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CONVERTED ROME RABBI HAD LONG BEEN ADMIRER OF JESUS; WROTE BOOK ON SUBJECT

ROME, Feb. 19 (JTA) — Israel Zolli, former chief rabbi of Rome who caused a sensation by his conversion last week to Catholicism, has long been an admirer of Jesus and even wrote a book on the subject several years ago, it was revealed here today.

The 370-page book, entitled "The Nazarene" and published in the Italian language in 1938 by the Institute of Academic Editions in Udine, is a study of the messages of the New Testament. In it, Zolli refers to Jesus as a great orator and preacher, emphasizing that "the oratory of Jesus is of a prophetic character".

Zolli wrote this book on Jesus when he was teaching at the University of Padua after he became a member of the Fascist Party in order to retain his position at the University. Asked by newspapermen last week as to what prompted him to adopt Catholicism, he said: "This has been going on in me for years, tens of years."

More than 4,000 Jews assembled in the Rome Synagogue this Saturday reaffirmed their faith in Judaism in a demonstration aimed at refuting the action of their former rabbi. Speakers denounced the "traitors who sometimes arise in our midst".

Meanwhile, Zolli and his wife moved from their apartment to the Georgian University. This was done "in order to get away from curiosity seekers, while looking for another apartment," he told American reporters. He denied that his wife was converted through his pressure.

The volume on Jesus written by Zolli opens with a quotation from St. John reading: "No man ever spoke like this man." The first chapter deals with the origin and various interpretations of the name "Nazarene" and establishes that the word "Nazarene" means in Syrian "to preach": "Jesus the great orator and the great preacher followed the customs of the time and preached and prayed in public in a declamatory way," Zolli writes, emphasizing that "the oratory of Jesus is of a prophetic nature."

Zolli points out that the prediction of events before their occurrence, as has been credited to Jesus, was a proof of divinity offered by the Jewish prophet Isaiah to his contemporaries. "The predictions, the forecast of his betrayal, of the condemnation, of the passion, of his death and resurrection, of the persecution of the apostles — all these prove the divine virtue of predictions inherent in Jesus," the ex-rabbi wrote.

Referring to the discussion between Christ and his disciples at the end of the last Supper, Zolli says: "Jesus was never so great as in the hour when he pronounced the painful word 'proust'." He goes on to declare that "in the person of Jesus Christ human suffering is made divine."

"The road of Jesus," Zolli states in one of the chapters of his book, "leads from heaven to earth. His sojourn on the earth was but temporary." The mission was

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to announce the coming of a new kingdom. Jesus represents the bending of heaven towards earth. Jeremiah is only an attempt at ascension, a desperate call which the earth launches towards heaven. Jeremiah wants to save. Jesus wants to redeem."

Zolli Complained of Starvation; Wanted 900,000 Liras from Jewish Community

NEW YORK, Feb. 19 (JTA) — The Jewish Telegraphic Agency learns from reliable sources that prior to adopting Catholicism, Zolli, in a communication received in this country, complained that he was facing starvation. He indicated that there was a rift between him and the leaders of the Jewish community in Rome, and that he was at odds also with the Zionists, despite the fact that he had, in his speeches and articles, supported Zionism.

Zolli also revealed that the Jewish Community in Rome was willing to give him 200,000 liras, but that he had asked for 900,000 liras "just to buy a hut and a piece of land in order to keep from starving." According to all indications, Zolli was unable to secure that sum.

Although Zolli mentioned to newspapermen in Rome that his wife had joined the Catholic church without being persuaded by him to do so, he failed to state that at the time he married her, she was only half-Jewish.

The differences between Zolli and the leaders of the Rome Jewish Community began when the Germans took over Italy. At that time he advised that the list of members and contributors of the Jewish community be destroyed and that whatever money was in the treasury of the community be taken out and that the Jews be advised by their leaders to hide. This advice was not heeded. As a result, about 2,000 Jews were arrested by the Germans in Rome and deported from the city. The Germans also levied on the Rome Jews a tribute of 50 kilograms of gold.

Zolli himself went into hiding during the time when the Germans were in Rome. Upon the liberation of the city by the Allies, the president of the Rome Jewish Community took the position that Zolli should not be reinstated as chief rabbi because he had not been available during the occupation period. The rift between Zolli and the president of the Jewish Community resulted in the Allied Military Government in Rome disbanding the community council and appointing a special commissar to administer the affairs of the community until elections of new officers could be held.

ROMANIA EXPROPRIATES 500 JEWISH BUILDINGS FOR USE AS GOVERNMENT OFFICES

BUCHAREST, Feb. 19. (JTA) — The Rumanian government today released a list of 500 Jewish-owned buildings which have been expropriated by the cabinet for use by government institutions which are now occupying them.

The Federation of Jewish Communities has applied to the Ministry of the Interior for a plot of land in the village of Gamar, in Transylvania, for burial of 136 Jews massacred there by Hungarian troops last September. The Federation has also demanded that Hungarians who assisted in the massacre be compelled to exhume the bodies, which are now in a mass-grave, and re-bury them in new graves.

JEWS RETURNING TO RUINED BUDAPEST; SURVIVORS IN DESPERATE FLIGHT

SOFIA, Feb. 19. (JTA) — A group of Jewish refugees who arrived here from Budapest over the week-end reveal that many Jews are now returning to the ruined Hungarian capital. The plight of the Jewish survivors, they say, is desperate.

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700,000 JEWS ARE STILL IN GERMAN HANDS. GESTAPO CHIEF HIMMLER ANNOUNCES IN BERLIN

BERN, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- The Swiss radio today reported that Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler has issued a statement in Berlin asserting that about 700,000 Jews are still alive in various sections of Europe ruled by Germany. The statement did not indicate whether Himmler's data included half-Jews and quarter-Jews whom the Gestapo usually classifies as Jews.

The broadcast emphasized that the Swiss Government was to a large extent helpful in securing the release by the Gestapo of 1,200 Jews from the Nazi camp in Mauthausen who recently arrived in Switzerland. It added that more transports of Jews released from German camps are expected to arrive on Swiss soil. "The Swiss Government is gladly giving shelter to the Jewish refugees until transport facilities enable them to find homes in other countries," the broadcast declared.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN GOVERNMENT GETS AUTHENTIC REPORT ON JEWS IN SLOVAKIA; FEW SURVIVED

LONDON, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- An authentic but gloomy report on the situation of the Jews in the liberated part of Slovakia was received here today by the Czechoslovakian Government from Frantisek Nemec, head of the delegation sent by the Government-in-exile to the liberated part of Czechoslovakia.

There are very few Jews left alive in Eastern Slovakia, the report said. In the town of Kosice only 300 remain of the 15,000 who lived there before the war. In the town of Presov there are only thirty Jews of the 7,000 that resided there. In Michalovce twenty-five Jews remain of the 800 former residents, and in Humenne no more than thirty Jews were left alive of the 600 who lived there before the outbreak of the war.

Communal kitchens for the surviving Jews in Kosice are being opened by Mr. Nemec, the cable stated, adding that the Jews there have organized a community council which is in charge of aid for the needy Jewish population. In Western Slovakia there are also few Jews, since the Germans deported ten transports of Jews after the liquidation of the uprising which took place last October, the report revealed.

PALESTINE JEWS APPEAL TO WARSAW GOVERNMENT TO PERMIT EMIGRATION OF JEWS FROM POLAND

JERUSALEM, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- An appeal to the Polish provisional Government in Warsaw to permit free Jewish emigration from liberated Poland to Palestine was cabled today by the Palestine Victory League following a mass-meeting at which resolutions of greetings were sent to the victorious Russian Army and the Warsaw Government.

A delegation of the Jewish National Council visited High Commissioner Lord Birt, and appealed to him to help save the remnants of European Jewry by securing their admission to Palestine. The interview lasted for a full hour. Dr. Chaim Weizmann today visited Chief Rabbi Herzog and had a lengthy conversation with him on the urgent need for Jewish unity in the light of the Jewish situation throughout the world.

8,000 JEWS IN RED ARMY DECORATED FOR BRAVERY SINCE OUTBREAK OF WAR

MOSCOW, Feb. 19. (JTA) -- More than 83,000 Jewish officers and men of the Red Army have been decorated for bravery since the outbreak of the war, it was reported here today. Jews rank fifth among the 182 nationalities of the Soviet Union in the number so honored.

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AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE INVITES OTHER GROUPS TO FORMULATE JOINT POST-WAR POLICY

NEW YORK Feb. 19 (JTA) — A call for an informal conference to consider the formulation of a unified Jewish post-war program was made by the American Jewish Committee in invitations extended today to the Agudas Israel of America, the American Jewish Conference, the American Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Labor Committee.

In identical letters to Rabbi Eliezer Silver, president of the Agudas Israel of America; Louis Lipsky, co-chairman of the American Jewish Conference; Dr. Stephen S. Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress and Adolph Held, president of the Jewish Labor Committee, Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, president of the American Jewish Committee, asked the four other organizations to collaborate with the American Jewish Committee in espousing "under the general provisions of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals, three Commissions: 1, a Commission on the Protection of Human Rights; 2, a Commission on Migration; and 3, a Commission on Statelessness."

Pointing out that these three Commissions were recommended by the group of scholars and Jewish community leaders composing the American Jewish Committee's "Committee on Peace Problems," Judge Proskauer wrote, "I think these projects will no doubt enlist the support of all shades of Jewish opinion and that they are of vital importance to the protection of European Jewry. "I write, therefore, to inquire whether you would come to an informal conference to consider the possibility of unified Jewish support for these three projects. If you will indicate to me your willingness to do this, I will immediately take up with you the time and place. It is not my idea that this conference would act in any formal or definitive manner, but that it would merely lay the basis for action by all organizations, if they are so advised, for a common effort to achieve these results."

INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE WILL DISCUSS POST-WAR JEWISH IMMIGRATION, DELEGATE SAYS

MEXICO CITY, Feb. 19. (JTA) — The problem of post-war immigration into the countries of North and South America, including the immigration of Jews from Europe, will be discussed at the Inter-American Conference on Problems of War and Peace, which opens here on Wednesday, a member of the Mexican delegation told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today.

"Jewish immigration will, of course, be discussed," he said, "there must be no racial obstacles to immigration in any of the American countries, and legislation barring Jews must be abrogated. Countries like Brazil and Mexico," he concluded, "are able to absorb tens of thousands of immigrants in new industries and agriculture."

NO JEWS REMAIN IN RHODES; MANY DEPORTEES LOST WHEN SHIPS SUNK IN AEGEAN

LONDON, Feb. 19. (JTA) — There are no Jews remaining in Rhodes, largest of the Dodecanese Islands, according to information reaching the New Zionist Organization here. After the withdrawal of the Italian garrison in July, 1943, the Germans deported the Jews to Greece. Two of the vessels bearing the deportees were sunk in the Aegean.

ELIAS KARLIN, NOTED MIZRACHI LEADER, DIES IN ENGLAND

LONDON, Feb. 5 (JTA - Airmail) — Elias Karlin, noted Mizrahi leader, who was active in various phases of Jewish life in England, died here today at the home of his son-in-law Herman Aronowitz, Zionist worker. He was 96 years old. Born in Russia, he emigrated to Holland and later to Belgium where he founded, in Antwerp the Pochkemoni, largest Hebrew National School in Western Europe.