Obituaries

Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn mourn grand rabbi of sect

NEW YORK (AP) — More than 30,000 religious followers filled four blocks of a Brooklyn street yesterday to mourn Grand Rabbi Levi Grunwald, leader of the Tzehlemer sect of Hasidic Jews, who helped formulate kosher-processing laws in the United States.

Men wearing dark suits and wide-brimmed fur hats, and women — standing apart from the men according to the customs of the ultra-orthodox group — filled sidewalks and building stoops for a glimpse of the 86-year-old rabbi's coffin.

The police estimated the crowd on Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn's Williamsburg section, which has a large Hasidic population, at between 30,000 and 40,000.

There were no eulogies at the service at the request of Grunwald, who died Saturday at Mount Sinai Hospital.

Among the duties of the grand rabbi was kosher food preparation and the establishment of sectarian schools in Hasidic communities.

After his arrival here in 1939 from Tzehlem, a town on the Czechoslovakian border, Grunwald was a pioneer in establishing conditions in slaughterhouses, dairies and wineries for the preparation of kosher foods.

According to Rabbi Efraim Stein, a supervisor of the Hasidic schools in Williamsburg, Grunwald's efforts to provide for kosher food here allowed for post-World War II Hasidic immigrants "to feel at home in America." Grunwald thus opened the way for greater numbers of his followers in Hungary, Czechloslovakia, and Austria to come to America, Stein said.

The Tzehlemer sect of Hasidic Jews was founded 200 years ago in Russia and now has large communities in Chicago and Los Angeles, as well as New York. Sect spokesmen estimated there are 250,000 Hasidim in the United States.

GRUNWALD, GRAND RABBI LEVI