

18-6-1998

## Reform Judaism

Reform Synagogues of Great Britain

Dear Sir

Even from the distance of Great Britain it would be impossible not to be aware of the constant barrage of attacks directed against Progressive Judaism in general and Rabbi Dr Walter Homolka in particular. Much is politically motivated and malicious. Occasionally it is simply uninformed.

We would welcome the courtesy of your letters page to set the record straight.

Although career movement did not allow Rabbi Dr Homolka to study for the full required period at the Leo Baeck College in London, his semickhah (rabbinic ordination) was given by three senior, scholar-rabbis, highly respected within the American and world Reform Movements. The basis for his ordination in fact is a solid academic background with four degrees of relevance to the rabbinate: a Bachelor of Divinity, an M.Phil. in Jewish Studies, a Ph.D. in Religious Studies and a postgraduate diploma in adult education. This plus time at the Leo Baeck College, internship at Barkingside Progressive Synagogue plus practical pastoral training at a hospital and several later publications were the basis for obtaining the s'mikhah. There is not the slightest ground on which his rabbinic ordination can be questioned.

Rabbi Homolka has the admiration, respect and support of his colleagues in the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain to whom he is well known. Indeed the Liberal community in Munich, which he served, is formally associated with the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain.

Rabbi Dr Homolka has the respect and confidence of the Convenor and members of the European Beth Din.

Rabbi Homolka has the gratitude and support of the Chairman and all his colleagues within the European Region of the World Union for Progressive Judaism for his untiring work for Jews and Judaism in Germany. His energy and application on behalf of Progressive Judaism are a profound source of hope for the future.

Rabbi Dr Homolka has the respect and full support of the President and officers of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

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of Great Britain

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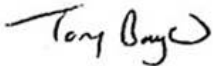


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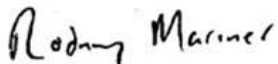
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Representing more than one and a half million Jews on five continents, the World Union for Progressive Judaism is the largest synagogal body in the world. We all celebrate Rabbi Homolka's success in Germany, stand shoulder to shoulder with the rapidly growing Progressive Movement in Germany and deplore attempts to denigrate the achievements of the man and the Movement.

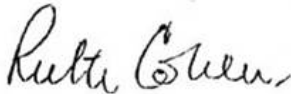
Yours sincerely



**Rabbi Tony Bayfield**  
**Chief Executive, Reform Synagogues of Great Britain**



**Rabbi Rodney Mariner**  
**Convenor, European Beth Din**



**Ruth Cohen**  
**Chairman, European Region and**  
**Senior Vice President, World Union for Progressive Judaism**