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CHIEF RABBI OF ROME BECOMES CONVERTED TO CATHOLICISM; JEWISH COMMUNITY ASTONISHED

ROME, Feb. 14. (JTA) — Dr. Israel Anton Zolli, for seven years Chief Rabbi of Rome, today announced that he has become converted to Catholicism. The announcement said that Dr. Zolli's wife and daughter have also renounced Judaism and have been accepted as converts by the Catholic Church.

In recognition of the humanitarian work which the Pope did in behalf of Jews during the German occupation of Rome, Dr. Zolli, who resigned as Chief Rabbi on Feb. 1, is taking the name of Eugenia Maria, which was the name of the Pope before he was elevated to his present office, the announcement, which appeared in the newspapers here, added. Dr. Zolli could not be reached for a statement.

The disclosure of their former Chief Rabbi's conversion was received with astonishment by the Jewish community of Rome. Joseph Nathan, head of the Union of Italian Jews, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent that "we had no intimation of Zolli's plans. All we know is what we have read in the newspapers. Naturally, we are sorry," he continued, "but the less said about it the better." A few days ago Dr. Zolli communicated with Mr. Nathan informing him that he could not accept appointment as head of the Rabbinical College here, which is to reopen soon, because of "personal reasons."

Other members of the local Jewish community told the JTA correspondent that Dr. Zolli has for a long time been primarily concerned with scholarly studies and out of touch with his community. His recent resignation brought the gap between him and the community into the open. Zolli told the JTA a few days ago that he felt estranged from the Jewish community and expressed his unwillingness to accept any new responsibilities from it.

Born in Brody, Eastern Galicia, in 1881, Zolli studied for the rabbinate in Vienna. In 1918 he was appointed Chief Rabbi of Trieste, a post he held until he became Chief Rabbi of Rome in 1938.

Dr. Stephen S. Wise Expresses Amusement at Conversion of Dr. Zolli

NEW YORK, Feb. 14. (JTA) — Commenting today on the announcement by Chief Rabbi Israel Zolli of Rome that he has become converted to Catholicism, Dr. Stephen S. Wise, Rabbi of the Free Synagogue here and President of the American and World Jewish Congress, said, "Naturally, I am amazed, as every Jew will be amazed, to learn of the so called conversion to Roman Catholicism of the Chief Rabbi of Rome and the members of his family. What lay behind this, I do not know, excepting that I have heard of certain things which surely have nothing to do with the change of a man's innermost faith. The Chief Rabbi has met with kindness at the hands of the Vatican and has had differences with his own flock.

"If it be the duty of a private to stand at his post, what shall we say of a General, the man in highest command. It will only be fair to wait and see what Dr. Zolli has to say about his advent into the Roman Catholic Church. It will take a great deal of explaining on his part to make intelligible the substitution by a Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Community of his own simple, reasonable, ethical faith for a faith which departs from the monotheism which Dr. Zolli's and my people have upheld for nearly 4,000 years."

UNITED PALESTINE APPEAL ISSUES STATEMENT ON DISSOLUTION OF UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

NEW YORK, Feb. 14. (JTA) — Emphasizing that "statements concerning the reasons for the dissolution of the United Jewish Appeal can serve no useful purpose in this period of high destiny for the Jewish people," Rabbi James G. Heller, national chairman of the United Palestine Appeal and of the United Jewish Appeal, today issued a statement calling upon American Jews to give their widest support to the reconstruction of the Jewish national home in Palestine to solve the problem of Jewish homelessness in Europe. Dr. Heller's statement reads as follows:

"Through the channel of the United Jewish Appeal the Jews of America, during the past six years, extended their sympathetic support to the United Palestine Appeal as well as the Joint Distribution Committee and the National Refugee Service. Statements concerning the reasons for the dissolution of the United Jewish Appeal can serve no useful purpose in this period of high destiny for the Jewish people.

"We have given the problems of this year's campaign long and careful consideration, with primary regard for the welfare of our brothers abroad who have always been and will continue to be our chief concern. In conducting its 1945 campaign the United Palestine Appeal recognizes the authority and central importance of local welfare funds. The Jewish welfare funds are the great symbol of unity in American Jewish life. They now share directly in decisions which will weigh heavily in the determination of the future of the surviving remnants of the Jewish people.

"The needs of the United Palestine Appeal and the Joint Distribution Committee are great. Regardless of whether the appeals in their behalf are made to the communities independently or in combination, we feel confident that American Jewry will meet the expanded opportunities to sustain the Jews of Europe in this transition period and to assure for the vast majority of them a permanent and secure future in the Jewish National Home in Palestine. In these terms the United Palestine Appeal calls upon the Jews of the United States to give their support in unmatched degree to Great Israel.

"We solemnly urge every community to initiate its campaign plans with dispatch and to raise maximum sums for the major causes in Jewish life. The United Palestine Appeal is confident that Jewish welfare funds will distribute their funds with a deep and sympathetic understanding of the centrality of the position of Palestine as the pivot and foundation of the Jewish future. We firmly believe that all American Jews share in the hope and determination that the survivors of mass persecution and devastation must never be homeless again. Let us in unity and harmony set our hands to this historic purpose."

Federations and Welfare Funds Council Asks Unity Despite U.J.A. Break

NEW YORK, Feb. 14. (JTA) — H. L. Lurie, executive director of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, today issued a statement to the welfare funds and other member agencies of the CJFWF reporting on the efforts of the Council to assist in bringing about the reconstitution of the United Jewish Appeal for 1945. The Council is prepared to do everything possible to assist its welfare fund agencies in readjusting their campaigns to the separate appeals of the JDC, UPA and NRS and in strengthening themselves as instruments for united communal action in fund raising as well as other communal endeavors.

In describing the Council efforts Mr. Lurie states that the former constituents of the UJA were equally cooperative with the Council's efforts to promote an agreement for 1945. "Several proposals were made by the Council representatives, some of which involved specific items as to the initial amount to be divided and the division ratio and others involving the establishment of drawing accounts and delegating the responsibility for dividing the bulk of the funds to an allotment committee of agency and community representatives. Some of these proposals were acceptable to one side and others to the other sides but in any event refusal to accept a particular proposal was

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done after most earnest consideration and only because the organization believed that the proposal would not do justice to the needs of the program and the people served by it."

The statement indicates also that the failure to reach a UJA agreement in no way reduces the need for support of the causes served by the former UJA constituents. "The needs for 1945 both for general overseas relief, rescue and rehabilitation falling within the scope of the JDC and for the Palestinian programs financed through the UPA are probably greater now than they were at any previous time. The Council feels that the welfare funds should speedily readjust their campaign plans to the separate appeals for the purpose of raising the largest possible amount for all causes and for the purpose of preserving and strengthening communal solidarity which is more important now than ever before."

YALTA STATEMENT CRITICISED FOR FAILING TO INCLUDE MEASURES AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

LONDON, Feb. 14. (JTA) — Regret that the statement issued at the conclusion of the Roosevelt-Churchill-Stalin conference in Yalta did not include any assurance that anti-semitism will be curbed by "decisive steps" after the war was expressed here today by Harold J. Laski in an article on the conference of the "Big Three".

"I regret that no assurance was given to that people which has suffered as no other people has suffered since Hitler's advent to power, that the United Nations will take decisive steps against a recurrence anywhere — even in Dorchester, Mass. — of anti-semitism," Mr. Laski writes. "For when Hitler and his gang are overthrown, there will still be a considerable number of duodecimo imitators — Mosley in England, Father Coughlin and Gerald Smith in the United States and Mayor Camille Houde in Canada — who need to be told in unmistakeable terms that when the war ends there ends with it the ghastly tragedy of anti-semitism."

"I say this because there is, alas, a considerable volume of evidence to show that Hitler's poison has seeped into innumerable veins. None of the three men at Yalta have done much to relieve the tragic burden the Jews have had to bear since 1933. It would not have been too much to expect had they given this forlorn, unhappy people a pledge that they will not have suffered in vain."

FRENCH GOVERNMENT DECIDES TO SUBMIT TO ASSEMBLY PLAN FOR RESTITUTION OF JEWISH PROPERTY

PARIS, Feb. 14. (JTA) — The French government has decided to submit to the Consultative Assembly its projected ordinance for the restitution to their original owners of properties and enterprises seized from Jews and others under the Vichy racial laws. That intention was contained today in a communique issued after a meeting of the cabinet.

According to the Ministry of Information, the ordinance "concerns the category of the property confiscated by the Vichy government or the German authorities, and ceded to acquirers who did not always act in bad faith." The text going to the Consultative Assembly is virtually the same as the draft recently prepared by the Ministry of Finance and which was severely criticized by some of those who studied it on grounds that it made recovery of property by the original owners a long and difficult process, and because it established the rights of the Vichy acquirers, which had been denied them by the present government before the liberation.

There have been certain amendments of this draft to meet some of these objections, but it is understood that they do not affect the basic principles of the measure. According to Felix Gouin, president of the Consultative Assembly, the measure will come up for action within the month. It is generally expected, however, that in its present form it will have rough handling in that body, and that further amendments may be required to meet objections within the assembly.

PALESTINE MOURNS DEATH OF HENRIETTA SZOLD; SIMPLE RITES MARK BURIAL CEREMONY

JERUSALEM, Feb. 14. (JTA) — Simple rites marked the funeral today of Henrietta Szold, founder of Hadassah, who died of a heart attack last night in her room at the Hadassah Nursing School, on Mt. Scopus, at the age of 84. She was buried on the Mount of Olives.

All Jewish institutions throughout the country, flew their flags at half mast, mourning the death of the "mother in Israel". Work did not stop because Miss Szold had always opposed any cessation of work in Jewish institutions in Palestine. The Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Jewish National Council issued a joint tribute emphasizing the loss suffered by the Jewish people.

Representatives of the 12,000 young Jewish refugees whose settlement in Palestine was made possible by the Youth Aliyah, of which Miss Szold was the leading spirit, arrived here during the day from settlements throughout the country to attend the funeral of the woman who was the heart and soul of the Youth Aliyah movement. The funeral took place at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and there were no eulogies.

Miss Szold was stricken with pneumonia last August, but recovered sufficiently to resume her work at improvised offices in the Henrietta Szold School of Nursing, adjacent to the Rothschild-Hadassah University Hospital from which she continued her activities until she was again stricken with double pneumonia and was confined to the hospital.

The entire Hebrew press appeared today with black-bordered pages carrying warm tributes to Miss Szold and publishing lengthy biographical articles.

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Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Miss Szold was the daughter of the well-known Rabbi, Benjamin Szold, she was educated in Hebrew, French and German by her father and in the public schools of the city. When the Jewish Publication Society of America was founded, Miss Szold became its secretary in 1898, a post she held until 1916.

In the 1890's when thousands of Russian Jewish immigrants fled to America from the pogroms in Russia, Miss Szold started a new activity, when she became one of the first women in America to engage in Americanization work. She organized classes where Russian Jewish immigrants were taught the language, customs and the ideals of America.

In 1909 Miss Szold went to Palestine for the first time. She was horrified by the Near East standards of living which prevailed in Palestine under a Turkish regime and was galvanized into action. She returned to America the following year, and in 1912 organized a group of women whose specific task was to bring modern methods of medical science into Palestine. Her unique talents as an organizer, her broad Jewish background and her compelling personality were in a large measure responsible for making this group, which became known as Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, one of the largest and most influential Zionist bodies in the world.

In 1930, the Jewish National Council of Palestine elected her a member, with a portfolio in health. After the advent of Hitler when German Jewish children had to be rescued from the Nazi regime, Miss Szold became director of the movement which has since brought children to Palestine from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, France, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Bulgaria, Italy, from the north coast of Africa, from India, and even from far-away Japan. Thousands of these children have been wanderers for years. Many were rescued from countries of temporary refuge. The majority are orphans.

Miss Szold was listed as one of the hundred outstanding American women of the last century by the Woman's Centennial Congress in 1940, during the national celebra-

tion of her eightieth birthday. In March 1944, she received another unusual honor when she was given the degree of Doctor of Humanities in absentia by Boston University.

Zionist Groups in America Mourn Miss Szold

NEW YORK, Feb. 14. (JTA) — All leading Zionist groups in the United States today cabled condolences to the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem mourning the death of Henrietta Szold, founder of the Hadassah and Zionist leader. Leading New York newspapers devoted columns to describing Miss Szold's activities both in the United States and in Palestine.

The passing of Miss Szold will be mourned at special memorial meetings next week by Hadassah chapters in about 700 communities throughout the country, Mrs. Moses P. Epstein, national president of Hadassah, announced. The national board of Hadassah issued a statement saying that "Jews and non-Jews from all walks of life in this country, the 600,000 Jewish men, women and children who make up the community of Palestine, and more specifically the 12,000 children to whom she has been as a mother, will sorrow as we do today, at the passing of a great woman, a great Jewish scholar, a great Zionist, and above all, a great humanitarian."

Jewish Organizations in London Pay Tribute to the Late Hadassah Leader

LONDON, Feb. 14. (JTA) — The Jewish Agency for Palestine, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the executive of the WIZO, International Womens Zionist Organization, and numerous other Jewish organizations today cabled condolences to Jerusalem on the death of Henrietta Szold.

CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE VOTES TO MAKE NATURALIZATION OF MIDDLE-AGED ALIENS EASIER

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14. (JTA) — Aliens fifty years or older, who have been in the United States since 1924, may become citizens without learning English under the provisions of a bill voted out today by the House Immigration and Naturalization Committee. Educational requirements would be similarly waived for aliens, regardless of age, with children now serving in the U.S. Armed forces.

JUSTICE MURPHY GETS AMERICAN HEBREW MEDAL IN RECOGNITION OF FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14. (JTA) — The 1944 American Hebrew Medal for promotion of better understanding between Christian and Jew in this country was presented yesterday to Associate Justice Frank Murphy of the Supreme Court. "It is our privilege, it is our duty, to spread the deathless doctrines of brotherly love and understanding," Murphy said in accepting the medal. "Only by so doing can we achieve the great American destiny." The presentation was made by Joseph H. Biben, editor and publisher of "The American Hebrew."

WOMEN CONTRIBUTE \$500,000 TO UNITED JEWISH APPEAL AT RALLY HONORING MRS. ROOSEVELT

NEW YORK, Feb. 14. (JTA) — The sum of \$500,000 was contributed by 2,000 Jewish women to the United Jewish Appeal of New York at a rally today in honor of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, held at the Waldorf-Astoria. The rally marked the official opening of the campaign of the Women's Division of the United Jewish Appeal. Principal speakers included Mrs. Roosevelt, Mrs. Herbert H. Lehman, Marshall Field, Rabbi Milton Steinberg and Monroe Goldwater.