

The Jews
and the Nation-States
of Southeastern Europe
from the 19th Century
to the Great Depression:

*Combining Viewpoints
on a Controversial Story*

Edited by

Tullia Catalan and Marco Dogo

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe
from the 19th Century to the Great Depression:
Combining Viewpoints on a Controversial Story

Edited by Tullia Catalan and Marco Dogo

This book first published 2016

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2016 by Tullia Catalan, Marco Dogo and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the
prior permission of the copyright owner.

This volume is the final outcome of a research project on the Jews in
Southeastern Europe financed by the Italian Ministry of Education,
University and Research (PRIN 2009) in the AY 2011-2013, whose
preliminary results were submitted to an international conference held in
Trieste, 12-13 May 2014. The Editors wish to express their gratitude to the
administrative staff of the Department of Humanities, University of Trieste,
for their help.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-9454-0
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-9454-8

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	vii
T. Catalan and M. Dogo	
Part I. The Jews in Southeastern Europe	
Chapter One.....	2
Neither Foreigners, nor Citizens: Romanian Jews' Long Road to Citizenship Emanuela Costantini	
Chapter Two.....	23
The Jews of Serbia (1804-1918): From Princely Protection to Formal Emancipation Milan Ristović	
Chapter Three.....	51
Jewish Identity and the Competing National Projects in the Western Balkans (1848-1929) Bojan Mitrović	
Chapter Four.....	73
Loyalty Sorely Tried: The Jews and the Bulgarian State (1878-1935) Marco Dogo	
Chapter Five.....	104
A Place in the Nation: Jews and the Greek State in the Long 19 th Century Evdoxios Doxiadis	
Chapter Six.....	135
The Tie and the Kaftan: The Hungarian Jews between Emancipation, Assimilation and Zionism (1848-1918) Gianluca Volpi	

Part II. Under Western Eyes

Chapter Seven.....	156
East European Jewry under Western Eyes: An Overview of the Official Publications of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (1860-1930) Annalisa Di Fant	
Chapter Eight.....	171
Looking East, Thinking West: Isidore Loeb (1839-1892) and the Jews in the Ottoman Empire Paolo L. Bernardini	
Chapter Nine.....	183
The Jews of Southeastern Europe and the Policies of Western European Philanthropic Associations (1878-1930) Tullia Catalan	
Chapter Ten	205
The Vienna Jewish Alliance (Israelitische Allianz zu Wien) and Its Attempt to Modernise Central Europe Björn Siegel	
Chapter Eleven	227
Luigi Luzzatti and the Oriental Front: Jewish Agency and the Politics of Religious Toleration Cristiana Facchini	
The Authors.....	246
Index.....	250

INTRODUCTION

TULLIA CATALAN AND MARCO DOGO

Southeastern Europe is *not*, in this volume, a geographical term. It is rather that part of Europe, surrounded by empires and itself an heir to empires, that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was being organized into nation-states. This meant the small Balkan monarchies which succeeded the Ottoman Empire, of course, but also the great kingdom of Hungary, whose Magyar identity was strengthened at the expense of Habsburg constraints; and the small kingdom of Croatia, whose elites in turn resented Hungarian restrictions. In that part of Europe, historical development had produced two typical structures of social and political organization: on the one hand, nation-states under nobiliary hegemony (Hungary, Romania), in which a privileged class of landowners had survived through the centuries and was now renewing its power in the forms of liberalism and of census suffrage; on the other, peasant nation-states (Serbia, Bulgaria), whose indigenous aristocracies had been destroyed centuries before, while new elites were now emerging through democratic/demagogic competition and universal suffrage. Everywhere, the middle class was non-existent, weak or at best in the process of being created. In this respect, also in relation to the type of state, Greece displayed particular characteristics.

For each of the governments in the region the essential source of legitimization and the main political resource was the *national interest*, in other words the presumed material and spiritual benefit of the majority of the population; of course, choices on how to achieve this were influenced by structural and cultural factors, as well as by ethnographic and geopolitical contexts, and the result was a non-uniform variety of "nationalist policies." Jewish communities, for their part, in the different countries of the region, were far from being compact entities, characterized by a given identity. The different government policies (each guided by its own national project) towards them were in fact united by the negative acknowledgment of their *diversity* with respect to the social, cultural and religious profile of the majority of the population. However, in the actual management of Jewish diversity, a whole range of options

CHAPTER ONE

NEITHER FOREIGNERS, NOR CITIZENS:
ROMANIAN JEWS' LONG ROAD
TO CITIZENSHIP

EMANUELA COSTANTINI

Historiography about the condition of Jews in the Romanian nation-state is vast. The special attention historiography has paid to the Romanian case is due to the abnormal situation of the discrimination of Jews in a state which claimed itself liberal. Several scholars, both in Romania and outside, have studied this "juridical anti-Semitism," as Carol Iancu has defined it.¹ It is obviously not possible, nor it is the object of this paper, to give an account here of the existing studies concerning this issue. What emerges from a general survey is the predominance of research about anti-Semitism, its main exponents, its roots and streams.² In the last years, new studies are being published. Experts on human geography and sociologists, making broad use of archival sources, have dealt with the profile and evolution of

¹ C. Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919). De la excludere la emancipare* (București: Editura Hasefer, 1996), 14.

² Among the other works about the period here taken into consideration: *Antisemitism in Romania: the image of the Jew in the Romanian Society: Bibliography*, ed. Z. Hartman (Tel Aviv: Diaspora Research Institute, 1993); *Dilemele conviețuirii. Evrei și neevrei în Europa Central-Răsăriteană înainte și după Shoah*, eds. L. Gyémánt, M. Ghitta (Cluj Napoca: Institutul Cultural Român, 2006); D. Balan, *Național, nationalism, xenofobie și antisemitism în societatea românească modernă (1831-1866)* (Iași: Junimea, 2006); L. Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: the Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s* (Oxford, New York, Seul: Pergamon Press, 1991); L. T. Botaru, *Rasism românesc. Component rasială a discursului antisemit din România pînă la al Doilea Război Mondial* (Cluj Napoca: Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2010); A. M. Vele, *România și Franța în a două jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea. Controversata chestiune evreiască* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2009).

Jews in Romania.³ In addition to this, Jewish scholars have studied the organization of Jewish communities, as well as aspects of their cultural and social life.⁴

Less interest has been shown in the reaction of Romanian Jews towards the political action of the ruling class, as well as in the impact it had on the Jewish community and on the Jewish culture. Among the few works dealing with this aspect, the book by Simona Fărcășan about Jewish thinkers in Romania in the 19th century is worth mentioning.⁵ The author examines the evolution of Jewish self-conception as a consequence of the transformation undergone by the Romanian politics and society. The aim of this essay is to extend the survey to the Jewish community as a whole and to briefly show the implications of the climate of hostility against it.

In the same way in which Fărcășan focuses on how the Jewish elite changed as the process of nation building developed, this essay attempts to analyse the attitude adopted by Romanian Jews when Romanian independence was achieved and also afterwards, within the new state. The main issue debated by Fărcășan, i.e. how Jewish identity was renegotiated in the constitutional state, when Jews were forced to leave the community and become citizens, is a major theme of discussion in almost every nation-state created after the French revolution, including Romania. After independence, the traditional Romanian society, divided into classes and structured in guilds, where the Jews' role was defined on a cultural/religious basis, came to an end. The building of a Romanian nation-state, whose members were citizens with rights and not aristocrats with privileges, peasants with duties or members of guilds with their rules, implied a redefinition of the Jewish place in Romanian society, as well as

³ P. Cernovodeanu, "O minoritate dinamică în Moldova secolului al XVIII-lea: evrei ashkenazi," *Revista istorică* 16, 3-4 (2005); A. Ciuciu, "Orient și Orientalism. Între ghetoul venețian și cartierele evreiești din București la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea," *Studia Historică* 6 (2006); S. Costachie, *Evreii din România, aspecte etnografice* (București: Ed. Top Form, 2003); Idem, *Evreii din România. Studiu de geografie umană* (București: Ed. Universității din București, 2004).

⁴ I. Braunștein, *Evreii în prima universitate din România. Catalogul documentelor aflate în Fondul Rectorat de la Arhivele Naționale, Direcția Județeană Iași. 1860-1948* (Iași: Edit. Dan, 2001); I. Braunștein, *Intreprinzatori evrei în Moldova. Catalogul documentelor aflate în Fondul Camarei de Comerț și industrie de la Arhivele Naționale, Direcția Județeană Iași. 1879-1950* (Iași: Junimea, 2003); C. Iancu, A. F. Platon, *Profesori și studenți evrei* (Iași: Editura Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2012).

⁵ S. Fărcășan, *Între două lumi (intelectuali evrei de expresie română în secolul al XIX-lea)* (Cluj Napoca: Editura fundației pentru studii europene, 2004).

of Jewish organization. Belonging to the category of citizen (therefore with access to rights) implied a breaking up of traditional social groups: not only social classes, but also religious communities. This was also true for Jews, as Jacob Katz has shown,⁶ causing a major change in the system of reference, the religious community being unsuitable in a society based on individual subjects. This process in most cases determined an internal conflict in Jewish communities, between those who decided to comply with the new context and those who tried to resist it. Simplifying, it was the division between those who upheld the desire to be integrated into local societies, which implied a redefinition of identity, and orthodox defenders of tradition. This split was interwoven with the internal debate between the Haskalah movement and its opponents.

Nevertheless, the condition of Jews in Romania was heavily influenced by the internal environment, characterized by a strong anti-Semitist sentiment which spread also among the members of the leading class. The creation of a liberal and constitutional state did not weaken the hostility towards Jews, and the two contradictory elements of liberalism and anti-Semitism coexisted until the First World War. Few voices from inside the country were raised against discrimination. Attempts to change the existing discriminatory legislation were made only by other European countries and by international organizations using pressure on the Romanian Government in international assemblies, as described well by Carole Fink in *Defending the Rights of Others*.⁷

How did this particular scenario affect Romanian Jews' attitude towards the nation-state? What was their position during the wars Romania was engaged in? What kind of action did they undertake in an attempt to assert their rights? In order to study these subjects I will be referring to Jewish sources, such as memories, journals and, of course, the Jewish press, while archival and bibliographical sources will obviously be useful in retracing the background.

Who were Romanian Jews?

It is not clear when the first Jewish colonies settled in the Romanian lands. Before the 15th century their presence was probably neither stable nor

⁶ I. Katz, "Introduction," in *Toward Modernity. The European Jewish Model*, ed. I. Katz (New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction, 1987), 2.

⁷ C. Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others. The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

significant.⁸ Only merchants and travellers occasionally passed through the Moldovan and Wallachian area. There are indirect statements about Jews in Moldova since the 15th century, but the first document referring to them is the "official call" from the Moldovan prince Ștefan Tomșa to Jewish merchants from Poland in 1612. During the 17th century Jewish presence began to increase and became stable.⁹ In roughly the same period Jews settled in Wallachia, as stated in several documents bearing witness to the presence of merchants and shopkeepers in Bucharest.¹⁰ Although they belonged to the same social classes, Jews in Moldova and Wallachia had different origins and cultural characteristics. The former came from Polish, Russian and Austrian lands and were Ashkenazim, while the latter came mostly from the Ottoman Empire and were Sephardim. From the mid 17th century onwards the two groups differed also in numbers, since Moldova became the principal destination of Jews escaping from pogroms in Polish and Ukrainians lands.¹¹ The number of Jews flowing into Moldova increased in the following decades. During the 18th and early 19th century a new wave arrived from the same areas, but also from the Habsburg and Prussian territories, due to the wars being fought in these countries and the episodes of anti-Semitism.¹² In 1803, Jews represented about 2% of the Moldovan population (there are no data on Wallachia). In 1831 the percentage had risen to 4.2 in Moldova and 2 in Wallachia.¹³

The Jewish communities' organization in Romania was similar to that of other areas in Eastern Europe. In the towns, Jews had their own guild, the *breaslă jidovilor*. The religious leader of each community was the rabbi and the lay leader was the *staroște*. In 1719 Ottoman authorities established a leading role, the *hahambașa*, a hereditary position combining both religious and lay power. This figure was in charge of collecting taxes, solving the less important judiciary cases, representing Jews before the imperial authorities and appointing *staroști* and rabbis.¹⁴ The *hahambașa* resided in Iași, but had authority also over Wallachia. A representative of

⁸ S. Costachie, *Evreii din România. Aspecte geografice* (București: Editura Top Form, 2003), 30.

⁹ D. Dieaconu, *Evreii din Moldova de Nord. De la primele așezări pâna în anul 1938* (București: Editura universitară, 2009), 15-21.

¹⁰ F. Waldman, A. Ciuciu, *Stories and Images of Jewish Bucharest* (București: Noi Media Print, 2011), 11.

¹¹ S. Sanie, "Cultura judaică la Iași," *Sahir* VII (2002): 22.

¹² D. Ivănescu, "Populația evreiască a orașului Iași în perioadă 1755-1860," *Sahir* I (1996): 116.

¹³ Costachie, *Evreii din România. Aspecte geografice*, 46.

¹⁴ Fărcășan, *Între două lumi*, 74-75.

his, the *vekil hahambaşa*, resided in Bucharest. Jews from both principalities were divided into three categories: *pământenii*, *hrisoveliți* and *sudiți*. The first were descendants of families residing in Romania for centuries. The second were descendants of the merchants invited by local princes, and in the decades to follow were included in the first category. The last group was that of Jews under the protection of the countries from which they had come. Several conflicts, regarding fiscal issues and the appointing of Jewish high dignitaries, emerged between *pământenii* and *sudiți*.¹⁵ The relationship between Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews was also difficult, reflecting a conflict between Wallachian and Moldovan communities. The Bucharest community, in particular, strove to gain an independent position, not accepting the religious and organizational leadership of Iași. This estrangement between the two regions was due to the specific characteristics of the two communities, one of which was closer to the Central-Eastern European Jewish world, while the other shared more similarities with the Jews of the Ottoman or post-Ottoman area. Social differentiation was also evident. Moldovan Jews lived in the cities or in small housing clusters called *târguri*, which can be identified with *shtetl*. Jews were invited by local princes to operate as intermediaries among boyars and peasants and they worked as small traders, craftsmen, innkeepers and money lenders. In Wallachia only small Sephardic communities were present and they lived almost exclusively in cities, mainly in Bucharest.

As the ideas originating in France spread and started circulating also in the Danubian Principalities, and the process of building a nation-state began, the traditional community system crumbled. This process was slower in Moldova, where rabbinic orthodox tradition was more rooted, above all in small villages in the countryside.¹⁶

Fighting for the homeland...

In Romania nation-building was the result of external and internal factors. The crisis of the Ottoman Empire strengthened the autonomy of the two principalities of Moldova and Wallachia, but after the war for Greek independence Russia managed to establish a protectorate over them. The abolishment of some of the obligations imposed by the Ottomans, such as the monopoly on trade, opened up new opportunities for the Jews and encouraged them to come to these regions.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75-77.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

In the same period, local aristocrats developed the idea of building an independent and united state for the Romanian people. Then in 1848, as in other towns throughout Central and Eastern Europe, troubles broke out in Bucharest and other Wallachian towns as the people demanded a Constitution and sovereignty. At the same time, Moldovan intellectuals and aristocrats signed a petition asking for the same.

In 1848 Romania appeared to follow the same trend as the other countries in which nation-building coincided with the acknowledgment of rights for all citizens and the end of discrimination; not surprisingly, Jews supported the fight. Revolutionaries actually were open to welcoming Jews into Romanian society, as stated in the Islaz declaration, the document presenting their requests. Article 21, in fact, says: "the Romanian people proclaim [...] the emancipation of Israelites and political rights for compatriots of every other confession." The same Wallachian liberals who called the Jews "brothers" asked for their support in the revolution. Jewish participation in the revolt ought not, however, to be overestimated. The Jews gave their support to the revolution individually. They were mostly members of the Sephardi community of Bucharest: tradesmen Hillel Manoah, Davicion Bally, Solomon Halfon and Barbu Iscovescu, son of Haim Iscovici, a house painter in Bucarest, as well as the painter C. D. Rosenthal, born in Pest.¹⁷ Personal friendship also influenced their participation, such as those between Rosetti and Rosenthal and between Davicion Bally and Ion Heliade Rădulescu. Manifestos were affixed around the town where Jews declared their support to "our dear homeland"¹⁸ and Bern Poper wrote, "today, when you offer us your rights, when you extend your hand to us as brothers, we will stand by your side, strong and bold, we shall be able to fight with you and even to die for our dear homeland."¹⁹ In Moldova also, the petition with which local boyars asked the prince for reforms implied the recognition of political rights for Jews, but "gradually."²⁰

The difference in attitude towards the Jewish minority was also a consequence of their increased integration in the Wallachian society, which was both the cause and the effect of the influence of intellectual movements like the Haskalah.²¹ It was actually in the mid 19th century that Haskalah began to penetrate the Jewish environment in Bucharest, thanks

¹⁷ J. Kaufmann, J. Berkowitz, *Evreii în Revoluția română din 1848* (București: CSIER, 1999), 5.

¹⁸ Fărcășan, *Între două lumi*, 94.

¹⁹ Kaufmann, Berkowitz, *Evreii în Revoluția română*, 12.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

²¹ Fărcășan, *Între două lumi*, 98.

to leading figures such as Iuliu Barasch, a well-known scientist born in Galicia and educated in Germany, who moved to Romania in the 1840s and is considered the Romanian equivalent of Mendelssohn.²² In actual fact, Barasch came from an area (Galicia) which had been a fertile land for orthodox movements such as Hasidism,²³ but his contact with the German debate led him to develop reformist ideas. He was the promoter of the first secular school in Bucharest and the founder of *Israelitul român*, the first bilingual (Romanian/French) Jewish magazine in Romania.²⁴ By actively promoting Jewish Enlightenment in Romania, Barasch brought to Romania the reformist tendency that was spreading throughout Central and Western Europe and which, in Jacob Katz's opinion, was prevented from taking root in Eastern Europe due to the strong Hasidic culture.²⁵ Consequently, Romania became the boundary between West and East, i.e. between reformist and orthodox Jewish culture. Bucharest was the first place in Romania in which such a confrontation emerged. Opposition to the action of Barasch, in fact, gathered around the rabbi Malbim, who was strongly against the expressions of Jewish reformist movements, as is clear from his criticism of the new schools with their teachings not based on religion.²⁶

The influence of the ideas of the so-called "Jewish Enlightenment" caused a rift in the Jewish communities, between those who supported new ideas and were open to "modernity" and those who considered them a danger to the integrity of their identity. For the defenders of orthodoxy the prospect of the disintegration of traditional values was even more real since the cultural transformation underway was parallel to the political change. The creation of the nation-state implied the redefinition of individuals as citizens and the fracturing of their adherence to other groups, including the religious community. This was perceived by non-orthodox Jews as a favourable framework for the development of both economic activities and their personal culture. As regards the latter, the development of a modern Jewish school influenced by *Haskalah* was accompanied by the practice of completing education abroad.²⁷ Using *Israelitul român*, which became its mouthpiece, this group expressed to

²² Ibid., 121.

²³ Katz, "Introduction," 8.

²⁴ "Barasch, Julius," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second Edition, Vol. 3, eds. F. Skolnik, M. Berenbaum (Detroit, New York, San Francisco, New Haven, Waterville, London: Thomson Gale, 2007), 34-135.

²⁵ Katz, "Introduction," 10.

²⁶ Fărcășan, *Între două lumi*, 107.

²⁷ Ibid., 102.

the Government the conviction that the integration of the Jews would benefit the entire Romanian population:

Principles like religious tolerance, political and civil freedom, equality before the law have been acknowledged and adopted since the 19th century. By these principles, modern nations can flourish and their institutions can have a long and stable life. Persecutions of the past centuries, intolerance and the inquisition have only been able to produce darkness, weakness, anarchy.²⁸

... of others

The success of the reformist ideas of Iuliu Barasch and the support of the national movement were due to the belief by a great number of Jews that the creation of the Romanian state would result in new opportunities for them, as had happened with the opening up to international trade after 1830. As the local economy became less traditional and closed, Jews had occupied spaces in trade and crafts, taking advantage of the lack of a local middle class. This resulted, in fact, in the flow of increasing numbers of Jews into Moldova and Wallachia, with percentages between 1831 and 1860 rising from 4.2 to 9 in Moldova and from 2 to 3.8 in Wallachia.²⁹

While orthodox Romanian Jews remained indifferent to the process of construction of the nation-state, reformists openly supported it. Therefore, after the Crimean war, they welcomed the creation of the Romanian principality with the union of Moldova and Wallachia, which maintained only a formal dependence on the Ottoman Empire. As Iuliu Barasch wrote in his pamphlet *L'émancipation israélite en Roumanie*, published in Paris in 1861, they hoped that the constitution of the new state would result in the official recognition of rights, transferring the spirit of tolerance that had spread among intellectuals to the whole population.³⁰ These hopes were based on the fact that, at the conference of Constantinople in 1856, England, France, Austria, Prussia and the Ottoman Empire included in the protocol with Moldova and Wallachia articles guaranteeing rights to people of every religion.³¹

²⁸ Ibid., 154.

²⁹ Costachie, *Evreii din România. Aspecte geografice*, 46.

³⁰ Ibid., 120.

³¹ Daniela Balan, Dinu Balan, "Dezbateri interne și reacții internaționale cu privire la situația străinilor și jurisdicția consulară în anii luptei pentru unire în Moldova (1856-1859)," in *Dilemele conviețuirii în procesul modernizării societății*

Their hopes of becoming part of the Romanian population and gaining the status of citizens were doomed, however, to disappointment. The first sign of a hostile attitude towards Jews appeared when, after the Crimean war, they were prevented from participating in the elections of the assemblies for choosing the new prince and deciding the institutional assets of the area. Only a few political leaders, like the liberals Atanasie Panu and Mihail Kogălniceanu,³² contested this decision. In the same period accusations of ritual murders spread throughout the country.³³

While the first Romanian prince, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, was in power between 1859 and 1866, there was a certain degree of openness toward Jews. At that time Cuza tried to make use of Jewish capital to finance reforms. Contacts with Jewish bankers, such as those working for the Ottoman Bank (whose director in the early '60s was Adolphe Crémieux, president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle), were very frequent.³⁴ The administrative law of 1864 guaranteed the voting rights of certain categories of Jews, such as those performing military service, graduates of the Romanian universities, or those awarded a doctoral degree abroad.³⁵ Article 6 of the first draft of the Romanian constitution, voted in 1866, stated that religion could not be an obstacle to obtaining citizenship.³⁶

The attitude of the prince met with the opposition of most of the local political class. When, in the same year, Cuza was replaced by a Hohenzollern prince, Carol I, Adolphe Crémieux arrived in Romania to ask for better treatment for Jews. Other leading figures in the defence of Jews visited Romania in the same period, such as Émile Picot and Moses Montefiore.³⁷ This did not, however, produce the desired result: anti-Semitism was fuelled by the fear of a more liberal legislation and the political class exploited social dissatisfaction to strengthen discrimination. In the final text of the Constitution the possibility for Jews to have access to rights was cancelled: according to article 7 only Christian residents

românești în spațiul est-carpatic (secolele XIX-XX), eds. C. Turliuc, M. Ș. Ceașu (Iași: Junimea, 2011), 29.

³² Balan, Balan, "Dezbateri interne și reacții internaționale," 36.

³³ Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others*, 10-12.

³⁴ L. Bercovici, "Structuri profesionale ale evreilor bucureșteni în a doua jumătate a secolului XIX și la începutul secolului XX," in *Dilemele conviețuirii în procesul modernizării societății românești*, 332.

³⁵ Bercovici, "Structuri profesionale ale evreilor bucureșteni," 14.

³⁶ O. Hrihorciuc, "Naționalism și xenofobie în doctrina frațiunii libere și independente din Moldova," in *Dilemele conviețuirii. Evrei și neevrei în Europa Central-Răsăriteană*, 55.

³⁷ Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919)*, 80-95.

could be recognized as citizens. A few voices contested this choice, such as those of Titu Maiorescu and Petre Carp, two of the main leaders of the conservative party.³⁸ In actual fact, most of those contesting discrimination came from the class of major landowners, which was not surprising since Jews often worked for landowners as leaseholders. The more liberal representatives of the nobility felt endangered to a greater extent by the possibility that Jews would be included in economic life, due to their interests in finance and trade. This explained why the liberal leader Ion C. Brătianu, having several interests in finance, was one of the main promoters of the anti-Semitic legislation.

Discrimination against Jews revealed an inner contradiction in the declaration of liberalism of the Romanian ruling class. With Art. 7 they denied Jews the same rights they had advocated for Romanians in the past and continued to advocate for Romanians in the Habsburg Empire. Moreover, their conception of the Romanian nation became problematic. Notwithstanding its secular connotation as a community of Latin origin, whose main identifying feature was language, the criteria for separating citizens and non-citizens and, implicitly, the juridical foundation of the nation-state, became religious. The main root of Romanian anti-Semitism in the 19th century was probably not religious prejudice but economic and social competition. Jews represented the only middle class in Romanian society and that was perceived as a danger by landowners and aristocrats interested in investing in finance. Unlike what had occurred in Germany, where "because [the bourgeoisie] was not yet ready-made and had as yet no clear-cut boundaries, the idea of including the Jewish outsiders into it was easily conceived and accepted,"³⁹ in Romania the lack of a middle class made the local aristocracy feel endangered by the possibility of Jews occupying this empty social space. Moreover, they could count on the hostility spread in the countryside against Jews who, being the landowners' leaseholders, were perceived by peasants as their real exploiters.

The difficulties faced by Jews soon after the creation of the nation-state were expected to diminish the inclination towards integration. In actual fact, however, this was not the case.

The wing that favoured integration was in a majority in the Romanian autonomous state, as demonstrated by the fact that in 1872, at the conference of Brussels on Jews in the Balkan states, the Romanian delegation scornfully rejected "in the name of devotion to the homeland" the proposal of the American consul in Romania, Benjamin Peixotto, of

³⁸ M. Petreu, "«Chestiunea evreiască» la Junimea," *Dilemele conviețuirii. Evrei și neevrei în Europa Central-Răsăriteană*.

³⁹ I. Katz, "Introduction," 10.

emigration to the United States. Peixotto's proposal actually caused a dilemma for the Jews, since, as shown by the newspaper *Românul*, if they decided to leave they would satisfy their enemies, but in choosing to stay they would demonstrate that their condition was not so bad.⁴⁰ The reaction of the Jews in the three decades after the birth of the Romanian state was twofold. On the one hand, they tried to convince the Romanian Government of their goodwill and their sincere support of the nation. On the other hand, they acted to exert pressure on an international level, thanks to the philanthropic associations of which they were members, especially the Alliance Israélite Universelle. Not only had the Alliance's president Crémieux tried to prevent discrimination in the Constitution of 1866, he also continued to report to the international community the abuses to which Romanian Jews were subjected. In 1867, for instance, he accused Brătianu (Minister of the Home Office) of having unjustly expelled Jews from Moldova under the specious accusation of separatism and incorrectly applying the law on vagrancy.⁴¹

Notwithstanding the hostile context they lived in, local Jews decided to support Romanian participation in the Russian-Ottoman war to win full independence from the Ottoman Empire, fighting in the army, offering financial aid and making use of their propaganda means. Nevertheless, at the congress of Berlin held at the end of the war in 1878, the Romanian delegation tried to resist pressure from the European powers to put an end to discrimination. Art. 44 of the treaty signed at the congress, subordinating Romanian independence to the acknowledgment of rights to every member of a minority, remained unfulfilled. Article 7 of the Romanian constitution was changed partially, allowing Jews to obtain citizenship on an individual basis and after a complex and lengthy procedure involving the fulfilment of several conditions, such as proving their presence in Romania for at least ten years, as well as having a stable job. The result was that in the forty years between 1878 and 1918 only 529 Jews were declared citizens, of whom 52 had fought during the war for independence in 1877-1878 and 330 were veterans of the Second Balkan War of 1913.⁴² In the following years, many other laws were passed limiting Jewish rights as far as economic activities, cultural life and political action were concerned. Jews were not allowed to work in public administration, could work as doctors and chemists only as general practitioners, could not sell tobacco and spirits, could work as peddlers only within given limits, could

⁴⁰ *Românul*, Aug. 7-8, 1872. See Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919)*, 296-298.

⁴¹ Arhivele Naționale ale României (ANR), Archive Group Casa Regală 1865-1814, Folder 7/1867.

⁴² Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919)*, 212-213.

own factories only if two thirds of the workers were Romanians, could attend schools only if the number of Romanian students was low enough (1887). From 1893 on they were allowed to attend public schools only after the payment of a tax and they could not attend faculties giving access to professions in public administration, namely law. In addition to this, although not Romanian citizens, they were subject to compulsory military service, but could not reach high military ranks (after 1895 they could not even be corporal or non-commissioned officers).⁴³ Expulsion under the accusation of vagrancy continued, again causing the reaction of the European Governments and of the international Jewish associations.⁴⁴

The Jews, therefore, who represented the main cultural and religious group in the country after the Romanian/orthodox group, were denied civil and political rights but subordinated to duties that foreigners did not have. This determined a *vulnus* in the self-assessed liberalism of the Romanian ruling class and in the conception of nation as deriving from the French tradition, which had been the reference point for the makers of national independence. The rights asked in the past by Romanians under foreign rule were now denied to local Jews.

Juridical discrimination also generated an empty space for Jews. The creation of the nation-states implied the disappearance of the old society structured on classes and guilds. In Romania, laws passed in the 1860s dissolved the councils regulating taxes and juridical affairs.⁴⁵ In liberal states, these competences were assumed by the state.⁴⁶ In Romania, however, juridical discrimination meant exclusion from or restriction of access by Jews to public services. Not only could they no longer rely on their self-regulated close community, therefore, but they could not access the rights reserved for citizens. This paradoxical situation was not specific to the Romanian environment: Jacob Katz has clearly shown how the "limitation of the communal authority applied" also to countries like Russia, "where not even the initial stages of emancipation had been introduced."⁴⁷ Romanian specificity lay in the fact that, while in Russia emancipation had not been introduced for anybody, in Romania it operated, but only for Christians. As a consequence, Jewish communities re-occupied spaces which had been taken by the public system, supplying

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 206-234.

⁴⁴ ANR, Archive Group Casa Regală 1865-1814, Folders 26/1879 and 27/1879.

⁴⁵ Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others*, 12.

⁴⁶ P. Birnbaum, I. Katznelson, "Emancipation and the Liberal Offer," in *Paths of Emancipation. Jews, States and Citizenship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 11.

⁴⁷ Katz, "Introduction," 1.

to their members services that the state denied.⁴⁸ The effect was that, despite the breaking of communal ties, anti-Semitism contributed to keeping Jewish identity alive, forcing Jews to continue to perceive themselves principally as Jews. Thus anti-Semitism actually acted as a centripetal force. It is not surprising, therefore, that as a reaction to such a situation Moldovan communities engaged themselves in preserving their cultural specificities. The second half of the 19th century was actually characterized by the flourishing of arts, as demonstrated by the founding of the first theatre in Yiddish in Europe.⁴⁹

But why, in such a difficult context, did Jews decide to stay in Romania and, at least until the end of the century, not emigrate to other countries? One possible explanation is that until the eighties they still hoped to take advantage of the ongoing economic transformation. After independence, they actually continued to create industries and to work in trade and finance. They also were numerous among professionals and in services such as health, as demonstrated by figures like Doctor Iacob Felix, a distinguished physician in Bucharest, whose surveys on nutrition of the rural population and on hygiene had some resonance in the country in the sixties.⁵⁰

Only in the eighties did the attitude of Jews towards the Romanian state begin to change. Juridical anti-Semitism became more and more evident and aggressive. Several intellectuals, like the philosopher Moses Gaster and the journalist Elias Schwarzfeld, were expelled from the country on the basis of a law of 1881 against foreigners "disturbing the public order." They were given a term of 24 hours to leave.⁵¹ In the following years several towns were subverted by violent anti-Semitic uprisings, like those sparked in Iași by the protest of the National Students' Committee claiming to defend "Romanianism."⁵²

⁴⁸ For an example of this see the statute of the community of Diciosânmărtin-Târnăveni. ANR, Fond Comunității evreiești, Dosar 1/1890. See also Lupu Dichter, "Comunitățile și asimilarea," *Revista israelită*, July 12, 1890, 319-323.

⁴⁹ Fărcășan, *Între două lumi*, 167.

⁵⁰ Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919)*, 333-334.

⁵¹ The law was introduced to prevent Russian populist refugees arriving in Romania, but it was often applied to expel Jews. See Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919)*, 231.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 256.

Loyalty (and voice) or exit?

Disenchantment about the possibility of changing Romanian authorities' attitudes resulted in Jews giving up their engagement to obtain acknowledgment of full rights. The old question of how much of their identity Jews were ready to relinquish to become Romanian citizens became more difficult to answer. The famous triad elaborated in 1970 by Albert O. Hirschman, describing the reaction of the members of a group when the condition within it deteriorates (*exit, voice, and loyalty*), can also be applied to Romanian Jews in the last part of the 19th century. Some reacted to discrimination by remaining *loyal* to the state, even when fighting to change their condition; others struggled to destroy nation-states, including that of Romania (*voice*), and still others decided to emigrate elsewhere or to build an independent Jewish nation-state (*exit*).⁵³

A consistent number of Jews was still convinced that conciliation between their cultural identity and citizenship was possible, even if a more militant attitude was to be adopted. Romanian Jewry became more and more engaged in claiming acknowledgment of its contribution to the development of the state. Intellectuals like Elias Schwarzfeld showed how Jews had protected Romanians during the Turkish occupation of 1821-1822.⁵⁴ Magazines like *Fraternitatea* and *Revista israelită*⁵⁵ emphasized the support offered by their coreligionists to Romanian history and the fact that "every Romanian Jew wants a strong Romania as a shelter with its own territory for a tightly united people, sharing the same languages, the same objectives, the same desires and disposition."⁵⁶ They criticized laws against Jews as being detrimental to the whole country. Limiting entrepreneurial action, for instance, prevented Romanian economic development, Jews being the only ones with experience in trade and industry.⁵⁷ The message was that Jews were not to be considered a problem, but an opportunity: "it is absurd to pretend they are a danger and that, being free, they would damage the local population. Indeed, it is the

⁵³ A. O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁵⁴ E. Schwarzfeld, "Evreii din Moldova sub ocupația turcească: Căimacamia lui Ștefan Vagaride, Căimăcămii Teodor Baiș și Petrachi Sturdza (1821-1822)," *Almanahul Israelit Ilustrat (1902-1903)*: 17-18.

⁵⁵ H. Kuller, *Presa evreiască bucureșteană. 1847-1994* (București: Editura Hasefer, 1996), 34.

⁵⁶ L. Dichter, "Comunitățile și asimilarea," *Revista israelită*, July 1, 1890, 318.

⁵⁷ "Piedicele întru dezvoltarea industriei noastre," *Fraternitatea*, Dec. 2, 1883, 369.

contrary.”⁵⁸ The Jewish press propounded the message that the perception of the “Jewish danger” was a consequence of anti-Semitic propaganda.⁵⁹

Jews still believing in the possibility to become part of the nation-state were obliged to acknowledge a worsening of the general situation. Thus they decided to act on a political level also, as demonstrated by the formation in 1909 of the Indigenous Jews’ Union (*Uniune Evreilor Pământeni*, UEP), whose aim was to achieve full recognition of rights for Jews and the end of all discrimination.

Those who decided to abandon attempts at dialogue followed three paths: emigration, Zionism and Socialism.

Jewish emigration became relevant at the very end of the 19th century. It was a result of anti-Semitism, as well as of the economic crisis of those years. The poorest emigrants left on foot, seeking solidarity from coreligionists in the towns they passed through. Most of them were directed to the Habsburg boundary and from there reached other countries in Europe. Many others used traditional means of transportation to reach the USA, Canada, Argentina, France and the UK. It is difficult to establish how many Romanian Jews left Romania during the 19th and 20th centuries, but the number allegedly amounts to several thousand (approximately 40,000 according to statistics released by the Alliance Israélite Universelle).⁶⁰

Emigration was also the most evident signal that the prospect of integration was no longer considered the best option for many Romanian Jews. After three decades, the refusal of emigration expressed in Brussels in 1872 became a choice for many Jews.

Some Romanian Jews also left for Palestine. Before the congress of Basel of 1897, which can be taken as the starting point for Zionism in Herzl’s definition, the hypothesis of migration to Palestine had circulated among Romanian Jews. For instance, the association Yishuv Eretz Israel had been founded in 1875 to support the emigration of poor people, small traders and shopkeepers to Palestine.⁶¹ Obviously, the climate of rising hostility and the deterioration of their living conditions at the end of the century contributed to the success of the Zionist option in the country. Two Romanian delegates were present at the Basel congress: Karpel

⁵⁸ Ploșteanu, “Delică și spinoasă,” *Egalitatea*, Dec. 3, 1910, 46.

⁵⁹ Regarding the acknowledgement of citizenship through the procedure established in 1878, the official press published false data, concealing the fact that very few procedures had been completed. See Ego, “In chestia indigenatelor,” *Revista israelită*, Apr. 15, 1890, 169-173.

⁶⁰ Quoted in B. D. Bretan, *Istoria presei sioniste de limba română în perioadă 1897-1938* (Cluj: Presa universitară clujeană, 2010), 49.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

Lippe, from Iași, and Samuel Pineles. Pineles was born in Galicia and had moved to Galați to reach his family. It is interesting to note that he had been a correspondent for the Alliance in the sixties before supporting the Zionist movement. He had been the founder of Yishuv Eretz Israel and was very active in creating colonies for Romanian Jews in Palestine, using also resources offered by baron Edmond de Rothschild.⁶² The Zionist movement in Romania had some difficulties at the beginning of the 20th century, due to the conversion to Christianity of its president Heinrich Rosenbaum and to the success of the UEP,⁶³ demonstrating the still-strong orientation of Romanian Jews towards integration. Zionist associations were nevertheless active in the main towns and the Zionist press was fairly widespread, publishing nationwide magazines such as *Zion*, founded in Brăila by Karpel Lippe, *Ahavat Zion*, published in Galați in 1898, *Vocea Zionului*, founded in the same year in Ploiești, *Răsăritul*, founded in Iași in 1899, the two magazines *Viitorul* and *Dorul Sionului*, respectively issued in Bucharest from 1899 and 1900, and many others.⁶⁴ Attention to Zionist ideas was also found in magazines supporting integration, such as *Revista israelită*, which created a section about Palestine and claimed that exile could be the only possible solution for persecuted Jews.⁶⁵

Emigration and Zionism were forms of *exit* from the state, but did not imply a rejection of the nation-state model. Jews deciding to emigrate were looking for a life within the nation-state, but since they could not be part of the Romanian state they moved to other countries. Zionists were also convinced of the effectiveness of the nation-state model, but they believed that Jews had to create their own.

At the end of the 19th century a group of Romanian Jews chose another option. The acceptance of Socialism implied a redefinition of the problem of individual identity. Its international ideology made it neither important nor necessary to find a way of coexistence with the predominant nationality, due to the transnational nature of the proletariat. In a socialist society, Jews would be acknowledged full rights as members of the working class, and not on a national basis. That indeed entailed a definitive relinquishing not only of the community as the group legitimating individual identity, but of the very Jewish identity as based on religious and cultural elements. The conciliation between “Jewishness”

⁶² “Samuel Pineles,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second Edition, Vol. 16, eds. F. Skolnik, M. Berenbaum (Detroit, New York, San Francisco, New Haven, Waterville, London: Thomson Gale, 2007), 166-167.

⁶³ Bretan, *Istoria presei sioniste*, 52-53.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 91-149.

⁶⁵ *Iste*, “Palestina,” *Revista Israelită*, Nov. 15, 1890, 172-176.

and Socialism was one of the main problems Romanian socialist Jews had to face, as well as the fact that a relevant part of the local bourgeoisie, the class enemy of the proletariat, was made up of Jews.

Jews' participation in Romanian Socialism was particularly relevant: one of the main theorists of the movement was Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, a Jew from Slavjanka, in the Russian Empire (today Ukraine), who moved to Romania in 1875 after having been accused of participation in populist activities. He founded, in 1893, the Social Democratic Party of Romanian Workers. Of the socialist publications, one is of particular importance: *Lumina*, a magazine whose editor, Dr. Ștefan Stânca-Stein, believed that Socialism would free workers and Jews, eventually enabling them to benefit from full rights. Although only five issues of the magazine were published,⁶⁶ it was actually an expression of the position of Jews in the Romanian socialist movement. *Lumina* was also the name of an association of young Jews adhering to Socialism, which was established in Iași in 1895 and published the magazine *Der Wecker*.⁶⁷

As suggested by Carol Iancu, the support given by Jews to Socialism was probably even more difficult in Moldova, since the middle class there was almost exclusively Jewish.⁶⁸ Therefore, joining Socialism meant truly giving up Jewish identity, at least in its traditional formulation. At the end of the century the Social Democratic Party of Romanian Workers disappeared as a consequence of an internal split. When it reappeared in 1910 the number of Jews increased.⁶⁹

Jews at war

In the wars involving Romania in the new century a diversification in the attitude of Jews emerged. Most adopted a similar attitude of support to the nation and, at the same time, continued to put pressure on the international community for help in having their status changed.

As is well known, Romania did not participate to the First Balkan War. Jewish international associations, such as the Conjoint Jewish Committee, tried to condition its requests for a compensation of the Bulgarian territorial acquisitions on the revision of article 7.⁷⁰ When Romania

⁶⁶ A. Greenbaum, *The Underground Jewish Press in Eastern Europe until 1917* (Tel Aviv: Keshet, 1991), 15.

⁶⁷ Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866-1919)*, 278.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 281.

⁷⁰ See the letter from D. L. Alexander and C. G. Montefiore to Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Minister, 11 January 1913, quoted in C. Iancu, *Lupta*

decided to join the anti-Bulgarian coalition in the Second Balkan War, the UEP sided with the Romanian Government once again. Around 25,000 Jews joined the army as conscripts or volunteers. Jews also offered capital, equipment and support to soldiers' families. Synagogues, schools and hospitals were made available to the authorities. Many Jewish newspapers and magazines solicited Jewish patriotism.⁷¹

The Balkan wars were the first occasion on which not all Jews expressed support to the nation. Zionists, in particular, thought that a weakening of the Ottoman Empire could damage their ambition to obtain territories in Palestine. In their view, the Ottoman Empire would have been less inclined to negotiate the creation of a Jewish state after a defeat. For this reason, Zionists decided to stay neutral and not to openly support Romania.⁷² That was the first occasion when a split among Jews was produced. UEP and its followers had chosen Romania as a homeland, while Zionists preferred Palestine, in the conviction that war would not have brought equal rights to Jews.⁷³ The Zionists were right: the Romanian government did not act in any way to modify its legislation, nor did it heed requests from other countries and from international organizations.⁷⁴

A strong anti-Semitic movement continued to thrive and to influence the Romanian ruling class: some associations, such as the National League, denounced collusions among Jews and Masonic orders and urged their banishment from the army.⁷⁵

The disappointment of Jews increased after Romanian annexation of Southern Dobruja, since citizenship was then granted to all inhabitants, Jews included. As written in *Curierul israelit* in 1913, "the rabbi of Silistra, having complained about the annexation of the town to Romania before the European States, will be a Romanian citizen, while Jews residing in our land for centuries and helping to conquer Silistra would remain foreigners."⁷⁶

internațională pentru emanciparea evreilor din România. Documente și mărturii, vol. I (1913-1919) (București: Editura Hasefer, 2004), 60-63.

⁷¹ "Evenimentele din Balcani și Evreii români," *Progresul*, Oct. 11, 1912.

⁷² *Zionul*, Dec. 1912, 1.

⁷³ A. M. Scântee, "Evreii și războiul din Balcani," *Zionul*, Dec. 1912, 8.

⁷⁴ Iancu, *Lupta internațională pentru emanciparea evreilor*, 19.

⁷⁵ "Report by the Central Committee of UEP concerning its activity in the years 1913-1914," in *1900-1920: Fast și nefast într-un răstimp istoric. Documente și mărturii*, vol. I (București: Hasefer, 2003), 101.

⁷⁶ "Evreii și războiul. Chestia evreiască trebuie rezolvită," *Curierul israelit*, July 12, 1913.

Discrimination was not ended nor even lessened after the Balkan Wars: new laws were introduced or proposed, such as that which compelled Jews to procure documents attesting their stable presence in Romania. This was particularly difficult for Jews who were descendants of families residing there for decades or centuries. In the end, this law was not passed,⁷⁷ but it was a new sign of the persisting climate of hostility toward Jews.

The scenario of division in the Balkan Wars also appeared during the First World War. When Romania entered the war, in August 1916, UEP published in *Curierul israelit* a call to Romanian Jews asking them to enlist in the army, "happy to make this sacrifice, since only through our suffering will tomorrow's Romania come into the world." It was then necessary "to forget every form of dissatisfaction and to renounce, as long as the war lasts, all political action," in the hope that claims for rights would no longer be necessary after the war.⁷⁸ In fact, most Romanian Jews declared themselves willing to defend national interests in a conflict which, more than in the past, forced them to fight against coreligionists lined up on other fronts (waging war on Jews in the Austro-Hungarian army was perceived as particularly traumatic, due to the fact that a large part of Romanian Jews came from Austrian Galicia).⁷⁹ Women's associations were also very active. Women who were part of the UEP offered their help with wounded soldiers. Ceremonies were celebrated in synagogues to support soldiers spiritually.⁸⁰ The Sephardi communities of Bucharest also called on their members to participate in the war.⁸¹ Ashkenazi communities in Iași in turn offered support to Romanian government.⁸² Once again, Zionists adopted a different attitude. They did not consider their political project in conflict with that of UEP, believing that both could be achieved, although at different times.⁸³ They urged Jews to assist the victims of the war, but never asked them to participate in it.⁸⁴ Obviously, the request that Jews supported Romania at war was

⁷⁷ Iancu, *Lupta internațională pentru emanciparea evreilor*, 23.

⁷⁸ "Apelul Uniunii Evreilor Pamănteni," *Curierul israelit*, Sept. 23, 1916.

⁷⁹ "Să nu mai fim calomniați," *Curierul israelit*, July 25, 1914.

⁸⁰ "Rugi pentru biruința oștilor române," *Curierul israelit*, Sept. 23, 1916.

⁸¹ "Apelul Comunității sefarde (spaniole) din capitală," *Curierul israelit*, Sept. 23, 1916.

⁸² "Telegrame adresate Regelui Ferdinand și Primului Ministru," *Curierul israelit*, Sept. 23, 1916.

⁸³ I. Avram, "Sioniștii în Uniune," *Curierul israelit*, March 17, 1913, also collected in *Ideala sionist în presa evreiască din România 1881-1920* (București: Hasefer, 2010), 323-324.

⁸⁴ "Sioniștii și războiul de întregire," *Curierul israelit*, Nov. 4, 1916.

underpinned by the blame for being considered foreigners, notwithstanding their contribution to the warring country.⁸⁵

Once again, Jews accompanied their action with pressure from their international associations, which found support in European governments. During the difficult peace negotiations for, the Romanian delegation tried to resist the full acknowledgment of rights to Jews, as imposed by the members of the Entente. Only after long negotiations did the government lead by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod sign the treaty⁸⁶ on 10 December 1919.

Romanian Jews had finally achieved their goal. The commitment to protect minorities was formally respected. In 1923 the new Romanian Constitution ratified the recognition of rights to every minority, although article 22 still defined the Orthodox Church as "dominant." In the following years, however, anti-Semitism did not weaken; on the contrary, an extremist and religious anti-Semitism emerged.

Conclusion

In the decades from the birth of the Romanian nation-state to the First World War, most Romanian Jews had adopted a cooperative attitude towards the political institutions. Neither outbursts of anti-Semitism nor discriminatory laws had caused them to stop supporting the state. Even when, at the end of the 19th century, some joined Zionism or Socialism and around 40,000 decided to emigrate, still the majority continued to live in the state and supported it in the wars to complete national unity. There are several possible explanations for such an attitude, all of them probably valid on different levels and for different categories.

First of all, the stereotype proposed by local anti-Semitism of Jews as wealthy bourgeois was true only to a very partial extent. Most Jews, especially in Moldova, were poor people belonging to urban under-classes or working in the countryside as peddlers. They often arrived in Romania escaping from even worse conditions of discrimination and persecution, especially when they came from Russian lands.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ H. Carp, "Ne vom face datoria," *Curierul israelit*, July 18, 1914; "Evreii pamănteni își vor face datoria," *Progresul*, July 24, 1914.

⁸⁶ G. Iancu, "Studiu introductiv," in *Documente interne și externe privind problematica minorităților naționale din România, 1919-1924*, ed. G. Iancu (Cluj Napoca: Argonaut, 2008), IV. See also S. Santoro, *Dall'Impero asburgico alla Grande Romania. Il nazionalismo romeno di Transilvania fra Ottocento e Novecento* (Roma: Franco Angeli, 123).

⁸⁷ *Almanahul Israelit Ilustrat*, 1902-1903, 10.

Obviously, that was not the case of the elite. If members of the elite decided to remain in Romania, it was for other reasons. The most enlightened were influenced by the ideas of the Haskalah and believed in the possibility to act within the state and change it. They were strongly convinced of the possibility of conciliation between Jewish identity and citizenship. The majority, however, were more inclined to evaluate the economic advantages of permanence in Romania. The gradual transformation of the economy from traditional to capitalistic (or semi-capitalistic) opened up areas that Jews could occupy, taking advantage of Romania's lack of a local middle class. This also explains why the economic crisis at the end of the 19th century had more weight in the choice to emigrate than did anti-Semitism.

One last question, therefore, is to what extent anti-Semitism influenced the attitude of Romanian Jews. The emphasis historiography has put on this must be correctly evaluated. The exacerbation of discriminatory legislation concerning Jews, in fact, brought about a real deterioration of Jewish living conditions, but it also had a strong effect on Jewish self-perception. If assimilation processes acted as centrifugal forces, as shown by Jonathan Frankel,⁸⁸ anti-Semitism operated as a centripetal force. It contributed to keeping the community structure alive as a parallel administration supplying services which the state did not offer. This made Romania assume the peculiar position of a liberal state with "patches" of self-regulating communities typical of a traditional society. The imperfection of Romanian liberalism was actually highlighted by the condition of Romanian Jews.

⁸⁸ J. Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews in nineteenth-century Europe: towards a new historiography?," in *Assimilation and community*, eds. J. Frankel, S. J. Zipperstein (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sidney: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.

CHAPTER TWO

THE JEWS OF SERBIA (1804-1918): FROM PRINCELY PROTECTION TO FORMAL EMANCIPATION

MILAN RISTOVIĆ

Traces of a long presence

The traces of the existence of Jewish communities in the territories that used to be or are within the framework of the Serbian state are now very scant for the period of antiquity and the Middle Ages. They include, above all, archaeological artefacts, a small number of written documents and rare toponyms. The existence of important economic and political centres in the territory of Serbia in antiquity and late antiquity (Naisus-Niš, Sirmium-Sremska Mitrovica, Singidunum-Belgrade), with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population, points to the conclusion that in these centres—similarly to towns in the southern Balkans—there also existed Jewish communities. This is testified to by a record from Stobi, Macedonia, dating from the 3rd-4th century A.D., where there used to be a synagogue that belonged to the Hellenised Jewish community. Around the year 950, the correspondence of a Jewish diplomat serving the Caliph of Córdoba contains a mention of Belgrade. In the mediaeval Serbian state, which in the 13th and 14th centuries encompassed Macedonia and the neighbouring Byzantine regions, there were few traces in the form of documents preserved of the presence of Jews and their position. In the trading and mining centres of Macedonia, between the 9th and the 16th century there were Jews to be found, who are mentioned in some diplomas of Serbian rulers and in the documents of the Dubrovnik archive. Jews arrived in the territory of Serbia as traders and doctors from towns on the Adriatic coast. The influence of Byzantine law on mediaeval Serbian law leads one to assume that the position of Jews in the mediaeval Serbian state was regulated in a manner similar to the practice pursued in