

HANUKKAH FEATURE
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nigrated by an intolerant regime. Franco demanded adherence to the majority faith even though some of his admirers in many parts of the world insisted that he moved late in life to extend toleration to the small Spanish Jewish community of 9000 souls.

Some may remember in later years that Franco's excesses—brought protests from the highest Roman Catholic sources. Towards the end when the General's execution of five men convicted of killing several policemen and civil guards took place, Pope Paul VI denounced the aging dictator. True, the men had been convicted; but a shocked world noted that 10 lawyers brought into court for those accused were expelled merely for raising legal objections. Lovers of justice were dismayed also when those convicted were given officers of Franco's army to prepare their defense in a miserably short five hours.

Fifteen European governments recalled their ambassadors to register their anger at this late rape of justice by the generalissimo and his loyal henchmen.

To the great credit of Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan of France and the leaders of the organized Belgian Jewish community, formal protests were forwarded to Spanish representatives by these Jewish sources. These were warranted cries of outrage over the specific act by a harsh, modern Spanish regime; but none speaking for Jewish devotees of religious freedom could react in this manner without poignant recollection of murderous blows struck against Jews by Spanish civil and religious leaders over the centuries.

Most harrowing of all Jewish experience in

Spain were the excesses of Torquemada's fiendish actions during the inquisition in the early 1480s and the eventual expulsion of Jews by the Spanish monarchs late in the same century. In sharp contrast to the golden years for Spanish Jewry there had been year after year of persecution — expropriation of Jewish property, denial to Jews of admission to desired professions, the perennial repetition of false tales of Jewish ritual murder. And before the eventual banishment of Jews by Ferdinand and Isabella there had been thousands of forced conversions with attendant degrading existence that became the lot of the Marranos.

This last drama of oppression remains now in the minds of many contemporary Jews as the most striking violation of the spirit of Chanukah. For the Maccabees gave glory and honor to the concept of religious liberty while Franco's forbears sullied and savaged that vital ideal. Hence in these days of a dictator's departure, we bless with special prayers the treasure that is Chanukah.

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The Dairy Commission has scheduled a meeting for Tuesday, December 2, at 9:30 in Conference Room 4, Convention Center.



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