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Leo Baeck College adopts historic Czech Memorial Scroll

"An orphan scroll, a legacy of the Shoah", the Brno Sefer Torah was written in Czechoslovakia in the 1880s

By **MICHELLE ROSENBERG**

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(L to R) - Dr Charles H. Middleburgh – Dean of Leo Baeck College, Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris - Principal of Leo Baeck College, Jeffrey Orenstein - chair of the Czech Scroll Memorial Trust

The UK's only Progressive Jewish rabbinic seminary adopted a Czech Memorial scroll into its community at a moving ceremony at Westminster Synagogue on 6th September.

The Brno Sefer Torah, also known as Scroll no. 163, was written in former Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic in the 1880s.

It was presented on loan by Jeffrey Orenstein, chair of the Czech Scroll Memorial Trust, to Rabbi Dr. Deborah Kahn Harris and Rabbi Dr. Charles Middleburgh from Leo Baeck College at the Memorial Scrolls Trust Offices in London.

The scroll will now be used regularly for Torah readings at shacharit.

Rabbi Middleburgh, the Dean of Leo Baeck College, led the service, sharing the history of the Jews in Brno (around 100 miles southeast of Prague) which dates back to medieval times.



Scrolls at the Memorial Scroll Trust.

He said: “All of us at Leo Baeck recognize the significance of taking in an orphan scroll, a legacy of the Shoah, and giving it a new and loving home. We are deeply grateful to the Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust for this precious loan.”

The Memorial Scrolls Trust have 1,564 scrolls in their collection. They were rescued from across towns and villages in former Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic and donated to the Westminster Synagogue in February 1964 by philanthropist Ralph Yablon.