Storyline

The Museum of the History of Romanian Jewry and the Holocaust

Bucharest, Romania

1. Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity, Christianity's Derivation from Judaism, the Old and New Testaments, the Exile of Jews in the Roman Empire

2. The beginnings of Jewish presence in the roman province of Dacia

The oldest evidence of the presence of Jews on Romania's territory dates from the 1st to the 3rd centuries.

Here are some **epigraphic documents** that refer to the presence of the Jews in Roman Dacia (the Roman province after Dacia was conquered by the Roman Empire, in 106):

- Inscriptions of names of Jewish origin.
- A stone ring having a Jewish inscription, discovered in Sarmisegetuza.
- Objects inscribed with Jewish symbols.
- The presence of eastern religions in Roman Dacia.
- Dacia is known to have hosted military units brought from Palestine.

Other testimonies:

- The comparison made by Jewish historian Josephus Flavius (in his *Jewish Antiquities*) between the ascetic lifestyle of the Essenes in the Judean desert and that practiced by members of a religious sect in Dacia (the *Pleistoi*).
- Apostle Andrew preached the Gospel in the land of the Scythes / Scythia (Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica*). The general meaning of the name "Scythia" refers not only to the land in the northern and eastern parts of Pontus Euxinus (the Black Sea), but also to Scythia Minor, i.e. Dobrogea. Apostles focused on the Jews settled in different cities of the Roman Empire.
- **133-134**. A coin issued by Simon Bar Kochba, the leader of the independence movement of the Jews from the Roman Empire, during this period (132-135), was discovered in 1971 during the excavation works at the fort of Pojejena (near Orșova). The currency proves that Roman legions sent to Dacia also had Jewish soldiers.

3. Jews during the middle ages in the Romanian principalities/ the district area of Transylvania

The first records of Jews in the Romanian principalities

- **1300**. The oldest Middle Age documentary mention of a Jewish community, based in Cetatea Albă.
- 1473-1474. The Jew Isaac Beg, envoy of Uzun Hassan, Khan/Shah of Persia (1453-1478), went to the court of Stephen the Great (1457-1504) to negotiate an alliance between

Persians and Moldavians against the Turks. Stephen the Great's court also hosted the Jewish doctor of Mengli Ghir (Khan of Crimea).

Isaac-Beg. Was a guest at the court of Stephen the Great in the second half of the 15th century. He was the messenger of Uzun Hassan, Shah of Persia; under the pretext of medical services provided to the Romanian Prince, he actually was a middleman in the relation between the East and the West, in order to organize a campaign against the Turks. Nevertheless, he made both political and economic negotiations. In 1472, he went to Venice, where he was welcomed by the Doge. The following year, he returned with two letters sent by the Shah to Stephen. He also brokered a similar correspondence with Matthias Corvinus. According to some sources, Isaac Beg was the one who helped the negotiations for improved relations between Stephen the Great and Matthias Corvinus.

- **The end of the 15th century.** Following persecution in Spain and Portugal Sephardi Jews settled in the south of (present time) Romania.

- **1550**. Documentary mention of a Sephardi community in Bucharest. The document mentions eight names, including the community leader, David ibn Usa.

The 17th century can be considered to be the beginning of the modern organization of the Jewish community in the Romanian Principalities, as they had rabbis, *hakhams*, synagogues and cemeteries.

The first Jewish guilds are mentioned towards the end of the 17th century.

- **1656-1657**. Swedish priest Conrad Iacob Hildebrandt mentions the existence of Jewish communities in Iași, Soroca, Alba Iulia (Transylvania).

- **1670**. In Iași, Ashkenazi Jews from Poland built their own synagogue.

- **1676-1677**. The oldest tombstone in the Jewish Cemetery from Piatra-Neamț dates from these years.

In 1646, Matei Basarab gifts an estate in nowadays Teleorman County to a certain Tanasie, who is said to "have been a stranger, from another country, of Jewish law" and to have been baptized. He was made a local boyar. Before becoming a Christian, he had been a *hakham*, having come into Wallachia as a merchant.

The so-called *pravile* (legal regulations and ecclesiastical codes) of Matei Basarab (1632-1654) and of Vasile Lupu (1634-1653) – the Regulation of Govora (*Pravila de la Govora* – 1640), the Romanian Book of Learning (*Cartea românească de învăţătură* – 1646) and the Correction of the Law (*Îndreptarea legii* – 1652) – **regulated the situation of the Jews according to the Byzantine model**; they were meant to make Jews convert. Anton Maria Del Chiaro (Davide Taglia), a baptized Jew and Latin language secretary of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, mentions the early 18th century clothing restrictions imposed upon Wallachian Jews, which were the same as for Ottomans and converts (baptized Jews).

The Regulation of Govora (1640), issued by Prince Matei Basarab in Wallachia. It is also known as the Church Regulation or the Small Code and has anti-Jewish provisions:

> [...] The one who defiles himself by receiving wine or butter from the hand of a Jew, items that should not be tasted by any Christian, must call the priest to bless them. It is only then that one can touch them
> [...] One shall not feast with Jews and heretics, nor will one receive the remains of their feasts. As light cannot mix with darkness, Christians should not sit at the same table with heretics and Jews or to take the remains that falls from their table: unleavened bread or anything else.
> [...] The one who will do Jewish jobs, who will fast and feast with them, if he is a priest, let him be banished; if he is a layman, let him be excommunicated.
> [...] If the Jew is baptized and if he is shamed of his mistakes, all his wrongdoings will be removed by the sacred secret of baptism and it will be as if he was born a second time. He may become a priest without difficulty.

4. The 18th Century, the road to modernity

The Romanian Principalities - a shelter for persecuted Jews in Europe

In the Romanian Principalities, Jews were able to enjoy their traditional livelihood, without being closes between the walls of ghettos and without restrictive measures against them. They enjoyed a freedom they only had in the Netherlands. There is no piece of information in the 16th and 17th centuries that describes instances of mass persecution and pogroms against the Jews. In this respect, the Romanian medieval world was very different from Western Europe. Until 1700, there were no repressive actions in the Romanian Principalities. These were actually places of shelter for Jews who fled anti-Jewish actions (including pogroms) that took place in the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom, at the time.

Early in the 18th century, Jews began to be charged of blood libel in the Romanian Principalities, too. One such example is the accusation of blood libel in Piatra Neamț, in 1710. The case was judged by Dimitrie Cantemir, who was just to the Jews, as they had been wrongly accused. Similar accusations and violent incidents occurred in Roman (1714) Onițcani (1783) and Ploiești (1815).

- 1801. In Bucharest, the accusation of blood libel made the crowd rush to the Jewish neighborhood and kill dozens of Jews.

Restrictions, offences

The civil status of Jews in Romanian Principalities was marked by their status of foreign non-Christians, subject to various limitations. Thus, they could not buy land, unless they were transferred a property in exchange for unpaid debts; their testimony in court - against an Orthodox Christian - had no validity; their legal oath often entailed humiliating conditions; mixed marriage with a Jew was not allowed, however marriage to a convert to Christianity was allowed, etc.

During the Phanariot period, Jews faced some limitations (among others, they were not allowed to buy property, except for certain conditions and places), they faced a lot of harassment, etc. There were cases of anti-Jewish persecution in Moldova (not in Wallachia). Jews had to face religious prejudice, including charges of blood libel, acts of fanaticism and intolerance.

5. The first half of the 19th Century , the Revolution of 1848

Jewish involvement in the great moments of the country's history

A particular feature of communal institutions, of various religious and secular institutions, was their assertion of patriotic feelings for the Romanian state: the blessing of Princes and Kings; the observance of national holidays, holding religious services on such occasions; their involvement in Romania's wars, though they were not citizens, yet.

The Revolution of 1848

The first event of the political reverberations where Jews from Moldavia and Wallachia were involved was the Revolution of 1848. Their participation was significant, as there were many personalities and material contributions.

Jews were encouraged by the programmatic claims of the revolutionaries, promising to grant civil rights to all foreigners who lived in the country. The Proclamation of Islaz (June 9/21, 1848), mentioned, in Article 21, the "emancipation of Israelites and political rights for fellow patriots of other faiths". Moreover, the *Wishes of the National Party in Moldavia*, published in Chernivtsi, in August 1848 and drafted by Mihail Kogălniceanu, promised, at Article 27, the immediate naturalization of all Jews.

> *27. The gradual emancipation of Moldavian Israelites*
> *The great number of foreign Israelites who came to Moldavia, their deep state of ignorance, are demanding that the government deal with this important issue for the country, as soon as possible; the inclusion of Israelites and their transformation into useful citizens of the state should be made as soon as possible*. Article 27 of the *Wishes of the National Party in Moldavia*
>
> *In short, the Romanian people decrees:*
> *[...] 21. The emancipation of the Jews and political rights for all compatriots of other faiths.*
> The Proclamation of Islaz

C.D. Rosenthal. Active participant in the Revolution. Born in Pest, in 1820. In 1842, he settled in Bucharest. In June-September 1848, he participated in the Romanian Revolution in Bucharest. He requested and was granted Romanian citizenship, in recognition of his merits. After the defeat of the Revolution, he was arrested along with other leaders of the movement and imprisoned in Giurgiu and Rusciuc. He went on a mission to Transylvania, to support the union movement of the Romanians. He was arrested in Pest, was tortured and died in prison on July 23, 1851, as a martyr of the Romanian cause.

Barbu Iscovescu (1816-1854), also a participant in the Revolution, alongside Rosenthal. He contributed to the affirmation of the social function of art. Although they have a Romantic touch, his portraits of political figures expressed his commitment to the fight for freedom and national

identity. After the Revolution, he took refuge in Brașov and later in Belgrade, where he came into contact with Serb revolutionaries. In 1849, he was studying in Paris. It was there that he made several copies of the portraits of Romanian medieval rulers.

6. Emancipation attempts: A.I.Cuza, the Independence war and jewish participation (1877), the Berlin Conference (1878)

The Age of Unification

Context:

- **1849**. After the failure of the Revolution, a conference was held in Balta Liman. There, Russia and Turkey re-established the status quo from before the Revolution and appointed Princes for a period of seven years.

During the Crimean War, the principalities were first occupied by the Russians (1853-1854) and then by the Turks and Austrians (1854-1856)

The Treaty of Paris (**1856**) and the Paris Convention (**1858**) end the Russian protectorate over the Romanian Principalities and they are under the guarantee of the Great Powers. The guarantor powers demanded the establishment of ad hoc divans (Consultative Assemblies) to represent various segments of the population. Their mission was to outline the political and administrative organization of the Principalities.

- **March 16, 1857**. Iuliu Barasch wrote the Plight of the Israelites for the Romanians (*Ruga israeliților pentru români*), a text that was to be read in Spanish and polish synagogues at a time when the fate of Romanian Principalities was debated by the great powers.

- **January-February 1859**. The ad hoc divans in both countries choose the same Prince, Alexandru Ioan Cuza.

Activity of the Romanian Jews to gain political rights

"The Jewish question" in Romanian Principalities

The Jews of Romania were the last in Europe to have obtained citizenship, as late as 1919, at the end of the First World War. The struggle for civil and political equality was carried by Romanian Jews themselves, but also abroad, in the West, by individuals and Jewish organizations that asked their governments to put pressure upon Romanian authorities.

The Ad Hoc Assemblies (1857) also discussed the future status reserved for the Jewish population.

In Wallachia, the Ad Hoc Assembly accepted the general principles suggested by the great powers, which entailed an implicit recognition of equal rights from religious, civil and political perspectives for the Jewish population of Romania.

In Moldavia, however, the Ad Hoc Assembly decided that civil and religious rights were to be granted to Christians only.

As a result, the Paris Convention (August 19, 1858) stated, in article 46, that only Christians benefitted from political rights. Thus, it was up to the Romanians to decide whether to give political rights to the non-Christian population of the Principalities. Jews demanded equal rights with the other inhabitants of the country.

The Policy of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza on the Jewish question

Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866) granted the Jews, under certain conditions, communal rights, under the Law dated March 31, 1864, art. 26 and under the Civil Code of 1864, art. 9:16. It was thus possible for certain categories of Jews to become citizens. The path of "gradual emancipation" was adopted, which meant that conditions were set for their naturalization. But the provisions of the law were not implemented. Jewish leaders were in contact with the Prince about the emancipation of their coreligionists.

- **July 3, 1862**. The Government ceases to engage in the organization of Israelite communities. Although it may seem a gain for autonomy, the result of this was the weakening of the legal status provided by state authorities.

Internationalization of the Jewish question in Romania

As of the beginning of modern Romania, in mid-19th century, the plight of Romanian Jews had an international dimension. The Foreign Minister of France, Count Walewski, intervened during the Peace Conference in Paris, in 1858, at the request of Baron Rothschild, to ensure that the future internal organization of the Romanian Principalities would mean that all citizens were equal before the law, irrespective of their origin or religion.

The Peace Treaty of Paris (March 1856) provides, at Article 23, the obligation to ensure full equality, in the Romanian Principalities, of all denominations. The future Ad hoc assemblies were left the mission to modify the Organic Regulations in this matter, according to the will of the Romanians.

The main Jewish organization from abroad, committed to helping Jews in Romania, including through protests against Romanian officials or interventions addressed to foreign chancelleries, was the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*. Other Jewish organizations from abroad were: the Anglo-Jewish Association, Israelitische Allianz of Vienna, the Board of Delegates of American Israelites.

Famous Jews who spoke in favor of Romanian Jews: Adolphe Issac Cremieux (former Minister of Justice in the provisional government of the Second Republic and founder of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*), Moses Montefiori (the most prestigious personality of English Judaism), Gerson von Bleichröder (banker and adviser to Chancellor Bismark), Benjamin Franklin Peixotto (US Consul in Romania, 1870-1876).

1866

May 10, 1866. Prince Charles arrived in Bucharest and formed his first government. The immediate goal of the future King was to draft a Constitution. In this context, Jews hoped that the new Constitution would provide them with equal rights, just like the other inhabitants of the country.

Following international interventions, the government submitted to the parliament an article of the future Constitution that was favorable to the Jews: "*The capacity of Romanian is obtained, kept and lost according to rules established by civil law. Religion cannot be an obstacle to obtaining citizenship*."

June 16, 1866. The committee in charge of drafting the Constitution changed the article: "*Religion cannot be an obstacle to becoming Romanian. As far as the Jews who came to Romania before, a special law will regulate their gradual admission to citizenship.*"

June 18, 1866. During the Parliament session which was to decide upon the final version of the article, a demonstration against granting civil rights to Jews turned into a serious anti-Semitic protest. The said article was withdrawn.

June 21, 1866. Article 7 of the future Constitution was adopted. It practically closed the road of Jewish emancipation and opened the way to a long line of discrimination: *the capacity of Romanian is obtained, kept and lost in accordance with rules established by civil law. Only foreigners of the Christian rite may become Romanians*.

1877

April 24, 1877. The outbreak of the Russian-Turkish war. Romania, still a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, allowed tsarist troops to cross her territory and actually joined the fight.

May 10, 1877. Romania declared her independence from the Ottoman Empire. During the fighting, in the summer and fall of 1877, the contribution of the Romanian army was decisive, many times, for the defeat of the Turks.

In 1877, across the country, Jewish committees were created and calls were launched (e.g. the Call of Israeli women in the capital), urging to provide material support to the military campaign, to treat the wounded.

During the campaign of 1877-1878, a number of 883 Jewish soldiers joined the army. Some of them were awarded the medal for outstanding bravery. In the country, Jewish communities and societies contributed to the war effort, organized ambulances and supported hospitals. Jewish Banks made donations to the army.

March 3, 1878. The San Stefano peace treaty between Russia and Turkey was concluded. Romania was not invited. Turkey recognized the independence of the new kingdom. In exchange, Russia received three southern counties of Bessarabia, offering, in compensation, a part of Dobrogea.

The peace agreement led to the discontent of the Great Powers. In June 1878, the Congress of Berlin took place in order to decide what changes would be made after the decisions made in Paris, in 1856.

Jewish international organizations (Aliance Israelite Universelle, the Anglo-Jewish Association, Israelitiche Allianz) began a serious campaign to support the cause of Jewish emancipation in Romania, in the broader context of the situation of the Jews in the Balkans. The result was that one central issue of the Congress was that of equal rights of all inhabitants of a state, irrespective of their religion. Romania's independence was practically conditioned by the international community: they had to modify Article 7 of the 1866 Constitution.

> *In Romania, the difference of faiths and denominations cannot be held against anyone as a reason for exclusion or incapacity to enjoy civil and political rights, to be admitted in public positions and honors, or in the exercise of various industries and professions, in any place.*
> *The free practice of all religions is provided to all subjects of the Romanian State, as well as to foreigners, and there will be no barrier in the hierarchical organization of the various communions or relationships with their spiritual leaders.*
> *The nationals of all Powers, tradesmen or others, will be treated on an equal footing in Romania, irrespective of their religion*. Article 44 of the Final Treaty of the Berlin Congress.

After large-scale diplomatic tours and countless attempts to obtain the recognition of independence without introducing the principle set out in Article 44 in the Romanian

Constitution, and after discussions and the fierce opposition of many politicians of the time, on the formula that was to replace Article 7 of Constitution, a new article was adopted, on **October 7, 1879**. While accepting the principle established in Berlin, in 1878, it stated that citizenship could only be granted by law, to be voted by the Parliament. Thus, citizenship was to be granted on an individual basis.

7. Communal life: Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Neologue, Orthodox Jews (16th-19th centuries)

The organization of communities Jewish

The Guild

The Guild was the main form of organization of the Jews in Moldavia and Wallachia. (In Transylvania: the company.) Jewish organization, whether called a guild, a company or Kahal, was based on the same principle of communal, religious and ethnic belonging, in all the European Diaspora. Romanian rulers tolerated and even supported – by charters – the existence of Jewish ethnic guilds, with its organizational structure, with *hakham-basha* and *staroşti* (lay leaders). The princely letters of the 18th century regulate the autonomy of the Jewish guild.

I allowed local Jews in the town of Bucharest, according to the old habits that they have met before and after the letter they sent to me, the permit to slaughter the cattle they need to eat. This permit is issued to them only, not to foreign Jews, who will have to buy meat from local Jews; thus, only local Jews have the right to prepare kosher meat and to sell it to foreign Jews. (Charter issued by Ioan Caragea in 1817)

The Hakhambashia

The communal life of Jews from Moldavia and Wallachia was dominated, as of the first part of the 18th century, by the *Hakhambashia*, a communal institution headed by the *Hakhambasha*, the moral and religious leader of the congregation. The *Hakhambashia* represents the supreme forum of civil and religious leadership of the community in the Romanian Principalities. (Correspondingly, in Transylvania it was the *Landes-rabbinate*.)

- 1719. The Ottoman Court imposes the *Hakhambashia*, having a hereditary character. The title of *Hakhambasha* was conferred upon Rabbi Naftali Cohen (1649-1719), a great scholar and Kabbalist. Naftali Cohen never became a *Hakhambasha*, as he died during the very year he was appointed to this position.

- By 1780, the *Hakhambashia* was based in Iasi, with jurisdiction over the community in Bucharest, where he it was represented by the deputy of the *Hakhambasha*.

The first documented *Hakhambasha* was Grand Rabbi Beţalel of Iași, an offspring of the Naftulovici family (grandson of Naftali Cohen). Rabbi Beţalel probably led the community from 1724 to 1743. Beţalel died in October 1743. His son, Itzhak, was given the title of *Hakhambasha* of Moldova, with jurisdiction over the congregation of Wallachia: "a bash-*hakham* of the whole Jewish guild of Moldavia and Wallachia" (Royal charter, 1743). The *Hakhambasha*s judged in cases between Jews. If the Jews were not satisfied with the judgment, they could call the *Divan* (Assembly having political, administrative and legal prerogatives that worked in connection with the Court of the Prince).

Testimonies of the time also mention the existence of local rabbis and *hakhams*. Documents also refer to the existence of a rabbinical court (Beth Din), which solved cases

between Jews. These courts punished them in case religious rules were broken, debts and communal fees were not paid, etc.

- 1834. The institution of the *Hakhambashia* was abolished.

Sephardi Jews in Bucharest

- The first mention of the stable presence of Sephardi merchants in Bucharest, from the *responsas* of Thessaloniki's chief rabbi, Samuel Medina, dates from the 1550s (about the death of a merchant in Dridu), although it may be that the merchant was in transit.

- 1559: The first mention of a stable Sephardi community in Bucharest, in the famous correspondence of Iosef Caro, rabbi of Nikopol. Names of two witnesses also appear in the response of Samuel de Medina, 1550. It means that witnesses had lived in Bucharest for at least nine years.

- 1714 Prince Ștefan Cantacuzino ordered the demolition of the Sephardi synagogue in Popescului slum (Jignița). It means that there was a community that included all its institutions: the cemetery, the synagogue (with communal, religious and confessional education prerogatives), a ritual bath, a funeral society, charities for orphans, poor girls, widows and sick, since the 17th century.

- 1716: the oldest gravestone in the cemetery of Sevastopol Street. The community was very present in the Mavrogheni area.

Here lies a great man, the leader of the city, famous B. Mordechai, son of the late Rabbi Yehuda of blessed memory. He died on 10 Kislev of 5476. May he rest in peace. May he rest in Paradise. Amen! (Epitaph on the gravestone of B. Mordechai, leader of the Jewish congregation, photographed by F. Damé in the early twentieth century)

- 1730: Nicolae Mavrocordat officially recognizes the Spanish Jewish Community in Bucharest

- 1818: Construction of the Great Spanish Temple (Cahal Grande) begins, on the venue of an old synagogue that had been demolished during the 18th century, in Negru Vodă Street. It was destroyed by the Romanian far-right Legionary members in 1941.

Migration of the Ashkenazi

The Ashkenazi settled both in Moldova and in Wallachia. At the end of the 1th century, Bucharest "was mainly re-inhabited by Ashkenazi. The newcomers brought their families and the organization of the Polish system, i.e. autonomous groups headed by an elected *starosta*, later confirmed by the authorities. The Guild of the Jews in Iași was organized with *starosta* elected by the whole congregation, together with the spiritual leader: the rabbi" (Halevy).

- **1694-1701**. The Treasury log of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu registered the taxes paid by the Jews.

At the end of the 18th century, **small trading towns were established on some estates in Moldova with the participation of Jews**: Vlădeni (1792), Șoldănești (1780), Târgu-Frumos (1763), Fălticeni (1780). Under a contract between the local boyar who owned the land and individuals, Jewish merchants and craftsmen inhabited the new locality.

A gap in traditional organization

The Organic Regulations (1831-1832) changed the legal status of the Jews in the Principalities. An article stipulated that locals could only be people of Christian denomination. Thus, non-Christians (i.e. Jews) no longer had the civil and political rights of the locals. By this statutory provision, all Jews, even those who previously enjoyed the status of the locals, automatically became "foreigners". The Organic Regulations also introduced the ban for Jews to own and work land in the Principalities.

During the period of the Organic Regulations (1831 / 1832 – 1856) restrictions against Jews were introduced. Measures were taken to limit the immigration of Jews in Moldova.

> *It is undeniable that Jews spread all over Moldavia, whose number increases every day and who mainly live from damaging the interests of locals, use all means of speculation to decrease our industry and public happiness. In order to heal, as much as possible, this unjust situation, committees will write down in official logs: the property and craft of each Jew, for those who do not have any property or craft and who, without having any useful craft, live without a purpose, should to deported from the country and any other like them will no longer be allowed to enter Moldavia*.
> Article 94 of the Organic Regulation of Moldavia

The Organic Regulations performed the reorganization of Jewish communities. By art. 57, communities were no longer called "guilds the Jews" or "guilds of Hebrews", but "the Jewish nation", according to their new status of foreign population. The tax and legal authority of the old guilds canceled. The institution of the *Starosta* or "*hakham-basha*" was replaced by a committee of 10 people chosen by the community, called *epitropia*. The spiritual leader of the entire community, the Chief Rabbi, was no longer appointed by the Prince, but elected by the community. These elected bodies operated according to provisions inspired by government decisions. These changes occurred both in Wallachia and Moldova.

Organization of the Jews, 1843-1918

- **1843**. The community of Local Jews of Polish (*lehi*) origin was founded. After organizational changes, it became the main Jewish community in Bucharest, being the most important organization of the Jews in the Romanian principalities. Two of the most important synagogues were built at the initiative and with the support of the community of local Jews of Polish origin: the Great Synagogue and the Coral Temple, both in Bucharest.
- **1857**. The Coral Temple of Bucharest founded, under the title "the Community of the Israelite Religion". The aim of this institution was limited to building a modern temple, whose cornerstone was laid on July 21, 1857. In the Coral Temple, prayers were said according to the Western rite, this being a display of the modernizing trend of Jewish religious life.
- **1874**. The Community of local Jews of Polish origin self-dissolves, thus ending a period in the history of the Jewish community of Bucharest.
- **1874**. The Coral Temple congregation was founded to replace the community of local Jews of Polish origin.
- **1895**. with the approval of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Coral Temple congregation obtained the title of "Community": the **Western Rite Jewish Community of Bucharest**, which operated until 1919.

Religious life. Spiritual trends (the 19th century)

The two spiritual currents in the case of Jews of Eastern Europe, during the 19th century, including for the Jews of Romania, were the *Haskallah* and Hassidism. Both contributed to the weakening of traditional Jewish society. The *Haskallah* marked the beginning of changes in all areas. It was less intense in Jewish communities in Moldavia, as they were more attached to the values and traditions of Hassidism.

There is a theory that Hassidism began in the area of Moldavia (Moshe Idel). During the same period, at the Neamț Monastery, a new phenomenon called hesychasm took place. It was related to Hassidism and a large number of Jews lived in the Principality. However, Hassidism is an important contemporary movement for Orthodox Jews from all over the world. Millions of people make annual pilgrimages to Uman (Ukraine), the holiest site of Hassidism.

Conversions to Christianity

Conversions to Christian (especially Orthodox) as an expression of the modernizing movement within the Jewish population.

Messianic Jews, the most important such group living in Bessarabia before and after 1918 are worth mentioning: Iosif Rabinovici (Joseph Rabinowitz – 1837-1899) – who founded the religious movement called the "Israelites of the New Covenant", in 1884; Leon Averbuch – the leader of the Christian Jewish community in Kishinev.

The beginnings of Jewish communal life in Transylvania

Even before 1623 Jews sporadically travelled into the Carpathian area, specifically in Transylvania, but their long-term presence is not mentioned by the documents of the time. Their medical services were requested by the Princes of Transylvania, Stephen Bocskai, the Báthory family or by Gheorghe Rákóczy I, later on. They traded within the Central-European region, throughout the country, but did not settle there.

- 1552 - 1718. The region of Banat came under Ottoman rule. It is known that some of the Sephardi Jews expelled from Spain arrived in the Eastern Mediterranean area and were well received in Constantinople, by the sultans. They were able to move relatively freely within the growing Empire. There are testimonies of the presence of Jews within the occupied territories. Jews often accompanied troops either as doctors, counselors, gun operators or craftsmen, offering their services to the heads of the army. During this period, the region of Banat has a much stronger Jewish presence there than in the rest of Transylvania.

The Jews of Constantinople, a strong and widely populated colony, helped embassies of European powers accredited to the palace of the Sultans to operation and maintain diplomatic and financial ties - money exchange, the purchase of luxury items, of spices on account of Prince, of the nobility or of the princely family.

Thus a Jew named Joseph was of great help for the Transylvanian court of the mid-17th century, when the messengers of the Transylvanian Prince came to the gate of the Ottoman Sultan to bring the due tax. (They helped with the trade, various purchases, the purchase of supplies for the "embassy", he managed the connection between more or less important officials of the Ottoman Empire, indicated the extent of the tip in order to bribe the officials, served as interpreter, etc.)

The settlement of the first Jews in the territory of Transylvania proper, specifically in Alba Iulia, is connected to the Jews in the Ottoman capital.

- **1623**. At the request of Dr. Abraham Salsa from Istanbul, Prince Gabriel Bethlen (1613-1629) issued a diploma of privilege for a few Jewish merchants from the Ottoman Empire. Certainly, they were Sephardi Jews (of Spanish rite). We do not know how many people used this privilege to trade freely in the Ottoman Empire and Transylvania, as well as in the neighboring regions. We know that they had the right to settle and build sustainable housing in the princely city. They were not separated, put into a ghetto, as it happened in the Western European world, nor were they prohibited from wearing "Christian" clothes. The clothing restriction referred, as shown in the regulation of the town of Alba Iulia, to wearing expensive suits and luxury items. They did not wear "Hebrew" signs, like the Jews of Europe (a special hat or strident clothes). They had the right to build a place of worship and were free to exercise their religion *intra muros*.

Their residence in Alba Iulia, as the community grew, became inconvenient in the late 17th century. The Jews wanted to leave the city and were looking for a decent life in a larger area in Transylvania, despite prohibitions.

The 18th century. The dissolution of the kingdom of Poland resulted in Jewish emigration to Moldavia, Transylvania, the Czech and Slovakian territories, as well as to the Hungarian territories dominated by the Habsburgs. The newcomers were Ashkenazi, who far outnumbered the Sephardim who were already living in Transylvania. This wave of immigration inhabited, among others, the areas of Maramureș and Satu Mare. Jewish population there was quite sizeable. They also arrived in Alba Iulia, where they doubled the local synagogue. Thus, under the same roof, there was a place of worship used both by the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi.

For other outlying regions (the so-called *Partium Regni Hungariae*) under direct authority of the Royal Locum Tenens Council of Hungary or for Banat, which had been liberated from the Turks by an army which was directly subordinated to Vienna directly, the situation was slightly different from that in Transylvania.

- **1790**. Jews were allowed into cities in the last year of the reign of Joseph II. Earlier, in cities such as Oradea and Timișoara they were under the protection of the military commander of the local garrison. Jews in Banat had their own organization, headed by a Judex Judaeorum – i.e. a judge of the Jews.

There is information about cases when nobles brought and founded entire colonies of Jews on their estates, such as Counts Károlyi of Carei (1724 and the following years), who built a wooden synagogue for the Jews at his court.

The connection between liberal Hungarian nobility and Jews created a unique "symbiosis" in Eastern Europe. The nobility and liberal bourgeois revolutionary strata, in the eve of the Revolution (1848), were more or less in favor of Jewish emancipation.

- **August 1849**. The Council of Szeged decided to recognize the equal rights of Jews in Hungary and Transylvania. Similar steps, quasi-identical measures, were also made by France or Prussia decades earlier, and this is where the Hungarian liberals were inspired from.

The idea of Joseph II - a typical idea of the Enlightenment to transform the Jewish society into a lucrative society, very complex in terms of occupations, and to modernize the outlook of their members through practical and scientific education – took roots. Jews started to be more educated, a network of educational institutions was organized, Israelite schools and teachers were better trained. Textbooks were printed and emphasis was placed on learning German, so as to replace Yiddish. Jews were forced to accept German family names. They were supposed to pay a modest fee and to choose from a set of eligible names. The measure came into force as of January 1, 1787. The first Jewish students were admitted to universities of the Empire in Vienna (1785) and later in Pest (1802). Jews were mainly interested in medicine and later in higher education areas such as mechanical engineering, music, as well as in the Handels-Akademie in Vienna (the School of Commerce). These institutions issued certificates valid for the whole empire and ensured their owners could exercise the so-called free lucrative professions.

The wave of reforms also hit the core of Jewish life until then – religious practice. The idea comes from the community of Arad. Rabbi Aron Chorin (1789-1844) brought a number of innovations in the formal worship (e.g. the sermon in German or Hungarian languages, even in the case of some prayers; placing women in separate banks, but at the same level with the men in the synagogue, inviting Christians at the Jewish service, introduction of organs, etc.) without changing the core theory of the religion. He thus managed to persuade the congregation in Arad.

There appeared a whole movement which then spread to the west, at first, reaching especially Ashkenazi communities who came from Central Europe, i.e. from Czech territories and Austria. Subsequently, after 1868, this trend increased the separation of Jews into **Neologues** and hit and core, the latter being conservative-traditionalists.

A special phenomenon was that of the Szekler Sabbatarian sect: Szekler peasants who, as a result of the religious reform converted to Judaism – without Jews, even before Jews come to Transylvania. They kept this faith, worshiping in Hungarian language, despite attempts to

attract them to the so-called religions which received God's message, accepted by the Transylvanian system of tolerance (Catholic, Protestant-Calvinist, Lutheran and Unitarian). In 1868, they opted for the status of Jews and joined the acknowledged Jewish religion. They kept their faith until the eve of the Holocaust or preferred to die in gas chambers. Their center was in Bezidul Nou şi la Sângeorzul de Pădure (in Mureș County, today). They were discovered by Neologue Rabbi and scientist Samuel Kohn, in the 1880s and rediscovered for the Jewish world by Moses Gaster, in the early 1920s.

The Jews of Transylvania were organized by the Governor of Transylvania and by the authorities in Vienna in a formal, but less viable body: the Grand Rabbinate of Alba Iulia, headed by a Chief Rabbi (*Ober-Rabbiner*). It was only on paper that he had jurisdiction over all Jews living in the counties (administrative unit) of Transylvania. In fact, each community was organized quasi-independently, according to a medieval model, and had their own religious leader, who chose or brought rabbis from the localities of the Empire.

A community was considered fully legal from the perspective of Jewish law when there were 10 mature men, if they had a Talmud Torah school, a ritual bath, a place of worship and a cemetery. Moreover, its members were to wholly comply with kosher laws. Usually they were under the formal protection of the local authorities, to whom they paid a defense fee (*Schutz-Geld*).

The most populous counties, on the eve of the 1848 Revolution, were: Bihor, Satu Mare, Maramureș, Arad, Timiș, Solnocul de Mijloc and Solnocul Interior, Dăbâca and Mureş. The areas least populated by Jews were the ones inhabited by Germans (Königsboden, Sachsenland) and by Szeklers. The reasons vary: while counties were dominated by relatively wide estates, where the Jewish presence was beneficial to the movement of goods and for the lease of plots of land, in Sachsenland, Saxons had been tradesmen and famous and skillful craftsmen for centuries. Thus, Jews would have been an unwelcome competition that would have upset the conservative economic status quo. The self-defense of the Saxon economic interests was also manifest against Armenians, Aromanians and Greeks, as of the 18th century.

Regarding the Szeklerland, the chairs (administrative unit of the Szekler) represented an insignificant part in the economy; the country was far behind economically and there was not a high attraction for Jewish entrepreneurs to move there, - except for the Mureș chair.

From the 1848 Revolution to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise

The Revolution of 1848-1849 also involved Jews of Transylvania and Banat into the military and political events. Their interest was to participate on the side of Hungarian progressive forces which promised them personal freedom, emancipation and the destruction of the feudal economic constraints. Many joined the military detachments as volunteers and were part of the national guards. The army of Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894, leader of the Hungarian

revolutionaries in 1848-1849), Jews were present at a much higher level than their share in the population of Hungary.

End revolutionary momentum was a major turning point in Jewish life, in this historic province.

- **1850**. Austrian authorities reorganized the economic life of dominated provinces and Jews were allowed to move to urban areas. The purchase of lands and of buildings, in general, was liberalized. They began supporting industrialization, issued more permits to establish craft businesses, manufactures and even factories.

The Jews of Transylvania and Banat first began to process agricultural products: cereals and fruits, textile and industrial plants. Factories of alcohol, starch, vinegar, mills and bakeries were founded, while butcher shops were leased. They founded small factories for producing vegetable oils, beer, as well as mills and woodworking factories.

In cities where guilds still existed, but were not as strong as before, they handled all kinds of crafts, especially those which were hitherto rare and missing from small and average workshops. Thus, shoemakers made boots for festive events; tailors made fashionable clothes, merchants traded haberdashery and spices.

Jews made and sold all goods they hoped could make them gain more or less. But they still faced bankruptcies and crises. Thus, the classes of the rich and of the poor began to be more and more visible. Mass Jewish impoverishment was commonplace. But Jewish solidarity led to the development of charities and mutual aid societies.

One means to escape poverty and needs was emigration to the USA and Western Europe. True, there was no massive emigration, as in the case of Russia or Romania, as the Jews of Austria-Hungary were living an incomparably better life than their brothers in the mentioned countries. Also, Zionism had not conquered as many hearts and minds as in other countries, although the prophets, the fathers of Zionism, were born in Hungary, such as Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau.

In rural areas, Jews continued their trade as innkeepers, merchants or lease owners, but they typically went to the cities, during this period. In most major towns, they now represented almost 20-30% of the population (in Sighet, Oradea, Timişoara, Arad, Lugoj, Cluj, Gherla, Târgu Mureş, Reghin, later in Gheorgheni, Tulgheş, Alba Iulia, Beiuş and even in Braşov and Deva).

In cities, an increasingly number of Jews were employees of companies, private and public officials, teachers, professors after the University of Cluj was founded (1871). They had their own stores and workshops. Usually, every town had a "Jewish quarter", i.e. around the synagogue and communal institutions, including streets walked and favored by Jewish merchants and craftsmen.

There were more and more buildings, family homes erected in luxurious neighborhoods, on the main street or on the outskirts of cities. House plans were designed by fashionable engineers and architects. They were well-rated, young people with new ideas about architecture, exterior decoration and furniture. Jewish architects from Budapest, Vienna, Timișoara, Oradea, Cluj were employed. The synagogues built in Timișoara, Cluj, Brașov, Târgu Mureș, Satu Mare and Arad were influenced by the trend of architectural renewal, and chose a different style: classical, Moorish-oriental and later *Jugendstil* or eclectic. These are architectural monuments that reflect the situation and taste of the people who had them ordered. The same features are found in Jewish cemeteries.

Mass participation in the founding of industrial establishments was seconded by the revival of financial life. The skills of the Jews in financial transactions, their sense of abstract calculations, made them indispensable for banking life. They were cashiers, accountants, bankers, heads of financial institutions and financial controllers of the state. No wonder that some of them became spectacularly rich, accumulating liquid and later real estate wealth. The Hungarian electoral system allowed the entry of the richest, the most powerful tax payers in towns and counties, in the so-called virilism system. Thus, at the end of each financial year, a list of the largest taxpayers was made. They could opt to enter the local councils had the right to vote. Jews were included since the beginning of the modern electoral system, that is in the 8th decade of the 19th century, until 1918. The Liberal system allowed Jews, like in England, Germany or Austria, to enter the great state politics. After the compromise of 1867, Hungary had several ministers in Liberal governments, including the ministries of trade and industry, justice and defense.

Anti-Semitism in the 19th century has a variable intensity. During some periods, it was weaker, but increased in the eve of emancipation of the Jewish religion. An anti-Semitic party was established and led by Győző Istóczy, who managed to gain votes and to enter the parliament. Anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jews was prohibited by law and authorities defended the Jews, so that public hostility towards the Jews was held in check by the entire liberal system.

Jewish life in Transylvania after the Austro-Hungarian compromise

Jews from Hungary, including those in Transylvania, paid a very high price for having joined the revolution's ideals of national independence during the 1848 Hungarian Revolution. They actively participated in the fight efforts of the Hungarian army and, as a punishment, most of them were subsequently forced to join the Austrian army.

Looking forward to better times, the Transylvanian Jewish community never stopped hoping to reach their goal of emancipation, as promised, during the Revolution, to the whole

Hungarian Jewry. That time came after the Compromise was reached and the Austro-Hungarian Empire came into being.

The Austria-Hungarian Empire period (1867-1918)

As they were granted the promised emancipation and the Israelite religion was acknowledged as having received the words of God, and also due to a period of economic growth, industrialization and modernization, which made them be in favor of assimilation into the Hungarian majority, Hungarian Jews (and those in Transylvanian) considered that the decades they lived in the Austro-Hungarian Empire were the "golden age", a period of unprecedented momentum of life and social status of the Jews in Hungary. This era was marked by the following important events of Jewish life in Hungary and Transylvania:

- December 28, 1867. Law 17 of 1867 was promulgated, granting civil emancipation to the Jews of Hungary. Thus, the Jews of Transylvania received equal civil rights to the members of Christian communities of the country. Following civil emancipation, the assimilation and cultural integration, from the linguistic and political perspectives, of Jews from Hungary, into the Hungarian population, speeds up.

- December 10, 1868 – February 23, 1869. The Israelite Congress of Pest. Following the Congress, the Mosaic religion in Hungary / Transylvania split up. There were three denominations, henceforth: the Neologues (congressists / progressives); Orthodox (conservatives); and status quo ante followers (those who did not accept the division of the Jewish faith in Hungary and campaigned to restore the situation prior to 1868).

A special phenomenon is the secession of the Jewish communities, caused by administrative and organizational measures, i.e. the so-called Jewish Congress summoned by the Hungarian government in Budapest, in 1868. Liberal Minister József Eötvös summoned a congress of all Jews so as to organize them into one religion with a hierarchy imposed by the state, like Christian denominations. But the Congress proved to be a failure in terms of organization, for not one religious body was established, but three, which were later recognized, separately.

The conservative traditionalists refuse any intervention in the exercise of their religion and in the internal organization, in general. The Neologue reformist trend accepted the measures and suggestions provided by the liberal state, while a third current or group adopted an intermediate viewpoint, preserving their state, but making a compromise between reform and tradition: it is called the status quo ante confession.

In terms of social strata, the first and third groups include richer entrepreneurs who embrace a change of ideology, of economic directions and secular culture. They provided people of culture and politicians, local councilors, journalists, opinion makers. Later on, in the 20th century, they were involved in the political and cultural movements of the Hungarian and German minorities, up to the emergence of local fascism. The Neologues dominated the

communities of Oradea, Timișoara, Arad and generally the west of Transylvania. The followers of the status quo were present in larger towns of Transylvania.

But most Israelites in Transylvania remained faithful to traditionalism, plus the Hassidim and the so-called Jews of Sephardi rite. Their main centers were in Carei, Sighet, Satu Mare, counties in the northern and north-western part of the province, under the influence of co-religionists from Trans-Carpathian Ukraine, Poland, Galicia, Lithuania, Belarus, where they came from. Their communities there grew continuously, in terms of demographics, at a higher or lower rate, depending on the policy of the authorities. At the end of the 19th century, their social condition was generally modest, but they later better adapted to the new conditions provided by Greater Romania.

- 1882/1883. The trial of Tiszaeszlár is an example of modern anti-Semitism in Hungary. Local Jews were accused of blood libel. Following the trial – where the Jews were found innocent – the Anti-Semitic Party was founded (1883) by Győző Istóczy. A whole anti-Semitic literature arises afterwards.

- 1895. Law 42 of 1895 was adopted. It recognized the Israelite religion. Thus, the Jewish religion had equal rights with other religions.

8. The history of Jews from Basarabia and Bukovina (end of 18th century- World War I)

History of the Jews in Bukovina, 1775-1918

After the annexation of the northern part of the Moldavian Principality to the Hapsburg Empire (1775), the number of Jews there grew rapidly.

Jewish immigration - most came from Galicia and some from Austria - was part of the settlement policy carried out by the Austrian authorities. The most important Jewish centers were: Chernivtsi, Rădăuți, Suceava, Sadagura and Wizhnitz. Chernivtsi was a large center of Jewish culture in Eastern Europe, being nicknamed the "Austrian Jerusalem". Jews played an important role in economic and social development of Bucovina.

Austrian authorities regulated the organization and operation of Jewish communities in Bukovina. According to an imperial order issued in 1776, they admitted the existence of a single district community in Chernivtsi. Nevertheless, later on, the authorities allowed the operation of several communities. At the end of the ninth decade, two main communities lived there: one in Chernivtsi, with the subordinated communities of Sadagura and Wizhnitz, and the other in Suceava, with the subordinated communities of Siret and Câmpulung.

The organization of Jewish communities in Bukovina, given the eligibility of their leaders, etc., was almost the same as in Banat. Leading the Jews of Bucovina was, first of all, a first-judge (*starosta*) - helped by magistrates of the larger local communities, by cashiers and secretaries who had to write in German language only. On the other hand, there was a district rabbi and a few local rabbis. The district Rabbi (*Landesrabiner*) was also the head of the Beth-Din (the religious court).

History of the Jews of Bessarabia, 1812-1918

Jewish presence in the territory between the Prut and Dniester is older than 1812, when Bessarabia was annexed by the Russian Empire. Especially in northern cities (Hotin, Soroca, etc.) there lived a relatively large number of Jews.

After 1812, the number of Jews greatly increased, while the anti-Jewish decrees of Russia, in the first half of the 19th century, were applicable only partially in the province (guberniya) of Bessarabia, which became a place of refuge for the Jews from the rest of the Czarist Empire.

The number of Jews in Bessarabia: in 1812 - about 19,500; in 1856: about 79,000; in 1889 – 180,918; in 1897 - 228.668 (11.8% of the total population). In 1918, given the collapse of the Russian Empire, Bessarabia united with Romania and it was the Romanian province having the highest number of Jews.

But Bessarabia also imposed economic and political restrictions against Jews. In 1900, there were open acts of persecution and violence, including pogroms, like in the rest of the Russian Empire. The best known are the two pogroms that took place in Kishinev on April 6 to 7, 1903 (on Easter days), when 49 Jews were killed and about 500 were injured. Hundreds of Jewish homes and shops were destroyed; in October 19 to 20, 1905, a number of 19 Jews were killed and 56 others were injured.

A feature of Bessarabian Jewry, given the poverty of the immense majority, was their presence in villages, in large numbers, their religious conservatism and life in closed communities.

9. The beginnings of the Zionist

The beginnings of the Zionist The beginnings of the Zionist movement in Romania. The first emigration to Palestine

Zionism was manifest in the entire Jewish population of Eastern and Central Europe. Jews in Romania had an important contribution here, too. Within the Jewish population of Romania, ideas that could awaken the a national consciousness and movement were old. This is proven by the intention, expressed in 1867, to organize an agricultural colony in Palestine. The "Ishub Eretz Israel" Company ("Motherland Israel Colonization") was founded in Moinești, in 1875. It proposed the reconstruction of the Jewish state. Similar companies were set up in other places.

- December 30, 1881 - January 1, 1882. Focșani hosted the first Zionist conference. It was attended by members of more than 50 colonization companies.

Foundation of the first colonies in Palestine, by Romanian Jews, 1882

In August 1882, the first colonization ship left from the port of Galați (the ship "Tethys"), carrying 228 Jews from Moineşti, Focșani and other places in Moldavia. They founded the first agricultural colonies in Palestine: Rosh Pina and Zichron Yaacov (which still exist). In Zichron Yaacov, Romanian Jews developed a wine cooperative, having brought with them the technology they used in Odobeşti.

10. The legal status of Jews, anti-semitism, Romanian elite for and against discrimination, expulsions and emigration (1878-1913)

Naturalization (after 1878)

The policy of individual naturalization did not meet the expectations of the Jewish people. Apart from the Jewish soldiers in the War of Independence (1877-1878), individual naturalization was granted, from 1880 to 1913, to a total of 529 people, of thousands of applicants.

The majority of those naturalized were among the very rich: bankers, merchants and industrialists. Intellectuals were also admitted to naturalization, but not without difficulty, sparking several scandals; for example, the rejection of naturalization in the case of scientist Lazăr Şăineanu.

The naturalization policy had clear restrictive intentions, by excessive delays and procedural formalism, as well as unnecessary and agitated parliamentary debates. The naturalization policy was a real disappointment for Jews.

In 1909-1919, the leading organization that struggled for the emancipation of the Jews was the Union of Native Jews (*Uniunea Evreilor Pământeni*).

Options of the Jewish population after 1879

The options of the Jews in Romania, after the path of collective naturalization was closed, in 1879, included:

1) **Assimilation** or even **integration** into the Romanian society. This option was embraced by wealthy Jews and a few elite intellectuals, as they were attracted by Romanian culture. This option was embraced by a minority.

2) **Migration**. Mass emigration increased after 1900, mainly because of poor economic conditions in the country and discrimination in matters pertaining to civil rights. By some estimations, until 1914, some 90,000 people emigrated, accounting for one third of the total Jewish population of Romania.

3) **Zionism**. Organized emigration into Palestine.

Emigration

Most emigrated to Western European countries and the US, but also to Palestine. The issue of Jewish emigration from Romania to the US was raised by the American Consul in Bucharest, Benjamin Franklin Peixotto, 1870-1876, who came up with an emigration plan.

A specific phenomenon was the so-called "pedestrian movement", around 1900. Due to the poor conditions in which they found themselves, especially Jewish craftsmen and freelancers, following discriminatory laws at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, hundreds of Jews started walking to other places.

US statistics of 1890 recorded 517 Jewish immigrants from Romania. By 1900, their total number reached 15,041 and still grew, reaching more than 60,000 people, in 1914.

Anti-Semitism in the Old Kingdom

Anti-Semitism in Romania was, first of all, a reaction of people who belonged to social groups that felt threatened by the economic competition represented by Jews: great landowners, the Romanian middle class which was under development. They were directly affected by the conflict of interest inevitably generated by the situation they were in. Economic competition is the main reason for anti-Semitism, but, at the time, there was also a religious anti-Semitism, etc. Accusations against Jews included: Jews were considered disloyal to Romania, they intended to

establish a state within the state, they undermined the Christian and Latin genius of the Romanians, they undermined nationality and race, they used the force and money of the occult Freemasonry. The typology of anti-Semitism in Romanian principalities / Romania, in 1830-1918, is complicated.

The organization of the anti-Semitic movement in Romania, highlighted:

- The organization of anti-Semitic committees in many towns.
- **1885**. The "Anti-Semitic Alliance" was founded in Bucharest.
- September 7 to 9, 1886. Bucharest hosted the Romanian-European anti-Semitic Congress.
- **1910.** The Nationalist Democratic Party is founded by N. Iorga and A.C. Cuza. Its program proposed for a "nationalist solution to the Jewish question". The final objective was the "elimination of the Jews, their gradual replacement from all branches of activity".

11. Jews during world war I, the peace conferences and the status of Jews

Jewish participation in the War of Reunification (1916-1919).

- August 15/28, 1916. The Union of Local Jews launched an appeal to the Jewish people for war mobilization. About 25,000 Jews joined the Romanian army.

The Jewish population also participated in the war effort and raised funds for the Red Cross, as well as by the volunteers who provided medical services in the venues and with the tools provided by the Romanian authorities.

The Jewish question during World War I.

- May 1917. By a memorandum, the Union of Native Jews proposed officials and the Romanian Parliament to develop a speedy emancipation process. It failed.
- **April 24 / May 7, 1918**. In the peace treaty with Germany, in Bucharest, the issue of Jewish naturalization was also touched.

- **June 28, 1919** – the Peace Treaty of Versailles. The Versailles treaty system established the new territorial division of Europe, after the war

- December 9, 1919. Minorities Treaty, art. 2, 7 and 8 acknowledges the Romanian citizenship was granted to all Jews living in Greater Romania

Art. 2 The Romanian Government is committed to provide her inhabitants with a full and complete protection of their life and their freedom, without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion.

Art. 7 Romania undertakes to recognize, *de ipso facto* and without any formality, all Jews living in the country, in Romanian territories, as Romanian subjects, unless they have any other nationality.

Art. 8 All Romanian subjects will be equal before the law and will enjoy the same civil and political rights, irrespective of race, language or religion.

Distribution of national minorities in Greater Romania, in 1920:

Ethnicity	New Romania	Old Romania	Total	percentage%
Romanians	5005000	6800000	11805000	69.9
Hungarians	1518000	50000	1569000	9.3
Ukrainians	792 000		792 000	4.7
Germans	690000	35000	725 000	4.3
Jews	**600000**	**300000**	**900000**	**5.3**
Bulgarians	140000	150000	290000	1.7
Roma	60000	225000	285000	1.7
Lipovans	59000	40000	99000	0.6
Poles	37000		37000	0.2
Turks		170000	170000	1.0
Various	196000	30000	226000	1.3
Total	9097000	7800000	16897000	100.0

La grande Roumanie. La structure économique, sociale, financière, politique et particulèrement ses reichesses, La Haye, Martinus Nijhoff, 1926, p. 70 *apud* Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România – de la emancipare la marginalizare (1919-1938)* – The Jews in Romania - from Emancipation to Marginalization (1919-1938)), Bucharest, Hasefer, 2000 p. 28

- **March 28, 1923**. The Constitution is promulgated. Jews are granted citizenship in Greater Romania.

> Art. 5. Romanians, regardless of ethnic origin, language or religion, enjoy freedom of conscience, freedom of education, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, freedom of association and all freedoms and rights established by law.
> Art. 7. The difference of religious creeds and denominations, of ethnic origin and language, in Romania, is not an obstacle to obtaining civil and political rights and to enjoy them.

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Unification of Transylvania with Romania

- 1914-1918. Hungarian Jews take part, in large numbers, in the fights of the First World War.

After the golden age of the Hungarian Jewish community, they had to face a series of reproaches and even many atrocities from the Hungarian majority. Jews had to understand that they were no longer needed, in terms of the percentages they represented within the population of Hungary, to ensure the majority of the Magyar element in the country. Moreover, they had to face a new crisis of identity, in light of the fact that Hungary lost Transylvania to Romania. This situation required the development of new identity strategies in the case of the Jews in Transylvania, so as to respond to the new conditions and events of the era:

- October-November 1918. Atrocities against Jews, committed by soldiers returning from the front (Năsăud Aleșd, Sighetu Marmației, Prundu Bârgăului, etc.)

- November 20, 1918. Followers of the Jewish national movement in Transylvania organize a constituent assembly in the Great Hall of the "Urania" Cinema and Café of Cluj. On this occasion, the National Union of Jews in Transylvania is established. Its leader was Theodor Fischer, a renowned lawyer in the city and an old supporter of Zionism.

- December 1-2, 1918. The Grand National Assembly of Romanians in Alba Iulia. The Unification with Romania is proclaimed. The meeting also established the Governing Council, based in Sibiu.

- December 19, 1918. Following the efforts of Chaim Weissburg and other local Zionists, the first issue of the *Új Kelet* (The New East) Zionist newspaper is published in Cluj. Between 1918-1920, it appeared on a weekly basis. Between 1920-1940, it appeared daily. It is the official newspaper of the National Union of Jews in Transylvania and, later on, of the Jewish Party in Transylvania. In the best years of the interwar period, its daily circulation reached almost 10,000 copies.

- 1919. The first Jewish high school in Banat and in former Hungarian territories, united with Romania in 1918, is established in Timișoara. Officially, the teaching language of the high school is Romanian, but, like the other two secondary schools established in those years (1920, in Cluj and in Oradea) education takes place both in Romanian and - especially - in Hungarian languages, because most teachers and students could not speak the Romanian language.

- June 4, 1920. Hungary signed the Peace Treaty of Trianon, by which they waived Western Hungary, Southern Slovakia, Trans-Carpathia, Crișana, Maramureș, historical Transylvania, Vojvodina and Croatia.

- July 1, 1920. At Chaim Weissburg's initiative, the National Union of Jews from Transylvania opened its first *ulpan* (a school aiming to teach Hebrew courses) in Transylvania, in Cluj.

12. Jewish contributions to the modernization of Romania (1830-1918)

Demographic data

The data for the year 1860, provided by the statistics book published by C. Negruzzi, head of the Statistical Office of Moldavia, show there **the 13 counties of the country hosted 118,922 Jews, 4,670 of which were foreign subjects. The grand total of the population in Moldavia was 1,206,906 inhabitants**. The data provided by Leonida Colescu show that, in the same year, in the whole country, a number of 134,168 Jews lived;

In Wallachia, the number of Jews did not exceed 20,000. Dan Berindei and his collaborators calculated, on the basis of documents, that the Jews of Wallachia numbered 17,632 people, compared to the 9.234 indicated by Radu Rosetti (Verax, 1903).

During 1859-1899, Romania's population grew by 54.1%. The general demographic data in Romania faced a special situation with regard to the growth of the foreign population, specifically the Jewish one. But the reliability of statistics is lower when it comes to these people, because **many of them, especially recent immigrants, due to their mobility and wish to not be expelled to their home countries, hid from census officials and from the authorities in general**. However, we have some data that allow us to track the dynamics of the Jewish population in the period between 1860 and 1919.

Thus, the census of 1859-1860 indicates the presence of **134,168 Jews, i.e. 3.5% of the total population**. Isidore Loeb, in a paper published in Paris, in 1877, considered that, in fact, in 1866, Romania hosted between 300,000 and 400,000 Jews. The figure is exaggerated, but this was the perception in some people of the time.

In 1899, Jews represented 4.5% of the total population, their number reaching 266,652. They represented about 28.6% of the total foreign population in Romania.

Thus, the growth rate of the Jewish population during 1860-1899 was 98.7%, compared to about 50%, as was the growth of the local population.

Given the economic crisis at the end of the 19th century and their emigration, the Jewish population decreased in 1901-1902, having been estimated at 261,000 people. **It increased slowly, to 269,000 inhabitants, in 1908** and, finally, **to about 300,000 people in 1916**. Another source indicates the presence of up to 320,000 Jews in Romania, in 1915.

During the second half of the 19th century, the number of Jews in Moldavia increased by at least 76,750 people, while in Wallachia their number increased by 59,618 people. However, although they were most numerous, behind the local population, Jews never exceeded 5% of the total population. In terms of the proportion of Jews per thousand of people, at the beginning of the 20th century, they reached 45 in Romania. This number was exceeded only in Austria (46.8) and closely followed by Hungary (44.2).

Earlier in the 20th century, Jewish community existed in 97 urban centers, which show the presence of this population in most towns across the country.

Romania / Provinces	The percentage of Jews in the urban population
Romania	**19%**
Moldavia	38.7%
Muntenia	10.6%
Oltenia	4.1%
Dobrogea	5.6%

Jews in the economic life of Romania, 1830-1918

Industry

Documents and censuses from the fifth decade of the 19th show a "classification" of trades that has about 100 positions, positions that involved about 25,000 people in the two Principalities. Nevertheless, around World War I, industry provided about 22% of the global social product and 14% of the national income, as this branch of economic life employed over 200,000 people.

- **1902**. In Romania, 66,188 industrial units operated at the time. Of them, 45,963 (73.9%) had Romanian owners, 6,360 (10.2%) were owned by foreign subjects and **9,865 (15.9%) were owned by Jews** (foreigners without protection, according to the documents of the time). As far as large industrial units were concerned - with a registered capital of more than 50,000 lei – there operated 625 such units. Of them 53.9% were owned by Romanians, 26.6% by foreign subjects and 19.5% by Jews.

In 1902, a number of 19,181 Jewish craftsmen operated various workshops. Of these, 61.7% were involved in the clothing industry, 12.5% in the metal industry, 10% in the wood and furniture industry and 5.3% in the food industry.

Table of large enterprises:

Industrial branches	Number of units	Having Jewish owners
Ceramics	13	1
Glassware	6	3
Mineral materials	13	-
Metals	75	9
Wood and furniture	72	19
Tannery, leather	25	6
Food	191	26
Textiles	31	7
Clothing	35	12
Chemicals	105	33
Paper	13	3
Graphic arts	26	2
Miscellaneous	20	1
TOTAL	**625**	**122**

Trade

In Moldavia, where 75% of the Jewish population from all over Romania was concentrated, especially in the north, **trade was an almost exclusively Jewish activity**. A statistical analysis made by officials in **1892** revealed that, in Botoșani County, the state of trade units was as follows: in Botoșani 92% of the companies were owned by Jews; in other urban communes, 85.1% of these units were owned by Jews and 75.6% in rural communes belonged to the same category. In other northern counties, the situation was as follows: Suceava - 94.8% in the capital city, 70% in rural areas; Dorohoi - 91.8% in the capital city, 95.5% in other urban

communes, 56.8% in rural areas; Roman - 86% in the capital city, 57.4% in rural areas; Iași - 82.2% in the capital city, 81.5% in other urban communes, 74.3% in rural areas; Vaslui - 89% in the capital city, 69% in rural areas; Bacău - 85.6% in the capital city, 62.5% in other urban areas, 42.5% in rural communes. Of the 13 counties of Moldavia, it was only in three capital cities that the proportion of Jewish trade units did not exceed 50%.

As far as Wallachia was concerned, the ratio is reversed - with the exception of Bucharest, Turnu Severin and Brăila. County capital cities like Ploiești, Slatina, Câmpulung, Craiova, Buzău had over three quarters of trade companies owned by Romanians. Moreover, in rural communities of the area, in 11 out of the 17 counties, the share of Romanian trade companies exceeded 90% and the share in Olt county was 100%.

Trade statistics from 1902 states that over 21% of traders - paying patents - were of Jewish origin. In absolute numbers, of 107,332 merchants, 22,590 were Jewish. Most were concentrated in the counties of Iași (75.3% of all merchants), Botoșani (75%), Dorohoi (72.9%), Tecuci (65.9%), Neamț (60.7%), Roman (57.4%), Vaslui (56.5%), Fălciu (55.7%) and Bacău (52.5%). Thus, much of the trade of Moldavia was in the hands of Jewish merchants and traders who completely dominated this area.

Entrepreneurship

A new field of activity which developed towards the end of the 19th century was entrepreneurship, here Jews were well represented. Not really in need of specialized knowledge, but access to funds and knowledge of management, entrepreneurial work generally entailed large profits. Of the Jews involved in this field, one needs to mention Herşcu Rosenthal and Ioseph Stoleriu. In 1861, they signed a contract for repair works at the *Mihăileană* Academy of Iași. Lupu Davidovici was active in the 1870s, contracting orders from the state; M. Weinberg and M. Litman, who contracted the development of the railway tracks from Giurgiu to Smârdan, in 1869; Solomon Zaraful of Iași contracted street paving works; A. Braunstein, winner of the tender to build the Traian covered market in Bucharest, as well as A. Scherer and L. Loebel, major contractors in carrying out hardware works. They were later joined by Emanoil Rosenthal, who opened the first couch line from Brașov to Giurgiu and Bucharest-Brăila-Galați, as well as Samuel Marcu, an engineer who installed power lines on some streets of Bucharest and Iași.

The Banking and financial sector

The export of cereals, in the second half of the 19th century, i.e. the main field of Romanian exports (80% of total annual exports) was largely controlled by banks having a Jewish capital. Among the famous Jewish bankers of the time, it is worth mentioning: Solomon Goldbaum, Michel Daniel - called "Rothschild of Moldavia" at the time, Leon Daniel, Leiba Cahane, Mayer Weisengrun, Joseph Unter, J. Olivenbaum, Haim Cahana, Janos Byck, Iacob Neuschotz, M. Predinger, A. Schartz, Solomon Cahan, Moritz Wachtel, Abram Halfon, Maurice Blank, Jacques Elias, etc.

Financier Jaques M. Elias, together with his father, Menahem Elias, and with his brothers, founded the General Bank of Wallachia (the second largest financial company in the country, after the Bank of Romania), which contributed to the foundation and support of important industries. The same can be said about the House of Marmorosch Blank, a milestone of Romanian banking world until the interwar period: at the beginning of the 20th century, the bank controlled almost 40% of the country's economy.

After the establishment of the National Bank of Romania, the CEC, the Rural and Urban Land Credit House, after the financial capital of Romania strengthened, the share of Jewish financial capital gradually diminished, as well as the importance of financial institutions controlled by them. Even so, they were still important in the country's general financial landscape.

One must reveal the fact that many Jewish financiers and owners of banks made generous donations in favor of Romanian cultural institutions, in particular the Romanian Academy. Among these generous donors, one should mention the following: Solomon Halfon, the Daniel brothers of Iasi, Iacob Neuschotz and Jaques M. Elias, who left his entire estate (almost one billion lei) to the Academy, "to help enlighten the people ".

Jewish personalities in the field of economy, the 19th century – beginning of the 20th century

- Hillel Manoah (Or Manoach - 1797-1862). A banker and philanthropist. Offspring of a family of Ottomans bankers. Honorary Consul of the Ottoman Empire in Bucharest and founder of one of the first banks in Wallachia. He had both professional and kinship ties with other Sephardi bankers. President of the Sephardi community. **Participant in the Romanian Revolution of 1848,** member of the City Council. He lent money to the state during 1833-1850 and credited Prince Alexandru Ghica. He founded the Hillel prize of the University of Bucharest (270,000 lei in gold), of which numerous students benefitted, including Lazăr Şăineanu.

- Solomon Halfon (1790-1862). Banker and philanthropist. Founder of the Halfon Bank. As his partner and relative, Hillel Manoah, **he participated in the Revolution of 1848** and was appointed member of the City Council of Bucharest. He was the brother of **Avram Halfon** (1800-1862), banker and Consul General of the Ottoman Empire.

- **Solomon I. Halfon** (1846-1913), grandson of Solomon Halfon, was the founder of the Romanian Commercial Bank and the one who granted Romania her first state loan. In 1880, he was granted Romanian citizenship, individually. He was awarded the Order of Officers' Cross in Rank of Commander. He donated large amounts to various Jewish institutions and to the Romanian Academy, which received 50,000 lei in gold.

- Davicion Bally (1809-1884). Banker and philanthropist. Head of the Sephardi community in Bucharest. **Supporter of the Revolution of 1848 in Wallachia**. He was the grandson of Cilibi Mentăş Bally (Cellibi Mendes Bally), the Ottoman Sephardi Jew who supported Nicolae Mavrocordat's coming to the throne in 1716. Davicion Bally was involved in the modernization of the capital, he supported the revolutionary cause and its newspaper, the *Pruncul Român* (Romanian Child). As leader of the Sephardi community, he actively supported philanthropic activities and the modernization of religious education.

- **Jacques Menahem Elias** (1844-1923). Industrialist, banker and philanthropist. Founder and President of the Romanian General Bank, founder of the sugar factory in Sascut, owner of the Patria and Continental hotels in Bucharest, owner of estates in Romania, or real estate assets in Vienna and of mercury mines in Dalmatia. **An advisor to King Charles I**, he was granted Romanian citizenship in 1880. In his will, dated 1914, he left almost all his fortune to the Romanian Academy, which manages it through the Elias Foundation. The Academy agreed to build a hospital named Menachem Elias, which would care for the needy "regardless of origin". He granted funds to the University of Bucharest and to the Faculty of Medicine. He gave grants to poor Jewish students. The Elias Foundation still operates under the same principles, today.

- ***Mauriciu Blank*** (1848-1929). Banker, cofounder of the Marmorosch Blank Bank together with Jacob Marmorosch. Basically, he was its CEO. He is the offspring of the Durrera el Blanco Sephardi family. His son, Aristide Blank, who succeeded him as CEO of the bank, founded the National Culture Publishing House, in 1923.

Agriculture

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, 56.8% of the large estates of more than 500 ha and 72% of the possession of more than 3,000 ha were included in the lease system. Thus, lease holders controlled whole counties.

In 1905, in four counties of Northern Moldavia, more than 50% of the total leased area was managed by Jewish lease holders. The Trust of the Fischer brothers controlled 159,399 ha in 1905 (about 60% of the leased estates were placed in three northern counties of Moldavia: Dorohoi 37,459 ha, Botoșani 32,260 ha and Iași 23,049 ha). To get a broader picture of this phenomenon, let us point out that about 30% of the estates in the entire country were leased. Foreigners managed 11% of the total cultivated land, and Jews managed 6% of the total.

The percentage of agricultural land leased to Jews, by counties:

Dorohoi	30	Bacău	8	Argeș	-
Botoșani	28	Vaslui	8	Buzău	-
Iași	24	Suceava	7	Dolj	-
Neamț	18	Tecuci	3	Gorj	-
Brăila	12	Tutova	3	Muscel	-
Covurlui	11	Ilfov	2	Olt	-
Ialomița	11	Dâmbovița	1	Prahova	-
Putna	11	Mehedinți	1	Teleorman	-
Roman	10	Rm. Sărat	1	Vlașca	-
Fălciu	9	Romanați	1	Vâlcea	-

- February 1907. A peasant uprising breaks out, initially in northern Moldavia, followed by a chain reaction throughout the country. Attacks against the Jewish population were reported not only in rural areas, but also in cities and small towns, since Jews were considered, in Moldavia, as being among the causes of the shortcomings in rural areas.

Liberal professions

- in **1899,** of the total number of 1.224 teachers in the country, 78 were of Jewish origin.

An important factor that led to the proliferation of liberal professions among Jews was the importance given to education, by the community. Moreover, the illiteracy rate among the Jewish mass was much lower (about 10%), compared with the general illiteracy rate in the country. Despite various legislative and administrative obstacles, in 1899, of the 68,000 pupils who attended primary school classes in urban areas, 3,800 were Jews; of the 21,212 students of secondary school classes, 1,585 were Jews; of the 3,840 university students, 342 were Jews.

A large professional group, considering the share of Jews in the total population, were doctors and medical workers. Despite the temporary obstacles in the exercise of the profession (the period 1864 – 1868). In 1904, there were 221 Jewish doctors of the total number of 559 doctors registered in the country. In the field of dentistry, almost all doctors were Jewish.

As far as engineers and architects are concerned, they were represented, in the same period, as follows: 9 of the 139 engineers were Jews, as well as 5 out of the 64 architects, nationally.

Modernizing trends among Jews

Towards the middle of the 19th century, the Jewish population in the Principalities showed signs of greater openness to the Romanian society. One indication is the appearance of the first Jewish newspaper in Romanian language, the (*Israelitul Român*) Romanian Israelite, in Bucharest, in 1857. The Sephardi community of Bucharest displayed a more noticeable trend towards integration, that contrasted with the attitude of most Jews from Moldavia, who preserved many elements of traditional life. The modernizing trend gained more and more ground. Its representatives pledged to fight for the political emancipation of the Jewish people, as well as for the movement for their integration into the larger Romanian society. The initiator of the modernizing trend was **Dr. Iuliu Barash (1815-1863)**, an immigrant from Austria who would later be one of the main organizers of the Romanian medical education system. Within the Jewish community of Bucharest, the modernizing trend actually managed to impose the expulsion of Rabbi Meier Leibuş Malbim, leader of the conservative trend, in 1864.

Jewish Cultural life, contributions of Romanian Jews to Romanian and world culture

Education

During the 19th century, Jews made remarkable progress as far as schools were concerned. But they had not been illiterate in previous centuries, either. "For the blesses religious life that ruled over the hearts and souls made it impossible for worshippers not to be able to read." (Halevy) Jewish religious schools (*Talmud-Torahs*).

In **1877,** Jews represented 11% of all public primary school students in towns, some urban communes reaching about 50% of all students. After the establishment of the Kingdom their number increased steadily and reached about 15%. In certain towns, they reached almost 75%. In five years, the number of Jewish students in various schools nearly doubled, as displayed in the following table:

Type of educational institution	**School Year 1878-1879**	**School Year 1882-1883**
Public primary schools (boys)	1432	2,950
Girls	1793	2741
Secondary schools (boys)	318	401
High schools (boys)	151	180

Trade schools (boys)	77	222
Secondary and vocational schools (girls)	34	75

Here is a comparison of the number of Jewish students registered at private schools:

Registered in the school year 1895-1896	Registered in the school year 1906-1907
Total: 19,232 students	Total: 32,740 students
Of whom were Jewish: 9,966	Of whom were Jewish: 19,239
Primary school: 9,376	Primary school: 18,472
Secondary school: 590	Secondary school: 767

In the public education system, the number of Jewish pupils registered at primary schools was as follows, in the whole country, during the school year 1906-1907:

Denomination	**Rural primary schools**	**Urban primary schools**
Orthodox	428,453	70.365
Catholics	6,102	1,050
Jewish	1,765	3,809
other religion	2,489	598

Other cultural institutions

The Yiddish theaters in Iași and Bucharest. The first shows were staged in Iași, in 1876.

The "Iuliu Barasch" Historical Society, established in 1886, in Bucharest, is the first institution of Jewish culture which aimed to encourage the study of Jewish history in Romania.

The Jewish press, Jewish journalists

Jewish press was very developed (hundreds of newspaper and magazines) and extremely diverse, both in terms of general direction and of the topics they referred to. Top names: *Israelitul român*, *Viitorul*, *Fraternitatea*, *Emanciparea*, *Revista israelită*, *Pământeanul*, *Aurora*, *Sionistul*, *Anuarul pentru israeliţi*, *Asimilarea*, *Înfrăţirea*, *Egalitatea*, *Curierul israelit*. The most important names of Jewish journalists were: Elias Schwarzfeld, A.S. Gold, M. Beck, I. Brociner, A. Stern, S. Grossman, C. Graur, E. Fagure, B. Brănişteanu, etc. The diversity of Jewish life in Romania was faithfully mirrored in these publications, which also played a role in shaping the image of the self and of the other. Jewish publications of different trends were means of disseminating messages about complete emancipation, the fulfilment of Zionist ideals or for the persuasion of coreligionists and the public opinion that they were right in their approach of issues related to the Jewish question in Romania.

Many of these journals were published by printing houses belonging to other Jews, such as the Samitca brothers, Saraga or by Alcaly.

Among the prestigious names involved in the "general" press of the country, let us mention *Adevărul,* edited by Beldiman, who employed Husar and Bolocan; *Lupta,* edited by G.

Panu and S. Pauker; *Timpul*, owned by Lascar Catargiu, who employed S. Rosenthal and Roth; P.P. Carp's *Constituționalul* employed Lupu Dichter and Diamandescu; *L'Independence Roumaine,* owned by G. Lahovary employed Azra Bercovitz, Al. Rubin, Johnson and Marcu; *Românul,* published by C. A. Rosetti employed M. Canianu, etc.

Literary creation, fine arts

Architecture: the neo-Moorish style (Bucharest) – an eclectic style with Byzantine, Oriental et western elements, the creation of Jewish architects living in Romania, an expression of Art Nouveau, linked to the question of their emancipation; Secession (in Oradea and other towns of Transylvania).

Celebrities of Jewish Culture

Among Jewish cultural personalities of the time, there are: Hillel Kahane, H. M. Pineles, M. S. Robener, Benjamin Schwarzfeld, D. Wechsler, M. Braunstein - all Hebraist writers; Iacob Psantir; Iacob, Wilhelm, Moses and Elias Schwarzfeld, I. B. Brociner, Iosif Kaufman - interested in the history of the Jews in Romania; Iuliu Barasch – a medicine doctor interested in literature; Tiktin, Moses Gaster and Lazăr Șăineanu - philologists and folklorists; Ronetti Roman, B. Lăzăreanu, B. Luca, B. Nemţeanu, C. Baltazar I. Pribeagu, F. Aderca, E. Furtună, E. Dancu, H. Reinstein, I. Ionalescu, Z. Helman, E. Valdman, E. Relgis, A. Steuerman-Rodion - in literature; Karpel Lippe and I. Niemirower - Jewish apologetics and cultural Judaism; C. Dobrogeanu Gherea (Solomon Katz), Henric Sanielievici – sociologist and literary critic; Avram Goldfaden - founder of the Yiddish theater; Ch. I. Bernstein, B. Segal - musicians.

In the field of visual arts, the following were better known during this period: C. D. Rosenthal, N. Vermont, N. Gropeanu, Samuel Mützner, etc.

- Ignat Samitca (1856-1925). He founded, with his brother, Ralian, the Ralian and Ignat Samitca Industrial Establishment of Graphic Arts (Craiova, 1886), a Printing & Publishing house. He published textbooks (for Israelite-Romanian schools and Jewish education), Romanian classics and literature. This was one of the most important publishing houses in the country. He opened a subsidiary in Turnu Severin, where the newspaper *El Luzero de la Pasensia,* the first newspaper inspired by the *Haskallah*, was published by Sephardi Jews from Romania. As of 1922, when Ignat Samitca withdrew from the business, the publishing house became the "Romanian Writing" Institute of Publishing and Graphic Art (Scrisul Românesc).

- **Leon Alcalay** (1847-1920). Romanian publisher and bookseller. Founder of the "Universal" - Alcalay & Co. book store. As of 1899, he took over the publication of the "Library for all" (Biblioteca pentru Toți) collection, initiated by Carol Müller, in 1895.

- **Moses Gaster** (1856-1939). Rabbi, philologist, literary, publicist and folklorist, especially in the field of Romanian language and culture, as well as of Jewish studies. A campaigner for the emancipation of Jews in Romania and an important Zionist leader. Shortly after being elected in the society of the Romanian Athenaeum, in 1885, he was expelled from Romania, at the order of the Liberal government headed by Ion Brătianu. He then settled in the UK. In 1929, he was elected Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy. Founder of the Folklore Society, member of the Royal Asiatic Society and of the Jewish Historical Society. He is **the most complex figure of Romanian Judaism**, a world famous scientist, called a "multilingual and a polyhistor" by Mircea Eliade. The "Balfour Declaration" was written in his London house.

13. Communal life, interwar anti-semitism and the Holocaust in Romania

- **January 24, 1919.** The first issue of the daily Zionist newspaper of Romanian language, *Mântuirea* (Salvation) was published. It is the press organ of the Zionist Federation. The representatives of the Zionist Federation sought the recognition of the Jewish nationality in Romania by being granted full political, cultural and religious autonomy. The Zionist Federation headquarters moved from Galați to Bucharest, in 1919. The weekly journal *Ştiri din lumea evreiască* (News from the Jewish World) was another official publication of the Zionist Federation.

- **August 30, 1919.** The first issue of *Conştiinţa* (Consciousness), publication of the "Guard of National Consciousness" was issued. The movement was initiated by Constantin Pancu and attracted attention by using National Socialist slogans. In October 1919, C.Z. Codreanu joine the Guard of National Consciousness. The organization was quickly dissolved by the authorities. Pancu and Condreanu founded the National Christian Socialism party, in February 1920.

- **April 1920**. A.C. Cuza established the National Christian Democratic Party; the party's manifesto: Appeal to all Romanians, Bucharest, 1922.
- **November 22 to 26, 1920**. The first congress of the National Union of Jews from Transylvania takes place in Cluj. The Congress adopted the new Statute of the Zionist organization. The adopted resolutions say that Transylvanian Jews want to be recognized as a national minority in Romania. Theodor Fischer was elected President of the Union.

- **1922** AC Cuza and N. C. Păulescu establish the *Uniunea Naţional Creştină* (National Christian Union). The new organization adopted the swastika as their official symbol. On April 1, the first issue of the bimonthly magazine the *Apărarea Naţională* (National Defense) was published. It is the journal of the National Christian Union.

- **May 20, 1922**. The Christian Students Association (AUC) is established – it will become a fruitful environment for far-right legionary ideology. The head of the Association is Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

- **October 1922** – The March on Rome. Benito Mussolini forms the Italian government.

- ***Numerus clausus***; anti-Semitic incidents caused by students grow in the summer and fall of 1922. Students demanded the exclusion of Jews from universities or limiting their number in connection to the percentage they represent within the total population

- **December 3, 1922**. A series of anti-Semitic protests begin in Cluj. The protests began at the Faculty of Medicine, where Romanian students asked fellow Jewish students to provide Jewish corpses for dissection. Protests continue and extend to all universities in the country until the summer. The period November 1922 – the summer of 1923 is not recognized as an academic year;

- **December 10, 1922**. Students delegated by the four university centers (Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Chernivtsi) gather in Bucharest to formulate a unified list of demands. They declare strike in their universities. Here are some of the students' requests: to introduce the *numerus clausus* principle, the obligation of Jewish medical students to provide Jewish corpses for dissection; the expulsion of Jews coming from the provinces annexed by Romania after August 1919.

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS PER FACULTY, BY ETHNICITY, 1921-1933

Faculty	Romanians (%)	Jews (%)	Other ethnic groups (%)
Law	77.0	16.5	6.5
Letters	81.5	11.2	7.3

Sciences	81.3	11.8	6.9
Medicine	67.9	26.8	5.3
Theology	96.3	-	3.7
Pharmacy	40.0	51.1	8.9
Veterinary medicine	80.0	-	20.0
Total	77.1	16.4	6.5

Source: Encyclopedia of Romania, vol. 1 (1938), p. 480.

- **January 1923** The Protocols of the Elders of Zion are translated and published in Romanian language by Ion Moţa.

- **February 19 to 20, 1923**. The Union of Local Jews becomes the Union of Romanian Jews (URJ). Wilhelm Filderman is elected president. The main objective of the URJ - as defined in congress of 1923, was the conquest of political rights and their consolidation, as well as the fight against anti-Semitism.

- **March 4, 1923**. A.C. Cuza established the *Liga Apărării Naţional Creştine* (LANC – the League of National Christian Defense). The logo of the League was the Romanian flag with a black swastika within a yellow circle, at the center of the flag.

The parliamentary program of the League wanted:

- the complete removal of Jews from the country;
- the cancellation of political rights and revocation of rights, as locals, granted to Jews, as well as their name changes;
- the expulsion of the Jews who entered the country after 1914;
- the expulsion of Jews from rural areas and to assign their goods to Romanian ethnics;
- the exclusion of Jews from public offices or jobs;
- their gradual expropriation of urban property;
- introducing the *numerus clausus* in all areas of education and economic activity;
- the expropriation, by the state, of all Jews who own land and oil installations;

In **1923**, there appeared two other far-right organizations: the National Romanian Fascia [members of this organization were strongly influenced by Italian fascism, advocating the mass evacuation of foreigners; they published a weekly magazine called *Fascismul*] and the Romanian Action [following the model imposed by Charles Maurras and L'Action Française. Ion Moţa is among the founders; the journal takes the name of the organization and later became *Fraternitatea Română* – the Romanian Fraternity]. Both merged with the National-Christian Defense League, in 1925.

- **October 1923**. C. Z. Codreanu, I. Moţa and others plan attacks against ministers, rabbis, Jewish journalists and bankers. They are arrested, tried and acquitted, in March 1924.

- **February 24, 1924.** The **Law on being granted and losing the Romanian nationality** is promulgated (the Mârzescu Law). According to the regulations of this law, committees that worked with the Court of Appeal were meant to be established and write lists of Romanian citizens. There was a deadline of 40 days for all the inhabitants of adjoined territories who wanted to appeal the decisions of the Commissions. In this case, they had to bring evidence of being locals, i.e., evidence of their entry in the registers of town-halls in their places of birth. After the work of committees charged with finding one's nationality, it is estimated that between 16,000 and 20,000 Jewish families (80,000-100,000 people) were stripped of Romanian citizenship. Most of them lived in Bessarabia.

In **1924,** there appears the *Renaşterea* (Rebirth) Zionist circle, composed of former members of the *Hasmonaea* Zionist Students Union [founded in 1914, they published the magazine of the same name. the group advocated for maintaining Jewish national identity]. Representatives of the Rebirth circle pursued a double objective: the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine and their involvement in Romanian politics so as to have the rights of the Jewish national minority recognized. The same year, the weekly *Renaşterea noastră* (Our Rebirth) appeared. It was the most important interwar Zionist publication, supporting the stand of the Rebirth Zionist circle.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN 1924

Province	Total no.	Rural	Urban
Bessarabia	238000	109000	129000
Transylvania	200000	108887	91113
Bucovina	129256	64656	64600
The Old Kingdom	230000	44880	185120
Total	797256	327423	469833

Source: Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România – de la emancipare la marginalizare (1919-1938)* – The Jews in Romania - from Emancipation to marginalization (1919-1938), Bucharest, Hasefer, 2000, p. 51.

- October 25, 1924. C. Z Codreanu shot C. Manciu, the head of the police in Iaşi, since he had intervened in force against anti-Semitic manifestations. On December 10, solidarity demonstrations of the students, in favor of Codreanu, took place. Codreanu's trial took place from May 20 to 26, 1925. He was found innocent.

- December 22, 1925. The law on private education, regulating the organization and operation of private schools and educational institutions run by churches or associations was published. The law imposed the use of Romanian language as language of teaching in private schools where the ethnic origin of the students was Romanian. According to the law, in the case of Jewish schools, the teaching language had to be the state language (Romanian) or the "Jewish" language. These provisions strongly disadvantaged the Hungarianized Jews of Transylvania, who did not speak Romanian, Hebrew or Yiddish.

- **July 1926**. Nicolae Totu shoots David Fallik, a Jewish student, accusing him of having offended a member of LANC. After the trial, Nicolae Totu was acquitted.

- **1927.** Octavian Goga published his collection of essays, The Boiling Wine. Goga calls for the defense of "blood purity" and of "the organic truths of the race". Jews were the real danger, "impure secretions" of Galicia, which threatened the very existence of the Romanian State.

Jewish actors were forced to leave the National Theater in Kishinev.

- **June 24, 1927**. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and his followers resigned from the League of National Christian Defense and found the Legionary Movement by organizing the "Legion of Archangel Michael"; they publish a bimonthly magazine, *Pământul strămoşesc* (The Ancestral Land – the first issue appeared on August 1, 1927).

- **December 4, 1927**. The Congress of Romanian students, whose works opened in Oradea; debates referred to the "Jewish question". They assaulted the Jewish residents of the city, having attacked and looted Jewish stores and devastated several synagogues. The attacks were repeated in Cluj, Huedin, Ciuc, Războieni, Braşov, Timişul de Jos, Predeal, Ghimeş, Târgu Ocna, Kishinev, Iaşi, Bucharest.

They smashed all the furniture with their axes; they took out the Torah scrolls and prayer books, broke them into pieces, defiled them, mocked them in an indescribable manner and, as they cried of victory, they took them out to the public square. There, they built a stake of Torah scrolls and set them on fire, dancing around them, dancing happily around the burning stake. (*La situation de la minorité juive en Roumanie* - The Situation of the Jewish Minority in Romania, Paris, 1928).

- April 22, 1928 - The law on religion [the Official Gazette no. 89, dated April 22, 1928]. The law regulated the legal status of Jewish communities in Romania. It allowed the operation of a single religious community in a locality. The law did not refer to Sephardi and Orthodox Jewish communities, i.e. those communities that maintained their right to be organized independently. Thus, in principle, in Transylvania, three communities could operate in a locality (Neologue, Sephardi and Orthodox). On November 3, 1928, the special rules regarding the organization of the Jewish faith were promulgated.

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY, 1928-1929

	Number of students	Percentage of total
Romanians	24144	79.9
Jews	4295	14.2
Hungarians	624	2.1
Germans	433	1.4
Russians	253	0.8
Bulgarians	219	0.7
Others	260	0.9
Total	30228	100.0

Source: Iosif. I. Gabrea, *Statistica şi politica şcolară* (Statistics and School Policies), p. 32 *apud* Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură şi naţionalism în România Mare* (Culture and Nationalism in Greater Romania), Bucharest, Humanitas, 1998, p. 282.

- **April 1929**. The *Adam* magazine was first published. It is the flagship publication in the cultural landscape of Romanian language Jewish press (it was discontinued in April 1940).

- **April 13, 1930.** CZ Codreanu founded the *Iron Guard*.

- **July-August 1930**. Anti-Semitic incidents in Borşa – the Jewish quarters of the town is set on fire – Jewish inhabitants are forced Jews to flee into the nearby forest. Also, in July 1930, there were anti-Semitic attacks in Southern Bucovina - Jewish homes were attacked. The campaign is waged by members of the Iron Guard; the synagogue in Suceava was destroyed.

JOB DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWS IN ROMANIA IN 1930

Economic sector	Jews (%)	Gentiles (%)
Agriculture	6.5	73.2
Industry-Crafts	28	8.6

Trade and banking	40	4.2
Transport	2.8	2.8
Public positions and professions	5.1	4.8
Miscellaneous	17.6	6.4

Source: Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România – de la emancipare la marginalizare (1919-1938)* - The Jews in Romania - from Emancipation to Marginalization (1919-1938), Bucharest, Hasefer, 2000, p. 63.

- **December 29, 1930.** General census of the population of Romania

	Population		Jews - % of the total	Jews - % of the total in urban areas	Jews - % of the total in rural areas
	Total	Jews			
Romania	18 057 028	756 930	4.0	13.6	1.6
Oltenia	1 513 175	3 523	0.2	1.6	<0.1
Muntenia	4 029 008	94 216	2.1	7.8	<0.1
Dobrogea	815 475	4031	0.5	1.8	<0.1
Moldavia	2 433 596	162 268	6.5	23.1	1.2
Bessarabia	2 864 402	206 958	7.2	26.8	4.3
Bukovina	853 009	93 101	10.8	30.0	3.9
Transylvania	3 217 988	81 503	2.4	8.6	1.3
Banat	939 958	14 043	1.2	5.8	0.2
Crişana-Maramureş	1 390 417	97 287	6.4	16.7	3.8

Source: The Central Institute of Statistics, General census of the population of Romania, December 29, 1930, 10 vol., Bucharest, 1938-1940, Volume IX, pp. 440-443.

- Population of Bukovina by ethnicity, 1930

	Total	Romanians	Ukrainians	Jews	Germans
Total	853 009	379 691	248 567	92 492	75 533
% of the population		44.5	29.1	10.8	8.9
Urban	228056	75 171	31600	63 349	33 481
% of urban		33.0	13.9	30.0	14.7

Source: Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură şi naţionalism în România Mare, 1918-1930* (Culture and Nationalism in Greater Romania, 1918-1930), Bucharest, Humanitas, 1998, p. 68.

- Population of Bessarabia by ethnicity, 1930

	Romanians	Ukrainians	Russians	Jews	Total

Total	1 610 757	314 211	351 912	204 858	2864402
% of the population	56.2	11.0	12.3	7.2	
Urban	116 736	19181	99500	98 709	370 971
% of urban	31.5	5.2	26.8	26.6	

Source: Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură şi naţionalism în România Mare, 1918-1930* (Culture and Nationalism in Greater Romania, 1918-1930), Bucharest, Humanitas, 1998, p. 114

- Population of Transylvania by ethnicity, 1930

	Romanians	Hungarians	Germans	Jews	Total
Total	3 208 767	1 353 288	544 278	178 810	5 549 806
% of the population	57.8	24.4	9.8	3.2	
Urban	336 756	365 008	126 936	100 413	963 418
% of urban	35.0	37.9	13.2	10.4	

Source: Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură şi naţionalism în România Mare, 1918-1930* (Culture and Nationalism in Greater Romania, 1918-1930), Bucharest, Humanitas, 1998, p. 164.

- Population of the Old Kingdom and Moldavia by ethnicity, 1930

	The Old Kingdom					
	Total	Romanians	Jews	Bulgarians	Turks	Roma
Total	8 791 254	7 782 996	252 066	191 125	153 857	137 663
% of the population		88.5	2.9	2.2	1.8	1.6
Urban	2 088 594	1 610 254	228 904	31025	28 441	28962
% of urban		77.1	11.0	1.5	1.4	1.4
	Moldavia					
Total	2 433 596	2 185 632	158 421	-	-	32194
% of the population		89.8	6.5	-	-	1.3
Urban	592 127	419 081	136643	-	-	-
% of the population		70.8	23.1	-	-	-

Source: Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură şi naţionalism în România Mare, 1918-1930* (Culture and Nationalism in Greater Romania, 1918-1930), Bucharest, Humanitas, 1998, p. 232.

Throughout the 1930s, there was an increase of anti-Semitic events in all social categories and the main institutions of the state. Jewish stores were devastated, while Jewish students and magistrates were assaulted.

In the census of 1930, 262.501 people (1.5%) said to be of Roma origin.

- **January 3, 1931**. The Iron Guard is banned, by the Government's decision.

- **May 4, 1931.** The Jewish Party of the Kingdom becomes the Jewish Party of Romania. The new political party has its first congress on November 7 to 8, 1933. The fundamental principles of the organization are set out: solidarity with the Romanian nation, defense of the civil and political rights enshrined in the Constitution and the complete civil equality of citizens of Jewish origin.

- **August 31, 1931.** The Iron Guard was restored. At the partial elections in Neamț County, they obtained 11.301 votes, a clear majority. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu got a seat in the Chamber of Deputies.

Gentlemen MPs, this generation of ours is considered anti-Semitic. I would like you to know that I did not come here to shout "down with the Kikes, as I think nobody did this. [...]
I do not use the word Kike in order to insult someone. I call them Kikes because I think this is the way

they are called. In fact, it seems strange that this is the only nation that flee from their name, the name they have. [...]
For me, this population, on the land of my country - please believe me, all of you – since I am firm in my conviction that they attack the very existence of my nation, as they are firmly aware that they are attacking her and seek to make place for themselves in our own territory, as far as I am concerned, please believe me, there is a deadly fight and I do feel like making jokes or insulting anyone. For me, it is clear and precise; intelligent or unintelligent, parasitic or non-parasitic, moral or immoral, this population is an enemy population, here, in the land of my country, and I intend to fight against them by all means I will be provided by my mind, by the law and my Romanian right.
(Extract from the speech of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu in the Parliament, read on behalf of the Iron Guard, December 21, 1931)

- **January 25, 1932**. The first issue of *Calendarul* [a Publication that was close to the Legionary Movement] was published. It was suspended on March 24, 1932, later reinstated.

- **March 1932**. The Legion of Archangel Michael – the Iron Guard is banned once again.

- **May 21, 1932**. Fritz Fabritius established the National Socialist Movement of Relief for the Germans in Romania.

- **October 20, 1932**. The first issue of the *Axa*, a magazine that was close to the Legion, was published.

In 1932, the National Peasants' Party split up. Because of this, the Romanian Front was established, headed by Alexandru Vaida-Voievod. The slogans of the new party were "Romania to the Romanians" and *numerus valahicus*. The program of the Front, published on May 12, 1935, stated that Romania needed to adopt a policy having a single goal in mind: ensuring the existence and development of the Romanian nation by imposing the principle of proportionality, so that the Romanian element would take possession of all branches of economy.

- **January 30 1933**. Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

- **May 9, 1933**. Under the title *Fascicula legionarului* (The Fascicle of the Legionnaire), C.Z. Codreanu published the *Cărticica şefului de cuib* (The Booklet of the Nest Leader).

- **May-June 1933.** Anti-Semitic disorders in universities.

- December 9 to 10, 1933. The Legion was banned. Several thousand members were arrested.

- December 29, 1933. Prime-Minister Ion G. Duca was assassinated by legionnaires on the Sinaia train station platform.

1933. The General Union of the Roma was established; during the interwar period, racism was present in publications that claimed to present scientific studies (see Iordache Făcăoaru, Gheorghe Făcăoaru Ion Chelcea, L. Stan etc.)

In 1934, periodicals published in Romania reached 2,253 titles. Of these, 1645 were written in Romanian (940 newspapers and 705 magazines), 273 in Hungarian language (150 newspapers and 112 magazines), 170 in German (131 newspapers and 45 magazines), 27 in Yiddish (18 newspapers and nine magazines), 13 in Ukrainian (11 newspapers and two magazines), 12 in Russian (newspapers), six in Bulgarian (newspapers), four in Polish (newspapers), three in Greek (newspapers), five in Armenian (two newspapers and three magazines), two in Albanian (newspapers), one in Ruthenian (a newspaper), two in Turkish (one newspaper and one magazine), two in Serbian (one newspaper and one magazine), nine in Romanian and Hungarian, six in Romanian and Russian, one **magazine in Romanian and Yiddish**, one

magazine in German and Hungarian, three magazines in German and French, one magazine in Russian and French, two magazines in Hungarian and French.

- **April 1934.** Mihail Sebastian published his novel *De două mii de ani...* (For Two Thousand Years...) with a foreword signed by Nae Ionescu.

- **July 1934.** "The Law on the employment of Romanian personnel in enterprises" required that at least 80% of the staff in economic, industrial, commercial and civil enterprises and at least half of the administrative board be of Romanian origin. The remaining 20% could be foreigners, preferably having Romanian wives and children). The Chairman of the Board could only be a Romanian ethnic. The law of 1934 was supplemented by a Regulation issued on January 23, 1935. According to this official document, three categories of staff were established: a) ethnic Romanian citizens; b) Romanian citizens of a different ethnic origin; and c) foreigners. The law and later regulation favored the introduction of ethnic criteria in recruiting staff in industry.

THE LAW FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF ROMANIAN STAFF IN ENTERPRISES.

Article 1: Economic, industrial, commercial and civil enterprises of all kinds are bound to have Romanian personnel at a level of at least 80% in each of the categories of staff they employ [...] and at least 50% of the members of the Board of Directors, of the Guideline Committee and of the auditors' committee; the Chairman of the Board will be Romanian. In the 20% reserved for foreign personnel, one will preferably employ foreigners who, at the date this law entered into force, had Romanian wives and children.

1934. The Ethnic Group of the Germans in Romania splits up into two distinct groups:

1. *The Association of Germans in Romania* - a moderate National Socialist group led by Fritz Fabritius;
2. *The German People's Party of Romania* – a radical National Socialist faction led by Waldermar Gast.

- **December 10, 1934.** The Iron Guard is reconstructed under the name *Totul pentru Țară* (Everything for the Country), a political party that took part in the 1937 elections and got 15.56% of the votes.

- **February 10 1935**. The German People's Party in Romania is founded and led by Alfred Bonfert.

- **May 12, 1935**. The program of the Romanian Front is published. This document mentioned that Romania should adopt having in mind a single goal: to ensure the existence and development of the Romanian nation. In order to do this, the "principle of proportionality" had to be imposed, for the Romanian element to be able to seize all sectors of the economy.

- **July 14, 1935**. The National Agrarian Party and the National Christian Defense League merged and established the National Christian Party (NCP), led by Octavian Goga and Alexandru C. Cuza; Goga's newspaper, *Țara noastră* (Our Country – 1907-1908, 1922-1938) became the official newspaper of the party. The party platform identified three types of minorities: 1. Loyal minorities, who welcomed the Romanian State. They might receive public offices in line with their ratio (the German minority); 2. Minorities connected to revisionist states (Hungarians and Bulgarians) might work in trade and industry in the same proportion as their numbers; 3. Jewish citizens who, since they were naturalized recently, were under the influence of foreign Jews and of the states to which they belonged in the past, who "formed a disaggregating, harmful element to the reinforcement of the Romanian State." According to the members of the new party, the solution to these problems was the implementation of the principle of *numerus nullus*.

The new Romania, that of A. C. Cuza's policy, will eliminate the Jews, as this policy is the policy followed by Hitler; or, more precisely, the policy followed by Hitler is Cuza's policy, as he preceded Hitler. (The National Defense, July 15, 1935).

- **September 15, 1935.** Germany introduces the anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws.

- **1936**. C. Z. Codreanu publishes *Pentru legionari* (For the Legionnaires) Sibiu, Everything for the Country Publishing House.

- **January 29, 1936**. The Jewish Party and the Union of Jews in Romania signed an agreement and established the Central Council of the Jews in Romania. The Chairman of the new group was Wilhelm Filderman. On February 2, members of the new group published a call to their fellow Romanians in the *Tribuna evreiască* (Jewish Tribune). The Federation of Unions of Jewish Communities in Romania was established the same year.

Nicolae Iorga published *Judaica*, Bukovina E. Torouţiu, Bucharest, 1937.

[Jews] work for themselves, as an invading nation, to have as much as possible. Even in liberal professions, even in education, in science, in literature, as lawyers, as doctors, as architects, as professors, there are more and more, as philologists, as philosophers, as journalists, poets, with their criticism, they simply push us out of our country ... [They] make our churches feel small, they replace our shops, they occupy our jobs and, what is more devastating, they are falsifying our soul, degrading our morality by the journalistic and literary opium that they feed us with.

Emil Cioran published *Schimbarea la faţă a României* (The Transfiguration of Romania).

What are the deeper reasons that lead us not to meet with them Jews except than with hatred and contempt? Why is there no man on earth who loves Jews naively, spontaneously without knowing the reason? Where does the infinite drama of their existence come from? Racial theory seems to be born only to give expression to the steep feeling of separation that differentiates any Gentile from a Jew? Humanely, we cannot get close to them because the Jew is a Jew, first of all, and only secondly human...

- **February 22, 1937**. The first issue of the Buna Vestire (Annunciation), a newspaper that was close to the Legionary Movement, was published. In December, the newspaper a launched an investigation under the title "Why I believe in the victory of the Legionary Movement". The question of the editors are enthusiastically answered by Sextil Puşcariu, I. Găvănescul, Colonel Emil Cristodulo, Nicolae Roşu, Prof. Grigore Cristescu, Corneliu Şumuleanu, Colonel V. Pipercescu, Mircea Eliade, Vasile Băncilă, Prof. Dan Rădulescu, General Mehedinti.

Can the Romanian nation end its life in the saddest decay ever witnessed by history, undermined by misery and syphilis, conquered by Jews and torn to pieces by foreigners, demoralized, betrayed, sold for a few hundred million lei? (Mircea Eliade, "Why I believe in victory of Legionary Movement?" *Buna Vestire*, no. 24, December 17, 1937)

- **1937 *Sfarmă-Piatră*** (Stone-Crusher – 1937-1938), a magazine founded by Nichifor Crainic, was published. In the very first issue, the editors pledged their commitment to the values of nationalism.

Jews are expelled from the Bucharest Bar and the National Bar Association. The National Congress of lawyers convened on **May 9, 1937** and decided to eliminate Jews and representatives of other minorities from the bar associations of the country.

- **May 16, 1937**. The Unions Association of all Intellectual Professions call for the Romanization of all academic positions.

- **December 20, 1937**. Election results:

The Chamber of Deputies:
The Governmental Bloc [the Liberals led by Tătărăscu] 35.92% / 152 seats
The National Peasants' Party 20.40% / 86 seats
***Totul pentru Țară* (Everything for the Country) 15.58%**/ 66 seats [it became the third largest political party] [previous results: 1929 - 0.4%; 1932 - 2.4%]
The National Christian Party 9.15% / 39 seats
The Hungarian Party 4.43% / 19 seats
The National Liberal Party (Gh. Brătianu) 3.89% / 16 seats
The Radical Peasants' Party 2.25% / 9 seats

During despite poor result in the elections, the National Christian Party took office on December 28, 1937. Charles II appointed Octavian Goga as Prime-Minister, while A.C. Cuza became a minister without portfolio.

We want Romania to belong to Romanians! This is the birth certificate of the new Cabinet. We believe in the revival of the Romanian nation and of our Christian Church. We believe it is a sacred duty to put the stamp of our ethnic domination upon all areas of political life. (Excerpt from Octavian Goga's inaugural speech as Prime-Minister)

Anti-democratic measures of the Octavian Goga government, December 1937-February 1938:

- as of December 30, 1937, the *Dimineaţa*, *Adevărul*, *Lupta* were banned, as well as Jewish newspapers that were published in Yiddish or Hebrew.

Other anti-Jewish measures made by the Goga-Cuza government;

- The Ministry of Religious Affairs ordered the expulsion of rabbis who were not Romanian citizens, while the Minister of Public Education bans the teaching of Jewish religion in state schools.

- They issued a Decree-Law that cancelled the licenses under which Jews were able to sell alcohol and operate pubs in villages. The law also cancelled the permits under which Jews were able to sell state monopoly goods, such as tobacco, cigarettes, matches, etc.

- **January 14, 1938**. The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Welfare prohibits Jews from employing Christian maids under the age of 40. The decision is justified under the following terms: "employers who hire young Romanian women as a maid, do this in order to take their innocence".

- **January 22, 1938**. Decree-Law no. 169 – The Law on the Revision of Citizenship. The new law canceled the legal provisions of the 1923 Constitution and reintroduced the issue of documentary evidence due to which Jews had obtained Romanian citizenship decades before. They had to prove, once again, that they were entitled to it. The documents required by the Romanian authorities included: the birth certificate; the proof that the parents of the applicant lived in the country, in case he or she was born abroad; the proof that he or she was not a subject of a foreign state; the proof of having been drafted in the

army or mobilized in one of the campaigns after 1913; other pieces of evidence under which, in accordance with Art. 1 of Decree-Law no. 2085 / 1919, they were entitled to be granted Romanian citizenship. The deadline for the submission of all these documents was 20 days after the publication of Law no. 169 in the Official Gazette [by Decree law no. 858 of February 12, 1938, the deadline was extended until March 10, 1938, for the Jews living in the Old Kingdom]. The new law entailed various fees for being issued the needed documents.
As a consequence of this law, 73.253 families - that is a total of 252.222 Jews (36.7%) lost the Romanian citizenship and became stateless.

Apart from the short notice, the political situation and the objective difficulties met in obtaining the documents, their submission entails expenses that far exceed the possibilities of most Jews. Statistical data show that many Jewish families are made of four-five people and they all live in one room, sleeping in one bed. It is clear that such poor people will never be able to obtain the necessary documents. Here is the reason why they have not submitted their documents. (Memorandum sent by W. Filderman to the Minister of Justice with regard to the Law on the Revision of Citizenship, July 4, 1938)

- **February 11, 1938**. Charles II invalidated the 1923 Constitution;

- **February 15, 1938**. All political parties were outlawed. In their stead, a single party was established, *Frontul Renaşterii Naţionale* (the Front for National Revival - December 16, 1938).

- **February 20 1938**. A new constitution is promulgated and the royal dictatorship is instated.

- **February 21, 1938.** – The *Totul pentru Ţară* party self-dissolved.

- **March 9, 1938**. The Regulation regarding the revision of citizenship was published. Article 4 of this law includes the first definition of a Jew, according to Romanian law: those who were of Jewish faith on November 18 (December 1) 1918, even if they subsequently converted. No less than 36.5% of those whose citizenship was revised, i.e. 225.222 people, lost the Romanian citizenship.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF ROMANIAN JEWS IN 1938

Segment of the Economy	**Jews (%)**	**Gentiles (%)**
Agriculture	4.1	73.7
Industry-Crafts	32.8	11.3
Trade and banking	48.3	4.2
Transport	2.4	2.3
Public positions and liberal professions	4.6	6.0
Miscellaneous	7.8	2.5

Source: Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România – de la emancipare la marginalizare (1919-1938)* – The Jews in Romania - from Emancipation to Marginalization (1919-1938), Bucharest, Hasefer, 2000, p. 63.

- **December 16, 1938**. *Frontului Renaşterii Naţionale* (The National Revival Front) was established. The new party welcomes only ethnic Romanians in its ranks. Jews were excluded from representation in the Parliament, except for the chief rabbi who was kept a place in the Senate.

- **September 1, 1939**. Germany declared war on Poland.

- **September 21, 1939**. Prime-Minister Armand Călinescu was killed by Legionnaires.

The Holocaust perpetrated by Romanian Authorities

- **June 26, 1940**. Romania is given an ultimatum by the Soviet Union in a note delivered by V. M. Molotov to the head of the Diplomatic Mission in Moscow, Gheorghe Davidescu. They demanded the evacuation of the civil administration and of the Romanian army from the territory between the Prut and the Dniester rivers, known as Bessarabia, as well as from the northern part of Bukovina. In case the withdrawal of the Romanian administration was not performed within the demanded period (four days), Romania was threatened with war.

- **June 28, 1940**. The Romanian government sent an official response to Moscow, by which Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina was ceded. In the context of the withdrawal from Bessarabia and Bukovina, **physical assaults and pogroms** against the Jewish population took place:

June 30 – **Pogrom in Galați**. The Romanian army opened fire on a crowd of civilians, killing about 300 people (mostly Jews) by reason of their refusal to obey the orders, they tried to flee, etc. Galați was, at that time, one of the most important points of evacuation from Bessarabia.

July 1 – **Pogrom in Dorohoi.** It resulted in 53 Jews killed by the Romanian army in the cemetery of Dorohoi.

The exact number of Jews killed in Moldavia during the withdrawal from Bessarabia and Bukovina, and in early July is not known precisely, ranging between 136 and several hundred, only 99 of whom were identified.

- **August 8, 1940**. The Gigurtu Government issued Decree no. 2650 according to which Jews no longer enjoyed the same rights as other inhabitants. Actually, all the rights provided by the Constitution of 1923 were cancelled. Thus, Jews were excluded from government departments, from public positions and from the boards of many institutions, as well as from many professions.

Examples of laws restricting the rights of the Jews (Decree-Laws, Ministerial Decisions, Guidelines)

1940, August 8. Decree-Law 2650 concerning the legal status of Jewish inhabitants. It formulated the definition of a Jew. Thus, Jews were divided into three categories and the legal and political distinction between persons of Romanians blood and Romanian citizens of Jewish ethnicity was established.

Art. 2 of Decree-Law 2650 includes the definition of a Jew:

- *Those of Mosaic religion,*
- *Those born to parents of Mosaic religion,*
- *Christians born to Jewish, unbaptized parents,*
- *Christians born to a Jewish mother and father, unbaptized,*
- *Those born to a Jewish mother, out of wedlock,*
- *Women included in the preceding paragraphs, married to Christians, if they converted to Christianity at the latest one year before the establishment of the Nation Party,*
- *Atheists of Jewish blood are considered Jews in the sense of this Decree, enforceable by law.*

Conversion to Christianity, of those belonging to the Mosaic religion after the issue of the Decree did not change their status of Jews, as established in this Decree, enforceable by law.

Those who belonged, when the decree was published, to Jewish religious communities were considered to belong to the Mosaic religion.

· *Art. 7 of Decree-Law 2650* refers to ousting Jews from public positions, namely:

- *officials of any kind, with or without salary, and those who work directly in public services*
- *members of professions which, by their nature, are directly related to public authorities, such as lawyers, experts and other similar occupations,*
- *members of the boards of all enterprises, public and private,*
- *tradesmen in rural communities*
- *retailers of alcoholic beverages and of items under state monopoly, under any title,*
- *tutors or curators of incapables of Christian denomination,*
- *members of the military*
- *explorers or lessors of cinemas; book, newspapers and Romanian magazines publishers, peddlers who sell Romanian books, holders of any means of national Romanian propaganda,*
- *heads, members and players in national sports associations,*
- *janitors in public institutions.*

This law was tougher and more restrictive than the Nuremberg (racial) laws

1940, August 8. Decree 2651, on stopping people of Romanians blood from marrying Jews.

1940, August 8. Decision 42181 of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts on sacking the Jewish staff from national theaters, Romanian operas and private theaters.

1940, September 21. Decision of the Minister of National Education, Religious Affairs and Arts no. 44400, which allowed Jewish artists to work on the stages of Jewish private theaters. Those theaters had to have a visible banner with the wording: "Jewish Theater".

1940, October 2. Decree-Law no. 3294, that prohibited the lease of pharmacies by Jews

1940, October 4. Decree No. 3347 - Jewish rural properties were transferred to the state

1940, October 4. The Ministry of National Economy sent to all county Prefects the guidelines on the procedure for transfer rural properties expropriated from Jews, under Decree No. 3347 of October 4, 1940

1940, October 11. Decree-Law no. 3438 regulated the situation of the Jews as far as the education system was concerned. Those born to both Jewish parents or only with a Jewish father could no longer work as teachers or administrative staff and were no longer admitted as pupils or students in Romanian schools (the principle of *numerus nullus*)

1940, November 12. Decree-Law No 3789 on the organization and operation of the College of physicians. Chapter VIII provided for the exclusion of Jewish doctors from the College and they were forbidden to treat Christian patients. The banners of Jewish doctors were to clearly show the wording "Jewish Doctor".

1940, November 12. Decree-Law no. 3825 Romanianization of the staff in all enterprises

1940, December 4. Decree-Law no. 3984 on the military status of Jews. Thus, Jews were excluded from military service, but forced to work and pay special taxes, instead.

1941, March 18. Decree 711 on the change of the general operation of religious groups. Jews of Mosaic religion were forbidden to convert.

1941, May 2. Decree 1216 that established the National Center for Romanization, aimed at the Romanianization all assets that entered the portfolio of the state, as well as supporting economic Romanianization.

1941, June 21. Order no. 4147, issued by Ion Antonescu and sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to all local and central units, about the evacuation of Jews from all villages and semi-urban localities from the entire territory of the country. Jews were to be concentrated in county capitals.

1942, June 27. General instructions regarding the forced labor of the Jews, sent by the General Staff under no. 55500.

- **August 30, 1940. The Second Vienna Award** was signed. Hungary received an area of 43,591 square kilometers, with approximately 2.5 million inhabitants. This was the northern half of Transylvania, including the counties of Sălaj, Bistrița-Năsăud, Ciuc, Someș, most of Bihor, Trei Scaune, Mureș-Turda

and parts of Cluj County. Territorial concessions gave Hungary the right to restore the borders from before World War I, including the counties of Maramureş, Satu Mare and Ugocsa.

Population of Transylvania ceded to Hungary:

Census of 1910 (Hungarians, by mother tongue)	Census of 1930 (Romanians, by nationality)	Census of 1941 (made by Hungarian authorities)
Hungarian 1 125 732 Romania 926 268 German Yiddish 90 195 Ruthenian 16 284 Slovak 12 807 Others 22 968	Hungarians 911 550 Romanians 1 176 433 Germans 68 694 Jews 138 885 Others 99 585	Hungarian 1 347 012 Romanian 1 066 353 German 47 501 Yiddish 45 593 Ruthenian 20 609 Slovak 20 908 Romany 24 729 Others 4586
Total 2 194 254	Total 2 395 147	Total 2 577 291

C.A. Macartney, October Fifteenth. A History of Modern Hungary, 1929-1945, vol. I, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1957, p. 423

Jews in Transylvania and Banat after the Vienna Award

August 2, 1941. "The third law about Jews." Marriage between Jews and non-Jews was prohibited. Under the law, all who had two of the four grandparents born as Jews and all of those who belonged to the Jewish religious community were considered Jews.

In the summer of 1941, thousands of Jewish Hungarian refugees were expelled to the Kamenets-Podolski region, where mass executions took place. They were also deported from Northern Transylvania, especially from the Szeklerland; it is from there that, on the basis of legislation laid down by Hungary in 1939, thousands of people were forced to cross the Hungarian-Ukrainian border, in the Körösmező region (today called Iashinia, in Ukraine) from northern Maramures.

On **March 9, 1942**, Horthy appointed Miklós Kállay as Prime-Minister. During his tenure, Kállay, did not take action against the Jews, despite the increasing pressure of the far-right and of the Germans. The only exception was the order that all Jews subject to military service be taken to forced labor, whether they were fit or not. Kállay was against the concentration of Jews in forced labor detachments or in ghettos; in December 1942, he said in Parliament that such measures were inconsistent with the applicable law. On the Jewish question, Kallay also confronted Mussolini - in the spring 1943, during one of his visits to Rome: he told the Duke that, in this respect, he "does not tolerate any outside interference." Moreover, despite the disapproval of the Germans he did not stop Jewish emigration to Palestine and assimilated Jews were tolerated in courts of law.

- **September 5, 1940**. By Decree-Law No. 3053, General Ion Antonescu was invested with "full powers".

- **September 14, 1940**. The National Legionary State was established. Romania became a totalitarian state.

- **October 1940**. Romanization Commissions were established under Decree Law 3361.

- **November 23, 1940** - Ion Antonescu signed the Tripartite Pact in Berlin, although, when he came to power, it was not obvious that he would be Berlin's favorite. But the Nazis identified him, due to the reports of the German Embassy in Bucharest, as a potential leader.

- **November 27 to 28, 1940**. The Legionary Police killed 63 former politicians, senior officers, policemen, gendarmes and Romanian intellectuals accused of having been involved in the arrest and execution of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Eleven Jews were also killed in Ploiești.

When he learnt of these savage murders, Generalul Antonescu told General Petroviceanu:

I do not feel sorry for any of them, because they harmed the country too much (Quote from Radu Ioanid's *Holocaustul în România*)

- January 21 to 23, 1941. In Bucharest, on the background of the Legionary Rebellion, a pogrom against Jews took place. At least 125 Jews were killed. Most of the murders took place in the Jilava forest, at the slaughterhouse and in the Fundeni and Pantelimon roads.

On January 21, 1941, about 200 Jews were brought at the Legionary House "Eng. Gheorghe Clime", 37 Călărași Avenue. They were locked into the attic and basement. First, they were robbed of all valuables and then forced to run up the stairs from the attic to the basement, under a rain of blows: a legionary man stood on each stair and hit them with a bat or iron bar.

In the morning of January 22, the arrested were divided into two groups, at random. The first group was taken to the Străulești outskirts of Bucharest, where they were beaten again for two days. Bullets were fired over their heads. After that, robbed of their clothes and shoes, they were released. Only with their shirt on, they marched for 16 km, into the city. The second group, consisting of about 90 Jews, was loaded into trucks and driven on Giurgiului Road, to the Jilava forest, where they were shot with 1-3 bullets, especially in the head. Some of the victims, who were taken in the first truck, were shot near the bridge over the Sabar River. Their clothes, footwear and gold teeth were removed. In the Jilava forest, 86 bodies were found. (....) Some victims were only injured and managed to escape. Among them, Rabbi Gutman was miraculously saved, though he stood by his sons, who were shot. (...) He went back into the woods to look for the dead bodies of his sons. When he found them, he used a so-called chemical pencil to write their names on the bodies, so as to be identified, later on. (Radu Ioanid, *Holocaustul în România*, pp. 87-88)

During this period, six temples and synagogues were devastated and were robbed: the Jewish Temple of Spanish Rite, the "Beit Hamidrash" Synagogue, the "Mogoșoaia Bridge" Old Temple, the Coral Temple, the "*Fraterna*" Temple and the Great Synagogue. Hundreds of Jewish homes and shops were devastated.

- January-February 1941. The agreement signed after the transfer of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR, in 1940, established that those born in the respective territories could return there. A joint Romanian-Soviet commission of repatriation was established. For Bukovina, a commission operated until January 1941. Thus, tens of Jews were forced by Romanian border guards, at gunpoint, to walk on a minefield near Burdujeni. Most died after they stepped on the mines.

- **February 14, 1941**. The Decree-Law under which Romania became a National Legionary State was cancelled.

- **June 21, 1941**. By Order 4147, General Ion Antonescu imposed:

The evacuation of all Jews aged 18 to 60 from the villages between Siret and Prut Rivers to Târgu Jiu.

(...) A deadline of 48 hours was given to carry out this operation.

- **June 22, 1941**. Operation "Barbarossa" - Ion Antonescu ordered the Romanian army to cross the Prut River. The German-Romanian military operations against the USSR began. On the same day, thousands of Jews from rural areas in northern Moldavia were transported by trains and interned in camps in Târgu Jiu, Craiova, Caracal and Turnu Severin.

- **June 28-July 6, 1941**. The Iași Pogrom: This was the first phase of the mass physical destruction of the Jews in Romania. At that time, 45,000 Jews lived in Iași. It was don at the express order of Ion Antonescu: he wanted the city to be cleansed of all Jews and any Jew who opened fire on the Romanian or German soldiers was to be eliminated without mercy.

On **June 27, 1941**, Ion Antonescu ordered, directly on the phone, to Colonel Constantin Lupu, commander of the Iaşi garrison, to evacuate all Jews from the city. Lupu was instructed to take measures so as to "cleanse the city of Iași of its Jewish population". On the night of June 28/29, while the army, the police and gendarmerie units were making arrests and executions, Antonescu telephoned once again to reiterate the evacuation order:

You give an order signed by you, given your capacity of military commander of the city of Iași, based on the government orders in use, adding: This is done in light of the state of war. When fired upon from a building, that place will be surrounded, all occupants (except children) will be arrested and, after a brief questioning, the guilty will be executed. The same penalties will apply to those who hide individuals who have committed the above-mentioned offenses.
The evacuation of the Jewish population from Iași is necessary and will be carried out in full (including women and children). The evacuation will be performed in stages: first in Roman, then in Târgu Jiu.
For this reason, you will discuss with the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the county prefecture, as the issue must be studied well.
You will take all measures to immediately comply with the order. For this reason, I ordered the General Staff to send a battalion of gendarmes and two trucks in Iași.

- **June 29, 1941**. Very many Jews were shot in the courtyard of the Police Headquarters. Others are loaded into Death Trains, where they went through mass asphyxiation. In total, about 13,500 Jews were killed. Of them 2700 died in Death Trains. At the same time, 311 Jews were killed in Sculeni.

One of the extermination method of choice, under the pretext of deportation was to squeeze them in "death trains". Thus, in the morning of **June 30, 1941**, two trains left the Iași train station to Călărași and Podu Iloaiei.

From Iași, it took the train eight hours to reach Podu Iloaiei, although the distance between these localities is just 20 km. The train was going so slowly that the guard follow it on foot. Despair, thirst and heat increased the number of victims. Thus, in the **19 freight cars** of the train, as reported by the Romanian authorities, of the **approximately 1900 Jews** who were locked in, only **706 survived**. The dead were buried in Jewish cemetery of Podu Iloaiei and the survivors were unlocked and taken into the houses of local Jews.

The same morning, the train heading to Călărași left the Iași station. About **5,000 Jews** were locked in. The train had about **35 freight cars**. Jews were crammed by the dozens in the tightly sealed cars, being hit with bayonets or rifle butts. Nobody took into account the fact that some were seriously injured or even dying. The following was written on the train: "Communist Kikes". The transport lasted six days and had an aberrant path. During this time, the train made a few stops to unload the bodies. The **first stop** was in **Târgu Frumos, 40 km away from Iași,** after an illogical itinerary that lasted 17 hours. There, 650 dead bodies were unloaded and buried in the mass graves of the local Jewish Cemetery. Only 1,011

people reached Călăraşi alive, after the six days of suffering.

Chernivtsi

- **July 5, 1941**. Joint German-Romanian armies entered Chernivtsi. There, they slaughtered the Jewish population for four days.
- **July 30, 1941**. Ordinance 1344 on the restrictions and the obligation to wear the distinctive sign for Jews was issued in Chernivtsi.

Traian Popovici was a Romanian lawyer, a Ph.D. in law and the Mayor of Chernivtsi in 1941-1942. He is best known for having saved 20,000 Jews of Bukovina from deportation.
In 1970, he was awarded the title "Righteous Among the Nations" (given to gentiles who ignored anti-Semitic policies and risked their lives, the existence of their families and their personal property in order to save persecuted Jews from death, without seeking any reward) .

Kishinev

- **July 17, 1941**. The date when the extermination and deportation of tens of thousands of Jews from Kishinev began. In just one day, at least 10,000 Jews were killed.
- **July 24, 1941**. The first camps and ghetto of Kishinev were established. The Romanian army concentrated about 25,000 Jews near the Coslav village, on the Dniester River.

- **August 2, 1941**. Ion Antonescu becomes Marshall.

- **August 5, 1941**. Return of the yellow star as a distinctive sign; by an order of the government, Deputy Prime-Minister Mihai Antonescu calls for "the yellow star to be worn throughout the country".

On **September 3**, the Federation of Unions of Jewish Communities was informed that:

All Jews (men, women and children) in Bucharest must wear a 6 pointed star – the Star of David- that will be placed in a square-shaped framework of 8.5 cm (...) The star, as well as the framework, will be black on a white background. The sign will be sewn on the clothes and will be worn on the left side of the chest.

- **September 8, 1941**. The siege of Leningrad began. It lasted until January 27, 1944.

- **September 9, 1941**. Following the intervention of W. Filderman, the leader of the Jewish community, Antonescu decided to cancel the order for Jews to wearing a distinctive sign. But the measure was only partially lifted. In some cities of Moldavia, as well as in Transnistria in Chernivtsi, Jews continued to wear the distinctive sign throughout the war.

- **August 19, 1941**. Transnistria came under Romanian administration. The governor of this area was Gheorghe Alexianu.

- **August 30, 1941**. Signing of the Tighina Agreement between Germany and Romania. Transnistria was to be administered by Romania, in accordance with Hitler's promise to Antonescu. Paragraph 7 of the agreement specifically refers to the Jews in the camps and ghettos of Bessarabia and Bucovina, as well as to the Jewish locals of Transnistria. This document confirmed that the final goal was to cleanse Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transnistria of Jews.

They were in charge of:
In Transnistria: Romania managed the security, administration and economic life, as well as transmission and broadcasting.
In the territory of the Bug- Dnieper: Germany was in charge of administrative and economic life, while Romania was in charge of security.

[...]
7 /. Deportation of the Jews
The deportation of Jews across the Bug is not possible, at present. Thus, they must be oncentrated in labor camps and used as work force, until their evacuation to the East will be possible, after the end of operations.
(Excerpt from the Tighina Agreement)

- **September 15, 1941**. Deportations to Transnistria began. Over 150,000 Jews from Bessarabia and Bukovina were deported to Transnistria by the Antonescu regime. More than 90,000 people died of hunger, disease and executions.

- **October 1941 - January 1942** – The Battle of Moscow.

- **October 9, 1941**. Devastated by reports on what was happening in Bessarabia and Bukovina, W. Filderman, made an appeal to Marshal Antonescu, in which he pointed out that deportation was tantamount to the death of the people and he begged him to end this exodus.

I was told that some Jews from Bukovina will be sent to Bessarabia and that those from Bessarabia have to be sent to the Ukraine – that would mean their death, considering the given circumstances.
Please, stop this exodus if it is possible and if they are not guilty of anything.
(Excerpt from the appeal addressed to Ion Antonescu by W. Filderman on October 9, 1941)

- **October 9, 1941**. Deportations from Southern Bucovina to Transnistria began.

- **October 10, 1941**. Orders are issued for the establishment of the Czernowitz ghetto and the deportation of all Jews, from across Northern Bukovina; the entire Jewish population of Chernivtsi was first gathered in a ghetto, on October 11.

I have the honor to inform you that it has been decided to evacuate the Jewish population from Bukovina. Therefore, the Jewish population from the Chernovitz county will be first rounded up in a ghetto established by the town council and then gradually transported by railway.
The Headquarters and Gendarme Inspectorate in Chernovitz will be responsible for collecting the Jews, guarding the ghetto, loading and transportation up to the border points.
[...]The Jews will be assembled in the ghetto on October 11, 1941, according to the enclosed with schedule. (Appendix No. 1). On that day, all the necessary measures will be taken to prevent any disturbances or acts against the state, all Jewish assets becoming from now on State property.
(Excerpt from the Order for setting up the Chernovitz Ghetto, October 10, 1941)

- October 11, 1941. The second memorandum sent by W. Filderman, President of the Federation of Unions of Jewish Communities to Antonescu. He wrote that the deportation meant *death, death, death, without any other blame but that of being a Jew*.

Today I received a desperate appeal from the leadership of the Kishinev Ghetto.
On the morning of October 8, of this year, a group of 1,500 people were forced on an 8-day march in cold and snowy weather, taking with them only as much as they could carry with their own hands; they are all likely to perish, being all naked, without food and without any possibility of getting supplies on a journey of at least 8 days in cold and snow. Only the sick, old and children could leave by carts - meaning that not even the sick were spared and neither were the women who also had to go on foot.
It is about death, death, death of the innocent without any other guilt, than that of being Jews.
I beg of you, Marshal, Sir, not to let such a terrible tragedy happen.
(Excerpt from the appeal addressed to Ion Antonescu by W. Filderman on October 11, 1941)

- **October 13, 1941**. The deportation of Jews from the ghetto of Chernivtsi began. Jews were taken to the train station, where they were locked into freight cars, more than 100 people in each car. Many Jews chose to commit suicide.

Odessa

- **October 16, 1941**. Odessa was occupied by Romanian troops, after a long siege.
- **October 22, 1941**. The Romanian military command in Odessa exploded and 61 people died.

The Odessa Massacre began in the evening of October 22, 1941, as a "punishment" (reprisals against civilians) after the Romanian military command in Odessa was destroyed by partisans or by the Soviet regular army. The explosion killed Romanian officer, including the city's military commander, General Ion Glogojanu, soldiers and lieutenants, several civilians and four officers of the German navy. The Romanian military failed to catch the perpetrators of the attack and took revenge on the local civilian population. They killed 5000 local civilians at random, most of whom were Jewish. Following the report he received, Marshal Antonescu ordered General Iosif Iacobici, the head of the General Staff and commander of the 4th Romanian Army, to take drastic punishment. That same night, Iacobici sent a cable message to Antonescu's military cabinet, communicating that he began the ordered action, "as retaliation and to give an example to the population, we took measures to hang a number of Jews and communist suspects, in public squares". The next day, **October 23, 1941**, Romanian troops killed an additional 19,000 civilian Jewish men, women, old people and children, whole families from Odessa. They were shot, hanged, explosives were detonated near them or were burned alive. An additional 45,000 Jews were sent from Odessa to the Bogdanovka concentration camp, where they were killed about two months later.

- **October 24, 1941**. Note to General Macici, transmitting Antonescu's order on retaliations in Odessas as well as on the execution of all Jewish the deportees from Bessarabia, who took refuge in the city:

General Macici
In retaliation, Mareşal Antonescu orders:
1) The execution of all Jews from Bessarabia who took refuge in Odessa.
2) All individuals subject to the provisions of Order no. 3161, dated October 23. 1941, who were still not executed, as well as others who can be added to them, will be placed in a previously mined building and then it will be detonated. This will be done on the funeral day of our victims.
This order will be destroyed after reading. [...]

- **November 7, 1941**. The Jews of Dorohoi, Darabani and Rădăuți were locked and deported to Transnistria.

- **December 16, 1941**. Decree-Law no. 3415 ruled the dissolution of the Federation of Unions of Jewish Communities and established the so-called **Jewish Central Organization**.

- **December 17, 1941**. The first stage of the deportation of Jews from Romania ended. On this day, the last convoys of Jews from Bukovina and Dorohoi crossed the Dniester through the Atachi area.

- **December 21, 1941.** The massacres of Jews from the ghetto of Bogdanovca (Transnistria) began. Some 48,000 Jews from Bessarabia and local Jews were killed. All this happened under the rule of the Golta County Prefect, Lieutenant-Colonel Modest Isopescu.

- **January 30, 1942**. The Operational Regulation of the Jewish Central Organization in Romania (*Centrala Evreilor din România* - CER) was published. After the dissolution of the Federation, the Central became the only organization authorized to represent the interests of the Jewish community

before officials and organize Jewish life in accordance with the orders of the Antonescu government. In fact, this was a local variant of the German *Judenrat*.

According to the Regulation, the Central had the following tasks:
a) to exclusively represent the interests of the Jews in Romania and to manage the assets of the former Union of Jewish Communities in the country;
b) to organize the Jews under the orders of the Romanian government;
c) to re-educate and organize Jews in order to perform various jobs and professions;
d) to prepare Jewish emigration;
e) to organize Jewish cultural activities and schools;
f) to organize Jewish relief efforts;
g) to organize Jewish participation in various jobs, under the law on the organization of national labor;
h) to organize the performance of Jewish professions as determined by the government;
i) to publish a newspaper of the Jewish Central Organization of Romania;
j) to provide all data and information requested by authorities for Romanization purposes;
k) to draw-up and update file and records of all Jews in Romania;
l) to receive all memos addressed by the Jews to various authorities and to submit them with additional references to the competent authorities;
m) to make special ID cards for Jews, as every Jew had to have an identity card with a photo;
n) to comply to all orders received from the government, from the government representative on the Regulation of the situation of the Jews.

- **February 24, 1942**. The ship Struma, laden of Jewish emigrants, was sunk. There were 769 dead and one survivor, a young man aged 18, David Stoliar.

The Struma case
On December 7, 1941, a number of 769 Jews left from the East Railway Station, Obor, on the route Bucharest-Constanța. They all had the same destination: Palestine. For several months already, the newspapers of the Jewish community published advertisements about a journey to the East, for them to leave Europe, where the carnage already reached unimaginable proportions.
On the same Sunday, December 7, 1941, as the train left the Obor station, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. A day earlier, on December 6, Britain declared war on Romania. On December 10, Romania declared war to the United States.
The passengers who traveled from Romania to Palestine to take refugee came from an "enemy country" to Britain. Palestine was governed by London since 1928. After 70 days of arrest in the Bosphorus, Struma was towed away. Without any working engine, the Struma was left to drift into the Black Sea. In the morning of February 24, a Soviet submarine torpedoed the vessel. The Struma exploded and sank. Once in the water, all but one passengers died. The water was extremely cold. The result: one survivor, a young man aged 18, David Stoliar from Bucharest. He managed to reach the shore and was held by the authorities for a few weeks. He was questioned, quarantined and eventually allowed to leave to Palestine.

- **February 1942**. Jews in the camps of Domanovka and Acmecetca (Transnistria) were killed.

- **May 25, 1942**. A census of the Roma population was ordered by I. Antonescu. The authorities also recorded nomadic Roma, as well as sedentary Roma who had a criminal record. Of the 41,000 people who were counted, 25,000 were deported and 11,000 died in Transnistria.

- **June-August 1942**. Deportation of Roma nomads.

The deportations began on June 1, 1942, with the nomadic Roma. That day, the gendarmes began to gather them in the capital cities of the counties and then to send them to Transnistria. Marshal Antonescu gave the order himself for the deportation "of all nomadic Gypsies' camps from all over the country". The nomadic Roma traveled on foot or with wagons from one precinct to the other, making their trip several weeks long.

Officially, the operation ended on August 15, 1942. Those who were at the front or mobilized within the country at the time of the deportation were expelled from the military by order of the Army General Staff, sent back home, and made to follow their families to Transnistria. Until October 2, 1942, a total of 11,441 nomadic Roma were deported to Transnistria (2.352 men, 2.375 women, and 6.714 children).

- **June 7, 1942**. The deportation of the Jews from Chernivtsi begins, one again, at the order of the Head of State.

- **June 14, 1942**. A number of 450 Jews from Dorohoi were deported.

- **June 27, 1942**. The General Staff ordered measures on the organization of the deportations of Jews to Transnistria, as punishment for not complying with forced labor regulations.

The general guidelines for the regulation of the work to be performed by Jews, sent by the General Staff with no. 55500 of June 27, 1942, provides the following punishments, at paragraph D 8:

f. For minor offences (being late at the call, undisciplined attitude) while in the labor detachments, commanders will apply corporal punishment to the Jews, according to regulations.

g. All Jews who commit the following offenses will be punished by being sent to Transnistria to hard labor units or ghettos, together with their families (father, mother, wife and children):

- repeated offences of the type mentioned above;

- are not diligent in their labor or do not perform the tasks by deception, bribe, interventions, not showing up at the calls for forced labor, unaccepted leave from work, etc .;

- does not announce the Draft Circle that he relocated, either inside the town or from one town to another, even if this was approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

- **July 24, 1942**. The Prime-Minister ordered the Interior Ministry to begin the deportation to Transnistria of all Jews who were suspected to be communist sympathizers or fighters.

- **July 31, 1942**. Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the evacuation and internment of all Jews suspected of communism into the camp of Vapniarca.

The inmates who were accommodated in three damaged and dirty pavilions (without windows, doors and beds) had enough reasons to believe in the prophecies of Murgescu.

In addition, their basic nourishment consisted in fodder peas which gradually poisoned them leading to paralysis and eventually to death.

[...]After December 27, 1942, the first case of spastic paralysis was registered (an inmate who was interned in the camp on Sept. 16, 1942). During the next days and weeks, this type of paralysis spread about, reaching 611 cases.

Although the accused I. Murgescu was informed by medical reports about the harmful effects of the fodder pea, he definitely refused to change their nourishment, moreover, he did not allow that medicines or clothing be brought into the camp.

(Extract from the indictment drawn up by the public prosecutors A. Bunaciu and D. Săracu in the trial of the first lot of war criminals, 1945). Colonel Murgescu was the commander of the Vapniarca camp.

- **August 8, 1942** The "Bukarester Tageblatt", newspaper of the German Embassy in Bucharest, published an article titled *"Rumanian wird Judenrein"* (Romania will be cleaned of Jews). The plan to deport the Jews of the Old Kingdom to Belsen was under development.
At the same time, a group of more than 1500 Jews from the Old Kingdom and Southern Transylvania was deported to Transnistria.

- **September 13, 1942**. Cordell Hull, US Foreign Secretary, radio broadcast a message of sympathy for the Jews all over the world, on the occasion of the Jewish New Year.

- **September 22, 1942**. Dr. W. Filderman addressed a new memorandum to the government, asking not to give in to the demands of Nazi Germany to deport the Jews of Romania to Nazi extermination camps.

- **September 1942**. Deportation of the sedentary Roma deemed to be a "problem."

In terms of the sedentary Roma registered in May 1942, the authorities first undertook to sort them. Those selected for the initial deportation were Roma who were considered "dangerous and undesirable" along with their families - a total of 12.497 individuals.
Ion Antonescu set the beginning of the operation for August 1, 1942. However, the deportation of sedentary Roma did not take place until September. It lasted from September 12 to September 20, 1942, used nine special trains, and began in different towns in the country. During that month, 13.176 sedentary Roma were deported to Transnistria. This number exceeded the number on the lists drafted for deportation and, moreover, the list of those deported did not coincide with the lists of those selected for deportation. An investigation into this discrepancy concluded that some who had been slated for deportation could not be found, while others, having been misled, volunteered; a rumor had been circulated among the Roma that once they arrived in Transnistria, they would be granted land.

- **October 16, 1942**. The newspaper *Timpul* (Time) published the communique of the Council of Ministers on the decision to suspend deportations to Transnistria. The government also informs that they rejected the German plan to deport the Jews to Nazi extermination camps.

- **October 30, 1942**. Memo of G. Richter, German Embassy counselor for the Jewish question, on the intervention of Queen Mother Elena and King Mihai in order to stop the deportation of Jews to Transnistria.

[...]She [Queen Mother Elena] *may have threatened the King that, unless deportations are to end immediately, she would leave the country. As a consequence, the King called Prime-Minister Mihai Antonescu, and the Council of Ministers convened. After that, the prisoners were not only released, but the government issued a statement.*
Of the recently deported Jews, a few hundreds were shot, some by German troops, others by the Romanians.

- **November-December, 1942.** The battle of the Don River Bend, a large scale military operation. In just two months of fighting, in the battle of the Don River Bend and in the Kalmyk steppe, 150,000 Romanian soldiers were lost, about half of the Romanian soldiers in the frontline at the time.

- **November 22, 1942.** For the first time, at the meeting of the leaders of the Jewish Central Organization of Romania (attended by W. Filderman) the government's proposal on the possibility of letting the approximately 75,000 Jewish survivors from Transnistria emigrate, for a fee of a few tens of billions, was referred to. But this was just an unfinished project.

- **January 1, 1943.** The **Comisia Autonomă de Ajutorare** (Autonomous Commission of Relief - CAA) and the Central Jewish Organization of Romania (CER) go to Transnistria for the first time to help deportees and to check on the distribution of the relief they had sent before. According to the report made by Fred Saraga, head of the delegation, concluded the following in front of the staff of the Central Organization of the Jews:

1). All the relief sent by the Central Organization is an infinitely small part of what they need
2). The situation of the 5,000 orphans is a disaster
3). The entire population is undernourished, weak and lacks clothes
4). The deportees could only be saved if their work skills are used. They need clothes, medicines and food.

- **January 2, 1943**. W. Filderman sent a memo to Ion and Mihai Antonescu, presenting the state of orphaned children aged 2 to 16, in Transnistria. In his opinion, there is only one solution to save them: to immediately bring them back to Chernivtsi. Otherwise, says Filderman, they will all die.

In Transnistria, Jews die in large numbers. The number of orphans – children aged between 2 and 16 - increased from one thousand to five thousand.[...] There is only one solution: to bring the children under 18 back to Chernovitz where life does not cost even a quarter of what it costs in Transnistria and where they can be looked after by public charity in view of their emigration.
These children cannot be accused of anything and their emigration is impossible in their physical state. Otherwise, at the end of winter they will be all dead.

- **May 11, 1943**. The government decided to impose a new exceptional contribution of four billion lei upon the Jews. The decision was sent to the Jewish Central Organization by Radu Lecca, in a letter:

You are hereby informed that the government, taking into account that, while Romanian soldiers sacrifice themselves on the battlefield, the large majority of Jews continue to enjoy the freedom to trade and live safely from the dangers of war, has decided that this population will contribute to the country's financial needs by the amount of four billion lei. [...] Be aware that the government has decided that Jews who are not willing to pay the established amount [...] will be punished by deportation to Transnistria and their properties will be liquidated in favor of the state. [...] We hereby point out the responsibility of the Jewish leadership [...] for the precise compliance with the above-mentioned decision of the government.

- **May 12, 1943**. At the request of Gingold, Filderman made his stand, in writing, on all anti-Semitic measures adopted by the regime in the years 1941-1943 and their impact on the situation of the Jews, concluding that they were unable to pay the requested amount. He also refuted Lecca's and Gingold's statements according to which Jews accumulated fortunes while Romanians fought on the front:

[...] Even if Jews are not fighting on the front [...] they perform community work, i.e. they fight for the country with tools; but there is a bloody difference: while soldiers at the front are equipped, fed and paid and, in case of disability or death, they or their families will receive pensions, the Jews under military obligations are neither equipped, nor fed or paid. Their families are not helped and, if they become disabled or die as a result of hard work, nobody receives a pension. It is not their fault that they are not on the front. They were expelled from the army under discriminatory laws.

- **May 26, 1943**. Following the text written by Filderman, Ion Antonescu considers his impertinent and ordered his deportation to Transnistria. W. Filderman would stay there for just three months, returning in early August after interventions of several personalities of the time, such as: King Michael, Queen Elena, Iuliu Maniu, etc.

- **October 2, 1943**. An order of repatriation of Jews deported for allegedly *"having perpetrated crimes against the forced labor discipline"* was issued.

- **October 3, 1943**: The first order of repatriation of the Jews who had been deported to Transnistria was issued

According to the order of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, we would like to inform you that it has been approved to repatriate all Jews who had been sent to Transnistria together with their families because they did not perform their forced labor duties.
These Jews will be sent back to Romania, to their places from where they had been picked up. By no means are they allowed to leave for any other destination than shown above.

- **December 8, 1943**. The repatriation of Jews deported from Dorohoi to Transnistria, i.e. 6,430 people, was ordered.

- **December 20, 1943**. The first group of about 1,500 deportees from Dorohoi left Transnistria, more precisely from the Moghilău-Atachi area.

- **December 1943**. The last group of Roma were deported to Transnistria.

- **January 27, 1944**. Ion Antonescu refuses to continue repatriation, claiming there were one million Romanians in Transnistria, Bessarabia and Bukovina who wanted to enter the country. Receiving the Jews back - he said - would cause great discontent.

- **February 1944**. The return of the orphans was decided, but only those who had lost both parents and were under the age of 15.

It was decided to repatriate the orphans. The marshal considered the number of 4,500 orphans.
According to the known statistics by age, of the orphans of both parents or of one parent, the situation is as follows:
Orphans of both parents up to the age of 15 – 2.000
Orphans of both parents up to the age of 18 – 950
Orphans of one parent – 2.000
(Filderman's note referring to the repatriation of orphans sent to the Police Sub-secretary of State, General C.Z.Vasiliu)

- **March 6, 1944**. A number of 1,846 orphans, 1,400 of whom crossed the Dniester River at Moghilău-Atachi and 446 at Tiraspol- Bender repatriated. Both groups met in Iasi, where the children were assigned to Jewish communities in Moldavia and Wallachia.

- **March 10, 1944**. The Soviet offensive for the liberation of the south-west territories began in Uman.

- **March 14, 1944**. Ion Antonescu ordered the general repatriation of Jews who were deported to Transnistria. The United Nations radio kept on repeating warnings against those who committed crimes against humanity.

- **March 20, 1944**. Soviet troops reached the Dniester, reconquering the entire region in the north of Transnistria.

- **August 23, 1944**. The coup of August 23, 1944 was an action of King Michel, who decided to dismiss and arrest Ion Antonescu. The King ordered the immediate end of cooperation of Romania with the Axis powers and the beginning of truce negotiations with the Allies.

The Holocaust in Northern Transylvania and Maramureș, parts of Hungary

- March 18, 1944. Meeting between Hitler and Horthy. The latter accepts Hitler's ultimatum and agrees that Hungary would hand over hundreds of thousands of "Jewish laborers to work in German industrial and agricultural enterprises."

- March 19, 1944. Germany occupied Hungary. Prime-Ministeer Kállay takes refuge in the Turkish Embassy. On March 22, 1944 the puppet government led by Döme Sztójay, former ambassador to Berlin, was already appointed.

- **March 19, 1944**. Sondereinsatzkommando members, led by Adolf Eichmann, consisting of about 100 people, went to Budapest. In most cases, members of the Sonderkommando Eichmann did not personally participate in capturing Jews, but only led, from behind the scenes, the activity of the Hungarian gendarmerie and of the police. But there were exceptions - for example, in Oradea and Ungvári (today Uzhgorod, Ukraine). The task of the Germans proved to be very easy after Prime-Minister Sztójay agreed, in the presence of Eichmann, with the German ambassador to Budapest, that Weesenmayer would develop the legal basis to provide the occupant with the means of state power, in order to fulfill the plan.

Legislative measures taken against the Jews, March-June, 1944:
- prohibition to employment of non-Jews in Jewish households
- dismissal the Jewish clerks
- permanent removal of Jews from the press, theaters and cinemas
- the obligation of Jews to declare the ownership of vehicles
- ban on the possession and use of telephones
- it was compulsory for Jews to wear the yellow star
- Jews were prohibited from leaving their home without a special permit
- it was mandatory for them to give their radios to the authorities
- it was mandatory for them to declare their assets, followed by their confiscation (in the case of merchants, they were forced to declare stocks of goods and the equipment they used in their stores)
- Jewish students were forbidden to wear uniforms
- operation permits of schools, boarding schools and Jewish classes were cancelled
- Jews were forbidden to enter restaurants
- those employed by Jewish merchants were dismissed
- The works of Jewish writers in the country and abroad were removed and their destruction was ordered

- **April 4, 1944**. A secret order asked mayors, the gendarmerie and the police to compile nominal lists of the Jewish population.

- **April 7, 1944**. A decree which detailed the procedures to be followed in the campaign of the *Final Solution of the Jewish Question* was adopted. The Ghettoization decree was drafted on April 26 and entered into force on April 28, 1944.

For ghettoization and deportation purposes, Hungary was divided into six zones. The ghettoization of the Jews was based on precise plans. Thus, in small towns, Jews were gathered in synagogues or in other buildings belonging to religious communities and their valuables were seized. From there, they were taken to the nearest previously designated cities. In the cities, they were taken to **ghettos, usually established in brick factories**, where cattle transport trains left for Poland with crammed Jews,

constantly. In the ghettos, the already robbed Jews were subject to other checks. Those deemed wealthy were beaten, tortured and forced to hand over the valuables they still had or to confess about places where other valuables could still be hidden. These fierce "ghetto institutions", called the "mint" by Jews, were real places of torture, where even young girls were checked in intimate places by women, for hidden jewelry.

- **May 3, 1944**. The ghettoization of about 160,000 Jews in Northern Transylvania began. There was a "de-Jewification" department based in Cluj and led by Lázló Ferenczy, assisted by members of the *Sonderkommando*.

The ghettoization drive in Northern Transylvania was generally completed within one week. During the first day of the campaign close to 8,000 Jews were rounded up. By noon of May 5, their number increased to 16,144, by May 6 to 72,382, and by May 10 to 98,000. These figures do not include the Jews of Maramureş County and of some districts in the neighboring counties that were geographically parts of Northern Transylvania, but administratively parts of Gendarmerie District VIII. These Jews fell victim to the drive conducted in Carpatho-Ruthenia and northeastern Hungary.

Main ghettos in Northern Transylvania:

Cluj. Before deportation, the ghetto had about 18,000 people. It was evicted between May 25 and June 9, 1944.

Dej. The ghetto was placed in a forest near the town. It was among the worst in Northern Transylvania. The maximum number of Jews who got there was 7,800. The ghetto was liquidated between May 28 and June 8, 1944.

Şimleu Silvaniei. Located in a brickyard in the locality of Cehei, near Şimleu, the ghetto included about 8,500 Jews. Their deportation took place from May 31 to June 6, 1944.

Satu Mare. At its peak, the ghetto had 18,000 people. Its liquidation occurred between May 19 and June 1, 1944, in six transports.

Baia Mare. There were two ghettos. The land of the Köning glass factory housed some 3,500 people. The ghetto made from the stables in Borcului Valley had about 2,000 people. The 5,916 Jews in the two ghettos were deported in two transports, from May 31 to June 5, 1944.

Bistriţa. The 6,000 Jews were gathered into the Stamboli farm, in barracks or pigsties. They were deported from June 2 to 6, 1944.

Oradea. There were two ghettos. The one near the Great Orthodox Synagogue had about 27,000 people, while the Mezey wood warehouse lad about 8,000 Jews. Their deportation took place from May 23 to June 27.

Târgu Mureş. The ghetto was placed in a dilapidated brick factory which offered shelter to only about 2,500 people of the 7.380 Jews who were ghettoized. Their deportation took place between May 27 and June 8, 1944.

Sighetul Marmaţiei. The ghetto was established on the outskirts of the town. It was extremely crowded, having a population of 12,000 people. It was liquidated very fast, between May 16 and 22, 1944.

The Jews of Northern Transylvanian were deported to Auschwitz, where the largest extermination camp in German-occupied zone operated. Trains leaving from different cities of Northern Transylvania usually reached Auschwitz in three to four days. Trains were made of freight cars that carried an average of 3000-3500 Jews. In every car, 70 to 90 were crammed; each car got a bucket of water and an empty bucket for excrements, after which the doors were closed. A significant number of Jewish men, members of the forced labor squads, traveling for work-related purposes or were on leave, were disembarked from passenger trains and taken to freight trains that carried them to Auschwitz, from larger stations. In

Transylvania, most cases of this type were reported in Oradea. This practice led the defense ministry to order members of forced labor detachments not to leave their units without military escort.
Until they reached Kassa [today Košice], trains were guarded by Hungarian gendarmes; there, they were replaced by SS guards. Because they were crowded and of the early summer heat, people in the cars could barely breathe. Many of the weak and elderly died on the way. Those who reached Auschwitz were separated on the platform: the very young, aged 12 to14, and those over 50, the sick and those with criminal records were immediately directed to the gas chambers; others were distributed to working groups.

- **July 7, 1944**. Under increasing pressure from the West, Horthy ordered the end of deportations.

- **September 1944**. After the attack on Romania, the Hungarian army committed several crimes against Jews in Arad, Luduș and Sărmaș (all 126 Jews were killed and buried in a mass grave, in the outskirts of the village.

Of about 165,000 Jews of Northern Transylvania, around 130,000 – 135,000 people perished in the Holocaust.

The Kasztner case
Rudolf (Rezső) Kasztner was the leader of Zionists in Hungary. Most likely, he learned of the Auschwitz protocols from Jewish Slovak leaders, in April 1944. Thus, he knew what would happen to the deported.
After the occupation, Kasztner liaised directly with Eichmann and managed to obtain the approval of the Germans for his family members and some Jewish leaders to go to Switzerland, for a significant amount (currency and gold worth about one and a half million USD).
By his very contradictory action, this lawyer from Cluj **managed to save 1,684 Jews, 388 of whom came from the ghetto of Cluj**. On June 9, 1944, after the deportation of all other Jews from the province, the 388 Jews from Cluj were transported to Budapest by train. There, they stayed in the special camp of Kolumbusz street, in wooden barracks built, under the guidance of Zsigmond Léb, head of Jewish Orthodox Community of Cluj - by László Devecseri, at the expense of the latter. The camp was guarded by five SS soldiers who were ordered to treat the inmates well. They could actually enter and leave the camp whenever they wanted. Kasztner's protégés reached Switzerland via Germany, in two groups: the first was released from the *Sonderlager* [the special camp] of Bergen-Belsen and sent to Switzerland on August 23, while the second group was sent there on December 7, 1944.
For many survivors in Cluj, Kasztner and the Jewish leadership in Cluj can be accused of complicity in the murder of the community. Based on the agreement concluded with Eichmann, Kasztner was silent about the accurate and detailed information he had on the massacres in Auschwitz; in fact, he only shared it with Zionists leaders and with the heads of the religious community. The leaders of the Jewish community in Cluj obeyed his orders and, not only did they not inform other Jews about their most probable fate, but they also spread "false, reassuring information". They advised members of the community not to resist or hide. The leaders did all they could do to make sure that Jews would not take refuge in Romania, not to oppose, but to enter the ghetto, the antechamber of death, in an orderly manner.
Others - especially those saved by Kasztner – still consider that the former lawyer of Cluj was a hero "who repeatedly put his head in the lion's mouth" to save fellow Jews, all those who could be saved.

14. Jews the communist period, the relationship between Jews and communism, communist anti-semitism, the sale of Jews and Jewish Emigration

Background

1. **Impact of the Holocaust**. The trauma of the Holocaust was decisive for the survivors of this period. It influenced their fundamental decisions, radically changing their way of thinking. The "return" to normality was only partial, difficult and painful. The collective memory of the Holocaust, of massacres, deportations and humiliations led to a low level of confidence in the Romanian society. All these made them wonder - as in other countries that experienced the Holocaust - whether their coexistence was still possible.
2. **The State of Israel**. Its appearance, in May 1948, was to raise the awareness of the overwhelming majority of the Jews, regardless of their decision to make Aliyah to the new country or not.
3. The third coordinate is represented by **social and economic changes,** as Romania was heading to communism.

Periods

What we generically call the communist era is a historical period of great complexity and it has several distinct sub-periods:

a. A **transitional period**, which covers the time from the fall of the fascist regime (August 23, 1944) and lasts until the establishment of the totalitarian regime, in the beginning of 1948.
b. **A cold period**, from 1948 to the end of the 1950s.
c. A period that opens in the early 1960s, with a **relative relaxation of the terror, but an increased marginalization of the Jewish population**. It witnessed a normalization of the Aliyah process, but also the emergence and development of an intense "silent" anti-Semitism. They tried and succeeded to cast a curtain of oblivion about the Jewish population, its existence and civilization.
Of course, there were some exceptions, such as the fact that the State Jewish theater still operated – it was the only Jewish theater in any communist state (except for the USSR); the publication of translations of Shalom Aleichem; the broadcast, at large intervals, of folk Jewish songs (at the radio show "Music of the people"). Otherwise, **Jews and the Holocaust became a taboo**.

Demographic and social data

Another starting point is the social and demographic analysis of the Jewish population after the Holocaust.

The Holocaust entailed a brutal numerical decrease of the Jewish population in Romania, to nearly half of their numbers in the late 1930s. From 765,000 Jews, they reached 375,000 people. The decrease was also amplified by the territorial losses suffered by Romania: Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, which became parts of the USSR.

A statistical analysis of 1948, conducted by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania, taking into consideration the approximate criterion of *matza* requests they received, showed that there were some 350,000 Jews in Romania. Of them, 132,000 lived in Bucharest. In Moldavia, there lived 118,000 Jews, while Transylvania had 62,000 Jews, Southern Bucovina - 22,000 and Dobrogea - 16,000.

The tragedy of the Holocaust is not expressed only, and not primarily by the number of victims, but by the serious consequences on the survivors' health, identity and welfare.

The 375,000 Jews who lived in Romania after the war, survivors of the deportations, massacres and the legalized robbery organized by Ion Antonescu, formed a traumatized mass marked, for a long time, by the effects of the shock produced by the state's policy. They were dominated by the fear that the tragedy

could repeat, their health was shattered. They were both physically and mentally impoverished, being a group of people who lost faith in the Romanian society and the Romanian State. In 1945, 68% of the Jewish population suffered from an insufficient diet, while 51% did not have the minimum needed clothes.

The social structure of the Jewish population in Romania after the Holocaust is also interesting. Thus, **only 27% of the Jews were active**. Of these, 3% were unskilled workers, 7% - skilled workers, 32% - craftsmen, 22% clerics, 15% merchants and factory owners, 3% teachers, 15% were independent or had undefined jobs.

The transition period (1944-1948)

Restoration of Jewish communal life:

- The restoration of the communities abolished by Antonescu, especially in areas considered of "national security", where Jews were forced to move from during the Holocaust. The restoration of traditional Jewish social networks: school, medical and welfare units.

- The attempt to help the entire Jewish population who had lost everything to the fascist dictatorship. With the help of Jewish organizations, first of all the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 80 canteens for adults were operational; 40,000 people received relief; there were 14 boarding schools that housed 1,475 children; 16 canteens for children; 54 medical pediatric centers; a large number of local canteens and communal dormitories, in the whole country, in 1946. In Bucharest, there were 15 canteens and 3,247 assistees. An important network of 23 hospitals (6 in Bucharest) was restored.

- In parallel the Jewish school system was developed. In 1948, before the nationalization in Romania, it included 30 kindergartens with 1,097 children and 69 primary schools with 7054 students. These units had 1,010 educators and teachers. Besides these schools, there were vocational and religious schools, as well as the Tarbuth Hebrew language network.

- Another matter pertaining to the social and economic reconstruction of the Jewish world after the Holocaust was the cancellation of anti-Jewish legislation. On December 19, 1944, the Romanian government passed legislation to repeal the anti-Jewish legislative measures. Its implementation was slow and partial, particularly as far as housing was concerned (the new residents who illegally occupied homes and refused to go, were hard to evict, and the authorities displayed an exaggerated "understanding" to them). The housing situation, especially in cities, was disastrous in the first decade after the war.

- A special issue of the utmost difficulty was the plight of a large number of deported Jews, both survivors of deportations to Transnistria and to Nazi camps. Their presence, many on their way to Palestine (via Constanța), complicated the social situation of the Jewish community. Communities, especially in Bucharest, made huge efforts to find solutions, often partial but urgent, given the difficult issues they had to face.

In 1944-1948, community structures, especially the Federation of Unions of Jewish Communities (FUCE) were restored, after Antonescu abolished it, in 1942. There appeared or reappeared major Jewish newspapers, like *Curierul Israelit* (the Israelite Courier), the leading Jewish newspaper during the interwar period which was closed down in 1940. In 1944-1945, Zionist newspapers reappeared, the most important being *Mântuirea* (Salvation), which had a new series from 1944 to 1948.

During the same period, Jewish organizations from abroad resumed their activity in Romania. If, during the Holocaust, the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) could not openly operate in Romania, but only under the aegis of the Red Cross, after August 23, 1944 it operated together with other Jewish relief organizations, such as ORT (the Organization for Rehabilitation through Training) – in charge of vocational education - and OSE (*Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants*) - dealing with the medical problems faced by the Jewish population. Note that the JDC organization provided a lot of support to the Jewish population in Romania from 1916 to 1949, when it was banned. There were cases when the Joint offered help to Gentiles, as well.

The Zionist movement played an important role. Zionist organizations resumed their legal work immediately after August 23, 1944. There was a revival and diversification of Zionist activities. The reorganization of Zionist structures was swift and we can talk of the resurgence of all groups that existed in the interwar period. One of the most obvious features of the Zionist movement was their ideological and organizational pluralism which entailed the fragmentation of a large number of organizations.

Interestingly, a coalition of all political trends in Jewish life was established and present in the leadership boards of the FUCE: various Zionist organizations, supporters of historical democratic parties (the National Peasants' Party, the National Liberal Party, the Social Democratic Party) and the Communists.

Between October 1944 and December 1947 the President of the organization was Wilhelm Fielderman, the undisputed leader of Jewish life in the interwar period and the Holocaust. He exercised his tenure in difficult conditions, being constantly attacked by communists and left by some of his friends. The communists considered him to be their main enemy. They called him a "fascist" and a "supporter of Antonescu". He was arrested for 18 days, in August 1945 and a part of his archive was confiscated, etc.

As far as immigration was concerned, the transition period is marked by illegal emigration. In the first phase after the Holocaust, until the proclamation of the State of Israel, the restrictive policy of the British was the main obstacle to emigration. According to the 1939 White Paper issued by the British government, Jewish emigration to Palestine was limited.

Since, after the Second World War, it had the largest number of Jews in the Soviet bloc - except for the Soviet Union - Romania tolerated and even facilitated Jewish emigration, until 1947. The reports of the police and gendarmerie, during these years, mention that unauthorized border crossings were an almost daily occurrence. Various Zionist organizations made emigration efforts to various areas of the world, such as France, Mexico, Costa Rica.

In December 1947, the Pan York and Pan Crescent ships left the port of Constanta. About 15,000 Jews from Romania were on board – it was the first time in the history of emigration that such a large number of Jews went in just one trip. They were initially interned in Cyprus by the British authorities and, after May 14, 1948, were brought to the newly created state. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, camps in Cyprus had about 53,000 Jews, approximately 23,000 of whom were from Romania.

Trials of War Criminals

Paragraph 14 of the Armistice Convention signed by Romania on September 12, 1944, stated that the "Romanian Government and High Command commits to collaborate with the Allied High Command and to the arrest and trial persons accused of war crimes". During the terms of the Rădescu and Sănătescu governments numerous discussions were held to formulate legislation so as to punish war crimes, but, as one can see from the transcripts of government meetings, they lacked legal expertise, political will and a correct representation of the tragedy of the Jews.

In **January 1945**, two Decree-Laws (no. 50 and no. 51) were issued. They provided an initial legal formula to the intention of bringing "war criminals and profiteers" and "those responsible for the disaster of the country" in courts of law. These laws were never implemented de facto, while the special courts provided by them were never established.

After the Groza government was installed (March 1945), the two decrees were merged and reformulated under Decree-Law no. 312 of April 21, 1945 on the "investigation and punishment of those responsible for the country's disaster or war crimes." Based on this, two People's Courts were established, in Bucharest and Cluj. The former dealt with crimes committed in the Old Kingdom and in the territories that went under the control of the Romanian authorities in the Soviet space, while the court in Cluj judged those involved in abuses and atrocities perpetrated in Transylvania and Banat.

Decree-Law no. 312 of April 21, 1945:
Art. 2. The ones guilty of the country's disaster, who committed war crimes:
a) decided to declare or continue the war against the Soviet Union and the United Nations;
b) breached international regulations on waging war;
c) subjected prisoners or hostages of war to an **inhumane treatment**;
d) ordered or performed **acts of terror, cruelty or subjugation** of the population in areas where war was waged;
e) ordered or carried out **collective or individual reprisals** for political persecution purposes or racial reasons, against the civilian population;
f) ordered or organized the **excessive labor or transportation of persons in order to exterminate them**;
g) Commanders, heads, supervisors and guards of prisons, of camps for prisoners, political dissidents or deportees, forced labor camps or detachments, who **treated those under their control inhumanely**;
h) Criminal police officers or inspectors linked to political or racial issues, who committed acts of violence, torture or other illegal means of constraint;
i) civilian or military prosecutors or judges who **- intentionally - helped or committed acts of terror or violence**
j) left the national territory with the aim of serving Hitlerism and fascism, having attacked the country in writing, in their speeches or in any other way;
k) have misappropriated or abusively taken private or political goods in areas where the war took place
l) have acquired properties illegally, as they participated in the waging of the war, in any capacity, or took advantage of their relationship with such persons or of the laws and measures inspired by Hitler, the legionnaires or racism
m) **ordered or initiated the establishment of ghettos, internment or deportation camps** for reasons of political or racial persecution
n) ordered the issue of unjust laws inspired by Hitler, the legionaries / racism or practiced - intentionally – the excessive implementation of laws entailed by the state of war or by dispositions

having a political or racial character;
o) put themselves in the service of fascism or nazism and contributed, by their deeds, to the achievement of their political goals or to enslaving the economic life of the country, to the detriment of the Romanian people.

The number of "lots" judged at the Bucharest People's Tribunal is not known precisely at the present state of research, but there were more than 15. According to statistical data in the archives, courts ruled in 2,732 cases involving 3,954 people. Of these, 943 people involved in 811 cases were convicted. The distribution between the two people's courts was relatively equal.

At the People's Court of Bucharest, the first batch (Nicolae Macici and others) was brought to trial in May 1945. The case covered several points: the massacre in Odessa; deportations of the Jews from Bukovina; inhumane treatments in the camps of Vapniarka, Vertujeni, Târgu Jiu; the Golta County and other areas of Transnistria, etc. The second lot included names such as Gheorghe Cuza, Visarion Puiu and other members of the government in exile, headed by Horia Sima. Lots 3 and 4 included commanders of the gendarmerie, headed by Ion Topor, who ordered or condoned massacres in Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria. The trial of Lot 5 focused on inhumane treatments and the use of forced labor. Lot 6, headed by General Mihail Iliescu, included military personnel and civilians involved in atrocities in Transnistria. Lots 7 and 8 focused mostly of policemen and soldiers involved in torture and acts of terror. The trials continued with the prosecution of members of the Special Intelligence Service, of journalists who put themselves into the service of the Antonescu regime; the second lot of ministers from the Antonescu governments, whose army representatives or civilians committed crimes during the Second World War. The trial of Ion Antonescu and of his collaborators referred to the 16th lot. As of September 1945, media reports about the trials became scarce and, after 1948, there was almost none.

The People's Court in **Cluj** prosecuted nine lots: Lot 1 – on the mass killings in Northern Transylvania, against the Romanians; Lot 2 – the case of Jewish forced labor units; Lot 3 - military commanders and their advisors; Lot 4 – Hungarian Security and Counter-Intelligence Service; Lot 5 – trial of the fascist journalists; Lot 6 - leaders of the Hungarian administration in Northern Transylvania; Lot 7 - authors of acts of terror in the prisons and work camps; Lot 8 - the ghettos in Transylvania; Lot 9 - other abuses committed by policemen, gendarmes, soldiers, commanders of camps, Jewish collaborators, etc. Half of those tried were charged of criminal offences against the Jews. 490 persons were convicted.

The People's Courts were abolished as early as June 28, 1946, but their trials continued their at the Court of Appeal.

The trial of the main culprits of the Iași pogrom was postponed several times until June 1948. After domestic and international protests, the Bucharest Court passed the sentence. Meanwhile, the law was changed. Law no. 291 of August 15, 1947, for the prosecution and punishment of persons guilty of war crimes and crimes against peace and humanity, was given a new terminology and legal classification in the case of those involved in anti-Semitic crimes. The definition of crimes against peace and humanity referred to those who "ordered or carried out collective or individual reprisals, for political or racial reasons, against civilians, or ordered or organized the sending of people to forced labor or deported them, or transported people in order to exterminate them, or approved and practiced their inhumane methods against the population." Hundreds of lawsuits took place under this law, including trials related to the Iași pogrom.

Beyond the level of fairness of the legal proceedings, which varied from one case to another, the documents used in these trials is a fundamental source for researching the history of the Holocaust. The files include thousands of statements of the victims and criminals, taken in the first years after the war, when their memory was still vivid. They also include original documents or images taken by the investigators from different archives.

Some of those convicted of war crimes were released, under Decree 421 of September 24, 1955. Some of the released were re-arrested for activity against the working class. However, the last war criminals were released from prison in 1964. In 1955, the Soviet Union returned a lot of 200 army men convicted of war crimes on Soviet territory. The Romanian State recognized the sentences issued by the Soviets; some prisoners were released, others were imprisoned again, as late as 1964.

The cold period

Background:

- **December 30, 1947**. The King abdicated. The People's Republic of Romania was proclaimed. The communist regime comes to power, pluri-partism disappears.
- **June 11, 1948**. The process of abolishing private property in the economy began: nationalization of the main economic units.
- **March 3 to 5, 1949**. The plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Romanian Worker's Party takes place. They launched a plan for the collectivization of agriculture.

Nationalization strongly affected the Jewish population: from the socio-professional perspectives, they counted on private property, both large and especially small and average sized. Thousands of small workshops and shops were the source of livelihood of most Jews.

The cold period also had external causes pertaining to the geopolitical interests of the USSR. At first, the USSR decided to support the State of Israel – hoping to turn it into a "bridgehead" of its influence in the Middle East. Nevertheless, after they were convinced of the failure of this project, they moved to a violently anti-Israeli policy and, despite ideological differences, they connected to Arab countries. Naturally, satellite states including Romania, followed the same policy.

In early 1948, the new communist power took absolute control over Jewish life. FUCE disappeared and was replaced by a new body: the Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania. (FEDROM). After the short presidency of Dr. Sandu Lieblich, a communist who was nevertheless sacrificed by his comrades, formal leadership was given to a "fellow" physician, M. Popper, having a purely decorative role. The effective leadership was taken over by a trio of activists: Bercu Feldman, Leibovici-Șerban and Israel Bacal. The first was also Chairman of the Democratic Jewish Committee, or the "first among equals" in the Jewish microcosm.

The new power launched a set of measures designed to void the fundamental institution, i.e. the community, of content. One after the other, in the name of "equality", the educational function (by abolishing the Jewish school network) or the socio-medical function (nationalization of hospitals, of nursing homes, of canteens and similar institutions) were confiscated. The Jewish community was meant, according to the communist power, to be "strictly religious", without any educational or social activity.

In the period 1948-1960, communist militants were promoted as leaders of the Community. Communist practices were applied, such as the launch of a "socialist competition" between communities, in 1948. The same direction is visible in a directive dated 1951, in a period of full swing of the "fight against Zionism, an agency of imperialism", which demanded the change of the names of certain synagogues they considered to have a Zionist sound: ”The plaques affixed to the building of certain community institutions, synagogues with Zionist names will be removed. One will change the name of synagogues, such as *Or Zion, Agudas Israel, Col Israel Haverim , Beth Israel*."

The period opened in 1948 is of a total freeze, which will be expressed in the dissolution of Zionist organizations. Communists considered them to be organized after a fascist model. Jewish philanthropic organizations were suppressed, despite having had a large-scale activity in Romania. Thus, on March 1, 1949, the Council of Ministers forbade the activity of the JDC, ORT and OSE organizations. It was only in 1967 that the JDC formally resumed its activity in Romania, the first country of the Soviet bloc where this happened.

In 1949-1950, Zionist activists were first tracked down, arrested and later on, in 1954, hundreds of Zionist militants were put on trial, in 40 major cases. The most important of these, in March 1954, "the trial of the 13", targeted a number of important Jewish leaders, headed by A. L. Zissu and Mişu Benvenisti. Other trials were directed against second rank leaders of Zionist organizations and of the community, youth organizations, employees of the Legation of Israel or Jews who tried to leave Romania illegally.

Marginalization period

The period after 1960 entails special features for Jews, which may seem contradictory: as far as propaganda is concerned, this was a period of relaxation. Zionism was no longer mentioned in the top of the list of "deadly sins", but still had a negative connotation. There were relations with the State of Israel, but they were limited and not a matter of routine. The ones who were linked to this state or who came from there were "closely watched".

The development of cultural activities was well below that of the previous period, tending to zero. It is true, immigration to Israel was liberalized, which is a very important fact, obviously.

A number of factors, especially the popular Aliyah movement, convinced the communist power that the Jews did not have the potential for building a new society. Aggressiveness, blame, etc. are replaced by a heavy silence. Jews disappeared from the public discourse, becoming "an invisible mass."

Lazăr Rosenbaum, a Jewish intellectual, sent several anonymous letters to the Central Committee of the PRR, to media outlets and to a few academics, protesting the discrimination faced by Jews in the communist state during the 1950s and degradation of living standards. He used the term "cold anti-Semitism" to describe the atmosphere of the time. Rosenbaum was arrested and sentenced to prison. After his release, he was allowed to move to Israel, but his entire work, at the stage of manuscripts, was confiscated (it can be found in the CNSAS archive, today).

The rise of National Communism began while Gheorghe Ghiorghiu Dej was in power, but reached a climax under Ceausescu. This was a climax of nationalism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Minorities began to no longer feel comfortable within the system.

The National Bank Robbery

In July 1959, a bizarre event occurred in Bucharest: a subsidiary of the State Bank was robbed by masked gunmen. More than 1,600,000 lei were stolen, a huge sum for that period. The State Security mobilized all their resources to catch the robbers, but only managed to track them down in September 1959. At the time, authorities were surprised to find that the **six main suspects were Jews and held or had held positions in the institutions of the communist state**. Some of them had been active in the underground or had worked for the State Security and Special Intelligence Service, after communists came to power.

The reasons of the robbery remain unclear. Some spoke of a diversion set up by the Security Service, but there is no factual evidence in this sense. The six declared, during the investigation, that they wanted to raise money in order to illegally fund the departure of Jews from the country. According to them, the robbery was an act of opposition to deviation of the communist regime during Dej's tenure - specifically the cult of personality, the lack of daily life items and the exclusion of Jews from positions of leadership, as well as the dismissal of those who expressed their wish to move to Israel. The State Security agency made a film in which the protagonists were the very perpetrators and they re-enacted the events. It was shown in cinemas as propaganda material. The six were sentenced in November 1959 and executed in February 1960, except for the woman, Monica Sevianu. After doing prison time, she was allowed to move to Israel, but took the secret of the reason for the robbery to her grave.

From the Jewish Democratic Committee to the "Rosen" age

In **June 1945**, the Jewish Democratic Committee (CDE) was established, as part of the overall effort of the new communist power to take control of all social sectors (the Greek Democratic Committee, the Armenian Democratic Committee, the Bulgarian Democratic Committee, etc.) By the CDE, the regime attempted to monitor all Jewish life and to perform the communist indoctrination of Jewish masses. The propaganda of the CDE, especially in the fight against Alyia movement, was particularly aggressive.

Political objectives of the CDE:

1. Re-stratification, or the attempt to modify the socio-professional structure of the Jewish population by targeting the productive activities, especially in industry. The CDE newspaper, called the "Union", referred many times to the activity of "train engineers" or "tractor drivers" of Jewish origin. But, in fact, this policy failed because it was inconsistent with the traditional professions of the Jews.

2. The anti-Aliyah propaganda, as combating the wave of migration was one of the preferred directions of the CDE

3. Cultural activity, designed to indoctrinate Jewish masses.

In **1953**, the CDE was abolished. In these circumstances, the Communists focus on a different type of leadership. They needed a non-communist "companion", someone close to the party who met the new religious identity of the community. Rabbi Moses Rosen was the right person for the job. This was

also helped by the exile of the former Chief Rabbi, Dr. Alexandru Safran, who decided to settle in Switzerland, in 1947.

First invested first as chief rabbi, in May 1948, Rosen gradually strengthened his position, especially due to the decline of the CDE and of the group of activists within the Federation. In 1962, he became head of the Federation and, in fact, from that moment on, he became the absolute ruler of the community. The party entrusted him with the management of all issues concerning Jewish life. One question one may ask is how the rabbi used his position. He became an absolute ruler, the only voice of the Jewish world, but, at the same time, he used his influence, the ambiguous situation in which the power kept Jewish life, to maintain minimal conditions for the preservation of Jewish, religious, cultural life and, at some point, to ensure the continuity of Jewish emigration from Romania.

In a complicated political game of "balancing on a rope", Rabbi Rosen succeeded to do more than any other Jewish leader in communist countries at the time: the organization of *Talmud-Torah* classes for young Jews; the maintenance of kosher canteens in the communities; the maintenance of synagogues and cemeteries. He managed to publish a Jewish magazine - bimonthly - which, despite continuous monitoring, was able to publish specific materials about Jewish culture, religion and history. At the same time, Rosen was involved helping certain Jews who lost their jobs, as well as students who had been expelled for having sought to emigrate to Israel.

Naturally, Rosen also knew his limits and gave in to "hopeless" situations, such as demolitions of synagogues, decommissioning of cemeteries, etc.

One can say that Rabbi Rosen was "the right leader under an abnormal situation."

Aliya under Communism

The first wave of Aliyah (1948-1952). The Aliyah movement was an important issue in Communist Romania. A new stage of Jewish emigration from Romania began after the **proclamation of Independence of the State of Israel, on May 14, 1948,** which led to an increased interest in making Aliyah. The issue of Jewish emigration from Romania was placed in the center of the relations between Romania and Israel.

In 1948-1952, the first wave of Aliyah from Romania took place. It raised the Jewish population of Israel by 18 percent.

Main factors that determined mass emigration:
- The trauma suffered by the Jewish population of Romania during the Holocaust;
- difficulties of reintegration and of reconstructing their situation of the interwar period;
- the Zionist ideal, strongly revived by the appearance of dozens of parties, youth organizations, etc., which appeared or reappeared in 1945-1948 and advocated for emigration to Palestine;
- the establishment of the State of Israel (which resulted in a massive expression of the wish to emigrate)
- the communist regime came to power in Romania and triggering economic situations that were incompatible with the Jewish way of life;
- anti-Semitism was manifest in various fields during the communist era.

In September 1948, the Special Envoy of the State of Israel, **Moshe Agami**, arrived in Bucharest. His task was to organize a committee for the registration of the Jews who wanted to leave for Israel. During his talks with the Romanian authorities about immigration, the Israeli side took into account the difficult economic situation of Romania and pledged to make efforts to help them improve.

The immigration issue was discussed in detail by the Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett, an a long letter he sent to Ana Pauker on March 11, 1949. Romanian authorities required emigration and transport to be made by sea, on board a Romanian ship. The only vessel available for this purpose was Transylvania, which could only carry up to 1,000 people. Moreover, the Romanian government increased per capita taxes for immigrants, from 55 US dollars to 90 US dollars.

The communists organized their own emigration, dubbed the "red Aliyah." Two ships traveled to Israel, the first in December 1948 and the second in February 1949, with 3,600 "politically trained Jews." They also transported printing equipment and materials which the Communist Party of Israel would need to print the Romanian language newspaper, *Glasul poporului* (The Voice of the People).

There was an increased trend of departure from the group of religious Jews, especially religious officials. Within ten months, **from December 1949 until October 1950, 75% of the rabbis and nearly 50% of the *hakhams* left**.

In the issue of Jewish emigration, the Communist Party had an ambiguous, changing attitude. After 1950, they continued to have an ambivalent position on the Aliyah - on the one hand, there was a furious anti-Aliyah propaganda. On the other hand, there was a silent, but consistent pressure for Jews to make Aliyah. The authorities wanted them to leave their houses and jobs, as well as to rid Romania of a group that did not integrate into the new regime. But first of all, they closely followed the directives of the USSR, which decided to approval and even to increase the number of departures.

Although they encourage emigration, the Party leadership was surprised by the extent of this phenomenon.

In April 1950, formalities of departure were simplified. As a result, the militia precincts were flooded by a **large number of applicants**. From the statistical data, one can see that, in some places, 60-70% of the Jews registered for emigration, while in others, even 90% of the Jewish population. In this context, the passport service moved from Calea Victoriei to the Sabinelor Street, so as to avoid creating an "unfavorable" mood among the inhabitants of the capital.
There were cases when militia officials exaggerated in their public presentation of these notifications, such as in Fălticeni, where application forms were displayed not only in the militia headquarters, but also the city. In Săveni, another town in Moldavia, representatives of the authorities actually beat drums in the streets to announce Jews that they could pick their forms up.
The Jewish population was swept by a wave of excitement, some leading to serious situations: they quit their jobs and positions, sold their houses and even panicked about the threat of war.
Schedules for departure were made poorly and Jews could not sell their assets on time. As far as the luggage of each emigrant was concerned, the maximum allowed weight was 40 kg.

The occupational structure of Jewish emigrants during this period included a large number of clerks, tradesmen, salesmen, workers and craftsmen. The percentage of freelancers, technicians and farmers was lower.

The Romanian government began to reduce the rate of emigration to Israel, on grounds that it harmed the "prestige of building socialism in the PRR" and thus risking to create a negative image of Romania abroad. **Another reason of the "cold" of 1952 was the effect that the departure of the Jews had on the Romanian economy**. One also needs to mention the international atmosphere of the Cold War, which reached its climax in 1952.

In the period 1948-1952, according to the statistical data, about 120,000 Jews emigrated from Romania in Israel, i.e. 1/3 of the total Jewish population of Romania.

In 1953-1957, the gates of emigration were almost hermetically sealed. The same happened all over Eastern Europe.

The second wave of Aliyah (1958-1965). On November 24, 1957, Ben-Gurion sent a letter to the President of the Council of Ministers of the PRR, Chivu Stoica, on the issue of separated families following the wave of Aliyah from the period 1948-1952. Romanian authorities did not recognize emigration as a general phenomenon. Thus, the operation was carried out under the name of "family reunion". This formula was preferred by the Communists, as it had a humanitarian sound and it was used throughout the communist period. This cover-up of the massive and permanent exodus of Romanian Jews was primarily an ideological matter. The communist state could not admit the failure of its policy, as far as the national question was concerned. But there were also pragmatic reasons, meaning that this emigration entailed the discontent of the new allies of the communist camp, Arab states.

Emigration resumed in 1957, in modest numbers.

In May 1958, immigration proper resumed. The militia headquarters of the Capital witnessed endless queues, as 130,000 people filed their emigration form.

The year 1958 lead to a change in Romanian foreign politics, as Soviet troops withdrew from Romania. The high unemployment rate among Jews was a huge factor in the resumption of emigration. The ease of restrictions on emigration was also related to the fact that Romania hoped to develop economic relations with the Western world.

In 1958, Gheorghiu Dej was advised by Nikita Khrushchev to receive goods in return for emigrants. The exchange took place between 1959 and 1965, when Israel paid with automated slaughterhouses, cold storage units, modern packaging lines and refrigerating trucks, etc. As of 1965, at the initiative of Nicolae Ceauşescu, the exchange was made in dollars.

Jews who left Romania could take with them a baggage of 25-30 kg, compared to the Jews who left Poland or Yugoslavia: the latter were allowed to take all their goods with them).

At that time, Romania represented the great reservoir of the Aliyah, except for the emigration from the Maghreb countries (Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria).

During this period, the Romanian government did not provide information on the bulk, rate or composition of the emigration, in terms of age and profession. It was not known exactly known in what fields people were supposed to train. All this raises serious financial problems that could shake day to day life in Israel. In this regard, the United Jewish Appeal launched an action in order to raise 100 million US dollars and to build housing for immigrants from Romania. Under the aegis of the Jewish Agency, an

unprecedented conference meant to mobilize the American Jewish community was held in New York, on February 15, 1959. It was attended by 19 Jewish organizations, whose leaders came together and tried to find solutions for the Jews of Romania.

One should also mention the difficulties faced by Romanian Jews who wanted to leave the country. In order to get the money they needed to pay the taxes levied by the state, emigrants were forced to sell their goods at ridiculously low prices, and buyers took great advantage of this situation.

Subsequently, the issue of Jewish emigration from Romania was no longer a matter of public interest and departures took place quietly, smoothly, without traumatic breaks, in compliance with the provisions agreed upon by both countries and under the important mediation efforts of the Joint Distribution Committee.

1958-1965: About 110,000 Jews emigrated from Romania to Israel.

1966-1967: The average number of emigrants fell to 550 per year.

1969-1974: The average number of emigrants increased to 3,000.

1975-1989: Communist authorities established a threshold and the annual quota was 1,500 emigrants.

Operation "Harvest"- For the communist regime, Romanian Jews were a source of income not only in relation to Israel, but also to West Germany. Nicolae Ceauşescu wanted the war reparations that were to be paid by the German state to the Holocaust victims of Jewish or Roma origin, living in Romania, be made in foreign currency, into the accounts of the state, after which victims would receive compensation in lei, at the exchange rate established by the state.
In 1967, the Religious Affairs Department, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Bank, asked the Federation of Jewish Communities to mobilize its members for them to submit individual claims of compensation to the Federal Republic of Germany.
In 1971, the Romanian Ambassador to West Germany sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bonn 31 containers laden with 155,125 compensation claims. Most claims were filed in the counties of Northern Transylvania and Bucharest. Most were filed by Jews, but there were also claims sent by Roma or Romanians.
Most of the claims were genuine, but there were also counterfeit claims of people who were not entitled to such compensation. Negotiations between the parties failed, and the German government didn't pay anything.

1990-2015

The number of Jews in official censuses. In post-communist years, the Jewish community continued its declining birthrate, as in previous years. At the 1992 census, the number of people who said they were Jewish was 8,955. Most of them live in urban areas: Bucharest (3,877); Iaşi (565); Timişoara (549); Cluj (344); Oradea (284).

At the 2002 census, those who declared their Jewish origin numbered 5,785 people. In 2011, no more than 3,271 declared they were Jewish. In 2002, a number of 2,473 Jews lived in Bucharest. In 2011 their number decreased to 1,333.

Communal Structure in Post-communist Romania

The body that coordinates communal work is the Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania – the Mosaic Religion. As of 2008, the Federation has a new statute (amended in 2014) which replaced the old statute of the Mosaic Religion, published in 1949. The Federation has a president, a vice president, a secretary, a board of directors, etc. The supreme governing body is the Congress, which meets every four years. Religious work is coordinated and organized by the Rabbinical Chancellery. The head of the Chancellery is the Chief Rabbi of the Mosaic Religion in Romania.

Cultural Events

An important part of the cultural and social activity developed by FEDROM refers to Jewish Communal Centers (JCCs). It is a specific institution resulting from the partnership between the communities and the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. In addition to cultural events, they develop programs for children and elders. Such centers are based in Bucharest (the traditional headquarters of 18 Popa Soare Street), Oradea, Iași and Timișoara.

The concern for Holocaust memory grew mainly in the 2000s, when several important steps were made by the Romanian State. In 2002, the Government issued an Ordinance for the prohibition of fascist, racist or xenophobic organizations and symbols, as well as those which promote the memory of persons guilty of crimes against peace and humanity. In 2003, the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, chaired by Elie Wiesel, was founded. In November 2004, it submitted a final report. The Holocaust Remembrance Day (October 9) was also first marked in 2004, by public events. In 2009, the Holocaust Victims' Memorial in Romania was inaugurated.