

# The Treasure of the Torah

The Story of the Rabbi Family Auerbach



## Travelling Exhibition

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Children-Teaching, association of encouraging interreligious and intercultural learning

# The Auerbachs – an Orthodox Rabbi Family

In 1499 a writ of protection is given to a man called „Moses von Auerbach“ (Moses from Auerbach). The name Auerbach has its origin in a town near Nuremberg. He is supposed to have been a “court Jew” of the bishop of Regensburg. You can find relatives of the family Auerbach who live in Vienna (Austria), Poland (“Awerbuch”, “Orbach”, “Urbach”) and in Alsace. Many of the male members of the family become rabbis. The tradition demands that at least one son of each family has to become a rabbi. He is expected to continue this tradition. Often he obtains, as a part of his commitment, the first name of his “rabbigrandfather”.

As a result of the Enlightenment and emancipation in the 18th and 19th century many Jews adapt to the Non-Jewish society (assimilation). Also rabbis support this new way. It is the beginning of Reform Judaism.

The Auerbachs do not follow this new “trend”, they still support the stricter religious way of Judaism and follow the old tradition – they stay “orthodox”, which means “law-abiding”. In contrast to Reform Judaism this traditional form is referred to as Orthodoxy or sometimes as Neo-Orthodoxy or modern Orthodoxy.

The Auerbach associate with many of the famous orthodox rabbi families through marriage and friendship. In the course of time a proper network develops. The rabbis **A**uerbach, **B**amberger and **C**arlebach are also called the “ABC” of the orthodox rabbis.



# Abraham Auerbach (1761–1846)

Abraham Auerbach is born 1761 in Bouxwiller in Alsace as the son of the rabbi Aviesri Selig. His mother is the daughter of the rabbi Isaac Sinzheim of Trier. At the age of four Abraham becomes an orphan, at the age of six his stepmother sends him to his grandfather Zwi Hirsch in Worms. In his yeshiva Abraham begins (as usual) with his first Jewish studies.

*Photos: Yeshiva of Abraham's grandfather (from 2008, now restored) and the rabbi-house in Bouxwiller.*



Of his father's inheritance Abraham only accepts his writings (explanations to the Talmud and others). After his grandfather's death Abraham also inherits his writings. Abraham studies in Frankfurt. After his graduation Abraham goes back to Alsace to his uncle David Josef Sin(t)zheim. His uncle's father-in-law Cerf Beer is a politically influential court Jew in those parts.

After Abraham is confirmed as a rabbi, he marries Gittel, the only daughter of David Josef Sin(t)zheim, in 1780. They have four children. In addition to the studies of the Jewish tradition Abraham was also interested in other sciences.

In the course of the French Revolution not only the political situation changes, but since 1794 also the situation for the Jews in Alsace.

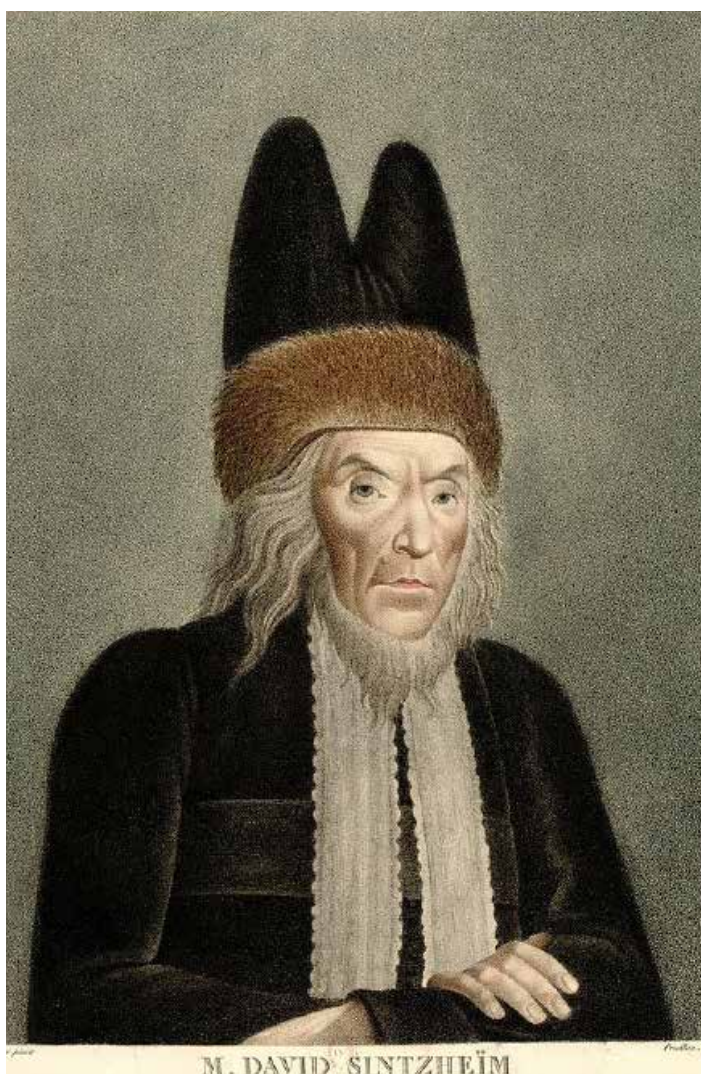
# Consequences of the Revolution

The carefree life of the families Auerbach and Sinzheim is over. Revolutionary troops are also quartered in Jewish houses. But even worse, worshipping is almost completely forbidden to Jews. „Freedom, equality, brotherhood“ do not seem to apply to everyone after all yet. The two families move to Straßburg (Strasbourg), where Abraham's brother-in-law lives. Abraham can study history, geography and natural history at the academy of Straßburg.

The side effects of the revolution even catch up with Abraham in Straßburg. Because of „illegal“ circumcision Abraham gets arrested, is imprisoned on 30 May 1794 and sentenced to death.

Also his wife Gittel is arrested, because she refuses to wear more revealing clothes and open hair, which are a sign of the revolution.

A coincidence saved Abraham Auerbach's life: Two days before his execution date, on 27 July 1794, Robespierre is murdered. Abraham's death sentence is suspended and he is set free on 20 August. In the Swiss mountains he waits together with his wife Gittel, who has also been set free, for the end of the revolution. Then he goes back to Straßburg, where he becomes a rabbi.



In 1804 Napoleon becomes emperor. His new administrative structure also affects the Jews. He does not only want to unify everything, but also wants to put civil rights above the religious laws. A assembly of 112 chosen notables is called together to confirm this. Abraham's father-in-law Sinzheim belongs to them. Many modern rabbis want to follow Napoleon's specifications, but Sinzheim succeeds in influencing many laws in favour of orthodox Jews. His sermon (in German) given on Napoleon's birthday on 15. August 1806 in the synagogue in Paris proved to be historically consequential: Napoleon takes a positive view on the Jews and even promises Sinzheim not to touch the civil rights of French Jews.



# Chief Rabbi in the States of the Confederation of the Rhine

Abraham Auerbach has the reputation of a major Torah scholar with great knowledge.

That is why he becomes a rabbi in 1802 in Neuwied and Chief Rabbi of the Rhine Alliance states. He reaches the equality of Jews living there with the French Jews. 1802 his wife Gittel dies at the age of 37. Abraham marries Esther Rebecca Oppenheim, the daughter of a rabbi and merchant, with whom he is going to have 16 children.

In 1812 David Sinzheim dies, Abraham also inherits his writings.

Abraham's last office is that of the Chief Rabbi in the „Consistoire Koblenz“ created in 1808, whose headquarters were moved to Bonn in 1810. Here he sees his main duty in the fight against religious reformers at Bonn University. In 1838 he gives the rabbinate to his son. Abraham Auerbach, „the highest authority of the Torah and a great helper in with private problems“, dies 1846.

DER TREUE ZIONSWÄCHTER, ORGAN ZUR WAHRUNG DER INTERESSEN  
DES ORTHODOXEN JUDENTHUMS, NO. 5 UND 6 VOM 3. UND 10. FEBRU-  
AR 1846

Rabbi Abraham Auerbach's gravestone, Jewish Cemetery in Bonn-Schwarz-rheindorf (photo).



The Rhine Province is rather Catholic, the Bonn University rather Evangelical. The reformist part of Judaism is more orientated to Protestantism and takes over, e.g. the Talar as official clerical robes. In Bonn Ludwig Philippson works, who as a rabbi of Magdeburg belongs to the reform movement. He is the founder, publisher and editor of the newspaper „Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums“. At Bonn University also teaches Abraham Geiger, one of the leading personalities of Reform Judaism. Abraham Auerbach forbids this gifted orator to give any speeches and sermons in the synagogue for fear of a possible take-over of the rabbinate by Geiger. Some of the religious, often polemical controversies can be read in both Philippson's (Liberal) „Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums“ and the Orthodox newspaper „Der Israelit“. (ONLINE: COMPACT MEMORY)

# Abraham's Children

Abraham Auerbach's children are examples of the orthodox „network“ that closely connects the rabbi families.

## Aaron

Dr. Aaron Auerbach is to succeed his father Rabbi in Bonn. His son Sohn Zacharias is a Rabbi in Wuppertal-Elberfeld, who is acquainted with the Lasker family. Else Lasker-Schüler „immortalizes“ him in her poems.

## Leon

Leon becomes a rabbi in Geneva.

## Rosa

Rosa marries Mayer Neustadt, an Assistance rabbi in Darmstadt

## Josef

Josef becomes a teacher in Wald near Solingen. He is the father of Dr. med. Auerbach, who becomes a famous doctor in Cologne, where he founded the „israelitische Krankenhaus“ (hospital).

## Samuel

Samuel becomes a Rabbi

## Jeanette

Jeanette marries Maximilian Feist, owner of the Sparkling Wine Cellars Feist - well known till today.

Erich Klibansky is an important descendant. During Nazi-time, he was the director of the „Jawne“, the first (and last in the Rhineland, till today) Jewish-orthodox Reform-Realgymnasium in Cologne. He was able to save many of his pupils/students by sending them with „Children Transport“ to England. When he and his family tried to escape, it was too late. He and his family were not able to escape and murdered by the Nazis.



# The New Rabbinical Education

Abraham Auerbach studies science subjects just because of his private interest. But to his successors a university degree was natural condition to become an office as rabbi.

The share of well educated members of the communities grow and also grow the expectation of the capability of the rabbies. They should know much more than the classic rabbinical erudition. They should also have a high level of education in general, not only in religious affairs.



SEMINAR-SYNAGOGUE

Esriel Hildesheimer, orthodox rabbi in Eisenstadt wanted to establish a new concept in educating rabbies. The concept should meet the change of times as well as the Halacha and the Jewish tradition.

He is successful during his time in Berlin as rabbi of the orthodox egression community. The „Berliner“ (or “Hildesheimer” – named after him) Rabbiseminar combined Thora-Talmud-Studies together with science on a high academical level.

This Seminar should become the place of education of the spiritual elite and guides on the position of leadership saving the future of the orthodox Judaism.

Members of the first Board of Trustees had been three rabbies and other personalities (besides others):

Dr. Selig Auerbach and Gustav Hirsch (relative of Hildesheimer and Auerbachs, owner of a copper and metal goods works).



HÖRSAAL I

The condition to study at an university is getting the university entrance qualification (Abitur). But no „Jewish“ faculty existed. Future rabbis often visited lectures given by Christian theologians. Specific Jewish knowledge was taught by private teachers (capabilities) or by self-studies.

By generous patronage it was possible to found own institutes and seminars serving to the methodical training of rabbies in a modern academic thinking.

Follower of the reform Judaism founded 1854 the Jewish-Theological-Seminar in Breslau (Fraenkelsche Stiftung) and 1872 in Berlin the University of the Science of Judaism (last director: Dr. Leo Baeck).

# Hirsch Benjamin Zwi Auerbach (1808–1872)

Hirsch Benjamin Zwi, the oldest son of Abraham Auerbach from his second marriage, was born in 1808 in Neuwied. He becomes a rabbi and graduates as “Dr. phil.” in Marburg. After posts in Krefeld, Worms and Hanau, he becomes Chief Rabbi of the Grand Duke of Hessen in Darmstadt, where he marries Baron Willi von Rothschild in November 1849 (and not the local reform rabbi Leopold Steine, see newspaper article).



Frankfurt a. M. Am 21. Nov. ward hier der junge Baron Willi von Rothschild getraut. Der selbe umging den radikalen Stadtrabbiner Leopold Stein, und ließ sich von dem allgemein hochgeachteten Stadt- und Landrabbiner Herrn Dr. Auerbach aus Darmstadt trauen. — Und in der That verdient es Herr Dr. Auerbach, daß ihm diese Ehre zu Theil ward, denn dieser würdige Geistliche kämpft unermüdet für das orthodoxe Judenthum und geht den jungen Rabbinen mit dem schönsten Beispiele voran.

DER TREUE ZIONSWÄCHTER, 25. JANUAR 1850

The tension in the community increases. And because the community joins the reform movement, Auerbach has to resign from the office of the Chief Rabbi in 1857. In Frankfurt he devotes himself to literary work, until he gets appointed as rabbi to Halberstadt in 1863. Halberstadt gets important for the family Auerbach and the Jewish orthodoxy later on. Hirsch Benjamin is considered one of the most important, leading rabbi in this field. As one of the first orthodox rabbi he preaches in high German.

Hirsch Benjamin get married to Lea Frenkel and has seven children with her. Their life shows how the “Auerbach network” continues:

Their daughter Rachel marries Wolf Fränkel and their daughter Täubchen (Toni) marries Karl Guggenheim; both sons-in-law come from old Jewish families. Toni’s twin brother is going to uphold this tradition.

Hirsch Benjamin publishes sermons, a textbook about the religion of Israel and a book about the rite of circumcision. He also publishes the (handwritten) halachische Sefer ha’eschkol by Abraham ben Isaak from Narbonne (from the 11th century) under the title “Schola talmudica”.



# Selig Sigmund Aviesri Auerbach (1840–1901)

Selig Sigmund Aviesri Auerbach was born in Darmstadt on 24th December 1840. He is graduated and leads an orthodox secondary school in Fürth. He becomes a rabbi, too, and eventually he becomes the successor of his father after his death in Halberstadt, where he celebrates his 25th anniversary.




He belonged to the supporters of the foundation of the ‚Berliner Rabbinerseminar‘ of Esriel Hildesheimer and becomes a member of its first Board of Trustees. Some members of the Auerbach family are later going to study and teach at this institution.



Auerbach-Archiv

On the occasion of Selig's death on 21st September 1901, orthodox communities, schools, organisations and the municipal authorities of the town, his relatives and his friends send letters of condolences. The newspaper "DER ISRAELIT" does not only report in great detail about his funeral but also in several issues about his life and work.

He has twelve children during his marriage with Rosa Hirsch. The eldest son Aaron becomes the first Nazi victim of his family in 1938. One of the other children, Emil Isaac, who was born in 1870, becomes a rabbi. His grandchild, the rabbi Nathan Rafael Auerbach, now lives in Jerusalem. He manages the heritage of his family and keeps the documents and (religious) manuscripts of the Auerbachs. He has published the genealogy of the 6000 family members in two volumes under the title „DIE WÄCHER DES HEILIGTUMS – DIE RABBINER DER FAMILIE AUERBACH IN ASHKENAZ“ (Germany). („Guards of Holy/Torah“)

Zeitung Nr. <u>370</u> Telegramm Nr. <u>11</u>	= Vorstand der juedischen gemeinde halberstadt		
Angenommen von <u>1897</u> am <u>11te</u> M <sup>o</sup> . durch <u>18</u>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="333 2335 550 2472">           Telegraphie des              Amt Halberstadt.         </td> <td data-bbox="550 2335 1029 2472">           Ausgefertigt            am <u>11te</u> M<sup>o</sup>.            durch <u>18</u> </td> </tr> </table>	Telegraphie des  Amt Halberstadt.	Ausgefertigt am <u>11te</u> M <sup>o</sup> . durch <u>18</u>
Telegraphie des  Amt Halberstadt.	Ausgefertigt am <u>11te</u> M <sup>o</sup> . durch <u>18</u>		
Telegramm an <u>+ v frankfurtmain 3+ 43 24 11 45</u> Min.			

# Joseph Auerbach (1872–1943)

Joseph, the third son of Selig Sigmund Aviesri, is born in Fürth on the 2nd January 1872. He does not follow the rabbi tradition, but becomes a businessman and goes to Hamburg in 1896. He founds a trading partnership with his brother named Aaron Auerbach, which he leads alone later. Joseph works in the company “Hirsch`s Kupfer- und Messingwerke“, but later he founds his own shop and trades with pharmaceutical items.

On the 21st December 1905 he marries Rosalie Rosa Cahn in Mainz, who was born there in 1885. He has six children with her. The family is economically well-to-do.



Family-Archiv

Hamburg as a hansa town is one of the old trading towns with many traditions and contacts all over the world. Also Jewish families can participate in the aspiring upper classes. Those who live in Hamburg, Altona and Wandsbeck belong to a large association of municipalities which maintains synagogues, schools and a hospital. Also there are four Jewish newspapers that are published in Hamburg.

Joseph's brother Aaron gets arrested already in 1938, he is put into a concentration camp in Neuengamme (near Hamburg) and dies because of the consequences of the imprisonment. The business gets transacted. Joseph and Rosa host their nephew Josef in 1938; his emigration to Palestine is successful.

Rosa starts to cook for other Jews to earn money after Joseph had to give up his shop. Eventually the family has to move to one of the „Judenhäuser“ in Dillstraße 15.1, which were houses where only Jews were forced to live by the Nazis. On 15th July 1942 they are deported from Hamburg to Theresienstadt. Joseph Auerbach dies there on 25th January 1943. Rosa is deported to Auschwitz on 9th October 1944, where she is murdered immediately after she arrived (probably together with one of her daughters).

Only two of six children survive the NS-time.



# Selig Sigmund Auerbach (1906–1997)

On 20th October 1906 the first child is born into the Auerbach family in Hamburg. Traditionally the son gets the name of the grandfather. In this case: Selig Sigmund. Just as his five siblings, he enjoys a traditional and orthodox education and he visits the Talmund-Tora secondary school. In order to gain the higher education entrance qualification he switches to the (non-Jewish) Albrecht-Thaer-Higher-Secondary school, which is seen as a progressive school. He graduates from this school with his A levels in 1925.



Talmud Tora secondary school and the Synagogue, Staatsarchiv Hamburg



Archiv University Würzburg

For the summer term he enrolls at the University of Marburg for the subjects of History, German, and Philosophy. At this time he has already started with his Talmudic studies.

He does not only keep the name of his grandfather but becomes a rabbi as well.

For the winter term he goes to Berlin to continue his studies at the seminar of rabbis. In 1933 he is ordained as a rabbi. He finishes his studies at the University of Würzburg, where he is promoted as one of the last Jewish doctors (Dr. Phil.).

*Auerbach Selig*  
zu *Hamburg* geb. *20.10.06*  
Relig. *isr.* Staatsang. *Bayern*

Name des Vaters *Auerbach Josef* Beruf *Prüfungsamt*  
Name der Mutter *Hamburg* Wohnort *Klopphollenstraße 9*

Semester	Studium	Datum	Gebühr	Nummer	Wohnung
<i>Wi. 30/31</i>	<i>phil.</i>	<i>27.10</i>	<i>29.-</i>	<i>304</i>	<i>Rothenturmstr. 113</i>
<i>Sp. 31</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>1.12.</i>	<i>21.-</i>	<i>1495</i>	<i>"</i>

Abgangszeugnis  
Promoviert zum Dr. phil.  
am *24. Februar 1933*

Abgangszeugnis z. Pr.

Hinterlegte Zeugnisse  
Reifezeugnis — Primareife  
Gymnasium, Realgymnasium, Ober  
*Hamburg 28. II. 21*  
Oberschule, Aufbauschule  
Studienanstalt  
gymnasialer, realgymnasialer, Oberrealschul  
Oberlyceum  
Abgangszeugnis *Berlin*

Die rheinischen Rabbinerversammlungen  
im 13. Jahrhundert.

Inaugural-Dissertation  
verfaßt und der  
Hohen Philosophischen Fakultät  
der  
Bayerischen Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg  
zur  
Erlangung der philosophischen Doktorwürde  
vorgelegt von  
Selig Auerbach  
aus  
Hamburg.  
Würzburg, S. S. 1931.

Druck von P. Helbig, Würzburg  
Ede. Kretzer-Theresien-Strasse.

DE 58350



# Jewish-orthodox Teacher Training

In the Weimar Republic in the 1920s the teacher training is given a new foundation and therefore most of the Jewish seminars are closed. The other academies, however, are confessional ones and demand A levels.

In Würzburg the former district rabbi Seligman Bär Bamberger founded the Israelite teacher training institution (ILBA) already in 1864. This institution remains even after the reform. The same applies to the institution in Cologne. The founders wanted to have well-trained Jewish teachers for religion and other subjects because of their strict and religious orientation. They wanted to send out the teachers to smaller Jewish grade schools and communities.

*„In a modern society an adequate orthodox training and education should have a future.“  
Jewish teachers should be educated „like their Christian colleagues and being able to mediate present-oriented knowledge suitable for children. On the other hand they should pass on Jewish tradition and Jewish identity plausible not only to children in schools but also to all members of the small Jewish communities, that have no rabbi.“*

STEIDLE, HANS: JAKOB STOLL UND DIE ISRAELITISCHE LEHRERBILDUNGSANSTALT.  
EINE SPURENSUCHE. WÜRZBURG 2002, 2)



## „The ILBA gave us hope“ (a graduate)

For the preparation of future students at the Würzburg teacher seminar there is a special preparatory school (“Präparandenschule”).

Not before the year 1928 it is decided that girls or young women are accepted and allowed to be trained as teachers. In this teacher seminar also students without A-Levels (Abitur) are allowed to be trained, they only have a different length of training time until the exams. During the Nazi-time the teacher seminar is becoming more important because Jews are banned from universities. Since the Jewish children are only allowed to attend Jewish schools the demand for Jewish teachers increases. The focus of teaching in these days is on the enhancement of Jewish identity and self-assertion as well as practical subjects such as sports and English, so that the Jewish children could have future in a foreign country.

In 1938 the ILBA is closed.



# The Family Fromm

Hilda Fromm studied at the beginning of the 1930s at the ILBA in Würzburg. Her family was part of an important orthodox family. Their ancestors can be traced back to the 11th century. One of them is the famous Rashi (Salomon ben Isaak), an important Bible and Talmud commentator who studied in Worms and Mainz. Others among her relatives are the creator of the ILBA Rabbi Seligmann Baer Bamberger and sociologist and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm. The paternal branch of the family lives in Großlangheim (district of Kitzingen). In 1908 father Wilhelm moves together with his brother Heinrich to Würzburg, where they establish the wholesale firm of wine named „Gebrüder Fromm“ („Fromm Brothers“). Only in 1918 they get their civil rights. In Würzburg Wilhelm marries the daughter of a men’s clothes manufacturer, Rosa Sachs. Here their child, daughter Hilda (Hilde) is born on 27th June 1911. Her parents set great store by her upbringing and higher education.

Verheiratet mit		Verwitwet — Geschieden	
Ehefrau — mann	<i>Rosa Sachs</i>	Ehemann — frau	
geborene	<i>geb. 18. 11. 1877</i>	Stand	
Religion	<i>Jüd.</i>	Religion	
geboren am	<i>27. Juni 1911</i>	am	
zu	<i>Würzburg</i>	zu	
und wohnhaft in	<i>17. Juni 1911</i>		
Ehefrau am	<i>17. Juni 1911</i>		
zu	<i>Würzburg</i>		
Ehren der Ehefrau	<i>Wilhelm Sachs</i>		
Vater	<i>Sachs</i>		
Stand	<i>geb.</i>		
Mutter	<i>Rosa Sachs</i>		
geborene	<i>Rosenbaum</i>		
in	<i>Würzburg</i>		
Kinder:		Bemerkungen:	
<i>Hilde, geb. 27. 6. 1911</i>			

Stadtarchiv Würzburg

Dr. Selig Auerbach, professor at the ILBA and Hilda Fromm, who is studying there, get to know each other. In 1934 they get engaged, which is announced in the newspaper „DER ISRAELIT , No. 20 ,17TH MAI 1934“.

Hilda Fromm 1934, Familienarchiv



The brothers Wilhelm and Heinrich Fromm served in the First World War. This however does not protect them from later persecution by the Nazis. Both are arrested after the Night of Broken Glass on 9th November 1938. They are forced to give up their company. Wilhelm returns seriously ill from the Buchenwald concentration camp and dies soon afterwards under unexplained circumstances: he is found dead in his wine cellar in 1939. His wife Rosa will remain in the apartment until she is forced to move into the „Judenhaus Heim Konradstraße 3“. In November 27, 1941 she is deported to the ghetto in Riga, where her traces are lost in the concentration camp Jungfernhof. William’s brother emigrated with his wife to the United States in 1940, where his son Martin Heinrich already lived.

# Jews in the Vest Recklinghausen

Gottschalk of Recklinghausen is one of a group of merchants who came to Westphalia in the 12th and 13th century. A settlement of Jews in the Vest (district) Recklinghausen is documented since the early 14th century. A famous person from Recklinghausen is the banker Vitus.

It is not sure if there were more Jews in Recklinghausen between 1500 and 1700 than the ones known by name who could have made a community of at least ten adult men possible. Later Jewish merchants were expelled and from the later 17th century on until 1800 no Jews are mentioned.

As a result of the emancipation Jews settle in areas of what is now known as the “Kreis (district) Recklinghausen”. Master butchers are the first persons who are accepted because the citizens are dissatisfied with the local butchers. Gradually the number of Jewish inhabitants grows.

A Jewish community is formed according to a notary contract on the 1st May 1827, in 1829 the community is entered into the register of associations (“Ver-einsregister”). 1847 the government in Münster decrees the formation of a synagogue district which comprises not only the Jews who live in Recklinghausen but also the Jews from nearby cities. Only six years later the first elections to the board take place and since 1855 the synagogue community is a corporation (body) under public law (“Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts”). In addition to Recklinghausen the cities Ahsen, Datteln, Flaesheim, Herten, Horneburg, Waltrop and Henrichenburg also become part of it.

On the 18th January 1074 King Heinrich IV. grants Jews customs freedom. Known by name is Mar Schemarja. Until 1300 the Jews spread in Westphalia and found communities in Münster, Dortmund, Minden, Osnabrück and Soest. Often merchants arrive, two of them are Gottschalk from Recklinghausen and Leo from Münster; also some bankers are known. Their business relations go beyond Westphalia. In 1350 the Jews are accused of being responsible for the outbreak of the plague and they are expelled from the cities, which almost destroys Jewish life or at least makes it meaningless. First in the 15th century more Jews come to Westphalia again, also to Recklinghausen but they do not have any civil rights and real estate. They are just tolerated for a short while.

In the 17th century we find many court Jews who advance to being influential confidantes in contrast to many poor Jews who are not in the possession of any writ of protection. The “Kingdom Westphalia” founded by Napoleon lasts only for a short period but paves the way for the Jewish people, offering them new opportunities for their personal development through emancipation, integration and assimilation. In 1815 Westphalia becomes a Prussian province. The Emancipation Edict of 1812 does not apply to Westphalia, so that five different sets of rules for Jews apply in the different regions. At the time of the constitution of the Parliament in 1871 there are 17245 Jews living in Westphalia, which is nearly 1% of the population.



# Orthodox „Egression Communities“

In the first half of the 19th century the inner Jewish religious conflict about finding the right way also starts in Westphalia.

Lazer Levi Hellwitz, the head of the Jews in the duchy of Westphalia, is the most important representative of the reform movement. The rabbi of Münster, Abraham Sutro, is his most important law-abiding opponent. The community of Synagogues in Recklinghausen goes into an orthodox direction.

1890 the rabbi of Bielefeld Felix Coblenz offers services even on (Christian) Sundays and publishes a “textbook of the Jewish religion”. In this book he dissociates himself from the traditional Judaism in a critical way.

Some communities in Westphalia join this reform movement and found the “Union of the communities of Synagogues of Westphalia.”

When this usually liberal moderate union wants to allow a prayer-book as a public textbook for the Jewish elementary schools which contains crucial differences to the current one, the orthodox communities react to that.

1896 the “Organization for preserving the religious interests of the Jews in the province of Westphalia” is founded. Members of this organization are small communities of the Münsterland near Höxter and Warburg. Temporarily no less than 39 from 100 Westphalian communities belong to this organization. They see themselves as a “Bulwark of traditional piety” and are said to be orthodox “Egression-Communities”. They build up their own rabbinate, whose domicile often changes. At first the headquarter is in Warburg, then in Recklinghausen.

*The founders of this organization explain: “In the same way as in former times our ancestors received the teaching at the mountain Sinai, which says that they will be forever holy, we see ourselves as dutiful sons of our forefathers, today and forever. The teaching of Israel is as a truth of God a timeless idea which cannot be changed by humans according to their whim. The real form that Judaism needs, however, is the education of time according to the Thora, not a linguistic niveling of the Thora according to the time.”*

The Secession law from 1876 by the Prussian Landtag (parlament) allows such spin-offs. 1902 arises the “Organization to preserve the religious interests of the Jews in the Rhineland”. Co-founder is Dr. Benedict Wolf (Cologne), an uncle of the Rabbi Dr. Selig Sigmund Auerbach.

Since 1906 this organization runs its own rabbinate (Adass Jeschurun).

The rabbi is Emanuel Carlebach, he and Wolf are 1921 co-founders of “Jawne” (Reform-Realgymnasium) in 1921.

Wolf is the chairman of the directorate and many years responsible for the communities in Westphalia.

# The District Rabbinate Recklinghausen

Dr. Gerson Lange, who lives in Warburg, becomes the first rabbi of the district rabbinate, until Lange is appointed to be the head teacher of the secondary school in Frankfurt/Main. His successor, from 1903 until 1910, is Dr. Marx from Darmstadt. The headquarters is moved to Recklinghausen, that is why the community gets their first rabbi. The reason of the relocation of the district rabbinate is that the increasing urbanization and the flight from the land have led to the development of strong orthodox groups. Thus the synagoge consecrated in 1880 is not sufficient anymore. On the 29th August 1904, Dr. Marx consecrates the new synagoge in Limperstreet. In his curatorship he installs the new cemetery at the Nordcharway (1905). Dr. Marx' successors are: Rabbi Dr. David Joseph Brader (1910-1912, who was a teacher at a Jewish teacher seminar in Cologne before), Dr. Julius Michalski (1913-1918, directly after his ordination as rabbi) and Dr. Joseph Weiß (1918-1922). Dr. Weiß moves the headquarters of the district Recklinghausen to Gelsenkirchen. Soon after that, the "Organization to preserve the religious interests of the Jews in Westphalia" splits up. In 1930 the Prussian National Association re-activates the Westphalian district rabbinate as a consequence of "unsatisfactory conditions" in Recklinghausen, but relocates the headquarters to Borken.

*Almost all mentioned orthodox rabbis (here and on other posters) are students of the „Berliner Rabbinerseminar“ by Esriel Hildesheimer.*



THE NEW SYNAGOGUE IN RECKLINGHAUSEN, LIMPERSTREET, CONSECRATED IN 1904  
STADTARCHIV RECKLINGHAUSEN

In times of vacancy and after the relocation of the district rabbinate to Gelsenkirchen, Dr. Benedict Wolf from Cologne assumes the supervision of the Westphalian communities, including the community of Recklinghausen. He is responsible for the Kaschrut and supervises the supply with kosher food. Already in World War 1, he takes on the supply of the Jewish troops at the Western front with kosher food.

Wolf is married to a daughter of Esriel Hildesheimer. In 1936 he emigrates to Palestine.



# Appointment to Recklinghausen

When Dr. Selig Sigmund Auerbach is appointed to the rabbi of the district rabbinate Recklinghausen in autumn 1934, the headquarters is moved back there again. Auerbach becomes responsible for a quite extensive district with several communities. On 7th September his registration card records his move from Würzburg to Recklinghausen. One month later, on 7th October, he is formally introduced to his office by the responsible head of the department for culture of the Prussian country association, the rabbi Dr. Siegfried Galliner. Two months after that, on 7th December, a Friday, the marriage of rabbi Dr. Selig Sigmund Auerbach and Hilda Fromm is documented in the registry office in Recklinghausen. On 9th December the wedding takes place in the synagogue and is carried out by the rabbi Dr. Sigmund Hanover from Würzburg. Except for one brother, all siblings and the parents come to Recklinghausen. The married couple moves into the rabbi flat in the house of the Jewish community “Am Polizeipräsidium 3”. (The name of the small street till today: „At Police Headquarters“)

Name: A u e r b a c h , Selig Sigmund Abraham Josef

Stand: Rabbiner

Geb. am 20 ten 10. 1 906, Religion: isr. , Familienstand: led.

Geburtsort: Hamburg , Kreis:

Woher zugezogen: Würzburg , Kreis:

Staatsangehörigkeit: Dtsch .

Datum der Meldung	Abmeldung oder Abgang	als	bei	Ort	Strasse	Nr
17.9.	7.9.34		Levi	I	Breitestr.	

Siehe Familienkarte

MELDEKARTE VON S. AUEBACH, STADTARCHIV RECKLINGHAUSEN

“Rabbi Dr. Auerbach thanked in his inaugural speech all instances for the trust which was expressed to him (...) and described the multiple tasks of the rabbi at the present time. He must be a teacher and social worker, friend and consultant of everyone. To be able to do this work fully, the rabbi has to remain faithful himself and is not allowed to demand anything from the members of the community that he cannot fulfill himself.”

“On Sunday (...) the ceremonial inauguration of the new elected district rabbi (...) took place (...) in the festively decorated synagogue. The chairman of the synagogue community, Hr. Ludwig Hirsch,(...) thanked the Prussian country association for their readiness to make sacrifices and their efforts to receive the conservative district rabbinate and to move its domicile back to Recklinghausen (...), the biggest district community. Then (...) Dr. Galliner (...) introduced the new district rabbi in his office.”

He admonishes him to think about his orthodox upbringing and the education he received in his parents’ home.

DER ISRAELIT, NR. 42 VOM 18. OKTOBER 1934/9. MARSCHEWAN 5695, S. 4  
(AND LEFT)