had never truly experienced my own personal grief viscerally...not even many years ago, when I visited Auschwitz itself. There, seeing the gas chambers and the crematoria, one feels numb and cannot weep. However, here in this quiet place, that enshrines all that I believe in and cherish and have dedicated my entire life to – it just all came pouring out – all of the sorrow I have ever personally felt, deep in my heart, over the Shoah...

When I was able to compose myself, I led our memorial ceremony. Everyone was deeply conscious of the drama of the moment- that we were being granted the incredible privilege of sharing the first Jewish worship in this sacred space since Yom Kippur 1938... that this was the first time the *Shema* had resounded within these walls in over 70 years – last sung by a thousand souls now long gone... in a world that no longer existed. After we concluded, with the recitation of the *Kaddish* and the singing of the German Reform version of *Adon Olam* just as it would have been sung on that last *Kol Nidre* Eve before *Kristallnacht*, there were many tears and many of us held each other and sobbed. I will never forget this moment, and indeed cannot get the images out of my consciousness. I will be forever grateful for the privilege of having experienced this personal encounter... as a testimony of the tradition and faith of our People, our survival out of the ashes, and the continuing, living message of the Reform Jewish heritage that I so cherish.

*The final impression of this entire saga...*

I returned home a few days later. My emotions were raw and my mind was in intellectual overload, attempting to process everything we had seen and experienced. When our plane landed back in Boston, and I stepped out once again on American soil, I was overcome with an profound sense of gratitude – that of all the long centuries of suffering – and all the far corners of the earth where Jews have wandered in search of peace and freedom, in the 5000 year history



*Our Memorial Ceremony in the former Sanctuary of the Hamburg Temple*

of our people, that I had been granted the blessing of being born at *this* time and *this* place. For my entire life, my love for America and its ideals has been inseparable in my consciousness from my love and commitment to my Jewish faith and identity. But when I disembarked at the International Terminal at Logan, and saw the Stars and Stripes at the gate, I did something I have never done before. Instinctively, almost without even thinking, and oblivious to the stares of the other passengers, I knelt down and kissed the floor... feeling an even deeper gratitude and love for this land than I ever had before. It all emerged in extraordinary clarity... this was the free, pluralistic nation that Jews have been welcomed

to with full liberty and civil rights from the very beginning. While born in Germany, it was here, in this free, democratic society, that the liberal Jewish spirit blossomed and reached its full potential... and *this* land and *these* shores remain the only soil, on the face of this earth, where Jewish blood has never flowed, other than in self-sacrifice to defend the rights and liberties we have been granted here as citizens of this beloved country. For the first time since I had left for Germany ten days earlier, I was able to gratefully utter the *Shehecheyanu* blessing...without feeling the need to also recite the *Kaddish*...

For those of us of the SCRJ who were privileged to share in this journey, it was a life-transforming experience. I am immensely grateful and proud that the Society was committed to taking this leadership role as the major American Jewish presence in the international commemoration of this great milestone anniversary of our sacred heritage as Reform Jews.

As I think about our visit to Germany and the various landmarks of Reform Judaism, I was struck by the fact that the initial reforms constituted a change in ritual, but not in substance. Thus, organ, head covering, men and women seated together, prayers and sermons in the vernacular really were not the true expression of Reform Judaism as we have come to know it. Yes, it was an acknowledgement that ritual is created by human beings, not God given. Nevertheless, what I believe truly makes Reform significant is its belief in the possibility of a “Messianic Age” as opposed to a literal hope for the coming of an actual Messiah figure. The Haftarah portion that was read in the Reform Synagogue in Berlin for the 200th Anniversary Service that we attended on July 17, is really the linchpin of our American Judaism—rituals alone are not a true expression of what we see as the purpose of religion: the purpose of religion is to make our world a better place for all humankind. The Haftarah, from the first chapter of Isaiah, expresses God’s dissatisfaction with ritual without deeds. In what we now term Prophetic Judaism, the text declares, “Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow...”



*The Jewish Museum, Berlin*

Ritual is important. It adds an aesthetic experience, it is a force to unite us, and when properly understood, it can express our deeper ethical and spiritual values. As an example, the blessing over the bread should be understood as a grateful acknowledgement that many hands went into providing our food and hence, we should be generous to those in need. But ritual is an accessory to – not the purpose of – our Judaism.

I am so glad that I was a part of this venture, because it made me appreciate even more what we as Reform Jews have accomplished in America. I only hope that the nascent Jewish community of Germany will eventually find itself in a position to also explore new paths in the continuous process of “reforming” Judaism.

*Rabbi Harold Kudan  
Northbrook, Illinois*

Our journey helped us to understand that the Reform Movement in Germany was motivated by a desire to help integrate Jews within their broader society by adapting religious practice that had not changed for many hundreds of years, in a world that had drastically changed in the same time period.

For us, the tour was first an educational experience since we knew nothing about any version of Reform beyond America's. It was also amazing to see Germany's continuing acceptance of responsibility for the Holocaust and the countless ways in which they acknowledge the evil days of 1933-45, including the innumerable plaques, monuments and memorials. Finally, we were unaware that the country that committed the greatest horrors ever against Jews now has the most rapidly growing Jewish population in the world.

It was gratifying to witness the apparent comfort which German Jews today feel at being identified as Jews. This is a change from the early 90's when we visited friends in Munich and realized that Jews tended to keep a low profile in their part of Germany at that time.

*Wolfgang and Donna Schaechter*  
Santa Clara, California

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The Society's recent mission to Germany celebrating the 200th anniversary of the dedication of the first Reform Temple in Seesen was truly amazing. For me this trip was filled both with the highs of being a part of this celebration and commemorating the rebirth of Judaism in Germany, but also with the sorrow of observing the ever present reality of the Holocaust – and the thought of what could have been if all of those precious lives had been saved, and the great heritage of German Jewry could have continued.

It was wonderful participating in the Anniversary Services and commemorations in the heart of Berlin – to me a continued testimony of the resilience of Judaism and how Judaism has survived one tyrant after another. Judaism is here – the tyrants are gone! Highlights for me include the commemoration of the 200th anniversary in Seesen and the dedication of the Israel Jacobson plaque in the center of Berlin. The participation of German civil authorities such as the Mayors of Berlin and Seesen, helped make these

ceremonies even more memorable. And another highlight was attending the Sabbath Morning Commemorative Service at the beautiful Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue, with the magnificent music of its choir and organ.

I found special meaning at the Berlin Holocaust Memorial. While the memorial can be a playground for tourists and kids – this monument is a tremendous statement. Here is a memorial to the Holocaust and victims of Nazi tyranny right in the heart of the nation's capital – where the Berlin Wall and no man's land stood during the Cold War and, ironically, very close to where Hitler's bunker was located.

One last note – this was my first trip to Berlin since 1973 and of course the differences between then and now were striking and amazing. When I went through Checkpoint Charlie in 1973, I never dreamt in my lifetime that the Berlin Wall would be torn down, the advent of freedom and democracy would come to East Berlin. And while the Checkpoint Charlie location is now a tourist spot, complete with a MacDonal'd's – the wonderful thing is that it is no longer a symbol of division. This unification of Berlin and Germany along with the rebirth of German Judaism – both these victories of liberty over tyranny are deeply inspiring. As a proud American Reform Jew, these momentous events give me hope that the challenges our world faces today, will be overcome in the same spirit.

*Chuck Udell*  
Kansas City, Missouri



*The Holocaust Memorial, Berlin*

When we learned of the Society's plans for this "Roots of Reform" pilgrimage, my son Bernie and I immediately felt that this experience promised to hold personal significance for us because of our family's well-known Reform Jewish history. He and I signed up and there began our incredible journey.

We had gone to Luxembourg City in 1997 to search for and find the 1851 birth certificate of my grandfather, Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, as well as to see the records of the Jewish Community there, where my great-grandfather, Rabbi Samuel Hirsch, was appointed Chief Rabbi by the King of the Netherlands in 1842. On an earlier trip to the Rotary International Convention in Rome in 1979, my late wife Minnie and I toured the Vatican library and was informed by the Vatican Librarian that Samuel Hirsch's lectures to the Masonic Lodge in Luxembourg were now part of the permanent collection of the Vatican. On yet another trip to a convention of Rotary in Munich in 1987, we visited the town of Dispeck, Bavaria, where my great-grandfather, Rabbi Dr. David Einhorn, "the Father of Classical Reform" had been born in 1809. With their memory in my mind, along with that of my uncle, Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler, Reform Judaism's great theologian and second President of Hebrew Union College, Bernie and I landed in Berlin to begin our journey of 200 years.

For me this journey came as three waves of my emotion and reminiscence. The first was in Berlin, where each of my illustrious forbears had studied- and experiencing the symbolism that the new Rabbinical Seminary training Reform Rabbis for a new generation of German Jewry, has been named in honor of Rabbi Abraham Geiger – one of the great pioneers of the Reform Movement, who taught my grand father, Emil G, Hirsch.

The second wave of feelings was of great sadness and anger as we visited in the Jewish Museum, the Holocaust Memorial and the House of the Wannsee Conference – where Hitler's infamous Final Solution was conceived in 1942, as fifteen high-ranking representatives of the German government and military met to discuss the planned deportation and murder of all of the Jews of Europe. In all three places I emotion-

ally remembered the tragic history of the Jews in Germany and my own many personal encounters with the aftermath of the Holocaust through the years.

The most touching moment of our tour was the Service we held in what had been the Hamburg Temple. This sanctuary was the home of what had been the world's first organized Reform Congregation, founded in 1818. No Jewish Service or presence has happened in the building since November, 1938. It was the last day of our journey and it was for me an emotional summation of all that I had reflected on in our previous four days. There were also other synagogue visits and receptions in our program but the visit on July 19<sup>th</sup> to the Klaus Synagogue in Halberstadt was, for me, the most revealing and informative. Rabbi William Wolff, born in Berlin in 1927 and sheltered and ordained in England, was the rabbi of this and two other congregations in the area where a portion of the almost 100,000 Russian Jewish refugees admitted to Germany had sought asylum in the last thirty years. He was instructing them and leading them in their quest to rediscover and reclaim their Jewish heritage and expression. Rabbi Wolff told us that this was the rebirth of German Judaism.

My grandfather, Rabbi Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, once preached in 1893 at the World Parliament of Religion, at the famed Chicago World's Fair, on "Elements Of Universal Religion". As I visited in Germany, looking at the stepping stones to modern Judaism, I reflected on some of the lines from his sermon:

*Religion is one of the natural functions of the human soul; it is one of the natural conditions of human, as distinct from mere animal life. Man alone in the wide sweep of creation builds altars...The universal religion of the future, will once more make the God idea a vital principle of human life. It will teach men to find him in their own heart and to have him with them in whatever they may do. No mortal has seen God's face, but he who opens his heart to the message will, like Moses on the lonely rock, behold him pass and hear the solemn proclamation. But what about death and hereafter? This religion will not dim the hope which has been man's since the first day of his stay on earth. But it will be more emphatic in winning men to the conviction that a life worthily spent here on earth is best, is the only preparation for heaven...*

My son and I made this journey as individuals looking back at our heritage so that we can spiritually better appreciate and understand our present Judaism and society. I am indebted to The Society for Classical Reform Judaism for giving us this opportunity to tread the environs of Berlin and Germany which in some way allowed us to touch the spirit and being of our forefathers.

*Emil Gustav Hirsch*  
*Naples, Florida*

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What happened in July of 1810 that was so worthy of note? It was in that year, July 17, 1810 to be exact, the Israel Jacobson established a private synagogue whose style of worship broke new ground in Jewish practice. Israel Jacobson understood that Jews in Germany and in the modern world faced a difficult choice: abandon Judaism to take advantage of the opportunities of modern society, its professional possibilities, cultural and social expressions, or remain as Orthodox Jews, socially and culturally isolated from the rest of society. Jacobson tried to help forge a middle ground, to reformulate Judaism and adapt it to the new possibilities of the modern world.

Many questions come to mind when we consider Jacobson's bold initiative – to create a new kind of synagogue. How did Jacobson's Temple come into existence? Why did this radical new institution appear first in Seesen, a small town in Westphalia, and not in trendy Berlin or Vienna? And finally, why was this experiment undertaken not by a Jewish scholar or philosopher?

Perhaps it was precisely because Jacobson was not a rabbi that he not only recognized the need for change, but also was unencumbered by professional or institutional limitations that might have limited his ability to break with the past and march confidently into a new future. Jacobson was a successful businessman, and a man of action. Jacobson was a person rooted in the political and economic developments of his day, and one who was imbued with sense of the new values of the Enlightenment that were sweeping across Europe. Jacobson understood that in the new society that Jews would need to speak the language of the country in which they were now to be welcomed

as citizens. Yiddish was to be replaced with German, religious study would be combined with secular learning in science, math and literature. Jacobson's first foray into changing Jewish life was in the field of education. In order to help Jews to adapt to the new possibilities of full inclusion in society, Jacobson founded, in 1801, a school, the Jacobson Schule – which is still in existence in Seesen. Jacobson created this school, initially, for Jewish children, mainly poor boys and girls, to study together, in German. He was determined to break down the barriers that separated Jews from others in society. As the academic reputation of the school quickly spread, non-Jewish students came to study alongside their Jewish schoolmates. The hallmarks of the school were academic excellence and religious tolerance.

Our visit to Seesen on was seen as historic and very significant to the people of the town and region. We visited Seesen the day after the 200th anniversary, as the actual anniversary was on Shabbat and we marked in Berlin. We were hosted in Seesen by the headmaster of the Jacobson school, which exists in an antique building on the site of the original school. After a reception and a viewing of a scale model of the temple, held at the school, we gathered in the courtyard where the temple long stood, and presented the mayor with a plaque to mark our visit and the significant anniversary. Many other local officials were present as we solemnly commemorated the events of 200 years, and also called to memory the lost Jewish presence in that German town.

Another moving experience for our group was our visit to one of the most famous of German synagogues, the Hamburg Temple. The Prayer Book, first published by this congregation in 1819, became an important influence on American Reform Judaism. Hamburg, more than Berlin or any other city was the source of the innovations that we look to today as the hallmarks of Reform Judaism in the United States and beyond. The temple was constructed in 1931. It is remarkable that this Jewish community could create such an ambitious structure in a time of such social turmoil and economic depression in inter-war Germany. It was the last synagogue constructed in Germany before the Shoah. Clearly, the community felt that they

had a bright future ahead of them. When we drove up to the beautiful white temple on the Oberstrasse in Hamburg, we felt strangely at home. It was a beautiful building, set back from the street beyond a wide plaza. Gazing at the temple, we could imagine that at any moment throngs of worshippers would emerge after having attended a Shabbat or Holiday service. It felt like a suburban American synagogue, but sadly this is no longer a Jewish building. After the war it was acquired by the German National Radio Station. The graceful sanctuary became a concert hall; the small chapel was made over into recording studio. On the one hand, we were thankful to see the building preserved, by people who appreciate its value and aesthetic qualities. On the other hand – we were amazed to hear that our delegation was the first Jewish group to have been allowed to visit for decades. We were only allowed in after lengthy negotiations and assurances that we were not there to reassert Jewish ownership rights to the building. We conducted the first Jewish prayer service in that lovely sanctuary in decades— using the liturgy of Sinai Temple in Chicago – which was based on the Union Prayer Book – and which had been inspired by the siddur of the Hamburg Temple. Rabbi Howard Berman led us in prayer, his eyes filled with awe and tears, as we recited the *Shehecheyanu* Prayer.

We had several other very moving and thought-provoking experiences during our journey. I will share with you just a few. During our stay in Berlin, we visited the Wannsee conference center, where Adolf Eichmann and many of the other Nazi leaders planned the destruction of European Jewry. The elegant villa sits in an upper-class suburb of Berlin, on the shores of a picturesque lake filled with sailboats. There the Nazi bureaucrats dined in luxury, and calmly discussed their evil plans to commit mass

murder. Hannah Arendt’s term, “The banality of evil,” comes to mind in describing what took place there. There, bureaucrats drank wine and planned mass murder. Now the site is a museum devoted to understanding the Nazi regime. Tour groups, Jewish and Gentile, from Israel and the rest of the world visit to try to grasp how so called “civilized” people could perpetrate such barbarous acts.

Another experience that produced indelible memories was our visit to the Jewish Museum in Berlin. It is truly an amazing institution, both educational

and experiential in intent. Daniel Liebeskind designed the exhibits and much of the building. Its very existence is a tribute to his perseverance in demanding that the German government follow through on its plans for an exhibit that would commemorate the Jewish contribution to German society. The emphasis is truly on that – the



*The Hope for the Future*  
Ordination of New Rabbis at Abraham Geiger College, Berlin

entire History of Jews in Germany. Its intended audience is mainly ordinary Germans, school children and adults, so that they can appreciate long Jews lived in Germany, how integral they were to German cultural developments in modern times, and how much was destroyed and lost. Liebeskind approaches the Holocaust era in oblique ways too. There is a sort of courtyard made up of columns of concrete pillars in a grid. The pillars reach up two or three stories into the air. The courtyard is surrounded by insurmountable concrete walls. The stone pavement is made up of large rounded stones, fist sized, set in cement. The floor is subtly pitched, so that when one walks among the columns, one is always disoriented. It feels as if one is aboard a ship. This is the metaphor for the life of Jews in Germany: one is always on uncertain ground, never sure of one’s balance, never secure. In Berlin we visited the restored grave sites of famous Reform leaders: Leopold Zunz, Rabbi Samuel Holdheim, the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, and Rabbi Abraham Geiger.

The College named for Geiger, is the first new Rabbinical School to open in Germany since World War II. Its aim is to train Reform Rabbis for Germany and the rest of Europe. It is most appropriate that the new seminary was named after Geiger (1810-1874), one of the great rabbinic minds of early liberal Judaism in Germany. The Rector, Rabbi Dr. Walter Homolka, explained to us that after the war, and until recently, the feeling was that Jews should be supported in creating new lives in Israel and other countries. But now that Jews have begun to return to Germany in large numbers, the German government and people are eager to help them remain. They recognize that Germany needs Jews. They wish to help create a Jewish renaissance in Germany.

Reflecting on the meaning of this trip, it occurs to me that in order to know where one is going, it is good and helpful to know where one has been. It is important to take stock of what skills, and tools one has acquired from the past that will stand one in good stead in facing the challenges of the future. What lessons can I distill from this "Roots of Reform" pilgrimage? I am still, two months since the journey digesting and reflecting on the trip.

Here are a few of my tentative conclusions:

*As Jews, we must ever be vigilant of bigotry and extremism, wherever we may live.*

*The corollary to this is that we must never cease in our efforts to build bridges to others and to seek to build a sense of common purpose with our neighbors. We must recognize that there are good people everywhere, and it is incumbent upon us to find partners with whom to make real the values we espouse.*

*We must, by virtue of what we have lived through as a people, continue to bear witness to the existence of evil and of the fragility of the humane values that the Enlightenment sought to implant in modern society. We must visit the sites of our history, our achievements as well as of our suffering. We must be a permanent presence.*

*We must remember for the sake of the victims, for our own sake, and for the world.*

*We cannot look only to the past. We have the ability to adapt to almost any circumstance. We must sup-*

*port those Jews who for all their various motivations, are attempting to bear witness to the Jewish presence in the world.*

*The perilous nature of Jewish life in most lands and ages is no more poignantly illustrated than in the contrast we experience with the life of Jews in Israel and in the United States. We must take advantage of our freedoms and support our vibrant Jewish institutions here and in Israel living our Jewish lives as fully, as creatively, and as passionately as we are able.*

*My final principle is identical to the core idea of Reform Judaism – that change is inevitable, so we must embrace it. We must embrace the continual renewal of our faith and traditions, we must look to the future with a sense of purpose, and to the past not only with nostalgia, but with a critical eye. We must seek the truth of the past and follow its trajectory forward wherever it may lead us.*

Rabbi David Kudan  
Temple Tifereth Israel  
Malden, Massachusetts



*The Menorah window on the facade of the 1931 Hamburg Temple, still identifying the origins of this landmark today.*

While this was not my first trip to Germany or to Berlin, the context of this trip was very different: traveling with a group of Reform and Liberal Jews from the US and the UK who were there specifically to celebrate the early roots of Reform Judaism and the bicentennial of the dedication of Israel Jacobson's "Tempel" in Seesen. The personal interactions with the other people in the group were very special to me.

Most moving, I would have to say, was our visit to the last building of the Hamburg Tempelverein. In Seesen, Halberstadt, Schwerin, and Berlin we mostly saw empty lots or ruins of pre-November 9, 1938 synagogues. In Hamburg, the building was intact, though used as the broadcast studios for Norddeutsche Rundfunk. (To be sure, the Hamburg congregation's previous building on Poolstrasse was also destroyed in the Reichspogrom that night in 1938.) To actually be inside the space of the sanctuary, and to be allowed inside the rooms that once served as the weekday chapel and the social hall, was incredible and historic (even Prof. Andreas Braemer, who has written extensively on the Hamburg Temple and spoke with us about the congregation, had never previously been in the latter two rooms!). And, of course, we conducted a brief service there--- the first act of Jewish worship in that space in 72 years!

Also moving was to participate in Shabbat morning services at the Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue in Berlin---on Shabbat Hazon, the Shabbat before Tisha b'Av. The resonance of destruction and rebirth at that moment was overwhelming.

I have already used materials and photographs from the trip in my Litergy classes at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, and I know that experiences from the trip will continue to enrich my teaching in the future.

*Rabbi Richard S. Sarason*  
*Professor of Rabbinical Literature and Thought*  
*Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion,*  
*Cincinnati*

## Reform's Early Beginnings in America and in Germany: A Comparative Analysis

*Dr. Gary P. Zola*

*Executive Director of the Jacob R. Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives*

*This Bicentennial Lecture was delivered by the SCRJ Scholar-in-Residence for the "Roots of Reform" Tour, Dr. Gary P. Zola, Professor of the American Jewish Experience at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, as the keynote of the Berlin Jewish Community's Official Commemoration of the 200th Anniversary at the Konrad Adenauer Institute – July 15, 2010*

Professor Barbara D. Metcalf, who teaches at The University of Michigan, recently noted that "anniversaries are good not only for gifts or speeches of remembrance, but also for reviving and revisiting historical memories." This evening, we stand on the threshold of the 200th anniversary of Reform Judaism's founding. Two hundred years ago, on July 17, 1810, the German financier – Israel Jacobson (1768-1828) – a man who is often called the "father" of Reform Judaism – formally dedicated his small "temple" adjacent to his gymnasium in Seesen. In this little sanctuary, Jacobson instituted several controversial alterations in the traditional mode of Jewish worship. Consequently, Jacobson is largely credited with having launched the world's first self-identified house of Reform Jewish worship.

Jacobson's innovations were no passing fancy. His interests had a resounding influence on all of modern Jewish history. From its modest beginnings in Seesen, the Reform Movement in Judaism has blossomed over the past 200 years into a genuine global phenomenon. It has been repeatedly asserted and, depending upon whether one categorizes the Bahá'í religion as a liberal faith, it is reasonable to contend that the Reform Movement in Judaism has become one – if not the largest liberal religious denomination in the world. As my own teacher, the late Jacob Rader Marcus, noted in his exhaustive study on Jacobson "if Jacobson were to return tomorrow... he would certainly be gratified at the success of the Reformation he sparked."<sup>1</sup>

Although Reform Judaism's liturgical origins may be traced back to der "Jacobson-Tempel" in Seesen, over

the past two centuries the movement's greatest efflorescence has taken place in the United States. According to the last official National Jewish Population Survey conducted under the auspices of the United Jewish Communities, approximately 40% of United States Jewry self-identifies as Reform. This makes American Reform the largest Jewish denomination in the United States. In no other geographic locale has Reform Judaism flourished as it has in the United States. Although there are many ideological and liturgical bonds – commonplaces – that unite all Reform or Liberal Jews, the history of the Reform Movement in America possesses a diacritical essence that distinguishes it from the historical development of its sister branches in Europe, South America, Israel, and elsewhere. Since Jewish Reformers have consciously endeavored to make Jewish practice relevant to its contemporary setting, local factors such as culture, politics, economics, etc. play a determinative role in shaping the indigenous Reform Jewish experience. The efflorescence of Reform Judaism in America as well as its distinctive nature are ineluctably linked to nature of American culture.

In commemorating the 200th anniversary of Reform Judaism's origins in Germany, it seems quite fitting to briefly consider how Reform Judaism's origins in Germany may have influenced the very first manifestation of American Reform, which took place in Charleston, South Carolina. Approximately fourteen years after the dedication of the Jacobson Temple, a "handful of men" – many of whom had drifted away from Jewish life – gathered together on Wednesday, November 21, 1824 to investigate "the reasons which may have led them from the Synagogue." This gathering produced a meeting of the minds, and the participants left with an impassioned desire to do something about the malaise that they themselves had experienced.<sup>2</sup> One of the discussants – probably a man named Abraham Moïse II (1799–1869) – composed a "Memorial" (or a petition) that was signed by forty-seven supporters and sent to the Adjunta (the governing board) of Charleston's synagogue: Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE). The Charleston "memorial" not only called for specific reforms, it also explicated why the proposed innovations had now become so very urgent.<sup>3</sup>

First, most of the congregants no longer understood Hebrew, so the "memorialists" suggested that "the Hasan, or reader, . . . repeat in English such part of the Hebrew prayers as may be deemed necessary."

Second, many felt that the worship service was much too long, so they urged the congregational leaders to remove everything "superfluous" and retain only "the most solemn portions" of the liturgy. The memorialists were particularly galled by the longstanding practice of bidding out various ritual honors in the midst of the worship service from those capable of offering the synagogue financial support.

A third request – undoubtedly influenced by the ubiquitous practice of their Christian neighbors – called on the synagogue's reader or leader to offer a weekly discourse, in English, on a chapter or verse from scripture – just "like all other ministers."

The "Memorial" was delivered to KKBE's officers together with membership subscriptions from the forty-seven signatories. Despite the prospect of acquiring new members not too mention beneficial effect this offer would have on KKBE's financial coffers, the synagogue's officers refused to entertain the reformers' proposals. They declined the petitioners' request with a courteous but firm rejection.<sup>4</sup> It was at this point that the memorialists established the "Reformed Society of Israelites for Promoting True Principles of Judaism According to Its Purity and Spirit"; the first organized attempt to reform Judaism in the United States.<sup>5</sup> The constraints of time will not permit us to provide a full review the interesting and noteworthy history of Charleston's Reformed Society of Israelites. Suffice it to say that the Society's history constitutes a foundational chapter in the story of American Reform Judaism. Among the Society's most consequential achievements was the publication of a Reform prayer book – preceded only by the Reform prayer books of Berlin and Hamburg – and arguably the first example of radical liturgical reform in all of modern Jewish history.<sup>6</sup>

There is one paragraph of the Charleston "Memorial" that seems particularly relevant to this particular anniversary colloquium. It has been frequently noted that toward the end of the document, as the "Memorial" comes to a rhetorical climax, the author(s) "bring to notice . . . the [Jewish] reformation which has been recently adopted by our brethren in Holland, Germany and Prussia." The memorialists then quote verbatim from a newspaper article that appar-

ently appeared in the Frankfurter Journal.<sup>7</sup> The article described a variety of liturgical reforms that had been introduced in an unspecified German setting. It is quite possible that the article was alluding to the religious innovations that had been introduced in Frankfurt's highly regarded and well known modern school for Jewish children, the Philanthropin.<sup>8</sup> Having duly noted that many of reforms they were advancing had already been actualized in Germany, the memorialists appealed to their readers' American sensibilities. Since a Jewish reformation had already appeared "amidst the intolerance of Europe," it was quite evident, they noted, that "our European brethren have anticipated the free citizens of America in the glorious work of reformation." They implored the synagogue's adjuncta with one final plea: "Let us hasten to the task with harmony and good fellowship."<sup>9</sup>

The fact that the American reformers consciously cited the report from the Frankfurter Journal has led many historians to assert that Charleston reformers were following in the footsteps of their German predecessors. The Society's first historian, Barnett A. Elzas, contended that the Charleston reformers were "directly dependent upon the earlier movement that had taken place in Germany."<sup>10</sup> Rabbi David Philipson, the first American scholar to produce a complete and fully documented history of the Reform Movement in Judaism, stated that the quotation from the Frankfurter Journal showed that "the Americans were influenced by the religious agitations that were stirring the Jews of Germany so profoundly at that time."<sup>11</sup> Even the towering scholar and author of most exhaustive study on prayer book reform in Europe, Rabbi Jakob J. Petuchowski, similarly concluded that "the Reformed Society of Israelites evidences, at least in part, a conscious emulation of the strivings for Reform in Germany, in general, and of the Hamburg Temple prayerbook, in particular."<sup>12</sup>

In spite of the fact that the Charlestonians advocated many of the same liturgical reforms that had already appeared in Germany, a close reading of the "Memorial" demonstrates that the founders of the Reformed Society in Charleston and the pioneering German reformers in Seesau, Berlin, and Hamburg were responding to a host of dissimilar challenges

and concerns. For example, both the German and the Charleston reformers were fretting over the problem of Jewish disaffiliation. Yet the reasons Jews for this exodus in Germany were different from those the Americans encountered. The Constitution made it foundationally impossible to compel any US citizen belong to or identify with a religious society. Jews – like all other Americans – identified with religious communities on a voluntary basis only. The situation for German Jews was much different. Until 1876, when the "Prussian Landtag" (legislature) passed Edward Lasker's "Succession Bill" (Austrittsgesetz), German Jews were born into official membership with the German-Jewish communities, and they were recognized as Jews by the state.

Throughout all of American history, any one wishing to call himself a Jew could do so without ever officially joining a synagogue or any other Jewish organization for that matter. In the 1820s, the American synagogue was the organized Jewish community and, as we have already noted, many of the Charleston memorialists had voluntarily elected to secede from their congregation. In America, it was neither bigotry nor civil disabilities that made Jews flee from the synagogue. According to the memorialists, they were fleeing from the synagogue itself:

*"[We] have ingenuously investigated the reasons which may have led [us] from the Synagogue, and are now seriously impressed with the belief that certain defects . . . in the present system of worship, are the sole causes of the evils complained of."*<sup>13</sup>

In addition to their concern over the Jewish flight from the synagogue, the Charleston reformers also fretted about Jewish apostasy. For countless numbers of enlightened German Jews, den Austritt aus dem Judenthums offered them relief from the pain of social injustice and frustrating discrimination. By abandoning Judaism, the German Jew could penetrate the political and social impediments to unfettered participation in the general society. According to Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, had their been no Reform Judaism in Germany, literally thousands of Jews would have voluntarily left the Jewish fold. "Reform's unremitting zeal," Plaut wrote, saved thousands [from converting to Christianity]<sup>14</sup> In America, a Jew's decision abandon his faith and become a Christian had, comparatively speaking, a negligible effect on matters such as social acceptance and economic opportunity. Yet

American Jews were voluntarily acculturating. This worrisome trend was accelerated by Christian proselytes who eagerly coaxed Jews to convert to Christianity. They were free to do so in America's open market of religious ideology. Many American Jews, unarmed and haplessly defenseless in the fullness of their Jewish ignorance, fell prey to clever and ambitious conversionists. In addition to this concern, the Charleston reformers had a related worry - one which had no real parallel in the social & political context of early 19th century German Jewry. The memorialists wanted their synagogue to open its doors to the growing number of non-Jews who were marrying Jews during the Antebellum period. KKBE - and, for that matter, every other American synagogue at that time - refused to welcome non-Jewish spouses into the synagogue's orbit. The idea that the synagogue should welcome these partners - to say nothing of the few curious Christians who might actually want to embrace Judaism - was rejected out of hand as preposterous. Yet "outreach" to non-Jews was explicitly and unquestionably one of their motivating concerns. "It should also be remembered," the memorialists wrote:

*that while other [religions] are extending the means of Divine Worship to the remotest quarters of the habitable globe . . . offering the most flattering inducements to all denominations - we, who may be termed the mere remnant of a great nation, are totally disregarding the fairest opportunities of increasing our own numbers . . . and neglecting the brightest prospects of enlarging our resources, and effectually perpetuating our national character.*<sup>15</sup>

There is one more differential that merits our attention this evening. In justifying the reforms they favored, the early German progressives were loath to disassociate themselves with the laws and precepts of the ancient sages. In the 1840s, there were some enlightened Jews, most notably Rabbi Samuel Holdheim, who favored a radical break from the authority of the ancient sages, but the early German reformers used talmudic reasoning and precedent to justify their reforms. David Philipson repeatedly criticized the early German reformers for "justifying their reforms from the rabbinical standpoint instead of instituting such changes of custom and interpretation as the modified requirements of their day demanded."<sup>16</sup> Yet fifty years before Philipson ever sat down in a Hebrew Union College classroom, the Charleston reformers openly rejected the teachings of the ancient

rabbis. Influenced by the enlightenment rhetoric of the American host culture, the Charleston reformers believed that religious truths must always be subjected to the authority of human reason. They spoke and wrote like Thomas Paine, the legendary author of *Age of Reason* and *Common Sense*, who brought the same militancy and rhetorical flair to promoting the ideals of a rational theology that he had for the cause of political independence. The memorialists made use of Paine's rhetoric, and they spiced them up with oratorical flourishes from the writings of American Deists and Freemasons.

*"We wish to worship God," the memorialists declared, "not as slaves of bigotry and priestcraft, but as the enlightened descendants of that chosen race, whose blessings have been scattered throughout the land of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."*<sup>17</sup>

Instead of quoting the rabbis to authenticate their reforms, the memorialists accused the sages of shackling the Jewish mind and distorting the purity of Judaism's moral spirit.<sup>18</sup>

The pioneering Jewish reformers in Germany and America clearly shared a common objective; they wanted to transform Judaism in order to meet the need of their day. They advocated many of the same liturgical reforms. Yet the challenges they sought to meet and the problems they hoped to address were clearly autochthonous. The history of the Reformed Society of Israelites reminds us that the origins of American and German Reform must be understood diacritically. Each grew out of its own set of motivating factors. Yet this point need not and should not obscure the remarkable symbiosis that has continually shaped the history of Reform Judaism. Throughout the nineteenth century, a stunning array of erstwhile European Reform Rabbis immigrated to America. They contributed Reform's dramatic growth in the New World - David Einhorn, Bernhard Felsenthal, Max Lilenthal, James K. Gutheim, Isaac M. Wise, Samuel Adler, Samuel Hirsch, Adolph Huebsch - the list is very long. Yet once these same individuals planted themselves firmly on American soil, more often than not underwent the transforming effects of Americanization. Soon enough they themselves

became spokesmen of an American Reform, sharing their experiences with their former colleagues back home. Eventually, American Reform Rabbis like Emil G. Hirsch, Stephen S. Wise, or Julian Morganstern went to Germany to earn diplomas and return to impart their learning in America. As one historian aptly noted, considering the geographic distance that separated these two continents for much of the past 200 years, “it is indeed remarkable how the two branches of Reform Judaism managed to keep in constant touch.”<sup>19</sup>

On this particular historic occasion, when we have gathered to commemorate the bicentennial of Reform Judaism’s beginnings, this case study of the Reformed Society of Israelites should remind us that the rise and growth of the Reform Movement in Judaism has not evolved on a linear trajectory. This movement – from its origins in Seesan to the present day – is more accurately understood when viewed as a dynamic global exchange of strategies, ideologies, and personalities that have continually sought to arm modern Jews with the spiritual resources they needed to survive and, ideally, to thrive in the ever-flowing and frequently turbulent waters of modernity.

What will the next 200 years bring for the Reform movement and for the Jewish community in general? Perhaps the best answer to this question comes to us from the renowned German philosopher, Goethe, who – in his epic work *Faust* – proclaimed: “WHAT YOU HAVE INHERITED FROM YOUR FOREBEARS, YOU MUST EARN FOR YOURSELF BEFORE YOU CAN REALLY CALL IT YOUR OWN.” In other words, we imbue this milestone anniversary with significance when our reflections on the past inspire within us an unyielding resolve to enrich the present so that, one day, our posterity will look back on our epoch and say of our efforts: they not only studied the past, but what embraced that inheritance, made it their own, and thereby conveyed a noble heritage to their posterity. And it is likely that no one captured the essence of this exhortation more aptly or elegantly than the first prime minister of the State of Israel, David Ben Gurion, with whose words we conclude: “We Jews must never, never live in the past, but the past most certainly must live within us.”<sup>20</sup>

1. Jacob Rader Marcus, *Israel Jacobson: The Founder of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1972), viii.
2. Quote comes from L. C. Moïse, *Isaac Harby* (Charleston: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1931), 99. On Charleston’s Jewish community during this period, see James William Hagy, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993).
3. For the text of “Memorial—A Petition to the Parent Congregation,” see L.C. Moïse, 52–59, the source from which all quotations from the document in this paper have been drawn. We do not know very much about either the meeting on November 21, 1824, or the one held on December 23, 1824. Barnett A. Elzas noted that the memorial was written by Abraham Moïse. Cf. Barnett A. Elzas, *Reformed Society of Israelites: History and Constitution* (New York: Bloch Publishers, 1916), 44. The decision to petition the *Adjunta* for liturgical changes was probably made at the November meeting. During the interim, the memorial was written. A minimum of forty-seven Israelites attended the January convention, although it is possible that others attended and decided not to sign the petition. Cf., L. C. Moïse, “Memorial,” 52, 59, and 99. The use of terms like “memorial” and “convention” reflect political language then current in South Carolina. The terminology would have been familiar to many of the society’s founders, since a large number of them had been active in local politics.
4. The rejection letter was sent on Monday, January 10, 1825. Cited in L.C. Moïse, 59–60.
5. For more on the history of this society, see Gary Phillip Zola, *Isaac Harby of Charleston, 1788–1828: Jewish Reformer and Intellectual* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 112–149.
6. During the first year of its existence, the society attracted a great deal of attention, both positive and negative. Their ideas were commended by some and condemned by others. Some have insisted that the society was “small” and “insignificant.” By another account, however, the Reformed Society of Israelites had successfully attracted nearly 200 partisans little more than a year after its constitution was written. See Elzas, *The Reformed Society of Israelites*, 19. Several newspapers ran the advertisement appealing for building fund subscriptions. Cf., *Charleston Mercury*, September 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., 1826. Michael A. Meyer has characterized the society’s prayer book as “the first radical liturgy produced in the Reform movement anywhere.” Cf., Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 49, n. 145, and p. 231. The prayer book of the Reformed Society of Israelites appears to have been the fourth oldest Reform liturgy in the world. *Gebete am Sabbath Morgens und an den beiden Neujahrs Tagen* was published—probably in 1815—for worship services conducted under the auspices of Israel Jacobson in Berlin. *Die Deutsche Synagoge*, vols. 1 and 2, appeared in 1817–1818, and, in 1819, *Ordnung der öffentlichen Andacht für die Sabbath- und Festtage des ganzen Jahres. Nach dem Gebrauche des Neuen-Tempel-Vereins in Hamburg — Seder Ha-Avodah* was published in Hamburg. Cf., Jakob Petuchowski, *Prayer Book Reform in Europe: The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1968), 2.
7. The memorialists refer to the publication as “the Frankfurt Journal.” This reference may refer to the *Frankfurter Journal*, but until the original article itself is located, it will be impossible to determine the paper’s identity with absolute certainty. The *Frankfurter Journal* was first published by a man named Emel in 1615. See Wolfgang Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen* (Stuttgart: Berlag, 1855), 144.
8. David Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism* (Syracuse, New York: The Mason-Henry Press, 1907), 149–150. Until the actual article cited is identified, it will be impossible to determine whether the developments mentioned related to reform initiatives in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt or elsewhere.
9. L.C. Moïse, 58 (emphasis added).
10. Lou H. Silberman, *American Impact: Judaism in the United States in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1964), 7.
11. David Philipson, 461.
12. Jakob J. Petuchowski, “Abraham Geiger and Samuel Holdheim: Their Differences in Germany and Repercussions in America,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* (1977): 149.
13. L.C. Moïse, 52 (emphasis added).
14. W. Gunther Plaut, *The Rise of Reform Judaism* (New York: UAHC Press, 1963), 238.
15. L.C. Moïse, 57.
16. David Philipson, 30.
17. *Ibid.*, 59.
18. Darren Staloff, “Deism and the Founding of the United States,” accessed on July 10, 2010 at <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/deism.htm>
19. Jakob J. Petuchowski, 151.
20. Cf. Rabbi Sidney Greenberg, *A Treasury of The Art of Living* (Hollywood, California: Wilshire Book Company, 1963), 246.



*Have We Not All One Father? Has Not One God Created Us All?*

*Malachi 2:10*

*Monument on the site of the Jacobson Temple, Seesen*

“Above all, O God, make us vividly conscious that we are brothers with all the adherents of other Divine teachings; that we are descendants of one humanity which adores Thee as their common Father; that we are brothers who must learn love and gentle tolerance... who will meet each other on one and the same road. Amen.”

*From Israel Jacobson's Dedication Prayer for the new Temple, July 17, 1810*

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