

RABBI ASKS ACTION BY SPAIN ON JEWS

Briton, at Jersey Meeting,
Calls for Legal Status

By IRVING SPIEGEL

Special to The New York Times

ASBURY PARK, N. J., Feb.

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Rabbi Solomon Gaon, official spokesman of Sephardic Jews in Europe, noted that increasing numbers of Moroccan Jews had been entering Spain in recent years, and he said it was "essential" that they be given legal and social recognition. Spain has about 5,000 native Jews.

Dr. Gaon spoke at the annual religious convocation of the Rabbinical Council of America, an Orthodox group, at the Berkeley-Carteret Hotel.

The Spanish Government has indicated an interest in Sephardic communities in various parts of the world recently. Sepharad is the traditional Jewish name for Spain. The Sephardim are the descendants of Jews of Spain and Portugal—now scattered throughout the world—as differentiated from the Ashkenazim—the Jews of middle and northern Europe.

Leaders Saw Franco

On Jan. 20, Generalissimo Francisco Franco received the heads of Jewish communities in Madrid and Barcelona, who discussed the status of Jews in Spain. It was believed to be the first time that a Spanish leader had discussed such a problem with Jewish leaders since the expulsion of thousands of Jews from Spain in 1492 by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

General Franco promised to consider their request for official recognition of Judaism. Spain's Jews now are permitted to worship under a "statement of tolerance" enacted in 1945, but in unmarked buildings.

The men who saw General Franco asked that the Jewish communities be listed in the state's Register of Associations, giving them the right to own property as corporate identities and enabling them to be parties in legal proceedings.

Rabbi Gaon, in his address, said that without governmental recognition the Jewish community in Spain could not expand as "a modern, viable spiritual entity." Jews, he said, would be unable to develop synagogues, religious schools, youth centers and social welfare agencies.

Another speaker here, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, leader of American Orthodoxy, called on Jewish religious leaders to stress the unity between religi-

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Another speaker here, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, leader of American Orthodoxy, called on Jewish religious leaders to stress the unity between religious ritual and moral behavior.

The rabbi, head of the Rabbinical Council's Halacha (religious law) Commission, deplored the tendency to confine religion to the "cultic ceremonial sense."

The rabbinic body presented a plaque to William Mapel, executive vice president of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, for the group's efforts on behalf of animal welfare as well as the society's recognition of the needs of kosher slaughtering.