Newman, (Rabbi) Louis

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Prov. Sunday Journal By
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Rabbi Louis Newman

National Jewish Leader, Rhode Island Native, Dies

A funeral service was held Friday in New York City for Rabbi Louis I. Newman, 78, a national Jewish leader and a former Providence resident, who died there Thursday.

He served as Rabbi of Congregation Rodeph Sholom, 7 West 83rd St., for 41 years.

Rabbi Newman lived at 271 Central Park West. He had been ill for about a year.

He was born in Providence on Dec. 20, 1893, graduated from Brown University in 1913, studied at the University of California and received a Ph.D. degree from Columbia University in 1924 and an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Brown in 1942.

Rabbi Newman, an early advocate of establishing the State of Israel, won prominence for his leadership of the Jewish cause, his creative work in Jewish education and his innovative concept of the role and services of the Reform synagogue. As long ago as 1922, his book, "A Jewish University in America?," provided an ideological foundation for what was to become Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass., a generation later.

He became a founder of the Jewish Institute of Religion for training rabbis in New York City, where he taught homiletics for a number of years. The institute later merged with Hebrew Union College.

Surviving are his widow, Lucile, three sons, Jeremy, Jonathan and Daniel; a sister, Mrs. Charles I. Cooper of Los Angeles, and 10 grandchildren.

NEWMAN, Rabbi Louis

LOUIS I. NEWMAN, NOTED RABBI, 78

Leader of Rodeph Sholom Is Dead—Active Zionist

Rabbi Louis I. Newman, a national Jewish leader who served for 41 years as rabbi of Congregation Rodeph Sholom, 7 West 83d Street, died here yesterday after a year's illness. He was 78 years old and lived at 271 Central Park West.

Rabbi Newman, an early advocate of establishing the State of Israel, won prominence for his leadership of the Jewish cause, his creative work in Jewish education and his innovative concept of the role and services of the Reform synagogue. As long ago as 1922, his book, "A Jewish University in America?," provided an ideological foundation for what was to become Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass., a generation later.

That same year, under the leadership of his mentor, the late Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Rabbi Newman became a founder of the Jewish Institute of Religion for training rabbis in New York City, where he taught homiletics for a number of years. The institute was later merged with Hebrew Union College.

A leading Zionist among Reform rabbis since 1913, Rabbi Newman in 1930 became a follower of Vladimir Jabotinsky and the new Zionist Organization and vigorously worked to restore a Jewish state in Palestine. In 1939-40 he became a founder and leader of the American Friends of a Jewish Palestine who supported the Aliyah Beit, the extra-quota immigration into Palestine, and the program of the Irgun Zvai Leumi later the Herut (Freedom) party in Israel, which helped fight the British blockade of Palestine, landing thousands of refugees on its shores.

Observer at U.N.

In March, 1946, Rabbi Newman represented the Central Conference of American Rabbis as an observer at the Security Council of the United Nations. When he was called in 1930 to Rodeph Sholom, which this year is celebrating its 130th anniversary, his innovative ideas included establishing a Sunday morning service featuring forum discussions with such figures as Jan Masaryk, Leon Feuchtwanger and Franz Werfel.

Rabbi Newman recognized the needs of various age groups within the synagogue and was a pioneer in the concept of Temple House with its many educational and social activities under the temple roof. He enhanced synagogue worship through the dramatic interpretation of the arts.

The author of many cantatas, confirmation services, hymns and biblical pageants and plays, Rabbi Newman also wrote the play, "The Woman at the Wall," which was later rewritten as a libretto for the opera, "Tamar and Judah," for which the Israeli composer, the late Marc Lavry, composed the music. The opera had its world premiere at Rodeph Sholom in 1969.

Among Rabbi Newman's works were "Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements," "Talmudic Anthology," "Hasidic Anthology" and "The Little Zadik," a play.

His sermons have been compiled in various anthologies. ciuntypical was his Yom Kippur sermon two years ago, whenhe called on the Jewish people to "let optimism guide us to better days."

"Despair," he said, "comes easily as we look upon the anarchy, violence and warfare of this decade. But we must not be overcome by hopelessness. On the contrary, we must appreciate that every era is mark by severe problems, and that the only way out of them is through them."

Established Nursery

His love for children and Jewish education climaxed his ministry with the establishment of the Rodeph Sholom Nursery School and, two years ago, with his colleague, Rabbi Gunter Hirschberg, in the foudning of the Rodeph Sholom Day School.

Dr. Newman was born in Providence, R.I., on Dec. 20, 1893, graduated from Brown University in 1913, studied at the University of California and received a Ph.D. degree from Columbia in 1924 and a Doctor of Divinity degree from Brown in 1942. In 1918 he received his ordination from Rabbis Wise, Martin, A. Meyer and Sidney E. Goldstein.

Before coming to Rodeph Sholom, he served as rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco.

Surviving are his widow, Lucile, 3 sons, Jeremy, Jonathan and Daniel; a sister, Mrs. Charles I. Cooper of Los Angeles, and 10 grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held today at 1 P.M. at Rodeph Sholom. A memorial service will be held Friday, March 24, at 8 P.M.

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