

ONLY REMAINING SEPHARDIC SYNAGOGUE IN EAST EUROPE BULLDOZED IN BUCHAREST

By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, July 28 (JTA) — The only remaining Sephardic synagogue in Eastern Europe was bulldozed in Bucharest on July 21, in spite of repeated assurances from Rumania that the building would be spared, according to a Jewish community official.

Alfred Moses, a vice president of the American Jewish Committee, said he had been told by Rumania's Ambassador in Washington, Nicolae Gavrilescu, that a massive urban renewal project under way in his country's capital would not affect the 600-year-old building, the Spanish Synagogue.

Rumanian Embassy First Secretary Dan Dumitru told the JTA last Friday that he could not yet confirm whether the Spanish Synagogue in Bucharest had been demolished and that he expected to hear something from his government "maybe next week." But a State Department official said that the building had been razed.

The incident took place after Moses testified in June before a House subcommittee, reluctantly favoring the extension of Rumania's Most-Favored-Nation status (MFN), which affords special trade benefits otherwise denied Soviet bloc countries under the Jackson-Vanick Amendment. In Eastern Europe, only Rumania and Hungary enjoy Most-Favored-Nation treatment.

President Reagan had notified Congress on June 5 that he was preparing to extend Rumanian MFN for another year. But there has been considerable pressure in both houses of Congress to suspend the Jackson-Vanick waiver for Rumania because of concerns about human rights violations.

Issue Raised With Ambassador

Representing the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, Moses said in his testimony at the House June 10 that despite "shortcomings" in Rumania's policies on human rights and emigration, the Conference believed that progress had been made, measured in part by the emigration to Israel of some 25 percent of the country's Jewish community over the past six years.

He added that the Rumanian Ambassador had been told "how important it is that the Rumanian synagogues in Bucharest...not be bulldozed to make room for Bucharest's urban renewal."

But word subsequently came from Bucharest that the area around the Spanish Synagogue had been cleared, indicating that the government intended to go ahead and destroy it, Moses told the JTA. He said that he and a number of other Jewish community representatives raised the issue at a meeting with Gavrilescu July 11, requesting that assurances be given in writing that the synagogue would not be touched.

The representatives at the meeting — Moses, Hyman Bookbinder of the American Jewish Committee, Warren Eisenberg of B'nai B'rith, and Jesse Hordes, of the Anti-Defamation League — were told by Gavrilescu that the building was not in jeopardy, but no written assurances had yet been given, Moses said. He said a similar commitment was made at a meeting between the Ambassador and Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ).

But Eisenberg told the JTA that the Embassy had promised no more than "that they hadn't destroyed it," leaving those attending the meeting to "try and penetrate what that means."

A State Department official said that Rumanian signals on the synagogue question had been "pretty opaque," and that while "some Rumanian officials had made categorical statements, others had not." The official said that high level protests have been registered in Washington and in Bucharest.

Dismayed And Shocked

"We are dismayed and shocked by what has happened," he said. But he added that the Administration position remains, in balance, supportive of extending Rumania's MFN. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Rozanne Ridgway will be testifying on the issue in the Senate Finance Committee on Friday August 1.

Moses, who was also to testify on Friday in support of extending Rumania's MFN, said he was considering backing out now that the synagogue has been destroyed. "We have in the past supported the extension of MFN for Rumania, but in view of this most recent action, we will have to reconsider our position," Moses told the JTA.

Expressing "deep sadness and disappointment" over the Rumanian action, Moses noted that the Jewish community in Bucharest had offered to have the synagogue moved to another site but "even this was denied by the Rumanian government."

The urban renewal project in central Bucharest has seen the demolition of a number of synagogues, as well as churches and other buildings. But there was an understanding with the Rumanian government that it would spare both the Spanish Synagogue, the oldest in Eastern Europe, and a Jewish museum housed in a landmark 19th century building within the same historic Jewish quarter, according to Moses.

"The destruction was without advance notice and will have a serious effect on the attitude of the American Jewish community toward Rumania; it calls into question whether Jewish leaders can rely upon statements made to them by the Rumanian government," Moses said.

There are no indications at this point of any immediate plans to destroy the Jewish museum as well.

JFC BOARD VOTES TO DIVEST ITSELF OF HOLDINGS IN COMPANIES PRESENTLY DOING BUSINESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

LOS ANGELES, July 28 (JTA) — The Jewish Federation Council Board of Directors has instructed the Jewish Community Foundation, its \$60 million endowment arm, to divest itself of all investment holdings in companies presently doing business in South Africa.

This action, taken at the Board's July meeting, makes it one of less than a handful of American Jewish Federations to join the growing economic boycott of the apartheid-wracked nation. The Foundation is the largest clearinghouse of Jewish philanthropic endowment opportunities in Southern California and the third largest Jewish community foundation in the nation.

Howard Miller, newly appointed chairperson of the JFC Community Relations Committee, stated that the Federation Board's decision mirrors the Jewish community's abhorrence of racism and discrimination in all its forms.

"We stand squarely with the many other corporate, government and community entities that have withdrawn support from the apartheid system," Miller said. "The CRC will continue to monitor the South Africa situation with reference to the effects of divestiture, the needs of South Africa's Jewish community and our Los Angeles community relations agenda."

In its debate, the Board considered the financial security of the community, relations with the Los Angeles Black community and the implications regarding the nature of business operations of other companies in its portfolio of investments.

Foundation President Allan Cutrow reported that, based on information provided him by four of the five independent firms managing the Foundation's \$12.5 million portfolio of income-generating funds, that investments in the following firms are included: DeBeers, Minorco, I.B.M., Nalco Chemical Co., V.F. Corporation, Bandag, Inc., American Cyanamid Co., Borden, Inc., Citicorp, Dupont, Dart & Craft, General Motors, General Signal, Kimberly Clark and Sterling Drugs, Inc.

Will Not Damage Community Reserves

Cutrow assured the Board that their commitment to this active stance would not damage the community's reserves. Not only is there a small representation of companies doing business in South Africa, he noted, but the average parcel of securities involved in any of the five accounts amounts to under four percent of the total value.

In addition, the equity portfolio is highly flexible, and divestment would not cost a significant amount to effect. An exact tally of the funds involved was not available pending the report of the fifth manager.

That all but DeBeers, Minorco, V.F. Corporation and Bandag, Inc., have signed the Sullivan Principles, an affirmative action statement fostering desegregation and equal pay in the workplace, became a significant distinction as several attempts were made to exempt those co-signers' securities from divestiture. The amendment was defeated each time.

JFC president Stanley Hirsh recognized several attempts to include in a divestiture policy those countries boycotting Israel, and nations such as the Soviet Union, which deny human rights to their Jewish citizens. Such efforts were defeated in the interest of maintaining the focus of the action. The Board also declined to study the investment portfolio of the Federation's pension fund.

BUSH TOURS OLD CITY, MEETS WITH OLIM FROM USSR, U.S., ROMANIA By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 28 (JTA) -- Vice President George Bush spent the second day of his visit to Israel Monday touring the Old City of Jerusalem in the company of Mayor Teddy Kollek, and later had lunch with a recent Jewish emigrant from the Soviet Union.

Bush, who arrived on the first part of a three-day, 10-day tour of the Middle East, visited the immigrant center at Mevasseret Zion near Jerusalem. He was also scheduled to meet with former Soviet Jewish Prisoner of Conscience Natan Shcharansky.

On meeting with olim from such countries as the Soviet Union, Rumania and the U.S. during their Hebrew studies at the Center's Ulpan Hebrew class for adult immigrants, Bush commented, "It is very moving for me to meet people who are free to come to the land of their choice, to the land that means so much to them."

Ulpan director Shmuel Segal told Israel Radio that Rumanian immigrants in particular found it difficult to understand the Vice President's visit, saying that in their home country such dignitaries are never seen by the ordinary public.

Bush then had lunch at the Ulpan Center with Marc and Natasha Drajinsky, who came to Israel from the Soviet Union a year ago. Center residents urged Bush to increase pressure on Moscow to open the gates and allow increased Jewish emigration.

Earlier, Bush became the most senior United States political personality to visit the Old City. Surrounded by scores of security personnel, Bush visited the restored Citadel at King David's Tower, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Cardo, the renovated Jewish Quarter of the City and the Mosques on the Temple Mount.

Purpose Of The Tour

Kollek presented his American guest with an antique map of Jerusalem, and to Barbara Bush, the Vice President's wife, he gave a pendant in the shape of a "Hamsa" (hand) charm. According to Kollek, the purpose of the tour was "to show that Jerusalem is one city and not a divided city."

It was only a few years ago that visiting American political figures agreed to tour across the pre-1967 borders in the company of an Israeli official. Secretary of State George Shultz made a similar tour.

Bush was warmly welcomed to Israel in a Rose Garden ceremony in Jerusalem attended by Israeli dignitaries, and religious and political officials, including Premier Shimon Peres.

Reaffirms U.S. Mideast Position

The U.S. Vice President affirmed the U.S. commitment to pursue a peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict, saying, "I can't think of any better time to come here," an apparent reference to the talks last week between Peres and King Hassan of Morocco.

Bush added: "We in America will do all we can to bring true peace to the Middle East." After the Rose Garden ceremony, Bush and his visiting entourage, which includes a film crew, went to Yad Vashem and later to the Western Wall, accompanied by Religious Affairs Minister Yosef Burg.

Bush had separate, private meetings Sunday with Peres and Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir. The meetings were described as purely courtesy calls, and working meetings are scheduled for Wednesday.

In the meantime, Bush appears to be spending his first days in Israel visiting numerous tourist sites. The camera crew is working for Bush's political action committee, Fund for America's Future, and the footage is expected to be used in Bush's anticipated Presidential bid in 1988.

EIGHT PROMINENT AMERICAN JEWS ACCOMPANYING BUSH TO ISRAEL By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, July 28 (JTA) -- Eight prominent American Jews accompanied Vice President George Bush to Israel, the Vice President's office here confirm-

ed Monday. All were people Bush consulted in planning his trip to the Jewish State, according to Gayle Fisher, an assistant press secretary to the Vice President. She said that all eight paid their own way for a one-way trip to Israel. They will not accompany Bush to Jordan and Egypt but will return to the United States on their own.

The eight are all members of the National Jewish Coalition and included Gordon Zacks, national cochairperson of the Coalition, and Jacob Stein, President Reagan's first liaison to the Jewish community. However, they were not accompanying Bush as Coalition members but as independent advisors.

Observers here believe that Bush is using his visit to Israel to help him in his forthcoming campaign for the Republican nomination for the Presidency.

Although he has frequently represented the Reagan Administration before national Jewish organizations, Bush does not have such close ties to the Jewish community as do two of his potential rivals, Rep. Jack Kemp (R. NY) and Senate Majority leader Robert Dole (R. Kans.), who are known for their strong support of Israel.

The Bush party was accompanied by a television crew from a political action committee set up to raise funds for Bush. It will not be surprising to see pictures of Bush at the Western Wall and Yad Vashem appear during primaries in states with large Jewish populations.

Zacks, of Columbus, Ohio, is considered one of the persons closest to Bush in the Jewish community and has frequently introduced the Vice President to Jewish audiences. The other Jews who accompanied Bush are believed to be supporting him, according to sources.

In addition to Zacks and Stein, Fisher identified those accompanying Bush as: Ivan Novick, Pittsburgh, former president of the Zionist Organization of America; Paul Borman, of Detroit; Joseph Gildenhorn, of Washington, D.C.; Barbara Gold, of Chicago; Richard Goldman, of San Francisco; and Jay Kislak, of Miami.

U.S. JEWISH GROUP PROVIDES \$5,000 GRANT TO GROUP REPRESENTING SUGAR CANE WORKERS IN THE PHILIPPINES
By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, July 28 (JTA) — The American Jewish World Service (AJWS), the Boston-based international development organization, has provided a grant of \$5,000 to a group representing sugar cane workers in the Philippines.

The grant was given to the National Federation of Sugar Workers, a non-governmental group formed several years ago in an effort to raise the standard of living of sugar cane workers, according to Laurence Simon, AJWS president.

Simon returned last week from a visit to the Philippines. He was accompanied by AJWS executive committee members Herbert Weiss, a Boston attorney, and Warren Eisenberg, director of the International Council of B'nai B'rith.

The grant to the Federation, based on the island of Negros, some 350 miles south of Manila, is to aid in a farm lot program designed to diversify crops in Negros.

According to Simon, sugar cane workers and their families suffer from poverty and malnutrition,

and the farm lot program seeks to provide proper guidance for rice and corn crops to be developed during the months when sugar cane is not grown in Negros.

Simon and the delegation also met with Philippine President Corazon Aquino, who welcomed AJWS involvement in self-help rural programs that will assist farmers with seeds, tools and technical assistance to grow food to sustain their families and sell in the marketplace.

Simon told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that during the 10-day visit to the Philippines, the three person group also met with members of the Philippine Jewish community at a reception hosted by Israeli Ambassador Uri Gordan. There are an estimated 350 Philippine Jews.

In addition, Simon said one host of the AJWS trip to the Philippines was Minister of Agrarian Reform, Sonny Alvarez, a member of the Cabinet of the Aquino government. "We are finding great levels of cooperation from the government," Simon said.

But Simon pointed out that the food lot program is merely a short-term solution to the problems facing sugar cane workers in Negros. He said there are substantial quantities of land — thousands of acres — that are now being foreclosed on by banks and ready for redistribution by the government.

Some of the land was left by owners who fled the country during the downfall of the former government of President Ferdinand Marcos. AJWS hopes to provide additional funds and agricultural assistance to persons with the newly acquired land. Simon said AJWS has been in contact with Israeli agricultural experts in an effort to have them provide assistance to the people of Negros.

ROSENNE 'FEELING VERY GOOD' AFTER UNDERGOING SINGLE BYPASS HEART SURGERY

WASHINGTON, July 28 (JTA) — Meir Rosenne, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, is expected to be released from the hospital Tuesday after undergoing single bypass heart surgery last week. The 55-year-old Ambassador is "feeling very good," Israel Embassy spokesman Yosef Gal said Monday. According to Gal, Rosenne underwent surgery at Georgetown University Hospital July 22.

Vice President George Bush, who is presently in Israel, visited Rosenne Friday. He reportedly brought with him President Reagan's wishes to Rosenne for a speedy recovery.

The Ambassador's surgery was kept "a secret" in order not to cause undue worry to his daughter in Israel.

13th JERUSALEM INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

JERUSALEM, July 28 (JTA) — The 13th International Book Fair will be held in the city's convention center from April 6 to 12, 1987. Mayor Teddy Kollek has announced. The Jerusalem Book Fair has been constantly growing, and the number and variety of participants are expected to exceed the nearly 1,000 publishers from 40 nations who attended Jerusalem's most recent biennial book fair in 1985.

Since the first Jerusalem Book Fair 23 years ago, the Book Fair has evolved two special themes: international publishing and the involvement of the younger generation of publishers and editors.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA A FASCIST REMAINS FREE By Milton Jacoby

MADRID, July 28 (JTA) — Last month a judge of the Civil Court of Madrid dismissed a suit of special significance to every Jewish survivor of the Holocaust. The suit was instituted by Violeta Friedman, a grimly determined survivor of Auschwitz who now lives in Madrid, against one of the world's most notorious Nazis, Leon Degrelle, who also resides here. He has a luxurious penthouse in the city and several villas on the fashionable Costa del Sol. He continues to bask in Hitler's reputed tribute to him — "If I had a son, I would wish he were like you."

A Belgian, he was condemned to death after World War II by the Belgian government for war crimes as a Nazi collaborator and as the founder of the notorious Rexist movement. But Degrelle, unlike Vidkun Quisling in Norway and Pierre Laval in France, was lucky. Fleeing from Norway, Degrelle crash-landed in Spain, where his admirer Generalissimo Francisco Franco granted him citizenship.

The action 40 years later in Madrid Civil Court resulted from Degrelle's appearance on July 11, 1985 on national television, when he boasted about his fascist past and declared his undying love for Hitler, whom he compared to Napoleon. On July 29, 1985 in an interview published by the weekly *Tiempo* he amplified his TV comments to include a sweeping denial of the existence of the Holocaust and the gas chambers. The Nazi Party might be dead, he said, but its ideology lived on.

It was at that point that Friedman could no longer keep silent. She had been taken at 14, with her family, to Auschwitz from Transylvania. Her family was exterminated but somehow she managed to survive, despite a severe spinal injury, until her liberation by the Russians in 1945. She had observed, with mounting frustration, the futile attempts by the Belgians through the years to have Degrelle extradited, and the criminal's superb success in confounding his accusers.

She began with a letter to *El Pais*, the leading daily, one of a series of letters over the following several weeks. Degrelle responded with an invitation, also through *El Pais*, for her to visit him so that he could convince her of the justness of his views. Friedman declined, unless their conversation could be covered by reporters and a TV crew.

Determined To Continue Her Battle

Some months ago, she managed to find a lawyer who would initiate legal action to prevent Degrelle from continuing to flood the country with his lies, and this unprecedented trial was set for June 11. In his preliminary deposition to a judge, Degrelle repeated his allegations (another of which was that Josef Mengele was a gentle soul who had been much maligned). But he refused to appear at the trial on the grounds that he feared Jews would kidnap him.

Friedman insisted to this reporter that all she wanted was for the court's opinion to be carried widely by press and TV, and that he be asked for a financial indemnity to the Spanish survivors of Mauthausen. Once again, with the dismissal of the action on June 11, the Nazi warlord had escaped justice.

The valiant Violeta Friedman is determined to continue her lonely battle, and she has launched an appeal. She has little or no support from her Jewish community or from the Israel Embassy. People seem uneasy in her presence. It appears to be a case of "let

sleeping dogs lie" or possibly a fear of retaliation by the militant rightwing organizations in Spain which support Degrelle.

A number of efforts were made to discuss this matter with Israeli Ambassador Shmuel Hadass, but he was unavailable for comment.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES JEWS AND NON-JEWS IN SPAIN By Milton Jacoby

MADRID, July 28 (JTA) — The PLO has asked the Spanish government to accord it full diplomatic status. It has made this request ever since Israel was granted recognition by Spain early last year. Although the terrorist organization has a three-story building in the heart of Madrid, and has been operating almost as any Embassy, it has never enjoyed complete status. It appears unlikely, however, that such "compensation" will take place.

Spanish authorities, deeply concerned with Basque terrorists of their own, have also been revolted by the activities of the imported variety. Following an investigation, the Libyan Ambassador in Madrid, who was charged with having provided support to Libyan terrorists trying to operate in Spain, quietly left the country.

According to Mordechai Amichai, the capable charge d'affaires of the new Israel Embassy, relations between Jews and non-Jews in Spain are the best they've ever been — a direct result of current close ties between the labor governments of Israel and Spain, and the official establishment of relations.

Spanish press and TV, stated Amichai, were remarkably enthusiastic in hailing the new accord. Both *El Pais* and ABC, the leading dailies, reported in unprecedented detail facts about Israel and the Spanish Jewish past. National TV, the day after Israel's recognition began its broadcast day, not with the customary "Buenos dias," but with "Shalom Israel Sepharad" in huge letters across the screen.

A major function of the fledgling Embassy is to bring the art and culture of Israel to the attention of the Spanish public, less than one percent of whom are Jewish. But, as in other countries, what Jews lack in numbers, they more than make up for in spirit and organized activity. Out of a population of 40 million, there are 12,000 or 13,000 Jews, and more than half reside in Madrid and Barcelona.

Synagogues, community centers, and schools are well maintained. A third of the students in the Madrid schools are non-Jews. Tourism to Israel and Spain has increased to the extent that flights between Barcelona and Tel Aviv have just been inaugurated, in addition to service from Madrid.

The Jews Of Gerona

Fifty miles from Barcelona and deep in the heart of Catalonia is one of the medieval splendors of Spain, and of its ancient Jewish people; the delightful city of Gerona.

For 600 years, from 890 to 1492, the Jews of Gerona exerted a profound religious and cultural influence, and, indeed in the 12th and 13th centuries, with its school of the Cabala and its great master, Nachmanides, it came to be known as the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry. The lanes, houses, courtyards and gardens of the ancient Jewish quarter, or Call, are a vivid and fascinating reminder of the glory that once was Jewish Gerona. The mayor of this unique city, Joaquim Nadal-Fareras, has resolved to upgrade the Call and improve its current Jewish Center with its remains of a 13th century synagogue. Nadal, himself a noted historian, has pledged the financial and administrative resources of his city to make Gerona a mecca for Jews.