

Bucharest Jews Greet Israel's Premier in Synagogue

By PETER GROSE
Special to The New York Times

BUCHAREST, Rumania, May 5—Rumanian Jews greeted Premier Golda Meir of Israel tonight at a solemn Sabbath service in the city's historic Choral Synagogue, at the end of her day of intensive political discussions with President Nicolae Ceausescu.

For blocks around the 106-year-old synagogue, where three decades ago stormtroopers began a pogrom, silent crowds of thousands of Jews stood patiently for over four hours though they would get little more than a glimpse of the 74-year-old Israeli leader.

There was no cheering. Tight police barricades prevented all but the most remote exchanges of waves between Mrs. Meir and the crowds.

A Time of Emotions

Tonight's Sabbath-eve service marked the emotional high-point of Mrs. Meir's visit, which began yesterday, just as her six hours of meetings earlier with President Ceausescu — three of them in complete privacy without any aides present — were the most politically important of the visit.

Senior Israeli officials said that Mr. Ceausescu seemed to be trying to learn whether there was any useful diplomatic move that he could make to promote peacemaking efforts between Israel and the Arab countries. He was said to have given Mrs. Meir a detailed report on his conversations a month ago with Egypt's President, Anwar el-Sadat, and to have pressed for Mrs. Meir's views on specific issues that

have long blocked diplomatic progress.

The talks are to continue tomorrow, Mrs. Meir's last day in Bucharest. Her aides said that even then it might not be clear whether the Rumanian Government will attempt mediation, in which the United Nations and United States have failed.

Although visibly weary after her long conferences, Mrs. Meir insisted on going through with a scheduled visit to a state farm outside the capital and then rushed back to the Government guest house to change clothes for the Sabbath service at sundown.

The Chief Rabbi of Rumania, Dr. Moses Rosen, interrupted the normal proceedings to greet Mrs. Meir at the synagogue door. In a rare honor, he carried the Torah scroll to her and allowed her to sit near the altar where, according to Orthodox Jewish practice, only men are permitted.

Mrs. Meir fought back tears, unsuccessfully, when the young people's choir sang Hebrew songs in her honor in the middle of the service, including such popular melodies as "Jerusalem the Golden" and "Hava Nagila," songs scarcely intended for the synagogue. When the choir began singing the Israeli national anthem, "Hatikva," the congregation quietly but distinctly, joined in the singing.

Rumania is the only Eastern European Communist country that did not break relations with Israel during the 1967 war. President Ceausescu's invitation to Mrs. Meir was a breakthrough in diplomacy—even if no specific peacemaking moves emerge—for never be-

fore has an Israeli Premier visited a Communist country.

Rabbi Rosen praised the Rumanian Government for the freedoms that permit the country's 100,000 Jews to thrive, and praised Israel and the Israeli Army "for guaranteeing not only Israel's existence, but our existence as well."

In a cautious allusion, he reminded the congregation that it was Mrs. Meir, as Israel's Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1949, who brought about a dramatic moment in postwar Jewish history by attending a service in the Central Synagogue in Moscow for the first time.

Orderly Reception

The reception by the Rumanians tonight was far more restrained and orderly than the tumultuous crowd scenes of that night in Moscow. Today the tears in the synagogue that greeted Mrs. Meir's arrival quickly gave way to correct composure.

Inside the synagogue there were about 1,400 invited guests. Rabbi Rosen said that thousands of other Jews—there are more than 50,000 in Bucharest—had to be denied invitations or turned away. The Choral Synagogue is the largest of 19 synagogues in use in Bucharest.

Under those circumstances it was probably the crowds outside that served as the most eloquent testimony to the attraction that Israel holds for Rumanian Jews.

According to Rabbi Rosen, half of prewar Rumania's 800,000 Jews perished under the Fascists. Three-quarters of the Jews remaining after the war found their way to Israel, and

there is still a small but steady flow.

"I wouldn't say that everyone who wants to go to Israel is going," said one of the rabbi's assistants. "But there is a continuing emigration and we are grateful for it."

Mrs. Meir seemed sad and disappointed as she slowly walked away from the synagogue among police guards, for she could scarcely see or greet the thousands waiting for her. But there were no signs of annoyance or complaint from the crowds, which dispersed quietly after she had passed by.