

MASORTI EUROPEAN MISSION SERMON SPARKS

Richard Hammerman

1-Europe is not a “vast Jewish graveyard.” Vital and growing, vis-à-vis Pew Report, et al,

Conclusion: Ref. Jonathan Wittenberg (synagogue full to overflowing with two simultaneous services on Shabbat morning plus at least 4 childrens’ services) B’haalotcha, “raising the flame.” We can create light. God created light. But we can raise the light on the light on the Menorah and help to spread it.

2- Ref: story by Chaim Weiner, Av Beit Din, Europe (explain). Met 22-year old from Slovackia at the Beit Din. Asked her typical question: What brought you here to want to convert. She explained that she was in a Café a couple of years ago someplace in Slovackia and overheard a conversation in a language with which she was not familiar- but understood! Asked the elderly couple what language they were speaking. Told: Yiddish. Came home and asked her mother: How come I know Yiddish? Mother explained that Grandmother took care of her the first two years of her life while parents worked. Grandmother spoke to her in Yiddish. She remembered! Grandmother died when she was aged two. Now, she wanted to reclaim her Jewish roots. Never before did she know, or was she told by her parents, that she was Jewish.

3- Where are the largest synagogues in the world? Might surprise you to know (from Yahoo)

** The largest synagogue in the world is probably the Belz Great Synagogue, in Jerusalem, Israel; whose main Sanctuary seats 6,000. Construction on the edifice lasted for over 15 years.*

** The next largest may be the Satmar synagogue in Kiryas Joel, New York; which is said to seat "several thousand".*

** The largest synagogue in Europe is the newly constructed Bratzlav Center at the graveside of Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav in Uman, Ukraine; which seats up to 5,000*

** The Dohány Street Synagogue in Budapest, Hungary; which seats 3,000, and have an area of 1200 m² and height of 26 m (apart from the towers which are 43 m).*

** Temple Emanu-El of New York, a Reform Temple located in New York City, with an area of 3,523 m², seating 2,500.*

** Kehilas Yetev Lev D'Satmar (Williamsburg, Brooklyn); seating between 2,000 to 4,000 congregants.*

Dohany Street Synagogue:

Rebuilt with government and Jewish funding (see on-line info such as: *Dohany Street Synagogue*. A

Brief History of the Great Synagogue

The Great Synagogue in Dohány Street (also known as Dohány Street Synagogue) is the largest Synagogue in Europe and the second largest in the world, capable of accommodating 3,000 people.

The beautiful courtyard, is now a respectful gravesite for victims of the Shoah who were murdered there. . However, one of the most visited sites (if not the most visited site) in Hungary. Had to purchase tickets in advance to visit! ***Now, back in use on regular basis.***

RH and Eytan reference: Hy Josovitz of Toms River, NJ was brought there by the Nazis and put on a “death march.” Survived by eating insects and ants on side of road. Till today, will not kill an insect. In his home, will catch a fly or mosquito in his hand and release it outside....

Shoes on the Danube memorial. Most moving. 6 months before the end of WWII. By then, Nazi machine was very efficient and managed to destroy most of the Jews. Complicity of the Arrow Cross

In just eight weeks, some 424,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. After October 1944, when the Arrow Cross party came to power, thousands of Jews from Budapest were murdered on the banks of the Danube and tens of thousands were marched hundreds of miles towards the Austrian border. In all, some 565,000 Hungarian Jews were murdered.

Jeremy Gerber’s story about member of his congregation who, along with his friend, had consecutive Auschwitz numbers, were rounded up by the Nazis. A “Nazi officer,” actually not, just dressed as one, came to the round up and demanded “able bodied men” for a work detail. Got a few dozen, including these two. They went with him- then said, “I’m not really a Nazi officer: this is all I can do for you. Now try to hide....” Re-met in England. One now lives in Wallingford, PA.

Did you know that JTS began in Europe? Intellectual and religious model/Origin, the JTS of Hungary- neologue

Neologue synagogues- explain their uniqueness. No mixed seating- but used music/ organ through the years. Modern approach to study, required university training for rabbis. Ritually traditional, however, “modern” in that they used organ. See Study materials.

Cantorial “exam” we witnessed.

Marom Cultural Center:

For young adults, whose parents and often grandparents grew up under Communism and either didn't know anything about Judaism, didn't know that they were Jewish and wouldn't acknowledge their Jewish heritage because of its being an impediment under Communism (though permitted: RH and Sharon visited JTS, Budapest and attended services there for Shabbat, summer, 1972)

a-Beer, wine, coffee,

b-social action, Adam: "IF you want to breathe free air, you have to fight for it, for human rights, for gypsies (Roma), homeless, gays..." Marom: As the Gateway for future Jewish values and future.

c-NGO's, used clothing drive- saw the full bags of clothing

d-some shabbat services- DOR CHADASH (Chumashim and Siddurim donated from Caldwell, NJ and TIC (?) on shelves, ***Torah scroll used found in the basement of the Dohany Street synagogue, saved from the Nazis – hidden--- just as the Jews hid their identity and are coming out into the community, today!***

e-Cultural Festivals (largest one! 3000- 4000 in attendance!! Jewish cultural theme) , arts, drama, music,

lounge and place for younger Jews to gather. Limited staff, maximum impact. Facebook. Social Media help produce attendance and participation.

4- French countryside. Contrast in Responsa from small, countryside village and larger town. Rav. Tam vs Rashi. Rav Tam, from outside of Toules, more lenient vis-à-vis minyan requirements. Wine specifications. (See sourcebook).Rashi from "city" more strict.

5 – Paris. Adas Shalom. Created "B'kol Zimra" based on our USCJ "Bkol Echad."

Rabbi Krieger story: First Yom Kippur success, followed by Sucot: 2 men- Rabbi and President (plus, 4 + 4 arbah minim! Didn't = 10). Slow development.

Use this image homiletically, the "music of the revived communities, cultural emphasis, as well as study, aesthetics of the Masorti congregations vis-à-vis formality of the Orthodox institutions and/or shteibels which are a throwback to Eastern Europe.

In Kaddish and some of the prayers, include Sfardic wordage to be inclusive.

Masorti rabbi introduced to Paris' Chief Rabbi who said to him in **English** which the Chief Rabbi could hardly express, "**HELLO RABBI.**" Didn't want to call him Rav or French equivalent.

Wouldn't allow food under Orthodox inspection to be used/ sold to, the Masorti synagogue for simcha celebrations!!! (Complained: 'take me to court!') Then, the market changed, and began selling .

5- Memorial to those murdered at Veleldrome B'Hiver (when returned, could see Eiffel Tower, behind the clouds.... The values of the French Revolution, Equality, Fraternity and Liberty, also clouded. [RH has two photos depicting this].

6- Our own very moving memorial at Hyper Cacher. Names. Describe. Night. Wind. Cold. Israeli flags. Je Suis Charlie.

7- R. Jeremy Gordon: My favorite Mishna- Shnayim ohazim ba'talit. I'm the talit, being pulled by tradition and modernity. Tension.

His congregation used "Authorized" Orthodox (Jonathan Sacks) Siddur.