

Remarks of Herbert Block

Member, United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad  
at the Dedication of the Memorial to the Victims of the Bucharest Pogrom of 1941

July 20, 2016

Master of Ceremonies Schwartz, FEDROM President Vainer, Mayor Negoita, Minister Curaj, Secretary Opaschi, Ambassador Samash, Professor Nistor, Mr. Berish, and all present:

I have the honor of representing the Government of the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad and my fellow Commission Member Martin Gold, who could not be present here today.

Mr. Gold generated the funds for this memorial to the victims of the murder, torture, and other attacks upon Jewish citizens by the Iron Guard during the Legionnaires Rebellion January 21<sup>st</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1941, the horrific rampage against an innocent minority already being abused and persecuted under policies that began with anti-Jewish legislation, the Jewish Codex.

The United States is a nation primarily comprised of immigrants and their descendants, from Romania as well as other nations. The Commission has worked with FEDROM and others to remember and preserve the heritage of the Jewish population of Romania that was decimated because of the Holocaust.

Our Commission funded the repair by FEDROM of gravestones at Bucharest's largest Jewish cemetery, Giurgiului. The Commission also made possible the Holocaust memorial in Gherla dedicated in May.

Working with Jewish communities throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the Commission knows how fortunate FEDROM and Romania are to have the services of President Vainer and Lucia Apostol.

We also appreciate the support of the Government of Romania and the city of Bucharest for the support that made this memorial possible.

I will now read a message from my colleague Martin Gold:

"The United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad is proud to respect and memorialize the victims of the notorious Bucharest Pogrom. This monument will shed perpetual light on a time of abject terrorism committed against Romanian Jewry.

"Through legislation, signed by President Ronald Reagan, Congress chartered our Commission in 1985. That statute clearly describes Congress' rationale and our objective both here and elsewhere. The law states, "because the fabric of a society is strengthened by visible reminders of the historical roots of the society, it is in the national interest of the United States to encourage the preservation and protection of the cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings associated with the foreign heritage of United States citizens."

“The connection between our charter and this memorial is vivid. Your heritage is our heritage too, a strong and durable bond between us. We join you in honoring the Jews of Bucharest who suffered from these crimes and paying this homage to their memory.

“We feel privileged to assist this poignant and worthy project.”

Thank you.