JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN HUMANITIES
56

Satu Matikainen

Great Britain, British Jews, and the International Protection of Romanian Jews, 1900–1914

A Study of Jewish Diplomacy and Minority Rights

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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Esitetään Jyväskylän yliopiston humanistisen tiedekunnan suostumuksella
julkisesti tarkastettavaksi Historica-rakennuksen salissa 320
elokuun 18. päivänä 2006 kello 12.

Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by permission of
the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Jyväskylä,
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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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Publishing Unit, University Library of Jyväskylä

URN:ISBN:9513925676
ISBN 951-39-2567-6 (PDF)

ISBN 951-39-2506-4 (nid.)
ISSN 1459-4331

Jyväskylä University Printing House, Jyväskylä 2006

ABSTRACT

Matikainen, Satu
Great Britain, British Jews, and the international protection of Romanian Jews, 1900-1914: A study of Jewish diplomacy and minority rights
Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2006, 234 p.
(Jyväskylä Studies on Humanities
ISSN 1459-4323; 56)
ISBN 951-39-2567-6
Finnish summary
Diss.

The thesis discusses the Romanian Jewish problem in the early twentieth century from the perspective of Jewish diplomacy and minority rights. The number of Jews in Romania was approximately 270,000, or 4.5 per cent of the total population. The Romanian Jews were one of the first minority groups to be protected by means of international conventions. The Treaty of Berlin (1878) provided for equal rights to persons of all religious confessions in Romania. However, Jews were not granted Romanian citizenship, and their lives were regulated by a system of anti-Jewish legislation. In this situation, emancipated Jewish elites in Western Europe, including Britain, strove to help their coreligionists in Romania.

British Jews, through their foreign policy organisation, the Conjoint Foreign Committee, tried to persuade the British Foreign Office to intervene on behalf of Romanian Jews. The British government agreed, in principle, that Romanian Jewish policy should be modified. It was reluctant to act, however, arguing that any intervention in Romanian affairs could only happen in concert with the other Great Powers.

The attitudes of the British government towards Romanian Jews were shaped in part by interpretations on international minority protection. They were also influenced by political considerations such as Great Power rivalry and domestic problems relating to Jewish immigration. As to Anglo-Jewish views, practical considerations such as immigration also played a role, but policy was mainly shaped by perceptions of the struggle for Jewish emancipation and the role of privileged Jewries as defenders of their less fortunate coreligionists.

Anglo-Jewish diplomacy did not result in any visible improvement in the situation of Romanian Jews before 1914. The legal emancipation of Romanian Jews only came to pass after the First World War. However, Jewish diplomacy was important on numerous occasions in promoting the subject of minority rights. The activities of the Anglo-Jewry on behalf of Romanian Jews were a significant phase in the history of minority protection.

Keywords: Romania, Great Britain, Jews, diplomacy, ethnic minorities, international relations, anti-Semitism,

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has been long in the making. My interest in Jewish history and history of ethnic minorities began when, in 1993, Professor Jorma Ahvenainen suggested a fascinating topic for my Master's thesis, under the working title of 'The Jewish Question in Romania'. The present work has gradually evolved from that starting point.

I would like to thank Professor Ahvenainen for supporting my application to participate in an Academy of Finland exchange programme to study and carry out research in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (now part of the University College) at the University of London, in 1995-1998. I wish to express my thanks to the staff in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

My thanks go to all the archives and libraries mentioned in the bibliography section at the back of the book. I would like to express my special gratitude to the Board of Deputies of British Jews, for permission to use their archives in the London Metropolitan Archives. I would also like to single out two institutions where I have spent countless hours: the National Archives (previously the Public Record Office) at Kew, London and the Hebrew and Jewish Studies Collection and the Special Collections and at the University College Library, London.

I am most grateful for the financial support I have received from the Academy of Finland and the University of Jyväskylä.

I would like to thank my reviewers Dr Eero Kuparinen and Dr Markku Ruotsila for criticism and suggestions on the manuscript. Laura McCambridge deserves special thanks for meticulous proofreading and language consultation. The map of early twentieth century Romania is drawn by Jari Järvinen. I would also like to thank the publishing unit of the Jyväskylä University Library.

I am immensely grateful to Professor Seppo Zetterberg, my thesis supervisor, for unending encouragement during these years. I am indebted to Professors Toivo Nygård and Petri Karonen, the former and present Heads of the Department of History and Ethnology, for supporting me in every step of the process. The Department of History and Ethnology of the University of Jyväskylä has provided a pleasant and inspiring working environment for the past eight years.

Jyväskylä, July 2006

Satu Matikainen

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The scene

At the turn of the millennium, the number of Jews in Eastern Europe and the Balkans is small. If we look back one hundred years or so, however, the picture was very different. Jews were found in large numbers in many countries of the region. The circumstances of Jews in Eastern Europe compared to Western Europe became markedly different during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The Jews of Western Europe were moving towards emancipation and acculturation, while the Jews of Eastern Europe, primarily in Russia and Romania, lacked political rights and their lives were restricted and regulated by a complex system of anti-Jewish legislation. [1]

The Jewish population in Eastern Europe increased rapidly during the nineteenth century. At the turn of the century, there were more than five million Jews in the Russian Empire. The number of Jews in Romanian by 1899 was approximately 270,000, or 4.5 per cent of the total population.[2] Comparison to the present-day number of Jews in Romania is striking: estimates today range from 6,000 to 11,000.

According to the Romanian Constitution of 1866, Jews were treated as foreigners on the grounds of their non-Christianity, and they were increasingly discriminated against under subsequent legislation. The legislation stemmed from the twin issues of a fear of Jewish economic domination and an urge to preserve the Romanian national character in the newly-established nation state. The matter was also linked to the intensification of anti-Semitism in Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Romanian government argued against any improvement of the Jewish legal position, while most of the Western Powers and all major international Jewish organisations wished to end

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1 For the Russian Jews, see, for example, Gartner 2001, 162-165.

2 *RG 1899*, xliv-xlvi.

Jewish disabilities. The Jewish situation in Romania was perceived as a 'Jewish problem' or a 'Jewish question'.

From an international legal viewpoint, the situation of Jews in Romania differed fundamentally from the situation of Jews in Russia, who otherwise lived in comparable circumstances. No formal international protection was awarded to Russian Jews, partly due to the Russia's position as a great power. The Western Powers, on the other hand, with Britain on the frontline, were keen to control newly-established and relatively weak states such as Romania; by regulating the rights of minorities, for example, Britain could minimise conflicts and impose 'Western' standards of society. Consequently, the Romanian Jews and other Balkan Jewries were among the first minorities to be protected by means of international conventions and treaties.

In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the condition of East European Jewish minorities was widely publicised in Western and Central Europe, as well as in the United States. The role of emancipated Western Jewries became imperative in contemporary discourse over Jewish rights. The East European Jews had active co-religionists in the West, who were eager to right any wrongs that had been committed against Jews in less developed countries. The activities of emancipated Jewish political and economic elites on behalf of Jewish communities in oppressive or backward countries can be called 'Jewish diplomacy'.[3] One of the major proponents of Jewish diplomacy was the Anglo-Jewish community.

1.2 Research on Romanian Jews

Three main chronological themes can be distinguished in research relating to Romanian Jews. The first line of research discusses the situation of Romanian Jews before the First World War, the second examines the interwar era, and the third addresses the fate of the Romanian Jewry during the Second World War. The latter two directions are sometimes very closely linked, as those studies tend to emphasise developments that led to the mass destruction of Romanian Jews in the Second World War. The history of the Romanian Jews prior to the First World War is, as a rule, analysed separately. It is precisely the research on this earlier period that is relevant to the topic discussed in my study. It has to be pointed out that discussion on the fate of Romanian Jews in the Holocaust and previous research on the Holocaust itself are not addressed in the present work.

As well as these chronological themes, Romanian Jews have also been discussed from various perspectives in historical research. Perhaps the most popular approach has been to address the question as it is — that is without linking the issue to any particular theoretical framework or to any wider contexts. Several historians have attempted to discuss the Romanian Jewish question by collecting 'facts'. A number of monographs and articles provide the

3 Gutwein 1991, 23-24.

reader with a detailed account of the Romanian Jewish situation, often with large tracts of documents included. The efforts of foreign governments and Western Jews often feature prominently in these accounts, along with internal aspects of the matter.

If we take a further look at the existing body of research dealing with the period before the First World War, we soon notice that the late nineteenth century is generally much more extensively covered than the early twentieth century. As a rule, the early twentieth century has been researched in a fairly cursory manner, occasionally presented as a kind of afterthought following a detailed discussion on, say, the events of the 1870s.

Jeffrey Stuart Schneider's unpublished thesis, *The Jewish Problem in Romania Prior to the First World War* (1981), is perhaps the most detailed account on the events of the early twentieth century so far, although admittedly, like so many others, he focuses on the late nineteenth century. Schneider attempts to incorporate the whole Romanian pre-First World War Jewish question, with all its domestic and international aspects, in one single study. As to the British perspective, Schneider does offer a lot of information on British attitudes and policies, but he has not gone systematically through the British Jewish archives and publications.

Another feature of research on Romanian Jews has been the prejudiced treatment that the subject has often received from historians. Fritz Stern, although not a specialist on Romanian Jewish matters, has remarked perceptively that 'the history of Romanian Jewry has always been written with more polemics than factuality'.[4] This holds true especially for contemporary pamphlets that were published by Jews or their opponents, but many modern studies are also somewhat biased in their handling of the subject.[5]

The most prolific historian of Romanian Jews is undoubtedly French historian Carol Iancu. His studies are reconstructions of contemporary opinions on Romanian Jews, and include extensive citations. They also include a strong pro-Jewish bias. Iancu has mostly concentrated on the late 19th century in his studies, but he has also studied the early 20th century. Principally, Iancu has used the Alliance Israélite Universelle archives and French diplomatic correspondence — therefore, understandably, the role of the British Jews is not elaborated in his studies. Iancu's major study is perhaps *Les Juifs en Roumanie,*

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4 Stern 1977, 354.

5 For example, Ismar Elbogen wrote in 1946 (the chapter title was 'Terror in Rumania and Russia'): 'Rumania set the record in maltreating the Jews. Russia was more brutal, but Russia had the courage to confess its brutality. Rumania, on the other hand, practiced the "cold" pogrom and washed its hands in innocence… The hocus-pocus which declared that the Jews were aliens in the country in which they and their fathers had been born, in which they had received their education and had rendered their military service, provided limitless possibilities for willful and capricious treatment… To the suggested solution that the Rumanians be brought up to work and so be enabled to compete with the Jews, they turned a deaf ear. The natural consequence was that the Jews were tormented and ruined, and the Rumanian people in no wise helped. The country which was fertile and rich in minerals was constantly on the brink of bankruptcy.' Elbogen 1946, 355-356.

1866-1919: De l´exclusion a l´émancipation (1978). It chronicles the main events of Romanian Jewish history in the late nineteenth century, along with domestic and foreign attitudes, and it therefore provides useful details and background on the Jewish community for someone who is actually studying the early twentieth century situation. *L'emancipation des Juifs de Roumanie* (1992) is especially valuable as it discusses the Romanian Jews during the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913, a theme that has otherwise attracted hardly any research at all.[6]

Beate Welter's German contribution, *Die Judenpolitik der rumänischen Regierung, 1866-1888* (1989), is mainly based on Austrian archives. The book's approach is interesting, with the work being divided into three sections: one on internal politics (especially interesting), one on international politics, and one on the Jewish activities. This is undoubtedly one of the more reasonably balanced accounts on the issue.

General histories of Romania often either ignore the Jewish question in the pre-First World War period (in the case of Romanian editions) or, alternatively, present a short overview of the matter (in the case of Western books). If the question is discussed, the focus tends to be on the developments relating to the international condemnation of Romanian Jewish policy in the 1860s and to the recognition of Romanian independence in the late 1870s.[7]

Certain specific aspects of the Jewish question have also been focused on in historical research, for example Jewish mass emigration and Romanian anti-Semitism. In addition, the implications of certain events concerning Jews, such as the Peasant Revolt of 1907, have attracted the attention of historians.

One of the more popular approaches to the Romanian Jewish question has been to examine the subject through the issue of anti-Semitism. Although the purpose of my work is not to provide an extensive analysis of anti-Semitism in Romania or elsewhere, the matter can not be ignored when placing the Romanian situation in an international context.[8] An interesting study dealing exclusively with Romanian anti-Semitism is William O. Oldson's *A Providential Anti-Semitism* (1991). Some works on Romanian fascism in the interwar era, such as Stephen Fischer-Galati's articles and N. M. Nagy-Talavera's classic book *The Green Shirts and Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania* (1970), are useful for possible interpretations on the roots of fascism and the nature of anti-Semitism in the period preceding the First World War.

The emigration of Romanian Jews is a relatively well researched topic. A classic and widely recognised article on Romanian emigration is Joseph Kissman's *The Immigration of Rumanian Jews up to 1914* (1947). It covers all aspects of emigration, but it is especially informative on the *fusgeyers*, the first groups of emigrants who left Romania on foot. Eliyahu Feldman's article, *A Batch of Letters from Prospective Jewish Emigrants from Roumania* (1980), is based on letters sent by emigrants to Rabbi Moses Gaster in London. Carol Iancu's

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6 Iancu has also edited a number of document collections on Romanian Jews, such as *Le combat international pour l'émancipation des Juifs de Roumanie* (Iancu 1994).

7 See, for example, Durandin 1995, 176-182 and Treptow 1996, 351.

8 Some general works on anti-Semitism have been used and included in the bibliography, but this selection is not meant to be all-inclusive.

L'emigration des Juifs Roumains dans la Correspondance Diplomatique Francaise, 1900-1902 (1981) is based on French diplomatic correspondence, with printed documents included.

1.3 International protection of minorities

The Romanian Jewish question can be approached from the perspective of ethnic minority rights. Within the context of debate over minority rights, Romanians and outside forces attempted to define, shape, and contest the legal position of Romanian Jews. At the centre was the clash of an emerging nation state, Romania, with the international community, the Great Powers. Romania was intent on guarding its sovereignty against any outside intervention into what it saw as its own internal affairs. In contrast, the Great Powers were keen to control new states and to impose minority protection standards on them. To add to the controversy, serious disagreements arose between the Romanian government and Jewish organisations and individuals in Western Europe and America.

In order to be able to discuss minority rights, one has first to define the word 'minority'. The definition of a 'minority' is undeniably problematic. In international law, there is no binding definition of 'a minority' in the sense of groups of persons who differ from the majority in ethnicity, religion or language. Attempts have been made since the interwar era to define the term.[9] Since the Second World War, the United Nations has made several suggestions, and in the 1990s, regional organisations such as the Council of Europe have also put forward draft definitions. The United Nations documents have used the expression 'ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities', but sometimes the term 'national minorities' is also used.[10] A historian studying minorities in past

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9 See Capotorti 1979, 5, for the definition attempts by the League of Nations.

10 Perhaps the most influential definition of 'a minority' has been the one included in the so-called Capotorti Study of the United Nations in the late seventies: 'A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members — being nationals of the state — possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.' Capotorti 1979, 96.

The following elements are nearly always present in the definitions of a minority:

1. A minority group has features that distinguish it from the other groups living within the state. These factors can be ethnic, linguistic or religious.

2. A minority group is numerically inferior to the rest of the population.

3. A minority group is in a non-dominant position in the state.

4. Members of the minority are nationals of the state.

5. Members of the minority group wish to preserve their distinct characteristics, and they have a sense of community.

For a discussion on these features, see, for example, Shaw 1992, 23-30.

societies will encounter additional problems. Modern definitions can not be applied directly to historical situations.

Minority protection falls into two categories: protection that is granted through domestic legislation within a country and protection that is dependant on international treaties. International protection of minorities is often believed to conflict with the principle of state sovereignty. States can, however, sign treaties in which they voluntarily enter into agreements to protect minority rights within their territory.[11] These considerations were relevant to the Romanian case as well: the protection of Romanian Jews was initiated from outside Romania, by means of international treaties.

Zelim Tskhovrebov defines international minority rights along these lines:

> 'the meaning of international "minority"-specific legal norms is an imposition of specific obligations upon states designed to facilitate the preservation of those differentiating features on which "minority" groups place high premium.'[12]

From another perspective, minority rights can refer either to non-discrimination or to special rights. In the latter case, minorities are granted special treatment (or affirmative action) in order to help them to preserve their distinct features.[13] Before the First World War, it was the former type of minority rights, i.e. equal rights and non-discrimination, which were sought after. The right to acquire citizenship of the country of residence was considered to be particularly significant.

Before the First World War, international minority protection functioned in a very fragmented manner. Its focus was on minority problems in Eastern and South-Western Europe, and a prime example was the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. The provisions of the treaties reflected Western norms, which were now being imposed on other, less developed countries. The minorities that were being protected differed from present-day minorities, as did the measures and goals that had been designed to protect them. At that time, there was no powerful international organisation such as the United Nations or the League of Nations; the main actors in the arena of international minority protection were the Great Powers. Minority issues usually came to the fore at times when great international settlements were being concluded. Hence, minority rights can be understood as an attempt to secure peace and order by minimising the possibility of ethnic conflicts.[14]

Protection was case-specific: treaties that contained stipulations on minority rights were series of separate provisions and did not constitute a consistent system of minority protection. It is essential to bear in mind that the protected people were usually identified by their religion — as were the Romanian Jews. However, the minority protection clauses tended to extend beyond purely religious rights, covering also, for example, education rights, the

11 Modeen 1969, 29-30.

12 Tskhovrebov 1998, 62.

13 Humphrey 1989, 46-47.

14 Jackson Preece 1998, 11, 42.

right to certain traditions, and property rights.[15] A large number of treaties containing minority provisions were concerned with the relations between European Christians and the Ottoman Empire, although some concerned the protection of Protestants in Catholic countries and vice versa.[16] The 1774 Treaty of Koutchouk-Kainardji between Russia and Turkey gave Russia the right to act as the protector of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire.[17]

In 1830, Britain, France, and Russia guaranteed the independence of Greece, at the same time stipulating that all subjects in Greece were to be treated equally irrespective of religion. In this instance, it was the non-Christian and non-Orthodox Christian minorities that were thus protected.[18] The Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815 is another significant example dating from the early nineteenth century. This time the minority protection clauses did not relate to Ottoman or Balkan affairs; Russia, Austria, and Prussia promised to permit national institutions for their Polish subjects, thus enabling the Poles to gain some degree of self-government, although not similar within each empire. The situation of the Poles and the observance of the minority protection obligations were monitored by the other Great Powers.[19]

Although expressing a concern for religious and national minorities, the terms of minority clauses tended to be vague. It can be argued that minorities were tolerated but not encouraged. Even so, there was a tradition of minority protection in international law. A major shortcoming of the minority clauses was the implementation of treaty provisions. Intervention rights as defined in the treaties, referring to the right to make representations, were usually limited. Special recognition clauses, on the other hand, strengthened intervention rights.[20] These considerations also became important in the Romanian situation.

Research on the history of minority rights has tended to concentrate on the minority problems of the late twentieth century. In addition, it has largely been conducted by social scientists and legal scholars. Some researchers have, however, attempted to trace the longer historical roots of minority protection. Two studies that cover a long time period and a wide variety of issues can be mentioned and recommended here. Patrick Thornberry's *International Law and the Rights of Minorities* (1991) is essential reading on minority rights in the light of international law. Jennifer Jackson Preece's *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System* (1998) is somewhat more detailed on the pre-First World War period. Both Thornberry and Jackson Preece do mention the minority rights of Romanian Jews, but neither discusses the matter in detail.

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15 Thornberry 1991, 25-26.

16 Capotorti 1979, 1-2.

17 Dadrian 1995, 8, 13,19.

18 Capotorti 1979, 2.

19 Capotorti 1979, 2; Jackson Preece 1998, 60-61. The Congress of Vienna is often emphasised as the first occasion in which 'national' minorities as opposed to religious minorities were protected.

20 Claude 1955, 8-9; Thornberry 1991, 32-35.

Some attempts have been made to study Jewish minority rights in Romania from a Zionist or Jewish nationalist standpoint. However, this approach is not very productive. Oscar Janowsky, in his 1933 study on Jewish nationalism and national minority rights, accurately remarked that there really was no important Zionist movement in Romania or in other Balkan states before the First World War. The Romanian Jews were focused on the struggle for civil and political rights within the context of the Romanian state.[21]

The most rewarding perspective for this present study is the one applied by Carole Fink in her book *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection*. Fink has studied international minority protection, and especially the minority question in Eastern Europe, from 1878 to 1938. She is therefore one of few historians to have related the Romanian Jewish question to the wider framework of minority protection — although she has not discussed the Romanian situation exclusively. Fink has argued that 'the quest for international minority protection in Eastern Europe involved the fusing of two powerful opposites: the attainment and maintenance of full national independence versus the expansion of outside control'. The Congress of Berlin in the 1870s and, subsequently, the League of Nations between the world wars, created cautiously worded compromise agreements on minority rights as well as limited measures to enforce the minority clauses.[22]

In a somewhat similar vein, Jennifer Jackson Preece has emphasised the relationship between national minority questions and the nation-states system: the nation-states system makes national minorities a subject of international politics. According to Jackson Preece, issues concerning the status of minorities came to the fore at those moments when a 'new international order' was established, such as in 1878 when the Treaty of Berlin was signed. It was precisely at the Congress of Berlin that the independence of the Romanian state and the rights of Romanian Jews were deliberated. On occasions in which a new order has been set in place, minorities have been granted certain rights in order to maintain stability. Jackson Preece believes, therefore, that minority rights protection can be understood as an attempt to secure peace and order by minimising the possibility of ethnic conflicts.[23]

According to Carole Fink, the history of minority protection in 1878-1938 involves five interacting factions:

1. The Great Powers, which dictated minority obligations to Eastern European states.
2. The revisionist states, which used minority protection for irredentist purposes.
3. The successor states, which had to submit to dictated terms. They tried to contest the international tutelage of their internal affairs.
4. The Jews, who were the main nongovernmental proponents of international minority protection.

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21 Janowsky 1933, 155.

22 Fink 2004, 359-360.

23 Jackson Preece 1998, 4, 11.

5. The emerging internationalist, humanitarian, and pacifist movements, which gave their support to the League of Nations as a forum to promote peace and justice in the interwar era.[24]

Of these elements, the revisionist powers and humanitarian movements were not applicable to the era before the First World War. These two factions were related to minority protection under the League of Nations. Consequently, three factions remain that are relevant to the present study. Firstly, the Great Powers, who tried to impose minority protection clauses. Secondly, the successor states, which had to comply with the minority protection clauses — although, preferably, before the First World War they should simply be called East European states, since the term 'successor state' carries an interwar connotation. Thirdly, there were the Jews. In the present study, the Great Power perspective and the Jewish viewpoint have been selected as the research subject. Within these categories, the British government, as an example of a Great Power policy maker, and the Anglo-Jewry, as a representative of Jewish interests, are analysed in relation to the international protection of Romanian Jews.

1.4 Jewish diplomacy and British foreign policy

The rights of minorities, the role of the Great Powers in minority protection, and the efforts of the Jewish activists will be discussed from the perspective of 'Jewish diplomacy'. There is no previous research dealing solely with Romanian Jews that has approached the issue from this angle. Romania is mentioned in a number of studies on Jewish diplomacy along with other countries such as Russia, but not as the sole object of discussion. Fink, for instance, discusses international Jewish policy relating to Romanian Jews, but she does not address the subject explicitly through 'Jewish diplomacy' nor does she focus exclusively on Romania. There is definitely room, therefore, for a study on Jewish diplomacy relating to Romania.

Zosa Szajkowski, in 1960, appears to have been one of the first historians to use the expression 'Jewish diplomacy'.[25] Jewish diplomacy can be defined as 'the activities of emancipated Jewish political and economic élites on behalf of Jewish communities in repressive or backward countries'. These activities could include direct intervention in acute situations, economic pressure or attempts to influence domestic governments.[26]

To defend the persecuted coreligionists world-wide was seen as a noble duty of the privileged Jewish notables. It was also a tool in the hands of the Jewish leaders to strengthen their position within their own communities at a

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24 Fink 2004, 360-363.

25 Szajkowski 1960. Szajkowski did not, however, attempt to define the concept in his article. For definitions of the term, see also Matikainen 2005, 346-347.

26 Gutwein 1991, 23-24.

time when there was an increasing demand for democratisation among the Jewish masses. Despite democratic trends in other sectors of community life, the Jewish public, as a rule, accepted the leading diplomatic role of the élites and believed that their diplomatic power was indispensable in aiding the oppressed.[27]

Mark Levene argues that if diplomacy as such is defined as the management of international relations through negotiation by diplomats, as well as the art of diplomats in managing those relations, a contradiction arises if one wants to speak of Jewish diplomacy. The diplomat must have some bargaining power in negotiations, be it economic, military or territorial. As a result, diplomacy is bound up with the possession of power and, therefore, it is usually a prerogative of sovereign states.[28] Levene calls the Anglo-Jewish efforts prior to First World War 'less diplomacy than a refined form of pressure-group politicking'.[29] However, Levene does use the term 'Jewish diplomacy' himself, as his focus is more on the policy of the Anglo-Jewish foreign policy expert Lucien Wolf during the First World War and its aftermath, than on the period before the First World War.

Todd Endelman also employs the term 'Jewish diplomacy' in his study on the history of British Jewry.[30] To add to the list, David Vital accepts the use of the phrase in his article on the trans-state political action of the European Jewry in 1860-1919. According to Vital, Jewish diplomacy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries dealt with aspects of the 'Jewish question'. It was political action directed by privileged, rich, academic or political individuals and groups in one country (or more) toward the authorities of another country — the 'target country', as Vital calls it. The ability and willingness to use pressure was essential. Pressure could take the form of rousing public opinion, exerting economic pressure or inducing one government to act against another government. There was often a wider aim that went beyond single situations: to bring about a lasting change in the status of the Jewish community that was being assisted.[31] It should be noted that Jewish diplomacy was pre-dated by mid-nineteenth century endeavours by individual Jewish notables, which Vital calls 'private intercession'.[32]

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27 Gutwein 1991, 23-24. Szajkowski has argued that, in the United States, 'Jewish diplomacy became a public matter for the large Jewish masses and not only for a limited number of Jewish politicians' in the early twentieth century. Szajkowski 1960, 150.

28 Levene 1992, 1.

29 Levene 1992, 11.

30 Endelman 2002, 122-123.

31 Vital 1991, 41-43. Jewish diplomacy was one of the forms of trans-state action. Vital, however, chooses to emphasise Zionism as a movement which was disposed to reform the Jewry 'on the basis of authentic national institutions and through uninhibited, unashamed national (and therefore implicitly trans-state) political action'. See Vital 1991, 48.

32 Vital 1991, 41. However, in another work, *A People Apart: A Political History of the Jews in Europe 1789-1939*, when he discusses the foreign policy of Jewish communal leaders, he does not use the term 'Jewish diplomacy',. For his usage of the word 'intercession', see, for example, Vital 2001, 335-336, 486.

The Anglo-Jewry had a specialist organisation for the conduct of foreign policy, i.e. Jewish diplomacy. The Conjoint Committee was established in 1878 to co-ordinate the foreign policy activities of the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Board of Deputies of British Jews (BDBJ), and to 'present a unified Jewish representation to the government'.[33] The Board of Deputies — not to be confused with the Jewish Board of Guardians, the welfare organisation — was a representative body of British Jews, elected by synagogues, whose roots dated back to the mid-eighteenth century. It functioned as a representative of the Jewish community in relations with the state. The Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA) had been established in 1870 as a branch of the French organisation Alliance Israélite Universelle and was, from the beginning, heavily involved in the battle for Jewish emancipation abroad.[34]

The presidents of the AJA and the BDBJ chaired the Conjoint meetings alternately, and the Conjoint had seven members from each parent body.[35] The Jewish aristocracy, or 'the Cousinhood' — so called because it was closely knit and dominated by such families as the Montefiores, the Goldsmids, and the Rothschilds — administered the Conjoint. Joseph Sebag-Montefiore was the president of the Board of Deputies between 1895 and 1903, and David L. Alexander from 1903 to 1917. There was no change in the leadership of the Anglo-Jewish Association during the time period discussed in this work: Claude G. Montefiore was the president of the AJA between 1896 and 1921. In addition to formal BDBJ and AJA leaders, Lucien Wolf should also be mentioned. Wolf began to play a significant role within the Conjoint Committee from 1908 onwards, although he had no formal standing in the organisation.[36]

The leaders of the British Jewry assumed that Jews in the rest of the world, including their less fortunate coreligionists in Eastern Europe, would eventually be emancipated. In their worldview, Jewish emancipation was a sign and even a prerequisite of a liberal world order. In this struggle, the British Jews saw the British government as their ally; there were common interests in promoting tolerance, as this was in harmony with British political and cultural models. The British government was inclined to be more prepared than the other European Powers to consider humanitarian aspects of Jewish minority problems. Therefore, the Anglo-Jewish leaders believed that the British government could be trusted to champion Jewish emancipation. This assumption formed the

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33 Bayme 1977, 263; Levene 1992, 2. Gutwein, however, seems to disregard the role of the Conjoint Committee in Jewish diplomacy. The Conjoint is only mentioned in passing. Gutwein focuses on the role of the Rothschild and Montagu families in Jewish community policy, including Anglo-Jewish foreign policy. See Gutwein 1992, 16, 362, 365.

34 Black 1988, 38-39, 44; Endelman 2002, 121-122; Levene 1992, 2.

35 Black 1988, 45.

36 Joseph Sebag-Montefiore (1822-January 1903) was one of the leading members of the London Stock Exchange. David Lindo Alexander (1842-1922) was a barrister. Glaude Goldsmid Montefiore (1858-1938) was a religious scholar and a founder of Liberal Judaism in Britain. Lucien Wolf (1857-1930) was a journalist, a founder of the Jewish Historical Society of England and a general advocate of Jewish rights.

central element of Anglo-Jewish foreign policy. Whether this congruence truly existed is open to question, but the key factor was that the British Jewry believed it did exist. In turn, the leaders of the Anglo-Jewry wanted to demonstrate their loyalty to the state.[37]

An important feature of Anglo-Jewish foreign policy was co-operation with other European and American Jewish bodies which in turn were to act in consort with their own respective governments to achieve the goal of Jewish emancipation in Eastern Europe.[38] The Romanian problem was a central concern for Jewish foreign policy — if not an 'obsession', as Eugene C. Black has argued. According to Black, Russia was too strong to be coerced to behave better towards its Jews, while Romania was seen as a suitable target to be pressured into compliance.[39]

The importance of the Conjoint Committee lay in the fact that most Jewish grievances concerning foreign policy went to the British Foreign Office through the Conjoint and that the Foreign Office recognised the role of the Conjoint as the official vehicle of Anglo-Jewish foreign policy. The Conjoint depended on its ability to turn to the Foreign Office to make representations, after which it expected the government to forward the message to the foreign governments in question. This can also be seen as the weakness of the Conjoint since there were no other valid options for the Conjoint to consider if the Foreign Office refused to co-operate with the Jewish leaders. It was mainly the co-presidents of the Conjoint Committee, Alexander and Montefiore, who signed the Conjoint memoranda and appeals addressed to the British Foreign Office, although many individuals, such as Lord Rothschild[40], transmitted letters of their own. Although petitions were frequently sent to the Foreign Office, informal social contacts through London clubs and court circles played a role at least equal to the formal representations. The exclusive character of the Conjoint meant that its leaders were upper-class men with contacts in high places, who were able to mix socially with government officials.[41]

Jewish organisations, such as the Conjoint Committee, can be understood as part of pressure groups that tried to influence British foreign policy in the early twentieth century. In his book *The Realities behind Diplomacy,* Paul Kennedy discusses the background influences on British foreign policy and also briefly analyses the pressure groups in the early twentieth century. In this context, he mentions conservative and patriotic pressure groups, such as the Tariff Reform League and the National Service League.[42] Kennedy, however, ignores other early twentieth century pressure groups and does not call attention, for example, to Jewish organisations. True, Jewish bodies were not

37 Levene 1992, 4-5; Vital 2001, 479, 482-484.

38 Levene 1992, 5-6.

39 Black 1988, 47.

40 Nathan Mayer, the 1st Baron Rothschild (1840-1915).

41 Levene 1992, 11.

42 Kennedy 1981, 57-58.

organised solely to pressure the government and alter public opinion, but influencing gentile opinion still constituted a significant field in their activities.

The Conjoint Committee favoured a discreet approach not only in its dealings with the Foreign Office but also in the way it publicised its campaigns. The leaders of the Anglo-Jewry did not want to risk the gains of emancipation they had acquired during the nineteenth century. The image of the British Jews as a law-abiding and well-integrated section of the population was always guarded very carefully. This meant that the Conjoint Committee opposed public rallies and marches because they threatened the respectable image of the Anglo-Jewry and were thus counter-productive. The Conjoint believed that nothing could be gained by demonstrations.[43] This did not mean that no public action was taken, nor did it mean that everything happened behind closed Conjoint doors. Campaigns in the press were common, not only in the Jewish weekly newspaper, the *Jewish Chronicle*, but also in the mainstream press, in which pieces clarifying the 'real' situation in Romania (or elsewhere) were written and replies to any hostile articles were quickly produced.

For the most part, research on British early twentieth century international relations has traditionally focused on the developments leading to the First World War, with much emphasis on the 'threat of Germany' and other comparable matters. British-Romanian relations in the period 1900-1914 have been for the most part ignored. Furthermore, there is no modern, all-encompassing study on British-Romanian relations[44].

'Romania ... seldom has been an area of serious concern of Britain's foreign policy'.[45] This summary by Paul D. Quinlan holds true especially for the time period prior to the First World War. British interests in Romania were chiefly connected with trade and finance. The main British investments in Romania were in oil, but Romanian grain exports and Danube navigation were also matters of interest. As far as the political issues were concerned, the Jewish question played a large role. The interests of Great Britain in the Romanian Jewish question originated partly in its international standing as one of the Great Powers, which justified its interference in the affairs of other, smaller countries. Britain had traditionally been the Power which was most likely to take action on behalf of human rights causes. However, there were also domestic factors that made Britain pay attention to the Romanian Jewish

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43 Black 1988, 302; Levene 1981, 30.

44 A classic general history is Nicolae Iorga's *A History of Anglo-Roumanian Relations* (1931). Iorga's study discusses the period *before* Romanian independence. Iorga mentions Jews in a hostile tone. There is a separate volume, a supplement to the periodical *Anuarul Institutului de istorie si arheologie "A. D. Xenopol"* (1983), containing articles on British-Romanian relations and covering economic, political, and cultural relations. These articles are based on presentations given in the colloquy of Romanian and British historians in Iaşi 1981. Amazingly, the Jewish question is not discussed at all. W.N. Medlicott's two-part classic article, *The Recognition of Roumanian Independence* (1933), is based on British diplomatic correspondence and is therefore particularly interesting. It gives a detailed chronological account on diplomatic developments, and the Jewish question features prominently.

45 Quinlan 1977, 13, 15.

problem: the strong domestic Jewish lobby and the consequences of Jewish immigration to Britain.

The British policy towards the Romanian Jewish question was related to the possibility of diplomatic intervention in Romanian internal affairs.[46] The Treaty of Berlin (1878) was the international legal document that determined the position of Romanian Jews. The Congress promised to recognise Romanian independence on the condition that Romania guaranteed equal rights to persons of all religious confessions. Consequently, Romania passed a new naturalisation law in which the treaty provisions were very narrowly interpreted. The Treaty of Berlin also brought about the idea of Great Power intervention — that is if one accepted that the Treaty allowed for joint Great power action on behalf of the Romanian Jews and that the Treaty provided for the possibility of joint Great Power action on behalf of Romanian Jews. The Treaty of Berlin was often referred to by the British government in 1900-1914, and the possibility of intervention was brought up frequently, not only in the context of the Jewish question, but when discussing other Balkan problems as well.

1.5 Research questions

Based on the considerations outlined above, my study concerns British and Anglo-Jewish views on the Romanian Jewish question in the early twentieth century. The topic will be approached from the viewpoint of Jewish diplomacy, international protection of minorities, and international relations. The research problems are related to the following themes:

1) The conduct of Anglo-Jewish diplomacy on behalf of Romanian Jews
2) The attitude of the British government as related to Jewish diplomacy
3) The factors that shaped Jewish diplomacy and British foreign policy in the Romanian Jewish question.

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46 Barry H. Steiner has studied preventive diplomacy directed at conflicts produced by ethnic rivalry within a state. According to Steiner, the conflict is between the ethnic group that controls the government and another group that is in a weaker position. Steiner has remarked that the great powers are rarely ready to intervene in internal ethnic disputes until the conflicts become violent. The great powers have to perceive the conflict to be an international issue. There are two objectives of preventive diplomacy: to enable the conflict to be discussed and negotiated, and to localise the dispute so as not to affect great power relations. However, at no point was it believed that the Jewish problem in Romania would escalate into an armed conflict. Certainly, the Peasant Revolt of 1907 had such undertones, but even the revolt did not include violent confrontation between Jews and the Romanian government. Neither did the Jewish population at any stage take up arms against the Romanians to resist government policy. Therefore, in the case of Romanian Jews, the issue of 'preventive diplomacy' was hardly applicable. Two of Steiner's examples have some relevance to Romania, namely the Bosnian Revolution of 1875-1878 against the Ottomans and the Armenian unrest before the First World War, again in the Ottoman Empire. Steiner 1998, 4, 10-13.

The first set of questions relates to the conduct of Jewish diplomacy. The objectives and results of Anglo-Jewish activities on behalf of Romanian Jews will be analysed. By what means did the British Jewry protect their Romanian co-religionists? Who were the individuals and groups that were active in the formulation of Jewish diplomacy? Several layers within the Jewish community can be separated and their attitudes compared. Firstly, and most importantly for the present work, the Conjoint Committee was the 'official' foreign policy body of the Anglo-Jewry and can be identified with the interests of the highest echelons of the British Jews. Secondly, the *Jewish Chronicle*, which was itself an important opinion maker, played a part. The attitude of the *Jewish Chronicle* sometimes echoed that of the Anglo-Jewish leadership, but it also had its own views, which were not always those promoted by the main Jewish organisations. There were also some scattered dissenting individual beliefs, like those of Romanian-born Rabbi Moses Gaster. Grass root level Jewish opinions, however, remained in the background in foreign policy issues.

The opinions and policies of the British government will be compared and contrasted with those of the Anglo-Jewish community. Did Great Britain try to protect Romanian Jews in the first place, and, if it did, how? Did it succeed? The Foreign Office represents here the British government and the official line on foreign policy. Within the Foreign Office, however, the thoughts of individual officials have to be separated when possible. It is also worthwhile to ask whether the Foreign Office establishment in London held different views from those of the diplomatic service located in Romania.

Special attention will be paid to the factors behind Jewish diplomacy and British foreign policy in relation to the Romanian Jewish question. Why did the Anglo-Jewish leaders adopt their policy on behalf of Romanian Jews? The obvious answer — 'they were sympathetic' — is not enough to explain a complex picture in which domestic policy considerations, such as immigration, were sometimes entwined with ideological elements and the basic conceptions of international Jewish foreign policy. As to the ideological and idealistic elements, contemporary views on minority rights and international minority protection definitely played a central role.

From the perspective of the British government, it also worthwhile to ask what the factors behind the British policy towards the Romanian state and towards Romanian Jews were. There were both political considerations and arguments that were based on international law. The differences between the ideas and perceptions of minority rights on one hand, and the practical political actions and decisions on the other, will be examined. The Treaty of Berlin was often mentioned as a potential tool for British pressure on Romania. One has to ask, however, if diplomatic intervention based on the Treaty of Berlin was in any way realistic.

The present work is arranged, for the most part, chronologically. Some additional aspects relating to the factors behind Jewish diplomacy and British foreign policy hence arise from the chronological dimension. The first years of the century, up to 1905, were characterised by Jewish mass emigration from Romania (and from elsewhere in Eastern Europe). In 1900, this new

development in the Romanian Jewish question resulted in extensive international discussion on the issue. The beginning of the emigration movement marked a new era in the Romanian Jewish problem as to the main themes of the debate and the amount of international attention it received. Most of the contemporary debate could be linked to the threat of emigration and, more specifically, the fear of massive inflows to Britain itself. At the same time, the Aliens Act of 1905 was prepared and passed in Britain, marking the end of the earlier principle of practically free entry. It is fascinating to examine the connection between immigration and the prospects of diplomatic intervention in Romanian affairs. Did the threat of immigration really matter when the British government and the Anglo-Jewry made decisions on policy towards Romania?

From 1906 onwards, the situation was characterised by the increasing preoccupation of the British government in Great Power problems and the obvious links between reactions to the Romanian Jewish question and the inflammable situation in the Balkans. The emigration of Romanian Jews was now almost completely forgotten. The British attitude towards Romanian Jews during this period has sometimes been perceived as less forthcoming than the one that prevailed during the first years of the century. The accuracy of this argument will be examined. The Romanian Jewish question was raised in the international arena by the Conjoint Committee during major political upheavals in the Balkan area, such as the annexation of Bosnia in 1908 and the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913. How well was the Conjoint able to take advantage of the current political situation to promote the cause of the Romanian Jews?

The final year of the study is 1914, for the obvious reason that it is the year the First World War began. The war pushed the problems of Romanian Jews into background, and, after the war, the nature of the Jewish question changed. Romania acquired Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bucovina, and thus the 'Greater Romania' was formed. Consequently, the Jewish population in Romania tripled, and, under strong outside pressure, Romania reluctantly agreed to grant full citizenship rights to its Jewish population and the legal disabilities of Jews were abolished.

1.6 Primary sources

For the most part, I am carrying out basic research on aspects of the Romanian Jewish question and Jewish diplomacy that have not previously been analysed in this light. Therefore, the role of primary sources is fundamental. There are five main groups of primary sources that have been consulted for this study:

1) British official papers and publications: Foreign Office documents and parliamentary papers

2) Jewish archives, reports and annual reports, and documentary collections

3) Newspapers: the *Jewish Chronicle* and non-Jewish papers
4) Romanian official publications
5) Contemporary pamphlets on the Romanian Jewish question.

British *Foreign Office* documents are stored in the National Archives, which was until recently called the Public Record Office, at Kew, London. Documents on Romanian political affairs, including general correspondence, can mainly be found in Foreign Office classes FO 104 (prior to 1906) and FO 371 (after 1906). The general correspondence consists of despatches from the British representatives abroad, drafts of outgoing despatches, and Foreign Office minutes. It also includes correspondence with private individuals and organisations, messages to and from the other branches of government, and correspondence with foreign representatives in Britain.

It is important to note that the Foreign Office papers also include the letters that the British Jewry wrote to the Foreign Office. To these communications are added the comments and memoranda made by FO officials on the Jewish activities, as well as the copies of replies sent to the Jewish leaders. These papers, together with the archives of the British Jewry, constitute an invaluable and essential source on Anglo-Jewish diplomacy.

The Foreign Secretary[47] maintained diplomatic relations with other states on behalf of the British government. There were only three Foreign Secretaries during the period of this study. The Marquess of Salisbury acted both as Prime Minister and as Foreign Secretary for his Conservative Government from 1895 to November 1900, when he gave up the latter post and The Marquess of Lansdowne stepped into his place. When the Conservatives had to cede governmental responsibility to the Liberals in late 1905, Sir Edward Grey became Foreign Secretary, thereafter occupying the position until 1916. These three foreign secretaries were all significant policy makers both in foreign policy and in dealings with the Anglo-Jewish leaders. The role of the other cabinet members, the Prime Minister, and the King in formulating foreign policy was negligible in relatively minor political matters such as the Romanian Jewish question.

The Permanent Under Secretary was the head of the Foreign Office and the closest adviser of the Foreign Secretary. His influence could often be great, and he was responsible for a wide range of matters within the Office. Sir Thomas Sanderson was the permanent secretary from 1894 to 1906. He was succeeded by Sir Charles Hardinge, who was then succeeded by Sir Arthur Nicolson in 1910. Nicolson remained in his position until 1916. Of these three men, only Sanderson had much to say about the matters relating to Romanian Jews. The next in the Foreign Office hierarchy were the Assistant Under Secretaries who supervised the Foreign Office departments. Every department had its chief, senior clerk, and, in addition, assistant and junior clerks. The

47 The section on the Foreign Office structure and procedures is based on Gosses 1948 and Steiner 1986 and, for the names and positions of individual officials, on the *Foreign Office Lists 1899-1914*.

department which handled Romanian affairs was called the Eastern Department.[48]

The diplomatic service, positioned abroad, had only a relatively minor share in policymaking. Diplomats, as a rule, followed the orders sent to them from London. Paul W. Schroeder, for example, has argued that the British interests in the Balkans, including Romania, were so small that observations made by the British diplomats positioned there almost have the value of neutral observations.[49] This appears to hold true on many occasions, but not in every single case. The British Legation in the Romanian capital Bucharest was small, with only a handful of personnel. Sir John Gordon Kennedy was the British Minister in Bucharest from 1897 to his retirement in December 1905. Sir William Conyngham Greene, who followed Kennedy, was also positioned in Bucharest for a lengthy period, which ended in January 1911. The next minister, Sir Walter Townley, was appointed in May 1911 but stayed only until March 1912 — after which Sir George Barclay held the post until after the First World War, in 1919.[50]

The Foreign Office papers are not the only group of official British sources that include material on issues related to Romanian Jews and British policy on Romania. A number of official British parliamentary publications contain some information on British attitudes towards Romanian Jews. *The Parliamentary Debates* of the House of Commons are indispensable tools to trace any parliamentary discussion on the Romanian Jewish question. Information on foreign policy at the time could primarily be attained by presenting a question on a particular matter in the House of Commons, although the Foreign Office answers tended to be vague — as was also the case when Romanian Jewish matters came up. The *Report of the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration* (1903) of the *Parliamentary Papers* series gives insight into the immigration problem in Britain but does not offer much helpful material on Romanian Jewish immigrants especially. *Census* returns, in addition, provide indispensable information on the number of Romanian Jews who immigrated to Great Britain.

Documents of Anglo-Jewish institutions and private individuals are the second major group of primary sources consulted for this study. It should be remembered that Anglo-Jewish sources always tell the story from the Anglo-Jewish viewpoint, and they never attempt to present an 'objective' version of the situation. On the other hand, information on the opinions and attitudes of British Jews is easy to find in the documents, which makes this material an excellent source for studying Jewish diplomacy and Anglo-Jewish policy.

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48 Some names come up repeatedly in the Foreign Office papers. Richard P. Maxwell was a long-time senior clerk (1902-1912) in the Eastern Department. Louis Mallet, Assistant Under Secretary from 1907 to 1913, supervised the Eastern Department. Charles Hubert Montgomery, a junior and assistant clerk, was also much involved in Romanian affairs.

49 Schroeder 1976, 16.

50 Kennedy received his baronetcy in 1901. Apart from ministers, several consuls and other legation personnel are mentioned in this work.

The Conjoint Committee archives are stored in the London Metropolitan Archives, along with other documents of the Board of Deputies of British Jews.[51] The Conjoint minutes are often brief and unfortunately they do not always unveil the processes behind public action. Nevertheless, some insight into the opinions of individual members of the Conjoint Committee can be found. Conjoint correspondence is available for certain years and certain topics only, but what is available is exceptionally fascinating. For example, the files dating from 1913-1914 are astonishingly detailed on private intrigues behind the scenes, especially those relating to the activities of Lucien Wolf. Minute books of the Board of Deputies shed light on how much — or little — of the confidential Conjoint manoeuvres were told to the parent body.

Additional information has been drawn from the Gaster Papers, deposited in the University College Library in London. Moses Gaster (1856-1939), the Romanian-born Haham (Chief Rabbi) of the Sephardi community in London, produced and collected a large number of documents, approximately 170,000 items in all. The collection includes a vast array of material: letters, diaries, documents of Anglo-Jewish organisations in which Gaster was a member, pamphlets, newspaper cuttings, and photographs. The Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) archives in Paris, France, contain a colossal assortment of material on Jewish affairs, including an excellent collection on Romanian matters. These collections have been consulted when they have been relevant to the actions and opinions of the British Jewry and, also, when they provide information on the situation in Romania that is not available elsewhere. It should be kept in mind that the present study will not address the role of the Alliance Israélite Universelle or the French Jewry as such — the activities of the French Jews are discussed only when they bear significance on the British Jewry.

Anglo-Jewish organisations have published some extremely valuable and detailed document collections and annual reports. *The Anglo-Jewish Association Annual Reports* and the *Board of Deputies Annual Reports* contain a section on the Romanian situation in every issue. These reports shed some light into the Conjoint Committee's activities. Based on the annual reports, it is also interesting to note how much information the Conjoint and the leaders of its parent bodies were willing to release to the Jewish public. *The Jewish Board of Guardians Annual Reports* include some information on the numbers of Romanian immigrants in Britain and on the Board of Guardians' opinion on Romanian migrants during the migration crisis of 1900. The Conjoint Committee printed an extensive volume of correspondence in 1919, called *Correspondence with His Majesty's Government Relative to the Treaty Rights of the Jews of Roumania and Civil and Religious Liberty in the Near East*, although the majority of the documents in the collection can also be found in the FO series.

A major source, with excellent material on Romanian Jews and the attitudes of British Jews towards them, is the Anglo-Jewish weekly newspaper,

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[51] Some items that obviously relate to Romanian Jews were unavailable for consultation due to their poor condition. Some files were still closed.

the *Jewish Chronicle*. Naturally, the paper is uncritically pro-Jewish, often exaggerating the misery in Romania or writing in a shamelessly sentimental tone. The *Jewish Chronicle* offered a vehicle for the British Jews for making their views known and for discussing the matters of Jewish interest. Besides the actual editorial opinion of the paper, dissenting views within the community were shown in the letters and opinion pieces. Particularly helpful are its features on meetings of Jewish organisations, which were reported on in full detail. Coverage on foreign affairs, including Romania, was often exhaustive.

The editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1878-1902 was Asher Myers, who was a professional journalist working for the owners Israel Davis and Montagu Samuel. During Myers's term, the *Jewish Chronicle* tended to agree with the leaders of the community over political issues such as the immigration question and the Romanian problem. A more or less similar approach continued after Myers's death in 1902, after which the real power lay more firmly in the hands of the owner, Israel Davis, although there was also an editor in charge, Morris Duparc.[52] It has to be noted that the identity of the correspondents and reporters of the *Jewish Chronicle* is almost never mentioned in the articles.[53]

In December 1906, the *Jewish Chronicle* was bought by Leopold Greenberg, who then controlled the paper until 1931. Greenberg was a Zionist, and this of course showed in the editorial policy of the paper, marking a departure from the previous anti-Zionist stance. The paper was revamped and modernised. At the same time, the *Jewish Chronicle* began to express more critical views on the activities of the Jewish establishment, for example on the policies of the Board of Deputies of the British Jews.[54]

In this study, the views of the British press will also be inspected, when appropriate, in order to acquire a deeper understanding of how the attitudes of the Anglo-Jewry and the British government were reflected in the press. This will not been done systematically, but by concentrating on certain key points such 1900 (the emigration wave), 1902 (Hay's note), 1907 (the Romanian Peasant Revolt), and 1913 (the Balkan Wars). *The Times* has perhaps the most comprehensive coverage.

Paul Kennedy argues that the importance of the press and public opinion should not be overestimated. He also points out that the press was able to influence the atmosphere with xenophobic or alarmist stories.[55] The latter argument can be applied to the Romanian Jewish question in two different ways. On the one hand, articles that were damaging to the Jewish interests appeared, especially when mass migration in the early years of the century raised fear of Jewish masses settling in Britain. Conversely, the British press sometimes carried stories in which the miserable conditions of Romanian Jews were strongly underlined and the Romanian government was blamed for the

52 Cesarani 1994, 67, 75, 95.

53 Cesarani 1994, xi.

54 Cesarani 1994, 103, 111-112. Greenberg wrote the editorials himself.

55 Kennedy 1981, 56-57.

situation. The press mainly took interest in the Romanian Jewish question at times of crisis, such as the Romanian Peasant Revolt of 1907.

Romanian official documents complement British sources and clarify the Romanian position. Two series of publications should particularly be mentioned. The Romanian official publication *Monitorul Oficial* incorporates information on anti-Jewish legislation and parliamentary speeches of political leaders on the Jewish question. Romanian censuses contain some useful data on Jewish statistics; although one has to remember to take account of the unavoidable inaccuracies and the possibility of misrepresentation. When examining 'attitudes of Romanians' in this study, it is mainly the opinions of Romanian elites that are taken into account. When the sentiments of the lower strata of society, such as peasants, are addressed, it is always clearly indicated.

A large number of pamphlets and books in the Romanian Jewish question were published during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Two opposite tendencies prevailed in the publications: they were either pro-Jewish or pro-Romanian. Contemporary pamphlets were not written by British Jews very often, and thus they are not very helpful for the opinions of the British Jewry. However, some of them are very useful sources for certain details, such as anti-Jewish legislation in Romania, although information on legislation can also be gathered from the *Monitorul Oficial*. Edmond Sincerus's *Les juifs en Roumanie: Depuis le Traite de Berlin jusqu´a ce jour: les lois et leurs concequences* (1901) remains the most extensive account on anti-Jewish legislation in Romania. As an example of a standard pro-Romanian pamphlet, Jean Lahovary's *La Question Israélite en Roumanie* (1902) can be mentioned.[56] International legal aspects and the legal position of the Jews were often emphasised in contemporary writings. Francis Rey, a French specialist in international law, produced articles (in 1903 and, later, in 1925) on the aspects of international law in relation to the Romanian Jewish question; these are essential in understanding how contemporaries saw the international treaties, such as the Treaty of Berlin.

[56] Edmond Sincerus was Elias Schwarzfeld's pseudonym. Schwarzfeld was a Romanian Jewish novelist and historian who was expelled from Romania in 1885 after being active in the campaign for Jewish emancipation. Jean Lahovary was a Romanian politician.

2 THE ROMANIAN JEWISH QUESTION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

2.1 The rise of the Jewish question

Permanent Jewish settlements had existed since the Middle Ages in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia — sometimes also called the Danubian Principalities. Wallachia, the southern part of future Romania, and Moldavia, the north-eastern territory, had been ruled by native princes in the Middle Ages. In the early 16th century, the principalities came under Ottoman rule. In an effort to ward off the growing influence of Russia in the early 18th century, the Ottoman government established the Phanariot system. Moldavia and Wallachia were ruled through Ottoman-appointed hospodars, usually members of Greek families from the Phanar district of Constantinople. Russia exerted a great influence after 1750 and continued to do so for a century.

Most Jews had arrived in order to establish small towns and to engage in trade. The number of Jews in the area grew slowly until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The juridical situation of Jews and popular attitudes towards them varied, often depending on individual rulers and economic fluctuations.[1] Compared to their treatment in Russia, Jews were treated relatively benignly in the Principalities.

The position of Jews in the Danubian Principalities before the mid-nineteenth century was restricted by a number of legal regulations, which did not form a consistent unity that could be called a special policy on Jews. Regulations on Jewish life that were in force in the eighteenth century included higher taxes for Jews, occupational restrictions, a prohibition on buying various kinds of property in the villages, and a ban on building synagogues made of stone. Non-Christians could not testify in court or marry Christians. These

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1 For the early history of Romanian Jews, see, for example, Schwarzfeld 1901a, 26- 54. Brociner 1910 is much more detailed, but Schwarzfeld presents a compact overview on the development of the situation.

measures were not originally directed against Jews in particular, but against non-Christians in general.[2]

The Moldavian northern border was open, without any serious entry controls. The opportunity to move south was taken by many Polish Jews who escaped the disturbances related to the partitions of Poland and the subsequent repressive Russian rule. During the reign of Czar Nicholas I, Russian anti-Jewish policy gained strength, in the shape, for example, of harsh military service. Immigration of Jews from Russia to the Danubian Principalities escalated at the same time. The Jews came mainly from the so-called Pale of Settlement — the territory that Russia had acquired in the partitions of Poland, and, in principle, the only region in the Russian Empire in which Jews were allowed to reside. Economic aspects also played a role in Jewish immigration. The Treaty of Adrianople of 1829 opened Moldavian frontiers to European trade. This increased the influence of Jewish merchants, especially in the absence of a native Romanian commercial middle class. Thereafter, Jewish immigration to the Principalities from Russia, as well as from Austrian Galicia and the district just north of the Moldavian border, Bucovina, was substantial until the end of the century.[3]

By the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, Moldavia and Wallachia, although still nominally under Turkish control, had become more autonomous and Russian control was further reinforced. The first major document codifying the Jewish legal position in the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia was the Organic Statutes of 1831/1832. The Statutes were legal codes that together functioned as the constitution in the Principalities. Among other stipulations, the Statutes limited political rights to the Greek Orthodox population. There were also special Jewish taxes. Those aliens who were not able to support themselves were classified as vagabonds and were liable for expulsion. This measure had far-reaching consequences in the late nineteenth century. Moldavia's statutes on Jews were harsher than Wallachia's. Generally, the regulations were restrictive to a certain degree but could be circumvented, for instance, by bribery.[4] However, articulated anti-Jewish feeling in Romania truly began to show after the mid-nineteenth century. This was the time when the Principalities were on their way towards unification and national independence.

The situation of Jews in the Principalities was first discussed internationally in the 1850s. After the Crimean War, the problem of Romanian status and the degree of its autonomy under Turkish rule was addressed by the Great European Powers. The Jewish problem was also touched on in this context. The Convention of Paris in 1858 granted the Romanian provinces autonomous status, and they were placed under the joint protection of the Powers.[5]

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2 Kellogg 1995, 46. Non-Christians referred to both Muslims and Jews.

3 Parkes 1946, 93-94.

4 Butnaru 1992, 17; Kellogg 1995, 47; Wolloch 1988, 43.

5 Jelavich 1977, 115. See Appendix.

Article 46 of the Paris Convention dealt with the Jewish situation in the Principalities: all Moldavians and Wallachians were to be equal before the law and equal with regard to taxation and admission to public employment. Moldavians and Wallachians of the Christian faith were to enjoy political rights, which *could* later be extended to persons of other religions. This meant that civil rights were guaranteed to all inhabitants, but political rights only to the Christians.[6] It had been the original intention of the Powers to emancipate the Romanian Jews gradually through Romanian legislation. However, the Romanians planned nothing of the sort. On the contrary, the situation of the Jews worsened in the second half of the 19th century.

Prince Alexandru Ion Cuza, after having been elected as prince both in Moldavia and Wallachia (resulting in a personal union of the Principalities[7]), made some promises to the Jewish population on the improvement of their legal status. The Civil Code of 1865 implied that there was to be gradual emancipation in accordance with the Convention of Paris and gave Jews the possibility to acquire citizen's status.[8]

However, the Civil Code was of no consequence, as Cuza was overthrown and a new prince, Carol I, was elected in 1866. Carol I (or Charles I), from the German house of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, was the Prince of Romania between 1866 and 1881, and the King of Romania between 1881 and 1914.[9] At the beginning of Carol's rule, in 1866, a new Constitution was passed. The constitution took a firm stand: it stated bluntly that only Christians could become Romanian citizens.[10]

As a rule, accounts and interpretations of the incidents of the 1860s and 1870s either tend to emphasise the anti-Semitism of the Romanian government or, at the other extreme, attempt to explain the government activities as self-preservation and 'normal' measures against vagabond aliens. The situation was inflammable between 1866 and 1877; this was a period of frenzied action around the Jewish question. The Romanian public engaged in occasional small-scale anti-Jewish disturbances, while the Romanian government passed anti-Jewish legislation. Western Jews hurried to help their fellow believers, and the United States and West European Powers protested against the treatment of Romanian Jews.[11]

Among the most well-known episodes of the era were the notorious Brătianu circulars of 1867 which ordered the expulsion of vagabond Jews, the

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6 Rey 1903, 464; Fink 2004, 11.

7 Prior to the Crimean War, the name *Danubian Principalities* was generally used. Then, in the Convention of Paris 1858, the name *United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia* was adopted into international usage. In 1859, the Romanians themselves introduced the name *Romania* in the domestic context, although this name was notrecognised internationally. The international community as a whole adopted the name only after the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

8 Wolloch 1988, 53-57.

9 For a short overview on this period, see Butnaru 1992, 14-16.

10 Wolloch 1988, 57.

11 For a standard Western overview on Romanian history during this period, see, for example, Durandin 1995, 176-182.

drowning of some expelled Jews in the Danube in 1867, and a series of pogroms and arrests of Jews following a theft of church valuables in Southern Bessarabia[12] in 1872.[13] Adding to the controversy, the United States government sent Benjamin F. Peixotto, a Jew himself, to Bucharest as an American consul. During his time in Romania, 1870-1876, Peixotto acted vigorously on behalf of Romanian Jews.[14]

What were the reasons for the emergence of the Romanian Jewish question in the international arena? Lloyd A. Cohen has tried to produce an answer. It would seem that the Jewish question should have been of minor importance in the era of Romanian nation building. However, according to Cohen, it grew out of proportion for three main reasons. The first was the frequently mentioned massive influx of Jews to Moldavia. The second component was the inability of any Romanian government to find a solution to the Jewish question. Finally, the interference of the international Jewry and foreign governments complicated the issue.[15] On the other hand, it was precisely because of the newly emerged national framework that the Jewish presence seemed more disturbing.

The Jewish question was hence extended from a purely domestic issue to an international problem, which further complicated matters. Now, it was not only a question of finding a compromise solution within Romania, but also of reconciling the outside forces. The Romanian Jews, or rather a vocal minority of them, believed that the intervention of their Western coreligionists would be an answer to their problems. This led to protests from foreign Jews, who first tried to receive assurances from the Romanian leaders. However, the attempts of Jewish organisations failed, and they began to request action from their respective governments. The Western Jewry indeed managed to persuade the governments of their home countries to intervene in the Romanian situation. The motivations of the Western governments included, on one hand, genuine humanitarian concern and questions of conscience, due to their treatment of Jews in their own countries, and, on the other hand, willingness to use the Jewish question as a tool to meddle in Balkan affairs.[16] These motives were to be apparent in the early twentieth century as well.

Although Cohen's observations appear to be accurate for the most part, the process of internationalisation was not quite as straightforward as he claims.

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12 Southern Bessarabia, acquired in 1856, was ceded to Russia again in 1878. The matter caused some friction between Russia and Romania.

13 A separate British State Papers volume, *Correspondence Respecting the Condition and Treatment of the Jews in Servia and Roumania, 1867-1876*, discusses the issue from the British viewpoint. For a detailed description of the era and for the French viewpoint, see Iancu 1978 and Iancu 1980. On the role of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, albeit very briefly, there is Chouraqui 1965, 87-100. On the Brătianu circulars, see also Stan & Ioşa, 129-133, for a Romanian interpretation. The Romanian Prime Minister was Ion C. Brătianu (1821-1891), not to be confused with his son Ion I. C. Brătianu (1864-1927), also a Romanian politician.

14 Kohler and Wolf 1916, 12-24. On the Peixotto episode, there is also Gartner 1974.

15 L. Cohen 1982, 195, 197.

16 L. Cohen 1982, 200-202.

The intervention of the international Jewry and the intervention of the West European governments happened simultaneously in fact, with the first active period in both cases being the 1860s. Nevertheless, Cohen sees the stance of Romanian Jews as decisive: they believed that foreign intervention would help, and they encouraged their coreligionists abroad to interfere. It is not quite clear whether Cohen holds the Romanian Jews fully responsible, or whether he also thinks that to some extent the foreign Jewry became interested in the Romanian problem without any agitation from Romania, as part of a natural interest in the Jewish issues everywhere.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of significant Jewish organisations were established in Western and Central Europe. They were often deeply involved in the battle for Jewish emancipation abroad. The Alliance Israélite Universelle, international in name but French in practice, was the most important of these new creations. In Britain, the Anglo-Jewish Association was established in 1871 as a branch of the Alliance Israélite Universelle.[17] The British Jews had first become involved in intervention on behalf of foreign Jews in 1840, in the 'Damascus blood libel case'. Sir Moses Montefiore, an Anglo-Jewish notable, travelled to the Near East with a French Jewish leader, Adolphe Crémieux, to request the release of the Jews who had been imprisoned for an alleged ritual murder. The undertaking was successful. In the following decades, Montefiore carried out other missions to defend persecuted Jews abroad, in Russia, Italy, and Romania. None of these efforts resulted, however, in a long-lasting improvement in Jewish status.[18]

The approaches of Romania and the Great Powers to the Jewish question were so different that there could be no mutual understanding at the international level. The starting point for the Western Powers was religious freedom; they emphasised the rights of the Romanian Jews as people of the Jewish religion, who should not be discriminated against because of their religion. Romania, on the other hand, approached the question from the viewpoint of national values and economic considerations. The Jews were seen as a threatening group of foreigners invading Romania. As a rule, the Romanians did not lay emphasis on the role of the Jewish religion.[19]

It was often argued on the part of the Romanians that Jews living in Romania were different from those in the West. Fritz Stern has drawn an interesting parallel in order to clarify the viewpoint of the opposing sides. According to Stern, the Jews of Iaşi (Jassy) were undoubtedly different from those of, say, Paris, but so too were the other inhabitants of Paris different from the people of Bucharest.[20]

When demanding Jewish equality of the West European type for Romanian Jews, the Great Powers and particularly the Western Jewries overlooked the fundamental differences in the Romanian situation compared to

17 Endelman 2002, 121-122; Levene 1992, 2.

18 Endelman 2002, 122-123. See also Feldman 2001, 232-248.

19 Schuster 1939, 94.

20 Stern 1977, 356.

the situation prevailing in the West. There were three main differences. Firstly, the percentage of Jews in Romania was much larger than in Western Europe; it was not more than one per cent in any Western European country. Moreover, the numbers of Jews in the West were not likely to rise substantially in the near future, whereas Jewish immigration to Romania continued into the late nineteenth century. Secondly, the Jews in Romania enjoyed a monopoly in many sectors of the economy, while in the West this was not the case. Finally, there was the question of assimilation and integration. In Romania, there had been no period of assimilation that could have resulted in Jewish political rights like those in Western Europe.[21]

At the same time, the Romanian Jews were not satisfied with their position, which was basically insecure despite their economic success. They wanted to broaden their field of activity, for example into public and administrative positions. Parkes evaluates that 'the situation was intolerable to both sides, and neither side was in the least to blame.'[22] This assessment is unusual. Interpretations of the Jewish situation in Romania that claim to understand the viewpoints of both ethnic groups are hard to find, apart from a quite similar one by Paul E. Michelson, who remarks that there is no balanced treatment of the Jewish problem in Romania. He believes this is mostly because the issue was a complex one and both sides had some truth in their arguments while continually ignoring the other's viewpoint.[23]

The 'anti-Romanian' attitude of the British government has been much discussed and often exaggerated, especially in older studies on the subject. Britain, although not always very favourable towards Romanian ambitions, did make compromises on the Jewish issue, and ended up favouring the union of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.[24]

Between 1866 and 1877 British interests in Romania were mainly economic, focusing on railway lines and other transport issues. Relations between the two countries (although Romania was not yet independent) were limited, and the British tended to view Romanian affairs in the context of wider Great Power policy issues in the Balkan area. Moreover, the British treated the Principalities as an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, thus linking Romanian

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21 Parkes 1946, 97. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century 'assimilation' often referred to a phenomenon that could today be termed 'acculturation' or 'integration'. For modern usage of the terms in Jewish studies, see for example, Nathans 2001, 11. According to Nathans, 'assimilation should be understood as a process culminating in the disappearance of a given group as a recognizably distinct element within a larger society. Acculturation signifies a form of adaptation to the surrounding society that alters rather than erases the criteria of difference, especially in the realm of culture and identity. Integration is the counterpart of acculturation (though the two do not necessarily go hand in hand) in the social realm — whether institutional (e.g., schooling), geographic (patterns of residential settlement), or economic (occupational profile).'

22 Parkes 1946, 97-98.

23 Michelson 1987, 166.

24 Funderburk 1982, 429; Marinescu 1983, 238-239. Both Marinescu and Funderbunk dismiss the theory of the consistent anti-Romanian attitude of the British government. For an opposite view, see Riker 1931.

affairs with those relating to Turkish interests.[25] As Nicolae Iorga argued in his classic study on the British-Romanian relations, 'English interests in the Principalities were purely economical'.[26] During this period, however, Britain also became very interested in the treatment of Romanian Jews.

There was a considerable amount of disagreement over the issue of legal sovereignty over Jews, and this is where the issue of the consular jurisdiction of the Great Powers comes into the picture. The problem from the Romanian national point of view, on the eve of their independence, was that foreigners were enjoying prerogatives that gave them a competitive edge over native Romanians in commerce. This was a situation the Romanians were not happy to tolerate. There was also the question of dual nationality and the problem of determining which government actually held legal sovereignty over Jewish newcomers in Romania. The Moldavians and Wallachians argued that they held suzerainty over the Jews because of their continuing residence in Moldavian and Wallachian territory. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Jews argued that they were under the protection of the countries from which they had arrived, especially since the Romanians refused to give them citizenship rights. This was true: sometimes Jews continued indeed to be under foreign protection and consular jurisdiction, and some of them newly appealed for foreign protection. This happened not only by claiming, for example, Austrian protection, if Austria was the country of origin, but also by registering with agents of countries like Britain and France.[27]

The privileged status of foreigners in pre-independent Romania derived from the arrangements between the Western Powers and the Ottoman Empire, and was also a sign of the dependent position of the Danubian Principalities. When foreign states acquired trading rights with the Ottoman dominions, including the Danubian Principalities, they secured for their nationals special rights to immunity from Turkish law. These rights were defined in a series of 'capitulations', which were signed by the Ottomans with several Powers mainly in the eighteenth century; although Great Britain had already signed them in 1675. As a result, foreign consuls were allowed to exert some sovereign rights. Civil and criminal disputes involving foreign nationals were handled by their respective consuls in accordance with the laws of their own countries, rather than according to Turkish laws or the legislation of the Danubian Principalities. Furthermore, a foreigner could not be expelled without the consent of his consul.[28] Eventually, Romania chose to try to solve the problem of consular jurisdiction by signing bilateral consular treaties with the Powers.[29]

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25 Funderburk 1982, 430; Marinescu 1983, 238-239.

26 Iorga 1931, 96. Iorga did not appreciate the British attitude over the Jewish question.

27 L. Cohen 1982, 198-199. For example, during the anti-Jewish trouble in 1867, many Jews residing in Moldavia sought the protection of the British consulate, but the British representatives did not agree to take them under their wing. Henriques 1985, 237.

28 Kellogg 1995, 39; Riker 1931, 10-11.

29 Kellogg 1995, 40.

An example from 1868 shows that consular jurisdiction mattered and was advantageous to Jews who were eligible for it: 30 Jews, who were Austrian subjects, were injured when a synagogue was plundered in Galați. After some negotiations, Romanians paid compensation to the Austrian consul for damages to Austrian subjects. Several non-Austrian Jews who had been maltreated on the same occasion were not protected by any country and were not given any reimbursement.[30]

2.2 The Treaty of Berlin

In 1877, when the war broke out between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, Romania sided with the Russians and declared independence. The Romanian situation was one of the issues discussed at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. The Congress promised to recognise Romanian independence on the condition that Romania guaranteed equal rights to persons of all religious confessions. The same principle applied to Serbia and Montenegro, but Romania was the only country in which problems arose; still, it has to be remembered that the earlier Serbian record on the treatment of Jews was not entirely clean either. The intention of the Great Powers[31] was to decide the matter and to grant Romanian citizenship to Jews, in order to avoid the kind of commotion that had repeatedly occurred during the two previous decades.[32]

The contribution of West European Jews, in insisting that Jewish rights should be included in the Treaty of Berlin, was significant.[33] In Britain, the leaders of the Anglo-Jewry recognised the need for concerted diplomatic action. The Conjoint Foreign Committee was therefore established by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association. [34]

Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty related to the Romanian Jewish question:

> 'In Roumania the difference of religious creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights, admission to public employments, functions, and honours, or the exercise of the various professions and industries in any locality whatsoever.
>
> The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship shall be assured to all persons belonging to the Roumanian State, as well as to foreigners, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organization of the different communions, or to their relations with their spiritual chiefs.

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30 Kellogg 1995, 52.

31 The Great Powers that were present in the Congress of Berlin were Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Turkey.

32 Welter 1989, 133.

33 For Jewish influence and the general aspects of the Jewish question at the Berlin Congress, see Iancu 1987, 47-54 and Kohler & Wolf 1916, 40-52. On the efforts of the British Jews, see BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meetings, 6 June 1878, 22 July 1878 and 9 Sept. 1878. For an account of the activities of the German Jewry, see Gelber 1960.

34 Levene 1992, 5-6.

> The subjects and citizens of all the Powers, traders or others, shall be treated in Roumania, without distinction of creed, on a footing of perfect equality.'[35]

The religious minorities in other Balkan countries were addressed in separate articles: Bulgaria in Article 5, Montenegro in 27 and Serbia in 35. These were otherwise similar to the Romanian article, but omitted the provision on the equal treatment of foreign subjects, traders or other. Ottoman minority matters, namely Macedonia and Armenia, were also addressed.[36]

The reaction in Romania was one of infuriation, and the Romanian government embarked on a crusade to persuade the Great Powers to drop the controversial article. The Powers did not accept the repeal of Article 44, so Romania then tried to gain concessions over the paragraph's interpretation. A diplomatic confrontation followed, lasting one and a half years. The main question was whether all Jews residing in Romania were to be granted political rights and if not, to which categories of Jews could full citizenship be extended.

The British government had to choose between a prompt recognition of Romania after the Berlin Congress and the postponement of recognition until the Jewish problem had been settled satisfactorily. On one hand, Britain wished for an early recognition in order to strengthen Romania and thus help to get the Russian troops that remained in the area out as soon as possible. On the other hand, for reasons of international co-operation in other fields, Britain did not want to alienate Germany and France, which, for their own reasons, both favoured finding a full solution to the problem of Jewish emancipation.[37]

Germany's role seems to have been decisive. The Jewish question was entwined with trouble that had arisen over the Romanian railways. Bethel Henry Strousberg, a convert of German Jewish descent, won a concession to build several railway lines in Romania in 1868. In 1870, Strousberg had to announce his inability to pay interest.[38] Since the original contract had not been sufficiently clear or detailed, the Romanians and Strousberg quarrelled over who should take care of the interest payments. All this led to bad blood towards Germany in Romania. In 1871, Bismarck delegated the railway business to Gerson (von) Bleichröder and another banker, Adoph Hansemann of the

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35 *Major Peace Treaties II*, Treaty of Berlin, 975-997. Another condition for the recognition of Romanian independence was imposed in Article 45: Romania was forced to hand Southern Bessarabia over to Russia. This clause did not cause international problems in the long run, although the Romanians were by no means pleased about this article either.

36 *Major Peace Treaties II*, Treaty of Berlin, 975-997.

37 Medlicott 1933a, 354-355. The problem of the recognition of Romanian independence, i.e. whether the Powers were willing to recognise Romania based on the conditions Romania offered, has been discussed in detail by W. N. Medlicott in his classic 1933 two-part article. Medlicott has used the Foreign Office documents from 1878-1880 extensively, many of which are also printed in the State Papers series referred to below. As Medlicott's work is so thorough, I have chosen not to return to the original FO documents here.

38 Stern 1977, 359-363. There is a very detailed account on the whole railway question, and not only the Strousberg affair, in Maier 1989, 170-262. Especially on Strousberg, Bismarck, and Bleichröder, see 172-182, 186-198.

Disconto Gesellschaft, and urged them to settle matters with Romania.[39] Romania was eager to purchase the railways either completely or partially, and of course aimed for the best possible terms. However, the international excitement over the Jewish question offered the Germans an opportunity to force Romania into a less favourable railway settlement.[40]

From autumn 1878 onwards, Bismarck appeared to be the champion of Romanian Jews and the most eager supporter of a strict enforcement of Article 44. He wanted to use the Jewish question to coerce Romania in the railway matter.[41] Austria did not want to make a big issue out of the Jewish question and favoured a quick normalisation of diplomatic relations with Romania. Russia also acknowledged Romania's sovereignty, and Italy followed earlier than the other three remaining Powers. Britain, and Prime Minister Salisbury, would probably have preferred the Austrian line of action, despite Britain's traditional interests in Jewish emancipation. Britain wanted to settle the trade relations between the countries and to draw up a commercial treaty. However, Bismarck pushed for the complete fulfilment of the religious liberty clauses and France agreed so Britain eventually adopted this course as well. Therefore, these three Powers insisted that a formal acceptance of the conditions included in the Berlin Treaty was required on the part of Romania prior to recognition of its independence.[42]

The British government tended to favour a solution that would have given the Jews who were born in Romania, so-called 'indigenous Jews', full citizenship rights, but that would have left aside the problem of the 'foreign' Jews, who had not been born in Romania.[43] In March 1879, the British representative in Bucharest, William White, observed that, in regard to the fulfilment of the Berlin articles, there was a considerable discrepancy between the expectations of 'some circles in Berlin and Paris' and the interpretation of the Romanians. He remarked that the Romanians would not agree to the full emancipation of all Jews residing in Romania, irrespective of origin.[44]

Naturally, the Jewish leaders in Britain were suspicious of Romania's behaviour and, through their newly established foreign policy organisation, the Conjoint Committee, urged the British government to postpone the recognition of Romanian independence until Romania complied fully with the Berlin articles. British Jews dismissed Romania's suggestions of distinguishing between those Jews who could be naturalised and those who could not.[45]

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39 Stern 1977, 365

40 Medlicott 1933a, 356, 360-361; Medlicott 1933b, 574-575. Stern criticises Medlicott's interpretation of Bismarck's and Bleichröder's role. Stern 1977, 582 (in endnotes).

41 Stern 1977, 382-385, 392.

42 Medlicott 1933a, 357-359.

43 Medlicott 1933b, 572-573.

44 *State Papers 1880*, no 22, British Minister in Bucharest William White to Foreign Secretary Marquess of Salisbury, 3 March 1879.

45 *State Papers 1880*, no 119, President of AJA Baron Henry de Worms and President of the BDBJ Joseph M. Montefiore, (i.e. the Conjoint Committee) to Salisbury, 11 Nov. 1879.

The Romanian Parliament passed an amendment, Article 7, to the Constitution on 13 / 25 October 1879[46]. The new piece of legislation adopted the principle of individual naturalisation and stipulated that religion did not form an obstacle to the acquisition of civil and political rights.[47]

The route by which a 'foreigner' could obtain naturalisation was explained in detail, and conditions for naturalisation were given. A person wishing to be naturalised had to send off an application to the government, after which he had to reside in Romania for ten years and prove that he was useful to the country. Exemptions could be made from the ten-year domicile requirement if the applicant was exceptionally distinguished (for example, if he had founded a large company) or if he and also his parents had lived in Romania for all their lives. In addition, Jewish war veterans of the War of Independence were naturalised collectively. All other naturalisations, however, were to be granted individually, each requiring a separate consideration in Parliament.[48]

Germany adopted a new approach to the Romanian situation in autumn 1879 when it formed an alliance with Austria. As the Austrians were very willing to normalise relations with Romania, the Germans could not ignore this viewpoint. At the same time, Prime Minister Sturdza at last managed to secure the final settlement on the railway issue.[49] German shareholders were offered securities that were issued by the Romanian government and guaranteed by mortgages on the railways and revenue from the state tobacco monopoly.[50] The railway settlement, as negotiated in the previous autumn, was finally ratified by the Romanian Parliament on 2 February 1880 and consequently accepted by bankers Bleichröder and Hansemann.[51]

Article 7, although very narrow in its interpretation of the Treaty of Berlin, satisfied the Great Powers. The dispute was finally settled when Britain, Germany, and France together recognised the independence of Romania on 20 February 1880. The first Anglo-Romanian commercial treaty was signed immediately after Britain recognised Romanian independence. The Great Powers, however, promised to observe the application of the naturalisation law and expressed their hope that Romania would eventually extend the mechanism of naturalisation. The British government argued that the new constitutional provisions could not be considered to be a complete fulfilment of the articles of the Berlin Treaty.[52] The implications of the recognition of

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46 The Julian calendar was in use in Romania until the First World War. It was 12 days earlier than the Gregorian calendar in the 19th century, and 13 days earlier in the 20th century. Throughout this work, dates are given in the Gregorian calendar, except if mentioning some important dates of Romanian events, when the dates are given in both calendars.

47 *Monitorul Oficial*,13/25 Oct. 1879

48 *Monitorul Oficial*,13/25 Oct. 1879; Iancu 1987, 82-88; Rey 1903, 484-485; Wolloch 1988, 68-69.

49 Medlicott 1933b, 584-585.

50 Kellogg 1995, 211, 215.

51 Stern 1977, 391.

52 *State Papers 1880*, no 149, White to Salisbury, 20 Feb. 1880; Cernovodeanu 1990, 255-256.

independence were to cause confusion in later years as far as the intervention rights of the Powers were concerned.

The Romanians had so far gained a victory in the battle over the Jewish rights, despite the efforts of the Western Powers. The Romanian government held its course determinedly, believing that it was vital to the interests of the country that Jews did not become citizens. The Great Powers surrendered under the persistence of the Romanians; after all, the situation of the Romanian Jews was hardly the most significant political question at the time. Occasional foreign protests in the late nineteenth century did not have any effect on Romania, and the Romanian Jewish cause was not at the centre of international attention during the two final decades of the century.

From an international point of view, the position of Romanian Jews in the period discussed in this work, i.e. 1900-1914, should have been based on the stipulations of the Congress of Berlin. From an internal Romanian point of view, the Jewish legal position in the country was based on Article VII of the Constitution, which defined the conditions of citizenship. Other legal restrictions relating to foreigners, or to Jews, could be derived from this article. Although citizenship legislation was supposedly an outcome of the Berlin Treaty clauses, there was a gap between the interpretation of the clauses by Romania and their original meaning.

According to Beate Welter, the Romanian Jews were no longer an issue in international politics after the consular agreement of 1899 with Austria. However, it is open to question whether the consular treaty was the decisive factor in the Jewish question. Welter also claims that from the 1880s onwards, Romania was seen as an interesting possible ally in the Balkans by almost all the Great Powers, and nobody wanted to irritate her. Another reason why the Romanian Jews were forgotten in international politics was the increasing European involvement in colonial business overseas.[53]

Furthermore, Welter argues that when the sovereignty of Romania was recognised in 1880, the status of the Great Powers as guarantors, as defined in the 1858 Treaty of Paris, ended, and they could no longer intervene in Romanian affairs.[54] Usually the situation was comprehended differently, however. The contemporaries (outside Romania) held that the Powers were entitled to interfere if the terms of the Berlin Treaty were broken. This was also the attitude of the British government. The Treaty of Berlin was still often referred to in 1880-1914, and the possibility of intervention was brought up frequently, not only in the context of the Jewish question, but in discussing other Balkan problems as well.

Although the British government had been friendly to the Jewish cause, it had simply not been able to impose Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty on Romania in the late nineteenth century. This could only have been done effectively in co-

53 Welter 1989, 202. Welter holds the consular treaty between Romania and Austria as very important, which is unusual as other historians tend not to mention it at all. The most likely explanation for this is perhaps the fact that Welter relies, for the most part, on the Austrian archival sources.

54 Welter 1989, 156.

operation with the other Great Powers. The concert of Europe had begun to break up, and bloc rivalry had entered the scene, which also decreased the possibilities for international Jewish co-operation. The Powers were less willing to act as a united group for a common cause, for example over the Jewish issue.[55]

In Britain, international intervention based on Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty was considered to be possible in theory, and Article 44 was interpreted to allow permanent control of the Romanian Jewish situation. The standard Romanian view was the opposite: the Powers' right of intervention had ceased when they had recognised Romanian independence in 1880 and, at the same time, effectively accepted the Romanian interpretation of the Jewish rights. The text of the treaty was favourable to the Romanian interpretation. Article 44 imposed a condition for the recognition of Romania without direct reference to any follow-up procedures.[56] This was apparent when compared to Article 61, which dealt with the position of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. After the duties of the Porte were described, a provision on Great Power supervision followed:

> 'It [the Porte] will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application.'[57]

The Armenian article led to a great deal of meddling by the Powers, especially by Britain, which was the keenest in pushing through reforms, engaging in diplomatic manoeuvres, and urging fellow Powers to intervene. The Powers even managed to embark on joint diplomatic action on some occasions.[58] As nothing of the sort was included in the provisions concerning Romania, the Romanian interpretation appears to have been correct from the strict international legal point of view. Yet the dominant international perception was that the right to intervene by the Powers existed. The Powers had promised to observe the application of the Romanian citizenship law when they had recognised Romanian independence, although the promise itself was not based on any formal international arrangements.

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55 Black 1988, 303; Levene 1992, 6-8.

56 Rey 1903, 509-510; Macartney 1934, 168. For a more modern argument against the right of intervention after the recognition of Romanian independence, see Welter 1989, 156.

57 *Major Peace Treaties II*, Treaty of Berlin, 975-997.

58 Sonyel 1987, 57, 75, 78, 166-167. Sonyel does not discuss the international legal aspects of the Berlin Treaty. For an anti-Armenian and anti-Powers interpretation of the international aspects of the Armenian question, see Öke 1988, p. 89-94. Literature on the Armenian question is abundant, with more or less biased either pro-Armenian or anti-Armenian (i.e. pro-Ottoman) contributions. The main controversy has been over the Armenian massacres (or 'alleged' massacres) during the First World War, but the earlier history of the question is usually presented in considerable detail in order to help the reader understand the later events. See, for example, Dadrian 1995 and Nassibian 1984.

2.3 Features of the Romanian Jewish community

The number of Jews in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, and subsequently in the Kingdom of Romania, had grown steadily and continuously throughout the nineteenth century. Many Jews who had at first settled in Moldavia moved south to Wallachia. In 1899, when there were approximately 267,000 Jews in Romania, nearly 200,000 of them lived in Moldavia. The percentage of Jews out of the total population was 10.5% in Moldavia, while it was considerably smaller in the Wallachian regions Muntenia (2.3%) and Oltenia (0.4%). In Dobrudja, the province on the Black Sea coast that had been acquired in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin, the percentage was 1.6%.[59] As there were many more Jews in Moldavia than in Wallachia, the greatest problems occurred in Moldavia. Both the relative and absolute numbers of Jews were at their highest at the turn of the century, as Table 1 shows. After that, emigration took its toll, and the Jewish population stagnated — and even decreased slightly — while at the same time the total population of the country increased substantially.

TABLE 1 The number of Jews in Romania, 1860-1912.[60]

Year	Number of Jews	Total population	Percentage of Jews
1860	134,168	3,864,848	3.5%
1899	266,652	5,956,690	4.5%
1912	241,088	7,234,920	3.3%

As in the other countries in Eastern Europe, there were hardly any mixed marriages between Jews and non-Jews in Romania. Neither did Jews often convert to Christianity.[61] The great majority of Romanian Jews were Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern and Central European origin. Sephardic Jews of Mediterranean origin numbered approximately 10,000 in 1919, which would suggest that the number was roughly the same in the two previous decades, as the Sephardi community was solidly established without any radical numerical changes one way or another.[62]

According to Moses Mendelsohn, Moldavian Jewish communities could be characterised as typically Eastern European, while Wallachian communities were more of the Western European type. The Wallachian community was long-established, with some families having lived in the area from the sixteenth century onwards, and it was concentrated in the capital city, Bucharest. They

59 *RG 1899*, xlv.

60 *RG 1899*, xliv-xlvi; *BT 1921*, 6, 49, 52,

61 Ettinger 1976, 860.

62 Iancu 1978, 143.

were partly descendants of Jews who had been expelled from Spain in 1492 and who had, consequently, immigrated to the Ottoman Empire. The well-off Sephardic Jews were, to a great extent, integrated into the Romanian culture, although they did not adopt a Romanian national identity.[63]

Moldavian Jews, nearly all of them Ashkenazi, were relative newcomers. However, the East/West-division does not fully apply to the case of Romania. The Wallachian Jews were different from the typical Western European Jewry; for example, the religious reform movement did not quite spread to Wallachia. The Moldavian Jews also differed somewhat from the typical Eastern European model. Their cultural identity was alleged to be weaker than their neighbours' in Russia and in the Eastern parts of Austria-Hungary. Moldavia was considered to be the Jewish hinterland: there were neither important Jewish intellectual centres nor famous Jewish religious scholars situated there. [64]

Most Romanian Jews (80%) lived in towns at the turn of the century. They constituted 19% of the urban population in Romania. The rest of the Jewish population (20%) resided in rural communes, but this was only one per cent of the rural population in Romania as a whole, since the great majority of Romanians (84%) lived in the countryside. In Moldavia, Jews formed the majority population in some northern towns, such as Botoşani and Dorohoi. Iaşi, the Moldavian capital, was one of the Jewish strongholds, with half of the population being Jewish. The biggest Jewish centre in Wallachia was the state capital, Bucharest.[65]

TABLE 2 The occupational distribution of Jews in Romania, 1904.[66]

Agriculture	2.5%
Industry and crafts	42.5%
Commerce and banking	37.9%
Liberal professions	3.2%
Others	13.9%
Total	100%

Industry and crafts were the most common Jewish vocational groups, but commerce and banking were also very significant. The share of liberal professions was surprisingly small, but the explanation for this was that, in principle, medicine was the only profession in Romania in which the Jews were permitted to engage. The Jews in agriculture were estate managers, leaseholders, and middlemen.

63 Mendelsohn 1983, 173-174. Mendelsohn's study discusses the interwar period.

64 Mendelsohn 1983, 173-174.

65 *RG 1899*, xlvi-xlviii; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14, 397.

66 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14, 398.

TABLE 3 The percentage of Jews in some occupations in Romania, 1904.[67]

Merchants	21%
Merchants in the town of Iaşi	75%
Artisans (all)	20%
Engravers	81%
Watchmakers	76%
Bookbinders	75%
Industrial workers	5%
Factory owners	20%
Doctors	38%

Engravers, watchmakers, and bookbinders are especially mentioned in Table 3, along with the other examples, because these particular crafts had an especially large proportion of Jewish artisans. The Jewish proportion of industrial workers was small; in fact, it was about the same as the Jewish percentage of the whole population. The numbers were not as simple as shown in the table, though, because Jewish influence varied considerably between different parts of the country. For instance, in the Botoşani and Dorohoi districts in Northern Moldavia, the percentage of Jewish artisans was 70% and 68% respectively. In the Botoşani district, Jews had a monopoly in a host of trades, including goldsmiths, silversmiths, bookbinders, soap makers, and dyers.[68]

Moses Mendelsohn has argued that the more backward the region in Eastern Europe, the more dominant the Jews were in non-agricultural occupations. He also states, however, that 'predominance in certain economic sectors did not imply wealth'.[69] This was also true in Romania. The Jewish communities were, in fact, quite poor, both in Moldavia as well as across the border in Austrian-ruled Galicia and the territories under Russian rule, Bessarabia and Poland. Naturally, problems emerged when a large number of persons in one locality were engaged in certain typically Jewish trades. The heavy concentration of Jewish craftsmen in Moldavian towns was also given as a factor behind Jewish emigration, which will be discussed in detail below.

2.4 Anti-Jewish legislation

The demographic features of the Romanian Jewish community, described above, were to some extent shaped by the system of anti-Jewish legislation. On the other hand, the particular social and economic characteristics of the Jewish

67 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14, 398. The numbers for the year 1901 are nearly identical. They are printed in Iancu 1978, 242.

68 Schuster 1939, 27. Unfortunately, there are no statistics available on the areas of the weakest Jewish influence in Wallachia.

69 Mendelsohn 1983, 180.

community pointed in a direction to where legislation was 'needed'. Romanian anti-Jewish legislation was extensive, and it dealt with all spheres of life, focusing on economic matters, the political system, and education.[70] Most pieces of legislation were passed in the 1880s and 1890s, although many restrictions had already been in force earlier. Therefore, by 1900, the set of laws was almost complete, and only a few major laws — such as the infamous Trades Law of 1902 — and some amendments were introduced in the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Anglo-Jewish Association presented a typical Jewish interpretation of Romanian legislation:

> 'Hardly a loophole is left in the tightly-woven meshes of regulations and prescriptions, so as to allow the Jew to earn an honest and peaceful livelihood... It must be remembered that each year always brings additional restrictions. It is the cumulative effect of this continual growth of laws and regulations which reduces the position of the Jews in Roumania to one of intolerable misery, unparalleled in the modern and medieval history of the Jewish race.'[71]

The Romanian parliament was very keen on passing laws; this was the case not only with anti-Jewish laws, but with legislation in general. Whole series of laws dealing with one single issue were passed and amendments were made to them.[72] In anti-Jewish legislation, it was not directly ruled that 'Jews' were excluded from enjoying certain rights. The legislative expression for 'Jews' (*evrei*) was 'aliens' or 'foreigners' (*străini*). Other ways of expressing anti-Jewish legislation involved the use of wordings such as 'only Romanians or naturalised Romanians', 'those eligible to vote', and 'Christians'.

The Jews were practically free to profess their religion and to maintain their religious and communal institutions, although Jewish communities were not recognised as legal entities by the state. There had been special taxes on Jews in the early nineteenth century, and some local — but not state-imposed — Jewish taxes were still collected in the late nineteenth century.[73] It is interesting to note that the religious rights of Romanian Jews did not cause major complaints, which implies that religious life was at least reasonably free. Religion did matter though, of course, since, in a way, all the discrimination occurred on the basis of the religious affiliation of the Jews.

The basic political issue for the Romanian Jews was the non-existence of Jewish political rights and the consequent exclusion of Jews from Romanian

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70 See Wolf 1912 for a comparison to Russian anti-Jewish legislation. As in Romania, Russian legislation dealt with the army, residency rights, public service, education, liberal professions, and property ownership. These six categories are put forward by Wolf.

71 *AJA Annual Report 1910-1911*, 15, 17.

72 The practice occasionally invited derisive comments from outside observers. For example, in 1908, British representatives in Romania pointed out that 'a large batch' of laws was being 'hurriedly passed'. FO 371/511/22162, Assistant Under Secretary Louis Mallet to Board of Deputies President David Alexander and Anglo-Jewish Association President Claude Montefiore (i.e. the Conjoint Committee), 14 July 1908

73 Sincerus 1901, 201.

political life. The Constitution of 1866 clearly ruled that only Romanians were eligible to vote and to stand for election. In addition, Jewish, or rather 'alien', participation in local elections was forbidden under regular legislation; and only Romanian citizens were allowed to hold public office. Some confusion prevailed over Jewish civil rights, such as freedom of press and freedom of assembly.[74] The law was not clear on this matter, and occasionally suppression of the Jewish press and prohibition of Jewish public meetings occurred, based on the argument that only Romanian citizens held freedom of press and freedom of assembly.[75]

Jewish residence in the countryside was restricted, and rural Jews, as aliens, were liable to expulsion. It should be emphasised that Jews were allowed to reside in the countryside, although some pro-Jewish sources and studies have sometimes argued otherwise. Jews, as aliens, had to possess an internal passport before they could settle in another rural commune, and they had to obtain a residence permit from the municipal council.[76] One of the most controversial laws in Romania was the Aliens Law of 1881, which stipulated that a foreigner residing in Romania could be deported from the country if he threatened state security or public order.

Economic laws were related to the 'peculiar circumstances' of Romanian Jews, as the leaders of the British Jews put it.[77] Although the laws were nominally directed against all foreigners, they referred to typical Jewish activities. Their first main concern was with the sectors of national economy in which Jews competed against the new Romanian middle class. The second field targeted comprised of rural middlemen occupations, which were seen as being exploitative of the peasantry.

The Jews, as foreigners, were not allowed to own land in the rural communes, so they could not, in principle, be engaged in agriculture. The ban did not, however, cover land rental from the large landowners, although there were occasionally some relatively half-hearted attempts to limit rental also. In addition to *arendaşi*, or renter-middlemen, a significant rural Jewish occupation and the foundation of their economic power in the countryside was inn keeping, which usually included alcohol and tobacco trade, and money lending. The latter activity caused friction because of the allegedly usurious rates and the connection of money lending with the alcohol trade; it was argued that when the peasants borrowed money, they spent it on alcohol that was so conveniently available on the same premises.[78]

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74 Sincerus 1901, 194, 199.

75 For example, in 1902, when Jewish artisans wanted to hold a meeting to discuss the new Trades Law, the Prime Minister at the time, Dimitrie A. Strurdza, argued that Jews had no right to hold such a meeting because the right of assembly was a political right. *AJA Annual Report 1901-1902*, 18.

76 Gaster Papers, bound volume 2A, memorandum of a Romanian Jewish association, April 1893.

77 FO 371/511/41368, Conjoint Committee secretary Charles Emanuel to Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, 25 Nov. 1908, enclosure: Conjoint memorandum.

78 Parkes 1946, 96.

The laws against the Jewish alcohol trade in the countryside were not effective, and, on the contrary, the number of inns and taverns increased in the late nineteenth century.[79] According to the law of 1873, only those who were eligible to vote were able to obtain a license for selling alcohol in villages and rural taverns, i.e. in the countryside. This did not apply to towns. Edmond Sincerus, in his contemporary study on Romanian anti-Jewish legislation, claimed that the law of 1873 eventually pushed the Jews out of the alcohol trade in the countryside and that various officials of the municipal communes took their place. Sincerus forgot, however, the usual Romanian habit of separating the functions of the license owner and the person who actually handled the trade. The latter was, in many cases, a Jew, even if the owner was an ethnic Romanian. As for the tobacco laws, the officials and vendors of the state tobacco monopoly were all supposed to be Romanians, both in urban and rural communes. However, the Jews continued to sell tobacco in the name of Romanian entrepreneurs.[80]

The Romanian government was also worried about hawking. It was mainly Jews who were engaged in hawking in Romania, and therefore the law of 1884, which introduced special permits for hawking, hit hardest the poorer section of the Jewish population. In the 1880s, the authorities still granted about 10% of all the permits to Jews, but the proportion of the Jewish hawkers decreased considerably. This was the key reason for the first wave of emigration of Romanian Jews in the 1880s, although the numbers involved then were still insignificant compared to those at the turn of the century.[81]

Anti-Jewish legislation that was connected with the development of national industry and commerce could be understood as being about setting limits on the more prosperous Jewish entrepreneurs — not the hawkers or small traders. The Romanians created the Chambers of Commerce and Trade to act as the main bodies representing commercial interests. Although the Jews formed a large minority of merchants and industrialists, they were not permitted to become members in the Chambers, nor were they eligible to select representatives for the Chambers. Moreover, the Jews were not given the opportunity to be employed in major state financial institutions, for example the newly established National Bank. The right of Jews to occupy administrative positions of joint stock companies was limited, but not entirely forbidden.[82]

When a factory was founded, two thirds of the workers had to be native Romanians after a five year period. Jews were not allowed to be employed in the state railways, and 60% of all the workers in private railways had to be Romanians.[83] There were further restrictions in the sphere of state security and

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79 Schneider 1981, 203, 205.

80 Sincerus 1901, 25, 27, 30-31.

81 Schneider 1981, 437-440; Sincerus 1901, 65-66, 69-70.

82 Gaster Papers, bound volume 2A, memorandum of a Romanian Jewish association, April 1893.

83 Joseph 1914, 73-74; Sincerus 1901, 94, 97-99. Although Joseph concludes that the two third Romanian quotas 'practically' excluded Jews, the restrictions hardly meant that. After all, one third of the private railway workers were allowed to be Jewish.

transport: Jews could not work in the postal services, customs, prisons, or on the police force.[84] Moreover, only Romanians could practise as barristers. When this law was introduced, it only referred to higher courts, but the provisions were later extended to cover all courts.[85]

Considerable attention was given to excluding Jews from the health services. Jewish doctors and other health service personnel were not permitted to work in state hospitals. However, they could be employed if no Romanian doctors and nurses were available. Legislation also dealt with hospital patients. The general rule was that no more than ten per cent of patients could be Jewish and they had to pay for their care.[86]

The education laws were probably the most critical and the most damaging group of anti-Jewish legislation passed in Romania in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Contemporary observations often mentioned the education laws as the most damaging aspect of the situation. The school legislation was very elaborate, and there were separate laws for different kinds of schools. The basic provisions of the education legislation could be divided into four groups. Firstly, Jewish children had to pay school fees, while Romanians could attend free of charge. Secondly, Jews were admitted to schools only if there was room after all native Romanian pupils had been given preference. This could also take the form of Jewish quotas, varying between 5% and 10%. The third group of restrictions referred to boarding: Jewish children were not allowed to board and had to go to school as day pupils. Finally, Jewish pupils were not eligible for state grants or financial aid.[87]

Jewish students were kept totally away from certain vocational schools, namely agricultural and forestry schools, and from military schools.[88] As Jewish teachers were in most cases excluded as well, Jewish children had to study in an atmosphere dominated by teachers of anti-Semitic mentality. It is generally agreed that schools and particularly universities were the strongholds of Romanian anti-Semitism.

Discrimination helped (from the Romanian point of view) to decrease the percentage of Jewish pupils in schools. In 1891, the percentage of pupils in state primary schools that were Jewish was 15,5%, but in 1900 it was only 5,5%. The figures for secondary schools in 1897 and 1898 were 11% and 7,5% respectively; the secondary school law was passed at this stage and the effects could be seen immediately.[89] Romanian Jews attempted to develop a private school network of their own, but met with hindrances designed to interfere with Jewish schools, such as administrative attempts to impose Saturday (Jewish Sabbath) instruction.[90]

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84 See, for example, Sincerus 1901, 52 on customs officials.

85 Sincerus 1901, 42-43; Schneider 1981, 434.

86 Gaster Papers, bound volume 2A, memorandum of a Romanian Jewish association, April 1893.

87 Iancu 1978, 192-196; Sincerus 1901, 124, 129, 133, 140.

88 Sincerus 1901, 139-140.

89 Iancu 1978, 194; Sincerus 1901, 132-133.

90 See, for example, *JC*, 26 Jan. 1900.

Army legislation constituted an exceptional case. Jews were not excluded from the army; quite the opposite, they were required to perform military service in the same way as the Romanians. However, Jews were not allowed to become officers or to participate in any special units, nor could they volunteer for the army. Not everyone in the Romanian governing circles was happy with army legislation, and sometimes it was questioned whether the Jews would be loyal soldiers — after all, they were not Romanian citizens.[91]

The effects of anti-Jewish legislation were open to question. On the negative side, the legislation's effects were accentuated by administrative circulars and occasional 'anti-Semitic' zeal on the part of local authorities, who were responsible for the execution of the laws.[92] However, there were also factors against the rigorous enforcement of the laws, and the very same administrative circulars and the responsibility of local authorities might occasionally work favourably for the Jews. Many laws could be evaded with bribery. Some laws clearly had negative consequences for Jewish economic conditions; for example, the hawking law caused suffering to those Jews who were already badly off.

In some economic sectors, the Romanian national economy could have collapsed if anti-Jewish laws had been properly enforced. This presents a peculiar contrast between legislation and practice. The Romanian leaders liked to help ethnic Romanian entrepreneurs as much as possible, but, on the other hand, it was convenient to use the work of Jews whenever no Romanian personnel were available. This arrangement offered the additional possibility of obtaining special payments or outright bribe money from Jews on the pretext of making exceptions and evading laws — even if the Jewish contribution in the economic area in question was more of a rule than an exception.

2.5 Anti-Semitism in Romania

A number of interpretations of Romanian anti-Semitism have been made, and historians have usually emphasised its 'domestic' origins. Connections to the wider context of European ideas have often been overlooked, and emphasis has, indeed, been placed on 'Romanian' anti-Semitism. The main focus of attention has been on the interwar period[93], which is understandable because of

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91 Sincerus 1901, 35-36, 40-41.

92 FO 371/511/41368, Emanuel to Grey, 25 Nov. 1908, enclosure: Conjoint memo.

93 However, Stephen Fischer-Galati has disapproved of the fact that the focus of research on Romanian anti-Semitism has been on the Old Kingdom. He has accused Carol Iancu, for example, of unbalanced treatment of the question. In Fischer-Galati's opinion, the developments in the other Romanian-inhabited areas, mainly Transylvania, before the First World War, have to be taken into account. However, this accusation reeks of determinism. Iancu's studies deal with the pre-First World War period only, and to make conclusions based on future occurrences in the Greater Romania would result in an unhistorical treatment of material related to pre-1914 Romania. See Fischer-Galati 1994, 2.

the existence then of a strong fascist movement, the Iron Guard. The pre-First World War situation is usually presented only as a brief background in these studies, in order to prove the long traditions of anti-Jewish attitudes in Romania. [94]

Anti-Jewish sentiment gained ground in late nineteenth century Europe. It was not that anti-Jewish ideas had not existed before — on the contrary — but now the somewhat hazy concepts of anti-Jewish thinking were articulated in a more cohesive manner. The term 'anti-Semitism' in a political sense was first introduced by a German, Wilhelm Marr, in 1879.[95] The anti-Semitic movement and dialogue was especially strong in Germany, but other Western and Central European countries also had their share of anti-Semitic activity. In France, for example, anti-Semitism was connected to the ideological battle between the clerical and the republican political circles. In Great Britain, however, there was no anti-Semitic movement that could be compared to those on the continent, and, although prejudice against Jews existed, anti-Semitism never gained intellectual respectability.[96]

In Western Europe, Jews had achieved civil and political rights. Nevertheless, their emancipation still had many opponents. Anti-Semites were not a uniform group. Their goals and their main arguments varied. Some of them wanted to turn the clock back to the pre-emancipation situation, while others wished to restrict Jewish activities in some sectors of economic and public life. Yet others favoured more extreme measures, aiming at the elimination of the Jews by any means.[97] Anti-Semitism appealed to many social classes. The middle classes, especially small entrepreneurs, such as the artisans and shopkeepers of the lower middle class, resented Jewish competition. The aristocracy and some church circles were suspicious of the modern democratic, urban, commercial, and secular society, and also feared the loss of their privileged position. They soon discovered that anti-Semitism offered a handy political tool in the battle against the liberals.[98]

Despite the anti-Semitic currents in Western Europe, the states themselves were not anti-Semitic. This was the key difference in comparison to certain East European countries, above all Romania and Russia. Jewish rights in Russia were tightly restricted, and, in the second half of the nineteenth century, anti-Semitism and Russian nationalism were formidable forces in Russian society and relations between Jews and gentiles were worsening.[99]

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94 See, for example, Livezeanu 1995, Nagy-Talavera 1970 and Volovici 1991.

95 Katz 1982, 4, 260-261; Lindemann 1997, 126-131. See also Kuparinen 1999, 149-150.

96 Lewis 1986, 96-97.

97 Katz 1982, 3, 246.

98 Parkes 1963, 22-23.

99 A short description of Russian anti-Semitism and the Jewish situation in the country in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century can be found, for example, from Lindemann 1997, 279-306. Lindemann groups Romania and Russia together as 'failures' in the sense that, in those two countries, the Jewish situation was worse and anti-Semitism stronger and more visible than in the countries of 'ambiguous failures' (Germany and Austria) and 'ambiguous successes' (Britain and the United States).

In Romania, anti-Semitism was, in the Russian manner, preached by the leading intellectuals and politicians, and it occupied a central place in Romanian thought. In William O. Oldson's words, there was an 'intellectual landscape permeated by anti-Jewish feeling'.[100] However, there were a number of different aspects of anti-Semitism in Romania, and the ideology and government policies could not be attributed to any single factor — nor could they be described as purely 'Romanian'. These elements can be divided into four main categories: religious aspects, economic factors, political aspects, and nationalism / racism.[101] The introduction presented below largely discusses the particular Romanian characteristics of anti-Semitism and the situation that prevailed in Romania, but the international framework has been included where appropriate.

The Christian religion had traditionally taken a negative view of the Jews. Jews were despised for theological reasons: because of their rejection of the Christian message and because of their — true or alleged — role in the death of Christ. Socio-economic factors, deriving from the Jewish occupational role in the medieval world, had sometimes been added to religious anti-Jewish beliefs. In the late nineteenth century, the influence of the church on every day life had somewhat weakened, at least in Western Europe, but Christian arguments against the Jews were still alive. They were also being used by the anti-Semites of the time. For example, ideas of Jewish moral inferiority and claims that Jews were attempting to rule the world were originally based on Christianity.[102]

Religious discrimination was official in Romania, as can be seen from the distinction between Christians and others that was often made in legislation. There were a small number of administrative measures against Judaism, such as prevention of the rebuilding of synagogues, local taxes on kosher meat, and, in a more general context, the continuing use of the special ritual oath, *More Judaico*. The Constitution of 1866, in stipulating that only Christians could become Romanian citizens, was a basis for religious discrimination.[103] The Romanians frequently pointed out that Jews were free to profess their religion

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100 Oldson 1991, 10, 100-101.

101 The categories are based on Brustein 2003; see especially 45-46. See also Iancu 1978 for a similar classification.

Brustein has evaluated Romanian, German, British, Italian, and French anti-Semitism in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. He has compared the occurrences of anti-Semitic 'acts' (from verbal accusations to murderous riots), based on the summaries of main events concerning Jews in the volumes of the American Jewish Year Book. In addition, he has examined the daily newspapers with the largest national circulation in each country by random sampling that includes editions for the 15th of each month from 1899 to 1939, in order to investigate the level of coverage of Jewish issues. Unfortunately, the findings appear to be somewhat misleading, probably as a result of the random sampling method. Brustein did not, for example, find high levels of reportage of Jewish affairs in 1900 (Jewish immigration) or 1907 (the peasant revolt), when Jewish issues definitely attracted attention in Romanian newspapers. See Brustein 2003, 8-9, 14-19, 23.

102 Brustein 2003, 67; Katz 1982, 319-320; Lewis 1986, 81-82.

103 Iancu 1978, 120-121.

and that the religious considerations were not the basis for the restriction of Jewish rights.

Economic factors were perhaps the most crucial factors in Romanian anti-Semitism. Economic factors were the facets of the Jewish problem that the Romanian leaders themselves wanted to emphasise in contemporary discourse. The age of capitalism brought two contradictory accusations against European Jews. On the one hand, they were believed to be exploiters who gained from the current economic circumstances, but, on the other hand, they were seen as being enemies of capitalism through their involvement in socialist activities.[104] The Jewish influence on the economy was adopted as one of the major arguments of anti-Semitism. The success of some rich Jewish bankers and tycoons gave rise to the stereotype of a capitalist Jew with international economic power, and it was often thought that all Jews were like this. During economic depressions, Jews were often blamed.[105]

The Romanians were worried about the rapid increase in the Jewish numbers and about the fact that the ethnic Romanian population was decreasing in many Moldavian towns — the Jews were 'suffocating' the native population.[106] There was an alleged danger of Jewish economic domination, especially in artisan trades and commerce. As in the standard theories of international Jewish conspiracy, the Romanians believed that local Jews were being given financial aid from Jewish banks in Austria, thereby enabling them to take control of Moldavian economic life. The Romanians perceived the Jewish economic influence as negative and harmful to the development of the Romanian (native) economy.[107] James Parkes has suggested that, as a possible solution to the Jewish problem, Jews should have been permitted to disperse from their traditional occupations into a wider range of vocations.[108] To allow Jewish employment and to encourage their participation in all sectors of economic life would obviously have required a fundamental change of policy.

Nicolas Spulber argues that when traditional societies are drawn into world trade currents, many functions in the process are performed by non-native entrepreneurs. The native elite relies — at least for a certain period — on the mobilisation of non-indigenous elements. Despite his central role, or perhaps because of it, the foreign entrepreneur provokes the frustrations and hatred of the native groups in the society: peasants, the old landed native élites, native artisans, and the rising intelligentsia. Finally, when the native middle classes develop, the foreign entrepreneurs begin to fall into decline.[109]

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104 Lewis 1986, 110.

105 Battenberg 1990, 181-182.

106 Lahovary 1902, 29-30; Schuster 1939, 37-38. Schuster's -like Lahovary's — attitude is anti-Jewish, and his book was written in Nazi-Germany. The Romanian statistics he used appear to be fairly reasonable. However, both Schuster and the Romanian statisticians tried to prove the dominant position of the Jews in Iaşi, and, therefore, the possibility of distorted information has to be taken into account here.

107 Michelson 1987, 167-169.

108 Parkes 1946, 103.

109 Spulber 1966, 138-139. Spulber's theory applies directly to Romania, as Romania and Indonesia were the case studies that he based his generalisations on.

From the 1850s onwards, the non-indigenous bankers and traders in Wallachia (including Jews, Greeks, and Armenians) established connections to Constantinople, while their counterparts in Moldavia (mainly Jews) looked to the North: Budapest, Vienna, Leipzig, and Moscow. At this stage, Jewish and other non-Romanian merchants were the only ones who had the necessary experience of international contacts, essential in handling the booming grain trade. When the Danubian Principalities opened up to international trade and a substantial market for grain exports appeared, the Jews (and other foreigners) were often the only ones who had contacts abroad and were therefore able to handle the trade. Besides selling the grain abroad, Jews sold imported products both to the peasantry and to the nobility. Jewish banking houses dominated in the mid-nineteenth century, but began to lose ground in the late 19th century, when indigenous banking initiatives started.[110]

The restrictions on Jewish life and economic activities began in earnest only after the constitutional system was adopted in Romania. The political life of the country was stable, and there were two main parties: the Conservatives and the Liberals. The parties used the Jewish question as a tool against one another when they tried to gain a parliamentary majority. Anti-Jewish measures and promises were utilised when attracting voters. It was also normal to attempt to damage the reputation of the other party by accusing it of pro-Jewish policies.[111]

The attitudes of the two main Romanian parties towards the Jewish question did not diverge very much, and both of them introduced pieces of anti-Jewish legislation. The Conservatives, who spoke for the nobility and for agricultural interests, were generally a little more favourably disposed towards the Jews. They opposed any agricultural and suffrage reforms promoted by the Liberals, and they accepted that industrialisation was progressing with the help of foreign capital. On the other hand, the Liberals, as representatives of the rising Romanian middle classes, saw the anti-Jewish measures as fundamentally important. This was connected to the demands for the national Romanian economy and the negative view on the power of foreign capital.[112]

Besides the actual anti-Jewish legislation and its ideological and practical background, there was yet another element hindering Jewish political rights, stemming from the nature of the Romanian political system. The majority of the peasants were disenfranchised, since the property qualifications blocked their participation in political life. If the Jews had been given political rights, they would have acquired considerable political power, based on their occupations, education, and property-ownership in towns. They would have formed the principal part of the second electoral college, in which the middle classes were represented.[113] The Jews were also accused of trying to dominate Romania

110 Spulber 1966, 96,101-102, 104.

111 Iancu 1978, 126-127; Welter 1989, 11.

112 Bernstein 1918, 52-53.

113 Joseph 1914, 75.

politically through their foreign or international organisations, such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle.[114]

The concepts of nation and race, widely discussed in many European countries at the time, were also visible in the Romanian debate on the Jewish question. Nationalism was closely linked with anti-Semitism, as the Jews did not fit into the framework of the nation state. The fact that Jews also lived among other nations as a minority was in itself a reason for xenophobia.[115] The concept of race was also entwined with the idea of nation. According to social Darwinist thinking, the Jewish (Semitic) race was inferior to the Aryan race, and Jews could be scientifically distinguished from Aryans through racial characteristics. The alleged racial features of the Jews included, for example, shortness, dark colouring, greed, and the lack of ability to create an advanced culture. Moreover, the Jews were seen as enemies of the Aryans in the inevitable battle of the races.[116]

Xenophobia and nationalist fervour[117] were closely connected with the insecurity that Romanians felt after their newly acquired independence and due to their situation as a neighbour of several Great Powers: Turkey, Russia, and Austria-Hungary. Stephen Fischer-Galati holds an exclusively economically based explanation to be inadequate, and places emphasis on the role of the influx of alien Jewish elements to Moldavia during the nineteenth century. He also stresses the national question and the national humiliations, in the minds of the Romanians, brought about by the neighbouring, larger countries.[118] Indeed, Romanian leaders were preoccupied with nation-building and strengthening the position of their country, which also involved the aim to eventually annex neighbouring territories that were inhabited by ethnic Romanians.[119]

The culture of the Jewish newcomers to the Romanian Principalities had been formed in Polish and Russian ghettos, where the Jews lived separately from the native populations. They had focused on preserving their religion and traditions in a hostile environment. According to James Parkes, 'citizenship implies some considerable degree of assimilation'.[120] Suspicions between the Jews and the ethnic Romanians were mutual: the Jews were not keen to embrace the Romanian culture, while the Romanians disliked Jewish culture. This was not fruitful ground for Jewish integration. Jews tended to view Romanian culture with suspicion and did not rate it very highly.[121]

The Romanian attitude toward Jewish assimilation or integration was ambiguous. It was believed that because Jews were not Romanians they could not be an integral part of the Romanian state — this was a standard

114 Brustein 2003, 311.

115 Katz 1982, 322.

116 Battenberg 1990, 188-191.

117 See Brustein 2003, 153-162 for an overview.

118 Fischer-Galati 1994, 3-7.

119 Hitchins 1992, 1064-1067.

120 Parkes 1946, 97.

121 Lindemann 1997, 312-313.

international anti-Semitic defence. However, the Jewish side insisted that many Jewish families had been living in the Romanian territories for generations, and, besides, many so-called ethnic Romanians had foreign ancestry: Greek, Albanian, or Armenian.[122]

Mihai Eminescu, the Romanian national poet, argued that no Romanian Jews existed since a Jew simply could not be a Romanian. On one hand, Eminescu wanted the Jews to be integrated into the society because he saw their separate culture as threatening, but, on the other hand, he claimed that the Jews were not capable of assimilation.[123] Eminescu's reasoning expresses well the paradoxical principles of Romanian Jewish policy: the Jews were scorned because they were different and, at the same time, they were not allowed to become Romanians.

The Western Jewries, the British Jews for example, often argued that the purpose of the Romanian policy on Jews was precisely to prevent assimilation and to alienate the Jews from the Romanian national sentiment. This way, Jewish emancipation could be avoided because the Romanians could claim that the Jews were not assimilated and thus could not be granted political rights.[124]

East European Jews, and the majority of Jews in Romania, were Ashkenazi Jews who spoke Yiddish as their mother tongue. Those who moved to Moldavia from the north and the east belonged to this group. In addition, there was a smaller number of Sephardi Jews of Mediterranean origin in Wallachia. In the Romanian debate on Jews, a distinction was often made between 'Spanish' (Sephardi) and 'Polish' (Ashkenazi) Jews. The Ashkenazim were rejected as an inferior group that showed visible characteristics of being different, while the Sephardim were considered much more acceptable and sometimes even worthy of Romanian citizenship.[125] Ashkenazi Jews were on occasion classified racially as Asians or Mongols and not as Jews at all. However, this was not simply a piece of nationalistic propaganda aimed at discrediting the Ashkenazi Jews, nor was it an exclusively Romanian belief. The Mongol connection referred to the Khazars: a Turkish-Tartar tribe that had adopted Judaism in a somewhat modified form during the seventh and eighth centuries, which then, in modern times, resulted in speculation on the possible Khazar origins of the Eastern European Jewry.[126]

The long-time leader of the Liberal Party, Dimitrie A. Sturdza, also distinguished between 'Spanish and non-Spanish' Jews in Romania [127](meaning

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122 For this argument, see, for example, Lazare 1903, 240-241.

123 Oldson 1991, 118-119. Oldson discusses Eminescu's opinion on Jews in detail.

124 FO 371/511/41368. Emanuel to Grey 25 Nov. 1908. Enclosure: the Conjoint memo.

125 Oldson 1991, 140-142.

126 Paul Wexler has argued that Ashkenazi Jews are ethnically different to Mediterranean Jews and that they have a strong Turkish ethnic element, in addition to a Slavic component. Wexler does not especially emphasize the Khazar ancestry, however; he dismisses that particular theory as too straightforward. See Wexler 1993, 16, 242.

127 Interestingly, in summer 1902, Sturdza divided the Jews into three groups: the first had lived in Romanian lands from the Dacian times, the second had previously been under Austrian or other foreign protection, and the third had immigrated from

Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews, but he did not use these words). Sturdza announced that the non-Spanish Jews of Romania were descendants of Mongols who had been converted to Judaism hundreds of years previously (referring to Khazars) and who thought they were better than Romanians. Those people could not be naturalised; they could constitute a real danger to the country when naturalised, as they would form a majority in many Moldavian towns. This would further attract new arrivals from Russia and Austrian Galicia.[128]

Prejudice against Jews was identified with discourse on the essence of Romanian culture and nationhood. The leading Romanian intellectuals maintained, in harmony with the international anti-Semitic currents, that a natural, essentialist distinction existed between races. There was much talk of Romanian national values and fear of any alteration in Romanian traditions. For instance, the national poet Mihai Eminescu and the historian Alexandru D. Xenopol argued that the Romanian nationality and heritage had to be preserved and that any course of action was justified in the name of national survival.[129] Also along standard anti-Semitic lines, a negative stereotype prevailed of a Jew sporting side curls and a caftan, and, perhaps more importantly, sporting certain personality traits. He was constantly seeking profit, he was usurious, and he was an exploiter of peasants. He poisoned the Romanian countryside; in short, he was 'The Village Bloodsucker'.[130]

Negative stereotypes also existed in Romania in regards to foreigners outside the country; for example, Hungarians were the oppressors of ethnic Romanians in Transylvania, Russians had occupied Romanian lands, and Turks were pagans that had invaded Romania and kept it under a yoke for centuries. Stereotypes of 'internal' foreigners, as Leon Volovici calls them, involved Greeks and Jews. The Greek problem had been acute in the 18th century, but in the late 19th century it had disappeared when the Greeks were more or less assimilated and were no longer perceived as a threat to Romanian culture. Hence it was the Jews who were left as representatives of foreign invasion in Romanian economic and social life. They had the features of external enemies, because of their alleged links to the international Jewish bourgeoisie and to a world-wide conspiracy.[131]

Russia or Galicia. The third, in his view, was a group of pauper Jews that caused social problems. *JC*, 18 July 1902.

128 FO 104/159/59, Browne to Lansdowne, 8 Sept. 1903; *FRUS 1903*, 704. Jackson to Hay, 7 Sept. 1903. Part of the Sturdza-Jackson discussion was forwarded to the British government, but a more detailed account is included in the Foreign Relations series.

129 Oldson 1991, 99, 112-113,116,136. Lindemann agrees: 'hostility to Jews was an integral part of Romanian national feeling'. Lindemann 1997, 307.

130 Volovici 1991, 10. The image of 'The Village Bloodsucker' was based on the late 19th century play of the same title by Vasile Alecsandri.

131 Volovici 1991, 4-5.

3 THE BEGINNING OF ROMANIAN JEWISH MASS EMIGRATION AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

3.1 Emigration statistics

The situation of Romanian Jews reappeared on the international scene at the turn of the century, after a comparatively quiet period during the two previous decades. The attention of the international Jewish community had mainly been focused on the conditions of Russian Jews, which had undoubtedly worsened. In Romania, the situation had stayed, in principle, the same as it had been at the time of the Berlin Congress; the Jewish question continued to cause serious problems. During the two final decades of the nineteenth century, successive Romanian governments had passed a large number of laws restricting the economic activities and the legal position of Jews. However, the turn of the century marked the emergence of a new issue: Jewish mass emigration from Romania.

Jewish emigration from Romania can be traced back to 1872, when the American consul in Bucharest, Benjamin Peixotto, spoke in favour of Jewish emigration. Peixotto's scheme never materialised, however, as the international Jewish community for the most part opposed the plan. Only a few dozen Romanian Jewish families emigrated in the 1870s, after which the movement temporarily died out.[1]

Romanian Jewish mass emigration began in the middle of the year 1899. Prior to this, emigration had been relatively small and had not caused any serious domestic or international debate; although, according to Samuel Joseph's migration statistics, more than 10,000 Jews had left Romania for the United States between 1881 and 1898.[2] At the turn of the century, however, economic depression in Romania, combined with restrictive legislation, made it impossible for many Jews, who were not well off, to earn a livelihood,

1 Vitcu & Bădărău 1992, 256-258.

2 Joseph 1914, 167.

especially in towns. In this situation, emigration was an option that was seriously considered by many individuals.

Between 1871 and 1914, approximately 75,000 Jews left Romania.[3] The most popular destination of the emigrants was, not surprisingly, the United States, but some migrants went to Canada, Australia, Western European countries, Cyprus, Ottoman Anatolia, and Palestine.[4] The peak year was 1900, followed by 1902 and 1903. The flow of emigrants began to dry up in 1904.

TABLE 4 Jewish emigration from Romania, 1899-1904.[5]

Year	Number of emigrants
1899	3,375
1900	16,678
1901	3,401
1902	8,974
1903	6,671
1904	2,682
Total	41,754

As Zosa Szajkowski remarks, it is difficult to obtain reliable figures on Romanian Jewish emigrants. Szajkowski's own statistics, taken from the Alliance Israélite Universelle bulletins, are very similar to the figures presented in Table 4, differing only for 1902 and 1904, and in the total of 42,968. Szajkowski apparently believes that the number of emigrants was actually larger, since the statistics were based on the number of passports issued, but many Jews left Romania without passports. Moreover, Romanian attempts to make the figures appear smaller may also have played a role.[6]

The figures given by Samuel Joseph also differ to some extent, but these are numbers of immigrants arriving in the United States, rather than numbers of emigrants leaving Romania. Even though the majority of migrants eventually went to the United States, they did not necessarily reach America during the same calendar year as they left Romania. According to Joseph, the peak year of Romanian Jewish arrivals to the United States was 1903, when approximately 8,500 Romanian Jews entered the country. The total number of Romanian Jewish arrivals between 1899 and 1910 was 54,827. It is worth pointing out that although the great majority of Romanian immigrants to America were Jewish,

3 Kissman 1947, 160; Marrus 1985, 34.

4 Already in the 1880s, some Romanian Jews had founded a colony in Palestine. The project was considered a failure. See Schneider 1981, 528-532.

5 Iancu 1978, 260. Iancu does not give any figures for the following years. His tables are based on the Alliance Israélite Universelle statistics.

6 Szajkowski 1951, 56.

some ethnic Romanians were also included. At the turn of the century, over 95% of Romanian immigrants were Jews, but in 1910 only 79%.[7]

Perceived from another angle, Jewish emigration from Romania formed a relatively small percentage of all Jewish immigration to the United States: in its peak year, 1903, it was less than 13 per cent. However, it was usually much lower than this, and the annual average in 1899-1910 was less than 7 per cent. It is clear that Samuel Joseph's figures have major problems when it comes to transmigration; he admits himself that many of those who, according to statistics, arrived from Britain and Canada were actually East European Jews who had temporarily stayed in Britain or Canada.[8] This element was also apparent in the case of Romanian Jews who travelled via England and, in addition, tended to prefer Canada as their first destination on the American continent.

Jewish emigration from Romania was the most intensive of all the Jewish emigration movements prior to the First World War. In Russia, which produced the greatest mass of Jewish emigrants, an average of 17.3 Jews per thousand emigrated annually between 1900 and 1914, whereas in Romanian this figure was 19.6. Both figures were much higher than among the gentile population in these countries.[9] The proportion of women and children among the Jewish emigrants was relatively large: only about 13,000 out of 41,000 Romanian Jewish emigrants between 1899 and 1904 were adult men, and the rest were women or children. Another remarkable feature was the dominance of artisans: they numbered nearly 10,000, again in 1899-1904.[10]

The large number of artisans among the emigrants was not surprising when mirrored to the key points of the emigration discussion of the era, but the emigration of whole families was often overlooked when contemporaries attempted to paint a picture of Jewish emigration from Romania. As will be shown in the following chapters, international Jewish organisations sometimes tried to prevent the emigration of whole families and, for the most part, wanted to select skilled artisans. However, the opposite view, which disapproved of emigrating men who left their families behind, also prevailed in some Jewish circles, most notably in Britain.

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7 Joseph 1914, 167-168. In 1900, 1901, 1902 and 1904, more than 6,000 Romanian Jews arrived in the United States each year. To compare, in 1909, less than 1,400 Romanian Jews arrived.

8 Joseph 1914, 93, 95, 167.

9 Ettinger 1976, 861-862.

10 Iancu 1978, 260.

3.2 The causes of emigration

Romania got into serious financial difficulties in 1899. The immediate cause of the crisis was the total failure of the harvest of 1899, resulting from a serious drought. However, the economic problems had been building up for several years. The Romanian state had, for a prolonged period, issued treasury bonds in order to carry out extensive public works, which were sometimes lavish and over-ambitious undertakings. The army had also received substantial financing. Since Romania was extremely dependent on agricultural exports, the harvest failure hit hard. The population had no purchasing power; merchants could not sell their stock, and the state lost revenue in the form of indirect taxation. In the past, Romania had financed its budget deficits through heavy foreign loans, but now there was a crisis in the European money market because of the Boer War in South Africa. Thus, it was harder for Romania to obtain extra money just when it needed it desperately.[11]

A serious political crisis also took place in Romania in spring 1899. Dimitrie A. Sturdza, with his Liberal Party, had been in power for four years. The Conservative Party accused Sturdza of treason and organised street riots against the government. The disagreement was over the Transylvanian question: Sturdza was alleged to have co-operated with Hungarians and was accused of having given inadequate support for Romanian schools in Transylvania.[12] The crisis led to the formation of a Conservative government, with Gheorge Grigore Cantacuzino as Prime Minister and Jean Lahovary as Foreign Secretary.[13]

Romanian financial difficulties were discussed in great detail during the following years, often in connection with the Jewish question. The economic situation in Romania drew a great deal of attention from abroad. Foreign newspapers wrote a large number of articles about the Romanian situation, diplomatic representatives reported the matter extensively, and Jewish organisations in Western Europe used the economic problems for their own purposes in presenting Romania in a bad light.

For the repayment of state treasury bonds and for other urgent expenses, Romania obtained loans from Berlin. The leading Berlin banking houses thus held the treasury bonds and practically controlled Romanian finances. This meant that Germany in general and the Berlin bankers in particular were able to exert pressure on Romanian economic affairs.[14] Furthermore, the 'natural' sympathy for Germany in Romania, partly because of King Carol's German

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11 FO 104/143/4, British Minister in Bucharest, John Gordon Kennedy, to Salisbury, 17 Jan. 1900; *The Roumanian Bulletin*, supplement to *JC*, 11 July 1902; see also *The Times*, 27 Dec. 1901, for an overview of Romanian financial difficulties.

12 FO 104/139/31, Kennedy to Salisbury, 14 April 1899. In Kennedy's opinion, Sturdza had passed many useful legal measures and was a hardworking but hot-tempered individual.

13 FO 104/139/33, Kennedy to Salisbury, 23 April 1899; Schneider 1981, 526.

14 Schneider 1981, 428.

origins, strengthened the relations between the two countries. Although the Romanian attitude towards Germany was friendly, at least some political leaders disliked German financial control. Their main reasoning for this was that the arrangements put Romania in a humiliating position and hurt its national pride.[15] At the same time, the French also demonstrated their economic influence. The 'Hallier affair', relating to a harbour works contract and its subsequent compensation dispute, ended up embarrassingly for the Romanians. French pressure compelled Romania to grant substantial compensation to the French harbour works contractor.[16]

The German bankers stipulated that no further Romanian treasury bonds could be issued until the present loan was paid off in 1904.[17] Initially, the bankers also refused to grant further advances to the Romanian government, but, eventually, King Carol personally managed to persuade the German banks to give an advance on the long-term loan, thereby overcoming the short-term difficulties. In Britain, the *Jewish Chronicle* bitterly remarked that Romania had managed to 'coax' a loan from the financiers but that it probably would not be able to do so again due to its deplorable behaviour concerning the Jewish question.[18] This was the typical tone that the *Jewish Chronicle* adopted. The newspaper returned to the Romanian loan theme many times during the following years, always linking it to the Jewish question.

Many contemporaries — both Jews and Romanians — liked to draw attention to the fact that many Berlin bankers involved in the Romanian financial crisis were Jewish. The main banking houses dealing with the case were Disconto Bank Gesellschaft, Bleichröder, and Rothschild, of which the latter two were markedly Jewish.[19] The Romanian government scorned the influence exerted by the Berlin group, but at the same time the Romanians were eager to please the bankers. There was a close relationship between the Berlin bankers and some leading Romanian statesmen, for example Petre P. Carp of the Conservative Party. All this suggests that the Jewish origins of the Berlin bankers did not play a large role in their financial dealings with the Romanians, unlike some Jewish leaders in Britain wished to believe.

Although Romanian economic difficulties were undoubtedly a short-term factor behind Jewish mass emigration from Romania, there was still a great deal of disagreement among contemporaries on what the main reasons were for the emigration. Indeed, disputes over the factors generating the emigration wave have continued in historical research. The main question was whether emigration could be attributed, on the one hand, to persecution of Jews or, on the other hand, to the financial crisis. The pro-Jewish interpretation — also

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15 FO 104/140/6, Kennedy to Salisbury, 20 March 1899; FO 104/143/3, Kennedy to Salisbury, 17 Jan. 1900.

16 Seton-Watson 1934, 382.

17 FO 104/147/49, Chargé D'affaires Henry Trotter to Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne, 6 July 1901; *Roumanian Bulletin*, supplement to *JC*, 11 July 1902.

18 *JC* leader, 9 Feb. 1900. This was the first time that the *Jewish Chronicle* discussed the Romanian financial situation and Jewish emigration from Romania in detail.

19 FO 104/143/66, Kennedy to Salisbury, 26 Aug. 1900.

actively promoted by the British Jewry — usually found two main factors to be underlying the emigration: firstly, Romanian government policy towards Jews and, secondly, the virulent anti-Semitism in Romanian society. The existence of economic reasons was nonetheless acknowledged. The anti-Jewish interpretation took the economic crisis into account as well, but mainly blamed international Jewish organisations for provoking Romanian Jews to emigrate. This viewpoint further maintained that the Jewish population was increasing so fast that Jews could no longer find any employment.

Furthermore, general reasons for Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe also held true in Romania. The Jewish population was growing rapidly, just as the anti-Jewish observers liked to argue. Prospects for traditional Jewish trades and occupations deteriorated in the changing economic conditions, and Jews faced increasing competition from gentiles in trades. Restrictions on Jewish residence usually permitted them to live only in specific geographical areas (in Russia) or in towns, which further intensified competition and concentrated too many people who were engaged in the same trade within one locality. Moreover, physical persecution and pogroms were often the immediate factor pushing Jews to make a decision to emigrate; this applied more to Russia than to Romania, as in Romania physical violence against Jews was not frequent, and actual murderous pogroms of the type seen in Russian did not occur.[20]

Lloyd P. Gartner has argued against the view that East European Jewish emigration was the result of persecution and pogroms. True, there were pogroms, but, still, the highest emigration rate was from the province of Galicia in the Austrian Empire, where no pogroms took place and the Jews were legally emancipated, but the Jewish population was very poor. Ukraine, the pogrom heartland of the Russian Empire had, in contrast, a relatively low emigration rate.[21]

Gartner emphasises the demographical and economic characteristics of the Jewish communities as the main reason for the emigration wave. The East European Jewish population was young, but there were no opportunities for the young people, since the traditional economy could not expand. The occupational structure of Jewish communities was rigid and very much concentrated on certain key sectors, mainly on small business and artisan trades. Restrictions on residency, for the most part, closed the major economic centres in Russia to the Jews. On the other hand, Gartner emphasises the pull-factors: America was an appealing destination. Steamship transportation had also made the overseas journey affordable by the end of the nineteenth century.[22] Contemporaries usually tended to overlook pull-factors; the lure of America was mentioned only occasionally.

Gartner's arguments — that general demographical and economic explanations seem to have relevance to both the volume and timing of emigration — have been supported by Charlotte Erickson. Erickson draws

20 Ettinger 1976, 860-861.

21 Gartner 1984, 1-3.

22 Gartner 1984, 4.

attention to the population explosion within Jewish communities and the restricted choice of residence and occupation. Nevertheless, at some points emigration waves coincided with pogroms in Russia. This was the case at the beginning of East European mass emigration in 1881 and in certain years in the first decade of the twentieth century.[23]

Carol Iancu, on the other hand, distinguishes between 'extrinsic' factors, i.e. factors outside the Jewish community, and 'intrinsic' factors, which originated within the community. Iancu sees the extrinsic factors, such as the situation in the Romanian society, anti-Semitism, and restrictive legislation, as primary. In addition, there were also intrinsic reasons, such as Zionism, demographic change, and urban concentration.[24] If Iancu's interpretation is compared to the differences between contemporary pro-Jewish and anti-Jewish views on the situation, extrinsic factors were those that were emphasised by the former outlook, while the latter stressed the intrinsic factors.

In the second half of the year 1899, the British representatives in Romania embarked on detailed descriptions and explanations of the financial crisis. Judging from their dispatches, the atmosphere in Romania was panicked. The British diplomats — and foreign representatives in general — in Romania often tended to place emphasis on the economic background to Jewish emigration, which was, as a rule, mentioned by everyone who was interested in the matter, irrespective of ideological bias. British representatives also referred to the 'intrinsic' elements. The British Chargé D'Affaires in Bucharest, Hamilton E. Browne, argued that emigration was mainly a result of financial crisis and not of anti-Semitism:

> 'This wholesale exodus however cannot be in any sense attributed to persecution, but rather to the prevailing financial crisis in this country. In fact, since the anti-Jewish riots in Jassy [i.e. Iaşi] and Bucharest, some three years ago, no real movement against the Jews has taken place in Roumania, and even these two occurrences were generally believed to be the result of a political manoeuvre and not of any real or acute anti-Semitic feeling on the part of the native population.'[25]

Although Browne's statement about the non-existence of anti-Semitic violence at the time was accurate, he obviously was not correct in assuming there was no anti-Semitic sentiment in Romania. The Consul General in the town of Galaţi, Henry Trotter, who was also occasionally chargé d'affaires in the absence of his superiors, was of the opinion that emigration was due to the failure of the harvest and the financial crisis, and the catastrophes which these things had caused for small shopkeepers and artisans — exactly those occupations

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23 Erickson 1996, 5-6.

24 Iancu 1981, 251.

25 FO 104/143/57, Chargé D'affaires Hamilton E. Browne to Salisbury, 7 Aug. 1900. Anti-Jewish riots in Iaşi in May 1899 seemed to have escaped the notice of the British representatives. For an account of the riots, see *L'Indépendance roumaine*, 18/31 May 1899; see also Schneider 1981, 527.

favoured by Jews.[26] These were characteristics that even the Jews themselves did not deny, and they were also accepted by the Romanians.

The British Minister, John Gordon Kennedy, later repeated Trotter's observations in his analysis of the emigration movement. He remarked that members of other nationalities had also emigrated, such as some Bulgarians from Dobrudja to Turkey. The numbers, however, were negligible. Another explanation for the suddenly escalated emigration could be found in the activities of international Jewish organisations, whose influence was particularly emphasised by the Romanians. Kennedy also thought that emigration was encouraged by 'Zionists'.[27] It is not known if Kennedy and other diplomats fully grasped the meaning of the word Zionist, however, as they seem to have used the term very loosely.

Agreeing with the reactions of the British diplomats, the French legation gave the economic crisis as the main factor for emigration: economic depression left small shopkeepers and artisans without customers and credit. The French representatives added that anti-Jewish laws and anti-Semitism in Romania also contributed to emigration, as did the rising Zionist movement among the Jews.[28]

A Romanian pamphlet, written by someone using the pseudonym Verax, argued that emigration was a result of the Jews' persistent concentration on certain occupations:

> 'In consequence of their repulsion to field labour and their insistence in encumbering trade and the handicrafts, the Jews were compelled by the crisis of 1899 to emigrate in large numbers.'[29]

King Carol of Romania claimed that emigration was stirred up by the French / international Jewish organisation Alliance Israélite Universelle and by wealthy foreign Jews, who were mainly German. According to him, the active role of German Jews in emigration schemes, as well as hostile articles in German newspapers, enabled the Jewish bankers of the Berlin banking syndicate to exercise pressure on behalf of their Romanian coreligionists. The King did not specify the form of this pressure however, and nor did anyone else.[30]

The Alliance Israélite Universelle was generally blamed in Romania for inciting emigration. Relating to this aspect, articles sponsored by the Romanian government began to appear in foreign newspapers as a counter-attack against the articles written and inspired by Western and Central European Jewish organisations. The Romanians accused the Alliance Israélite, firstly, of initiating

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26 FO 104/143/45, Trotter to Salisbury, 6 July 1900. This was the first Foreign Office dispatch on the causes of emigration.

27 FO 104/144/92, Kennedy to Salisbury, 31 Oct. 1900. This dispatch is extensive. Kennedy attempts to give a general view of the Jewish situation.

28 Iancu 1981, 262-263, Léon Descos, the first secretary of the French legation at Bucharest, to Téophile Delcassé, the French Foreign Secretary, 28 June 1900.

29 Verax 1904, 76. The Verax pamphlet has been attributed to Radu Rosetti.

30 FO 104/143/65, Kennedy to Salisbury, 18 Aug. 1900.

emigration and, secondly, of provoking agitation against Romania at the moment of Romania's economic vulnerability.[31]

Thus, both the Romanian government and the Western Jews campaigned internationally on behalf of their own interpretation of the situation and quarrelled over the causes of the emigration. The British Jewry was not very deeply involved in the debate — the continental Jewries were more active. The same went for the newspaper articles; the propaganda war was waged mainly on the European continent, and only a small number of articles appeared in the British mainstream press. The *Jewish Chronicle* obviously was a different matter. It featured a large number of articles on Romanian Jewish emigration and the situation in Romania.

There are not many primary sources on Romanian Jewish emigration that were produced by the emigrants themselves. Otherwise, information can be obtained from the contemporary press, the reports of Jewish organisations, and the official publications of the receiving countries, such as Britain and the United States. However, there is one major group of original documents written by Romanian Jewish emigrants themselves: the letters sent to Rabbi Moses Gaster in England. Most of the letters came from groups or representatives of groups that wished to emigrate, but some were sent by private individuals. Prospective emigrants were of different social positions; most of them were poor, but some were affluent. The prospective emigrants did not seem panic-stricken like the Russian Jewish emigrants did, who were threatened by pogroms. They seemed to plan their move rather carefully.[32]

The motives of the emigrants, as analysed by Eliyahu Feldman, can be divided between economic and political factors. The majority of writers emphasised the discriminatory politics in Romania, and consequently, Feldman argues that the anti-Jewish policy of the Romanian government was the main motive for emigration and that the economic factors were only secondary. However, political and economic conditions were also entwined, as anti-Jewish legislation was connected with economic issues.[33] To conclude, Jewish mass emigration from Romania could not be attributed to any single factor. The causes for emigration were complicated and multi-faceted, as both Romanian government policy as well as economic and social factors played a role.

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31 Szajkowski 1951, 55.

32 Feldman 1980, 63-67. Because Feldman has analysed a number of letters of emigrants in Gaster's collection and reprinted some of them in his article, the original letters in the Gaster Papers have not been consulted for this work. In addition to letters, emigrants also wrote some poems and leaflets. Jill Culiner's study features extensive quotations from Jacob Finkelstein's autobiographical account, 'Memoirs of a Fusgeyer from Romania to America', originally published in YIVO Bleter 26/1945, translated from Yiddish by Culiner. See Culiner 2004, especially 24-25 for an explanation of the source.

33 Feldman 1980, 66-67.

3.3 'Fusgeyers' — the first wave of emigrants

In 1900, the Western and Central European press paid considerable attention to the emigration of Romanian Jews. This was partly due to some sensational and extraordinary features of the emigration. Thousands of Romanian Jews left the country for Austria-Hungary planning to travel through Europe to major Western European ports and from there to America. Some of them travelled on foot, hence the Yiddish term *fusgeyers*, meaning walkers.[34]

The *fusgeyer* movement appeared to have begun already in 1899, but it began to draw widespread attention only in spring 1900. The first groups of walkers left from Moldavia, from the areas with the heaviest concentration of Jewish population, intending to walk at least to the border between Romania and Austria-Hungary. From the border, they planned to travel through Europe by other means, although some groups were determined to continue across the continent by foot. The *fusgeyer* bands mostly comprised of young males who were attached to a common local synagogue and who were artisans by profession. Pioneering groups were relatively well organised and prepared. Some even wore special uniforms. In general, there was a great idealistic spirit among the first *fusgeyers*. However, as the movement caught on, all kinds of individuals, not necessarily very fit and strong, began to join the trek. On their way, the *fusgeyers* collected money by singing, acting, and distributing leaflets. Both Jewish communities and gentiles helped by offering food or providing a place to stay the night.[35] There were also some groups of women among the *fusgeyers*, such as a society of seamstresses from the town of Galați.[36]

It has to be remembered that the *fusgeyers* formed only a minority of the emigrants, although the movement of the walkers was the detail of emigration which attracted most attention at the time. According to Joseph Kissman, the number of emigrants involved in the *fusgeyer* movement is not known, although he offers a tentative estimate of 'a few thousand people', which appears reasonable enough. Neither is it known how many groups there were. The size of a *fusgeyer* group varied a lot, but, according to several estimates, it consisted of 40-300 persons.[37]

The unusual migration pattern adopted by the *fusgeyers* did not please Romanian political leaders, who argued that emigration acquired a markedly political character as the Jews marched across the country singing, making

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34 The Yiddish word is often used in this context, sometimes with an incorrect spelling. Sometimes the terms 'wanderers' or 'wayfarers' are used. In her book that combines history with travel writing, Culiner tells about her journey in the steps of the fusgeyers. She crossed Romania on foot in 2001, following the route Jacob Finkelstein took in 1900. Culiner 2004, 23-26, 28-29.

35 Culiner 2004, 20-23; Kissman 1947, 163-166. An extensive account of the *fusgeyers* can be found in Bar-Avi 1961, 49-82.

36 *JC*, 27 July 1900.

37 Kissman 1947, 165.

noise, and disturbing peace.[38] In spite of this, the Romanian Conservative government, led by Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino, took an encouraging outlook on emigration at first, perhaps seeing it as a convenient way to get rid of Jews.

Not everyone began their journey on foot as *fusgeyers* — many emigrants boarded a train to Austria-Hungary. Yet others boarded a ship at the Romanian Black Sea ports in order to sail to Near East destinations such as Cyprus, Palestine, and Anatolia. Hungary did not allow Romanian Jews to enter its half of the Dual Monarchy at all if they did not have sufficient finances, or at least it did not permit them to leave their trains while in Hungary. The Vienna Allianz, the main Viennese Jewish organisation, sent some emigrants back from Vienna, after which they ended up in Budapest. They were not allowed to remain in Budapest, however, and were sent back to the Romanian border. At the border, it turned out that the Romanian authorities did not permit re-entry, because the passports issued to the emigrants did not allow for a return. Some Jews did not dare to attempt to go back to Romania at all, preferring to camp at the border area.[39] As for other problems in emigration during the year 1900, there were some disturbing incidents such as defective ships carrying too many passengers and unusual, ultimately unsuccessful choices of destination, such as Cyprus.[40]

In 1900, failed colonisation schemes of Romanian Jews attracted some attention in Britain, both among the Anglo-Jewry and among the government officials. Some Romanian Jews had emigrated to Turkey and Cyprus, but both projects soon proved to be total failures. The Cyprus episode is interesting as it indirectly involved Britain, the colonial landlord of Cyprus, and there was some debate on the matter between the British representatives in Romania and the Cyprus colonial administration. Davis Trietsch, 'one of German Zionism's most inveterate utopians'[41], was planning a Jewish settlement in Cyprus. He was keen to include some Romanian Jews in his settlement scheme.[42]

As early as 1899, Trietsch went to Romania to distribute emigration propaganda, after which some enthusiastic Romanian Jews began to make somewhat unrealistic emigration plans. There was even a piece of news about a group of young Jews from Galați who wanted to join the British forces as volunteers in the Boer War in South Africa. Their object was to settle in Cyprus after the war — if they were still alive.[43]

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38 *FRUS 1903*, 704, American Minister in Athens (also accredited to Romania) John B. Jackson to Secretary of State John Hay, 7 Sept. 1903.

39 *JC*, 3 Aug 1900. See also *The New York Times*, 16 July 1900. *The New York Times* pointed out that a number of emigrants were actually professional men, such as lawyers and doctors, who spoke many foreign languages.

40 FO 104/146/6. Trotter to Salisbury, 30 May 1900. The same dispatch is also in FO 770/56.

41 Penslar 1991, 51.Trietsch believed Cyprus was suitable for Jewish colonisation because of its proximity to Palestine.

42 *JC*, 20 Oct. 1899, Davis Trietsch to the Editor. For the Cyprus project, see also Bar-Avi 1961, 40-46.

43 *JC*, 10 Nov. 1899.

Eventually, Trietsch could not handle the situation. After hearing about far-fetched plans like the Boer War scheme, he had to begin to hold back prospective emigrants. He also tried to persuade them to make all the necessary arrangements prior to leaving Romania.[44]

When problems appeared at the Cyprus end in spring 1900, Trietsch contacted the British representative at Bucharest, John Gordon Kennedy, asking for help.[45] It had transpired that the Cyprus authorities would not allow the immigrants to land unless they had some guarantees for their maintenance and, in the case of the possible failure of the settlement, guarantees of their removal from Cyprus. Consequently, the shipping company that the migrants had made a deal with refused to carry them from the Romanian port of Sulina. The main question seemed to be whether the group of Romanian Jews was going to be a burden on the Cyprus population — although the required guarantees appeared to be available from Jewish activists and some well-to-do Romanian Jews. There was also an implicit fear of the arrival of more Jewish immigrants from Romania to Cyprus, especially as Trietsch himself was so dedicated to the settlement idea, envisioning several Jewish agricultural colonies being established on the island.[46]

The Cyprus authorities opposed Trietsch's project, and argued that Trietsch had not made sufficient provisions for the maintenance of immigrants, although he had been 'instrumental' in bringing or attempting to bring them to Cyprus.[47] Strict guarantees on financial support, adequate housing, medical care, and payment of possible expenses of removal were required from the sponsors of the settlement.[48] Trietsch claimed that he had brought only two small groups to the island in early 1900, twelve individuals at first and then '28 families'. None of them were rejected at the port on arrival, but some admittedly did not have sufficient means. Those unfortunate individuals then became a burden on the Jewish agricultural colony and some fell ill or, in a few cases, died. In addition, Trietsch refused to take responsibility for the actions of a group of 250 Romanian Jews who had sailed from Galați to Cyprus in May 1900 despite his warnings.[49]

Several hundred, or at highest one thousand, Romanian Jews moved to Anatolia. A group of 160 Jews from Tulcea sailed to Constantinople, where the Ottoman authorities granted them aid and forwarded them to the Anatolian inland, where they were then given land for agricultural settlement. The first group to arrive in Turkey was 'destitute' and so were the subsequent migrants.

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44 *JC*, 17 Nov. 1899.

45 FO 770/55/3, Kennedy to Trotter, 30 May 1900.

46 FO 104/146/7, Trotter to Salisbury, 1 June 1900, enclosure: letter from Trietsch to Kennedy, 28 May 1900. This matter can also be found in FO 770/56/10, Trotter to Kennedy, 2 June 1900.

47 CO 67/123/18763, High Commissioner for Cyprus Sir William F. Haynes Smith to Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, 4 June 1900; CO 67/124/24125, Haynes Smith to Chamberlain, 16 July 1900.

48 CO 67/124/24114, Haynes Smith to Chamberlain, 16 July 1900.

49 *JC*, 14 Sept. 1900; *JC*, 12 Oct. 1900, article by Trietsch.

When more colonists began to arrive to Turkey, the authorities closed the borders to them. The colonists' situation did not improve with time, and they were generally in a very bad state, suffering from health problems and starvation. Later, most of them were repatriated to Romania or were helped to emigrate elsewhere.[50] According to Iancu, the Anatolian and Cyprus colonists had fallen prey to the activities of devious middlemen.[51] It remains uncertain whether Iancu also includes Davis Trietsch with his Cyprus project as being among these dishonest go-betweens, but it seems as if Trietsch's case was more about foolish idealism.

Incidents at the Romanian and Austro-Hungarian border and the arrival in Vienna of Jews who lacked money to continue their journey did not escape the notice of the Western and Central European press. The situation induced the papers to write extensively about the whole Romanian Jewish question during the summer of 1900, not only about the problems connected to emigration. The Romanian financial situation was also discussed in detail.[52]

It was particularly those newspapers that were allegedly under 'Jewish influence' that launched a fierce campaign against Romania. These papers included *Pester Lloyd* in Budapest, *Neue Freie Presse* in Vienna, and *Frankfurter Zeitung* in Frankfurt.[53] Romania was deliberately painted in a negative light in these newspaper articles. The papers were keen to remind their readers and politicians about the Jewish problems in Romania. The Romanian Jewish question was therefore raised anew on the international front, after an absence of twenty years.

Anti-Romanian tendencies in Austro-Hungarian newspapers were transmitted from time to time to Britain. *The Times* discussed the Romanian emigration problem extensively in an article in July 1900, basing its account mainly on reports that had recently appeared in Austrian papers. According to the Vienna correspondent for *The Times*, the Romanian explanation of Jewish emigration, which emphasised short-term economic factors, was inadequate. The real cause of emigration, according to the correspondent, was the extensive anti-Jewish legislation in Romania. The article further repeated all the standard pro-Jewish arguments, starting with the Romanian evasion of the Berlin Treaty.[54]

The Romanian legation in London was not pleased with the articles appearing in *The Times*, and it wished to make its own case known by attempting to play down anti-Jewish tendencies in Romanian society. This was

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50 The *Jewish Chronicle* had several articles on Romanian Jewish emigration to Anatolia, see *JC*, 9 Feb. 1900, 27 April 1900, 27 July 1900 and 14 Sept. 1900. On the Anatolian settlement, see also Bar-Avi 1961, 30-38.

51 Iancu 1981, 253-254.

52 See, for example, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 7 July 1900; *Neue Freie Presse*, 8 July 1900.

53 Iancu 1981, 263-265, Arsène Henry, the French Minister at Bucharest, to Delcassé, 12 July 1900.

54 *The Times*, 23 July 1900. See also *The New York Times*, 16 July 1900. *The New York Times* emphasised the anti-Semitism of the Romanian population and the anti-Semitic legislation of the Romanian government. The Jewish situation in Romania was believed to 'represent the most elaborate boycott ever inflicted upon a race or class'.

done in a rather friendly and courteous manner, with a piece in *The Times*. The formulation of the article was evasive, and it only mentioned some advantageously selected details such as the fact that it was not *impossible* for the Jews to obtain naturalisation in Romania.[55] Not surprisingly, the Romanian article provoked some members of the public to write enraged replies, in which the points made by the Romanian legation were ripped to pieces.[56] This dispute set an example for the years to come: Romania's arguments were generally not very well received in Britain, and the attempts of Romanian representatives to present their country in a positive light were not terribly convincing.

55 *The Times*, 22 Aug. 1900.

56 *The Times*, 23 Aug. 1900, Oswald John Simon to the Editor; *The Times*, 28 Aug. 1900, Herbert G. Lousada to the Editor.

4 BRITISH ATTITUDES TOWARDS ROMANIAN JEWISH MIGRATION

4.1 The Anglo-Jewish community and immigration

A large number of Romanian Jews arrived in Britain in the summer of 1900. This sudden influx came at a bad time for the British Jewry. It coincided with the rise of anti-alien agitation, combined with the problem of overcrowding in the East End of London. Moreover, the Boer War had incited nationalist and racist mentalities.[1] The leaders of the British Jewry believed that the immigration of East European Jews threatened their own status and increased the risk of anti-Semitism.[2]

Jewish emancipation in Britain was completed by the early 1870s, although the year 1858 is often specifically mentioned due to its symbolic importance as the year when the first Jewish MP, Lionel de Rothschild, was able to take his seat in Parliament.[3] During the previous decades, obstacles in parliamentary voting, local politics and the municipal office had been abolished, Jews were admitted to the Bar, and the City of London gave up the regulations that had hindered Jewish economic and public success. Christian sacrament before naturalisation was abandoned, enabling Jews to acquire British citizenship on an equal footing with others. Jews were admitted to the Bar in 1833.[4]

At the same time, Jewish communal institutions retained their autonomy and the state was very reluctant to interfere in their matters. The majority of the Anglo-Jewish leadership had actually been indifferent or even hostile to political emancipation during the mid-nineteenth century. A group of wealthy, well-connected and politically liberal Jews were at the head of the emancipation

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1 Black 1988, 258.

2 Endelman 2002, 171-172.

3 Feldman 1994, 25, 46. For an overview on Jewish emancipation in Western Europe, see Gartner 2001, 128-161.

4 Alderman 1992, 53-55; Lipman 1990, 8-9. See also Endelman 2002, 101-104.

campaign. Political equality was irrelevant to most Jews as it was not a prerequisite of social and economic freedom, or of Jewish communal life. Participation in the political life of a Christian state was viewed as a distraction from the Jewish way of life.[5]

But were there any hostile forces working against the Anglo-Jewry in British society in the early twentieth century? Colin Holmes has examined anti-Semitism in early twentieth century Britain. On the one hand, Holmes admits that there were pressures restricting overt anti-Semitism: anti-Semitism was seen as disreputable and there were not many who were willing to risk their reputation through overt anti-Jewish agitation. Liberal circles especially disapproved of anti-Semitism, partly due to their capitalist ideals of independent (including Jewish) entrepreneurship and partly due to their traditions of religious liberty. Of course, not everybody agreed with this, and Holmes describes in detail the attitudes of those who expressed their anti-Semitism. And even if Jews were well 'tolerated' in British society, they were not necessarily accepted as social equals. Nevertheless, Jews were well organised as a group and had access to the government and the press. Their influence made them more likely to be tolerated than more fragmented and weaker ethnic groups.[6]

As far as government policy was concerned, there was no evidence of any official anti-Semitism.[7] Eliyahu Feldman, however, has drawn attention to the anti-Jewish ideas circulating among the English upper class, particularly within the Foreign Office. Especially those diplomats who were accredited to Russia tended to adopt the views of the Russian elite.[8] This argument can also be applied to the case of British diplomats who came into contact with Romanian politicians.

Holmes points out that despite the positive currents and many successes, one should not be too optimistic about the Anglo-Jewish situation in the early twentieth century. Private discrimination existed within working life, clubs and academia.[9] As for the actual organised anti-Jewish agitation, Holmes argues that it was not in fact directed against the Jewish group as a whole but was manifested in terms directed against certain sections of the Jewish population. This hostility was expressed through two main images: the alien Jew and the rich Jew. Hostility against the alien character of Jews involved a wide range of arguments, including the fear of alien / Jewish invasion in the form of immigration, the portrayal of Jews as a cosmopolitan force against British interests, and criticism of Jewish separatist culture, habits, clannishness and alleged criminality. A somewhat narrower group of anti-Jewish attitudes

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5 Alderman 1992, 52, 57-59; Endelman 2002, 104-110.

6 Holmes 1979, 104-105.

7 Holmes 1979, 227.

8 Feldman 1987, 587, 595-597.

9 Holmes 1979, 110.

consisted of the disapproval that was often felt of Jewish economic success and power.[10]

Robert Wistrich remarks that Jewish mass immigration was the most significant factor in British anti-Semitism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[11] Consequently, the worries of the Anglo-Jewish leaders over the arrival of a large number of foreign Jews were not without foundation.

There is an abundance of information available on the immigration attitudes of British Jews and Western Jewries in general.[12] For the most part there has been a consensus on the fact that the Jewish communal leaders did not want Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Britain; only the extent of their critical stand has caused disagreement. Attitudes towards Romanian immigration have not been separately addressed in previous research.

The basic Western Jewish attitudes towards Jewish emigration, which can also be applied to the Romanian case, are categorised by Zosa Szajkowski as follows. Firstly, there were those who advocated emigration to America since the Jewish masses themselves wanted to emigrate and since they expected that anti-Jewish policy and discrimination in Eastern Europe would not cease. Those who were opposed to the solution of the Jewish problem through emigration had several arguments in their repertoire. Emigration would entail that Jewish communities in Europe would fade out in the long run. Large-scale emigration would compromise the struggle for Jewish emancipation: emigration could be interpreted as deference to the policies of governments, like Romania's, that were trying to get rid of the Jews. Also, emigration and, in particular, propaganda favouring emigration, could serve as a tool for the anti-Semitic accusation that Jews were not patriotic. As to more practical arguments, the American Jews could not be expected to assist every newcomer happily and willingly.[13] All these arguments also came up in the Anglo-Jewish debate on emigration of Romanian Jews.

According to Szajkowski, British Jews had the most negative stance against immigration of all the major Western Jewish communities. This was, above all, promoted by the 'circle' headed by Claude Montefiore, the President of the Anglo-Jewish Association. Montefiore was afraid that the Romanian movement would encourage and increase the immigration of Russian Jews.[14] Although Montefiore's 'circle' constituted the main part of the Jewish establishment, it was by no means all-encompassing. It is not therefore enough

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10 Holmes 1979, 111-115.

11 Wistrich 1991, 104-106, 113.

12 There is plenty of research on immigration politics of the British Jews. Lloyd P. Gartner has written several studies on Jewish immigrants in Britain. They have some interest especially in relation to Romanian immigration to Britain, but they are principally convenient for the general immigration opinions in Britain. Gartner's major work is the admirable *The Jewish Immigrant in England, 1870-1914* (1960/1973). Highly recommended is Eugene C. Black's *The Social Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1920* (1988), which has also excellent material on Jewish foreign policy.

13 Szajkowski 1952, 157-158.

14 Szajkowski 1951, 59. This assessment is based on Claude Montefiore's correspondence with the Jewish Colonization Association.

to generalize that the British Jewish attitude was the most anti-immigrationist in Europe since it is clear that more than one opinion existed within the Anglo-Jewish leadership.

There was no single immigration policy that could be attributed to the Anglo-Jewry as a whole. For the most part, the leaders of the British Jews, although unhappy with the arrival of Jewish masses, did not want to legally close the borders against newcomers. Others, including the head of the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter, Hermann Landau, held a more positive view towards the new arrivals but did not actually want more immigrants in Britain either. He concentrated on demanding more aid for those immigrants already in Britain. Some, on the other hand, such as Benjamin L. Cohen, President of the Board of Guardians until 1900, were in favour of official immigration restrictions. Lloyd P. Gartner concludes that the attitude of British Jews was that of a 'middle course, neither welcoming nor repelling immigrants'.[15]

Gartner's interpretation is accepted by Bernard Gainer.[16] W.D. Rubinstein, on the other hand, calls the Anglo-Jewish attitude 'tolerant' and emphasises their opposition to legal immigration restrictions.[17] Vivian Lipman concludes that the Anglo-Jewry was 'a community initially divided on the question of the immigrants'. He mentions that there were attitudes for and against immigration but points out that eventually the whole community was united in its efforts to allow for the landing of persecuted coreligionists from Russia and to campaign for a lenient interpretation of the provisions of the 1905 Aliens Act.[18] Indeed, after the Aliens Act was passed, Jewish leaders were active in demanding the repeal or amendment of the Act.[19]

Eugene C. Black's assessment that the British Jewish leaders were not as unfavourably disposed towards Jewish immigration as the French Jewry also contrasts with Szajkowski's opinion.[20] Black holds the view that the British Jewry was undeniably anti-immigrationist but not in an extreme way, hence agreeing with Gartner. This should be accepted as the basic tendency of the Anglo-Jewish reactions to immigration.

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15 Gartner 1973, 49-51, 54-56. The Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter and the Board of Guardians had had disagreements over immigrant assistance since the establishment of the shelter in the 1880s. Until 1900, the Board of Guardians had refused to cooperate with the shelter. See Gutwein 1992, 169-170.

16 Gainer 1972, 55-56. Gainer cites the first, 1960 edition of Gartner's book, not the 1973 edition that has been used in the present work.

17 Rubinstein 1996, 158.

18 Lipman 1990, 75-76.

19 Bloom 1995, 188, 190-191.

20 Black 1988, 244.

4.2 The arrival of Romanian Jewish immigrants in Britain in 1900

Even though the attention of the British Jewry had at first been on the general features of Jewish emigration from Romania, the perspective changed somewhat when these emigrants began to arrive in Britain and became immigrants, from the British point of view. Disquieting stories about the influx of Romanian Jewish migrants to British shores started to appear in the Jewish Chronicle in June 1900. Romanian emigrants who had been travelling through the European continent from town to town and from community to community had now reached London, aided by their coreligionists in Austria, Germany and Holland. At the same time, news from Vienna described the presence of a large number of destitute migrants who were allegedly on their way to Britain. The arrival of Romanian Jews to London produced a strong response within the Jewish establishment. The British Jews were puzzled and confused, desperately wishing to end the influx but unable to do anything to prevent it.

The main continental embarkation ports for England were Hamburg, Rotterdam and Bremen from where migrants sailed to London or Grimsby. The latter was predominantly for transmigrants who crossed the country only in order to take another ship from Liverpool to America. Those who landed there were either planning to stay in Britain, did not have tickets to America, or simply did not know what to do next. Exploitation of emigrants by charging extra for tickets or lodgings, as well as outright criminal activities such as baggage theft, was known to occur both at the continental ports and the British docks. The scruffy appearance of the immigrants after a three day crossing was often taken as indication that the immigrants themselves were 'unsanitary', although it was often just a result of the difficult journey.[21]

In early June, a group of 172 Romanian Jews arrived in London. They were taken to the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter, an institution which assisted new Jewish immigrants, and their situation was examined. They explained that some 'Zionists' had sent them to England by arranging cheap or free transport.[22] This was strongly contested by the Zionists who found it absurd that any Zionist would ever direct unregulated migration to Britain or even to America. True, they were totally in favour of Jewish emigration, but only to the Jewish homeland and in a properly arranged manner that would also ultimately solve the Romanian problem.[23]

The leaders of the Anglo-Jewry thought that the solution to the Jewish question in Eastern Europe should be found within Eastern Europe itself: emancipation was expected to occur within the country of residence. Thus, mass emigration as a solution was discouraged.[24] This also led to opposition to Zionism. The official opinion of the Conjoint Committee and the Anglo-Jewish

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21 Gartner 1973, 31-36.

22 *JC*, 15 June 1900.

23 *JC*, 29 June 1900, J. de Haas to the Editor.

24 Bayme 1977, 264.

establishment was against Zionism as a solution to the Jewish problems in Romania and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Nationalism and requests of special Jewish rights on the grounds of the separate Jewish nationhood were presumed to be damaging to the cause of oppressed Jews and the idea of Jews as a nation was contrary to the model of assimilation as understood in Britain. This could also be applied to the Romanian situation: if Jews in Romania claimed to have a nation of their own, it would play into the hands of the Romanians, justifying Romania's arguments for exclusion and for the Jewish status as aliens.[25] Indeed, there were signs of this attitude in Romania: Zionism was seen as yet another sign of the Jews' inability to integrate.[26]

Although the anti-Zionist stance of the Anglo-Jewish elite was not uniform, their position was usually at least non-Zionist — i.e. not especially supportive of Zionism but not completely against it.[27] However, as the leaders of the Conjoint Committee, Claude Montefiore and David Alexander, were fierce anti-Zionists, Conjoint policy tended to proceed along firmly anti-Zionist lines. They objected to the idea that the Jews constituted a separate nation, and, at the same time, they advocated a high degree of acculturation.[28]

Lucien Wolf, the subsequent main policy maker of the Conjoint was also anti-Zionist. He was not as explicitly against the idea of the Jews being a distinctive nation as, say, Claude Montefiore. He also supported the Jewish Territorial Organisation which called for an autonomous Jewish territory (not in Palestine). Nevertheless he strongly objected to the Zionist national doctrine, calling the movement 'a Zionist peril'. He promoted the emancipationist and integrationist position. An aspect of his opposition was the implication of Zionism for the Romanian Jewish situation: if the Jews were a nation, the Romanians had no reason to emancipate them.[29]

The *Jewish Chronicle* later interviewed another group of Romanian Jewish immigrants in London. They said they had received assistance from several continental Jewish communities, for example those in Vienna and Frankfurt, and now expected the London Jews to assist them in the same manner. They wished to travel to Canada, where they hoped to settle as agricultural colonists, and they claimed to have some previous experience in agriculture. Some of them, at least, had begun their journey as *fusgeyers*.[30] This appeared to be a typical sample group from the early stages of Romanian Jewish emigration. They were young or youngish men who dreamed about agricultural settlement

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25 Gaster Papers, received mail, the Conjoint file IV, Conjoint memo on Zionism, 27 April 1915 and a copy of a letter from Lucien Wolf to James de Rothschild, 31 Aug. 1916.

26 Verax 1904, 80-81.

27 For this, see Rubinstein 1996, 166-171.

28 S. Cohen 1982, 166-171. Cohen's account is on Montefiore; Alexander remains a more elusive figure.

29 Levene 1992, 111-113. To compare, the French Jews also laid strong emphasis on assimilation and acculturation. It was the duty of the French Jewry to encourage other Jews to follow their example. Marrus 1971, 87, 94.

30 *JC*, 6 July 1900

in Canada. They were penniless and travelled quite happily at the expense of their fellow brethren outside an organised emigration framework. They appeared to be unaware of the actual conditions in Canada or in the countries they passed through.

Based on Eliyahu Feldman's analysis of letters from prospective Romanian Jewish emigrants, the United States indeed was not the first choice of destination for the emigrants in 1900, although most of them ended up there anyway. Canada, as a possibility for agricultural settlement, was their most popular destination, at least theoretically.[31] Their dreams for the future destination and their plans for future work corresponded very weakly, however, with the actual outcome of the emigration process: settlement in large American cities.

On the other hand, it has to be remembered that Feldman used only a small number of letters in his study and discusses only the year 1900, so his observations cannot perhaps be accepted as universal. It is not entirely clear if those who gave Canada as their preferred destination really wanted to stay there permanently or if they saw Canada only as a convenient stepping stone to the United States. At least some of the emigrants might have been familiar with the projects of the Jewish Colonization Association[32] (ICA) in Canada, and hence expressed their willingness to go there, in order to draw benefits. The accounts in the *Jewish Chronicle* and other contemporary Jewish sources do support Feldman's observations, however. If the Canada plans were not, as a rule, successful, this was mainly attributable to ignorance and false expectations rather than any conscious intention to cross the border into the United States.

The perceptions that the East European Jewry held of the possible destination countries formed part of the reason why the main immigration flows were directed to the United States. The image of the United States was that of legal equality, social mobility and democracy. It appeared to welcome large masses of immigrants and to offer them free secular education and enormous economic opportunities. Great Britain was simply too small to offer the kind of opportunities that could be found in America. Britain, although possessing an emancipated Jewish elite, was perceived as oligarchial and even 'too Christian', with a sectarian and undemocratic education system. The strong position of the Anglo-Jewish leaders within their community could also be seen as a negative aspect, further contributing to the impression of class division and upper class dominance. Finally, some emigrants believed that, due to the relative geographical closeness of Britain to Russia, it would be easier to be deported back to Russia from Britain than it would be from America.[33]

Since the emigrants had been aided financially by others throughout their trek and since they had no money to begin with, they were unable to continue

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31 Feldman 1980, 67.

32 The Jewish Colonization Association (JCA or ICA) was a welfare organisation founded by Maurice de Hirsch. Its purpose was to help poor or persecuted Jews to settle in a new country and to find work there. It also sponsored Jewish schools.

33 Rubinstein 1996, 95.

their journey from Britain. In the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter, 500 Romanian Jews were received within a month in midsummer 1900. Hermann Landau, the president of the Temporary Shelter, handled the situation energetically, selecting 200 migrants to be sent to Canada through a Jewish Colonization Association settlement project.[34] As a result, the dreams of agricultural work in Canada, which, to some extent, had been stirred up by emigration 'agents'[35] in Romania, did come true for some emigrants.

One hundred Romanian Jews, who had been selected in London, arrived at an ICA settlement near the Canadian town of Regina in 1901. The project proved ultimately unsuccessful. Already during 1899, there had been a large number of Romanian Jewish arrivals in Canada: 2,202 according to Theodore Norman. Norman gives a further figure of 4,304 as the number of Romanian Jews who immigrated to Canada with the help of the ICA during 1901-1906.[36] According to Eliyahu Feldman, the figure was only 1,759 during 1901-1904.[37] In any case, it can be said that there was indeed a considerable number of Romanian Jews who went to Canada and there is a strong indication in the sources that there was not much success, at least with respect to the agricultural projects.

The Anglo-Jewish Association contributed to the dispute by remarking that they were not responsible for helping immigrants; the duty fell logically to the Board of Guardians.[38] On the other hand, the AJA concluded that the situation in Romania was 'worse than anywhere else'.[39]

The *Jewish Chronicle* suggested that two solutions to the Romanian emigrant / immigrant problem should be looked into immediately: emigration should be organised properly and the root causes in Romania should be tackled.[40] Addressing the root causes could mean either relief for poor Jews in Romania or some kind of action against the Romanian Jewish policy (including evasion of the Berlin Treaty, if even more far-reaching conclusions were drawn) which was seen as the absolute root cause for emigration. The Romanian government's behaviour was constantly referred to in the *Jewish Chronicle* as the major emigrant-generating factor.

The Jewish Board of Guardians, responsible for the Jewish community's welfare, had several heated debates on the issue during the summer and autumn of 1900. The Board, or at least the majority of its officials, argued that immigration had to be stopped and that those migrants who were already in London had to be sent back to the continent.[41] The *Jewish Chronicle*, along with

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34 *JC* leaders, 6 July 1900 and 13 July 1900.

35 Szajkowski 1951, 59.

36 Norman 1985, 96-98. Although Norman has acquired his information from the ICA papers, he does not use footnotes, and, therefore, it is difficult to argue against him without consulting the ICA papers.

37 Feldman 1980, 62.

38 *JC*, 13 July 1900, Annual meeting of AJA.

39 *AJA Annual Report 1899-1900*, 13.

40 *JC* leader, 6 July 1900.

41 *JC*, 13 July 1900.

its editor, Asher Myers, supported the Board of Guardians' repatriation policy. This attitude has also been mentioned by David Cesarani in his history of the *Jewish Chronicle*.[42]

It seems as though the idea of letting the newcomers stay, at the expense of the British Jewish community, was absolutely unacceptable for the British Jews, and nobody seriously suggested it. There was some disagreement as to the role of the British Jewish community in the situation: the community leaders were generally unwilling to give substantial backing but some individuals had a more pro-migrant outlook. Rabbi Moses Gaster, for instance, probably because of his own Romanian origins, did not want the 'refugees' — as he called the Romanian migrants — to be sent back to Romania. However, even he did not want them to settle in Britain, and he wished that emigrants would not travel via England in the first place.[43] The latter wish was often proposed as a solution to the British transmigration question, but the British Jews were unable to change the sea routes and pricing policies of shipping companies, which, at the time, advertised cheaper fares travelling from the European continent to America via Britain than travelling directly.

The British problem with Romanian Jewish inflows was mainly that of transmigration rather than immigration and permanent settlement. Reactions to transmigration were also important since they added to the contemporary impression of large immigrant masses. Those who stayed longer needed accommodation and work. They were perhaps trying to earn money for their passage to America. Their situation was therefore not so different from that of the permanent settlers.[44]

The Jewish Board of Guardians had a very discouraging attitude towards Romanian Jewish immigration. Although the Board, in principle, understood why emigrants wanted to move out of Romania, they greatly disapproved of the movement and, implied that these people should not have left Romania in the first place. They somewhat bitterly commented in the Annual Report of 1900 that

> 'the popular imagination in Romania...became inflamed with the extravagant idea, that Canada was impatiently awaiting an unlimited influx of any and every kind of immigrants; and that these had only to reach London in order to find, either a qualified organization prepared with plans and funds to equip and forward all applicants to the land of promise, or, as an alternative, the prospect of an assured career in England.'[45]

It is clear, therefore, that the Board did not want Romanian emigrants to come to Britain, even if they were simply on their way to another destination. They suspected that the Canada plan was unrealistic. The Board also disapproved of the activities of continental Jewish communities in forwarding Romanian migrants to London. From the beginning, it was clear that the only help that

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42 Cesarani 1994, 74.

43 JC, 20 July 1900, Rabbi Moses Gaster's speech at the Jewish Working Men's Club.

44 Garrard 1971, 213.

45 *JBG Annual Report 1900*, 16.

would be given to the newcomers was repatriation (although there were rare exceptions). The attitude towards married men who had left their families behind in Romania was especially cold. Furthermore, the presence of Romanian immigrants in the East End of London was seen as a danger to the community, especially as the migrants might occasionally have resorted to sleeping in the streets — a practice that was fiercely opposed by the Board.[46]

Additional problems with public order arose in the East End of London. For instance, a group of Romanian Jewish *fusgeyers* caused trouble in the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter. One of the *fusgeyers*, Jacob Finkelstein, described the episode as follows:

> 'One evening we grouped together and went away to the Shelter. It was already closed, but that didn't daunt us. We knocked on the door. After ten minutes of knocking someone came around who knew us and said, "Aha. The tramps are here again; get away from there or we will call the police and have you arrested". We answered that we weren't afraid since we had nowhere else to go. He kept his word, called the police and told them to come and arrest us.'[47]

The police did not arrest the men after all. Some reporters then arrived to interview the group. After spending the night on the front steps of the Shelter, the *fusgeyer* group was finally asked to come in. Apparently, the reporters had already published their article and criticised the Shelter for not helping the *fusgeyers*. Hermann Landau, the president of the Temporary Shelter, was outraged, as related by Finkelstein:

> 'A second man arrived, Mr. Landau, as we later learned, and he fanned a newspaper straight in our faces and gave us the following welcome: "You vagabonds, Romanian tramps, which devil sent you to dirty the Jewish name."… After hearing such insults, we were astonished.'[48]

Another 'unpleasant incident' took place in July 1900, when a band of Romanian immigrants turned up, uninvited, to the Anglo-Jewish Association annual meeting. In a vague piece of editorial, the *Jewish Chronicle* blamed some unnamed persons — not the immigrants themselves — for this and feared that serious consequences and street brawls might follow such demonstrations.[49] Yet another problem that the Jewish institutions were facing was the appearance of bogus welfare cases who tried to gain passage to Canada by posing as newly-arrived penniless migrants from Romania.[50]

The Board of Guardians produced some statistics on the support granted to Romanian Jewish immigrants. From 18 June to 8 July 1900, 211 Romanian Jews were assisted by the Board of Guardians. 58 of them were sent back home, 117 — most of whom had left their families behind — were refused help except

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46 *JBG Annual Report 1900*, 16-17.

47 Culiner 2004, 207, Jacob Finkelstein's immigrant story.

48 Culiner 2004, 207-208, Jacob Finkelstein's immigrant story. Finkelstein does not mention the name of the newspaper, nor does Culiner.

49 *JC* leader, 13 July 1900.

50 Black 1988, 252.

in returning home (apparently they refused to return), 17 were sent to America, 2 received temporary financial aid and 1 was given a loan. These figures did not include those who had received help from the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter. As to the occupations of the Board customers, there were hawkers, locksmiths, carpenters, tailors, shop assistants and clerks. 58 men, however, had no trade at all, and none of them were familiar with agricultural work, which had serious implications for their future as the Board suspected that they were not suitable colonist material to be sent to Canada.[51]

In December, the Board of Guardians was able to observe, somewhat relieved, that the inflow from Romania had not, after all, been as bad as had been feared in the summer. They could not get too comfortable, however, as a new influx of Romanian Jews might have arrived at any time. It was thus important to avoid anything that might encourage foreign Jews to travel to England.[52] In 1900, when 493 Romanian Jews were assisted by the Board, 466 of them were sent away, setting a very clear and discouraging example for potential future arrivals.[53]

In 1900, the year of the Romanian immigration crisis in Britain, the total number of cases supported by the Board rose from 1,784, in the previous year, to 2,903. Although a substantial portion of the increase was due to the Romanian exodus, the number of Russian and Polish Jewish paupers increased as well.[54] They made up the majority of the welfare cases throughout the pre-First World War period. One person could be counted as a case year after year, and, indeed, many individuals were long-term Board protégées. The separate categories for those who had lived in Britain more or less than seven years demonstrate the proportion of newcomers or relative newcomers. It can be clearly seen that, as the years passed by, more and more Romanian Jews who were long-standing residents in England sought Board relief, while the numbers of fresh arrivals diminished both in the Board's books and in general.

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51 *JC*, 27 July 1900, Jewish Board of Guardians' president Leonard L. Cohen's memo on Romanian immigrants.

52 *JC*, 14 Dec. 1900.

53 *JBG Annual Report 1900*, 49.

54 *JBG Annual Report 1900*, 46-47.

TABLE 5 The number of Romanian Jews assisted by the Jewish Board of Guardians in London.[55]

Year	Cases of Romanian Jews who had lived in Britain more than 7 years	Cases of Romanian Jews who had lived in Britain less than 7 years	Total number of cases of Romanian Jews assisted	Total number of all cases assisted by the Board
1900	-	493	493	2,903
1901	1	208	209	5,061
1902	4	172	176	4,806
1903	13	214	227	5,113
1904	19	171	190	6,018
1905	15	119	134	6,746
1906	15	42	57	6,418
1907	45	70	115	5,584
1908	58	37	95	4,248
1909	43	26	69	4,859
1910	57	24	81	4,359
1911	40	9	49	4,039
1912	49	17	66	3,746
1913	44	17	61	3,348
1914	86	21	107	4,508

4.3 International Jewish action and coordination of emigration

The Romanian Jewish immigration question was not confined to Britain. All the other Jewish communities in Western Europe and the United States were keen to express their opinions on the issue and to find solutions to the problem of the unregulated migration movement. Information on the later, more organised stages of emigration is also needed as background to decreased immigration in Britain and diminished fears of mass immigration among the Anglo-Jewry and the British government.

In June 1900, there was an international Jewish conference in Paris, followed by other conferences during the next two years, which discussed the problem of Romanian Jewish emigration. The conference decided not to encourage emigration and not to take any political action against Romania. Selected individuals who were already on their way to America were assisted. Those emigrants who could not successfully be settled in any country were to be sent back to Romania, where they would be given emergency relief.[56]

The Board of Deputies did not attend the international conference: the invitation arrived too late, and, in any case, the Board did not approve of the conference since the Romanian matter was already taken care of among British

55 Data is collected from the *JBG Annual Reports 1900-1914*. Each report includes a thorough statistical section. Vivian Lipman's history of the Board of Guardians has an appendix table of the main activities of the Board but, unfortunately, it does not give exact numbers of the Romanian Jewish cases. Lipman 1959, 282-284.

56 *JC*, 27 July 1900; Schneider 1981, 537

Jews.[57] Jews in the United States did not want to participate in the conference of June 1900 either as they maintained that they already had enough to do in helping the thousands of newcomers from Romania to settle in America and they were afraid of an additional financial burden. They, like the British Jews, also feared that a possible anti-Jewish or anti-immigrant atmosphere might develop in the United States. It was decided in the conference that the Jewish Colonization Association would take care of the systematisation of emigration flows from Romania.[58]

On the other hand, the American Jews took action in order to assist the immigrants and persuade immigration officers to allow some 'questionable' Romanian immigrants into the country. They were not, therefore, entirely against the arrival of their Romanian coreligionists. Problems involving Romanian Jewish newcomers made the U.S. government send an immigration inspector to Romania to observe the underlying causes for the sudden escalation of immigration. The inspector, Robert Watchorn, concluded in his report in autumn 1900 that the conditions of Romanian Jews were miserable. Anti-Jewish legislation made it nearly impossible for Jews to earn a living. That being said, his interpretation of the situation was not completely in line with Jewish opinion: he blamed foreign agitation, especially Zionist, for the sudden mass departure.[59]

Another international Jewish conference on the Romanian situation was convened by the Alliance Israélite Universelle in June 1901. It discussed relief work in Romania and the funding of the welfare provisions. The atmosphere was filled with pessimism, particularly when diplomatic action was proposed. Claude Montefiore, for instance, declared that diplomatic pressure was not going to help, since the Great Powers would only act if their own interests were at stake.[60]

Some members of the Anglo-Jewish Association were reluctant to attend the conference, although it was eventually decided that the AJA would participate. Several reasons were given for their reluctance. First of all, a conference on 'semi-political' affairs might imply that the Jews had their own separate nation — a typical emancipation-oriented argument at the time. At a more practical level, it was argued that a conference might encourage false hopes among the Romanian Jews for the improvement of their situation and could, in fact, increase emigration. The latter opinion annoyed Rabbi Gaster who once again complained about the selfishness of the British Jewish leaders and their indifference towards the oppressed Jews of Romania.[61] Gaster, as a member of the Anglo-Jewish Association, often used the AJA meetings as a forum for his outbursts.

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57 BDBJ 3121/A/14, BDBJ meeting, 16 June 1901.

58 Schneider 1981, 535-536.

59 *The New York Times*, 14 Oct. 1900; Kissman 1947, 174.

60 AIU/F/VD19, meeting, 17 June 1901. See also Schneider 1981, 550-551.

61 *JC*, 7 June 1901, meeting of AJA.

With regards to the antics of Gaster, Stuart A. Cohen has come up with a less than flattering, but basically accurate, portrait of Gaster:

> 'Gaster, especially, possessed an uncommonly irascible temperament. A man of monumental irritability, he was prone to quarrelling irreconcilably with persons of all types.... As his vast correspondence reveals, he rarely supported any cause without from time to time turning on its founders and backers, always charging that he had been betrayed and tricked and never admitting that he had been in the wrong.'[62]

Eventually, the issue of Romanian loans became linked to the Jewish question, as the Germans (and to some extent the Austrians) managed to use the uncomfortable situation in Romania to pressure the country in loan negotiations. The Romanian government became worried that the country was receiving bad foreign publicity, mainly because it was afraid of ruining the crucial negotiations. Now the Romanians aimed to show the other countries that they did not want to drive the Jews away, but, on the contrary, wished that the Jews would not leave. The government changed its policy, adopted a discouraging position to emigration and launched a press campaign attempting to take a conciliatory stance towards the Jews. Newspaper articles expressed sadness at Jewish departures and emphasised the good attributes of the Jews. A false statement of Rabbi Beck of Bucharest was printed where he allegedly claimed that the Jews had nothing to complain about. Beck had actually contributed to the article and, as some coreligionists who were appalled about his statement complained, had allowed himself to be fooled by the manoeuvres of the government.[63]

Besides the propaganda, the Romanian government adopted practical measures: passport regulations, for example, were tightened. When mass emigration had begun, the authorities had not imposed any difficulties and had willingly delivered emigration passports which did not allow for return to Romania. Now, however, collective passports were no longer issued to groups with insufficient means, and passports were only granted to individuals who possessed adequate funds and were going straight to Western European ports.[64]

During a governmental crisis in the summer of 1900, the former Conservative government of Cantacuzino was replaced by a government comprised of another, 'younger' branch of the Conservative Party, with Petre P. Carp as the Premier. German financiers had a say in this matter: they preferred Carp whom they knew well and whom they trusted to handle the financial negotiations satisfactorily. After Carp came into power, various stabilisation measures were introduced that were designed together with the Germans. Aside from his willingness to please the German financiers, Carp's attitude to the Jewish question was more moderate and liberal than the position of the

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62 S. Cohen 1982, 112-113. This analysis relates to the Zionist wrangles between Moses Gaster and Leopold Greenberg.

63 *JC*, 29 June 1900; Kissman 1947, 168.

64 Iancu 1981, 265-268, Henry to Delcassé, 5 Aug. 1900; *JC*, 10 Aug. 1900.

majority of Romanian leaders, although he was only inclined to make minor concessions.[65]

Hamilton E. Browne, the British chargé d'affaires in Bucharest, wrote that Carp was 'generally believed to be a philosemite'; this, however, was an exaggeration. Carp did try to take some steps which would affect the Jews positively. He was planning to strengthen the system of Jewish self-government by recognising the role of Jewish communities, which were in a fragmented and disorganised state due both to government oppression and internal strife, and by minimising the interference of local authorities in the Jewish community's affairs. Possible changes to the education laws were also mentioned but these proposals met aggressive opposition and were not put forward.[66]

Carp settled the emigration problems with Austria, agreeing that only those Jews who had valid tickets, given by international Jewish organisations, were allowed to travel through Austria-Hungary. Unfortunate emigrants, who had been compelled to remain in Austria when their journey was cut short due to lack of money, were returned to Romania at the expense of the Romanian government. On top of this, Carp sent a circular to prefects urging them not to prevent the return of Jews into rural communes.[67] Carp also cooperated with the Alliance representative, Isaac Astruc, and supported Astruc's relief plans for the returnees.[68] Some expulsions of Jews still took place, which, according to the *Jewish Chronicle*, were the prefects' doing in the more remote districts where the government's authority did not extend.[69]

The British minister, Kennedy, believed that Carp's proximity to the leading Berlin bankers would entail that he would do his best to improve the treatment of Jews in Romania. Kennedy further believed that all the commotion around the emigration problem could result in positive developments for the Jews.[70] However, although it was true that Carp's attitude was friendlier than normal, nothing concrete actually emerged. Kennedy's conclusions were rather unrealistic and they formed a typical example of how quickly hopes were raised in every possible 'better-than-average' situation.

The opinion among the British Jewish elite was not as optimistic as Kennedy's. The *Jewish Chronicle* pointed out that Carp, while having a relatively favourable disposition towards Jews, was nevertheless prevented from doing anything substantial by the other elements in the government — in particular, the minister of industry, Nicolae Filipescu. In short, a comparatively tranquil period was expected but legal improvements were not.[71]

In the autumn of 1900, during Carp's time as Prime Minister, the *Jewish Chronicle* observed, without any positive visions for the near future:

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65 Oldson 1991, 100.

66 FO 104/143/57, Browne to Salisbury, 7 Aug. 1900.

67 FO 104/143/ 57, Browne to Salisbury, 7 Aug. 1900; Iancu 1981, 255-256.

68 Schneider 1981, 542.

69 *JC* leader, 18 Jan. 1901.

70 FO 104/143/65, Kennedy to Salisbury, 18 Aug. 1900.

71 *JC*, 31 Aug. 1900 and 7 Sept. 1900.

> 'As day succeeds day, the absurdity of the Roumanian persecutions grows more and more palpable, and, consequently, more and more unintelligible. The action of the authorities, in fact, is not only a crime, it is what has been cynically declared to be worse — a blunder. Their hideous oppression of their Jewish subjects may be explained as sheer enslavement to monstrous hates and prejudices. Their persistence in this course after its injurious effect on their own interests has become manifest, is *a piece of stupidity which baffles understanding*.'[72]

In January 1901, however, the newspaper had an altogether different tone:

> 'It is gratifying to note a ray of hope in the thick clouds that have hung over the Roumanian Jews.'[73]

It was then assumed that the improved situation was due to the 'good offices' of the British government, but this was not actually the case as the Foreign Office did not take any action at this stage.

When visiting Vienna and Berlin, Carp gave interviews to several newspapers explaining his position on the Jewish question. British Minister Kennedy believed that Carp's statements were trustworthy and that they truly reflected his opinions on the Jewish question. Carp explained, however, that feelings in Romania did not allow for Jewish emancipation at the moment. He boasted that when the question had been raised in the Congress of Berlin in 1878, he had been the only politician in Romania to be in favour of complete emancipation.[74] It was indeed true that Carp had spoken favourably about the Jewish emancipation in the late nineteenth century and had then, among his peers, acquired his reputation as a friend of Jews.

Carp's position was not easy, and the Liberal Party alleged that he was trying to modify the Constitution. Even the other members of the government were not keen on Carp's proposals.[75] In reality, Carp was not planning to do anything drastic and was only trying to introduce a few cosmetic reforms designed to calm the furore. This is also an example of a situation in Romanian domestic politics where the opposition used the Jewish question to attack the government.

Eventually, Carp's government got into difficulty because of the ardent resistance of the Liberal party to Carp's financial stabilisation measures. Although Germany and Austria expressed their preference towards Carp's government, it had to give way to a government of Liberals led by Sturdza in February 1901. This certainly did not promise anything positive for the Jews. Alarmed voices were raised among the Jewish community in Britain, although there was no special need for anxiety. The Anglo-Jewish Association called Sturdza 'the chief persecutor of the Jews'[76]. At the same time, the Romanian Liberal Party accused the Alliance Israélite Universelle of using the emigration

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72 *JC* leader, 26 Oct. 1900. (Emphasis added.)

73 *JC* leader, 18 Jan. 1901.

74 FO 104/147/6, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 28 Jan. 1901.

75 FO 104/144/92, Kennedy to Salisbury, 31 Oct. 1900.

76 *AJA Annual Report 1900-1901*, 22.

problem as a weapon to coerce Romania into making amendments to the Constitution.[77]

The *Jewish Chronicle*, in Britain, was not actually particularly concerned about Sturdza, declaring fatalistically:

> 'Governments may come and governments may go, but oppression goes on for ever.'[78]

There was some discussion about a possible joint action of international Jewish bankers to sabotage Romanian loan negotiations. This was chiefly promoted by those individuals who were not themselves connected with the loan question. The German Jewish bankers tended to remain silent.[79] Certain international Jewish groups did make some attempts to prevent the Romanian loan but without success. Jewish bankers were not willing to go along with their more idealistic fellow religionists and tended to give preference to economic, rather than ideological, considerations.[80] In London, a whole issue of the *Jewish Chronicle* supplement, the *Roumanian Bulletin*, was dedicated to the Romanian financial situation in order to discredit Romania and weaken the interest of potential British investors.[81]

Similar aspects relating to Russia could be mentioned here briefly. The Russians had sought loans from the West since 1890 but immediately ran into difficulties after the Moscow expulsions of Jews the following year. Jewish bankers were suspicious and the Paris House of Rothschild withdrew from the loan deal, formally because of financial reasons, but also under pressure from the London House of Rothschild. Through the years, the Rothschilds retained their critical attitude towards loans to Russia, but not every Jewish banker shared their conviction. From 1906 onwards, for example, the friendship between Russia and Great Britain made the refusal of money more difficult as it was considered unpatriotic to maintain a hostile attitude towards Russia.[82]

On the other hand, the situation among American Jewish bankers was somewhat different than among their European brethren; there, the Jewish bankers mostly refused to lend any money to the Russians. One of them, Jacob Schiff, went as far as giving Japan financial aid in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. He urged his European colleagues to follow his example. However, the attempts of these bankers did not actually make much difference in the Russian situation.[83]

The emigration of Romanian Jews continued, now partly masterminded by international Jewish organisations, such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle.

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77 Schneider 1981, 550.

78 *JC* leader, 5 July 1901.

79 For speculation about the effects of pressure from Jewish bankers, see, for example, *The Times*, 9 Oct. 1902.

80 Szajkowski 1951, 69.

81 *The Roumanian Bulletin*, supplement to *JC*, 11 July 1902.

82 Aronsfeld 1973, 87-94.

83 Aronsfeld 1973, 99, 102, 103.

The Alliance Israélite Universelle, although by necessity very much involved in organising emigration, was opposed to large emigration *en masse*. The Alliance was founded in Paris in 1860 and, although it was an international body with branches world-wide (the Anglo-Jewish Association was one of them), it was very much French-based in its central administration. Its activities included interventions on behalf of persecuted Jews, assistance with Jewish education, and assistance with migrants.[84]

The Alliance agent Isaac Astruc went to Romania to study the question and make plans for organised emigration in the summer of 1900. He sent reports to Paris almost daily. Astruc's letters described in detail the misery of prospective emigrants who were waiting for transportation. He also observed the unfortunate situation of Romanian Jews in general.[85] Still, Astruc considered the emigration fever among the local Jews to be foolish and ill-advised, and he called for emergency relief for those who were willing to remain in Romania. As well as practical measures dealing with relief and organisation of emigration, Astruc also met with Romanian local authorities, requesting help for the returning migrants. The authorities tried to assure him of the amiable attitude of the Romanian government.[86]

However, in the summer of 1901, Astruc formulated a plan for the emigration of young Jews. This was a small-scale scheme with some surprising characteristics, directing emigrants to agricultural work in Canada, which was still accepting small numbers of agricultural workers. In addition, the United States promised to take 1,200 young Jews a year, with an average of 25 arriving weekly. The Jewish organisations in the United States would find work for the youngsters, again mainly on farms. Another part of Astruc's scheme was to send English language teachers to Romania, enabling emigrants to acquire some knowledge of English prior to their settlement in their new country. The Romanian government gave these plans their full approval.[87] The developments were commented on by the British Minister in Bucharest, John Gordon Kennedy, on several occasions. Kennedy attempted to paint a comprehensive picture of the emigration situation with many correct observations, but he did not completely succeed, as the details he gave were sometimes vague, and he was not able to place individual details within the general framework. Generally, Kennedy seemed happy with the new arrangements.

By 1902, the patterns of emigration had been established, but not quite according to Astruc's original visions. The scheme of agricultural work proved to be unsuccessful and instead people were sent to the towns for work. The ICA representative in Romania, Wolfgang Auerbach was called away in early 1902 and, from then on, the co-ordination of Romanian emigration was entrusted to a Bucharest Jew, Adolf Salomon. Emigration applications were submitted to local Jewish community leaders around the country who arranged for medical

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84 Szajkowski 1951, 62.

85 AIU/R/IVC25, Isaac Astruc to AIU, 29 May 1900 and 30 May 1900.

86 AIU/R/IVC25, Astruc to AIU, 31 July 1900.

87 FO 104/147/79, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 4 Nov. 1901.

examinations; only healthy emigrants were selected. Then, the emigrants were assembled in Ploieşti from where they were sent through Europe. At the later stages of their journey, the Vienna Allianz and the Montefiore Committee of Rotterdam co-operated with the ICA to help the migrants forward.[88]

There were three categories of emigrants. The first were men who travelled alone; they were either single or had left their families behind — unlike the Board of Guardians in London, the ICA did not seem to have scruples about sending married men away from their families. The first category, at least from 1903 onwards, also included whole families,. The second group consisted of the families of those who had already emigrated. Their journey was paid for by a family member in America. Thirdly, many emigrants left entirely at their own cost, without the ICA selection process, but were helped by the ICA with formalities such as obtaining a passport. Free passages were eventually stopped and all categories of emigrants were expected to pay an increasingly large proportion of their journey's expenses.[89]

Most of the emigrants were at least in some way assisted by the Jewish Colonization Association, although it is impossible to count who received 'direct' and who only 'indirect' assistance. It is probable that the majority of emigrants were 'spontaneous', and did not actually belong to the group directly assisted by ICA.[90]

Romanian Jews themselves were not always happy with the way the Alliance and the ICA handled emigration. In late 1902, they complained that they were being transported like cattle.[91] There were also some controversial elements concerning the selections made by the Jewish Colonization Association. The appropriate quality of emigrants was constantly monitored and young, skilled male workers tended to be favoured. As referred to above, there was much dispute over whether families should be allowed to accompany the male breadwinner. Wives and children were left behind in many cases. The selection criteria were usually determined by American Jewish committees rather than the organisations operating in Romania. The dominant trend, selection of skilled workers, sometimes also proved problematic for American Jews, because they feared that these people would disturb the American labour market.[92]

Although the British Jewish establishment tended to disapprove of the emigration of married men, they did not actively oppose the practice when the selection took place in Romania. They only did something on the occasions that they became directly involved in themselves. On the co-ordination of emigration, the British Jewry did not really comment at all, although they did

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88 *JC*, 21 Aug 1903, annual report of ICA for 1902; FO 104/159/64, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 4 Oct. 1902.

89 *JC*, 21 Aug. 1903, annual report of ICA for 1902; *JC*, 5 Aug. 1904, annual report of ICA for 1903.

90 Szajkowski 1951, 70.

91 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 1 Dec. 1902.

92 Szajkowski 1951, 52-53.

appear simply to be very pleased with the principle of organised emigration. This was understandable as the systematisation of emigration was exactly what they had called for when the wave of Romanian Jews had arrived in England in 1900. It should be noted that the role of the British Jewry in the co-ordination work itself was not large. The responsibility fell, for the most part, to the continental and American Jewish groups and communities.

4.4 Romanian Jewish immigrants and the British Aliens Act of 1905

The nature of available statistics does not allow us to determine the exact annual number of Romanian Jewish arrivals to Britain, let alone the number of those who settled there permanently. Official censuses and lists of passengers arriving to Britain are not entirely accurate or reliable sources. Passenger lists, for instance, do not record the religious affiliation of the arrivals.[93] Similarly, census figures cannot automatically be accepted. According to some historians, the number of East European Jews may have been smaller in the census returns than in reality, because at least some immigrants avoided taking part.[94]

TABLE 6 Romanians arriving in Britain not *en route*, 1900-1905.[95]

Year	Number of immigrants
1900	3,216
1901	1,162
1902	1,282
1903	565
1904	513
1905	411
Total	7,149

It has to be remembered that not all of the immigrants, listed above, stayed in Britain permanently, although they were not technically *en route* when they arrived. They may have stayed in Britain for some time and eventually continued their journey to America. John A. Garrard estimates that the number of East European transmigrants was 'many times' greater than the number of East European Jews who really settled in Britain. As Garrard and Gartner both accept the figure of around 120,000 as the number of permanent settlers, this would suggest that the number of transmigrants could have been anywhere

93 Gainer 1972, 8-9; Gartner 1960, 97-98.

94 For this view, see Garrard 1971, 214. For an opposite interpretation, see Gainer 1972, 6-8. According to Gainer, the census returns of 1901 were approximately correct.

95 *Statistical Tables 1906*, 42.

from 500,000 upwards.[96] Lloyd P. Gartner's estimate of the number of transmigrants who stayed in Britain at least two years, before crossing the Atlantic, is 400,000 to 500,000.[97] There is no information, however, on the percentage of Romanian Jews that were among the transmigrants.

More than two million Jews emigrated from Eastern Europe during 1880-1914. Only something in the region of 120,000-150,000 settled in Britain.[98] The number of foreigners of Russian or Polish origin was more than 100,000 in 1911.[99] It was obvious that the number of Romanian Jews in Britain was very small when compared to the numbers of Russian and Polish Jews. As to the total number of Jews in Britain, the Jewish Year Book gave an estimate of the Jewish population 'in the British Isles' in 1911 as about 240,000.[100] The proportion of Jews of East European origin was less than half of the total. Again, the percentage of Romanian-born Jews was insignificant.

TABLE 7 The number of foreigners in England and Wales who were born in Serbia, Montenegro, Romania or Bulgaria, 1891-1911.[101]

Year	Number of persons
1891	734
1901	3,296
1911	3,722

In the census, aliens were enumerated by the country of birth, but no mention of religion was made. It is generally agreed that the term 'Romanian' would have been practically equivalent to 'Romanian Jew' as emigration from Romania mainly consisted of Jews. In England, the general terms 'Romanian', 'Russian' and 'Polish' were often used, when talking about Jews coming from those countries.[102] Admittedly, there were some thousands of non-Jewish Russians and Poles in Britain, but there is no reference to gentile Romanians to be found in the sources. It is reasonable to assume there were not many ethnic Romanians living in Britain.

There are also other inconsistencies that make it difficult to compare exact figures. In the 1891 and 1901 censuses, only foreigners of different nationality were enumerated while the number of naturalised British subjects of Romanian origin was not specified. It is clear that the number of naturalised persons cannot yet have been large, because nearly all of the immigrants from Romania

96 Garrard 1971, 213; Gartner 1973, 30.

97 Gartner 1971, 121.

98 Feldman 1994, 141.

99 *Census 1911*, 114.

100 *The Jewish Year Book 1911*, 267. This estimate is by the editor of the book, Isidore Harris.

101 *Census 1901*, 260; *Census 1911*, 114.

102 Gartner 1960, 99.

were newcomers. However, by 1901, there must have been some who had been naturalised, especially among the 734 who had already been in the country at the time of the previous census. There is also a problem in distinguishing between residents and visitors. The census of 1911 was the first to separate these two categories.

It would probably be most fruitful to examine the total number of persons born in Romania (and in Serbia etc.), but this is only possible for the year 1911, when the number was 4,366, consisting of 4,293 residents and 73 visitors.[103] The only way to compare the returns of different censuses is to look into the numbers of foreign subjects born in Romania, rather than all Romanian-born individuals; for that reason, this particular category was chosen for Table 7.

The naturalisation of Romanian-born immigrants did begin to play a role, as the difference in number between foreigners and foreign-born who had acquired British citizenship was more than 600 in 1911. The implications of the acquisition of citizenship should not, therefore, be overlooked, but this is exactly what has been done in some earlier studies on the subject. When an immigrant acquired British citizenship and moved into another category in the census, it did not mean that he should not be calculated in the number of people involved in immigration. The inclusion of all the Balkan nationalities in the same category must also be kept in mind.[104]

It is apparent that persons of Romanian origin were the biggest nationality group within the category of Romanians, Serbians, Montenegrins and Bulgarians, but how many in the group actually belonged to the other three nationalities is not known. Because the British-born children of foreigners were technically British and not counted as aliens, the number of Jews of Romanian Jewish origin in Britain was smaller in the statistics than it was in reality.

It is useful to examine the figures of the 1921 census as well, in order to get a better picture of the situation. This is particularly interesting since in the 1921 census Romanian-born persons were, for the first time, separated from other individuals of Balkan origin. The total number of Romanian-born persons in England and Wales was 5,121. This included both visitors (276) and permanent residents (4,845). Of the 4,845 residents, 995 were British citizens, 2,911 were aliens, and 939 did not specify their nationality. The number that should be compared to the earlier 'foreigners' figures, i.e. non-citizens of both the resident category and the visitor category, is 4,120.[105] Despite the fact that Romanians now constituted a separate category, the figure does not differ much from that of the two earlier census returns. By the time of the 1921 census, immigration had diminished and there were hardly any new additions to the figures.

To conclude, the approximate number of Romanian Jews who settled in Britain before the First World War can well be accepted as five thousand or more. If inaccuracies in the census, along with the number of deaths and the

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103 *Census 1911*, 114.

104 See, for example, *A Documentary History of Jewish immigrants in Britain*, 15-16 and Gartner 1960, 98.

105 *Census 1921*, 181.

number of immigrants who went to live in Scotland or Ireland[106] (hence excluded from the census returns), are taken into account, the calculations may result in a larger number than given in the previous paragraph — 5,121. However, if a small margin for the ethnic Romanian immigrants is allowed, the above figure appears to hold true quite well.

The immigration of Romanian Jews, although relatively small in number, was a part of Jewish mass immigration to Britain. The increased immigration of Eastern European Jews at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century was the main argument in favour of the new Aliens Act of 1905, during the preparatory stages of the bill. The presence of 'aliens' in Britain, especially in the East End of London, was a recurrent theme of debate at the time. The first suggestions for legislation had already been heard in the late 1880s. The role of Jewish immigration from Romania was of secondary importance, and, as a rule, it caused worry only when the threat of further Romanian immigration was mentioned. In fact, Romanian Jews were not really mentioned in the House of Commons immigration debate at all, except for a number of short references when listing the immigrant-generating countries. A detailed account of the history of the Aliens Act will not be chronicled in this study, as a large number of studies on the subject already exist and the matter is so well known as to require no retelling here.

Debates preceding the approval of the Aliens Bill were almost entirely related to Jewish immigration and especially to the problems it caused in densely populated areas of East End London[107]. On the other hand, it was stressed repeatedly that anti-immigrant attitudes did not equate to anti-Semitism, but that any nationality arriving *en masse* and causing social problems was objectionable. The newcomers only happened to be Jews in this case. The key arguments for stricter immigration legislation could be divided into three groups. Firstly, poor immigrants, unable to support themselves, became a burden on society. Secondly, the immigrants drove native English people out of the East End and took their jobs. The third complaint was about the unhealthy and unsanitary habits of immigrants and their harsh working conditions, i.e. the 'sweating system'.

The Royal Commission on Alien Immigration held its meetings in 1902 and 1903 and put together a detailed report on the subject. Among five others, the members of the Commission included Lord Rothschild and Major William Eden Evans-Gordon. The purpose of the Commission was to inquire into

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106 In 1925, there were 25 Romanians in Scotland and, in 1911, there were 16 Romanian-born persons in Ireland. *Census of Scotland 1921*, xxxiii; *Census of Ireland 1911*, 31.

107 The occupational structure and places of settlement of Romanian Jews in England followed the general patterns of other Jewish immigrants. The majority, more than 2,500, lived in London in 1911 and a large number of them in the Borough of Stepney in the East End. Other popular places of residence were Manchester and the neighbouring Salford. As to the sources of livelihood, tailoring, shoemaking and hat making, together with shop keeping and hawking, were the most usual ones. *Census 1911*, 131,136, 144, 216-219. All this refers to a category including Romanians, Serbians, Montenegrins and Bulgarians.

problems resulting from unrestricted immigration. Nearly 200 witnesses were called and statistical tables were examined.

The role of Evans-Gordon[108] is interesting. He could not help but be preoccupied with the question since his constituency, Stepney, had the highest percentage of Jewish immigrants in the whole of Britain. He also played a fundamental role in organising an East End anti-immigrationist body, the British Brothers League. Therefore, it can be concluded that Evans-Gordon's position was firmly against immigration and in favour of anti-alien legislation. On the other hand, Evans-Gordon also criticised Romanian Jewish policy heavily. He did this very vocally, being one of the only persons who actively looked at both sides of the picture: the situation in Romania and the consequences in Britain. He did not, however, approach the question from the Jewish standpoint. His anti-alien views were not always popular with the Jewish community despite the fact that some Jewish notables, such as Lord Rothschild, had supported him when he won the election in 1900.

When Evans-Gordon went to Eastern Europe in autumn 1902 to obtain information on the conditions of prospective emigrants, his travels also reached Romania. He came to the conclusion that Jewish emigration from Romania could be directly traced to Romanian government policy. He repeated this argument in his book, *The Alien Immigrant*, which was in some parts identical to his testimony before the Alien Commission, and which had a chapter on the situation in Romania.[109] Evans-Gordon went on to describe the conditions that the Jews lived in, and he appears to have been correct on most details. In his opinion, it was natural for the Jews to emigrate when many occupations were closed to them, especially as economic depression was further decreasing their possibilities. Evans-Gordon complained that the Romanian naturalisation policy was 'malignant' and broke the spirit of the Berlin Treaty.[110]

Although the British Jews were not totally happy with all the particulars in Evans-Gordon's report, they thought it was generally a good and objective account on the situation in Eastern Europe.[111] Moreover, Evans-Gordon described the Romanian Jews in good light:

> 'The Roumanian Jew, as a type of his race, stands head and shoulders above his Galician neighbour, and many of his co-religionists in Russia and in Poland.'[112]

The Romanian government did not take Evans-Gordon's conclusions well and criticised them, not directly and officially, but in a pamphlet. In the late nineteenth century, anti-Jewish publications, articles, books, and pamphlets had

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108 For the relations between the Jewish population and the MPs behind the Aliens legislation, see, for example, Alderman 1983, 68 onwards.

109 Evans-Gordon 1903, 163-164.

110 *Royal Commission on Immigration 1903*, 460-461, evidence by Evans-Gordon, 26 Feb. 1903.

111 *JC* leader, 6 March 1903.

112 Evans-Gordon 1903, 185. Evans-Gordon had a very negative view of the Galician Jews and this was one of the issues on which the *Jewish Chronicle* disagreed with him.

begun to be published in Romania. They were often sponsored by the Romanian elite and were sometimes printed abroad in foreign languages[113]. A Romanian government-sponsored pamphlet about the Jewish question, written under the pseudonym 'Verax', was circulated to some British MPs in 1904. The publication was especially directed to English readers, to give them 'correct' information on the Jewish question. In the preface of the booklet, Evans-Gordon's observations were declared utterly erroneous and his knowledge of Romania inadequate. Evans-Gordon had only spent a week in Romania, and, while there, he had been guided by local Jews whose explanations he consequently believed.[114] This annoyed Evans-Gordon, who threatened to raise the matter in the House of Commons.[115] He was backed by the *Jewish Chronicle* which fervently criticised the Verax pamphlet, claiming that it was so ridiculous that no one in Britain would believe it.[116]

Evans-Gordon was not alone in being criticised by Verax. *The Roumanian Bulletin* and the Jewish campaigners behind it also received their share of criticism:

> 'They [i.e. Jewish activists] began to issue in London, under the title of *The Roumanian Bulletin*, an organ appearing only when they thought it necessary for the needs of their cause and distributed gratis, each number of which was full of imaginary persecutions, of mispresented facts and, especially, of mendacious assertions relative to the state of Romanian finances.'[117]

Evans-Gordon was not particularly worried about Jewish immigration from Romania. However, although the number of Jews coming from Romania to England was, in his opinion, relatively insignificant, he did perceive certain threatening possibilities. The migrants who left Romania with the help provided by the Jewish Colonization Association were not generally a danger because they were directed to America. It was only the group of migrants who travelled by their own means, uncontrolled by any welfare organisation, that might end up in Britain. Although they also, as a rule, set course for the United States, the American entry regulations, which were enforced by the shipping companies at embarkation ports, could cause unfit persons to turn to another destination, possibly Britain. Evans-Gordon specifically mentioned those who suffered from eye and skin diseases which formed an obstacle of entry to the United States and were often perceived of as 'typical' immigrant diseases. If the American laws were made stricter, it would naturally increase the flow of migrants to Britain; this was a very worrying scenario in Evans-Gordon's opinion.[118] Nevertheless, he was not able to show any compelling evidence on

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113 Butnaru 1992, 24.

114 Verax 1904, iii.

115 *The Times*, 22 March 1904, Evans-Gordon to the Editor.

116 *JC*, 25 March 1904.

117 Verax 1904, 75.

118 *Royal Commission on Immigration 1903*, 462-463, evidence by Evans-Gordon, 26 Feb. 1903.

the threat of renewed and escalating immigration from Romania to Britain. He could only speculate on the effects of the United States immigration policy.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, friction arose between Evans-Gordon and Rabbi Moses Gaster because of the aliens legislation. Gaster vehemently accused Evans-Gordon of attempting to create a piece of anti-Jewish legislation comparable to Romanian laws dealing with 'aliens'. This was a fascinating comparison as the word 'alien' appeared in both Romanian and British legislation; although in the British usage it referred to all non-Empire immigrants without any anti-Semitic connotations. Gaster also argued that it was absurd that Evans-Gordon opposed Romanian Jewish policy while he, himself, drove immigration legislation through.[119] Gaster refused or failed to see the logic in Evans-Gordon's actions, but it was well known that he was positioned in the more pro-immigrant fringe of the Jewish community leadership and was very biased in the matter.

Concluding their work, the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration made recommendations for the proposed piece of legislation. They suggested that some restrictions of entry should be introduced but only against 'undesirable aliens'.[120] However, two members of the Commission, Kenelm E. Digby, the permanent secretary in the Home Office, and Lord Rothschild did not agree with the others. They did not believe the proposed provisions would be practical. Rothschild argued that the measures directed against 'undesirables' would also affect good, hard-working people who just happened to be poor.[121]

The Aliens Act, passed in August 1905 after lengthy debates in the Commons (and in force after 1 January 1906), was largely based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission. A special mechanism of immigrant inspection was established. Immigration officers inspected alien immigrants at the ports and could withhold permission to land if they found the immigrant to be of an undesirable character. Objectionable arrivals were those who were lunatics, criminals, seriously ill or unable to support themselves. The most controversial criterion was probably the requirement that the immigrant had to be able to support himself and his dependants. These measures were applied not only when entry was refused, but also in deportation cases. Paupers who had been deemed unable to support themselves could, instead of wandering around or claiming benefits, be liable to expulsion[122].

The exception to the rule was someone with refugee status, who was defined as a person who was avoiding prosecution or punishment on political

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119 *JC*, 6 May 1904 and 13 May 1904, Gaster to the Editor and Evans-Gordon to the Editor.

120 *Royal Commission on Immigration 1903*, 40, results and recommendations of the Commission.

121 *Royal Commission on Immigration 1903*, 52, Lord Rothschild's dissenting closing statement.

122 There were usually a couple of Romanian 'lunatic pauper' cases a year. Most of these individuals had Jewish names, although their religion was not, of course, specified in the documents. See, for example, FO 369/164/29088, Home Office clerk W. P. Byrne to Permanent Under Secretary Charles Hardinge, 20 Aug. 1908.

or religious grounds, or who was being persecuted on account of religious belief and in danger of imprisonment or death.[123] There were no direct guidelines on determining who was a refugee. According to David Feldman, refugee status was in fact narrowly interpreted after 1906. In 1906, 505 immigrants benefited from the provision, but in 1910, the number was as low as 5.[124]

After the Aliens Act was passed, the British government and the public generally felt more comfortable and ceased to worry about the threat of large-scale immigration. This also lessened the fear of Romanian Jewish immigration as a separate section of immigration. In fact, the Act was administered rather leniently by the Liberal government during the following years. The immigration boards where instructed to interpret the provisions of the law favourably for the immigrants. Indeed, the regulations applied only to alien steerage passengers anyway, not to those who travelled in first or second class. Rejection rates were low: in 1906, one in 79 immigrants was rejected, and in 1909, when the law was enforced relatively rigorously, one in fifteen was rejected.[125] However, as so often in the case of Romanian immigrants, these numbers do not provide any insight into the number of Romanian Jews who were rejected.

After the Aliens Act, the volume of East European Jewish emigration, although it had decreased, was still substantial. Arrivals from Russia could be counted in terms of thousands per year. According to Vivian Lipman, the average annual number of Jewish immigrants during the years immediately following the Aliens Act was 'at least about 4,000 or 5,000'.[126]

The decrease in numbers could be attributed to the Act only partially since there were other determinants working against immigration to Great Britain. Chain migration to America had increased as the earlier immigrants there had sent for their families and instructed their relatives and friends to migrate. Late in the first decade of the century after the constitutional reforms had been introduced, there was a more moderate atmosphere in Russia. There were also other possible destinations — such as Argentina, South Africa and Palestine — further decreasing the English share of inflows. Concerning the enforcement of the Aliens Act, the tolerant administration of the Act almost nullified its original intention in the years immediately following the passing of the Act. Compared to other aliens, East European Jews had a favourable status: they could be, in principle, included in the refugee category due to persecution and because the domestic Jewish lobby constantly campaigned on their behalf.[127]

On the other hand, the flow of Jewish immigrants from Romania had practically dried up by 1905 — the key factor in the disappearance of the Romanian immigrant question from the forefront. The more optimistic Jewish

123 *Law Reports 1905*, 22-27, Aliens Act, 11 Aug. 1905.

124 Feldman 1994, 354-355.

125 Garrard 1971, 104-107.

126 Lipman 1954, 143.

127 Rubinstein 1996, 157-158.

outlook in Romania cannot have been without effect either, especially when compared to circumstances in Russia. There was nothing pressing in the Romanian situation that could immediately have led to new serious prospects of immigration[128]. The fears of the British government, the Jewish community, and the general public, had played a greater role in the case of Romania than the actual facts and figures of immigration: approximately five thousand Romanian Jews settled in Britain.

128 See chapter 6 for a new immigrant scare after the Romanian Peasant Revolt.

5 DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF ROMANIAN JEWS DURING THE FIRST YEARS OF THE CENTURY

5.1 Anglo-Jewish diplomacy and Foreign Office policy in 1900-1901

Emigration of Romanian Jews and intervention in Romanian affairs were not explicitly linked together by the Anglo-Jewry. However, some diplomatic efforts were made simultaneously as the first and the most troublesome waves of immigrants arrived. The Foreign Office did not have a role in the immigration debate. Immigration matters were not the business of the Foreign Office, and, understandably, the FO did not participate in domestic disputes on social problems created by increased immigration. As for the implications of immigration for British foreign policy, it is not clear whether the Foreign Office consciously supported or even considered recommending the improvement of the Jewish situation in Romania because of the fear of immigration. It could not, however, have been ignorant of the connection between immigration and the Jewish situation in Romania since both the British Jewry and Parliament mentioned the link. The Foreign Office did not voice this connection explicitly in its own documents.

The immigration problem in the summer of 1900 did not result in Conjoint Committee demands for official political action against Romania. The *Jewish Chronicle* was pessimistic about British government pressure or diplomatic intervention, and suggested international Jewish action instead as a solution to the difficult situation.[1] The paper predicted that Lord Salisbury, the British Foreign Secretary, would favour intervention but that the other European statesmen would not. Their reluctance, according to the *Jewish Chronicle*, was due to the troubled international situation[2] at the time and the anti-Semitic

1 *JC* leader, 8 June 1900.

2 Probably referring to the Boer War.

tendencies in many European countries.[3] Benjamin Cohen, MP for East Islington and the former President of the Board of Guardians, did not believe that pressure on Romania from the British government would lead to any immediate results. In line with the typical Anglo-Jewish policies, he opposed any public agitation in Britain, reasoning that a careful course of action would be the most successful way of handling things.[4]

In the House of Commons during June 1900, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice asked John Brodrick, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a question on the Berlin Treaty. His answer greatly annoyed the Jewish community in Britain. This contributed to their change of position in becoming more inclined to call for, although not completely in favour of, diplomatic intervention. The *Jewish Chronicle* was amazed at the Foreign Office's ignorance, and they more or less destroyed Brodrick's statement.[5] Fitzmaurice had asked whether the Foreign Office was aware of the persecution of Jews in Romania and whether Romania had been reminded of its continuing violation of the Berlin Treaty. Brodrick, in response, claimed that there were no grounds for diplomatic representations, adding:

> 'It is understood that the Jews in Roumania are not naturalized, but no complaints have reached Her Majesty's Government.'[6]

The expressions 'it is understood' and 'no complaints' gave a very bad impression to the Jewish community. Afterwards, Benjamin Cohen decided to give the Foreign Office some helpful information as it seemed to him that the Foreign Office was very unfamiliar with the Romanian issues. Therefore, Cohen, who had previously voiced his views against public action, saw fit to approach Salisbury privately in August 1900.[7]

The result of this episode was that the Conjoint Committee chose not to take any action since Cohen's initiative was thought to be an adequate effort for the time being. However, the Anglo-Jewish Association had originally favoured diplomatic intervention and had forwarded a resolution on the matter to the Conjoint. Claude Montefiore, the Co-President of the Conjoint, thought it best to wait until Romania fell even deeper into financial crisis, while Rabbi Moses Gaster argued that Benjamin Cohen's letter to Salisbury should not have been

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3 *JC* leader, 27 July 1900.

4 *JC*, 22 March 1901, annual meeting of the Board of Guardians.

5 *JC* leader, 3 Aug. 1900.

6 *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 87, 25-26, question: Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice (Wiltshire, Criclade), answer: John Brodrick (Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs), 30 June 1900.

7 FO 104/146, Benjamin L. Cohen to Salisbury, 14 Aug. 1900. (Documents which are not part of official correspondence with representatives in Romania are without document numbers in FO 104.)

published in the newspapers in the first place — Romania might become irritated.[8]

However, Salisbury asked the British Minister in Bucharest, John Gordon Kennedy, to discover whether there was any truth in Cohen's information on the sad state of Jewish affairs in Romania. Kennedy gave the Jewish question quite deep consideration in the autumn of 1900 and ardently analysed the Jewish situation in Romania. There was some sharp analysis in his memorandum, although certain remarks were based on pure hearsay. Kennedy argued that there was no special ill-treatment of Jews, but, at the same time, he felt that the situation was very serious.[9]

Kennedy discussed the citizenship problem and attempted to examine the motives of the Romanians. The Romanians maintained that if the Jews were naturalised, they would eventually acquire all the agricultural land and occupy prominent administrative positions; in short, they would rule over the Romanians. Kennedy himself found this difficult to believe, but he had heard these arguments from some 'foreigners who knew the country well'. Kennedy further remarked that the Romanians felt intellectually inferior to the Jews and therefore adopted measures of self-defence, namely anti-Jewish laws, to limit the Jewish influence. They denied the Jews naturalisation rights and wanted to keep the number of the Jews as low as possible; hence they were pleased when the Jews began to emigrate *en masse*. They did not realise that emigration was in fact harmful to Romania as the country was losing a productive sector of its population.[10]

Kennedy's observations on the peasant frame of mind were somewhat in bad taste. It is unclear whether he had come to these conclusions himself or had heard them from the same mysterious foreigners familiar with Romania. He wrote that the peasantry was ignorant and had hardly emerged from serfdom (which was actually true). The peasants felt bitterness and jealousy towards cleverer people, such as the Jews, yet they were themselves responsible for their own backwardness as 'they had closed the door to advancement'.[11] This characterisation of the Romanian peasantry was typical of British diplomats or Foreign Office officials, and it definitely was not flattering. The agrarian question was certainly more problematic than being a matter of peasants' backwardness and general stupidity.

Kennedy took a stand against international diplomatic action:

> 'In concluding the foregoing observations, I beg to remark that, while admitting the deplorable conditions under which Jews now exist in Roumania, I concur in the belief expressed to me by Roumanian Jews of education and position, that the

8 BDBJ 3121/C11/1, Conjoint meeting, 8 Nov. 1900. Compare to Gaster's antics in 1907 (chapter 6), when he sought publicity to present his views on the Romanian Peasant Revolt, expressing opinions that were certain to irritate Romania.

9 FO 104/144/92, Kennedy to Salisbury, 31 Oct. 1900.

10 FO 104/144/ 92, Kennedy to Salisbury, 31 Oct. 1900.

11 FO 104/144/92, Kennedy to Salisbury, 31 Oct. 1900.

> present prospects of better treatment for their coreligionists would be imperilled by any intervention of a Foreign Power on their behalf.'[12]

Later the same day, Kennedy sent another dispatch to London in order to emphasise his recommendation for non-intervention. He gave additional reasons for it: The Romanians were sensitive on the Jewish issue and, in principle, were hostile to any suggestions on this matter coming from abroad. Also, it was also very unlikely that the other European Powers would join Britain in possible representations.[13] The three main factors, therefore, against diplomatic intervention, as described by Kennedy, were the wishes of the Romanian Jews, the hostility of the Romanians, and the likely reactions of other Powers.

At the same time, however, the Romanians referred to the international legal stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin in another matter. The Macedonian powder keg continued to trouble the Romanians. They objected to the lenient way the Bulgarians treated Macedonian revolutionary terrorists and, interestingly, complained that Bulgaria had not dismantled the old Turkish fortifications on the southern bank of the Danube. In the Treaty of Berlin, it had been stipulated that the fortifications had to be torn down, and, therefore, Romania argued, Bulgaria's behaviour was against the Treaty. Even more remarkably, Romania sought the support of the Great Powers in this matter. Salisbury saw fit to reply to the Romanian Minister, Bălăceanu, in vague terms that expressed sympathy.[14] This was neither the only time nor the only basis on which Romania sought Great Power backing by appealing to the Treaty of Berlin.

King Carol complained that the British government had a weaker representation in Romania than that of the other Powers. Kennedy explained to him that there were not many British subjects living in Bucharest and, hence, consular representation was incomplete. There was, however, a full consular structure in Galați since the British interests were focused on the ports of the Danube Delta.[15] In 1902, the then Foreign Minister, Brătianu, made further complaints about the British attitude towards Romania, claiming that British interests in the Balkans and in Romania had weakened. Kennedy tried to explain these accusations away by reminding Brătianu that British attention had been firmly on the Boer War.[16]

The Jewish establishment in Britain was following events on the Romanian front very closely, and when something new happened they immediately assessed the potential effects on the Romanian Jewish population. During the summer of 1901, new worries centred on the fact that the Romanian Prime Minister, Petre P. Carp, who was perceived as relatively pro-Jewish, was no

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12 FO 104/144/92, Kennedy to Salisbury, 31 Oct. 1900.

13 FO 104/144/93. Kennedy to Salisbury 31 Oct 1900.

14 FO 104/142/44, Salisbury to Kennedy, 2 Oct. 1900.

15 FO 104/144/118, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 31 Dec. 1900.

16 FO 104/151/25, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 3 April 1902.

longer in office. Thus, the objections to intervention given by Kennedy almost a year earlier no longer applied because Sturdza's new government was potentially dangerous to the Jews. These developments prompted Anglo-Jewish foreign policy expert Lucien Wolf to write to Lansdowne's private secretary, Eric Barrington, who was a close contact of his.[17] The Anglo-Jewish leaders thereby adopted a policy of making formal requests for diplomatic intervention.

A private meeting was held in Lord Rothschild's house in late May 1901 to discuss the situation of the Jews in Romania. Afterwards, a memorandum drafted by the Jewish leaders was forwarded to Lord Lansdowne, who had succeeded Salisbury as Foreign Secretary.[18] The meeting in Lord Rothschild's house was not to everyone's taste — especially those who had not been invited were annoyed. Joseph Sebag-Montefiore, the Board President, had not been present and had to inquire about it afterwards. He was told that the meeting had been 'consultative' in nature and had concerned private action by the Rothschilds. Several Conjoint members disapproved of private action; after all, foreign policy ventures belonged to the domain of official Conjoint policy.[19]

The communication from Rothschild in summer 1901 led to a relatively thorough Foreign Office discussion about the Romanian Jews. This was a typical case of Foreign Office attention being stimulated by pressure exerted by the Jews in Britain, this time by Lord Rothschild, who always received a friendly and co-operative response from Lansdowne.

The memorandum of the meeting of the leading Jews in Britain was a standard Anglo-Jewish document which attempted to cover the Romanian Jewish question as a whole. The Anglo-Jewish leaders sought British intervention in Romanian Jewish affairs on the grounds of the Treaty of Berlin. The British Jews demanded action from the British government, reasoning that nothing short of international interference would ease the plight of the Romanian Jews, whose condition was a 'scandal'. The document discussed the history of the Jewish question in Romania at considerable length, and it stressed that the Romanian Jews were entitled to emancipation as stated in the Treaty of Berlin. Indeed, international legal considerations were very much emphasised.[20]

On the other hand, everyday conditions and restrictive legislation were also described. The tone of the document was sentimental and it painted a grim picture, with some hints about the potentially grave consequences for the international situation in the shape of the emigrating Jewish masses:

> 'It is, however, to the practical rather than moral effects of the persecution of the Roumanian Jews that the attention of their foreign co-religionists has been most anxiously directed. It was pointed out at the beginning of this Memorandum that a crisis was impending which was likely to assume an international scope. The particular development that is feared is a wholesale emigration of destitute Jews.

17 FO 104/150, Wolf to Lansdowne's private secretary Eric Barrington, 19 May 1901; FO 104/150, Wolf to Barrington, 13 June 1901.

18 FO 104/150, Lord Rothschild to Lansdowne, 12 June 1901.

19 BDBJ 3121/C11/1, Conjoint meeting, 8 July 1901.

20 FO 104/150, memorandum of the leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community, 22 May 1901, forwarded to Lansdowne by Rothschild, 12 June 1901.

> Manfully as the Roumanian Jews have endured the hardships imposed upon them, there must come a time when they can struggle no longer.'[21]

The memorandum did not discuss Romanian Jewish immigration to Britain in any detail. It only implied that Britain might get its share of trouble if uncontrollable emigration flows were renewed.

The Foreign Office considered whether Britain should make any representations to Romania. There was a feeling that the new government in Romania had made the situation less favourable for the Jews. Permanent Under Secretary Thomas Sanderson insisted that there was no reason to care about Romania's sensitivity on the Jewish question, which had been one of Kennedy's earlier key arguments against intervention. Sanderson believed that the reluctance of other European Powers to join in making representations was the crucial contributing factor against diplomatic action.[22]

Kennedy basically agreed with Rothschild's memorandum and admitted that the situation had worsened with Sturdza's government since Sturdza was 'notoriously hostile' to the Jews. Sturdza had explained to Kennedy that it was impossible to mention the Jewish question in Parliament until the financial crisis was over. This was partly true, but it is unlikely that he ever intended to bring the Jewish question forward, at least in any constructive sense. However, Kennedy considered Sturdza's excuses to be logical as Sturdza's position did indeed depend on the success of his financial programme.[23]

Kennedy repeated his recommendation for non-intervention, and he opposed diplomatic representations even if they would be made jointly with other countries. He based his argument on the harmful effects that the international demonstrations would have on the Jewish community in Romania. He considered especially that the circle of affluent Jewish bankers in Bucharest also held this opinion. Kennedy thought that the only effective measure on behalf of the Romanian Jews would be for the Berlin and Paris bankers to put pressure on the Romanian government, but he assumed that they were probably saving their influence for purely economic matters such as commercial treaties.[24]

Lansdowne did not wish to inform Rothschild about the possibility of pressure being exerted by Berlin and Paris bankers — about which Rothschild surely knew more than Lansdowne anyway. He decided that something should be sent to Rothschild which could in turn be shown to his 'friends' within the Anglo-Jewish community.[25] He wrote to Rothschild concluding that there was very little to be done on the matter at the moment and that the discussions with

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21 FO 104/150, memorandum of the leaders of the Anglo-Jewish community, 22 May 1901, forwarded to Lansdowne by Rothschild, 12 June 1901.

22 FO 104/150, minute by Permanent Under Secretary Thomas Sanderson, 14 June 1901.

23 FO 104/150, minute by Kennedy, 21 June 1901.

24 FO 104/150, minute by Kennedy, 21 June 1901.

25 FO 104/150, minute by Lansdowne, 21 June 1901.

Kennedy had shown that the situation with regard to any possible intervention was discouraging.[26]

In conclusion, this was a standard episode in the history of the controversial topic of international diplomatic intervention on behalf of Romanian Jews. There were arguments both in favour and against intervention. The British Minister in Bucharest, Kennedy, was against diplomatic action, basing his view on the discussions he had with leading Romanian Jews. On the other hand, the British Jews demanded intervention and the Foreign Office did not dismiss their requests outright. The Foreign Office was careful not to do anything hastily, although it acknowledged that everything was not as it should be with the Jewish situation in Romania. It seems amazing that the Anglo-Jewish community did not take into account the opinion of their Romanian coreligionists, which Kennedy repeatedly spoke about. On the other hand, it is questionable whether the opinions given by a few well-to-do Bucharest bankers were representative of the majority of the Romanian Jews. Their opinions, however, were the only Romanian Jewish opinions that anyone referred to at this juncture.

5.2 The Romanian Trades Law in spring 1902

With the new Trades Law, the system of Romanian anti-Jewish legislation and its special characteristics, such as the peculiar wording of the anti-Jewish measures, were brought to the fore in 1902. The Romanian Trades Law of 1902 was drafted in order to standardise artisan permits and to set up organisations for craftsmen, but it also included a number of paragraphs affecting Jews very negatively. Whether these stipulations, referring to 'foreigners', were especially designed to harm the Jews was to be a major point of contention between the Romanians and all the other players on the stage.

The alarming news about the Romanian plans to pass a new law was first forwarded to the Foreign Office by Lord Rothschild in February 1902. He complained that the consequences of the law would be injurious to the Jews. Rothschild's main concern, however, seemed to have been another bill, the 'Police Bill', which would have dealt with rural communes and would have included several paragraphs restricting Jewish residency rights. This bill did not become law, but it still caused considerable anxiety among the Jews.[27] Laws dealing with rural administration and security were passed or planned from time to time in Romania, and these always tended to include some provisions on 'foreigners'. In this light, the proposed Police Bill was not unusual.

Rothschild's message was forwarded to John G. Kennedy, the British Minister in Bucharest, by the Foreign Office and more information was requested. Kennedy understood the worries expressed by Rothschild and

26 FO 104/150. Lansdowne to Rothschild, 4 July 1901.

27 FO 104/159, Rothschild to Lansdowne, 26 Feb. 1902.

explained that the Trades Law was designed for the protection of native Romanian workmen.[28] The Trades Law was passed on 5 / 18 March 1902.[29] Kennedy immediately took great pains to produce an extensive memorandum on it, outlining both the facts and his own opinions on the subject. As far as the general provisions of the law were concerned, there were a large number of paragraphs that did not deal with Jews in any way. However, many key articles referred to 'foreigners'. These were about the reciprocity of treatment, the establishment of corporations, and competition for public works.

The most controversial provision was Article Four, by which name it was often referred to in subsequent discussions. It stated that if a foreigner wished to exercise a trade in Romania, he was required to prove that the right of reciprocity for Romanians existed in his home country. If no proof could be presented, a foreigner might still obtain an authorisation, i.e. a work permit, from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.[30]

Kennedy remarked correctly that the Jews were not able to show reciprocity of treatment — this was obvious to everyone. Furthermore, he argued that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry was anti-Semitic in its dealings, which meant that Jewish artisans would have trouble in obtaining permits.[31] This was undoubtedly true, but it could hardly be taken as total exclusion. Contrary to a widespread belief, particularly within international Jewish circles, the Trades Law did not exclude the Jewish artisans from the trades altogether, as the procedure of applying to the Chamber of Commerce did indeed exist. However, at the time, the law was thought to mark an end to the livelihood of the Jewish artisans and, even if this was not genuinely the belief of the Jewish activists, it was the picture that they very much liked to present to the world.

Every artisan was to possess either a master's or a worker's permit, which could normally be obtained from the corporation's local committee — an administrative body of the artisans' organisation — except in the case of foreigners who could not show reciprocity. Only Romanians could be elected to the corporation's committees, although everyone had to belong to the corporation itself. The corporation was to pay for trade schools, in which three quarters of the students had to be native Romanians. Romanian contractors were given preference in public works, even if what they had to offer was slightly, though not considerably, less competitive. Kennedy also pointed out that the law gave Romanian workers power over Jews. This was true: the corporations, in which membership must, in many cases, have been predominantly Jewish, were administered only by native Romanians.[32]

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28 FO 104/159/17, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 12 March 1902.

29 *Monitorul Oficial*, 5/18 March 1902.

30 *Monitorul Oficial*, 5/18 March 1902.

31 FO 104/159/17, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 12 March 1902.

32 *Monitorul Oficial*, 5/18 March, 1902; FO 104/159/17, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 12 March 1902.

The Romanian government rightly claimed that Romanian workmen had long called for protection. In previous years, Christian artisans had on many occasions demanded some kind of legislation on the trades. The Trades Law did not therefore come as a surprise. Requests for the regularisation of the trades had been addressed to the former Conservative governments.[33] Now these proposals were effectively brought to fruition in the Trades Law.

Kennedy, the British Minister, did not think much of the native Romanian artisans, echoing the negative opinions he had expressed a year and a half earlier on the Romanian peasantry. According to Kennedy,

> 'the Roumanian artisan or workman is as a rule devoid of technical education, and both ignorant and lazy, and at a great disadvantage with his foreign competition, whom he hates almost as much as he does the Jew.'[34]

He went on to observe:

> 'In view of the hatred of the Jew which exists, it is not to be expected that the Roumanian workman will treat him with justice... It is a fatal law which drives the Jew to leave trade, and betake himself to other means of livelihood less honourable.'[35]

His attitude to the law was hence very critical, quite similar to Rothschild's in fact. By less honourable occupations, he presumably meant usury, selling alcohol, and hawking, which were other common Jewish activities apart from artisan trades.

It is striking to note that in another dispatch, written later in the same day as the comments above, Kennedy put forward almost reverse views on the meaning of the Trades Law. He discussed the possibility of international intervention, considering it to be as undesirable as before. He believed that it would be useless to protest against the Trades Law as it was less anti-Jewish than the proposed Police Bill. Indeed, if the Police Bill was not to be passed, the Jews could continue their existence without much 'additional inconvenience'. According to Kennedy's experience, Romanian laws tended to become dead letters soon after they were passed. He again made insulting remarks about Romanian craftsmen: they were incompetent in undertaking any trade without Jewish or foreign help, due to their laziness and ignorance. This meant that the provisions of the law would have no real impact because there were no Romanian workers to do the work properly. Kennedy also mentioned the reluctance of other Powers to intervene; the general feeling in the Bucharest diplomatic corps was that the true consequences of the new law should be awaited before preparing any plans for action.[36]

As the anti-Jewish articles constituted only a small fraction of the Trades Law, it is hard to assess whether the main object of the law was the general

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33 Iosa & Lungu 1977, 91-93.

34 FO 104/159/17, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 12 March 1902.

35 FO 104/159/17, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 12 March 1902.

36 FO 104/159/18, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 12 March 1902.

organisation of the trades or the restriction of the Jewish artisanship. If the purpose was only to systematise the trades, anti-Jewish measures may anyway have been included since it was normal in Romania to insert such measures into a wide variety of laws. However, anti-Jewish purposes do seem to have been at the fore, partly for an obvious reason: in many crafts, the majority of artisans were Jewish, and if trade legislation was made it was bound to concern the Jews. The wording of the reciprocity clause strongly indicated an anti-Jewish orientation. In addition, the protection demanded by Romanian artisans almost certainly equated to protection from Jews. Economic depression further increased competition in the trades, hitting the trades sector particularly hard. If the Jews were eliminated from the trades, it would mean more opportunities for the Romanians.

5.3 Interpretations of the Trades Law

The Trades Law created some controversy abroad, when Jewish organisations began to be worried about the treatment of their coreligionists. Foreign governments were also anxious to know how the law would affect their citizens, or the 'real' foreigners, residing in Romania. All in all, the impression abroad, including in Britain, was negative.

In February 1902, Kennedy had actually thought that it would be 'inadvisable' to encourage British investment in Romania. This was partly due to the alleged anti-foreign intentions of the Sturdza government, but also due to a general suspicion of foreigners that prevailed in the country. British investors and businessmen were not always happy with the way the things were handled in Romania. Complicated legal wrangles with Romanians were always a problem and new pieces of economic legislation posed a threat, as did the prospective duty increases.[37]

Although the *Jewish Chronicle* had featured alarming news on the Police and Trades Bills since mid-January[38], the real uneasiness — including the fear of renewed mass emigration — began to emerge only after the passing of the Trades Law. The *Jewish Chronicle* began to make vigorous attacks against the Romanian government. Unlike during the two previous years, diplomatic action on behalf of Romanian Jews was now earnestly promoted, and it was believed (for some mysterious reason) that the moment was now right for intervention, especially when the situation in Romania was getting worse and worse:

> 'In the history of religious and racial persecution — and it is a long and a black one — nothing like the trickeries practised on the Roumanian Jews has been witnessed.'[39]

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37 FO 104/152/4 (commercial), Kennedy to Lansdowne, 10 Feb. 1902.

38 *JC*, 17 Jan. 1902.

39 *JC* leader, 4 April 1902.

The Anglo-Jewish Association also concluded:

> 'The situation of the Jews in Roumania has grown steadily worse.'[40]

Gradually, the Romanians realised that they had got into difficulties because of the Trades Law. Foreign newspapers, again mainly those in Austria and Germany, such as *Frankfurter Zeitung*, launched a campaign against the allegedly anti-Semitic and anti-foreigner measures.[41] The problem of Romanian foreign loans stepped onto the scene as well. In April 1902, the value of Romanian state treasury bonds fell in Berlin because of the new problems. The Romanians then set about circulating their own propaganda and published explanatory statements in Germany, France, and at home. The basic message was that Jews did not have to prove reciprocity of treatment, and that they were not considered to be 'foreigners' under the law. All this led British Minister Kennedy to believe that the law would not be strictly enforced, if at all.[42] He began to believe the Romanian government's explanation and, by late April, abandoned his first, condemning reactions to the law.

The Anglo-Jewish Association discussed the new Romanian situation in early April. Rabbi Moses Gaster, having received information from his contacts in Romania, believed that the Romanian Jews were panic-stricken. He wanted diplomatic steps to be taken to assure that the Trades Law would not treat native-born Jews as foreigners. Gaster did not trust the assurances of the Romanian statesmen. The matter was then referred to the Conjoint Committee, away from the public eye.[43]

The Conjoint Committee had discussed the Romanian situation in March, but had postponed any decision until the Cologne Conference.[44] The conference was convened by the Alliance Israélite Universelle and was motivated by the Trades Law. It was decided in the conference that coordinated Jewish efforts would proceed through two channels: a press campaign was to be launched and Jewish organisations were to contact the ministries and authorities of their home countries.[45]

No information on the conference proceedings was given for publication, and neither did the Conjoint refer to the matter in its next meeting, although it was implied that the Conjoint's programme of diplomatic representations had been approved by the conference.[46] In May, the Conjoint sent an appeal to the

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40 *AJA Annual Report 1901-1902*, 11.

41 *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 18 March 1902 and 7 April 1902. See also Iancu 1981, 272-274, Descos to Delcassé, 6 June 1902.

42 FO 104/159/32, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 20 April 1902.

43 *JC*, 11 April 1902, meeting of AJA.

44 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 13 March 1902.

45 AIU/F/VD19, Cologne conference, 16 April 1902.

46 BDBJ 3121/A/14, BDBJ meeting, 4 May 1902; *JC*, 18 April 1902.

Foreign Office, emphasising the violation of the Berlin Treaty that Romania was continuously committing.[47]

At the same time, the Jewish artisans in Bucharest complained that they were not allowed to hold meetings to discuss the law and could not take part, in any way, in the legislative matters which, after all, considerably affected their livelihood. The Anglo-Jewish Association passed their opinion on to *The Times* in a rare attempt to make the voice of the Romanian Jews heard in Britain.[48] However, the most visible way that Romanian Jews responded to the Trades Law was through a new emigration wave. It was true that emigration had continued without any radical decrease in numbers, but, since the *fusgeyer* movement of 1900, there had been no particular difficulties.

After the Trades Law was passed in the Romanian parliament, emigration of Jews increased, just as had been feared in England. There were now more skilled artisans among the emigrants than previously; these were precisely those people who were affected by the law. However, the Romanian government did postpone the enforcement of the Trades Law until autumn 1902. In addition, it took some measures to discourage emigration: getting passports was made more difficult (as in 1900), persons who encouraged emigration were deported, and the police were instructed to behave well towards Jews so that they would have nothing to complain about. These measures were designed to prevent criticism abroad and to secure the success of the loan negotiations, which were still pending.[49]

Despite the attempts of Romanians, some confusion followed in Austria, when smallish groups of Romanian Jews passed through the country and raised fears of *fusgeyer*-style marches. However, the work of the Jewish Colonization Association was believed to be preventing an uncontrolled migration flow, making a big difference compared to the situation in 1900.[50] This was also the opinion of British Minister Kennedy:

> 'The danger of an exaggerated immigration of Jews into England is I believe less than it was 2 years ago because now emigration from Roumania is controlled by resident agents...'[51]

The Conjoint Committee, on the other hand, was not as optimistic about the threat of emigration. The Conjoint overlooked the role of the regulation measures and feared that the consequences of the Trades Law would result in renewed large-scale migration:

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47 FO 104/159, Joseph Sebag-Montefiore and Claude G. Montefiore to Lansdowne, 22 May 1902. Hereafter, Claude Montefiore will be simply referred to as 'Montefiore' and if any other members of the Montefiore family are mentioned, their first names will always be given.

48 *The Times*, 3 May 1902.

49 Schneider 1981, 557-558.

50 *The Times*, 10 June 1902.

51 FO 104/159, Kennedy to Sanderson, 22 June 1902. Kennedy was in London when he wrote this letter.

> 'All over the country an emigration fever is now raging, and it is certain that, if the Powers refuse to act on behalf of the Jews, a march for the frontier will begin as soon as the promulgation of the Artizans' Law gives the signal.'[52]

The late spring of 1902 saw an intensive effort on the part of the Romanians to prove that the Trades Law was not anti-Jewish.[53] They also tried to explain matters in the best possible light to the British government. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ion I. C. Brătianu, told Kennedy that the piece of legislation was not directed against foreigners or Jews, and that Jews would be treated as native Romanians. Kennedy commented that Brătianu's tone was apologetic because the attacks in the foreign press had alarmed the Romanian government and he was worried about the loan situation; this was, however, denied by Brătianu himself. Kennedy then asked Brătianu why such an unnecessary law had been passed in the first place. Brătianu blamed the Conservative opposition for provoking Romanian artisans to organise demonstrations and for trying to cause trouble for the government.[54]

Concerning the financial difficulties, Brătianu claimed that the foreign and Jewish financiers believed that pressure over the loan business would eventually lead to a revision of the naturalisation provisions in the Romanian constitution. However, their belief, in his opinion, was nonsense since the Romanians certainly would not change their constitution and grant the Jews citizenship *en masse*. 'It is a question of life and death', he declared.[55]

In London, the Romanian Minister, Alexandre Catargi spoke on behalf of his government. He went to considerable lengths in an attempt to explain away not only the Trades Law, but also the generally poor situation of the Jews. Some of his remarks were quite ridiculous and almost seemed to harm his cause. However, the Foreign Office did not make any written comment on these statements. Catargi argued that the Jews in Romania had always been treated 'with utmost consideration'; they were allowed to profess their religion, build synagogues, and were given free education. He made a hazy and unclear distinction between Romanian Jews and foreign Jews. By the former, he referred to the long-established Jewish communities in Wallachia and, by the latter, the newcomers in Moldavia. Foreign Jews, the category comprising the majority of Jews residing in Romania, were not allowed any privileges and certainly not any political rights, especially since many of them were 'living in a state of savagery'. Furthermore, Catargi informed the Foreign Office that Jews had no agricultural instincts and had consequently adopted artisan trades.[56]

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52 *BDBJ Annual Report 1903*, 57-63, David L. Alexander and Montefiore to Lansdowne 23 June 1902. This memorandum was an updated version of an earlier 1901 memorandum that was also sent to the Foreign Office.

53 See, for example, *L'Indépendance roumaine*, 30 March/12 April 1902 and 19 April/2 May 1902.

54 FO 104/159/33, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 30 April 1902.

55 FO 104/159/33, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 30 April 1902.

56 FO 104/159/19A, Lansdowne to Kennedy, 14 May 1902.

King Carol of Romania himself offered his views on the subject when giving a private audience to Kennedy. The King was offended about the strong use of language against Romania in the foreign press. He repeated that the Trades Law was not aimed at Jews, although Kennedy told him that it was interpreted as such in Britain and that some statements made by deputies of the Romanian Parliament had indicated the same. The King also blamed the Conservatives for provoking the pro-Trades Law demonstrations and argued that, in his own opinion, the law was unnecessary. He moved on to discuss the naturalisation of Jews, stating that the Jews in Bucharest could be naturalised, but it would be impossible to accept all those living in Moldavia as Romanian citizens — a view he based on the right of Romanians to self-defence. Kennedy was quite sympathetic to the King's concerns and even told Lansdowne that the nasty newspaper articles had been 'a great blow' to the King's health.[57]

Kennedy seemed to have swallowed King Carol's views completely and agreed with the King's idea about very limited, gradual Jewish naturalisation. In any case, neither Kennedy nor other Foreign Office personnel expected the Jews to be naturalised *en masse,* and they did not ask Romania to grant naturalisation. The British always spoke about bad treatment, persecution, or specific issues such as the Trades Law, but seemed to understand or go along with Romania's point of view on the most fundamental issue: the naturalisation of Jews residing in Romania.

It is not surprising that Romanians living in England were annoyed by the visible campaign waged against their native country. In an interesting pro-Romanian outburst in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a writer, under the pseudonym 'Anglo-Roumanian', argued that the Romanian government was fully justified in restricting Jewish activities, because if it did not, the Jews would eventually own the land and dominate in the public sphere — both typical arguments heard in Romania at the time. The writer admitted that the Jews in general had many good qualities, but claimed that most Jews in Romania were different: they were 'the scum of modern Israel'.[58]

In the summer of 1902, the leaders of the British Jews called for international diplomatic action. Although they kept the Foreign Office well informed, they admitted that the influence of the British government was limited in the matter. The Anglo-Jewry circulated the *Roumanian Bulletin*, a publication issued as a supplement of the *Jewish Chronicle* but also distributed to the British press, to MPs, and to the banking circles.[59]

By August 1902, the *Jewish Chronicle* believed that, as the situation was calm on the Romanian front and it appeared that the Trades Law would not be

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57 FO 104/159/36, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 15 May 1902.

58 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 June 1902, 'Anglo-Roumanian' to the Editor.

59 *JC*, 18 July 1902, Montefiore's speech in the annual meeting of AJA. Five issues of the *Roumanian Bulletin* were published as supplements to the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1902 and 1903: 11 July 1902, 26 Sept. 1902, 5 Dec. 1902, 13 Feb. 1903 and 22 May 1903.

applied to Jews, the European Powers must already have acted.[60] The paper was definitely mistaken, however, as the Powers had not made representations of any sort.

The situation in Romania was also brought up in the House of Commons. Question Time offered a suitable forum for introducing highly specialised issues such as the Romanian Jewish problem. In the period 1900-1914, almost every question that was posed in the House of Commons dealing with the Jews in Romania occurred prior to 1905, during the years of the immigration debates, before the Aliens Act was passed. These questions cannot, however, be entirely attributed to concern over immigration. On many occasions, it was not the anti-immigrationist Members of Parliament who posed these questions, but those who were personally interested in the Jewish question, either for religious or humanitarian reasons.

Two questions put to the House of Commons were directly related to immigration from Romania. In 1901, a question was posed about alien paupers arriving from Romania, Russia, and Poland.[61] Another question, posed by a Sheffield MP, Sir Howard Vincent, a committed anti-alienist, was addressed to the Board of Trade rather than the Foreign Office, and called for the prevention of immigration from Romania. This was the only question that dealt solely with Romanian immigration:

> 'I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been directed by His Majesty's consular agents in Roumania, or by other means, to the exodus of poor Jews from that country, and to the efforts they are making to come to London; and what steps he is taking to prevent their ingress into Great Britain.' [62]

Apart from those referring directly to immigration, there were some questions concerning the Romanian Jews in general. These were particularly interesting as they were related to the twin issues of international law and intervention. They dealt with the general position of Jews, accusing Romania of persecution and evasion of the Berlin Treaty, and asking whether the Foreign Office had acted in any way to protect Romanian Jews. These questions often resembled private letters sent to the Foreign Office by individuals and organisations. The government's answers were elusive and usually did not do much to clarify the Foreign Office policy unless it was that of definite refusal to intervene in the Romanian situation.

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60 *JC* leader, 15 Aug. 1902. At this point, *JC* could not yet have known about Hay's note, although by then the note had been sent to the American representatives. Besides, *JC* spoke about the intervention of the Berlin signatories, not of the United States.

61 *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 95, 552-553, question: Thomas Dewar (Tower Hamlets, St. George's), answer: Viscount Cranborne (Parliamentary Under Secretary), 17 June 1901.

62 *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 109, 96-97, question: Sir Howard Vincent (Sheffield, Central), answer: Gerald Balfour (President of the Board of Trade), 9 June 1902.

One question dealt specifically with the Trades Law of 1902 and how it constituted a breach of the Berlin Treaty.[63] Another question was posed by Herbert Merton Jessel, a Jewish MP, who was very interested in the subject and who bombarded the Foreign Office with letters. In July 1902, having asked about the observance of the Treaty of Berlin, he received an answer which actually explained Foreign Office policy quite honestly: the other Great Powers would not join in any representations.[64]

Late in the summer of 1902, the situation was such that the enforcement of the Romanian Trades Law had been postponed until the autumn and nobody seemed to know what real effect it would have on the Jews in the end. All conjectures about the law were based on guesswork and depended on the position of the person making the comments. As to the Romanians, they were now adopting the view that the Trades Law was not to be used against the Jewish artisans. The British government, with Kennedy as the key source of opinion, trusted the Romanian assurances. The Jews, on the other hand, both in Romania and abroad, held the opposite view — as can be concluded from increased emigration. However, in August, a new development suddenly attracted everyone's attention: the United States intervened in the Romanian Jewish situation by sending a circular note criticising the Romanian Jewish policy to the European Powers.

5.4 Hay's note — the American intervention

It is necessary to examine the background to Hay's note[65] in order to acquire a better understanding of the reactions it stirred up in Europe, especially in Romania and Britain, and in order to put the note and its resulting controversy into the right perspective and context. Hay's note was the most important diplomatic action on behalf of the Romanian Jews in the early twentieth century and, for that reason, deserves to be discussed properly.

By 1902, the leaders of the Jewish community in the United States had, for a couple of years, followed the situation of their Romanian coreligionists anxiously. Besides the usual interest that they had always had in Jewish affairs world-wide, the problem of Romania had acquired special significance because of the massive Jewish immigration from that country to America. The scale of

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63 *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 112, 279, question: Sir Arthur Hayter (Walsall), answer: Cranborne, 31 July 1902.

64 *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 110, 682-683, question: Herbert Merton Jessel (St. Pancras South), answer: Cranborne, 3 July 1902.

65 There are several valuable studies about the American Jewish policy towards Romania. Cyrus Adler's well-known collections of official and American Jewish documents, with his own commentaries, on the Jewish question in Eastern Europe provide usable material. Adler's main work is *With Firmness in the Right: American Diplomatic Action Affecting Jews* (1946), written with Aaron Margalith. On Hay's note, Gary Dean Best's *To Free a People: American Jewish Leaders and the Jewish Problem in Eastern Europe, 1890-1914* (1982) is the unsurpassed account.

immigration caused American Jews to become very much involved as they had to help newcomers from Romania to settle in the United States. The impending Trades Law, in spring 1902, further threatened to accelerate migration.

It was at this stage that Jacob Schiff[66], a banker and one of the leading figures of the American Jews, went to see President Theodore Roosevelt in April 1902 to discuss financial matters. Schiff decided, however, to bring up the subject of the Romanian Jews on the same occasion. He had talked the matter over with another Jewish leader, Oscar Straus[67], who had given him a memorandum on the situation of the Romanian Jews to be forwarded to Roosevelt. In his memo, Straus suggested that the United States should protest to Romania, using immigration as a pretext but referring also to the Berlin Treaty. Straus explained that the arrival of immigrant masses gave the United States the right to intervene because, in forcing Jews to leave Romania due to miserable, unbearable conditions, Romania was performing an unfriendly act towards the United States.[68] In this way, Straus had already designed the basic contents of the forthcoming note.

Roosevelt was at once co-operative. There were several reasons for his positive reaction. Roosevelt and Schiff were both New York Republicans, and Roosevelt had received substantial funds from Schiff and other Jewish businessmen like him for his previous presidential campaign. The proportion of Jewish voters, especially in New York, was constantly increasing, and, as elections were nearing again, it would be wise to keep his Jewish supporters happy. In addition, when Schiff had difficulty with Roosevelt's anti-trust legislation, Roosevelt could compensate through friendliness on the other issue — the Jewish question.[69] Immigration itself may have had something to do with Roosevelt's attitude, as it certainly was not desirable to receive large numbers of poor Jews onto American shores. Co-operation with the Jewish leaders could be expected to help curb the flow of immigrants.

Following the meeting between Roosevelt and Schiff, Oscar Straus was invited to Washington to meet Roosevelt and his Secretary of State John Hay[70]. The news about Roosevelt's sympathies excited the Jews of Britain, as they had so little success in persuading their own government to intervene. Nothing happened at first, however, to the embarrassment of Schiff and Straus, who had

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66 Jacob Schiff (1847-1920), one of the most powerful investment bankers in the United States, used his money and influence to help Jews all over the world. For example, he refused to grant loans to Russia because of the Jewish policy of that country. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14, 960-962.

67 Oscar Straus (1850-1926) had close contacts with the US government, serving as a diplomat, and later as the Secretary of Commerce and Labour. He was involved in the attempts to help Jews in Romania and Russia on several occasions. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 15, 429-430.

68 Best 1982, 45-47; Kohler & Wolf 1916, 108-109, Straus to Schiff, 2 April 1902. Interestingly, Straus's letter included some incorrect details: he claims that the Jews in Romania numbered 400,000, that they were not allowed to reside in rural districts, and that they were not able to rent land.

69 Best 1982, 48.

70 John Hay (1838-1905) served as the Secretary of State from 1898 to 1905.

advertised their success to European Jews.[71] Hay's fragile health and his insistence on formulating a suitably diplomatic wording of the protest delayed the action. Finally, on 17 July 1902, Hay showed his note to Roosevelt; he had chosen the failed naturalisation treaty negotiations between the United States and Romania as a pretext for the note.[72]

Charles E. Francis, the American minister in Athens, Greece, who was also accredited to Romania, had proposed several treaties to Prime Minister Sturdza when visiting Romania. The Americans had been attempting to sign treaties with Romania since 1880, but nothing had come of it. At first, Francis proposed an extradition treaty, which Romania turned down.[73] The next proposal was a commercial treaty, which Sturdza again rejected. Finally, Francis suggested a naturalisation treaty that would have defined the grounds for the naturalisation of a Romanian subject in the United States and vice versa. Sturdza announced that it was a treaty which Romania should consider carefully, but, in the end, Francis's proposals were not accepted.[74]

However, in February 1902, Francis forwarded to the Romanian minister in Athens a draft of the proposed naturalisation treaty. The Romanian minister had supported the treaty and the draft was the outcome of his discussions with Francis. It was based on an earlier treaty between the United States and Serbia, and it was thus a standard proposal, with nothing 'personal' concerning the Romanian situation. The venture did not proceed, however, because the Romanian government remained opposed to it. Interestingly, the Jewish question was at least one of the reasons for Romania's reluctance. Romania was afraid that large numbers of Jews would depart for the United States in order to acquire the citizenship of that country and afterwards return to Romania, now protected by the United States.[75] This fear was not totally without foundation since similar issues emerged in Russo-American relations when some Russian Jews wanted to avoid conscription or to benefit in business matters. There is no evidence, however, of these problems with Romanian Jews immigrating to the United States.

On 17 July 1902, John Hay sent his note to the Chargé D'Affaires in Athens, Charles S. Wilson. Francis, mentioned above, was no longer positioned there. The note, in the form of a dispatch addressed to Wilson, scrutinised the naturalisation treaty rather extensively. However, the treaty was not the note's main concern or the main reason behind it, as revealed, for example, by Hay's explanation to Roosevelt (he stated that he was using the treaty issue as a pretext) and by Hay's correspondence with American Jewish leaders. Besides,

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71 Best 1982, 48-49. Another prominent Jew involved in preparing the note was Congressman Julius Littauer, a close friend of Roosevelt's.

72 Best 1982, 50-51.

73 Quinlan 1980, 199.

74 FO 104/159/66, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 6 Oct. 1902.

75 *FRUS 1902*, 914, American Chargé D'affaires in Athens Charles S. Wilson to Hay, 8 Aug. 1902; Adler & Margalith 1946, 119-121. Adler and Margalith place an undue emphasis on the role of the naturalisation treaty, arguing that the Romanian refusal to agree on the treaty was the immediate cause for Hay's note.

the fact that copies of the dispatch were later circulated to all the European Powers would have been odd indeed if the dispatch had concerned a bilateral treaty. By referring to the naturalisation treaty, Hay simply intended to give Wilson an excuse to bring the whole Jewish issue up with the Romanians.[76]

However, Wilson did not understand the purpose of the note, interpreting it as a dispatch purely dealing with the naturalisation treaty.[77] The complicated diplomatic formulation of the note was too implicit for Wilson to grasp. He brought the subject up in a discussion with the Romanian minister, but the Jewish situation was mentioned only when the Romanian minister gave it as a reason for his country's refusal to enter into the treaty. Later, the Assistant Under Secretary of State, Alvey A. Adee, who had constructed the note, explained its true intention to Wilson by sending him a copy of the version meant for the American ambassadors in Europe.[78]

Hay sent the note on 11 August to the U.S. ambassadors in London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, St.Petersburg, Vienna, and Constantinople, instructing the ambassadors to inform the governments to which they were accredited about the note. The circular[79] referred to the original dispatch sent to Wilson and the content was essentially similar. Only the introduction differed, as it omitted the detailed description of the naturalisation treaty negotiations. Hay wrote that some matters which might also be of interest to the European Powers had been discussed during the treaty negotiations between the United States and Romania. The United States wished to let these matters be known, after which the signatories of the Berlin Treaty could act as they wished.[80] As a whole, the note was a relatively vague piece of writing, which had already been illustrated by Chargé D'Affaires Wilson's misinterpretation.

Hay claimed that immigration from Romania had made the United States an interested party in the Romanian Jewish question. The United States welcomed all immigrants, with exception of criminals, paupers, and the seriously ill, who would presumably turn out to be a burden on the community. Immigration had to be voluntary, but Romania forced Jews to leave the country through oppressive laws which deprived them of their livelihood. People arriving from such a miserable situation could not be considered voluntary immigrants nor were they capable of becoming good, useful American citizens.

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76 Best 1982, 52.

77 *FRUS 1902*, 914, Wilson to Hay, 8 Aug. 1902. American diplomatic correspondence in 1902-1903 relative to the Romanian Jewish question is also printed in Adler 1906, p. 54 onwards.

78 *FRUS 1902*, 915, Under Secretary Alvey A. Adee to Wilson, 22 Aug. 1902; Best 1982, 53-54.

79 The term 'Hay's note' can refer to both the dispatch sent to Wilson and the one sent to the ambassadors. Sometimes the term 'Hay's circular' is used, referring only to the version addressed to the ambassadors.

80 *FRUS 1902*, 42, Hay to the ambassadors, 11 Aug. 1902. Also included in the British Foreign Office series: FO 104/159, Hay to Ambassador in London Joseph H. Choate, 11 Aug. 1902. The note was forwarded to the Foreign Office from the American embassy. It is interesting to compare Hay's note to a circular sent by the Secretary of State Hamilton Fish in 1872. It also referred to the Romanian Jewish situation and was addressed to American ministers in Europe. Kohler & Wolf 1916, 20.

Hay further clarified the general conditions of the Romanian Jews. The note explained in detail the fundamentals of American immigration policy and the reasons that Romanian Jews did not fit with these principles. Hay declared that although the United States was not a Berlin signatory, it could appeal to the principles of the Berlin Treaty. The note ended with an appeal on the grounds of international law and 'in the name of humanity':

> 'The United States may not authoritatively appeal to the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin, to which it was not, and cannot become, a signatory, but it does earnestly appeal to the principles consigned therein, because they are the principles of international law and eternal justice, advocating the broad toleration which that solemn compact enjoins, and standing ready to lend its moral support to the fulfilment thereof by its co-signatories, for the act of Roumania itself has effectively joined the United States to them as an interested party in this regard.'[81]

Francis Rey, writing from the international legal viewpoint soon after the note was sent, in 1903, argued that the note was not a valid diplomatic intervention in terms of international law. As the United States was not party to the existing agreements on the Romanian situation, i.e. the Treaty of Berlin, the note could not be based on international legal provisions and could not, in a strict sense, refer to them. The arguments that were used in the note, namely humanity and the United States' own interests, could not form a legal basis for intervention.[82]

There has been some disagreement among historians and contemporaries as to the motives behind the note. Gary Dean Best, who has studied the note in detail, denies that domestic political motives were behind it because, in 1902, the presidential elections were still two years away and the benefit that could be drawn from the note would not be significant in the congressional elections.[83] However, Best overlooks the willingness of the United States government to please the Jewish voters in a more general way and the attempts of the government to obtain long-term support and campaign funds.

Other historians have explained that Hay's and Roosevelt's motives were precisely concerned with domestic politics and were targeted at the presidential elections of 1904. A humanitarian protest offered a convenient way to fish for more votes from the Jews. The Jewish cause did not in itself interest Hay at all; yet, simply based on the note, the Jews considered him a genuine friend. On the other hand, Hay was not an anti-Semite; he was rather indifferent to the question.[84]

Alvey A. Adee explained the background of the note in 1913. He claimed that it was designed to calm the over-heated feelings of Congress. Furthermore, the note was a serviceable way to hinder more radical, uncontrollable action

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81 *FRUS 1902*, 42, Hay to the ambassadors, 11 Aug. 1902.

82 Rey 1903, 501.

83 Best 1982, 59.

84 Clymer 1971, 349-350, 354; Dennett 1963, 395-397; Quinlan 1980, 200-201. Both Clymer and Quinlan cite Dennett's work, and thus accept Dennett's interpretation. Clymer's article is an excellent account of Hay's attitude towards Jews. However, when writing '[Hay] protested Roumania's treatment of her Jewish citizens'(p. 349), Clymer incorrectly elevates Romanian Jews to a position of Romanian citizens.

that could have angered the European Powers. Adee argued that the American motive was not humanitarian, but practical: Jewish immigrants arriving from Romania were a nuisance. He also stated that Jewish leaders had complained about the difficulties and financial burden they had experienced because of the poor Romanian newcomers.[85]

The significance of Adee's comments is lessened by the fact that it was made ten years after the note was written and sent. It may be true that the note was intended to pacify Congress but no-one else offered this explanation. Adee's attitude appeared to be more cynical than the average. He clearly indicated that the rich New York Jews did not want to be burdened by poor Jews from Romania. This was understandably an attitude that the affluent Jews themselves did not want to broadcast.

5.5 British reactions to the American note

The British government became aware of Hay's note on 23 August 1902.[86] It came as a surprise to the Brits, as well as to the other Powers.[87] The Americans themselves, except for those few who had been involved in drafting the note, were also taken by surprise.[88] The British attitude was cautiously approving, and Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, decided upon the line of action:

> 'My impression is that we ought to associate ourselves with the U.S. so far as the affirmation of the general principle goes, but that we should avoid committing ourselves in regard to specific complaints. But I think I am right in believing that our own official reports tend to show that the Jews are very badly treated [in Romania]...'[89]

In principle, Britain was ready to take a stand against Romania. It is unclear, however, what kind of intervention Britain was prepared to make. Within Britain, willingness to support the American initiative was not openly associated with the British immigration problem. However, in the United States, the *New York Times* wrote that

> 'the question of the exclusion of pauper aliens from Great Britain is growing more acute, and anti-immigration laws are demanded in many influential quarters. So the Government is in sympathy with Mr. Hay's protest in the hope that the wholesale exodus of undesirable emigrants from Eastern Europe may be checked.'[90]

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85 NA 1198/7/871.4016/51, minute by Adee, 17 Dec. 1913.

86 FO 104/159, Choate to Lansdowne, 23 Aug. 1902, enclosure: Hay to Choate, 11 Aug. 1902.

87 Iancu 1981, 274-276, French Ambassador in Washington Pierre de Margerie to Delcassé, 22 Sept. 1902. De Margerie describes the reactions in Washington.

88 *The Times*, 23 Sept. 1902.

89 FO 104/159, minute by Lansdowne, 26 Sept. 1902.

90 *The New York Times*, 20 Sept. 1902.

Hay did not specify in the note what he wanted the European Powers to do; the Americans only referred to measures that would seem wise to the Powers. A couple of weeks after receiving the note from the Americans, in the beginning of September, Lansdowne forwarded it to the British ambassadors positioned in the capitals of the other European Powers. He attached a circular of his own to the American material. He asked the ambassadors to inquire if the governments they were accredited to would join a protest against Romania on the grounds of Romania's failure to fulfil the conditions of the Berlin Treaty.[91] This was sometimes referred to as the 'supplementary note'. Lansdowne's tone was not aggressive nor did he push the other countries into action. What he did, simply, was to inquire if the others were willing to intervene, at the same time implying that Britain would act if the others did. There was no talk of individual British action at any point.

The *Jewish Chronicle* printed its first piece on Hay's note on 19 September and, during the following weeks, discussed it extensively. The newspaper, beside itself with joy, believed that the note might bring some results about — diplomatic intervention had finally come to pass! The British government's reaction and its supplementary note also met with gratitude. Moreover, the *Jewish Chronicle* was certain that British public opinion was strongly sympathetic to Romanian Jews, judging from the opinions of famous and distinguished British individuals, which were printed in the new issue of the propaganda supplement *Roumanian Bulletin*.[92]

The reactions of the mainstream British press to the note were generally positive. The British newspapers were happy with the humanitarian aspects of the note and did not place any emphasis on the controversial international legal considerations.[93]

The foreign governments considered the subject cautiously, suspiciously, and, in general, without enthusiasm. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs was especially elusive. At first, he maintained that he had not received the note from the American ambassador, while the ambassador himself claimed otherwise. The Russians did not sympathise with the note at all.[94] This was not surprising in light of Russia's own Jewish policy. Even at the Congress of Berlin, Russia had been unwilling to take action on behalf of Romanian Jews, although it had gone along with suggestions made by the others.

Austria considered that appealing to the Berlin Treaty did not suit this particular situation.[95] There were mixed feelings in Austrian official circles, with conservative and military elements against Hay's note. However, *Neue*

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91 FO 104/159, Lansdowne to ambassadors Edmund Monson (Paris), Frank Lascelles (Berlin), Charles Scott (St Petersburg), Francis Plunkett (Vienna) and secretary of embassy Rennell Rodd (Rome), 2 Sept. 1902.

92 *JC*, 19 Sept 1902, 26 Sept. 1902 and 3 Oct. 1902. The latter two issues were especially overflowing with enthusiasm for the note.

93 See, for example, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 Sept. 1902; *The Spectator*, 27 Sept. 1902.

94 FO 104/159, Scott to Lansdowne, 26 Sept. 1902; FO 104/159, Scott to Lansdowne, 2 Oct. 1902.

95 FO 104/159, Plunkett to Lansdowne, 25 Sept. 1902.

Freie Presse took its typical pro-Jewish stance by arguing that the Berlin signatories had failed to enforce the Treaty and that the United States was now showing the European Powers what their obligations were.[96] *Neue Freie Presse*'s position on the note was probably the most positive of all and its rather original emphasis on the failure of the Powers in their duties was not commonly accepted elsewhere. The British minister in Bucharest, Kennedy, offered his interpretations on the reasons for Austria's and Germany's responses. He pointed out that the Germans, as major investors in and trade partners of Romania, always had economic considerations in the back of their minds and the Austrians had a 'military understanding' with Romania.[97]

Conservative circles in Germany were strongly against the note, while some liberal and bourgeoisie cliques welcomed Hay's action. *The Times* correspondent in Berlin remarked that Romania was 'probably' a Triple Alliance satellite and that Germany wanted to maintain friendly relations between the two countries, although the Germans admitted that Romania had not behaved well in regards to the Jewish question. The Bismarckian traditions of foreign policy did not include interference in the affairs of foreign countries, particularly when the question was solely about humanitarian issues. German conservative newspapers drew attention to the treatment of 'Negroes' in the United States and to the position of Filipinos in American overseas territories. If the Americans were so concerned about Romanian Jews, why did they not gladly accept all of them as immigrants to the United States?[98]

The comparison with the Russian situation was also made in Germany: it was easy for the Americans to bully a small country, Romania, while ignoring the behaviour of Russia, the main oppressor of Jewish rights. However, the major argument against the American note appeared to be that the United States simply should not be allowed to interfere in the European political scene, especially since the Americans, as formulated in the Monroe Doctrine, opposed European interference in the affairs of the American continent.[99] The issue of American interference in Romanian affairs but not Russian affairs is an interesting one. However, the Americans had not ignored Russian Jewish rights in the past and they had indeed made diplomatic representations to Russia also, despite the fact that there were no international treaties concerning Russian Jews.[100]

France's reaction was friendlier than Russia's, Germany's, and Austria's: it agreed to join in with the criticism if the others decided to act.[101] France was not, however, particularly enthusiastic, perhaps due to its domestic wrangles at the time between clerical and republican elements on Jewish matters.[102] Italy

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96 *St. James's Gazette*, 20 Sept. 1902.

97 FO 104/159/61, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 24 Sept. 1902.

98 *The Times*, 22 Sept. 1902.

99 *The Times*, 22 Sept. 1902.

100 *The Standard*, 19 Sept. 1902.

101 FO 104/159, Monson to Lansdowne, 1 Oct. 1902.

102 *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1902.

wanted the other Powers to be careful. Like Austria, Italy saw the note as a sign of Anglo-American co-operation. However, the Italians still basically thought that the Romanian policy on Jews should be changed.[103]

The Times correspondent in Athens discussed the note and the European reactions to it. His interpretation of the note's origins was that it was the outcome of the long disagreement between Romania and the United States about the status of Romanian Jewish immigrants in America. This view suggests that the correspondent linked the note directly to the problem of the naturalisation treaty, as had the American representative in Athens, Charles S. Wilson. It was presumed that nothing would come of the note because the Powers were 'half-hearted'. The crucial factor, as the correspondent accurately observed, was the attitude of Russia, Austria, and Germany since British opinion did not have much influence in Romania. Germany did not want to embarrass King Carol, who was of German origin, and wished that Prime Minister Sturdza would stay in office because of the loan negotiations. Besides, Germany had never been interested in questions of minorities in the Balkans. Austria wanted, above all, to maintain good relations with Romania, despite the inconveniences it had been experiencing as a result of the Jewish migrants who passed through its territory. Russia, on the other hand, was hardly in a position to complain about the Jewish treatment in any foreign country, although it might privately have wished that Romania would improve the conditions of the Jews so that more Russian Jews might be willing to move to Romania.[104]

Meanwhile in Britain, the *Jewish Chronicle* was puzzled that no information on the possible action of the European Powers surfaced during the autumn.[105] There was no real information to give though, and the *Jewish Chronicle* had to remain in the dark throughout the autumn of 1902. The British 'feeler', i.e. the supplementary note, was dismissed on the continent, which was the response that British diplomats had to report back to London. When the European reactions became known, however, there was no great sense of disappointment in the Foreign Office. It is not entirely clear if Lansdowne and others in the Foreign Office had seriously expected any support from the continental Powers, but it appears that they had not, although there is no hard evidence for this.

In the House of Commons, Hay's note also generated some interest. During 1902-1903, William Evans-Gordon asked three times for information about the latest correspondence on the Romanian Jews and Hay's note. He wished that diplomatic correspondence on the American note would be published and that the House would be able to discuss the matter. At first, he was told that the correspondence was not complete, but, later, it was explained that there was no new correspondence on the subject, which, indeed, seemed to imply that it had been complete by then.[106] This was a typical, convenient

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103 FO 104/159, Rodd to Lansdowne, 25 Sept. 1902, enclosure: article in a 'semi-official' Italian newspaper *La Tribuna*.

104 *The Times*, 9 Oct. 1902.

105 *JC* leader, 17 Oct. 1902.

106 *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 113, 219-220, question: William Eden Evans-Gordon (Tower Hamlets, Stepney), answer: Arthur Balfour (Prime Minister), 20 Oct.

answer, given every time the Foreign Office was reluctant to give any information. Nothing came of Evans-Gordon's efforts.

In short, Hay's note did not attract the sympathies of the European Powers apart from Britain. Nobody wanted to intervene in Romanian internal affairs and many were offended by American interference in what was seen as European affairs. The note did not lead to any joint European protests to Romania. Therefore, the comment of 'an experienced British official' in *The New York Times,* in September 1902, nicely summarised the state of affairs:

> 'Nothing that will be of any permanent good can result from Secretary Hay's note to the Powers on Roumania's treatment of Jews unless somebody is willing to crush Roumania, and no Power seems anxious to take on that task.'[107]

5.6 The conclusion of the dispute

In Romania, the Trades Law still evoked heated discussion in August and September 1902. Prime Minister Sturdza was 'as usual, defiant and unyielding' in late August 1902. However, Hay's note was not yet an issue then. Kennedy did not know about it and the Romanians later claimed that they had not heard about it either.[108]

Kennedy still concentrated his energy on the Trades Law, which had busied him since March. He thought it was possible that financial pressure could secure amendments to the law. He also believed that 'a better spirit' towards the Jews prevailed in Romania at the time. Some proof of the more lenient mood was that a Jew had recently been permitted to sue a Romanian in court, despite the fact that only Romanians were normally allowed to file lawsuits.[109] Kennedy drew far-reaching conclusions from one court case, seeing it as a concession to the Jews in general. However, in reality the case had no relevance whatsoever to the Jewish question in a wider context. In this sense, Kennedy's remark stood out as a complete miscalculation.

In September 1902, the regulations for the enforcement of the Trades Law were published after a waiting period of six months. The only concession to the Jews, but a crucial one, was the stipulation that foreigners who did not enjoy the protection of any state, and who were therefore under Romanian protection, were not required to prove reciprocity of treatment or to apply for authorisation from the Chamber of Commerce. Other restrictive measures remained as they had been in the original version: only Romanians could be elected to

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1902; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 114, 1231, question: Evans-Gordon, answer: Cranborne, 18 Nov. 1902; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 123, 931, question: Evans-Gordon, answer: Cranborne, 15 June 1903.

107 *The New York Times*, 24 Sept. 1902. The identity of the 'experienced official' is not known.

108 FO 104/159/56, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 26 Aug. 1902.

109 FO 104/151/57, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 8 Sept. 1902.

corporation committees, while everyone was obliged to be a member of the corporation, and Romanians were given preference when competing for public works. Kennedy interpreted the continuing emigration as proof of the inefficiency of the new regulations, which were not enough to secure the employment of Jewish artisans.[110]

However, the effect of the amendments could not yet be seen and Kennedy was too quick to draw conclusions. True, emigration continued in earnest but it probably had nothing to do with the new regulations, but was due rather to the earlier negative perceptions of the Trades Law as such. Moreover, even the Jewish activists admitted that the new regulations had enabled Jewish artisans to obtain permits in a normal manner and therefore to exercise their trade in peace.[111]

It was only in late September that the Romanians began to discuss Hay's note with the British representatives and the Foreign Office. The Romanians claimed, confusingly, that they had not heard about the note before. This seemed unbelievable, but it was true that the United States had not addressed the note to Romania and the Romanians did not hear about it through the direct, official diplomatic channels. One of the most peculiar aspects of the note was that, although it was very much about the behaviour of Romania, it was addressed only to the Great Powers excluding Romania itself. Kennedy had received a copy of the note on 2 September but had been unable to obtain any comment from the Romanians because the King was abroad and the members of the cabinet were holidaying in their country homes. Kennedy himself was not very pleased about the note. He reminded the Foreign Office that he had opposed international intervention on behalf of Romanian Jews on several occasions. Expressing an opinion which resembled those that the Romanian government often promoted, Kennedy said that 'it would be fatal to the interests of the Romanian population of Moldavia' if political and civil rights were granted to all Jews. As he had mentioned earlier, he believed that these rights could be granted to the Jews of Bucharest because they were long established Romanian residents.[112]

When the note reached the Romanian government, it caused anxiety, displeasure, and fear, although the Romanians tried to hide the latter emotion, attempting to appear calm. They opposed the line of action that the United States had taken and argued that even the European Powers were not entitled to meddle in Romanian internal affairs. This was the standard Romanian interpretation on the right to intervention as laid down in the Treaty of Berlin. Another typical Romanian argument related to the treatment of the blacks and the Chinese in the United States: they were treated worse than the Jews in Romania. In addition, Romania accused the Americans of hypocrisy when they

110 FO 104/159/60, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 22 Sept. 1902.

111 BDBJ 3121/C11/1, Conjoint meeting, 4 Feb. 1903

112 FO 104/159/61, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 24 Sept. 1902.

intervened in Romanian Jewish matters but not in the Russian situation — a common accusation at the time.[113]

The Romanian Prime Minister, Sturdza, later said that Romania was no longer under the protection of the Berlin signatories and therefore did not recognise their right to intervene in its affairs.[114] The Romanians also speculated about the motives of the Americans, believing the motive of humanity, as given in the note, to be insincere since, if humanity had been the main concern, the note should have been about the Russian Jewish situation. It was common opinion in Romania that the note was designed in the interest of securing support for the next elections in the United States.[115]

King Carol of Romania condemned this American interference in the internal affairs of Romania. However, he seemed to be more agitated about some hostile articles, written by a journalist called Hugo Ganz in several German newspapers, than about the note. He was convinced that Ganz's 'vicious' actions had been deliberate. The King claimed that he had made efforts on behalf of the Jews but had been met with hostility. What these efforts were is not clear, but the King was perhaps referring to a minor incident that he had talked about on the same occasion, generalising the incident to apply to all Jews. Some time earlier, he had supported the citizenship application of a well-known scholar, Lascar Şaineanu, and had voiced his wish to grant Şaineanu citizenship. However, parliament ignored his opinion and voted against Şaineanu's application. The King took this incident personally, and Şaineanu moved to Paris.[116] The King succeeded in making himself a Jew-sympathiser in the eyes of Kennedy and managed to turn attention away from the embarrassing note problem.

As usual, the most bizarre comments were made by the Prime Minister Dimitrie A. Sturdza. He blamed two Americans, namely the American representative Charles Francis and a Standard Oil agent Robert Porter, for orchestrating the note. The motive of these two men was supposed to be revenge against Sturdza himself. As described above, Francis had persisted in proposing a host of treaties upon Sturdza, but none of them had been accepted

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113 Verax 1904, 77-78. See also *Adeverul*, 8/21 Sept. 1902.

114 FO 104/159/59, Browne to Lansdowne, 8 Sept. 1903; *FRUS 1903*, 704, Jackson to Hay, 7 Sept. 1903.

115 FO 104/159/66, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 6 Oct. 1902.

116 FO 104/159/63, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 2 Oct. 1902. The Şaineanu episode was often presented as an example (albeit an extreme one) of the twisted nature of the Romanian citizenship legislation. Şaineanu's application was first introduced in the Senate in 1891, when it was rejected. Then, in 1895, the Chamber of Deputies showed him the green light; in this occasion the King had spoken for him. In 1899, Şaineanu's application was reconsidered in the Senate and it was passed unanimously. Suddenly, however, it turned out that an application had to be passed in both the Senate and the Chambers during one single parliamentary session. Şaineanu's application was sent back to the Chambers, which postponed the decision until the next session. Finally, in December 1900, his application was voted on in the Chambers and rejected. It seems that anti-Semitic agitation against Şaineanu's case had something to do with the decision. Şaineanu, who had already spent some time abroad earlier because of his academic career, moved to Paris. Brandes, 1901, 343-346.

by Sturdza. Now Sturdza claimed that Francis had engineered the note because he was bitter. Porter, meanwhile, had been in Romania for Standard Oil. One of the suggested measures for financial stabilisation in Romanian, in 1900, had been to sell the state petroleum lands and to create competition for the construction of a pipeline from the oilfields to Constanța. Standard Oil of New Jersey was willing to buy and Petre P. Carp, the Prime Minister at the time, was inclined to sell. The Liberal Party and Sturdza, on the other hand, opposed the negotiations, as they feared that Standard Oil would eventually acquire a monopoly on the transport and sale of oil in Romania. The negotiations failed, which, in Sturdza's opinion, gave Porter a motive for revenge in the shape of the note.[117] Kennedy did not believe these accusations and, quite frankly, they were absurd. There is no evidence of the involvement of either Francis or Porter in the drafting of the note.

Sturdza blamed the Alliance Israélite Universelle for anti-Romanian propaganda in foreign newspapers — a theme he often liked to talk about. He was afraid that the note would hinder successful loan negotiations in Berlin and further feared that the Conservative Party would use the note in domestic politics to gain power. Sturdza correctly predicted that Germany, Austria, Italy, and Russia would not join in any kind of demonstrations resulting from Hay's note; he linked the Austro-German attitude with the wish of those two countries to do business with his Liberal government.[118]

There were some grounds for the Romanian's fear of financial problems because of the note, as the value of Romanian state bonds had fallen again. Aggressive newspaper articles spread a hostile atmosphere towards Romania, especially promoted by Hugo Ganz and the German newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The anti-Romanian attitude of some of the leading European bankers may have played a role as well. It is interesting to speculate whether the activities of Jacob Schiff, who was keen to put pressure on anti-Semitic countries financially, had anything to do with the opinions of European Jewish bankers, but, as noted earlier, real economic pressure did not materialise.

Just before the end of year 1902, Kennedy again saw signs of better conditions for the Jews. He based his opinion on some moderate articles in Romanian newspapers, a number of restrained speeches in Parliament, and some (normal) naturalisations of Jews.[119] Kennedy's interpretation of the situation was overly optimistic and he admitted his miscalculation in March 1903, when he accepted that his anticipation of more naturalisations had not been fulfilled.[120] There were more naturalisations in the parliamentary session of 1902-1903 than there had been in the immediately preceding years but the figure was not remarkably large.[121]

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117 FO 104/144/107, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 15 Dec. 1900; FO 104/159/66, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 6 Oct. 1902. On this matter, see also Pearton 1971, 24-26.

118 FO 104/159/66, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 6 Oct. 1902.

119 FO 104/159/96, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 30 Dec. 1902.

120 FO 104/159/28, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 5 March 1903.

121 *The Roumanian Bulletin*, supplement to *JC*, 22 May 1903; Iancu 1994, 87, document no 17: Statistics of Jewish naturalisations between 1879 and 1913. According to the

In Britain, the Anglo-Jewish Association also concluded that there had been small signs of improvement and relaxation in the enforcement of anti-Jewish laws. The Anglo-Jewish Association attributed the change to foreign pressure and to the diminishing Jewish population, which had made the Romanians consider the possible fatal consequences for their country.[122] Both Kennedy and the Anglo-Jewish Association were partially correct when they observed indications of lessening tensions in the final months of 1902 and in spring 1903, but this did not entail any fundamental changes in the basic principles of Romanian Jewish policy.

The Conjoint Committee discussed the Romanian situation on several occasions during winter 1902-1903. After a trip to Romania, Herbert Bentwich, a Zionist, concluded that Romanian Jews needed financial help in emigration and in purchasing artisan permits. Moses Gaster promised that the situation would soon improve — he had heard this from his sources in Romania.[123] Bentwich suggested that a Mansion House public meeting could be held and a relief fund set up.[124] His proposals met with very little enthusiasm.

Moses Gaster had suddenly decided, in February, that conditions in Romania had improved, and, besides, no funding was needed for the purchase of artisan permits. As to the emigration funds, Claude Montefiore was against the idea as, 'it would at once cause a panic among those opposed to immigration in this country'. Consequently, the Conjoint decided not to make any appeal for a Romanian relief fund.[125]

Crucially, especially for the Sturdza government, Romania emerged victorious from the difficult loan negotiations. The terms of the new loan were reasonable and the economic situation of the country was stronger than before.[126] In London, the *Roumanian Bulletin* tried to belittle the loan arrangement and argued that the outcome did not mean that the Romanian

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Roumanian Bulletin, the number of naturalisations was 14, according to Iancu, it was 16.

122 *AJA Annual Report 1902-1903*, 21. Some conflicting views were also published in newspapers in 1903. For example, in the United States, *The New York Times* argued that the situation of Romanian Jews had deteriorated in 1903. *The New York Times*, 7 June 1903.

123 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 1 Dec. 1902. There was an incident in London involving Romanian Minister Catargi in November 1902. Catargi was not invited to a banquet given to the diplomatic corps by the Lord Mayor of the City of London. Sir Marcus Samuel, the newly-elected Lord Mayor, was a Jew. He made it clear that he had not invited the Romanian Minister because of the treatment of Jews in Romania. Catargi was deeply offended and inquired at the Foreign Office if there was any particular reason for his exclusion from the banquet. The Foreign Office claimed not to know anything about the matter. Catargi put the blame on Rabbi Moses Gaster — of which there was actually no proof. *JC* leader, 14 Nov. 1902; FO 104/159/85, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 29 Nov. 1902.

124 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 11 Jan. 1903. Bentwich suggested a Mansion House meeting already in summer 1902, but David Alexander disagreed. BDBJ 3121/A/14, BDBJ meeting, 18 June 1902.

125 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 4 Feb. 1903.

126 FO 104/155/5, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 23 Jan. 1903; Schneider 1981, 576.

financial situation was good.[127] The Romanians boasted that the conversion of the loan had been achieved without any political concessions on the part of Romania.[128] These concessions clearly referred to changes in policy towards the Jewish population.

The final outcome of the Romanian economic difficulties revealed that the Jewish question was not, after all, so closely linked with the loan negotiations at a practical level. The Romanians' fear concerning the influence of international Jewish financiers had not materialised. The Berlin banking circles had, at one point, hinted that the Jewish problem was a hindrance to successful negotiations and had used it as a tool to achieve better positions for themselves in the negotiations. However, despite the intense dispute on the issue at the time, there is no evidence that the Jewish question had any real affect on the loan.

The *Jewish Chronicle* was disappointed when it became apparent that the Powers had not seen fit to take any action on behalf of Romanian Jews. It asked why, in that case, the Powers had engaged themselves in the Macedonian question, another long-term difficulty in the Balkan area.[129]

However, the attention of the international Jewish community was shifting to Russian Jewish trouble which became very alarming in April 1903 with pogroms in Kishinev in the Russian Bessarabia (Moldova) on the other side of the border from Romania. At the time, there was also a fear of pogroms spreading across the border. The situation in Romania remained calm, though, despite the British Jewry's constant fear that Russian anti-Semitism might spread to Romania.[130]

On the other hand, the Anglo-Jewish Association, no matter how suspicious of Romania it was usually, did not seriously believe that the Romanians would burst into Russian-style violence:

> 'The Roumanians themselves are not of a fanatical character, and, unless fomented by the representatives of the so-called higher classes, an agitation of this kind is not likely to succeed in Roumania.'[131]

After 1903, discussion around the Romanian Jewish question temporarily died out, both within Britain and on the wider international scene. Romania had managed to stay firm and continued to follow its policy on the Jews as it had wished. The year 1902 was the peak year for the attention that Romanian Jews received internationally and it was not to be matched in the following years.

It is hard to find any detailed information on the Romanian Jewish situation in the years between 1904 and 1906. This period was characterised by a temporary calm around the Romanian Jewish question and, on the part of the British Jews, by a continual stream of small reports on the allegedly improved

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127 *The Roumanian Bulletin*, supplement to *JC*, 22 May 1903.

128 FO 104/155/7, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 28 Jan. 1903.

129 *JC* leader, 20 Feb. 1903.

130 See, for example, *JC*, 2 Nov. 1906.

131 *AJA Annual Report 1902-1903*, 23.

situation. Thus, the positive signs that had been apparent since the last months of 1902 persisted. Nothing 'real' happened during this period which perhaps was exactly why the British Jewish leaders assumed that the situation was improving. On the other hand, the situation in Russia[132] was so grave that Romania must have seemed like a safe haven for Jews at this time.

132 On the Russian situation, see, for example, Lindemann 1997, 290-305.

6 THE ROMANIAN PEASANT REVOLT OF 1907

6.1 The background to the revolt

The minority rights of Romanian Jews began to attract new attention in 1907 after being practically ignored in Western Europe and America after the furore caused by Hay's note had died out. In 1907, the new issue that brought the Jewish problem to the foreground again was the Romanian Peasant Revolt, the most serious peasant disturbance ever in Romania. The cause of the revolt was linked to anger against Jewish middlemen, and, during the rebellion, Jews were attacked by peasant mobs. The events in Romania resulted in vocal protests from the major Jewish organisations. The revolt also had wide repercussions for Jewish diplomacy. In the aftermath of the disturbances, the Romanian Jewish question was discussed as a whole, and international legal considerations were debated within the Western Jewish circles.

It had been relatively peaceful on the Romanian Jewish front since 1903. From the British Jews' part, a series of reports on the allegedly improved situation in Romania had been written and published. Compared to Russia, nothing of special significance was happening in Romania at this point, which perhaps was why some Jewish leaders in Britain assumed that the situation in Romania was improving. In spring 1904, the *Jewish Chronicle* concluded that a 'better spirit' prevailed in Romania and that anti-Jewish legislation was being applied less aggressively.[1] When the Anglo-Jewish Association argued in late 1904 that the Jewish situation in Romania was improving, it caused some controversy within the Jewish community in Britain, particularly in their relations with Romanian Jews.[2] There was no cause for controversy, however, in the following year when the Anglo-Jewish Association reckoned that the state of affairs in Romania had not really improved despite some encouraging signs. As they admitted, the outlook remained dark.[3]

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1 *JC* leaders, 22 Jan. 1904 and 22 April 1904.

2 *AJA Annual Report 1903-1904*, 15-16.

3 *AJA Annual Report 1904-1905*, 19.

By this stage, Britain had negotiated a new commercial treaty with Romania. The treaty was signed on 30 October 1905 and was ratified early in the following year. It contained tariff reductions on a number of exports that were crucial to British commercial interests, including cotton yarns, jute yarns and sacks, tin plates, coal etc., while Britain did not have to make any significant concessions to the Romanians.[4]

The Jewish question was mentioned at least once in Foreign Office correspondence relating to the new commercial treaty, although only in passing when discussing the Romanian prohibition of foreign landownership.[5] Unlike one might have suspected, the treaty did not lead to any strong protest from Jewish organisations. Not surprisingly, the British Jews were somewhat suspicious of British trade relations with Romania and generally did not approve of British commercial ventures in Romania. The *Jewish Chronicle* briefly wondered why the British government had not brought up the Jewish question at such a convenient opportunity as the treaty negotiations. Furthermore, the *Jewish Chronicle* saw the willingness of Romania to improve its trade and economic conditions through commercial treaties as contradictory to the fact that, at the same time, it discouraged its Jewish subjects from participating fully in the national economy.[6] This appears to be a rather far-fetched argument, desperately attempting to link the situation of Romanian Jews to anything that was happening in Romania.

In Romania, disputes with Greece and hatred towards Greeks living in Romania had perhaps diverted some attention away from the Jewish question at this point. Romania had, for some years, been having serious disputes with Greece over the situation of Romanian relatives, the Vlachs[7], who lived dispersed within Macedonia, which was still under the Ottoman administration. The relations between Greece and Romania were officially ruptured from 1905 to 1911.[8]

Romania sought British support on the matter of Vlachs on a number of occasions, for instance in early 1903, autumn 1904, and autumn 1905. The Romanian government accused the Greeks of atrocities in Macedonia.[9] The

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4 FO 104/170, Hubert Llewellyn Smith (Board of Trade) to FO senior clerk Algernon Law, 25 Oct. 1905.

5 FO 104/170/40 commercial, Trotter to Lansdowne, 3 Sept. 1905.

6 *JC* leader, 4 May 1906.

7 The number of different nationalities in Macedonia was very hard to estimate, but the number of Vlachs was likely to be somewhere in the region of 200,000. Barker 1980, 12.

8 FO 371/1464/2836, British Minister in Bucharest Walter Townley to Grey, 4 Jan. 1912, annual report of 1911. There were two main reasons for the Greek-Romanian breach. Firstly, Romania blamed Greece for the killings of Vlachs that took place in Macedonia. The culprits were irregular bands who were allegedly led by Greek officers and sponsored by the Greek government. The other complaint was about the right of the Vlachs to use Romanian language in schools and churches, and the position of the Vlach community in general. FO 371/117/8589, British Minister in Bucharest William Conyngham Greene to Grey, 3 March 1906.

9 FO 104/158, Romanian Minister in London Alexandre Catargi to Lansdowne, 12 Feb. 1903, enclosure: Brătianu to Catargi, 17 Jan. 1903.

British government, as well as making hazy allusions to a fair settlement of Macedonian problems, did not fail to link the subject to the Romanian Jewish question. Sir Thomas Sanderson, at the Foreign Office, wished to inform the Romanians that as long as they failed to fulfil their obligations on Jewish emancipation, they were 'hardly entitled to appeal' to the British government on behalf of their relatives in Macedonia.[10] Lansdowne, however, was more careful:

> 'The remark as to the Roumanian Jews should not be made too pointedly.'[11]

There was another connection between the Greek and the Jewish questions. In Romania, public feeling against Greeks was strong, occasionally resulting in riots and violence. At the height of the dispute, after the break-up in relations with Greece, Romania passed a law enabling the government to increase taxes on persons who were subjects of countries that were not bound with Romania by conventions. This discriminatory law was directly aimed at Greek subjects; the commercial treaty between the two countries ended in July 1906 and the promulgation of the law coincided with it.[12] Comparison to the peculiar wording of anti-Jewish legislation is interesting, although the phraseology in this piece of legislation was not identical to the anti-Jewish laws. The Jewish community in Britain noticed the anti-Greek feeling in Romania and observed that Jews were being left temporarily in peace while the attention was diverted away from them[13]. The British minister in Bucharest, Conyngham Greene, on the other hand, believed that Greeks, although not well liked in Romania, were still preferred to Jews.[14]

Some background on the agrarian situation in Romania is necessary to fully understand the factors behind the Peasant Revolt of 1907 and the role that Jewish aspects played. These matters were later widely discussed in the foreign press, within Western Jewish organisations, and in diplomatic correspondence. References to the agrarian situation had been made in a number of Foreign Office dispatches during the years preceding the revolt. This was not surprising as Romania was one of the largest grain exporters in the world, and the agrarian conditions in the country were therefore a major economic matter. However, the British diplomats had not attempted to analyse the problems that had developed between the peasantry and the Jewish *arendaşi*, as well as other Jewish entrepreneurs, in the Romanian countryside. As for the British Jewry, they did not really bother with agrarian considerations as such, but they were very interested in all expressions of anti-Semitism in Romania, many of which occurred in rural areas.

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10 FO 104/158, minute by Sanderson, 10 March 1903.

11 FO 104/158, minute by Lansdowne, 10 March or after; FO 104/160/49, Kennedy to Lansdowne, 18 Oct. 1904; FO 104/164, minute by Sanderson, 13 Sept. 1905

12 FO 371/118/20612, Greene to Grey, 10 June 1906; FO 371/118/23530, Chargé D'affaires Dayrell Crackanthorpe to Grey, 7 July 1906.

13 *AJA Annual Report 1905-1906*, 17-18.

14 FO 371/117/8589, Greene to Grey, 3 March 1906.

The main Romanian export article was grain. The peasantry had been legally freed in 1864 but remained in a subordinate position. Peasant plots were of inadequate size and the peasants were therefore compelled to seek additional land, especially when the plots were further diminishing due to the rapidly increasing population. For this reason, the peasants leased land from big landowners. In exchange for the land, the peasant performed labour services and surrendered part of his product or paid money to the landowner. Labour service resulted in a system where the large estates were ploughed by the peasants with their own backward methods. In addition to the unfavourable structure of land ownership, the peasantry suffered from high taxes and military service.[15]

When the landowners were away, usually in Bucharest but also in the large European cities, they leased their estates to *arendaşi*[16], professional estate managers, at a fixed price, for a period of under five years (longer rental periods were forbidden). It was then the duty of the *arendaş* to make the annual sub-leasing contracts with the peasants, and it was his right to collect the peasant dues.[17]

The *arendaşi* were often Jewish. In 1907, 62% of Moldavian estates were rented to *arendaşi*, 44% of these to native Romanians, 43% to Jews and 13% to foreign Christians. In 1900, 72% of the estates (with property over 5,000 hectares) in the whole country were rented out, of which 27% were to Jews. As shown above, Christian *arendaşi* constituted the majority, but the larger the estate, the greater the probability that the *arendaş* was a Jew.[18] Since Jews, as foreigners, were not permitted to own land in Romania, they had no interest in the long-term development of the estates; they could not expect to buy the land or even stay long as *arendaşi*.

Nicolas Spulber argues that Jews who engaged one way or another in commercial activities were 'the active agents of deep and substantial economic changes in the countryside'. Land contracting was not only about acting as a substitute for absentee landlords, but it was also a very profitable business. However, there were basically two kinds of Jews engaged in agricultural business: rich investors and poorer sub-contractors. The latter acted as agricultural intermediaries on behalf of affluent businessmen, or were small traders, artisans or tavern-keepers. The role of the Jewish middle and lower middle classes in the villages was many-sided. They exchanged the by-products of the estate, such as alcohol, for peasant produce, such as grain, which they collected for the markets. They also introduced new tastes and products to the

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15 For the conditions in the countryside, Philip Eidelberg's study (1974) about the revolt gives substantial background. All general works on the revolt tend to include good accounts on the agrarian situation; see, for example, Scheerer 1974; Hurezeanu & Iosa 1991a.

16 *Arendaş* (singular), *arendaşi* (plural) is Romanian for renter, leaseholder. The Romanian term is convenient and it is widely used in many English-language studies.

17 Chirot 1976, 144; Hurezeanu & Ioşa 1991a, 21.

18 Georgescu 1992, 144; Roberts 1969, 14-15.

peasants. When the peasants fell into debt after the abolition of serfdom, widespread usury developed in the villages, encouraged by Jewish moneylenders who in many cases were only middlemen between the peasants and big (Jewish) moneylenders.[19]

The power of the Jewish *arendaşi* was greatest in Northern Moldavia. They sometimes attempted and succeeded in forming large land trusts there. Some of the Northern Moldavian *arendaşi* were not, in fact, Jews residing in Romania, but Austrian Jews from Bucovina who wanted to benefit from the lucrative agricultural business. The fierce competition of the Jewish *arendaşi* resulted in very high rents in Northern Moldavia.[20]

The Fischer trust had 159,399 hectares of arable land in its possession and the Juster trust had 30,152 hectares just before the outbreak of the revolt.[21] Both families were Jewish, originating from Austria and backed by Austrian banks. This aspect sometimes led to Romanian accusations of foreign capitalist domination. The accusations were used against foreign — mainly Jewish — *arendaşi*. It was true that the Fischer Trust had very substantial foreign financial backing behind them and they also leased land in Wallachia: over 20,000 hectares in that province. On the other hand, it should be noted that vast Romanian land trusts also existed.[22]

Peasant anti-Semitism undoubtedly can be counted as one of the reasons for the 1907 revolt, but was the Romanian peasant anti-Semitism instigated by the Romanian elite, as many historians and contemporaries have argued? There has been disagreement over who the actual initiators of Romanian anti-Semitic feeling were: did the Romanian leaders or the peasant masses have more input in the development of anti-Semitism? It should be pointed out that from both the government and the peasant viewpoint, the Jew acted as a handy scapegoat. Frederick Kellogg has argued that Jews functioned as a safety valve to relieve social tensions in Romania.[23] This way, the government was able to direct the attention of the peasantry to something other than its own ineptitude, and the peasants had an easily recognisable object on which to direct their anger.

Stephen Fischer-Galati emphasises the actual conditions in the countryside as a factor generating anti-Semitism. He maintains that the typical Jewish occupations had, for generations, led to bitterness among the peasantry, although he admits that nationalist intellectuals and the government readily exploited the image of the Jews as the enemy of the common people. The Jews

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19 Spulber 1966, 102, 104.

20 Eidelberg 1974, 37-39. Eidelberg's attitude towards the Jewish *arendaşi* seems to be quite negative. He emphasises that they were Austrian speculators.

21 Bar-Avi 1966, 81-84; Hurezeanu & Iosa 1991a, 22; Scheerer 1974, 25, 32. The Fischer brothers and their sons were called Marcu (or Mochi), Hermann, Froim, Schoil, Avram, Calman and Leon. The Justers were called Leon, Heinrich, Hermann and Marcu. The large number of individuals and different versions of the first names sometimes caused confusion.

22 Wood 1983, 161-162. In his detailed study on the agrarian conditions in Wallachia, Wood uses the term 'leaseholders'.

23 Kellogg 1995, 53.

were seen as oppressors and popular anti-Semitism was therefore a natural consequence.[24]

As an example of the opposite interpretation, however, I. C. Butnaru argues that the Romanian government spread anti-Semitic propaganda and provoked the masses to take part in occasional 'spontaneous' pogroms. Romanian leaders tried to turn attention away from the real economic and social problems, to which they could not find solutions.[25] Meyer Weinberg argues that, based on his comparisons of anti-Semitism in twelve countries, including Romania, anti-Semitism was mostly 'cultivated' by governments and dominant social groups, and therefore originated in the upper echelons of the society and was manipulated by the elite for their own advantage.[26]

As for contemporary opinion, the Jews in Britain were inclined to believe that the peasantry was actually friendly towards Jews and that anti-Semitism was an artificial product of government propaganda or private agitators.[27] Rabbi Moses Gaster, of Romanian Jewish descent, explained that the Romanian Jews had a deep affection for the peasantry and that the Romanian government was to blame. He stressed the peasants' friendly attitude towards Jews. The government manipulated the peasants so that they were persuaded to see Jews as responsible for peasant misery. The anti-Jewish policy of the government was dependent on the sub-ordinate position of the peasants. The small native Romanian middle-class supported anti-Semitic measures enthusiastically.[28]

Along Gaster's lines, the Anglo-Jewish Association had no hesitation in arguing where the blame for the anti-Semitic spirit in 1914 should be placed:

> 'The persecution directed in Roumania against the Jews is consequently the act of the Government and the authorities, and not that of the population, which, except for a handful of politicians and agitators, whether towns or rural districts are concerned, is rather favourable to them than otherwise.'[29]

It is, however, reasonable to assume that the question was not this simple. The conditions varied between different regions of Romania, and, in the areas of the heaviest Jewish presence in Northern Moldavia, the popular sentiments cannot have been similar to those of, say, the Western parts of Oltenia in Wallachia. Even if anti-Semitism is chiefly perceived as originating in the upper classes, there is no question that peasant anti-Semitism existed in at least some Moldavian areas;[30]and it was precisely in Northern Moldavia that the Peasant Revolt broke out.

Political and ideological discussion about the peasant question, not only on the Jewish aspects but also on the general rural conditions, had intensified in

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24 Fischer-Galati 1974, 158-159.

25 Butnaru 1992, 1-2, 22.

26 Weinberg 1986, 245.

27 *JC* leader, 1 Oct. 1909.

28 *JC*, 5 April 1907; *The Morning Post*, 2 April 1907.

29 *AJA Annual Report 1913-1914*, 15.

30 Constantiniu 1997, 247.

Romania in the years before the revolt. This agitation can be counted as a short-term factor in the revolt. A political faction, the populists, advocated the regulation of agricultural contracts and the distribution of land to the peasants. There was also some anti-Jewish, or anti-*arendaşi*, agitation in the countryside prior to the revolt. Some of this was the work of the Liberal Party, which was in opposition at the time, and some was arranged by the populists. Anti-Semitic agitators travelled around Moldavia and leaflets containing anti-Jewish material were circulated. The activities were concentrated in the Botoşani district, which was the region with the most powerful Jewish *arendaşi*.[31]

One interesting element of the pre-revolt agitation was the student movement. The students of the University of Iaşi were particularly active, led by their professor, a well known anti-Semite, A.C. Cuza. Another nationalist professor, Nicolae Iorga of Bucharest, contributed to the debate on the peasant question also from an anti-Jewish viewpoint.[32] Student antics caused anxiety among the British Jewry, who were worried about the Romanian situation during the months preceding the revolt. The *Jewish Chronicle* reported on many occasions in late 1906 and early 1907 that anti-Semitic agitation was taking place in Romania. The paper blamed the Liberals for stirring up disturbances for political purposes, in other words to bring down the Conservative government. The actual perpetrators were students who caused street violence and small-scale anti-Jewish riots.[33]

The situation was so serious that, in Britain, the Conjoint Committee even considered representations on behalf of Romanian Jews in January 1907. Rabbi Moses Gaster, however, argued that any intervention would only strengthen the Liberal opposition and weaken the Conservative government that was not particularly hostile towards Jews. It was decided in the Conjoint that no action was needed.[34] Despite somewhat disturbing news from Romania in early 1907, nothing as dangerous as the Peasant Revolt was anticipated in Anglo-Jewish circles. If British Jews suspected anything sinister at this stage, the threat would have certainly been expected to come from the students or other intellectual agitators, not from the peasants.

6.2 The Peasant Revolt — responses and evaluations

The revolt began on 8 / 21 February in the commune of Flămînzi, in the Botoşani district, on the huge estate of a nobleman named D.M.Sturdza[35]. The estate comprised of over 16,000 hectares of arable land with additional forests

31 Bernstein 1918, 73-74; Eidelberg 1974, 205 onwards. Bernstein accuses the Romanian government for organising agitation.

32 Scheerer 1974, 33-34.

33 See, for example, *JC*, 4 Jan. 1907.

34 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 21 Jan. 1907.

35 Not to be confused with the Liberal politician Dimitrie A. Sturdza who was a more visible figure in Romania.

and pasture. Prince Sturdza had leased his lands to the Fischer trust after a competitive tender in summer 1906 between the Fischers, the Justers, and the local Popular Bank. The events leading to the tenancy agreement between Sturdza and the Fischers played a critical role in the background of the revolt. The peasant-owned bank withdrew from the negotiations and promised to back the Fischers, who, in turn, promised easy terms for the peasant leasing contracts. When the Fischers did not keep their promises, the revolt broke out.[36]

At first, in February, the disturbances concentrated on Northern Moldavia, but later, in early March, spread to the whole of Moldavia. The peasants demanded more favourable agricultural contracts and the right to rent land through co-operative organisations. They did not demand anything very radical and certainly did not want to change the structure of agrarian society. The poorer peasants seem to have been the first to take part in the revolt, but richer peasants also joined, as did the village middle class such as priests and teachers.[37]

In February, the peasants were not very violent. They demonstrated, rioted, plundered property, and drove the Jewish *arendaşi* out of their homes. The attacks were predominantly directed towards Jewish property.[38] However, when the revolt spread across the country in mid-March, the rebels also embarked on more deadly missions. They attacked Jewish, foreign Christian, and Romanian *arendaşi,* as well as landowners. The Conservative government of Gheorge Grigore Cantacuzino was helpless and was forced to resign on 12 / 25 March. The new Liberal government of Dimitrie A. Sturdza suppressed the revolt with the help of the army, killing between 10,000 and 11,000 peasants.[39] This figure can be found in most of the studies on the revolt, but a wide range of different estimates were given after the revolt, ranging from 400 to 15,000.[40]

The most interesting point though is the number of Jews killed during the revolt, but there is no detailed information on this. This lack of data is remarkable because Western Jewish organisations were always keen to clarify all possible harm that was done to Jews in any country. Now there were stories of violence against Jews and plundering of Jewish property, but no mention of casualties. It appears as if no Jews were killed, or, at least, there was no evidence of it.[41]

In their Annual Report for 1907, the Board of Deputies of British Jews wrote that 45 Jews were killed or wounded during the Revolt.[42] One has to

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36 Eidelberg 1974, 200, 214-215. For a contemporary Romanian interpretation, see *Documente Marea Rascoala*, document 14, Prefect of Botoşani Ilie Vasescu to Romanian government, 18 Feb/3 March 1907. Vasescu blamed Jewish middlemen for exploiting the peasantry. For the first stages of the revolt, see also *Adeverul*, 3/16 March 1907 and 4/17 March 1907.

37 Roberts 1969, 3.

38 Scheerer 1974, 60,65.

39 Eidelberg 1974, 1-2, 226-227.

40 Scheerer 1974, 87.

41 AIU/R/VIC 34, Astruc to AIU, 14 April 1907. See also Schneider 1981, 596.

42 *BDBJ Annual Report 1907*, 58.

wonder what percentage of the group of 'killed and wounded' was actually killed — perhaps none or just a few of them, the rest being injured. For example, *The Times* observed that none of the Moldavian *arendaşi* — the section of the Jewish population most likely to be slain — were killed in the revolt.[43] As the revolt was more violent in Wallachia, but the majority of middlemen in that province were non-Jews, it might also, in this light, be comprehensible that the Jewish population lost no lives. Furthermore, the *Jewish Chronicle* did not write about any casualties, which, for that particular newspaper, would have been strange indeed if there had actually been casualties to report on. The Anglo-Jewish Association did not make any reference to Jewish deaths either in its annual report or in its meetings.

Carol Iancu mentions, when writing about the material losses the Jews encountered during the revolt, that there were 'a certain number of killed and wounded', but he does not give an exact figure nor does he explain the matter.[44] First of all, what was the mysterious 'certain' number? Secondly, one has to wonder again what percentage of the group of 'killed and wounded' was actually killed. Karl Scheerer, in his detailed study on the revolt, concludes that there must have been some who were killed or wounded even at the first, less violent stages, when the revolt was localised in Moldavia. When the rebels plundered the town of Botoşani, four people were killed, but Scheerer does not say if these individuals were Jews.[45] In Wallachia, the peasants killed a number of landowners, *arendaşi,* and officials, but, again, it is not known if any of the fatalities were Jewish.[46] Therefore, Scheerer does not come up with any decisive information on the number of Jews killed during the revolt.

The revolt was probably the most widely discussed Romanian episode abroad in the years preceding the First World War. Augustin Deac has collected accounts on the revolt that appeared in British newspapers. His collection includes some of those that have been analysed for my study. Deac, however, has a very different approach, attempting to explain the opinions of the British press by Britain's capitalist interest in the stability of the Romanian bourgeois society.[47] Deac is right in assuming that the great interest shown in Britain was at least partially motivated by the fear of revolutionary action and the collapse of the Romanian political system, which, after all, had been very stable since the country's independence. Possible negative consequences on grain production and exports also drew much attention.

The *Jewish Chronicle* first carried a story on the revolt on 22 March. The paper attempted to connect Romanian events to the conditions in the

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43 *The Times*, 13 April 1907.

44 Iancu 1978, 231. There is a gross error in the English translation of Iancu's above mentioned book. The original footnote referring to the Jewish sufferings, the footnote number 47, is apparently mistaken for the number of dead and injured: 'There were 27 localities where the Jews suffered particularly and, in certain ones, besides 47 killed or wounded, the losses were considerable.' Iancu 1996a, 150.

45 Scheerer 1974, 77, 151.

46 See, for example, Scheerer 1974, 69, 71.

47 Deac 1967, 200, 212.

neighbouring countries, Russia and Bulgaria, seeing visions of an Eastern European anti-Semitic wave. The *Jewish Chronicle* did not give a proper account of the events and developments during the revolt nor did it later discuss the character of the revolt extensively. It appears as though the *Jewish Chronicle* trusted its readers to obtain the basic information from other British newspapers. Moreover, discussion about the revolt died out very soon afterwards.

The *Jewish Chronicle* did not consider the peasantry to be guilty for the atrocities. The same position was later adopted by the Anglo-Jewish Association in its annual report.[48] The blame was placed firmly on the agitators who included the Liberal Party, anti-Semitic organisations, teachers, clergy, and local administration. The *Jewish Chronicle* seemed to play down the significance of the Jewish land trusts and argued that the Liberals had turned the rural population against the Fischer trust.[49] The peasants were innocent in the same way as they had been free of anti-Semitism prior to the revolt:

> 'Today, it is the ignorant, easily led peasantry who have broken out into riot...This is the first time the masses of the Roumanian peasantry have been successfully stirred up against the Jewish population. Maddened with misfortune and injustice, they have been induced by agitators to vent their anger on the Jews.'[50]

The Times, unlike the *Jewish Chronicle*, shortly set about analysing the causes of the agrarian disturbances. The revolt was perceived as deriving from agrarian conditions with no anti-Semitic character. It was only a coincidence that the majority of 'farmers' (which meant *arendaşi*, but gave the wrong impression here as not distinguished from owner-farmers) and shopkeepers in Moldavia were Jews.[51] Soon, however, *The Times* correspondent explained that the revolt had, in fact, been directed against Jews in the beginning and had assumed a general agrarian nature against all landowners and *arendaşi* later.[52] The *Morning Post* agreed: the revolt had at first taken on a superficially anti-Semitic character because of the presence of the Jewish *arendaşi* in Moldavia.[53]

The oppressive Jewish land trust practices were emphasised as an immediate cause for the revolt in the British mainstream press.[54] These particularly unpleasant *arendaşi* were mostly 'German Jews like the notorious Moki [sic] Fischer and Juster'.[55] After the situation had calmed down, *The Times* accused some Moldavian Jewish middlemen of still having 'an obstinate attitude', which made the return to normal agricultural work more difficult.[56]

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48 *AJA Annual Report 1906-1907*, 12-13.

49 *JC*, 22 March 1907.

50 *JC* leader, 22 March 1907.

51 *The Times*, 23 March 1907.

52 *The Times*, 25 March 1907.

53 *The Morning Post*, 4 April 1907.

54 *The Morning Post*, 4 April 1907; *The Times*, 16 April 1907.

55 *The Times*, 13 April 1907.

56 *The Time* , 12 April 1907.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Conjoint Committee had already discussed the possibilities of taking action and asking help from the Foreign Office prior to the revolt. The reason for these plans had been anti-Semitic agitation in Romania, but the Conjoint had decided not to act.[57] The circumstances changed quickly. The new problems Romanian Jews were facing because of the Peasant Revolt were quickly brought to the attention of the Foreign Office. The British Jews had received, through Vienna, news of attacks against Moldavian Jews. On March 20, they described the Moldavian occurrences in a letter to the Foreign Office and asked in their usual manner for the British government to make representations to Romania.[58] Following this appeal, Foreign Secretary Edward Grey asked the Minister in Bucharest, Sir William Conyngham Greene, to find out if the allegations made by the Conjoint Committee were true, and, if they were, to point out to the Romanian government in an unofficial manner that incidents like these created a 'deplorable effect' abroad.[59]

The wording of this Foreign Office dispatch from Grey to Greene resembled those sent to the British diplomats in Russia at the times of Jewish disturbances there. The British attitude to the 1905 pogroms in Russia, as analysed in an article by Eliyahu Feldman, can be compared to the British view on the Romanian Jewish question, especially during and after the Peasant Revolt.

According to Feldman, the situation of Jews both in Romania and Russia was a factor affecting British foreign policy. Diplomatic representatives in Russia and Romania reported extensively on Jewish issues and, that way, kept their superiors in the Foreign Office well informed. In the case of both countries, Jewish organisations and individuals, as well as some non-Jews, tried to pressure the British government to intervene on behalf of the Jews. Feldman finds several factors that determined the Foreign Office perspective towards the Russian pogroms. Humanitarian considerations and Anglo-Jewish pressure were among them, but the personal views of the senior officials and the general direction of foreign policy towards Russia were also significant. Feldman holds the latter two factors, rather than the Anglo-Jewish machinations, to be the most decisive.[60]

Feldman draws attention to the anti-Jewish ideas circulating among the English upper class, especially in the Foreign Office. Some diplomats who were accredited to Russia adopted the views held by the Russian elite and repeated them in their dispatches. One example of the similar treatment of the Russian and Romanian Jewish matters can be drawn from the language used by the Russians when they maintained that discriminatory legislation was due to self-defence against Jewish dominance. The British diplomats echoed the Russian arguments by stating that the Jews were shrewder than the Russians and that

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57 *JC*, 18 Jan 1907, meeting of AJA; *JC* leader, 8 Feb 1907.

58 FO 371/317/9195, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 20 March 1907.

59 FO 371/317/9195, Grey to Greene, 22 March 1907.

60 Feldman 1987, 579-580.

their superior qualities made it impossible for the Russians to compete.[61] These were exactly the same arguments as were often heard in the Romanian case.

Another similarity can be seen in the appeals of the Jewish leaders to the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office, although it did not totally ignore them, rejected these appeals and replied that Britain could not interfere in a Russian internal question. The Foreign Office did not use the 'internal affairs' excuse with Romania, but the Romanians themselves opposed any intervention on this ground. The British government also maintained, in the Russian case, that any interference would actually be damaging to Russian Jews or that representations would, in any case, be ineffective. These were two arguments that were often heard also in the context of Romanian Jews. Britain wished to be on friendly terms with Russia and therefore did not want to do anything that might irritate the Russians. Hence, Great Power policy played a major role.[62]

But did the change of government in Britain, which had happened after the Russian atrocities in 1903-1906, before the Romanian Peasant Revolt, make a difference? On the alliance front, the British agreement with Russia was not completed until August 1907. It is noteworthy that the Liberal Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith governments, with Grey as Foreign Secretary, were perceived as less friendly to the Jewish cause than the previous Conservative Salisbury and Balfour regimes. It was the Asquith government that became associated with the pro-Russian position and that overlooked the Russian atrocities for the sake of the Great Power agreements.

These developments were apparent in the British position towards Romania as well. When the first decade of the twentieth century was nearing its end, Great Britain eventually began to link its Romanian policy with the general political situation in the Balkans, and with the relations between itself and other European Powers. When discussing the Jewish question in Romania, several references to the flammable situation elsewhere in the Balkans were made. Britain did not want to irritate or alienate the Romanians, because of the political considerations in the Balkan area. Based on the information in reports and dispatches, the Foreign Office started to take the Romanian military position much more into consideration than before. Wider political considerations could not remain detached from the British attitude to the Jewish issue or from the question of possible intervention on behalf of the Jews.

The Peasant Revolt took the British Foreign Office by surprise. Although there were not many Foreign Office minutes on the Revolt, let alone any detailed analysis, the situation was thought to be grave indeed. Richard P. Maxwell remarked in an internal memorandum:

> 'This is a very serious state of affairs which may lead to complications in the Near East.'[63]

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61 Feldman 1987, 587, 595-597.

62 Feldman 1987, 601, 606-607.

63 FO 371/317/10156, minute by Maxwell, 30 March 1907 or after.

After sending a number of short telegrams on the events of the revolt, the British minister in Bucharest, William Conyngham Greene, attempted to make sense of the revolt and to analyse its causes on 24 March 1907:

> 'The peasant rising is not directed especially against the Jews, nor is it in any way connected with religion; but there has certainly been great destruction of Jewish property. The movement is aimed at the whole class of land-owners, and is the outcome of the faulty land system of Roumania. It is particularly directed against the Land Trusts, by which large tracts of land have been acquired and rented to the peasants at exorbitant rents. The Jews hold the more important of these Trusts, and hence the present anti-Semitic agitation.'[64]

The next day, he added that the Wallachian incidents proved that the revolt was not fundamentally anti-Jewish, since there were hardly any Jews, let alone Jewish *arendaşi*, in Wallachia. Greene called the revolt 'socialist and revolutionary'.[65] He misjudged the character of the revolt, however, as it certainly was not socialist or even very revolutionary, but was rather moderate in its aims. In early April, Greene reconsidered and elaborated on his opinion of the rebellion. He correctly gave the long-term agrarian conditions, as well as agitation and propaganda, as main causes for the revolt — there was no longer mention of socialism. Concerning the role of the Jews, he explained that the Romanians hated the Jews for economic reasons; the Jews were more intelligent than the Romanians and had captured the trades, commerce, and land trusts.[66] At the beginning of April, the Romanian Minister in London, Alexandre Catargi, visited the Foreign Office in order to reassure the British government that the situation in Romania was peaceful and the Jews had not suffered during the revolt — 'no Romanian Jew had had a single hair of his head injured'.[67] These explanations were not taken seriously in the Foreign Office.[68]

The British view on the revolt, as exemplified by Greene and, for instance, *The Times*, appears to have been the generally accepted Western European portrayal of the events. To compare, the Italian minister, Carlo Emanuele Beccaria-Incisa, explained that troublemakers, students, anti-Semites, socialists, and Russian-influenced revolutionaries were to blame for the Peasant Revolt. Beccaria-Incisa observed that, although the revolt was occasionally directed against the Jews and although the mighty land trusts had contributed to this, it mainly derived from general agrarian reasons.[69]

After the revolt, the Jewish organisations all over Western Europe began to collect money for relief work among the Romanian Jews who had suffered during the disturbances. The Anglo-Jewish leaders closely co-operated with their continental counterparts and keenly expressed their opinions on how the

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64 FO 371/317/9544, Greene to Grey, 24 March 1907.

65 FO 371/317/9770, Greene to Grey, 25 March 1907.

66 FO 371/317/11113, Greene to Grey, 3 April 1907.

67 FO 371/317/10684, minute by Assistant Under Secretary Eldon Gorst, 3 April 1907.

68 Grey even remarked on Catargi's visit: 'I am glad that I was away'. FO 371/317/10684, minute by Grey, 3 April 1907.

69 Di Iorio 1979, 130-131.

relief work should be organised.[70] Homelessness and extensive damage to property seemed to be the main problems that needed to be addressed in the relief work. Rabbi Moses Gaster claimed that over 50,000 Jews had become homeless.[71] According to Karl Scheerer's study on the revolt, 10,000 Jews had become homeless and 2,000 had escaped to Austrian Bucovina.[72]

Donations were needed for the relief operations. The Conjoint Committee handled the British section of the donations and published an appeal in the *Jewish Chronicle* describing the losses and damages that had occurred: houses and shops had been burned and sacked, family breadwinners disabled, businesses ruined, and savings gone. An additional dilemma was the congestion in Moldavian towns where the rural Jewish population had fled to. Public response, however, to the plea for donations was less than enthusiastic. The Conjoint wondered if this was due to the fact that the Peasant Revolt had not been an extreme, Russian-style pogrom.[73] It was perhaps true that the Jewish public had some difficulty to respond to the Romanian appeal when everyone had recently been horrified by the Russian pogroms, of which the *Jewish Chronicle* had printed endless accounts from 1903 onwards, sometimes with distressing photographs of dead bodies, attached to graphic reports.

The leaders of the British Jewry passed elaborate accounts on to the Foreign Office of the plight that Romanian Jews had to endure during the Peasant Revolt. A typical pattern of anti-Semitic occurrences in Moldavia during the revolt emerged from the list of examples. Peasant mobs attacked the houses of the Jewish *arendaşi*, who usually managed to escape unhurt — one even shot a Romanian attacker. These attacks caused panic in the Jewish communities in the villages and caused the Jews flee to Moldavian towns or across the border into Bucovina.[74] The detailed narrative, presented to the Foreign Office by Alfred de Rothschild, seems reasonably truthful, although the events were given an ominous character and were dramatised shamelessly. Generally, the worst sufferers were poorer Jews without resources to protect their small possessions from peasant plundering. Powerful *arendaşi* usually escaped safely to Bucovina.[75]

The Hebrew Rumanian Association in London held a meeting, in the beginning of April, in order to discuss the subject of the Romanian Peasant Revolt. The association had been set up in 1901. It was mainly involved in assisting Romanian Jewish immigrants in Britain, but also strove to influence

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70 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/99/2, Alexander and Montefiore to Paul Nathan (Germany), 2 May 1907. Alliance Israélite Universelle coordinated the international diplomatic campaign in spring 1907.

71 *The New York Times*, 7 April 1907.

72 Scheerer 1974, 30. For the flight of the Jews during and after the revolt, see also Bar-Avi 1966, 41-50.

73 BDBJ 3121/C11/1, Conjoint meeting, 22 May 1907; *JC*, 31 May 1907, Alexander and Montefiore to the Editor.

74 FO 371/317/9374, Alfred de Rothschild to Hardinge, 22 March 1907. This was not an official Conjoint letter, although Rothschild's action was approved by the Conjoint. See also *JC*, 22 March 1907 for similar accounts.

75 FO 371/317/22718, Emanuel to Grey, 8 July 1907.

public opinion on behalf of Romanian Jews and aimed at the fulfilment of the Berlin Treaty provisions concerning minority rights. In the meeting of April 1907, Rabbi Moses Gaster presented a review of the conditions in Romania and made some interesting remarks about the Peasant Revolt. According to Gaster, in the light of the violent occurrences 'in Wallachia, where no Jew had set foot for centuries', the revolt was not an anti-Semitic riot. Gaster argued that the Romanian Jews had a deep affection for the peasantry, who, 'as recent events had shown, had no wish to harm the Jews' — a most peculiar interpretation after large-scale peasant disturbances.[76]

At this point, Gaster also gave an interview to *The New York Times*. He continued to defend the peasants by arguing that they had considered the Jews 'their best friends' some decades earlier, when the Romanian government had expelled a large number of Jews from the villages in the 1880s. As a result of the expulsions, there was 'now not a single Jew in any village of Romania'. As for the number of Jewish *arendaşi* in Moldavia, Gaster claimed that it was 'less than a dozen'. He called attention to the sufferings of the Jews who lived in towns, whose houses and shops had been destroyed:

> '*Every* Jewish home, shop, and institution in all the principal towns of Moldavia has been pillaged and destroyed, and the Jews, whose poverty was proverbial, are now reduced to the verge of starvation.'[77]

Gaster emphasised that Jewish complaints were solely against the Romanian government rather than the peasants. The Liberal Party had agitated public opinion against the Jews in order to end Conservative rule.[78] During the outbreaks of anti-Jewish riots, in the months preceding the revolt, Moses Gaster had believed that the Romanian Conservative government was doing its best to prevent the spread of violence.[79] It appears as if Gaster's anger was directed mainly toward the Liberal party. As for truthfulness, Gaster's views clearly left much to be desired. His comment on Wallachia and the lack of Jewish presence there was bizarre, as were his remarks on the total absence of Jews in Romanian villages and the very small number of Jewish *arendaşi*. Gaster certainly tried to paint a rosy picture of the peasant-Jewish relations in the countryside, maybe in order to be able to blame the Romanian government more fervently.

To the great dismay of the Conjoint Committee, Gaster had some unconventional ideas about the manner in which action on behalf of the Romanian Jews should be organised. He informed his fellow members of the Anglo-Jewish Association that some Romanian Jews residing in England were going to set up a pressure group and start to publish a pamphlet, to be named 'The Darkest Roumania'. It seems to have been a relatively modest effort,

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76 *JC*, 5 April 1907; *The Morning Post*, 2 April 1907. Gaster had expressed similar views in the Conjoint meeting in March, see BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 21 March 1907.

77 *The New York Times*, 7 April 1907. (Emphasis added.)

78 *JC*, 5 April 1907.

79 BDBJ 3121/C11/1, Conjoint meeting, 21 Jan. 1907.

without much visibility within the Anglo-Jewry. The Romanian clique was following the example of an anti-Russian pressure group which published another pamphlet on Jewish misery in Eastern Europe, called 'The Darkest Russia'. Gaster inquired whether the Conjoint Committee would be willing to act together with the Romanian group. According to him, the Romanian Jews did not want the English Jews to meddle in the matter, and, besides, the Romanian group was best qualified to look after the problem.[80]

Gaster's reasoning puzzled Claude Montefiore, the Anglo-Jewish Association leader, who had to admit that he did not understand what Gaster meant. Montefiore argued that delicate matters such as the Romanian diplomatic pressure were best to be left to a small specialist body, namely the Conjoint Committee.[81] Montefiore tried to persuade Gaster not to embark on independent manoeuvres.[82] At the same time, Gaster had another dispute over the Romanian Jewish question with the Romanian consul in London, Alfred Stead. This was not surprising as Stead was an enthusiastic adversary of the anti-Romanian policy pursued by Anglo-Jewish activists.[83]

The Conjoint material was usually confidential, and, although reports of the Conjoint's decisions were communicated to the parent bodies, the Anglo-Jewish Association, and the Board of Deputies, the particulars were normally omitted from press releases. Thus, the *Jewish Chronicle*, for example, was rarely able to print any detailed descriptions of Conjoint matters. Sometimes, though, the newspaper was given correspondence between the Foreign Office and the Conjoint to print. The Board of Deputies, except for the inner circle and the Conjoint members, was also often kept in the dark. If someone asked for information on Board activities on the Romanian (or some other) matter, he was soon put in his place by the Board president David Alexander, explaining that the matter was in the hands of the Conjoint.[84]

All in all, the Romanian Peasant Revolt led to surprisingly few complaints and pleas on the part of the Jews in Britain. There were not many requests for Foreign Office intervention, nor was the Foreign Office itself particularly keen to dwell on the Jewish aspects of the revolt — it preferred to give thought to the general agricultural considerations. It was after the revolt, however, that the British Jews began their campaign on behalf of the Romanian Jews in earnest. Then, the international legal aspects, not at the forefront during the revolt, became more apparent.

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80 *JC*, 12 April 1907, meeting of AJA.

81 *JC*, 12 April 1907, meeting of AJA.

82 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 8 April 1907.

83 *JC*, 19 April 1907, 26 April 1907 and 17 May 1907. See, especially, the letters to the Editor.

84 See, for example, BDBJ 3121/A/15, BDBJ meeting, 26 Nov. 1908.

6.3 Anglo-Jewish diplomacy in the aftermath of the revolt

After the Peasant Revolt, the British Jewish establishment did not abandon the Romanian Jewish cause, but, on the contrary, wished to expand the themes of the Peasant Revolt to broader considerations of the conditions for Romanian Jews. When the subject of diplomatic intervention was raised again, the Foreign Office still was not ready to do anything. It was believed to be the wrong time to intervene. This was, according to Grey himself, due to the recent disturbances, after which Romania had 'just escaped a revolution'.[85] Later in April 1907, Grey wrote:

> 'It is quite true that the present time is most inopportune for approaching the Romanian Government and if we met with no response from other Powers in 1902 we should certainly meet with a refusal from them to take joint action at this moment.'[86]

It is clear from this account that the 1902 events had discouraged the Foreign Office to take action on behalf of Romanian Jews. Indeed, every time an excuse for passivity was needed, the experience of 1902 was a good resource. The British Minister in Bucharest, William Conyngham Greene, was, however, instructed to ask around in the Bucharest diplomatic corps if any other Great Power was interested in protesting to Romania, although the hopes of success were slim.[87]

In Romania, several laws dealing with agriculture were passed in the parliamentary session of 1907-1908. One legal measure directly affected Jewish *arendaşi*. The laws were designed to pacify the peasants and were mainly cosmetic, although some minor improvements in the peasant situation were made. One piece of legislation dealt with the restriction of leasehold agreements, putting a limit on the leased area to 4,000 hectares. This only applied to new agreements and left the old ones unaffected. Moreover, in the standard Romanian manner, the law was not properly enforced.[88] All this meant that the position of the Jewish *arendaşi* did not radically change after the rebellion. The *arendaşi*, however, were not the only Jews experiencing difficulties, and it was the position of the rural Jewish population as a whole that became an issue during the year following the revolt.

The Romanian government began to appease the peasants, which included rigorous administration of residence regulations and expulsion of Jews from Moldavian villages. In April 1907, the Conjoint Committee presented a lengthy account of the Jewish situation in Romania to the Foreign Office, emphasising once again that Romania had not fulfilled the conditions of the Berlin Treaty and that Jews were treated as aliens. Expulsions were now believed to be an extremely significant aspect of the problem. As described

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85 FO 371/317/12279, minute by Grey, probably 17 April 1907.

86 FO 371/317/14244, minute by Grey, probably 30 April 1907.

87 FO 371/317/12279, minute by Assistant Under Secretary Francis A. Campbell, 17 April 1907.

88 Hurezeanu & Ioşa 1991b, 292.

above, a great number of Jews had escaped to towns during the revolt. The Conjoint Committee complained that the Romanian government had ordered expulsions of Jews from the countryside while it should have been assisting the Jews to return to their homes in villages instead. Indeed, some Jews who had fled during the rebellion were not allowed to return. Expulsions went on all over Moldavia, especially in the Botoşani district, where one thousand Jews were driven from their homes. The Conjoint Committee hinted that a wave of emigration might follow.[89] Their vision echoed the warnings that had often been heard during the first years of the century.

However, the Foreign Office did not react to the Conjoint provocation. Moreover, as expected, none of the other foreign representatives in Bucharest supported any international operations. The Alliance Israélite Universelle had made appeals in Berlin and Paris; these were similar to the appeals made by the Jewish community in Britain — the campaign was actually coordinated by the Alliance.[90] Greene, the minister in Bucharest, presented his own views on the subject. He observed that it was natural that international Jewish organisations wished to exert pressure in order to make the Romanian government grant civil and political rights to the Jews in Romania, but, at the same time, it was natural for the Romanians to resist this due to economic reasons. Greene claimed to understand the viewpoints of both sides.[91]

Like his superiors in London, Greene saw the timing as most inappropriate for any intervention. Concerning the expulsions that the Jews in Britain were so anxiously complaining about, both Greene and the Romanian government argued that these were just ordinary executions of the Aliens Law of 1881 and the Licensing Law of 1880 — although what the Licensing Law had to do with expulsions was not clear — and were not a sign of anything especially anti-Jewish.[92] The Romanian Aliens Law of 1881 authorised the government to deport aliens who disturbed peace or threatened state security. It had been passed after the murder of Czar Alexander of Russia, when the Romanian government had feared that radicals and nihilists would arrive from Russia to spread terrorism in Romania. Although the law was originally meant to deal with 'real' foreigners, it was later applied to Jews as well.[93] However, deportations out of the country should be distinguished from expulsions within Romania from one rural commune to another rural commune or to a town.

It was true that there was nothing extraordinary about deportations on the grounds of the Aliens Law. The majority of the recently expelled were accused of socialism, which fitted perfectly in the 'threat to state security' category. The law had been applied to both Jewish and non-Jewish foreigners during the previous decades, and the majority of the non-Jews who were expelled were socialists. For example, between 1894 and 1904, Romania expelled

89 FO 371/317/12279, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 10 April 1907.

90 Schneider 1981, 604.

91 FO 371/317/16361, Greene to Grey, 14 May 1907.

92 FO 371/317/16361, Greene to Grey, 14 May 1907.

93 Iancu 1978, 202.

approximately 6,500 persons, of which fewer than 1,200 were Jews. Apart from socialism, the reason for the deportation of a Jew could be Jewish activism or criticism of the government — this was exactly what had happened to Rabbi Moses Gaster in the 1880s.[94] Expulsions were a part of the normal Romanian policy and could affect both Jews and non-Jews who were suspected of radical ideas or anti-government views.

As could be expected, the Jews of Britain furiously disagreed with Greene on the nature of the Aliens Law. The *Jewish Chronicle* was very disappointed with Greene's attitude, complaining that it was 'out of harmony' with the traditions of the British attitude towards the Romanian Jewish question.[95] The Conjoint Committee claimed that the two laws mentioned in Greene's report were specifically directed against Jews. Another problem the Romanian Jews were encountering in summer and autumn 1907 was the reclassification of small townships as villages. The representatives of the Jews in Britain saw the rearrangement of rural administration as a vehicle for easing the expulsions; when a town was changed into a rural commune, control over Jewish settlement became stricter.[96]

How did the Romanian peasants react to the evictions of Jews? According to the prefect[97] of the Iaşi district, the peasants wanted the Jews to be expelled. However, in most cases the peasants seemed to oppose expulsions. The peasants and the municipal councils expressed their dissatisfaction in several Moldavian regions. Their argument against the expulsions was that the Jews were useful to the community.[98] This peasant attitude was interesting when compared to their anti-Jewish behaviour during the revolt. On the other hand, by 'useful' Jews they probably meant merchants and artisans; it is unlikely that they would have called *arendaşi*, the main object of their hatred during the revolt, 'useful'.

There were some renewed fears of emigration from Romania. The *Jewish Chronicle* ran a series of articles on Romanian Jewish transmigrants in London. Emigration had continued throughout the years at a steady pace, although the numbers involved were smaller than in the first years of the century and the organisation of the movement was better which meant that the emigrants did not cause any special trouble or panic abroad. However, the *Jewish Chronicle* now wanted to give the impression that the phenomenon was fresh and, therefore, a sign of Romania's ruthless policy during and after the Peasant Revolt. This time, the main concern was not the threat of immigration to Britain — these transmigrants were on their way overseas and their tickets were

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94 Iancu 1978, 202-203.

95 *JC* leader, 29 Nov. 1907.

96 FO 371/317/22718, Emanuel to Grey, 8 July 1907.

97 Romania was divided into 32 districts which were headed by prefects. A district was further divided into sub-prefectures. The next administrative unit was a commune, led by a municipal council and a Mayor. The smallest unit was a village. Eidelberg 1974, 16-17.

98 FO 371/511/22162, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 25 June 1908; see also Bernstein 1918, 75-76.

prepaid, which minimised those fears — but the circumstances which had prompted the emigrants to leave Romania.

Approximately 1,000 Romanian Jewish emigrants passed through London in autumn 1907[99] and the migration continued in 1908. The emigrants were mainly travelling to Canada, and their expenses were paid by the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA). In London, they were received by the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter, in agreement with the ICA, and they were housed either at the Shelter itself or in local boarding houses. Then they were sent to Montreal, from where they were dispersed to their final destinations. Many of these people had formerly been engaged in agriculture and the rest were artisans. As to the reasons for their decision to emigrate, some of them had lost their possessions in the revolt and some had been expelled from the villages in the aftermath.[100] The families were unusually large and the emigrants in good health, which gave the *Jewish Chronicle* an opportunity to attack Romania's ill-advised expulsion practices and to demand international action:

> 'Surely, the other Powers have something to say to this anti-social and anti-Christian mania!'[101]

After this, emigration from Romania basically ceased to trouble the British Jews. In 1911, Edmond Sincerus (also known by his real name Elias Schwarzfeld) wrote in the *Jewish Chronicle* that persecution in Romania was not over and emigration still continued, but the numbers involved were smaller due to restrictions in the receiving countries.[102] His agitated tone notwithstanding, Sincerus was partially correct: the British Aliens Act of 1905, for example, decreased emigration simply through forming a mental barrier in the minds of the Eastern European Jewry by making it clear that Britain did not welcome everybody indiscriminately. Although the number of Romanian immigrants to Britain dropped after 1905, the case with transmigrants was different. Transmigration continued and several thousands of Romanian Jews travelled via Britain from 1905 to 1914.[103]

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99 For the Romanian Jewish emigration in 1907, see Bar-Avi 1966, 56-62.

100 *JC*, 27 Sept. 1907, 18 Oct. 1907 and 13 March 1908.

101 *JC* leader, 18 Oct. 1907.

102 *JC*, 3 April 1911, Edmond Sincerus to the Editor.

103 *Aliens Act Annual Report 1908*, 34-35; *Aliens Act Annual Report 1909*, 34-35; *Aliens Act Annual Report 1910*, 65-66; *Aliens Act Annual Report 1911*, 59-60; *Aliens Act Annual Report 1912*, 56-58; *Aliens Act Annual Report 1913*, 52-54. Romanians, Serbians, Bulgarians, and Montenegrins were grouped together in the Aliens Act statistical tables. Of these nationalities, the Romanians were most probably the largest group. The number of Romanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Montenegrin immigrants arriving in Britain during 1908-1913 was 1,016, and the number of transmigrants was 9,807. These numbers were very small compared to the total number of immigrants and transmigrants. The number of immigrants was rather consistent throughout the years 1908-1913: approximately 20,000 a year. The number of transmigrants fluctuated, however, from 62,000 in 1908 to 154,000 in 1913. These migrants were not, in many cases, East Europeans, let alone Jewish.

7 THE CONJOINT COMMITTEE CAMPAIGN ON BEHALF OF ROMANIAN JEWS, 1908-1909

7.1 A renewed Anglo-Jewish campaign in early 1908

Perhaps the British Foreign Office considered the subject of Romanian Jews closed in summer 1907, but, in spring 1908, the main organisations of British Jews renewed their appeals for intervention. A thorough discussion on the Jewish problem followed. The Foreign Office seemed harassed; the officials tried to argue that the reasons against intervention which were mentioned in 1907 were still valid. The timing was again unsuitable for any protests.[1] However, Romania was not experiencing any special problems this time, and therefore the tentativeness of the British attitude may be fully explained by the explosive situation that was developing in the Balkans.

The discouraging experiences of earlier intervention attempts were well remembered by Charles Hubert Montgomery of the Foreign Office Eastern Department, although the role of the Treaty of Berlin was still referred to:

> 'The Roumanian Government treat the Jews abominably but our position with regard to the question remains the same as it was when Mr Mallet explained it to the Messieurs Alexander and Montefiore on April 30, 1907. We have no more prospect now than we had in 1902 of obtaining the support of the other Powers, Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin in any representation to the Roumanian Government.'[2]

In June 1908, the Conjoint Committee began to press the Foreign Office in earnest on the pretext of the expulsions. The Conjoint leaders were in contact with their informants in Romania, and the Alliance Israélite agent there, Isaac Astruc, forwarded them reports on the situation.[3] All the arguments introduced in the previous year were repeated. An additional issue had begun to cause

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1 FO 371/511/11608, minute by senior clerk Richard P. Maxwell, 6 April 1908.

2 FO 371/511/22162, minute by clerk Charles Hubert Montgomery, probably 30 June 1908.

3 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/97/1, Wolf to Emanuel, 22 July 1908.

displeasure: a new Rural Communes Law had been passed in Romania. It was the latest step in a long series of Romanian laws dealing with the organisation of rural administration.

In the new law, the role of the district prefects in granting certificates to alien residents was strengthened. The Conjoint suspected that this would be harmful to Jews, as prefects were considered to be in 'favour of the anti-Semitic central government', and thus would not grant certificates as freely as the municipal councils had. A list of expelled individuals from the Bacău district revealed that the expelled Jews certainly did not seem like a bunch of troublemakers, although they had been expelled for allegedly disturbing the peace. In the list of approximately 50 names, the majority were merchants by profession. Most of them were middle-aged or older, and all of them had duly performed their military service. The majority were either Romanian-born or had lived in Romania for decades.[4]

On the other hand, the Conjoint Committee did not always trust information that was forwarded to Britain from the continent, although that mistrust was not voluntarily admitted to outsiders, including the British government. At least in May 1908, the Vienna Allianz reports on expulsions were thought to be exaggerated. Most of the alleged Romanian Jewish expellees appeared to be Austrian Jews.[5] A similar case of false rumour had occurred in autumn 1907.[6]

However, the expulsions were not the grounds on which the Conjoint Committee sought foreign intervention in 1908. As usual, the Conjoint demanded intervention on the basis of the Berlin Treaty, and, in addition, referred to humanitarian reasons. The Romanian matter was compared to the cases of Macedonia and Congo. Britain had acted on the grounds of treaty rights in these instances. The Conjoint Committee reminded the Foreign Office of the fact that Romania itself was taking action on behalf of the Vlachs in Macedonia, seeking the protection of the same Treaty of Berlin. The Conjoint ended its appeal with threats of possible Jewish immigration to the United Kingdom, which was not a very convincing argument at this particular stage.[7] International legal considerations were the only plausible line of reasoning that remained.

The Foreign Office did not believe the grim picture painted by the Conjoint. The minister at Bucharest, Greene, claimed that he had not heard anything about out-of-the-ordinary problems; the Jews in Romania had not complained, despite the numerous opportunities they had had to do so when meeting British diplomats on consular business. In Greene's opinion, the piece of rural legislation was not taken seriously by anybody in Romania (a possibility that the British Jews cleverly overlooked). He remarked that the expulsions were confined to the district of Bacău, where the prefect was

4 FO 371/511/22162, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 25 June 1908.

5 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 29 May 1908.

6 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/99/1, Gaster to Emanuel, 16 Oct. 1907.

7 FO 371/511/22162, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 25 June 1908.

personally hostile to the Jews.[8] Indeed, it was precisely this problem district, Bacău, that had been presented in the Conjoint Committee's list of expellees, presumably in order to portray the situation in the worst possible light.

The *Jewish Chronicle* featured accounts of expulsions from time to time throughout 1908 and strongly disapproved of the Romanian authorities:

> 'The Roumanian authorities are suffering from another spasm of persecuting zeal... These unfortunate people [i.e. Jews], at the bidding of a gang of half-civilised tyrants, are to be driven from their homes, ruined, and sent to swell the Jewish populations of the towns.'[9]

Another editorial opinion, in a similar vein, accused the Great Powers of a lack of concern:

> 'The proceedings of the pinchbeck tyrants who rule the destinies of this Balkan state, have come to be acquiesced in by the Powers with a sort of fatalistic resignation.'[10]

The British Chargé D'Affaires in Bucharest, Colville Barclay, was asked by the Foreign Office to gather more information about the latest Rural Communes Law. The previous Rural Communes Law of 1904 had been incorporated into the new one. However, the expulsions from Bacău had nothing to do with the latest law as they had taken place before it came into force. There were some paragraphs referring to Jews in the new law. Firstly, it was stipulated that a foreigner who wished to settle in a rural commune had to obtain a permit from the municipal council, which later had to be approved by the prefect. At the same time, the applicant had to prove, by presenting a document received from the place of his previous residence, that he was of good behaviour, had an income, and had performed military service. These provisions had existed under the previous rural laws. However, the power of prefects was further increased in the 1908 version, and the prefects were given extensive rights to withdraw authorisation in cases where the foreigner had failed one of the above conditions of the residence permit.[11]

The Foreign Office forwarded Barclay's explanation of the Rural Communes Law to the Conjoint Committee. The officials saw fit to hide some comments made by Barclay because they were bound to incite the British Jews further if they heard of them. Barclay had remarked that the new law could be a powerful weapon in the hands of an anti-Jewish prefect, and, if prefects made full use of it, there would be very few Jews left in the Romanian countryside. On the other hand, he admitted that it was hard to assess the full consequences

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8 FO 371/511/22162, minute by Greene, 7 July 1908 and Mallet to Alexander and Montefiore, 14 July 1908.

9 *JC* leader, 10 April 1908. *JC* claimed that 10,000 Jews had been expelled from the villages.

10 *JC*, 25 Sept. 1908, review of the Jewish year 5668.

11 FO 371/511/29315, Chargé D'affaires Colville Barclay to Grey, 19 Aug. 1908. For the previous Rural Law, see *JC*, 3 June 1904 and 21 April 1905.

of the law yet, as it had only been in force for a month.[12] It is understandable that the Foreign Office did not want the Anglo-Jewish leaders to hear that Barclay suspected the Rural Communes Law to be dangerous; this would have made it difficult to explain why Britain did not want to intervene. It is interesting to compare Barclay's opinion of the possible grave consequences to Greene's earlier view that the law was not taken seriously and, as a result, there was no reason to worry.

To conclude, the expulsions of Jews from the Romanian countryside occurred in 1907 and 1908 on three grounds. Firstly, the old Aliens Law of 1881 was applied. Secondly, the new Rural Communes Law was passed, increasing the power of prefects to expel undesirable Jewish residents. The third factor was the transformation of small towns into villages, enabling the usage of rural residence restrictions. The Rural Communes Law of 1908, in short, made Jewish settlement in the countryside more uncertain, but there was no evidence that the prefects actually applied it as arbitrarily as the Jews of Britain and the British representative Colville Barclay feared. All this seems to have been simply a part of normal Romanian Jewish policy, although perhaps just a little more zealous because of the recent disturbances in the countryside.

7.2 The Romanian Jewish question at the time of the Balkan crisis

Despite the lukewarm response received from the Foreign Office in spring and summer 1908, Anglo-Jewish leaders were determined to raise the question of the Romanian Jews again later in the year. A thorough memorandum signed by all the most eminent leaders of the Jewish community in Britain was sent to the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey. This must have been one of the most ambitious attempts of the British Jews to persuade the British government to intervene on behalf of Romanian Jews. These efforts were also significant as they were firmly based on international legal considerations and intervention was sought on the basis of the Treaty of Berlin. In 1908, the Romanian problem was the topic that most occupied the minds of the Conjoint Committee members, and Russia, for example, was set aside.

It was precisely at this stage, in 1908-1909, that the journalist, Lucien Wolf, began to play a significant role within the Conjoint Committee, although he had no formal standing in the organisation. Up to this point, the Conjoint Committee had been run by amateurs. Lucien Wolf provided the Conjoint with professional expertise and an unrivalled knowledge of foreign policy. Under his direction, the Conjoint Committee began to function as a 'shadow foreign office'. Wolf tried to gain tactical victories as he was aware that Jewish

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12 FO 371/511/29315, C. Barclay to Grey, 19 Aug. 1908. Compare to the censored version sent to the Conjoint Committee, in *Correspondence 1919*, document no 4.

emancipation in Romania (and Russia) could not happen at once. A suitable moment to raise the subject was the crisis in the Balkans in 1908.[13]

Wolf's appearance in the Conjoint front-line was not fully advantageous from the Conjoint's viewpoint. Carole Fink has pointed out that Wolf was considered in the Foreign Office as 'a troublesome meddler who invariably received noncommittal assurances designed to propitiate his powerful patrons'.[14] Perhaps this assessment is a little too harsh. For instance, no derisive or particularly negative comments on Wolf can be found in the Foreign Office internal memoranda on Romanian affairs. It was true that the Foreign Office replies to the Conjoint Committee appeals were noncommittal, but they had always been evasive — this had nothing to do with Wolf's role as such. On the other hand, Wolf's strong criticism of Prime Minister Grey and his newspaper articles on foreign policy, mainly on Russia, occasionally annoyed Grey, and this may well have had a negative impact on Wolf's efforts in other matters, such as the Romanian question.

The political situation in the Balkans was tense in 1908. The Macedonian question continued to cause trouble, and, moreover, the Young Turk revolution had taken place in the Ottoman Empire in summer 1908. A major international crisis began in October 1908, when Bulgaria proclaimed independence and Austria annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both of these acts were breaches of the Treaty of Berlin. Britain refused to recognise the changes on the grounds of treaty violation and argued that the Berlin Treaty could not be altered without common consent of the signatories. At this point, in October 1908, plans for an international conference to discuss the Balkan situation began to be promoted by the Russians and the French. Britain, although not very keen, agreed to support the idea, but insisted that a proper conference agenda should be drawn up beforehand.[15]

As for the Romanian position during the Balkan crisis, Romania did not react very strongly to the events of 1908. Romania was in favour of the Young Turk revolution and did not oppose Austria's annexation of Bosnia.[16] The new Prime Minister, Ion I. C. Brătianu, said that the Bosnian annexation did not affect Romania, especially as Romania was not a Balkan state — a point often eagerly made by the Romanians in their willingness to distance themselves from the messy affairs of the Balkan Peninsula. However, the Romanians were anxious to see that no changes in the international Danube administration were made without their consent and participation. They did not want the composition of the Danube Commission to be altered, thereby agreeing with the British government in the preservation of the status quo in the Danube regime.[17]

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13 Levene 1981, 52-54; Levene 1992, 14-17.

14 Fink 2004, 50-51.

15 Bridge 1972, 115-116; Cooper 1964, 267-268.

16 FO 371/724/1266, Greene to Grey, 1 Jan. 1909, annual report of 1908.

17 FO 371/724/1267, Greene to Grey, 6 Jan. 1909 and minute by Hardinge, 11 Jan. 1909 or after.

The European Commission on the Danube had begun its operations in 1858 to ensure that trade ran without difficulty on the Danube. Taxes were collected and revenues were used for agency salaries, upkeep of port facilities, and maintenance of the Sulina branch in the delta. In addition, loans were granted by the member states and, more often, by private banks. The Commission was virtually self-sufficient economically.[18]

In the Berlin Congress, the Commission was given an extra-legal and extra-territorial status. Newly-independent Romania was granted a seat in the Commission, while the Commission had complete independence from Romanian authority in the Danube Delta.[19] Eventually, Romania began to see the Commission as a threat to its national existence and as a symbol of foreign domination. Still, smoothly flowing trade, supervised by the Commission, was an important benefit for the Romanian grain trade, despite the contentious fact that the port revenues were collected by the Commission and not by Romania.[20]

At the time, the British share of foreign trade on the Danube was between 55% and 65%. Therefore, it was Britain that was primarily interested in the maintenance of the Commission and the efficient flow of trade.[21] The relationship between the Danube Commission and the Romanian local authorities was often strained. This was hardly surprising when there was overlapping jurisdiction over the shipping matters.[22] The Commission and Romania were constantly at loggerheads over the authority of the Commission. Complicated cases and quarrels occurred at the port of Sulina, more often from the year 1910 onwards.[23]

The Conjoint Committee was resolved to take simultaneous action with the major Jewish communities abroad. Lucien Wolf was asked by the Conjoint to write a memorandum on the Romanian situation in mid-October 1908.[24] He managed to finish it within a month, and, on 11 November, the Conjoint decided to send it to the Foreign Office — in spite of objections from Moses Gaster who was against the haste.[25] In Wolf's all-embracing memorandum, the Conjoint Committee wished that the 'oppressive disabilities' of Romanian Jews

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18 Frucht 1982, 17-19.

19 *Modern Peace Treaties II*, Treaty of Berlin, 975-997.

20 Frucht 1982, 22-26.

21 FO 368/715/38169, vice-consul in Sulina Alexander Adams to Charge D'affaires John Duncan Gregory, 29 Aug. 1912.

22 FO 368/570/14827, Danube Commissioner Hamilton E. Browne (had formerly held other posts) to Permanent Under Secretary Arthur Nicolson, 14 April 1911. Danube shipping caused much trouble for the British consular service. Their image of the Romanian authorities was less than flattering: 'The Roumanians are almost as stupid and ignorant as the Turks but have not had respect for foreign consuls drilled into them in the same way that the Turks have.' FO 368/570/26795, minute by clerk Edgar G. Lister, probably 10 July 1911.

23 Difficulties for the British shipping sometimes made headlines in the British newspapers. See *Standard* leader, 3 Jan. 1912, for the case of SS Benhead, perhaps the most serious dispute over the legal powers at the port of Sulina.

24 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 13 Oct. 1908.

25 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 11 Nov. 1908.

would be submitted for discussion to the conference of Great Powers. The demand was based on international law, as stipulated at the Convention of Paris, 1858, and the Treaty of Berlin, 1878. The Conjoint Committee pleaded:

> 'Territorial changes and changes in political status of the various territories of South-Eastern Europe are of subsidiary consequence. The Treaty of Berlin is, above all, a great charter of emancipation, especially of civil and religious equality... Today this principle has been loyally complied with by all the States of South-Eastern Europe, with the single exception of Roumania. In that kingdom over 200,000 human beings, languishing in a bondage worse than ever oppressed the Christians of the Ottoman Empire, still invoke the liberating spirit of the Charter of 1878. The Great Powers of Europe assuredly cannot be insensible to this cry at a moment when they are about to consider the revision of this very Charter.'[26]

The document was, above all, a general account of the Jewish situation in Romania, told from a strongly Jewish standpoint. A large part of the memorandum was reserved for long descriptions of the treaties and for examples of Romanian anti-Jewish legislation. The Conjoint took a firm stand against Romania:

> 'The truth is that the Jews are being systematically and intentionally barbarised and impoverished, in order to exclude them from their rights, and, if possible, to get rid of them altogether.'[27]

The timing of the Conjoint's appeal was ostensibly connected with the proposed Balkan conference, but it would have been very surprising if the Jewish matter had been addressed at the conference. The Foreign Office certainly did not want to connect the Romanian Jewish question with the more pending political problems, especially as Romania was not involved in the current Balkan turmoil and nothing that was related to Romania was likely to be discussed at the conference. The Romanian situation could not be compared to other Balkan disagreements in 1908-1909 and the suggestions of including the Jewish problem in the conference were not very realistic.

On the same day that the Conjoint Committee sent its letter to the Foreign Office, a question was put to the House of Commons on the same theme. Stuart Samuel, MP for Whitechapel and a Jew himself, asked whether the Romanian Jewish question would be discussed in the forthcoming conference on the reconsideration of the Treaty of Berlin.[28] Two days later, Lucien Wolf also wrote a private letter to Permanent Under-Secretary Charles Hardinge to elaborate on and emphasise what he wanted from the Foreign Office. His first wish was the submission of the Romanian Jewish question to the conference, but, if this was not possible, he expected the Foreign Office to give the Conjoint Committee a

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26 FO 371/511/41368, Emanuel to Grey, 25 Nov. 1908, enclosure: Conjoint memo.

27 FO 371/511/41368, Emanuel to Grey, 25 Nov. 1908, enclosure: Conjoint memo.

28 *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th series, vol. 197, 391-392, question: Stuart Samuel (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel), answer: McKinnon Wood (Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs), 25 Nov. 1908.

statement on Romania's failure to fulfil its obligations under the Treaty of Berlin.[29]

Referring to the Conjoint memorandum, Hardinge observed:

> 'I think this matter must be handled carefully as the Signatories of the Memorandum represent the principal Jewish associations of this country. While declining to submit the question of the Jews in Roumania to the proposed Conference... we should, I think, endeavour to give a reply which should be at least sympathetic in tone.'[30]

This was fulfilled. The Foreign Office replied that introduction of the Jewish issue in the proposed conference was out of the question. However, the Foreign Office promised to send the Conjoint memorandum to Bucharest and ask William Conyngham Greene if the allegations in the memo were accurate. If so, the Foreign Office said it would have to admit that the hopes of Romanian Jewish emancipation, as expressed at the Congress of Berlin, had not been complied with.[31] This was a relatively sympathetic and co-operative reply.

The *Jewish Chronicle* had begun to write editorials about the Balkan trouble as early as February 1908, when it had pointed out that the situation demonstrated the fragile nature of the prevailing arrangements in the area. If there was to be a change of borders, diplomatic negotiations could be reopened and the Romanian business might be raised again. However, at this stage, there was only a brief reference to Romania and everything was pure speculation.[32] The real attack began only in autumn 1908, in chorus with the Conjoint manoeuvres. In harmony with the Conjoint Committee, the *Jewish Chronicle* strongly emphasised the importance of the Treaty of Berlin in relation to the new developments in the Balkans.

A frequently repeated and interesting argument of the *Jewish Chronicle* was that Romania, with its treatment of Jews, had been the first country to violate the Treaty of Berlin. This had made the treaty look worthless and easy to ignore in the eyes of the other Balkan states. Now the behaviour of Austria and Bulgaria had practically destroyed the treaty, which meant that the only barrier that had stood between the anti-Jewish policy of the Romanian government and the Jews in Romania was breaking down.[33]

The *Jewish Chronicle* was also angry with the Powers, including Britain, and was unable to understand why the Romanian Jewish question could not be tackled at the conference along with other Balkan issues. The newspaper wondered why the Powers condemned other violations of the Berlin Treaty but ignored the Romanian problem. Joint operations of the main European Jewish bodies were suggested as the most efficient way of pressuring the Powers to

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29 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/97/1, Wolf to Hardinge, 27 Nov. 1908.

30 FO 371/511/41368, minute by Hardinge, 25 Nov. 1908

31 FO 371/511/41368, Assistant Under Secretary Walter Langley to the Conjoint Committee, 4 Dec. 1908.

32 *JC* leader, 21 Feb. 1908.

33 *JC* leader, 9 Oct. 1908.

change their minds and agree to introduce the Jewish question on the conference agenda.[34]

When the Romanian government heard about the plans of the Jewish organisations to submit the issue to the conference of the Powers, it became defensive. The Romanians also warned the Foreign Office of Jewish agitation. Alexandre Catargi, the Romanian Minister in London, argued that the Jews were treated in an excellent way in Romania. However, Catargi added that the Romanians would 'never' grant political rights to the Jewish population because it would result in many administrative districts being under Jewish control.[35] Catargi felt that the British people did not realise the seriousness of the Jewish question in Romania. He claimed that any proposal for Jewish political rights would lead to bloodshed and, therefore, no government in Romania would dare to suggest anything of the sort.[36] This was a typically melodramatic statement by Catargi. He was not considered a particularly trustworthy source by the Foreign Office as far as the real state of Jewish affairs in Romania was concerned.

It was argued in the British Jewish circles, for example in the Anglo-Jewish Association's annual report, that the Powers had abandoned the cause of the Romanian Jews and moved away from the Treaty of Berlin. This was alleged to have led to the unfortunate circumstances in which Romania no longer had to fear foreign intervention, or at least intervention based on the provisions of the Berlin Treaty.[37] This complaint referred to the Powers' eventual abandonment of the conference idea, which meant that the changes in the Balkans were being overlooked, and, in a way, that violations of the Berlin Treaty were being sanctioning by the Powers. These arguments were somewhat hot-headed and theatrical, and it has to be noted that very different voices were heard again in 1913-1914, when the Conjoint Committee repeatedly referred to the Berlin Treaty without once implying that the treaty had been nullified during the 1908-1909 upheavals.

In January 1909, William Conyngham Greene wrote a long report on the Jewish situation in Romania and answered the allegations made by the Conjoint Committee. He focused on the contemporary aspects of the question and did not wish to comment on the historical detail. The report was basically a reply to some smallish particulars of the Conjoint memorandum of November 1908, such as the laws on liquor trade and peddling. At a more general level, Greene remarked that Jews were not the sole object of the restrictive legislation since it applied to all foreigners. He admitted, though, that Jews had no home country to appeal to and hence were not protected as other foreigners residing in Romania were.[38]

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34 *JC* leaders, 23 Oct. 1908 and 4 Dec. 1908.

35 FO 371/511/42068, minute by Campbell, 27 Nov. 1908.

36 FO 371/724/3158, minute by Assistant Under Secretary Louis Mallet, probably 25 Jan. 1909.

37 *AJA Annual Report 1909-1910*, 17.

38 FO 371/724/3158, Greene to Grey, 18 Jan. 1909.

Greene thought that the tone of the Conjoint memorandum was exaggerated. Romanian Jews were not deprived of earning their livelihoods; they formed a large proportion of workers and owned many thriving businesses. They could not be more miserable than the majority of the Romanian peasants and they were not persecuted, oppressed, or treated barbarously. Greene concluded:

> 'However unfairly the Jew is handicapped in the matter of his civil and political rights, he still manages to rub along somehow or other, side by side with the Romanian, and even to thrive and multiply at a faster rate than the latter.'[39]

Mark Levene has argued that compared to the 1901 memorandum by Kennedy, Greene's report shows a clear change in the British attitude towards Romania and the Romanian Jews. This was, in Levene's opinion, related to Britain's willingness to please Russia; it meant that intervening on behalf of Jews anywhere became more difficult since the British government had to think about the possible implications for the Russian Jewish situation. There is, however, no proof of this to be found in the Foreign Office documents. In Levene's opinion, the new, less friendly British attitude towards the Romanian Jews could also be attributed to the deteriorating international situation in general — this is a more plausible argument. Levene also mentions briefly the subject of Romanian oil and the possibility that it could be used for fuelling British battleships.[40]

Greene's version of the real situation in Romania was, on occasion, more accurate than that of the Conjoint Committee, as he refused to follow the more alarmist Conjoint arguments. Moreover, even if he had consciously adopted an anti-Jewish position, it did not mean that the Foreign Office as a whole agreed with him. One document cannot be taken as proof of a major policy change. There were many other opinions within the Foreign Office, including those of Colville Barclay, the occasional Chargé D'Affaires in Bucharest, which were more sympathetic to the Jewish viewpoint. The former Minister in Bucharest, Kennedy, had produced a large number of documents on the Jewish question and seemed to be the Foreign Office opinion maker in the matter. His views were generally trusted within the London establishment which rarely wrote down any minutes of their own on the matter. However, if the pre-1906 period, and particularly the years 1900-1902, were characterised by the opinions of one diplomat, the post-1906 years were clearly marked by the diminishing significance of the British representatives' views on the Jewish question. At the same time, the Foreign Office minutes became more elaborate[41] and many officials eagerly expressed their opinions.

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39 FO 371/724/3158, Greene to Grey, 18 Jan. 1909.

40 Levene 1981, 40-41. Unfortunately, Levene's references to the Foreign Office documents concerning Romania in 1907-1909 in FO 371 seem to be inaccurate either by date or by document numbers. He has left some of the references to the Romanian situation out of his subsequent 1992 publication.

41 This was partly due to the reorganisation of the Foreign Office system and filing of documents in 1906.

The subject of Romanian military alliance with Austria and the possibility of any new line of Romanian foreign policy were discussed and speculated on by the British representatives in Romania during the years 1908 and 1909. Alwyn Parker, a junior clerk at the Foreign Office, offered his interpretation on the Romanian role in the Balkans:

> 'Having regard to the important part which Roumania is likely to play in any future crisis in the Near East, when she may be in a position to turn the scales, it seems most undesirable to give her offence and perhaps drive her over to the Austro-German camp.'[42]

Romania had been allied to Austria and Germany since 1883. The Austro-Romanian Treaty was a defensive friendship treaty, simultaneously linking Romania to Germany, which had been an ally of Austria since 1879. The treaty was renewed several times, in 1892, 1896, 1902, and 1913. According to the Treaty, Austria and Romania would not enter into alliances directed against one another. Austria would provide military assistance if Romania was attacked (implying by Russia), but Romania would assist Austria militarily only if Austrian territories bordering Romania were attacked. The agreement was never presented to the Romanian parliament for ratification and its secrecy was well maintained, as only the King and a few party leaders knew about it up until the First World War.[43]

Alwyn Parker's interpretation was therefore inaccurate, as Romania was in the Austrian camp already. This was also known in the Foreign Office, which becomes clear from many other documents. Parker's remark, however, serves as an example of the fact that Great Power politics were very much entwined with the British attitude at this juncture. If they did not dictate the course of British policy on the issue of the Jews in Romania outright, they were at least taken into consideration.

In regards to Romanian oil, it does not seem likely that the oil question was crucial between 1907 and 1909, and, indeed, the Admiralty was not particularly interested in purchasing oil from Romania, although there had been tentative discussions on the matter since 1906, initiated both by the Romanians and by the British diplomats.[44] By 1912, Romanian oil was utilised by the Admiralty through contracts with the Dutch-British company Astra Romana and the German-dominated Steaua Romana. These had been concluded through normal Admiralty tenders. They were business matters with private companies, rather than undertakings with the Romanian government,

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42 FO 371/724/39944, minute by clerk Alwyn Parker, 1 Nov. 1909. Parker could not be considered an expert on Romanian Jews and he did not handle the matter frequently. Schneider mentions this document in his study, but makes a mistake by claiming it was Grey who spoke about 'the Austro-German camp'. Schneider 1981, 625.

43 Dvoichenko-Markov 1968, 47-49.

44 See, for example, FO 371/317/9356, Permanent Secretary of Admiralty Charles I. Thomas to Hardinge, 29 April 1907; FO 368/320/5119, Greene to Grey, 3 Feb. 1909; FO 368/320/14532, Greene to Grey, 14 April 1909.

and the companies supplied oil to other governments as well.[45] The subject of Romanian oil became more acute after the outbreak of the First World War, when the Allied Powers, including Britain, frantically coaxed Romania to sell oil to them and not to the Central Powers.

Great Britain was for many years the largest destination of Romanian oil exports, with nearly 25% of oil exports going to Britain.[46] Investments were at a more disappointing level[47] but increased later: just before the First World War, the share of British capital in the Romanian oil industry was approximately 20% of all foreign capital.[48] Although the British capital in Romanian oil gave the impression of being substantial from the Romanian standpoint, the situation was quite different when viewed from the British perspective. British capital and British trade was much more important to Romania than vice versa. The share of the Balkan countries, including Romania, in total British overseas investment was less than one per cent, although, admittedly, investment in Romanian oil was the largest British capital concentration in the area. The oil imports from Romania, combined with grains, constituted only a little more than 0.5% of British imports.[49] This kind of economic interest, although not to be overlooked, cannot have been of crucial importance for the British government in deciding on its policy towards other Romanian matters, such as the Romanian Jewish question.

In February and March 1909, the Balkan crisis culminated in a near-war situation when the Powers, above all Russia and Austria-Hungary, quarrelled about the compensation Serbia was to receive for the annexation of Bosnia, which was understood to have damaged Serbian interests. Russia supported Serbian aims, but, after Germany expressed its support for Austria, Russia and Serbia had to back down. The crisis was over by April 1909.[50] The Romanian Jewish question was no longer at the fore, and the intensive Conjoint campaign of late 1908 had calmed down. Therefore, the efforts of the Conjoint had centred on the first stages of the Balkan crisis.

At the Foreign Office, Assistant Under-Secretary Louis Mallet, who often handled Romanian Jewish matters, believed that the Conjoint Committee should be sent a reply based on Greene's report but drawn in general terms, which would admit existing disabilities and deny evidence of 'barbarous treatment' of Jews.[51] This was undertaken, but relatively late, in April 1909. The Foreign Office gave a short version of Greene's report as a reply to the Conjoint Committee and also admitted that Romania had not entirely fulfilled the

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45 FO 368/714/16015, Permanent Secretary of Admiralty W. Graham Greene to Nicolson, 15 April 1912; Kent 1993, 42.

46 Funderburk 1982, 433; Pearton 1971, 69.

47 British disinterest in Romanian oil was often noticed by the Romanians, but also by British representatives in Romania. See, for example, FO 368/122/31639, C. Barclay to Grey, 17 Sept. 1907.

48 Pearton 1971, 68; Pearton 1989, 115.

49 Crampton 1981, 19.

50 Bridge 1972, 128-133.

51 FO 371/724/3158, minute by Mallet, probably 25 Jan. 1909.

conditions of the Treaty of Berlin. This was actually a fairly encouraging answer — also interpreted as such by Lucien Wolf himself in 1919.[52] However, the Foreign Office did not see any reason to make diplomatic representations to Romania: no results would be achieved as the other Powers would not join in.[53]

In fact, the statement on the Romanian failure to comply with the Berlin Treaty was exactly what Lucien Wolf had wanted from the Foreign Office. He had voiced his wish privately in December 1908, when he already had, in his opinion, secured a satisfactory reply from the Foreign Office after negotiations with Hardinge and others:

> 'Of course we did not expect that the question would be brought before the Conference, but we have been anxious to get a statement from the Government agreeing that Roumania is still a defaulter in regard to the Treaty of Berlin, and that the Jewish question consequently remains open.'[54]

It was only in autumn 1909 that the Conjoint Committee replied to Mallet's message.[55] This letter was not a very dynamic effort and it was the last in the Conjoint's campaign of 1907-1909 on behalf of Romanian Jews. In autumn 1909, the Foreign Office and the Conjoint Committee had a disagreement over the publishing of the correspondence concerning the Romanian Jewish question. Lucien Wolf wrote on behalf of the Conjoint Committee leaders (or 'the Jew people', as Charles Hubert Montgomery in the Foreign Office tactlessly called the Conjoint[56]) to the Foreign Office to ask permission for the publication of recent correspondence. The Foreign Office, however, dismissed the idea. A number of Foreign Office clerks and under-secretaries argued that the effect of the publication would be negative and would irritate the Romanians.[57] Wolf was tremendously disappointed and angry, and claimed that it had been understood beforehand that the letters would be published. He further remarked that the British Jews could not be expected to consider the feelings of the Romanian government in this matter.[58]

The Jewish leaders insisted that they had to include some information on the correspondence in the annual reports of their associations, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association. They therefore sent a proposal of the text they intended to publish in their reports to the Foreign Office for approval. They wanted to say that Grey had been sympathetic to the

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52 Wolf 1919, 46.

53 FO 371/724/3158, Mallet to Emanuel, 3 April 1909.

54 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/97/1, Wolf to Isidore Spielman, 10 Dec. 1908.

55 FO 371/724/39938, Emanuel to Grey, 29 Oct. 1909.

56 FO 371/724/38981, minute by Montgomery, 15 Oct. 1909.

57 FO 371/724/38981, minutes by Maxwell and Mallet, 16 Oct. 1909. However, this was the same correspondence that, in 1919, was included in a more extensive publication of the Conjoint Committee, the one also referred to in this work. The document collection was compiled for confidential circulation among the members of the Peace Conference and the Jewish delegations who were assembled in Paris. The object of the publication was to illustrate the diplomatic history of the Romanian Jewish question.

58 FO 371/724/3158, Wolf to Montgomery, 24 Oct. 1909.

Jewish cause but the question could not be included in the Balkan conference, which was anyway abandoned in the end. They would also have included a reference to the Foreign Office's refusal to make the correspondence public, and would have inserted a conciliatory remark: the Conjoint Committee had no reason to be dissatisfied with the result of their correspondence with the Foreign Office.[59] This was peculiar, as it seemed that the Conjoint Committee had, on the contrary, every reason to be unhappy with the antics of the Foreign Office; the Foreign Office had not made any representations to Romania and, in addition, had forbidden the publication of correspondence.

The rather carefully formulated suggestion of the text by Lucien Wolf did not satisfy the Foreign Office. Almost every single sentence was objectionable to the Foreign Office. All references to the Balkan crisis were out of the question and the proposed paragraph had to be changed.[60] The outcome of this was, in Lucien Wolf's words, a 'completely eviscerated'[61] statement, which read as follows:

> 'The correspondence which ensued was confidential, and the Conjoint Committee have readily acquiesced in the desire of His Majesty's Government that it should still be withheld from publication. It may, however, be stated that the representations of the Conjoint Committee met with the utmost sympathy at the hands of Sir Edward Grey.'[62]

59 FO 371/724/39944, Wolf to Montgomery, 29 Oct. 1909.

60 FO 371/724/39944, minutes by Maxwell and Mallet, probably 1 Nov. 1909.

61 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/97/1, Wolf to Alexander, 10 Nov. 1909.

62 *BDBJ Annual Report 1908-1909*, 65.

8 THE ROMANIAN JEWISH QUESTION DURING THE BALKAN WARS, 1912-1913

8.1 The Union of Native Jews

In autumn 1911, the *Jewish Chronicle* evaluated the situation of Romanian Jews and found it, as ever, discouraging:

> 'Hardly a ray of light has pierced the thick Roumanian darkness during the year. The Powers, busy with their own quarrels, have no stomach for Jewish appeals, and leave the Roumanian Jews to their fate.'[1]

The pleas of Romanian Jews for emancipation began to be expressed more vocally during the 1910s. Throughout the earlier years, the Romanian Jews had had two main lines of action. The first was to ask for the protection of Western Jewish organisations or individuals. These appeals were very often — when not directed to the Alliance Israélite Universelle in France — addressed to Anglo-Jewish leaders. For example, in May 1867, following the notorious Brătianu circulars and the expulsions of Jews, the Jewish community of Iaşi sent a moving plea to two Anglo-Jewish notables, Sir Moses Montefiore and Sir Francis Goldsmid. In a straightforward manner, the petitioners asked Montefiore and Goldsmid to intervene as they saw fit.[2] Based on this request, and some other examples dating from the late nineteenth century, it appears as though foreign help and intervention were sought mainly by Jews residing in Moldavia, who were relative newcomers in Romania. On the other hand, these were the people who were hit the hardest by anti-Semitic legislation and anti-Jewish disturbances. This fact can explain their desire to adopt a more radical course of action and their reluctance to count on the goodwill of Romanian statesmen.

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1 *JC*, 22 Sept. 1911, annual review of the Jewish situation worldwide.

2 *State Papers 1877*, no 31, enclosure: the Jewish community of Iaşi to Moses Montefiore and Francis Goldsmid, no date but no later than 22 May 1867. There are other examples from the late 19th century.

However, there was also a section of the Romanian Jewish population that opposed foreign intervention and argued that the solution to the Jewish question should be found within Romania and through domestic means. They were not happy with the tactics of the pro-interventionists and were afraid that foreign interference could cause more harm than good.

The favoured method of those who were against foreign intervention was to present petitions to Romanian authorities. Typical petitions were signed by a smallish group of individuals.[3] Apparently, the most active element involved in the petitions was the well-to-do Jewry of Bucharest, who usually tried to emphasise their long-established settlement in Romania and their loyalty to the Romanian state. It has to be kept in mind, though, that the Bucharest Jewish elite did not always oppose foreign meddling: at some stages they eagerly expected foreign help. However, it was perhaps precisely this group which, being against foreign intervention, had given the British Minister, John Gordon Kennedy, a strong impression of the Romanian Jewry's anti-interventionist position during the early years of the twentieth century.

The Union of Native Jews[4] was founded in Bucharest on 27 December 1909 / 8 January 1910. The new association was supposed to represent all Romanian Jews. Its aim was Jewish emancipation and the realisation of Jewish citizenship.[5] The Union of Native Jews liked to emphasise that the Jews residing in Romania wished to integrate into the Romanian society. The Union's methods included discussions with Romanian politicians, appeals to parliament, printed propaganda, and, as will be shown later, campaigns abroad. The first President of the Union was Adolf Stern.[6] Stern was a lawyer who also acted as a legal adviser to the British, American, and German legations in Bucharest, therefore possessing extremely useful foreign connections.[7]

Despite its declarations, the Union did not, in fact, represent the opinions of all the Jews in Romania. There were different attitudes towards integration into Romanian society. The Union of Native Jews appears to have been comprised of the Jewish elite and those Jews who were already the most

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3 See for example, Gaster Papers, bound volume 2A, memo of a Romanian Jewish association, April 1893. This organisation was not the same as the Union of Native Jews introduced below.

4 In Romanian *Uniunea Evreilor Pamînteni*. In Britain, the *Jewish Chronicle* called the organisation first the 'Central Committee of Native Jews' or the 'Central Committee of Jewish Representatives'; later the AJA called the organisation the 'Association of Roumanian Jews'. The correct name did not appear in the *JC* until autumn 1911. See *JC*, 1 April 1910, 22 April 1910, 27 Oct. 1911 and 3 Nov. 1911; *AJA Annual Report 1912-1913*, 16.

5 Iancu 1992, 39. The founding of the Union of Native Jews near the New Year of 1910 has caused confusion in dates because of the differences in the Julian and Gregorian Calendars; some studies on the subject give the year 1909 and some give the year 1910 as the founding date.

6 Butnaru 1992, 29; Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. 14, 390-391.

7 FO 371/511/24732, Langley to C. Barclay, 28 July 1908. Stern was formally appointed as the legal advisor of the British Legation in summer 1908 but had already performed services for the Legation earlier.

assimilated. Some of its leaders were even Romanian citizens, like Adolf Stern[8] himself.

There was some controversy over the new Romanian Industry Law, which was first proposed in 1910 and finally passed in the Romanian Parliament in January 1912. The law was designed to support Romanian industry by granting state subsidies to companies in which 75% of the employees were native Romanians. As had been the case with the Trades Law of 1902, foreign workers were required to prove reciprocity of treatment between their home country and Romania, which could be interpreted as discrimination against Jewish workers. The Union of Native Jews opposed the Industry Law and made an appeal to King Carol, parliament, and the cabinet, claiming that the new law was against the interests of Romania. The appeal of the Union received an unusually warm response. An amendment was passed, similar to the one which had been made in 1902 for the Trades Law: non-Romanian workers who were not protected by any other country were to be treated as native Romanians. The shortage of workers, especially in the oil industry, did not allow for any anti-Jewish industry-related measures at this stage.[9]

Apparently, the Romanian government did not want to endanger the basic economic interests of the country. Otherwise, it is remarkable that the outcome was a result of the activities of Romanian Jews themselves (and, admittedly, the oil industry) and had nothing to do with their coreligionists abroad. In Britain, the Conjoint Foreign Committee considered that it was better not to interfere, especially as the Romanian Jews did not think that foreign help was needed in the matter.[10]

Despite the concessions that the Romanian government had made to the Jews, Anglo-Jewish leaders were very worried about the general effects of anti-Jewish legislation. The Anglo-Jewish Association drew attention to the fact that Romanian Jewish birth-rate was declining:

> 'There can be no more eloquent proof than these figures of the miserable state to which the Jews of Roumania have been brought by the oppressive laws, which deprive them of their means of livelihood, *sap their vitality and threaten them with slow extinction*.'[11]

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8 Adolf Stern was naturalised in 1880. See Iancu 1994, 101, document no 19: list of Romanian Jews naturalised between 1879 and 1902.

9 Bernstein 1918, 85-88; Iancu 1992, 44.

10 However, the Conjoint had planned 'energetic action' in March 1910, based on the general unhappy situation in Romania and on the new Industry Law. The Conjoint wrote a letter to Isaac Astruc, the AIU representative in Bucharest, and asked him what the Romanian Jews thought of the possibility of Anglo-Jewish intervention. Astruc advised against any agitation since Romanian Jews had told him about their own independent efforts. See BDBJ 3121/C11/1, Conjoint meetings, 3 March 1910 and 2 May 1910.

11 *AJA Annual Report 1911-1912*, 18-19. (Emphasis added.)

8.2 Jewish concerns relating to the First Balkan War

The long impending trouble in the Balkans erupted on 8 October 1912, when Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria declared war against the Ottoman Empire. Each country sought additional territories within Ottoman-held Macedonia. The First Balkan War resulted in the division of former Ottoman areas in Europe between the allies in May 1913, albeit with serious disputes over territory remaining unresolved. In addition, the Albanian state was created.

Romania did not take part in the First Balkan War, but it was nonetheless involved in the complex territorial arrangements resulting from the war. In Romania's case, this meant the acquisition of an area situated on the Black Sea coast, called Southern Dobrudja, from Bulgaria. From a Western perspective, Southern Dobrudja was relatively small and even an outright uninteresting piece of land. However, the transfer led to a passionate international Jewish campaign against the border change, with a significant contribution by the Conjoint Committee of British Jews.

Romania had been allotted the northern section of Dobrudja in the very same Treaty of Berlin that had called for Jewish emancipation in Romania. The Romanians, however, had dreamt of the whole Dobrudjan area. The Balkan Wars proved to be appropriate timing for the realisation of those dreams. Romania's arguments were based on the balance of power in the Balkans; when all the other Balkan states were expanding, the frontiers of Romania, as defined in the Treaty of Berlin, were no longer unalterable. In addition, some Romanians justified their demands on the grounds of compensation for Romanian neutrality in the First Balkan War. In the existing international situation, it was evident from the beginning that Romania would acquire at least some additional territory from Bulgaria.[12]

The ambassadorial conference, which discussed the problems of territorial adjustments in general and the creation of the Albanian state, began in London on 17 December 1912. The ambassadors of Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia, and France were present, with Sir Edward Grey as the chairman. The conference was continually interrupted and, in fact, did not formally adjourn until 11 August 1913. Matters that were discussed in the ambassadorial conference were mostly related to the creation of Albania and to the fate of the Aegean islands. From 16 December onwards, at the same time as the ambassadorial conference, a preliminary peace conference also took place in London, at St. James' Palace, where representatives of the belligerent Balkan countries negotiated. This conference was interrupted at the beginning of February 1913 when the hostilities resumed in the Balkans. The Peace of London was finally signed on 31 May 1913.[13] These conferences and negotiations, which were actually

12 Traylor 1980, 25.

13 A very thorough account on the negotiations can be found in Helmreich 1969, 249-340. Helmreich's study, first published in 1938, is a well-known classic portrayal of

separate, have caused confusion among contemporaries and in historical research. They have sometimes been comprehended as one single peace conference occurring in London, the centre of diplomatic action.

Not surprisingly, there was disagreement on the size of the area that Bulgaria would cede to Romania. Romania and Bulgaria agreed on mediation by the Great Powers. The negotiations were carried out at the ambassadorial conference of St. Petersburg in spring 1913. However, they were at one juncture, namely in January 1913, conducted in London. A compromise was eventually found, and the Protocol of St. Petersburg was signed on 8 May 1913. Romania received only the city of Silistra and the surrounding zone, although it had wanted more; its maximum demands had embraced the Turtukaia-Baltchik line.[14]

Immediately after the outbreak of hostilities in the Balkans in October 1912, the *Jewish Chronicle* began to busy itself with reporting on how the fighting affected the Jewish population in the Balkans. The paper also wondered what the possible wider implications of the conflict were. Border changes particularly worried the *Jewish Chronicle*. Although the Romanian Jewish problem received more attention, the fate of Salonican Jews[15] in Ottoman Macedonia was the other significant theme throughout the whole conflict. The Salonica question did not have any direct links to the Romanian Jewish situation. British Jews did not at any point connect the two issues, when campaigning on behalf of Dobrudjan Jews. They handled the matters separately, apart from some references to religious liberty in the Balkans in general.

The port of Salonica, a town which belonged to the Ottoman Empire and which had a long-established and wealthy Jewish population, was subjected to both Greek and Bulgarian occupation. Both countries were very keen to acquire it. This made the local Jews fear possible Hellenisation measures or negative economic consequences. In late 1912, local Jews suggested that the city of Salonica could be neutralised and placed under international protection. This proposition gathered some wind in the West. However, at one point it seemed as though the city would fall into Bulgarian hands, and the Bulgarians were willing to formally guarantee the rights of the Jewish population. In the end, all these plans were in vain because Salonica was finally annexed to Greece in autumn 1913, with no special privileges awarded to the Salonican Jewry.[16]

Although many different estimates exist, it is generally agreed that the largest ethnic group in Salonica was the Jews. Typical figures presented as the

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the diplomatic history of the Balkan Wars. For a more compact version of the negotiations, see Boeckh 1996. 40-42, 49-54.

14 Helmreich 1969, 300-307; Traylor 1980, 27-29.

15 For the situation of Salonican Jews, see Gelber 1955, 107, 114. Gelber discusses the Salonican Jewish question without linking it to other Balkan Jewish problems. He does not connect the Salonica problem to the wider theme of religious liberty in the Balkans, nor does he connect it to the Romanian Jewish question.

16 Gelber 1955, 107, 114; Fink 2004, 58-59. For the Salonican question (relating not only to Jewish matters) during the Balkan Wars, see also Mazower 2005, 293-304.

number of Salonican Jews are in the region of 60,000-70,000.[17] Apart from the atrocities performed against the population of Salonica during the first stages of Greek occupation, there were long-term negative consequences for the Salonican Jews from the annexation to Greece. Salonica was cut off from the Macedonian hinterlands, Turkish businessmen left, and the economic situation was generally bad. This led to mass emigration of Salonican Jews, which further contributed to the decreasing economic importance and strength of the city.[18]

Although Romania was not a belligerent nation in the First Balkan War, the *Jewish Chronicle* practically blamed it for the outbreak of the war. The reasoning of the newspaper went that even though most of the warring parties and the Great Powers had one way or another violated the Treaty of Berlin, Romania had been the first to do so. The conduct of Romania over the Jewish question had weakened the binding force of the Berlin Treaty in the eyes of Romania's Balkan neighbours. This led to the collapse of the system created in Berlin 35 years earlier. In addition, the *Jewish Chronicle* demanded that if there was to be an international conference on Balkan issues, Romanian behaviour had to be discussed there.[19]

When the peace conference actually began, the *Jewish Chronicle* argued that it was the duty of the Western Jewry to see that the future peace settlement was not going to result in the 'enslavement' of some additional sections of the Jewish population. The boundaries of the area where oppression ruled were not to be widened — this clearly referred to Romania. The peace conference was a rare opportunity to discuss the Jewish problem in the Balkans, especially in relation to the Berlin Treaty.[20]

It was therefore understandable that the Jewish activists were very excited about the peace talks. They clearly expected to see some results this time, hoping for improvements in Romania but, at the same time, fearing negative consequences in the Balkan area as a whole. This, once again, was a time when Romanian obligations under international law were put under scrutiny and positive action by the Great Powers on behalf of the Romanian Jewry was called for.

The issue of Jewish rights in the event of border changes in the Balkans was discussed for the first time in the Conjoint Committee meeting of 21 November 1912. The prospects of agitation raised some controversy. Both Moses Gaster, through a message from the Anglo-Jewish Association meeting, as he was no longer a Conjoint member, and Lucien Wolf argued against intervention. Since Jews were 'free' in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, any

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17 Mazower 2005, 303. Mazower quotes the figures of the Greek census of 1913. The census was organised immediately after the annexation. The overall population of Salonica was approximately 158,000, of whom just under 40,000 were Greeks, approximately 46,000 were 'Ottomans', i.e. Muslims, and over 61,000 were Jews.

18 Boeckh 1996, 358-362.

19 *JC* leader, 18 Oct. 1912.

20 *JC* leader, 13 Dec. 1912.

representations on the Balkan matters would only cause anger in those countries.[21]

However, already after two weeks, the Conjoint resolved to send a statement to the Peace Conference on the subject of a civil rights clause.[22] This was done on 17 December 1912 — immediately after the conference had begun. In the letter to the London Peace Conference (or the Conference of St. James), the Conjoint expressed its wish that the forthcoming treaty would include a clause affirming the principle of religious equality in the Balkans. Romania was not named in the document, but the reasons for the request were given as follows:

> 'In the work of political reconstruction on which your Excellencies are now engaged, it is possible that many members of the Jewish race and religion will find themselves confronted by the necessity of transferring their allegiance from one State to another. That this will in any way entail a limitation of their rights and privileges as free citizens of the lands of their birth or adoption we do not apprehend; but, unhappily, the voice of religious intolerance and racial prejudice has not yet been wholly silenced in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, and it is not unnatural that the objects of this intolerance and prejudice should view with a measure of anxiety the political changes that await them.'[23]

The *Jewish Chronicle* was not happy with the confidential way that the Conjoint and its parent body, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, administrated the affair.[24] The newspaper also implied that the Conjoint should have consulted the leaders of Romanian Jews prior to taking any action since the Romanian Jews wished to handle their business by themselves.[25]

There was nothing special in the Conjoint's methods, as it had always been secretive in its manoeuvres, but the attitude of the *Jewish Chronicle* was a sign of increasing criticism from the paper after Leopold Greenberg had bought it in 1907. The first protests from the *Jewish Chronicle* against Conjoint secrecy had been heard after the Romanian Peasant Revolt, and that dissatisfaction now seemed to intensify. The ostensible reason for the *Jewish Chronicle's* disapproval, the feelings of the Romanian Jews, is also interesting. Although the wishes of coreligionists in Romania were mentioned in Anglo-Jewish discussion every now and then, it was not often that the opinions — or imagined opinions — of Romanian Jews were used as a tool in internal Anglo-Jewish strife.

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21 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 21 Nov. 1912.

22 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 8 Dec. 1912.

23 *Correspondence 1919*, no 9, Alexander and Montefiore to the Plenipotentiaries at the London Peace Conference, 17 Dec. 1912.

24 *JC* leader, 10 Jan. 1913.

25 *JC* leader, 14 March 1913.

8.3 The international Jewish campaign on behalf of South Dobrudjan Jews

After the first tentative attempt, the crusade of the British Jewish foreign policy team began in earnest in January 1913. By then, the Conjoint Committee 'had learned' that the Romanian borders was to be enlarged. The Conjoint asked the British Government to block the plans for the border change. Two grounds for the request were presented:

> 'We do so on the grounds 1) that Roumania, being in default in regard to the conditions imposed upon her by the Treaty of Berlin for the recognition of her independence, is not entitled to any such consideration at the hands of the Great Powers; and 2) that any territorial aggrandisement of that country would have the undesirable effect of enlarging *pro tanto* the area within which its Government practises a policy of religious discrimination and intolerance, in defiance of the Treaty of Berlin and in violation of the solemn pledges given to the signatories of that instrument in 1880.'[26]

That the British Government should veto the plans for the Romano-Bulgarian border adjustment was unlikely to receive any serious consideration in the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office was not impressed by the arguments the Conjoint had introduced. One of the senior clerks, Richard P. Maxwell, commented realistically:

> 'It is rather too much to expect us to make the settlement of the Romanian question dependent on the position of the Jews.'[27]

However, he also remarked that the Conjoint Committee was an influential body and that the Foreign Office had to act accordingly. The chosen course of action was careful and evasive. Foreign Secretary Grey decided the Foreign Office should tell the Conjoint that it was uncertain whether anything connected with Romania would come up before the Great Powers in the ambassadorial conference.[28] Although the conference had not discussed the Romanian question by the time the Conjoint had sent its first letter to Grey, the issue was put forward during the spring of 1913 when the Powers were involved in mediation between Romania and Bulgaria.

In his private letter to Claude G. Montefiore, Lucien Wolf did not seem to be very happy about the Foreign Office's attitude. He pointed out that the Foreign Office had been 'very much more agreeable' in the early years of the century.[29] Here, in Wolf's statement, the issue of the allegedly changed, more

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26 FO 371/1742/1832, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 11 Jan. 1913. A copy of the extensive Conjoint Committee memorandum that had originally been sent to the Foreign office in November 1908 (see FO 371/511/41368) was enclosed to remind the Foreign Office of all the main aspects of the Romanian situation.

27 FO 371/1742/1832, minute by Maxwell, probably 13 Jan. 1913.

28 FO 371/1742/1832, minutes by Maxwell and Grey, probably 13 Jan. 1913; FO 371/1742/1832, Mallet to Alexander and Montefiore, 17 Jan. 1913.

29 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/97/2, Wolf to Montefiore, 21 Jan. 1913.

dismissive attitude of the Foreign Office towards the Romanian Jewish question came up again, although only very briefly.

The religious equality clause that the Conjoint had proposed already in December 1912, received some official backing from the Americans. The United States government expressed its wish for a special clause on civil and religious rights in any impending Balkan settlement or treaty. However, the Americans did not participate in the ambassadorial conference and therefore had problems in voicing their opinion formally. They communicated their wish through Grey and received a friendly response from the conference, but nothing came of their effort.[30]

Rabbi Moses Gaster was no longer a Conjoint member but nevertheless meddled in Conjoint affairs by sending messages from the Anglo-Jewish Association — in which he was still a member — to the Conjoint. This was a rather unusual way to make oneself heard, and it was not always appreciated in the Conjoint. In November 1912, Gaster was against any action over the Balkan religious freedom clauses in general.[31] In January 1913, he objected to any meddling in the Romanian matter and argued that the situation in Romania was improved.[32] What the Romanian internal situation had to do with the campaign was not clear, since the current campaign was waged on the grounds of Romanian territorial enlargement. However, Gaster was correct in assessing that there was nothing especially threatening in the Romanian Jewish condition at the time.

The *Jewish Chronicle* was triumphant in late January when it proudly published letters from the Greek, Bulgarian, and Albanian[33] peace delegates. In their letters, the representatives officially affirmed the rights of the Jews residing in the territories that were to be annexed to their respective countries. Only the Romanian difficulty, therefore, remained, and it was of the gravest character as the Jews in Southern Dobrudja almost certainly would lose the rights that they had enjoyed under Bulgarian rule. There was one action, however, that the *Jewish Chronicle* suggested Romania could take in order to secure the smooth transfer of the contested zone. Romania could abolish 'the whole medieval code which makes slaves of its present Jewish *citizens* [sic]'.[34] In its enthusiasm the *Jewish Chronicle* elevated the Romanian Jewish inhabitants to the status of citizens, which was an embarrassing mistake as the paper usually made sure to remind its readers that Jews residing in Romania were not Romanian citizens.

The Conjoint Committee soon found other grounds against the adjustment of the Romanian southern border, again from the field of international law. This

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30 Kohler & Wolf 1916, 83 onwards. Correspondence between the American Jewish Committee and the U.S. government is printed in Kohler and Wolf's publication.

31 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 21 Nov. 1912.

32 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 20 Jan. 1913.

33 Albanian leaders had declared independence from the Ottoman Empire in late 1912, but the Albanian state had not been formally constructed yet, nor had the borders been drawn.

34 *JC* leader, 24 Jan. 1913. (Emphasis added.)

time Lucien Wolf had dug up a seemingly far-fetched parallel from African history and imperialism. He drew a comparison with the case of the Congo Free State in 1894, when it had been agreed that a state which owed its existence to an international convention could not alter its frontiers without the consent of the signatories of the convention. The Conjoint insisted that the case of Romania was similar.[35] The Foreign Office, however, soon dismissed this suggestion. The matter was investigated by officials who declared the Congo case not to be comparable to the Romanian situation. The case of Congo had referred only to neutral states, which Romania was not.[36]

Perhaps the most important single component — although not necessarily from the British perspective — of the renewed international publicity that the Romanian Jewish situation received in 1913 was the newspaper articles written by the former Italian Prime Minister, Luigi Luzzatti.[37] Luzzatti was of Jewish descent himself. He had been inspired by the president of the Union of Native Jews, Adolf Stern, who had travelled to Western Europe to campaign for the Romanian Jewish cause. Stern met a number of representatives of Jewish organisations, as well as non-Jewish political and cultural figures. Luzzatti's first article on the condition of Jews in Romania was published in the Milan newspaper *Corriera Della Sera* on 3 March 1913 and was followed by many more during 1913 and 1914. In his articles, Luzzatti, naturally, discussed the Dobrudja question, the main factor in the debate at the time, but he also reviewed the situation in Romania in its entirety. He emphasised the significance of religious liberty as a basic human liberty. Luzzatti's articles were sentimental, with expressions such as '[the Romanian Jews] are the last existing serfs in Europe', a tone which delighted Jewish activists all around Europe and in the United States.[38]

The Romanian government was angered by Luzzatti's articles and the widespread publicity they received. The Romanians pointed out that the Jewish question was a Romanian internal business. Pressure from the outside would not have any effect on Romanian domestic policy. Ionescu, the Romanian Minister of Interior, further explained that all inhabitants of Dobrudja would be allowed to preserve the rights they had possessed under Bulgarian rule. They also, however, made contemptuous comments about Luzzatti's Jewish origins. Luzzatti responded to the Romanian outburst and advised his readers to remember the fate of the inhabitants of Northern Dobrudja after the region had come under the Romanian control in 1878. Luzzatti worked in constant co-

35 FO 371/1742/4074, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 24 Jan. 1913. This was not the first time the Congo comparison came up. It was mentioned by the Conjoint in their 1908 campaign. It was also referred to in the *Jewish Chronicle* as early as 1902, see *JC* leader, 26 May 1902.

36 FO 371/1724/4074, minutes by Montgomery 28 Jan. 1913 and 30 Jan. 1913.

37 Luzzatti (1941-1927) served as Italian Prime Minister from 1910 to 1911.

38 Armon 1993, 531-533; Iancu 1992, 48-50. Armon leans heavily on Iancu's account on the Luzzatti affair.

operation with Adolf Stern, who sent him documents on which to base his article.[39]

The activities of Luigi Luzzatti were brought to the attention of the Foreign Office by Lord Rothschild, the unofficial leader of the Anglo-Jewry, who even enclosed a letter he had received from a French relative of his.[40] Grey answered to Rothschild, but in evasive terms, declaring that he would be glad to see a solution to the Jewish question, but that the matter should be raised 'at the proper time'.[41] The Italian Ambassador in London, Guglielmo Imperiali, also spoke of Luzzatti's articles and forwarded one of them to the Foreign Office.[42] Regardless of these exchanges, the Foreign Office did not give much thought to the Luzzatti episode.

The Conjoint Committee expressed its views on the Romano-Bulgarian border question in the *Daily Telegraph* on 10 March 1913. The press campaign was approved by the Romanian Jewish leader Adolf Stern.[43] At the time, Lucien Wolf did not seem to believe in any joint intervention by the Powers. Wolf particularly commented on the German reluctance to do anything that would embarrass King Carol of Romania.[44] Despite Wolf's pessimism, Anglo-Jewish efforts were made. In the *Daily Telegraph* article, the Conjoint objected to the enlargement of Romanian territory and illustrated the nature of the Jewish problem in Romania in a somewhat emotional manner. The piece ended with a typical plea:

> 'We trust that for the honour of Christendom, as well as to satisfy the most elementary dictates of humanity, an effort will now be made by the Powers to end the cruel scandal of the Jewish question in Roumania.'[45]

In late May, the Conjoint Committee again reminded the Foreign Office of the fate of Dobrudjan Jews. The Conjoint leaders had somehow learnt about two separate versions of the St. Petersburg Conference protocols — relating to Romano-Bulgarian negotiations. They were alarmed to notice that neither

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39 Iancu 1992, 51-52.

40 FO 371/1742/21183, Lord Rothschild to Grey, 7 March 1913.

41 FO 371/1742/21183, Grey to Lord Rothschild, 19 May 1913.

42 FO 800/94, Grey's private secretary William Tyrrell to Grey, 26 March 1913, enclosure: Luigi Luzzatti's article in *L´Italie*, 9 March 1913.

43 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 5 March 1913.

44 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/97/2, Wolf to Montefiore, 19 March 1913.

45 *Correspondence 1919*, no 15, Alexander and Montefiore to the *Daily Telegraph*, 3 March 1913, published in the *Daily Telegraph*,10 March 1913. Meanwhile, there were a number of questions in the House of Commons regarding religious liberty in the Balkans. Like the Conjoint Committee, the Members of Parliament were mostly concerned about what would happen to inhabitants in the territories that were to be transferred from one state to another. Although two questions in 1913-1914 especially mentioned Romania, the others concerned minorities in general or named other Balkan minorities, such as the Albanians in Serbia or the Greeks in Bulgaria. Romanian obligations under the Treaty of Berlin were touched upon. See *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, vol. 50, question: Sir Philip Magnus (London University), answer: Grey, 13 March 1913.

version contained any reference to the rights of Dobrudjan Jews. The Conjoint correctly interpreted that the informal verbal assurances by Romanian statesmen were the reason for the omission of the civil rights provisions in the protocol. The Conjoint expressed its deep mistrust of the Romanians in the light of all the well-known complications that had materialised after the Congress of Berlin.[46]

The Foreign Office, however, believed the assurances delivered by Nicolae Mişu[47], the new Romanian Minister in London. He had sent Grey a letter in which he stated that 'of course' all inhabitants of the ceded Bulgarian territory would enjoy full political and civil rights just as they had when they were under Bulgarian rule. The Foreign Office expected Mişu's promises to satisfy the Conjoint Committee as well.[48]

Mişu had himself mentioned the earlier case of Northern Dobrudja as an example of the perfect handling of Romanian administration in a newly acquired territory. This appeared to be a tactical mistake, as the Anglo-Jewish interpretation of the Northern Dobrudja episode was quite different to the one promoted by Mişu. As had the Greek, Bulgarian, and Albanian peace delegates two months earlier, Mişu sent two letters to the *Jewish Chronicle* in March 1913, stating that all inhabitants of the new province were to enjoy all the rights of Romanian citizens.[49] The *Jewish Chronicle*, astonishingly, was relieved and appeared to trust Mişu's promises.[50]

However, the Conjoint Committee adopted a more typical Anglo-Jewish approach and did not find Mişu's assurances satisfying at all. The Conjoint complained that Mişu had not in any way specified how exactly the civil and political rights would be granted to Dobrudjan inhabitants. Making the opposite point than Mişu, the Conjoint also drew a parallel to the ambiguous situation that had followed the cession of Northern Dobrudja. The Romanian

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46 FO 371/1742/23648, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 23 May 1913.

47 Mişu was appointed to the London position in a hasty manner in late 1912. See FO 371/1464/54258, British Minister in Bucharest George Barclay to Grey, 19 Dec. 1912. George Barclay should not be confused with Colville Barclay.

As for the British legation in Bucharest, changes in British representation were not always straightforward either. Conyngham Greene left Romania in January 1911 and Walter Townley was appointed in May 1911. The legation was under the care of Arnold Robertson for a lengthy period, as Townley did not arrive until autumn 1911 and did not stay for long, only until March 1912. Although George Barclay was appointed in March 1912, the beginning of his period in office was marked by his absence. Titu Maiorescu, the Romanian Foreign Minister, and King Carol saw the repeated changes in the British representation as a sign of British indifference towards Romania.

These matters are summarised in FO 371/1742/2858, G. Barclay to Grey, 4 Jan. 1913, annual report 1912. See also *Foreign Office Lists 1911-1913* for the names and dates.

48 FO 371/1742/23648, minute by Maxwell, probably 26 May 1913; FO 371/1742/23648, Mallet to Alexander and Montefiore, 9 June 1913.

49 *JC*, 21 March 1913, Nicolae Mişu to the Editor.

50 *JC* leader, 21 Jan. 1913. Romanian Jewish leader Adolf Stern was very surprised at the attitude of the *Jewish Chronicle*. For Stern's opinion on this matter, see Iancu 1994, 78-80, document no 10: Stern to Montefiore, 4 April 1913.

representative had conveniently forgotten to mention that the law on the status of the Dobrudjan population had not been passed until 1909 — thirty years after the acquisition of the province! Consequently, the Conjoint Committee asked the British Government not to recognise the transfer of Dobrudja until 'definite' pledges had been offered by the Romanian government.[51]

The Foreign Office had nothing new to say on this. Charles Hubert Montgomery, a senior clerk, concluded with a resigned attitude in a Foreign Office memorandum:

> 'We have not ever been able to do anything to make Roumania to fulfil her obligations under the Treaty of Berlin.'[52]

It is somewhat uncertain what the Conjoint Committee meant by the 'definite pledges' it demanded from Romania. It seems, however, that the Conjoint was continuing to refer to the clause on civil and religious liberties that it had promoted earlier, in the winter of 1912-1913. The Conjoint wanted a civil liberty clause to be inserted in any document dealing with the Balkan territorial rearrangements. It is strange how fervently the Jewish foreign policy activists believed that the clause would really guarantee the rights of the Dobrudjan Jews. After all, they were always keen to point their fingers at the Romanian habit of avoiding the observance of international treaties on the Jewish question. Thus, the Conjoint Committee was well aware of the Romanian attitude and behaviour.

The civil and religious liberties clause was apparently intended to refer only to Southern Dobrudjan Jews. The Anglo-Jewish leaders did not want the number of non-citizen Jews within the Romanian borders to increase. The whole question of Romanian Jews was really not discussed along with the Dobrudja theme at this point, although the general 'sufferings' of the Romanian Jews were mentioned on many occasions. The Dobrudjan Jews were the main concern of the Conjoint Committee in spring 1913.

8.4 The Second Balkan War and the question of Jewish citizenship

The central issue concerning the Jews in Romania during and after the Second Balkan War related to the fate of the Jewish war veterans: should they be naturalised like those who had taken part in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878? As opposed to the Southern Dobrudjan problem, the question of the naturalisation of the Jewish war veterans remained primarily an internal Romanian affair and was not debated very much outside the country. In Britain, there were occasional articles on the theme in the *Jewish Chronicle* but they were

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51 FO 371/1742/32066, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 10 July 1913.

52 FO 371/1742/32066, minute by Montgomery, 12 July 1913.

not very thorough and even appeared to lack precise or accurate information. Neither was the Conjoint Committee actively involved in the matter. The British Foreign Office, for its part, completely ignored the whole war veteran business.

Jewish citizenship[53] was a central component in determining the legal position of Jews in Romania and it was to attract some attention again in 1913. The problem of citizenship was much discussed by contemporaries, but hardly ever with any serious attempts to reach objective conclusions. Information on the number of naturalised Jews prior to the First World War varies. The subject has not been properly analysed by modern historians either. On the contrary, many historians have directly cited some of the older works.

Partly as a friendly gesture designed to please the Powers in the aftermath of the Berlin Treaty, 883 Jewish war veterans of the War of Independence (the Russo-Turkish war) were naturalised in 1879. However, there are problems in determining the true situation of the veterans: how many of them were actually alive at the time of their naturalisation, and how many of them were finally able to obtain their citizenship certificates? The *Roumanian Bulletin*, a propaganda vehicle of the Anglo-Jewry, maintained, in 1903, that 600 Jewish soldiers had died in the war, and, of the remaining veterans, 'many' never received their citizenship certifications.[54]

According to the Encyclopaedia Judaica, a reference work which covers a wide scope of Jewish life, around 2,000 Jews were granted Romanian citizenship before the year 1912.[55] After deducting the number of 883 war veterans, who are included in these figures, the number of other Jewish citizens remains no more than 1,117.

The Conjoint Committee of British Jews claimed in their article in the *Daily Telegraph*, in March 1913, that only 200 Jews had been granted Romanian citizenship:

> 'The Jews remained aliens, and the law by which their access to naturalisation was supposed to have been secured proved a cruel mockery. In thirty-five years only some 200 of them have managed to obtain letters of naturalisation out of total of nearly 300,000.'[56]

This calculation apparently excluded the war veterans. It is the smallest estimate available, although not very different from the figures offered by S.

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53 The section on Jewish citizenship is based on Matikainen 1998, 49-58. Some revisions have been made.

54 The *Roumanian Bulletin*, supplement to *JC*, 13 Feb. 1903. The misconduct of the Romanian government was mentioned by another contemporary observer, Elias Schwarzfeld (also known as Edmond Sincerus). He argued that the names of those soldiers who had died in the war were included in the veterans' list, while the names of the survivors were deliberately omitted. Schwarzfeld 1901b, 68-69.

55 *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14, 389.

56 *Correspondence 1919*, no 15, Alexander and Montefiore to the *Daily Telegraph*, 6 March 1913, published in the *Daily Telegraph*, 10 March 1913.

von Bernstein and Joshua Starr, who both maintain that 361 Jews acquired citizenship through the application process before 1912.[57]

Attempts to estimate the number of applications have rarely been made. Carol Iancu, however, believes that there must have been tens of thousands of applications. The process itself was so slow that a person could well die before his application was discussed in Parliament and the applications might be kept in the Parliament storage rooms for decades.[58]

Carol Iancu has discussed the citizenship issue in most detail and his figures should therefore be inspected closely. Between 1879 and 1913, the number of Jews accepted as Romanian citizens was 529, which included the Jews of Northern Dobrudja, who acquired citizenship as a group in 1912. When the war veterans are added to this, the number is 1,412, according to Iancu's 1978 study, *Les Juifs en Roumanie, 1866-1919: De l´exclusion a l´émancipation*.[59] In his 1994 document collection, *Le combat international pour l'émancipation des Juifs de Roumanie,* Iancu arrives at the total figure of 1,417 — the number of war veterans is now given as 888.[60]

For some reason, the Dobrudjan question has hardly ever been taken into account in previous research. Romania was granted Northern Dobrudja at the Berlin Congress — as opposed to Southern Dobrudja, which was to be a source of dispute during the Balkan Wars. The matter of the inhabitants' political rights was to be decided 'later'. The legal arrangements were finally put forward by the Romanian government in 1909, but Jews were required to produce proof of the rights they had held under Turkish rule. In many cases, it was impossible to produce any documents. There were approximately 4,000 Jews in Dobrudja, and the majority of them remained without formal Romanian citizenship and political rights. Those who had arrived in Dobrudja after 1877 were automatically excluded since they had never had any rights under Turkish rule in the first place.[61]

However, all the aforementioned calculations — incidentally all of them pro-Jewish / anti-Romanian — relate to the number of *naturalisations* and not the *total number of Jewish citizens* in Romania. To include family members in the calculations makes a difference, resulting in a number more than twice as high as the number of naturalisations, although children who were born prior to the naturalisation of their father were not regarded as citizens.

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57 Bernstein 1918, 37-39; Starr 1941, 59. Starr cites Bernstein. Starr's article deals specifically with the Jewish citizenship in Romania, and thus it is somewhat unusual he has not paid more attention on this detail.

58 Iancu 1978, 187-188. Enric Braunstein has mentioned 25,000 as the number of applications, Braunstein 1921, 31.

59 Iancu 1978, 186-187. Iancu has collected this information from the Alliance Israélite Universelle statistics.

60 Iancu 1994, 87, document no 17: Statistics of Jewish naturalisations between 1879 and 1913. The figure of 1417 is comprised of the following components: 888 war veterans, 205 'normal' naturalisations 1879-1911, 166 naturalisations in the year 1912 (apparently mainly Dobrudjans) and 158 naturalisations in the year 1913.

61 Iancu 1994, 73-77, document no 9: Stern to Luzzatti, 4 April 1913. According to Russian statistics, there had been 2,900 Jews in Dobrudja in 1877. Nouzille 1996, 29.

There are some interesting Romanian statistics available from the 1912 census, apparently ignored in earlier research, which cast light on the numbers of Jews within different legal categories. In the 1912 census, 4,668 Jews (2,320 of them male and 2,348 female) were classified as 'Romanians', which can be understood to mean Romanian citizens. Of the total number, 1,668 resided in Dobrudja, clearly demonstrating the special status of the province, as it contained relatively more Jewish citizens than elsewhere in Romania.[62] It has to be acknowledged that Iancu's figures, mentioned above, do not correspond with the number of Dobrudjan Jews who were Romanians according to the 1912 census.

TABLE 8 The number of Jews who were classified as Romanians in 1912 according to the official census.[63]

Region	Number of Jews who were classified as Romanians
Moldavia	1,675
Muntenia	1,196
Oltenia	129
Dobrudja	1,668
Total	4,668

Obviously, it is not certain that the real number of Jewish citizens was the number presented in the Romanian statistics. There might have been mistakes in the census, and some non-citizens might have been included among the citizens or vice versa. One also has to question whether the connection between an individual's naturalisation and his classification as a Romanian was straightforward. Furthermore, not all of the Jews who had been granted citizenship since 1878 were alive on the eve of the First World War.

The most significant single detail in the citizenship question as a whole, however, is the inclusion of family members. The number of female 'Romanian' Jews was 2,348 in 1912, although there is no need to compare this to the data on naturalisations since only male Jews were naturalised. The number of 'Romanian' Jewish males in 1912 was 2,320.[64] If we accept Iancu's testimony of 1,417 or so naturalisations as approximately correct, it appears that nearly half of the 2,320 Jewish male citizens consisted of the sons of naturalised individuals. This percentage becomes even larger, however, if the deaths of many naturalised Jews by 1912 are taken into consideration, and especially if we agree that not all Jewish war veterans had been able to obtain citizenship.

A fascinating point emerges from the difference between the number of those who acquired their citizenship through legal formalities and the total

62 *BS 1921*, 49. Information from the 1912 census can be found in this volume.

63 *BS 1921*, 49, 55, 58, 61, 64. Note that Wallachia is divided into two areas, Oltenia and Muntenia. In Oltenia there were relatively few Jews — hence the small number of naturalised Jews.

64 *BS 1921*, 49, 55, 58, 61, 64.

number of Jews with Romanian citizenship: the role of the family members appears to have been played down by the international Jewish activists, including Anglo-Jewish leaders. Contemporary Jewish texts always tried to present as low figures as possible in order to make the Romanian situation look graver. An extreme example of this was the estimate by the Conjoint Committee in 1913, that there were 200 Jewish Romanian citizens, which failed even to take into account the war veterans. Whether this was consciously done or out of ignorance remains open to debate[65].

It is true that 4,668 citizens did not constitute a large percentage of all Jews residing in Romania — only 1,9% — and it is not radically different to the estimates of 'something under 2,000', but what is important when examining the Western Jewish attitude is the continual tendency to ignore the existence of the family members of naturalised Jews. Moreover, the contemporary misrepresentation has found its way into modern research, which has repeated it faithfully.

There was more than the usual amount of dialogue about the Jewish situation in Romania in 1913, and it also touched an issue that had been completely dismissed during the previous decades: the potential improvement of Jewish legal rights and even the granting of citizenship to considerable segments of Jewish community. The Conservative government of Titu Maiorescu was willing, or at least expressed its willingness, to make some concessions to the Jews or, possibly, to grant citizenship to certain groups of Jews. The argument in favour of improving the Jewish legal position was that the changes would be in the best interest of Romania. However, at the same time, the Maiorescu government passed some new pieces of anti-Jewish legislation, such as laws for stockbrokers and for breweries, both of which contained paragraphs restricting Jewish participation in economic life.[66]

The question of Jewish citizenship was linked to the outbreak of the Second Balkan War. Territorial disputes had not been satisfactorily settled in the First Balkan War. Other Balkan states argued that Bulgaria's share was too large, but the Bulgarians were not happy either with what they had acquired. In the Second Balkan War, in the summer of 1913, other Balkan countries allied themselves against Bulgaria. Serbia and Greece were the main opponents of Bulgaria, and the main battles were fought between these countries. Romania and the Ottoman Empire were, however, quick to join in the warfare in order to grab a share from overpowered Bulgaria.

The Second Balkan War was a small-scale conflict that lasted less than two months. Approximately 20,000-25,000 Jewish soldiers were in the Romanian army in the campaign against Bulgaria. Their enthusiasm could perhaps be attributed to a highly patriotic manifesto published by the Union of Native Jews. The Union called on Romanian Jews to demonstrate their loyalty to the Romanian state. Authorities ignored the law that forbade 'foreigners' to

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65 No references to conscious misrepresentation of the figures were found in the Conjoint archives.

66 Bernstein 1918, 106-107.

volunteer for the army. Hence Jewish volunteers were gladly accepted to join in the war effort. Large sections of the Jewish population participated eagerly in the war, also helping through their own hospitals, welfare institutions, and other communal bodies.[67]

Such wide-spread war fervour among Romanian Jews appears strange for many reasons. Firstly, why did the Jews support the war efforts of a country that had treated them with contempt? As the conditions for Jews in the army had traditionally been very unpleasant, why did they now rush to enlist? Finally, the war against Bulgaria was clearly aimed at ensuring that additional territories of Dobrudja would be annexed to Romania, which would lead to an enlargement of 'the area of religious discrimination', as the British Jewish leaders, for instance, repeatedly argued.

The main motive behind the impressive Jewish war effort may have been the promises given by the Romanian government. The government had implied that those Jews who volunteered would be granted citizenship after the war. The precedent of the War of Independence, after which nearly 900 war veterans were naturalised, encouraged the Jews and certainly contributed to an optimistic atmosphere. There had been no other possibility to test this model of citizenship acquisition through war effort, as Romania had not participated in any armed conflict during the time between the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 — or the War of Independence, as it was called in Romania — and the Second Balkan War.

Both S. von Bernstein, in his 1918 pamphlet, and Carol Iancu, in his 1978 and 1992 publications, collected opinions of leading Romanian personalities favouring Jewish emancipation during the Second Balkan War. Their accounts only feature the opinions that were favourably disposed towards the principle of limited Jewish citizenship. Anti-Jewish statements from the summer of 1913 are omitted in both Bernstein's and Iancu's books, although, without doubt, those were also heard in Romania at the time. Several politicians expressed their wish that citizenship would be granted to Jewish war veterans in the same way as it had been granted after the War of Independence. It was proposed that the war veterans and their families could be naturalised. The estimated number of this 'healthy and assimilated' part of the Jewish population was around 100,000. A gradual expansion of the enjoyment of political rights to the rest of the Jews was also touched upon, but, at the time, the general consensus was that it would be dangerous to attempt to naturalise all Jews at once, as the mood of the country would not permit it.[68]

Despite the favourable political climate prevailing at the time, Romanian Jews themselves realised that citizenship for all Jews residing in Romania was not yet possible. The political rights of war veterans were seen as a step in the right direction, but, nevertheless, the Union of Native Jews announced it was

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67 Iancu 1992, 55. The Conjoint Committee claimed that the number of Jewish soldiers in the war was approximately 15,000, but the estimate 20,000-25,000 is more common. FO 371/2089/32066, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 14 July 1914.

68 *JC*, 15 Aug. 1913; *Monitorul Oficial*, 2/15 July and 9/22 July 1913; Bernstein 1918, 109-113; Iancu 1992, 56-58.

aiming at citizenship for all Romanian Jews. The Union complained that partial naturalisation would only result in uncomfortable situations if some members of a family were naturalised and others remained stateless. Besides, those who were unfit for military service would be at a disadvantage.[69]

In Britain, the *Jewish Chronicle* began to discuss the war veterans only in mid-August 1913, when the Second Balkan War was already over. The *Jewish Chronicle* did not trust Romania's promises, and, like the Union of Native Jews, it opposed the idea of partial naturalisation. The *Jewish Chronicle* argued, with a sense of moral righteousness, that Romanian Jews should outright refuse partial naturalisation and demand full emancipation. The view of the paper was that, after all, the Jews in Romania were entitled to be naturalised without any absurd conditions, such as participation in a war. The complete equality of Romanian Jews was already based on the stipulations of the Berlin Treaty.[70] Once again, a strict international legal viewpoint was adopted by Anglo-Jewish activists.

Before the end of the war, things began to go wrong for the Jewish veterans. The events ultimately led to the abandonment of the naturalisation plans. Romanian authorities started to release Jewish soldiers from duty prior to the Treaty of Bucharest that formally ended the hostilities. This was accomplished in two different ways. Firstly, Jewish volunteers were erased from the lists on the grounds that, as foreigners, they had not been allowed to volunteer in the first place — which indeed was true, in accordance with army legislation. Their participation was explained away as being a mistake, despite the fact that these soldiers had taken part in the hostilities against Bulgaria. Secondly, those Jews who had been conscripted were released and ordered to go home. Yet another method was to create different categories of soldiers to describe the seriousness of the warfare in which individual soldiers had been involved. Jewish soldiers were placed in the category which allegedly had not participated in the war at all. This manipulation reduced the number of Jewish soldiers to almost zero.[71]

S. von Bernstein links the policy of the Romanian government to the international situation. Romania's aim had been to acquire Southern Dobrudja. To achieve its goal it had to take into account the opinion of the Great Powers. This was why Romania gave such sweet promises of Jewish rights but, later, after signing the Treaty of Bucharest, completely changed its course.[72] Bernstein's explanation, however, is somewhat unsound since the change of policy had occurred before the Treaty of Bucharest was concluded. In addition, Romania had secured the annexation of Southern Dobrudja long before the Bucharest Treaty was signed, although Romania managed to enlarge the incorporated area during the Second Balkan War.

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69 Bernstein 1918, 114-115.

70 *JC* leader, 22 Aug. 1913.

71 Bernstein 1918, 117-120. It is interesting to note that the Romanians did not suffer any combat casualties! However, there was an outbreak of cholera and approximately 6,000 soldiers died. See, for example, Hall 2000, 118.

72 Bernstein 1918, 120.

The Great Powers did not make demands in connection with the Treaty of Bucharest, and, this time, Romania did not have to promise anything to the Powers. Attention must also be drawn to the fact that there had been no formal reference to the Jewish question during the Romanian negotiations in the winter and spring of 1913 either. Nevertheless, Romania may have adopted its temporarily amiable attitude towards Jews just in case the Powers decided to introduce some civil liberty clauses. Certainly, it did not hurt Romania's cause.

The Anglo-Jewish Association analysed the war veteran episode with the following words, blaming the obscure manoeuvres of Romanian political life:

> 'But once the enthusiasm had died down, bad impulses regained the upper hand. Politicians, and even the heads of the Liberal Party, recognising the danger to themselves of allowing a weapon which had always served them against their opponents to fall from their hands, returned to their former attitude, and the anti-Semites, who had kept quiet for a time, again raised their heads.'[73]

However, the war veteran affair did not attract much Anglo-Jewish attention. The Conjoint Committee mentioned the issue briefly in correspondence with the Foreign Office, but did not examine it in detail. Besides, the letter in which the matter was touched upon was written as late as in summer 1914. The Conjoint drew attention to the fact that the path to Jewish naturalisation was being barred, while, at the same time, wider political rights were being proposed for Romanian peasants on the grounds of their active participation in the Second Balkan War. The Conjoint implied that the Jews in Romania were now worse off than in the 1870s, when the earlier group of veterans had been naturalised, because even military accomplishment could no longer help them to obtain citizenship.[74]

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73 *AJA Annual Report 1913-1914*, 11.

74 FO 371/2089/32066, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 14 July 1914.

9 ROMANIAN JEWS, JEWISH DIPLOMACY, AND MINORITY RIGHTS ON THE EVE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

9.1 The Treaty of Bucharest

Balkan matters were settled in the Treaty of Bucharest after the Second Balkan War. The treaty was concluded on 10 August 1913 by the delegates of Bulgaria, Roumania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece. Romania's political position was strong at the time. Since Bulgaria had been badly defeated in the war, Romania was able to acquire the area in Dobrudja that it had originally wanted during the earlier negotiations that had been conducted in spring: i.e. the area from Turtukaia to Dobritch.[1]

Carol Iancu regards the Bucharest Conference as the first major diplomatic conference after the Congress of Berlin 1878 in which the Romanian Jewish question could at last have been resolved.[2] However, this did not come to pass and the legal position of Romanian Jews remained as it had been before: the Jewish question was ignored in the peace settlement.

The situation was accurately assessed by Lucien Wolf in summer 1913, albeit highly pessimistically and sentimentally:

> 'Things in the Balkans are turning out badly for us. The wicked are flourishing, and it seems that only wickedness can flourish in those regions. We shall get nothing out of Romania now that she is cock of the walk, and the Powers will not dare to ask her for any concessions on the Jewish question.'[3]

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1 Helmreich 1969, 395-396. In September, Bulgaria negotiated separately with the Ottoman Empire. In the Treaty of Constantinople, 29 September 1913, The Ottoman Empire recovered Adrianople and the adjoining areas it had lost in the First Balkan War.

2 Iancu 1992, 11.

3 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/4, Wolf to Montefiore, 22 July 1913.

The problem of the tolerance clause was touched on at the Bucharest Peace Conference but no solution was found. The United States, which was active in the Romanian Jewish question in 1913, had wished for the tolerance clause.[4] In addition, a paragraph referring only to Christians had been mentioned in the negotiations. However, Titu Maiorescu, the Romanian Prime Minister, had believed such a provision to be unnecessary and expressed his willingness to declare verbally that the inhabitants of the new territories would have the same rights as the other inhabitants of Romania. The Conjoint Committee of British Jews dismissed Maiorescu's promises as totally unreliable, in the same way as it had with Romanian representative Mişu's similar assurances in the springtime. Apart from the obvious discrimination against Jews professed by the Romanians, the Conjoint was also worried about the heightened nationalist spirit in the Balkans. According to the Conjoint, the nationalistic atmosphere could later result in racial problems in other Balkan countries, especially as Romania was showing such a bad example to the rest of the South-Eastern European governments.[5]

During the months following the Treaty of Bucharest, bilateral peace treaties were also concluded. These documents included provisions for the minority rights of populations residing in annexed territories. None of these, however, referred to the Jews in Dobrudja — or to anyone in Dobrudja, for that matter — since these treaties were between Turkey and Balkan countries. Clauses in the Turko-Bulgarian (29 September 1913, Constantinople), Greco-Turkish (14 November 1913, Athens), and Turko-Serbian (14 March 1914, Constantinople) treaties were very similar to each other and addressed exemption from military service, equal rights for the inhabitants of the new territories, the rights of Muslim religious communities, and the right to choose one's nationality and to emigrate.[6] At the same time, Romania managed to obtain guarantees for the Vlachs in Macedonia through an exchange of notes between the other Balkan governments.[7]

The Great Powers did not interfere with the arrangements made in the aftermath of the Second Balkan War. Britain was not particularly interested in the provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest and did not believe that the matters which were incorporated in the treaty had much relevance to Britain itself. The Foreign Office also feared that if there was to be any concerted action by the Powers it would drag on, without any definite conclusion in the near future.[8]

The Foreign Office was of the opinion (which they did not communicate to the Conjoint Committee of British Jews) that Romania was bound to treat its new subjects, the Dobrudjan Jews, 'as badly as' the other Jews residing in Romania. Concerning the perennial issue of united action by the Great Powers, the Foreign Office believed it was impossible to persuade all the others to act.

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4 For American efforts in this matter, see Fink 2004, 62-64.

5 FO 371/1742/46483, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 13 Oct. 1913.

6 Boeckh 1996, 80-81, 86, 90.

7 Boeckh 1996, 353.

8 Bridge 1972, 203-204.

On the other hand, the Foreign Office was sure that if joint action was taken, it would secure new guarantees of civil liberties in the Balkans and, more specifically, in Romania.[9] Thus, the Foreign Office had not completely deserted the idea of intervention on behalf of the Romanian Jews, but was, as always, pessimistic about the ability of the Great Powers to demonstrate a collective stance.

Western Jewish organisations did not give up after the disappointing outcome of the Bucharest Peace Conference. American Jews and sympathetic gentiles in the United States were especially active in autumn 1913. Americans — Jews and non-Jews — also proposed a conference to be held in January 1914 in Berlin, where a formal protest against the treatment of Romanian Jews would be made and forwarded to King Carol of Romania. This ambitious scheme did not materialise, as European Jewish leaders did not agree on the plans.[10]

At this point, Luigi Luzzatti in Italy renewed his assault against Romania. He proposed the establishment of an international committee which would act for the liberation of Romanian Jews. As suggested by Luzzatti, a pressure group was organised by the Alliance Israélite Universelle in co-operation with the Romanian Jews. Regular appeals to the Romanian government were made and typically dismissive replies were received.[11]

In Britain, the Conjoint Committee also renewed its attacks in autumn 1913, after it had become evident that the Treaty of Bucharest did not contain any provisions guaranteeing civil and religious liberties in the annexed territories. The Conjoint did not believe it was possible to revise the Bucharest Treaty, but it thought that 'something might be done in the way of pressing for the non-approval of the Treaties except on conditions.'[12] The campaign was orchestrated by Lucien Wolf, although the letters sent to the Foreign Office bore the signatures of David L. Alexander and Claude G. Montefiore, in the usual manner of the Conjoint.

At this juncture, a piece of important correspondence between the Foreign Office and the Conjoint Committee was written. In late October 1913, a Foreign Office letter was sent to the Conjoint Committee that has sometimes been interpreted as being extremely encouraging and positive, both by contemporary Jews and by modern historians. The note was signed by Assistant Under-Secretary Eyre Crowe[13]. The document was very short, only two paragraphs:

> 'I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of October 13th and to observe in reply that the articles of the Treaty of Berlin, to which you refer, are in no way abrogated by the territorial changes in the Near East, and

9 FO 371/1742/46483, minute by Montgomery, 14 Oct. 1913.

10 Iancu 1992, 61.

11 Armon 1993, 535 onwards; Iancu 1992, 62-66.

12 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 25 Sept. 1913.

13 At the time, Sir Eyre Crowe handled Eastern Department (to which Romania belonged) matters in addition to those of the Western Department of the Foreign Office. Crowe is best known for his role as an expert in the Foreign Office policy towards Germany.

> remain as binding as they have been hitherto as regards all territories covered by those articles at the time when the treaty was signed.
>
> His Majesty's Government will, however, consult with the other Powers as to the policy of reaffirming in some way the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin for the protection of the religious and other liberties of minorities in the territories referred to, when the question of giving formal recognition by the Porte to the recent territorial changes in the Balkan Peninsula is raised.'[14]

Mark Levene has argued that the document was 'the most important breakthrough for the Conjoint since 1878', i.e. since the Treaty of Berlin. Levene further claims that the Foreign Office promised to bring the subject up internationally and to connect it with the Berlin Treaty.[15]

As for contemporary views, the *Jewish Chronicle* considered the document to be very satisfactory.[16] The Conjoint itself was happy with the Foreign Office attitude:

> 'We are desired by the Committee to thank you for this communication, and to express their lively satisfaction with the assurances you are good enough to give them, and which appear to them to meet the necessities of the case they had the honour of placing before you.'[17]

However, the Conjoint presumed that any action in the future would depend on the other European Powers.[18] Lucien Wolf, in his book on diplomacy over the Jewish question in 1919, also mentioned the Foreign Office letter, though only briefly. He called the Foreign Office promise of consultation with the other Powers concerning the sanctioning of the border changes an 'important assurance'.[19]

Interestingly, the Conjoint Committee was not the only pressure group to act on the matter of civil and religious liberties in the Balkans in the autumn of 1913. Questions concerning Balkan minority protection began to appear in Parliament. The Balkan Committee, a vocal group preoccupied with Macedonian affairs and a vehicle of Noel Buxton, MP, wished that the peace settlement after the Second Balkan War would include a guarantee on minority rights. However, this was not the primary interest of the Balkan Committee; their main object was to achieve the partition of Macedonia along ethnic lines and according to the wishes of the Macedonian residents.[20] These efforts — for

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14 FO 371/1742/46483, Assistant Under-Secretary Eyre Crowe to Alexander and Montefiore, 29 Oct. 1913.

15 Levene 1981, 57-58. Levene's 1992 version of his study on Lucien Wolf's diplomacy omits the phrase 'most important breakthrough' and argues instead that the Conjoint was 'on the verge of a breakthrough' in 1913. Levene 1992, 19.

16 *JC* leader, 7 Nov. 1913.

17 FO 371/1742/52255, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 17 Nov. 1913.

18 BDBJ 3121/A/1, BDBJ annual meeting, 8 Feb. 1914.

19 Wolf 1919, 47.

20 FO 371/1843/35809, Balkan Committee (Noel Buxton, Edward Boyle and Arthur G. Symonds) to Mallet, 1 Aug. 1913.

the partition, not for the minority clause — were deemed totally unrealistic by the Foreign Office.[21]

The All-India Moslem League, watchful of the rights of their coreligionists in the Balkans, had also written to Grey and received the same reply on the Berlin Treaty principles as the Conjoint.[22] The Foreign Office grouped the Conjoint and the All-India Moslem League appeals together, and it was mentioned in its internal memos that identical replies to their letters had been produced.[23] The aforementioned Foreign Office letter, sent to the Conjoint Committee, appears to have been a standard response to concerns expressed by interest groups on religious liberty issues at the time. It cannot be interpreted as especially significant or unusual, although, without doubt, it defined the British policy as regards to the Balkan annexations. The course of policy that the Foreign Office adopted related to all minorities in the Balkans and not explicitly or primarily to the Jews in Dobrudja or Romania.

Rabbi Moses Gaster became involved — again — in a minor controversy over the Romanian business in early November 1913. Gaster argued that the British Jewry should proceed carefully when trying to decide what to do next over the Romanian question. According to his estimation, Romanian Jews did not want foreign intervention, but this did not necessarily entail that foreign Jews should not take action. This statement was somewhat confusing; Gaster in fact seemed to argue that Romanian Jewish opinions could well be ignored. Claude G. Montefiore, president of the Anglo-Jewish Association, replied that any effort by the Conjoint Committee was totally independent of the 'League of the Romanian Jews' — by which he must have meant the Union of Native Jews.[24]

Apparently, the Romanian Jewish view on foreign intervention was ambivalent at the time. As will be shown below, Adolf Stern, president of the Union of Native Jews, travelled around Europe pursuing a campaign of pressure, and supplied foreign activists such as Luigi Luzzatti with background material for newspaper articles that were sure to provoke the Romanian government. This was exactly the kind of foreign intervention and international Jewish meddling that the Romanian government particularly disliked.

In Romania, the Union of Native Jews worked zealously in autumn 1913 on behalf of the Balkan war veterans, whose hopes of naturalisation had faded fast after the war against Bulgaria had ended. The Union adopted a resolution in November, requesting the naturalisation of all Jewish veterans. A petition, with a memo on the Jewish situation, was sent to the government. In their appeal, they argued that the prevailing circumstances were not in the best

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21 FO 371/1843/35809, minute by Montgomery, 3 Aug. 1913.

22 *The Times*, 4 Dec. 1913.

23 FO 371/2110/72/611, minute by clerk Claud Russell, 5 Jan. 1914.

24 *JC*, 14 Nov. 1913, open letters from Gaster to Montefiore and from Montefiore to Gaster.

interests of Romania. They also reminded the Romanian government of Jewish patriotism during the war.[25]

At the same time, anti-Jewish currents gained strength in Romania. *Liga Culturăla*, or the Cultural League, was a nationalist organisation which promoted the union of all ethnic Romanians, mainly by demanding the annexation of Transylvania to Romania. The league was also anti-Jewish, and it opposed any improvement in the Jewish legal position and relaxation of the conditions for obtaining naturalisation. When Jewish demands intensified in late 1913, so too did the League's operations. In November 1913, simultaneously with Jewish meetings, the League organised a number of meetings around the country.[26]

In Britain, the *Jewish Chronicle* ran a series of very short articles on the Cultural League, but it did not provide any in-depth analysis on the League or its aims.[27] As for the British minister in Bucharest, Sir George Barclay, he failed to connect the League to the Jewish question. He reported that the protests, which he did not take seriously at all, were against the Hungarians in Transylvania.[28]

Although the realisation of citizenship for war veterans had for some time seemed unlikely, the matter was settled for certain in early 1914, albeit not in the way that the Jews would have liked. In spite of some willingness on the part of the Conservative government to find a compromise, the government eventually chose to explain that it could not ignore the opinion of the Romanian people, i.e. the Cultural League. Public opinion had changed during the last months of 1913, and the 'mood' was now against any concessions to the Jewish war veterans. At the beginning of 1914, the Liberals formed a new government, which immediately voiced its commitment to keep the citizenship law unchanged.[29] The Union of Native Jews continued its work for emancipation throughout the spring and summer, with petitions, newspaper articles, and pamphlets.[30] All this occurred without any widespread interest from Anglo-Jewish leaders and British governmental circles. However, the Conjoint Committee was getting involved in a new and ambitious project on behalf of Romanian Jews, called the International Committee for the Defence of Religious Liberty.

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25 Iancu 1992, 64-65; Schneider 1981, 618.

26 Bernstein 1918, 121-123; Iancu 1992, 65-66.

27 *JC*, 17 Oct. 1913, 28 Nov. 1913 and 12 Dec. 1913.

28 FO 371/2089/15301, G. Barclay to Grey, 2 April 1914.

29 Bernstein 1918, 123; Schneider 1981, 619.

30 See, for example, *JC*, 27 Feb. 1914.

9.2 The International Committee for the Defence of Religious Liberty

Mark Levene has argued that the international Jewish campaign around the Romanian question in autumn 1913 and spring 1914 was reminiscent of the Berlin Congress campaign of 1878 in its strength and intensity. Lucien Wolf was the major British player in organising the crusade. He worked in co-operation with Jews in other Western countries and with Romanian Jewish leaders.[31] Carol Iancu claims that, as the result of the joint ventures of foreign and Romanian Jews, the number of Jewish naturalisations in Romania was the largest ever in 1913: individual naturalisations numbering 158.[32]

Although both Levene and Iancu maintain that a large-scale Jewish campaign was waged at this stage, clear indications of the struggle are not so easy to find in contemporary British sources. The *Jewish Chronicle*, for instance, did not pay much attention to the topic; this was particularly apparent in spring 1914 when there was practically nothing written on the subject of the 'international campaign' and very little on Romanian Jews as such.

However, when inspected more closely, the matter looks quite different, which is why, in this case, the internal deliberations of the Conjoint Committee[33] need to be studied in detail. In the first half of the year 1914, the Conjoint, and more specifically Lucien Wolf, acted in co-operation with the Romanian Jewish leader, Adolf Stern. The campaign was intensive, but, as we shall see later, all their heated activity was only in the preparation of a battle, with no results to show for such complicated efforts. However, the episode is important as it was a fine example of Anglo-Jewish action behind the scenes, away from the publicity.

The starting point of the international Jewish campaign was the plan sketched by Adolf Stern in consultation with Luigi Luzzatti. Their strategy embraced two elements. Firstly, there was an idea promoted by Luzzatti called 'the International Committee for the Defence of Religious Liberty'. Luzzatti had decided to publish an appeal with the signatures of international notables, and had managed to win over a number of statesmen in France, Italy, and the United States. Arthur Balfour and Lord Rosebery[34] were to be approached as potential British signatories. Secondly, a more specific part of the plan was a pressure campaign that was set to coincide with the revision of the Romanian

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31 Levene 1981, 58; Levene 1992, 19. Levene does not mention Adolf Stern's role in the events and manoeuvrings. He seems to imply that the campaign was mainly Lucien Wolf's own project.

32 Iancu 1994, 87, document no 17: Statistics of Jewish naturalisations between 1879 and 1913; Iancu 1992, 70.

33 Fortunately, Conjoint files on these matters have been well preserved.

34 Balfour was a well-known politician and former prime minister. Rosebery was also a former prime minister, but he had already retired from politics. His wife Hannah de Rothschild, who had died in 1890, had been Jewish.

Constitution in autumn 1914.[35] Stern was disappointed with the war veteran episode and the fact that the plans for a revision of the Romanian Constitution did not include any provisions for the Jewish legal position. Revision proposals appeared to be mainly concerned with land reform and the extension of franchise.[36]

At the same time as Stern and Luzzatti planned the 'International Committee for the Defence of Religious Liberty', an American activist, Henry Green, was also forming a committee on behalf of Romanian Jews. Green was fiercely disapproved of by the official Anglo-Jewish groups. His maverick action was seen as counter-productive and allegedly interfered with other, more respectable and well-organised Jewish manoeuvres. Green's proposed committee also embarrassingly resembled Stern's and Luzzatti's committee.[37] When Green arrived in London to seek support for his project in December 1913, Lucien Wolf warned Claude Montefiore of this 'notorious' person:

> 'I think you ought to warn all your friends within reach.'[38]

The very same Henry Green had harassed the British government in summer 1912 with highly emotional appeals on behalf of Romanian Jews. Green also corresponded industriously with the government of his own country. Although his appeals had no real importance, let alone any consequence, they are interesting as examples of extremely sentimental cries for help on behalf of Romanian Jews. It was not clear what Green actually wanted from the Foreign Office; he simply wished the British government to 'stop the torture' of the Romanian Jews. He also believed the British government to be ignorant of the situation in Romania, which, in fact, it was not.[39] When Green renewed his appeals in 1913, he was simply ridiculed in the Foreign Office.[40]

In late autumn 1913, Lucien Wolf decided that the Conjoint Committee could not ignore Adolf Stern's scheme for large-scale international action on behalf of Romanian Jews, especially as Stern had acquired mighty supporters on the continent.[41] Stern's ambitious proposal was discussed in the Conjoint meeting in December 1913.[42] Once the Conjoint had agreed to support Stern's plans, it turned out that the Conjoint leaders would have to do most of the work. Naturally, the bulk of the responsibility fell on Lucien Wolf. Complicated activity followed from late 1913 to summer 1914, with an endless stream of correspondence to activists within Britain and abroad.

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35 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/1, Adolf Stern to Wolf, 18 Feb. 1914.

36 At least one account of the revision plans was published in Britain. See E. J. Dillon's article in *The Contemporary Review*, June 1914, 875-880.

37 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/4, Wolf to Montefiore, 9 Oct. 1913.

38 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/4, Wolf to Montefiore, 21 Dec. 1913

39 FO 371/1464/29127, Henry Green (Director of the American Immigration and Distribution League) to Grey, 27 June 1912.

40 FO 371/1742/39605, minute by Montgomery, 29 Aug. 1913.

41 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/4, Wolf to Alexander, 26 Nov, 1913.

42 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 8 Dec. 1913.

In spring 1914, Lucien Wolf was involved in translating and revising the programme of the International Committee for the Defence of Religious Liberty. The manifesto focused shamelessly on the Romanian problem, while linking it with the wider issue of religious liberty everywhere. However, there was nothing specific on any other matters, and it is impossible to guess what other fields besides the Romanian situation the International Committee was intending to cover.

Lucien Wolf was not entirely happy with the original text of the manifesto, and he decided to modify and water it down when drafting the English version, although the text could not be changed without consulting the other persons and organisations involved. Wolf also feared that Lord Rothschild — whose feelings had to be taken into account — would not like the document:

> 'It is long and wordy, and I can imagine Lord Rothschild sniffing at it very unsympathetically when we approach him.'[43]

The committee manifesto shed light on the Romanian situation, repeating all the standard verses starting from the Romanian non-compliance of the Berlin Treaty. However, any hostility towards Romania was denied, and, on the contrary, Romania was called a 'fine country' in the document. Jewish emancipation was thought to be in the best interests of Romania. The details of the committee organisation and programme were to be published later. The manifesto sketched the general aims of the committee high-mindedly but vaguely:

> 'Injustice cannot hold out for long against the pressure of civilised opinion. The formation of the present Committee is explained and justified by the contention that questions of general human interest may and should be the subject of international action, without distinction of race or nationality. The Committee will form a new link in the chain which is to unite mankind in the brotherhood of universal sympathy.'[44]

The manifesto and the entangled intrigues surrounding it were increasingly embarrassing for the Conjoint Committee in April 1914. Nothing appeared to come of the ambitious scheme. David Alexander, the Board of Deputies president, was particularly pessimistic:

> 'It seems very doubtful whether Stern's project will ever come to maturity.'[45]

Foreign statesmen who were signatories of the manifesto comprised Luigi Luzzatti himself, Emilio Visconti-Venosta from Italy, Alexandre Ribot and Georges Clemenceau from France, and Theodore Roosevelt from the United States.[46] For some reason, it was the former prime ministers whose signatures

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43 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/1, Wolf to Alexander and Montefiore, 7 April 1914

44 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/103, International Committee for the Defence of Religious Liberty manifesto, translated and modified by Wolf, March/April 1914. See also Luzzatti's own account on this matter, Luzzatti 1930, 477-479.

45 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/1, Alexander to Wolf, 23 April 1914.

46 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/2, Wolf to Stern, 10 July 1914.

were almost obsessively coveted by Adolf Stern and Luigi Luzzatti.[47] Lucien Wolf and the Conjoint Committee of British Jews apparently had to go along with this line.

Just as Wolf had suspected, Lord Rothschild, indeed, did not seem to like the manifesto. Rothschild did not want to show it to Lord Rosebery at all, since he did not believe Rosebery would sign it.[48] He was right: Rosebery, after reading the manifesto later, did not want to participate in the project, insisting that he did not express any opinions on political matters any more, let alone on foreign affairs.[49]

Arthur Balfour, although he agreed with the manifesto in principle, did not actually sign it. He did write a separate letter, however, in which he expressed his approval and support.[50] Balfour's involvement in the campaign is mentioned by Jason Tomes in his study on Balfour's thought on foreign policy. Tomes concludes that Balfour was not very enthusiastic about the project, despite the fact that he agreed to support it.[51]

It was not only the manifesto that was in Adolf Stern's and Lucien Wolf's programme in spring and summer 1914. Some new ideas were introduced. The Conjoint Committee was now planning to print a document collection, a 'Blue Book', on the Romanian situation. The volume was supposed to contain correspondence with the Foreign Office and a list of Romanian anti-Jewish legislation.[52] Stern further planned a newspaper campaign which would have included a number of articles on the Jewish question in leading European newspapers. To add to the list, another petition was to be presented at the Inter-parliamentary Conference in Stockholm.[53] Stern travelled around Europe on his campaign, also visiting Britain and meeting the leaders of the Conjoint Committee.[54]

In early summer 1914, Luzzatti suddenly and very frustratingly decided he wanted to put the plan on hold at least until October or November. It was alleged in the British Jewish circles that the Romanian Prime Minister, Brătianu, had managed to frighten Luzzatti — Luzzatti was still in correspondence with Brătianu. Luzzatti himself, however, later claimed that he had only been saddened, not intimidated, by Brătianu's attitude and had concluded that the

47 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/1, Wolf to Montefiore, 12 May 1914.

48 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/1, Wolf to Alexander and Montefiore, 15 April 1914. Luzzatti, on the other hand, later claimed Rothschild had agreed to become a member of his committee. See Luzzatti 1930, 479, for the list of international notables who supported him.

49 BDBJ 3121/C11/12/103, copy of a letter from Lord Rosebery to Lady Battersea, 9 June, 1914.

50 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/1. Wolf to Stern, 20 May 1914.

51 Tomes 1997, p. 202.

52 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/2, Wolf to Elias Schwarzfeld, 8 July 1914.

53 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/2, Stern to Wolf, 18 July 1914.

54 BDBJ 3121/C11A/1, Conjoint meeting, 5 May 1914. Adolf Stern was also present in the meeting, but, unfortunately, particulars on the discussion are not included in the minutes.

situation of Jews in Romania was hopeless. Nevertheless, Brătianu had directly asked Luzzatti to abandon his campaign in a letter of late April 1914.[55]

Whatever the real reason for Luzzatti's change of heart, it was impossible to drive the International Committee for the Defence of Religious Liberty manifesto through without him. He had, after all, set the example for the other signatories of the appeal. Consequently, the whole scheme, which had been so painstakingly prepared, collapsed. This was particularly unpleasant from the Anglo-Jewish perspective since the other components of the campaign were by then ready to be publicised and a number of documents had been compiled and translated. Adolf Stern still wished to continue with the plans, and, unlike Lucien Wolf, he did not think there was a necessary link between the manifesto and other parts of his plan.[56]

As the Conjoint Committee had feared, Arthur Balfour asked for his letter of support to be returned, ostensibly in order to make alterations to it.[57] Inevitably, the outbreak of the First World War dealt the final blow to the ambitious plan. Lucien Wolf put an end to all campaign preparations in early August. Every aspect of the project hence failed to materialise.[58]

9.3 Minority rights in the Balkans

In early 1914, the Conjoint Foreign Committee of British Jews busied itself with the international campaign initiated by Adolf Stern and Luigi Luzzatti. However, there were other aspects of the Romanian Jewish question that were also discussed. One matter was related to minority rights in the Balkan area in general, while the other concern was the unresolved situation of Jews in Southern Dobrudja.

The British government was active in the question of minority rights in the Balkans in the spring of 1914. In January 1914, Prime Minister Grey sent a letter to British ambassadors in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and St. Petersburg, to enquire about the attitudes of the other Powers towards the recognition of the territorial annexations in the Balkans. The abolishment of capitulations, or consular privileges, in the Ottoman Empire was also related to the matter. Were the capitulations abolished when the Macedonian territories passed into the hands of the Balkan Christian governments, as the Balkan governments themselves liked to argue? Grey believed that the new arrangements marked a departure from the Treaty of Berlin and thus could not acquire formal validity without the consent of the signatory Powers. The British government wanted to regularise the situation as soon as possible and expressed its special interest in

55 Luzzatti 1930, 493-494.

56 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/2, Wolf to Schwarzfeld, 29 June 1914 and Stern to Wolf, 18 July 1914.

57 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/2, Alexander to Wolf, 31 July 1914.

58 BDBJ 3121/C11/2/5/2, Wolf to Alexander, 3 Aug. 1914.

the problem of minority protection. As to recognition of the annexations, Britain's main argument was that it should be made subject to a guarantee on national and religious minority rights in the annexed territories.[59]

British Jews, as already mentioned above, were interested in the rights of all Jewish populations in the Balkans. In a wider context, the minority question concerned all national and religious minorities living in the annexed territories of Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, and the new state of Albania. It was not the Anglo-Jewry that pushed for the rights of other — Christian and Moslem — minorities, but here other organisations and interests came into the picture.

The Macedonian issue further complicated the matter: it was impossible to solve the problem of dispersed and mixed nationalities in the province, which was now partitioned between Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Therefore, the minority protection clause acquired additional significance. Considering the role of Macedonia, the British government probably thought that the Romanian Jewish question was less important than other, more inflammable aspects of the Balkan minority question. As will be seen below, the British government led a consistent policy of putting the Dobrudjan — and the Romanian — problem in line with the minority protection plans in general.

The Romanian government was worried about the form and content of any potential minority protection clause or guarantee. Nicolae Mişu, the Romanian Minister in London, called at the Foreign Office a number of times in March 1914, enquiring about British policy on Balkan minorities. The Romanians seemed to be worried about any prospect of altering or undermining the Treaty of Bucharest, which was not surprising as they wanted to make sure Southern Dobrudja was to remain in their hands. They did not welcome any action on the part of the Powers. Romania maintained that the Treaty of Berlin still remained in force as to the minority matters — but the Romanian interpretation of what this actually meant certainly differed from the British, let alone the Anglo-Jewish, interpretation.[60]

Eyre Crowe, the Assistant Under Secretary, tried to assure Mişu that Britain did not intend to reopen the Treaty of Bucharest. He was not eager to inform Mişu of the tepid replies that the Foreign Office was currently receiving from the other Powers, although he later wrote to Mişu, admitting that the minority clause had indeed been discussed among the Powers. It appears as though the Jews were not mentioned at all in the discussion between Crowe and Mişu, except in connection with the earlier Foreign Office reply to the Conjoint, promising to consult the other Powers on the minority clause.[61] Later, when Mişu was granted an audience with Grey, the Jewish problem still was

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59 FO 371/2110/72/72, Grey to Ambassadors Francis Bertie (Paris), Edward Goschen (Berlin), Maurice de Bunsen (Vienna), Rennell Rodd (Rome) and George Buchanan (St. Petersburg), 9 Jan. 1914.

60 FO 371/2110/72/12634, minute by Crowe, 14 March 1914; FO 371/2110/72/12389, minute by Crowe, 19 March 1914.

61 FO 371/2110/72/12634. minute by Crowe, 14 March 1914, FO 371/2110/72/12389, minute by Crowe, 19 March 1914

not mentioned. Mişu expressed his satisfaction with the British position, since Britain was not attempting to modify the Treaty of Bucharest.[62]

As a result of the Balkan Wars, Romania became practically independent of the alliances. While Romania did not break its alliance with Austria, relations between the two countries worsened. The situation on the eve of the First World War was such that both alliances courted Romania.[63] The British Minister in Bucharest, George Barclay, believed that in the event of war Romania was unlikely to carry out any arrangement with Austria — and this was exactly what happened when the First World War broke out. Romania was strong after the Balkan Wars: it had acquired the territory it wanted with very little cost.[64] Russia and France tried to exploit the change in Romania's position, while Britain did not really want to get involved in the matter. Consequently, Russia accused the British Foreign Office and the British minister in Bucharest of being too inactive.[65] Britain did not want to meddle in purely Balkan problems — those problems that did not touch the Straits, Asiatic Turkey, and the Mediterranean. If Britain had to become involved in Balkan questions, it wished to preserve the present alignment of power and tried to limit the scale of the conflict.[66]

A worry that Russians had was the fear that Britain was willing to push for a new minority rights guarantee which would irritate the Romanian government.[67] As a reply to this accusation, Grey argued that British interests embraced all minorities who were covered by the Berlin Treaty, not only those residing in Romania. Presently, the main question was the situation of those minorities that resided in the recently annexed territories.[68] Grey therefore hinted at the fate of the Dobrudjan Jews, but did not particularly single them out. He also appeared to imply that the Romanian Jewish question as a whole was not to be forgotten.

The status of the territory annexed by Romania, Southern Dobrudja, came under scrutiny again in spring and early summer 1914, when the Romanian government set up the administrative structure of the province. The British minister in Bucharest, George Barclay, was not very well-informed as far as the new legal arrangements in the region were concerned. In June 1914, Barclay complained that he had not received a French-language copy of the Dobrudjan administrative law. He had tried to read about the law in the newspapers but, due to his limited knowledge of the Romanian language, could not quite grasp

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62 FO 371/2110/72/13558, Grey to G. Barclay, 23 March 1914.

63 Schroeder 1976, 3. The section of Schroeder's paper discussing the British attitude towards the Balkans and Romania is based on Arthur Nicolson's correspondence in the Foreign Office private papers (FO 800) series.

64 FO 371/2089/13944, G. Barclay to Grey, 11 March 1914, annual report of 1913.

65 FO 371/2089/23138, G. Barclay to Grey, 24 May 1914; FO 371/2089/23138. Grey to G. Barclay, 2 June 1914.

66 Schroeder 1976, 15, 18-19.

67 FO 371/2089/23138, G. Barclay to Grey, 24 May 1914.

68 FO 371/2089/23138, Grey to G. Barclay, 2 June 1914.

the provisions of the law! However, he concluded that there 'appeared to be' no discrimination against Jews.[69]

Jews were not the only section of the Southern Dobrudjan population that sought foreign support. Claud Russell, a clerk in the Foreign Office, remarked after reading a complaint sent by representatives of the Bulgarian population:

> 'I do not see what can be done for them and I am afraid they have nothing to look forward to under the "rights of minorities" reaffirmation. H. M. Govt. cannot intervene effectively on their behalf with a Govt. like that of Roumania.'[70]

However, if George Barclay was not sure what the legal position of Dobrudjan residents was going to be, British Jews were not much more knowledgeable about the matter either. The *Jewish Chronicle* hinted on several occasions in late 1913 that the position of the Dobrudjan inhabitants — Jews and non-Jews alike — would turn out to be ambiguous and that their status would be that of second-class Romanian citizens.[71] This assessment had been repeated over and over again since early 1913. However, the *Jewish Chronicle* did not write anything specific on the circumstances in Dobrudja nor did it base its views on any facts. When the Dobrudjan administrative law was finally adopted in Romania, it escaped the notice of the *Jewish Chronicle* altogether.

The Romanian law on the administration of the new territories was passed in April 1914. Bulgarian citizens living in the Southern Dobrudjan district on the date of the Bucharest Treaty of 11 August 1913 were to become Romanian citizens. Thus, the Jewish inhabitants of Dobrudja were granted Romanian citizenship — at least on paper. The Jews, as a group or a special category, were not singled out in the law, even though some provisions were aimed at the Moslem inhabitants.[72] Therefore, the worst scenario for the Jewish community — the discriminatory treatment of Dobrudjan Jews on the basis of their religion — did not come to pass. There were, nevertheless, some serious shortcomings in the new piece of legislation as to political rights and citizenship procedures. These stipulations revealed that the fears expressed by, for example, the *Jewish Chronicle* had materialised to some extent; the inhabitants of Dobrudja did not acquire political rights identical to those of their Romanian counterparts.

The Dobrudjans were not happy with the new administration, but their complaints did not directly refer to the Jewish situation in the province. Criticism centred on the fact that the Dobrudjans were going to form a new category of Romanian subjects without full rights. The authorities established special commissions to deal with the citizenship process. The Dobrudjans did

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69 FO 371/1917/25550, G. Barclay to Grey, 3 June 1914. This despatch can only be found in the Bulgarian files, although it arrived from Bucharest. In general, British representatives in Romania were able to obtain information more easily than George Barclay was in this particular case. Problems like Barclay's were therefore rare occurrences.

70 FO 371/1917/32730, minute by Russell, 21 July 1914.

71 *JC*, 12 Nov. 1913 and 28 Nov. 1913.

72 FO 371/2089/28020, G. Barclay to Grey, 13 June 1914, enclosure: copy of the Administration Law, 31 March/13 April 1913.

not obtain Romanian citizenship automatically but only after inquiries were made as to their eligibility. This undoubtedly left some room for manoeuvre on the part of the authorities. In addition, Dobrudjan self-governmental institutions were crushed, the province was deprived of parliamentary representation, some tracts of land under the old Ottoman ownership system were confiscated, and schools and churches became Romanian-controlled.[73]

One detail that was systematically omitted in the papers and publications of Jewish organisations, and in British official documents, was the number of Southern Dobrudjan Jews. Dobrudja was not a significant Jewish centre. The number of Jews in the neighbouring Northern Dobrudja was relatively small, approximately 4,000.[74] The Conjoint Committee did not give any figures on the number of Dobrudjan Jews in its extensive correspondence with the Foreign Office in 1913-1914. No reference was made to the number of Jews on whose behalf the intensive diplomatic campaign was waged. The *Jewish Chronicle* did not feature any data either, and, as to the Foreign Office, the British diplomats ignored the matter.

The leader of the Union of Native Jews, Adolf Stern, did mention a figure for the number of Southern Dobrudjan Jews. Stern criticised the Romanian Government for the manner in which it had been able to overlook the legal position of all Romanian Jews by granting citizenship to a group of Dobrudjan Jews numbering only 20-30.[75] Stern's estimates were extremely small and make the international Jewish crusade on behalf of the group appear somewhat out of proportion. In this light, it would not have been surprising if the embarrassing smallness of the Dobrudjan Jewish community was the reason for the failure of the Conjoint Committee to inform the Foreign Office and the British public about the number of Dobrudjan Jews. When intervening on behalf of Romanian Jews, Jewish activists usually drew attention to the size of the Romanian Jewish population, sometimes overestimating the number.

The total population of the ceded Southern Dobrudjan province was in the region of 300,000, with estimates ranging from 280,000[76] to 310,000. Turks and Tartars formed the largest ethnic group in the region (47.7%), followed closely by Bulgarians (44.3%). Other minorities included Romanians, Armenians, and Greeks. It is striking to notice that Romanians formed only a minority of 8,532 persons or 2.4%, meaning that the border change certainly could not be justified by the ethnic composition of the area.[77]

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73 FO 371/2089/28020, G. Barclay to Grey, 13 June 1914, enclosure: copy of the Administration Law, 31 March/13 April 1913; see also an article in *The Times*, 13 May 1914. *The Times* article examines the question from the Bulgarian viewpoint and does not scrutinise Jewish grievances.

74 *RG 1899*, xlvi-xlviii.

75 Schneider 1981, 615-616. This figure refers to the Silistra area only.

76 Helmreich 1969, 453; Ischirkoff 1919, 110.

77 FO 371/1917/18343, British Minister in Sofia Henry Bax-Ironside to Grey, 17 April 1914. This document is in the Bulgarian volume. Another estimate of the percentage of ethnic Romanian population in Dobrudja, by Boeckh, is very similar: 2.2%. See Boeckh 1996, 49.

For reasonably detailed information on the number of Jews in the ceded territory, Bulgarian sources prove to be useful. It is also not likely that the Bulgarians had any motive for distorting the statistics as far as the Jews were concerned — they were too busy trying to demonstrate that very few Romanians, as opposed to many Bulgarians, were living in Dobrudja. The Bulgarian data would imply that there were at least 600 Jews in Southern Dobrudja: 549 in Silistra and Dobritch together, a few dozen in other towns, and still some more, undoubtedly, in the villages.[78] If the estimation of 600 plus is accepted as correct, it would mean that the percentage of the Jewish population in the province was approximately 0.2%. The Conjoint Committee was also determined to get a clause on civil and religious liberties, referring to the newly annexed areas, to be included in any international legal document concerning the Balkans. This was a direct continuation of the policy that the Conjoint had begun as early as December 1912. The matter was discussed in the Conjoint's meetings again in spring 1914 and, especially, in the correspondence between Lucien Wolf and other Anglo-Jewish notables.

The Conjoint Committee wanted to make the recognition of territorial changes in the Balkans conditional on the respective states accepting the clause. The proposed text was intended to replace the civil liberty articles of the Berlin Treaty — for example, the Romanian Article 44. The main reason for the Conjoint's plans was, unsurprisingly, the behaviour of Romania. The Conjoint Committee actually went as far as helpfully suggesting a draft paragraph that the Foreign Office or other official bodies could use:

> 'All persons of whatever religious belief born of residing in the territories annexed to —, in virtue of the Treaties of London and Bucharest, and who do not claim a foreign nationality and cannot be shown to be claimed as nationals of a foreign state shall be entitled to full civil and political rights as nationals of the Kingdom of —, in accordance with the foregoing stipulations.'[79]

In the Foreign Office, Eyre Crowe did not believe that any clause would affect the attitudes of the Balkan governments. He did not consider the issue to be pending as, for the time being, the British government was not going to recognise the annexation of Southern Dobrudja.[80]

Having, in January, sent out the letter enquiring about the attitudes of other Powers on the recognition of the Balkan territorial annexations, the Foreign Office had awaited the replies. Responses from the Powers were very slow to arrive, at least as far as definite statements of policy were concerned. The British government was not optimistic about the prospects for concerted action. Finally, in early May, Grey was able to put forward an overview of their responses and the resulting British policy, again in a circular to the ambassadors in the major European capitals.

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78 Ischirkoff 1919, 113-114.

79 FO 371/2089/11207, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 12 March 1914.

80 FO 371/2089/11207, minute by Crowe, 18 March 1914; FO 371/2089/32066, minute by Crowe, 22 March 1914.

The French were the only ones that agreed with the British suggestions. They believed that recognition of the annexations could indeed be made subject to a reaffirmation of the Berlin Treaty minority clauses. Italy was also in favour in principle, but it proposed that the Powers should act independently. The others did not want to make an official statement — Russia, especially, was against any further affirmation of minority rights. The British government thereby had to conclude that there was no prospect of a joint Great Power agreement on the matter. Britain decided to act on its own. The Foreign Office intended to notify the Balkan governments about its intention to recognise the annexations on the condition that the Balkan states affirmed the binding force of the Berlin Treaty's minority provisions.[81]

In early April, Grey had informed Noel Buxton in the House of Commons that the Foreign Office planned to ask consuls who were stationed in the Balkans to write reports on minority issues.[82] In May and June, unpleasant reports began to arrive from the Balkan Peninsula. The main problem was the Serbian situation, while there were only relatively minor grievances against Greece and Bulgaria. Romania was not mentioned in this context at all. However, the reports relating to other Balkan countries had some relevance to the Romanian situation as well, since they had an effect on the general British policy on the Balkan minority issues.

The Serbian document described endless atrocities performed by the Serbs in the annexed Macedonian districts: forced emigration, closing of schools, destruction of mosques, confiscation of property, excessive taxation and lack of parliamentary representation, violence, rape, and torture. This oppression affected the Moslem population the most, and there were not many measures taken particularly against Jews — just as in Dobrudja, Jews were not specifically targeted.[83]

The new Serbian territories had a large proportion of non-Serbs. The Serbs formed only a minority, and the other sections of population were comprised of Turks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Vlachs, and Macedonians. The Serbian policy seemed to aim at forced Muslim emigration and the resettlement of the area with ethnic Serbs.[84] In the new Bulgarian territories, both Greeks and Muslims had complaints, but these were relatively minor in comparison to the situation in Serbia. Greece took anti-Slav measures in its new areas in order to drive away the Slav population. As in the other countries, these measures focused on schools and churches, and forced emigration.[85]

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81 FO 371/2110/72/14331, Grey to Bertie, Goschen, de Bunsen, Rodd and Buchanan, 6 May 1914.

82 *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, vol. 60, question: Buxton, answer: Grey, 2 April 1914.

83 FO 371/2110/72/25085, vice-consul in Monastir Charles A. Greig to Chargé D'affaires in Belgrade, Dayrell Crackanthorpe, 25 May 1914.

84 Boechk 1996, 162-173. Boeckh has for the most part used the Foreign Office documents.

85 Boeckh 1996, 198-199, 228-230.

The Foreign Office was pressurised into publishing the controversial reports because of some promises Grey had given to Buxton. The Serbian report was, however, so sensational that it could not be published, as it would have presented the Serbs in an unfairly critical light compared to the other Balkan countries. In any case, Grey had so far refrained from publicising atrocities in the Balkans. Moreover, the report was not considered to be entirely truthful by the Foreign Office establishment.[86]

In this situation, the Foreign Office decided to wait. The officials argued that it would be undesirable to publish reports that showed 'an all-around absence of civil and religious freedom' in the annexed territories.[87] Grey admitted in the House of Commons that the general conditions in the area appeared to be 'disturbed', which in his opinion indicated that the Balkan states should be allowed an opportunity to stabilise the situation in the annexed provinces.[88]

Noel Buxton proposed in June 1914 that a special commission on the treatment of minorities would be set up, or, alternatively, a Balkan conference on the minority questions be held. These suggestions were not welcomed at all by the Foreign Office.[89] On the other hand, the Foreign Office promised the House of Commons that the British government would not recognise the border changes in the Balkans until the governments acknowledged the binding force of the Berlin Treaty in respect to their new territories.[90]

The attitude of the Foreign Office, in reaffirming its commitment to the binding force of the Berlin Treaty in relation to the annexed territories, was warmly welcomed by the main Anglo-Jewish organisations and the *Jewish Chronicle*. David Alexander even boasted in a Board of Deputies meeting that the zealous Conjoint campaign had been the crucial influence in bringing about the government's attitude.[91]

In early July 1914, the Foreign Office prepared a letter to be sent to the British representatives in Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Romania, and Montenegro. The ministers were instructed to communicate the contents to the governments they were accredited to. The British government promised to recognise the territorial annexations on the condition that the minority provisions of the Berlin Treaty were reaffirmed — just as it had planned to do since autumn 1913. However, the draft was not sent after all; it was 'suspended', which was the comment that Crowe wrote in the margin of the draft.[92] Although the reason for

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86 FO 371/2110/72/25085, minute by Crowe, 8 June 1914.

87 FO 371/2110/72/25085, minute by Parliamentary Under Secretary Francis Acland, 8 June 1914 or after.

88 *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, vol. 63, question: Buxton, answer: Grey, 18 June 1914

89 *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, vol. 64, question: Buxton, answer: Acland, 29 June 1914 and speech by Buxton, 29 June 1914.

90 *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, vol. 63, question: Sir J. D. Rees (Nottingham East), answer: Acland, 10 June 1914.

91 BDBJ 3121/A/16, BDBJ meeting, 21 June 1914.

92 FO 371/2110/72/31766, Crowe's draft for a circular to British representatives in the Balkans, 8 July 1914.

this was not given, the outbreak of the war was without doubt the decisive factor. Later, in September, Greece voiced its assurance on the minority rights, after receiving a communication from the British government.[93] There was, however, no common circular to the Balkan governments, which would certainly have been impossible after the outbreak of the war.

The Conjoint Committee contacted the Foreign Office in July 1914 to inform Grey on the subject of the proposed modification of Romanian Constitution. The revision plans did not appear to include any provisions for the Jewish rights. David Alexander and Claude Montefiore pointed out that the Romanian Jewish problem contributed to the inflammable situation in the Balkans:

> 'In once more commanding the case of our sorely tried co-religionists of Roumania to the sympathy and solicitude of His Majesty's Government, we are not unmindful of the grave international difficulties by which the diplomacy of the Great Powers in the Balkans is at the present moment preoccupied. It seems to us, however, that by leaving the Roumano-Jewish question open, those difficulties can only be aggravated.'[94]

This letter was the final Conjoint Committee effort on behalf of Romanian Jews before the outbreak of the First World War. The vigorous Conjoint Committee campaign of 1913-1914 had come to nothing. Hopes had been high, but the First World War got in the way. The Romanian Jewish question was pushed into the background, as was resignedly summarised by the *Jewish Chronicle* in August 1914:

> 'Unfortunately, owing to the war, nothing further can be done in the matter for the moment.'[95]

9.4 Towards a new era

When the First World War broke out, Romania remained neutral despite its alliance with Germany and Austria. At this stage, the Conjoint Committee was still, in principle, able to campaign on behalf of the Romanian Jews. Romanian Jews were suffering from new regulations that were passed in the anti-alien atmosphere brought about by the war.

The main organisation of the Romanian Jews, The Union of Native Jews, had set up a bureau in Switzerland, from where it co-operated with Jewish organisations in Western Europe and the United States. In 1915, David Labin, a Union representative, urged the Conjoint Committee and the Alliance Israélite Universelle to intervene on behalf of Romanian Jews in the same manner as they had repeatedly intervened before the war. At the time, however, the Allied

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93 FO 371/2110/72/45490, Crowe to Minister in Athens, Francis Elliot, 3 Sept. 1914.

94 FO 371/2089/32066, Alexander and Montefiore to Grey, 14 July 1914,

95 *JC*, 14 Aug. 1914.

powers and the Central Powers were competing for Romania's support. Therefore, any action by Jews of the Allied countries, primarily in Britain and France, had to take the military situation into account. Any agitation on behalf of Romanian Jews might endanger the Allied cause in Romania and was therefore unlikely to be welcomed by the Allied governments. In this situation, Lucien Wolf and the Conjoint Committee decided not to act. In 1916, another request for help by the Union of Native Jews was suppressed in the same manner.[96]

From the perspective of the Conjoint Committee, it was unfortunate that Romania eventually became an ally of Britain in 1916. Anglo-Jewish policies were likely to diverge from British government policy as a result. British policy was designed to promote war aims and therefore the government was not willing to argue with Romania over Jewish problems. Consequently, the Conjoint faced a major dilemma that concerned the basic principles of its existence. Leaders of the Conjoint believed that British and Anglo-Jewish interests were similar, but it was now impossible for the Conjoint activists to act on behalf of their East European co-religionists without being portrayed as disloyal British citizens.[97]

In 1917, the Conjoint Committee underwent a transformation. The causes of this were the quarrel over Zionism and, more generally, the Board of Deputies' undemocratic practices. During the war, the Conjoint policy was anti-Zionist, just as it had been earlier. However, Zionism was undoubtedly on the ascent among the Anglo-Jewry. On 17 May 1917, the Conjoint published a manifesto rejecting Zionism in *The Times*. A number of influential members of the Anglo-Jewish community subsequently sided with the Zionists.[98]

A meeting of the Board of Deputies in June passed a motion against the Conjoint statement on Palestine. The Board then technically put an end to the Conjoint by terminating its treaty with the Anglo-Jewish Association over foreign policy co-operation. The series of events led to the resignation of the Board president David Alexander. However, although it may have appeared so, this did not mark a Zionist victory in Anglo-Jewish community affairs.[99]

The Anglo-Jewish Association set up its own foreign committee with Lucien Wolf as the policy maker, while the Board ran its own foreign affairs division. In the autumn of 1917, it seemed that the AJA committee was managing to eclipse the feeble Board of Deputies committee almost completely. However, in December 1917, an agreement was reached between the Board and the AJA, and the Joint Foreign Committee was set up. This was really an updated and remodelled Conjoint, with Lucien Wolf now as the formally recognised foreign secretary.[100]

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96 FO 371/2443/165840, Wolf to Parliamentary Under Secretary Lord Robert Cecil, 4 Nov. 1915 and Wolf to David Labin, 4 Nov. 1915. See also Mark Levene's account, which is perhaps the best there is relating to these matters, Levene 1992, 45-47.

97 Levene 1992, 37-38.

98 Levene 1992, 150-155.

99 Levene 1992, 154-155.

100 Levene 1992, 156-157.

As to the Romanian Jewish problems at this point, the danger of potential Romanian enlargement at the expense of Austria-Hungary raised the issue again of the expansion of the 'area of religious intolerance'. Romania had been promised Transylvania in exchange for entry into the war. From the perspective of minority rights issues, there was, however, the prospect of a peace conference after the war. It was reasonable to expect that some kind of guarantee of religious liberty or minority rights would be included in the future peace settlement.

The Romanian war effort ended disastrously when a large part of the country fell under German occupation. Romania was forced to conclude the Treaty of Bucharest[101] on 7 May 1918 with the Central Powers. The treaty contained a provision concerning the naturalisation of those persons residing in Romania who did not possess any other citizenship. The provision was vague and had shortcomings, since it stipulated that a separate law would be passed to deal with naturalisations. It therefore met with criticism on the part of the Jewish organisations in most countries. In any case, the treaty was never ratified. After the Central Powers were defeated in November 1918, the solution to the citizenship problem was left for the peace conference to decide.

Attempts were made in Romania to extend citizenship to some categories of Jews through domestic legislation. During the period from May 1918 to May 1919, consecutive versions of naturalisation decree laws dealing with Jewish citizenship were passed in Romania. All those who had served in the army both during the First World War and the Balkan War were included, as were those who had been born in Romania and whose parents had also been Romanian-born. The latter provision, however, was subsequently abandoned.[102]

As a result of the First World War, Romania's territory doubled. It acquired Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bucovina. Sizeable Jewish communities resided in these areas. Consequently, the Jewish population in Romania tripled in comparision to the census results of 1912; the number of Jews in the Old Kingdom had been approximately 240,000 just before the World War, but now the number of Jews had risen to more than 750,000. Two-thirds of the Romanian Jewish population were now living in the new territories.[103]

The conclusion to the problem of Jewish citizenship came through an international treaty — yet another instance of international minority protection. The role of the Jewish organisations such as the Joint Foreign Committee of British Jews, as well as individuals such as Lucien Wolf, was imperative in drafting the minority settlements at the peace conference. Romania had to sign a minority treaty in 1919, in accordance with other post-war minority treaties that were imposed on East European countries. The Romanian government did so very reluctantly.[104]

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101 Not to be confused with the Treaty of Bucharest concluded on 10 August 1913 (see chapter 9.1).

102 Gelber 1950, 235-236, 243-245; Iancu 1992, 171, 191-192; Rey 1925, 144.

103 *RG 1930*, xxiv, xxvii. The number of Jews by nationality was 728,115 (4.0 % of the population) and by religion 756,930 (4.2 %).

104 Spector 1962, 218.

The Romanian Minority Treaty included a special clause on Jewish citizenship to tackle the perennial pre-war problem. In the case of Romania, it was considered necessary to strengthen the usual citizenship provisions that were in other respects constructed along a common patter. Romania agreed to recognise the full citizenship rights of its Jewish population. All Jews residing in the Romanian territory who could not claim any other nationality were to be acknowledged as Romanian citizens without any formality — this meant accordingly that Jews could not be discriminated against on the basis of anti-alien legislation. Everyone in Romania was to enjoy equal civil and political rights, and the free exercise of religion was guaranteed. The treaty also stipulated that the provisions were to be acknowledged as fundamental laws and that no Romanian law or regulation was allowed to conflict with them.[105]

Finally, the new Romanian Constitution of 1923 provided formal legal confirmation of the provisions of the Minority Treaty and granted citizenship to Jews.[106] A separate law on the procedure for citizenship acquisition completed the process in 1924.[107] Some requirements for proof of permanent residency were ambiguous, however, and the law was not always administered properly. Despite the constitution, a large number of Jews were left stateless due to a narrow interpretation of the residency qualification. An American estimate puts the number of Jewish family heads who were stateless in the late twenties at 20,000, which was calculated to mean approximately 100,000 persons.[108] Irina Livezeanu gives a figure of 80,000 as the number of stateless Jews.[109] It has to be noted that these stateless Jewish individuals were not those who had lived in the pre-First World War Romanian Old Kingdom, but rather were Jews who resided in the vast new regions that Romania had been awarded in the peace treaty.

The British Jewish foreign policy team, still led by Lucien Wolf, but now under the name of Joint Foreign Committee, did not give up its efforts on behalf of Romanian Jews in the 1920s.[110] A careful watch was kept on developments in Romania, and the fulfilment of minority treaties all over Eastern and Central Europe was monitored.[111] As the League of Nations, the new intergovernmental organisation, acted as a guarantor of the minority treaties, Jewish activists and associations conducted their foreign policy within the framework of the

105 Iancu 1992, 293-297; Jackson Preece 1998, 74-76; Janowsky 1933, 371-378.

106 *Monitorul Oficial*, 282/1923. See also Iancu 1996b, 99-109; Rey 1925, 147-149; Wolloch 1988, 99.

107 Iancu 1996b, 109-117.

108 American Committee 1928, 43; Starr 66-67. Starr accepts the information that is given in the American Committee publication.

109 Livezeanu 1995, 123.

110 Lucien Wolf died in 1930.

111 *The Jewish Minority in Roumania 1927*, no. 1, Joint Foreign Committee to the Romanian Government, 17 Sept. 1925.

League's minority protection system, lobbying the League bodies and maintaining close contacts with League officials.[112]

The conclusion to the Romanian Jewish question that was reached after the First World War was really only a partial solution to the main legal problem of the pre-war era — the status of Jews as aliens. The minority rights regime that was imposed from above did not indicate any fundamental change in the attitudes of Romanian political leaders or the Romanian people. On the contrary, minority treaties were deeply resented in Romania. Even after the acquisition of citizenship, Romanian Jews still had to fight for their place and their rights in Romanian society. The character of the Romanian Jewish question was soon to change with the rise of fascism and the coming of the Second World War.

112 For the activities of Jews relating to the League of Nations minority system, see Fink 2004, 267-335.

10 CONCLUSION

Romanian Jews and the international protection of minorities

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, emancipated Jewish political and economic elites acted on behalf of their persecuted coreligionists in a manner that can be defined as 'Jewish diplomacy'. Jewish organisations in Western Europe and the United States were thus the principal proponents of international minority protection in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The Anglo-Jewish community was one of the main protagonists in Jewish diplomacy. The main target countries of Jewish foreign policy were Russia and Romania. Jews in those countries lacked political rights and their lives were restricted by a complex system of anti-Jewish legislation.

The problem of Romanian Jews was related to a number of larger themes that were fundamental issues during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as anti-Semitism, the emancipation of Jews, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, the establishment of independent nation states, and Great Power rivalry. In this study, the situation of Romanian Jews has been linked to the emerging system of international minority protection. In the area of minority protection, the issue involved the clash of an emerging nation state, Romania, and the international community, the Great Powers. Romania was intent on guarding its sovereignty against any outside intervention in what it saw as its internal affairs. The Great Powers were in turn keen to control new states by, for instance, regulating the rights of minorities. Moreover, there were disagreements between the Romanian government and West European (and American) Jewish organisations and community leaders. Their points of view were polar opposites. The Romanian government argued against any improvement in the legal position of Romanian Jews, whereas Jewish activists wished to end Jewish disabilities.

The Anglo-Jewish policy – as well as the official British foreign policy – towards the Romanian Jewish question was connected to the possibility of diplomatic intervention in Romanian internal affairs. The Treaty of Berlin (1878) was the international legal document that determined the minority rights of

Romanian Jews. It was actually the most important episode in which minority rights were promoted before the First World War.

In the Treaty of Berlin, the Great Powers promised to recognise Romanian independence on the condition that Romania guaranteed equal rights to persons of all religious confessions. Consequently, Romania passed a new naturalisation law in which the treaty provisions were very narrowly interpreted. The law could not be considered to be a fulfilment of the articles of the Berlin Treaty. From the perspective of minority rights protection, the question of citizenship – on an individual basis – was the primary issue in the Romanian Jewish question: it was a basis for the general legal status of Romanian Jews. In the early twentieth century, practically every individual episode relating to the Romanian Jewish question was linked to the Treaty of Berlin.

Anglo-Jewish diplomacy

The British Jews conducted their diplomatic activities through a specialist body, the Conjoint Foreign Committee. The problem of Romanian Jews occupied a central place in Anglo-Jewish diplomacy during the years preceding the First World War. Using their connections and access to the press and public forums, the British Jewry tried to pressurise the British Foreign Office to become involved in Romanian Jewish affairs. Anglo-Jewish policy was mainly shaped by perceptions of the struggle for Jewish emancipation and the role of privileged Jewries as defenders of their less fortunate coreligionists. Political and social considerations relating to the dynamics of the domestic Jewish community, such as immigration, played a role as well.

The role of certain Anglo-Jewish individuals was of crucial importance in conducting Jewish diplomacy. The formal leaders were the presidents of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association, David L. Alexander (until 1903 Joseph Sebag-Montefiore) and Claude G. Montefiore. However, journalist Lucien Wolf was, from approximately 1908 forward, the leading force behind the formulation of Anglo-Jewish foreign policy. The decisive role of Lucien Wolf in the aftermath of the First World War has been shown previously by Mark Levene and Carole Fink, but it is clear that Anglo-Jewish diplomacy in relation to Romania was very much Wolf's creation during the years preceding the war as well. The Conjoint Committee's policy became more consistent and more persistent with Wolf. Opportunities were exploited to the full and arguments were relentlessly pursued.

Wolf's experience and contacts with the British Foreign Office benefited Anglo-Jewish foreign policy in the case of Romania. It may have been a different matter in the Russian case: Wolf pushed for an improvement of Jewish rights in Russia, which was not very much appreciated at the Foreign Office. The limits of Jewish diplomacy were much more strictly defined as regards Russia, not only because of Russia's status as a Great Power and an ally of Britain, but also from an international legal perspective. No international treaty protected Russian Jewry in the manner that the Treaty of Berlin protected

Romanian Jews. Romania was definitely a more suitable target than Russia for Jewish diplomacy to attack.

Unlike during and after the First World War, wrangles between the old-style Anglo-Jewish establishment and rising Zionists did not manifest themselves in matters relating to Jewish diplomacy. Zionism did not play a large role in relation to Romanian matters, although it was sometimes mentioned in the context of Romanian emigration. Certainly there were some signs of discord, however, especially when the *Jewish Chronicle* criticised the Conjoint Committee for secrecy or when Rabbi Moses Gaster offered his opinions on Romanian matters.

Anglo-Jewish co-operation with other Jewish organisations in Western and Central Europe was for the most part smooth. With American Jews, there was not a lot of joint action as far as the Romanian problem was concerned. Anglo-Jewish leaders had ambiguous attitudes towards Romanian Jewish opinions. On occasion, the wishes of Romanian Jews were respected, and in some situations there was also intensive co-operation with Romanian Jewish leaders. This was particularly apparent in the period immediately preceding the First World War. Sometimes, however, it seemed as though the Anglo-Jewry overlooked the Romanian Jewish viewpoint. On the other hand, it was not easy to adopt a consistent attitude towards Romanian Jewish desires, since Romanian Jews were not a united front that held one single opinion. In any case, it was only the views of the Romanian Jewish elite that were taken into account in Britain.

The Foreign Office: congruence or discord?

Anglo-Jewish leaders often perceived that the British Foreign Office was on the same side as the Conjoint Foreign Committee. To a certain extent, this interpretation was correct: both institutions would have liked to see the extension of legal rights for the Romanian Jewry. This congruence notwithstanding, the interests of the British government and the Anglo-Jewish leaders sometimes clashed. They had somewhat different perceptions of the importance of Jewish emancipation in Romania and the intensity of the campaign that should be targeted at Romania. While the Conjoint Committee saw the issue of Romanian Jewish minority rights as crucial, the Foreign Office was not ready to use aggressive pressure on Romania.

Therefore, the British government agreed, in principle, that Romanian policy on Jews should be modified. The Foreign Office repeatedly made sympathetic noises on behalf of Romanian Jews. The careful policy that was chosen was precisely the one that was most in accordance with British interests: Britain did not want to alienate Romania, but it did not want to provoke the domestic Jewish lobby either.

The Romanian Jewish question was, from the British point of view, very much a part of the international system as created at the Congress of Berlin. The British government was always concerned with the stance of the other international players. Effective intervention could only happen in co-operation

with the other Great Powers. This attitude became more apparent from about 1907 onwards. The first years of the century had seen relatively lively action by the British government, for example in the form of the 'supplementary note' that followed the American note in 1902, but British reactions became more passive as the first decade of the twentieth century was nearing its end. The difference, however, was quite small, since the British government's outlook was consistently very cautious and tentative.

It has sometimes been alleged that anti-Semitic attitudes on the part of diplomats and Foreign Office bureaucrats contributed to the fact that the Foreign Office was not very forthcoming to Anglo-Jewish requests for intervention. This does not appear, however, to have been a decisive factor in Foreign Office policy. True, there were occasional – though very rare – derisive remarks made about Jews, and some diplomats seemed to adopt the attitudes of their Romanian contacts and Romanian statesmen a little too easily. Still, it has to be noted that the Romanians in fact received a greater share of Foreign Office suspicion than the Jews, as well as a very patronising attitude sometimes.

Romania's arguments remained the same throughout the years: when the Great Powers had recognised Romanian independence in 1880, they had given up their right to intervene in Romanian internal affairs. The Romanian government maintained that Jews were not being persecuted, but were, on the contrary, enjoying religious freedom. And if there was any anti-Jewish legislation, it was only due to the fear that 'foreigners' might overrun Romania. Despite the fact that the British government did not believe Romania's assurances of the good treatment that Jews were receiving, this had no fundamental effect on the relations between the two countries. The relations remained cordial, although not very close.

The Romanian government sometimes attempted to explain their Jewish policy in a favourable light. These were typical legation undertakings by distributing 'correct' information through the press and in discussions with the Foreign Office personnel. In addition, there was one occasion when a pamphlet, sponsored by the Romanian government, was circulated among British notables. However, if the Romanians published one pamphlet and an occasional apologetic article, the Jewish pressure groups in turn published dozens of pamphlets and newspaper articles. In short, while the Jews had a strong domestic lobby which acted on behalf of Romanian Jews, the efforts of the Romanians were comparatively weak. This cannot have been without effect on the governmental and public opinion in Britain.

Aspects relating to Romanian Jewish migration

Mass emigration from Romania began in 1900, stimulating internal and international debate on the causes of the phenomenon and on possible solutions. Britain became directly involved due to the transmigration of Romanian Jews via England to America. Only a small number of migrants were planning to stay in Britain or would remain in Britain in the end, but this was not known at the time. Besides, many transmigrants did not leave the country

immediately. This raised enormous anxiety within the British Jewish community and in Britain as a whole. It was also true that more than 100,000 Russian and Polish Jews had settled in Britain, and there was thus good reason to suspect that the Romanian Jews would not continue their journey to America either, especially if they were 'encouraged' to stay in Britain. The number of Romanian Jews who actually settled in Britain before the First World War was in the region of 5,000.

In Britain, there were no separate measures taken or special policies adopted because of the Jewish immigrants from Romania: the Romanian migrant inflows were treated as a part of the bigger picture. It is doubtful whether the non-Jewish individuals and organisations were capable of distinguishing between Romanian, Russian, and other Eastern European Jewish immigrants, or if they were able to analyse the typical features of immigration from different Eastern European countries. As for the Foreign Office, it could not meddle in the immigration problems. Migration was mentioned a few times in diplomatic correspondence, in the context of foreign intervention, but the topics were not linked in a particularly articulated manner. In these cases, the threat of immigration to Britain was given as one of the possible reasons for exerting diplomatic pressure; these hints were made either by the British representatives in Romania or by the British Jewry in their correspondence with the Foreign Office.

The Anglo-Jewry's reactions to immigration were ambiguous and interesting. The basic belief of the Anglo-Jewish elite was that immigration should be discouraged because England could not absorb large masses of immigrants. The major Jewish organisations in London practised a firm policy designed to curb Romanian Jewish settlement in England. They sent destitute migrants back to the continent and gave financial aid only in selected and closely inspected cases. Everyone, including the Zionists and other dissenters from mainstream elite opinion, agreed that emigration from Romania should be arranged properly and that it should not be directed to Britain. Dissenting opinions referred only to the allegedly heartless and penny-pinching attitudes of the Jewish community leaders towards the migrants. It was never seriously suggested that all Jews from Romania who wanted to land in Britain should be welcomed to do so.

British reactions to the American note of 1902 were either welcoming (in the Foreign Office and among the general public) or overjoyed and grateful (within the Jewish community). The British government was at this point so favourably disposed towards the note as to write a 'supplement' to it, inquiring whether the other European Powers would be willing to interfere in the Romanian matter. The answer was negative, and this restrained British efforts in the following years. Hay's note did not have any real consequences except for a somewhat more relaxed policy towards the Jews in Romania, although this might be contributed to international opinion in general and not to the note alone.

The international political situation as a factor

After several rather uneventful and quiet years around the Romanian Jewish question, the Romanian Peasant Revolt of 1907 led to much speculation on the role of the Jews in the revolt. It was soon blighted, however, by wider aspects of the Romanian Jewish question as well as by the inflammable political situation in the Balkan area. From 1908 to 1913, there were two occasions, both arising from the international political issues, in which the Jewish question was discussed or was about to be discussed in the official international forum. The first occasion was the proposed conference on Balkan matters in 1908 – neither the Jews of Romania nor even Romania itself were involved in the Balkan turmoil, but the British Jews pushed for the inclusion of the Jewish question at the conference. Although its attempt was not very realistic, the Conjoint waged a particularly intense campaign at this stage to help the Romanian Jews.

However, the British government was not inclined to pressure Romania with the Jewish issue when Romania was already in trouble. After 1907, this may have been a consequence of the general political situation and alliances; the British did not want to irritate Romania so that it would anchor itself more firmly in the Triple Alliance camp. This attitude was not visible in the first years of the century, which was understandable as Britain had not concluded any arrangements with Russia and France at that stage and was therefore less worried about developments in the German and Austrian bloc.

Even if the Romanian Jewish problem was not in any way connected to the proposed - but not materialised - conference of 1908, the situation was quite different in 1913, during the Balkan Wars. At that time, the change of the Romano-Bulgarian border directly involved Jewish interests, since a smallish number of Bulgarian Jews in Southern Dodrudja - well under one thousand - were about to become Romanian subjects. This led to a full-blown campaign of Jewish diplomacy. The question seemed to be more about principles than practicalities: the key argument was that the territory of 'religious oppression' should not be allowed to expand.

The Dobrudja dispute also offered a convenient opportunity to raise the whole Romanian Jewish question anew in the international arena. The opportunity was fully exploited by the Conjoint Committee leaders. The Conjoint Committee made repeated references to the Berlin Treaty, arguing that the new arrangements in the Balkans required a reaffirmation of the principles of the Berlin Treaty.

In late 1913 and in summer 1914, the Conjoint Committee considered the replies they had received from the Foreign Office to be very encouraging. When the First World War broke out, however, nothing concrete had resulted from the allegedly promising sentiments.

Objectives and results

The main objective of the Conjoint Committee was to work for the emancipation of Romanian Jews. This goal was related to the Treaty of Berlin:

the Conjoint insisted that Romania would fulfil the provisions of the treaty by granting the Romanian Jewish population full citizenship *en masse*. Partial naturalisation of selected groups was rejected. Jewish citizenship would subsequently lead to the abolishment of Romanian anti-Jewish legislation, since Jews could no longer be treated as aliens.

From the full equality of Romanian Jews, the fulfilment of the Conjoint's implicit objective would follow. The worldview of the non-Zionist Anglo-Jewish elite would be reinforced if Jewish emancipation in Romania came to pass following emancipatory models adopted from Western Europe. Romanian Jews would become useful citizens of Romania who could be integrated into Romanian society. Furthermore, Jewish emigration from Romania would cease, and embarrassing immigration problems in Britain would hence be brought to an end. In short, the Jewish question would be solved in Eastern Europe, exactly as the Anglo-Jewish leaders wished.

Did Jewish diplomacy achieve any results in the Romanian problem? One is tempted to say not really. Romania made minor concessions to Jews in relation to its application of anti-Jewish legislation, but these compromises were not *direct* results of Jewish diplomacy. Admittedly, due to Jewish efforts, the situation of Romanian Jews attracted attention in the Foreign Office, and it was known in Romania that Britain basically did not approve of Romanian policy on Jews. This might have restrained Romanian anti-Jewish policy.

Anglo-Jewish diplomacy did not result in any visible improvement in the situation of Romanian Jews before 1914. The legal emancipation of Romanian Jews only came to pass after the First World War. However, Jewish diplomacy was crucial in bringing the issue of minority protection to the fore on a number of occasions. In the bigger picture, the activities of the Anglo-Jewry on behalf of Romanian Jews were a significant phase in the history of minority protection. This policy continued in earnest in the aftermath of the First World War, when Jewish leaders played a major role in shaping international minority protection standards.

YHTEENVETO (FINNISH SUMMARY)

Britannia, Britannian juutalaiset ja Romanian juutalaisten kansainvälinen suojelu, 1900–1914: Tutkimus juutalaisesta diplomatiasta ja vähemmistöoikeuksista.

Tutkimuksen lähtökohdat

Euroopassa eli 1800-luvun lopulla ja 1900-luvun alussa hyvin erilaisessa oikeudellisessa ja yhteiskunnallisessa asemassa olevia juutalaisyhteisöjä. Juutalaisten emansipaatio oli toteutunut useimmissa läntisen Euroopan ja Keski-Euroopan maissa, mutta joissakin itäisen Euroopan maissa, erityisesti Venäjällä ja Romaniassa, juutalaiset elivät vailla kansalaisoikeuksia ja heidän elämäänsä rajoitettiin juutalaisvastaisella lainsäädännöllä. Tällaisessa tilanteessa vaikutusvaltaiset länsieurooppalaiset juutalaisyhteisöt, mukaan lukien Britannian juutalaiset, katsoivat velvollisuudekseen auttaa vähäosaisempia juutalaisia ja ponnistella näiden aseman parantamiseksi. Heidän toimintaansa voidaan kutsua ”juutalaiseksi diplomatiaksi”.

Ennen ensimmäistä maailmansotaa Romanian väestöstä suurimmillaan 4,5 % eli lähes 270 000 asukasta oli juutalaisia. Suurin osa juutalaista oli muuttanut 1800-luvun kuluessa Venäjältä ja Itävalta-Unkarista ja asettunut asumaan Pohjois-Romaniaan, Moldaviaan. Kun Romania itsenäistyi vuonna 1877, Euroopan suurvallat määräsivät seuraavana vuonna Berliinin sopimuksessa, että juutalaisia tuli kohdella Romaniassa tasa-arvoisina muun väestön kanssa. Tämä sopimuspykälä ei kuitenkaan toteutunut käytännössä, vaan juutalaiset jäivät ilman Romanian kansalaisuutta, mikä mahdollisti muukalaisvastaisten lakien käyttämisen heitä vastaan. Vaikka suurvallat olivatkin tunnustaneet Romanian itsenäisyyden, ne kuitenkin tulkitsivat, ettei Romania ollut täysin noudattanut sopimusvelvoitteitaan,

Tässä tutkimuksessa Romanian juutalaisten tilannetta tarkastellaan kansainvälisen vähemmistöjen suojelun ja juutalaisten diplomatian kautta. Tutkimuksen kohteena ovat Britannian juutalaisten diplomatia ja Britannian hallituksen näkemykset liittyen Romanian juutalaisten asemaan. Tutkimuskysymykset liittyvät ensinnäkin juutalaisten diplomatian harjoittamiseen: miten Britannian juutalaiset harjoittivat diplomatiaa, ketkä henkilöt ja mitkä järjestöt olivat pääroolissa, mitkä olivat tavoitteet ja kuinka hyvin tavoitteisiin päästiin. Toisaalta tarkastellaan millainen suhde Britannian hallituksella — käytännössä ulkoministeriöllä — oli juutalaisen diplomatian harjoittajiin, tekikö Britannia mitään Romanian juutalaisten hyväksi ja miten mielipiteet erosivat ulkoministeriön sisällä.

Tutkimus keskittyy myös politiikan taustalla olleisiin motiiveihin; tämä koskee sekä Britannian juutalaisia että ulkoministeriötä. Taustalla oli ensinnä kansainväliseen vähemmistöjen suojeluun liittyviä motiiveja ja käsityksiä juutalaisemansipaation toteutumisesta. Toisaalta asiaan vaikuttivat myös ajankohtai-

set poliittiset kysymykset kuten siirtolaisuuteen liittyneet ongelmat ja Balkanin alueen poliittinen tilanne. Tutkimuksessa kiinnitetään huomiota näiden tekijöiden muutokseen tarkasteluajanjakson kuluessa.

Juutalainen diplomatia

Juutalaisen diplomatian käsitettä on viime vuosikymmeninä käytetty tutkittaessa emansipoituneiden ja etuoikeutettujen juutalaisyhteisöjen ponnisteluja sorron alla eläneiden uskontoveriensa hyväksi. Määrittelyn alle sisältyy suora interventio vakavissa tilanteissa, taloudellinen painostus, yritykset vaikuttaa kotimaan hallitukseen sekä yleiseen mielipiteeseen vaikuttaminen. Toiminnan kohteena on saada aikaan muutos ns. kohdemaan viranomaisten juutalaisvastaiseen toimintaan.

Kun yksittäiset juutalaisjohtajat olivat 1800-luvun puolivälin tietämillä vedonneet kärsivien uskonveljiensä puolesta, vetoomukset osoitettiin yleensä suoraan kohdemaan viranomaisille ja hallitsijoille. 1800-luvun loppupuolella ja 1900-luvun alussa Britannian juutalaisjohtajien painostus kohdistui kuitenkin oman maan, ei kohdemaan, hallitukseen. Tässä toimintalinjassa oletettiin, että juutalaisten pyyntöjen seurauksena oma hallitus ottaisi vuorostaan yhteyttä kohdemaan hallitukseen ja painostaisi tätä parantamaan kohdemaan juutalaisten asemaa. Samalla otaksuttiin, että kotimaan hallitus suhtautuisi pyyntöihin myönteisesti ja että juutalaisen diplomatian ja Britannian ulkopolitiikan edut kohtaisivat: juutalaisten emansipaatio ja suvaitsevaisuuden edistäminen käsitettiin hallituksen ja juutalaisten yhteisiksi tavoitteiksi.

Länsi- ja Keski-Euroopan sekä Yhdysvaltain juutalaiset perustivat 1800-luvun puolivälistä alkaen lukuisia järjestöjä, joiden tehtävänä oli joko yksinomaan tai muiden toimien ohella auttaa juutalaisten emansipaation toteutumista niissä maissa, joissa juutalaisten asema oli huono. Tärkein näistä oli epäilemättä ranskalais-kansainvälinen järjestö Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU), joka perustettiin vuonna 1860. Britannian juutalaisilla oli erityisesti ulkopolitiikan hoitamiseen tarkoitettu toimielin, Conjoint Foreign Committee. Kaksi keskeistä juutalaisjärjestöä, Board of Deputies of British Jews (BDBJ) ja Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA) perustivat sen vuonna 1878 koordinoimaan emojärjestöjen ulkopolitiikkaa. BDBJ oli perinteisesti ollut juutalaisten tärkein edustuksellinen organisaatio, johon synagogat valitsivat edustajansa ja joka myös edusti juutalaisia viranomaisiin päin. AJA oli perustettu vasta vuonna 1871 AIU:n haarajärjestöksi, ja oli esikuvansa mukaisesti tiiviisti mukana edistämässä juutalaisemansipaatiota ulkomailla.

BDBJ:n ja AJA:n puheenjohtajat toimivat vuorotellen puheenjohtajina Conjoint Committeen kokouksissa. Tutkimusajanjaksolla BDBJ:n puheenjohtajina olivat Joseph Sebag-Montefiore vuoteen 1903 saakka ja David L. Alexander vuodesta 1903 eteenpäin. AJA:n puheenjohtaja oli Glaude G. Montefiore. Heidän nimissään myös yleensä käytiin kirjeenvaihtoa Britannian ulkoministeriöön päin ja julkaistiin lehdistötiedotteita. Vuoden 1908 paikkeilla Conjointin strategiseksi käytännön johtohahmoksi nousi journalisti Lucien Wolf, jolla ei varsi-

naisesti ollut muodollista asemaa organisaatiossa. Wolf laati tärkeimmät Conjointin muistiot, kirjeet ja lehtikirjoitukset.

Ennen ensimmäistä maailmansotaa juutalaisen diplomatian harjoittaminen oli nimenomaan juutalaisen eliitin hallussa. Ulkopoliittiset asiat pidettiin tarkoituksella mahdollisimman pienen sisäpiirin hallussa. Conjoint Committeen jäsenten mielestä ulkopuolisten yksityisluontoinen asioihin sekaantuminen ei ollut toivottavaa, vaan ulkopoliittiset hankkeet oli kanavoitava Conjoint Committeen kautta.

Jotkut Britannian juutalaiseliittiin kuuluneet henkilöt pyrkivät ajoittain esittämään omia mielipiteitään siitä, kuinka Romanian juutalaisia tuli auttaa. Näihin näkemyksiin sisältyi yleensä kritiikkiä ”virallista” diplomatiaa kohtaan. Esimerkkinä aktiivisesta ulkopolitiikkaan sekaantujasta voidaan mainita romanialaissyntyinen rabbi Moses Gaster, joka asemansa puolesta kuului juutalaisyhteisön korkeimpaan kerrostumaan, muttei ollut mukana diplomatian harjoittajien ydinjoukossa. Ulkopolitiikkaa koskevaa tietoa, uutisia ja mielipiteitä levitti juutalainen viikkosanomalehti *Jewish Chronicle*. Lehti heijasti eliitin ajatuksia, mutta sillä oli myös omia, edellisistä eroavia käsityksiä. Kun sionisti Leopold Greenberg vuonna 1906 osti lehden, kriittiset näkemykset lisääntyivät jonkin verran toimituksellisessa aineistossa — Conjoint Committeen johtohahmothan vastustivat sionismia, joten Greenberg oli jo lähtökohtaisesti heidän kanssaan eri mieltä juutalaisen yhteisöpolitiikan perusasioista.

Juutalaiseen diplomatiaan liittyi keskeisenä osana yhteistyö eri maiden juutalaisjärjestöjen välillä. Britannian juutalaiset olivat tiiviissä yhteistyössä Länsi- ja Keski-Euroopan sekä jossain määrin myös Yhdysvaltain juutalaisten kanssa. Tärkeimmät yhteistyökumppanit olivat Saksassa, Itävallassa ja ennen kaikkea Ranskassa.

Kansainvälinen yhteistyö ja koordinointi ei suinkaan välttämättä merkinnyt yhteistoimintaa kohdemaan juutalaisten kanssa. Kohdemaan juutalaisten omat toivomukset jäivät usein taka-alalle, kun Britannian juutalaiset harjoittivat diplomatiaansa. Romanian juutalaiset olivat nimenomaan toiminnan kohteita, eivätkä aktiivisia yhteistyökumppaneita. Osa Romanian juutalaisista kannatti ulkomaisten juutalaisten diplomatiaa apukeinona, mutta osa piti ulkopuolista asioihin puuttumista pikemminkin haitallisena, ja halusi vedota itse suoraan Romanian hallitukseen. Ajoittain Britannian juutalaiset toki perustivat toimintansa myös Romanian juutalaisten mielipiteisiin, mutta tiivis yhteistyö ei yleensä toteutunut. Näkyvin esimerkki yhteistoiminnasta löytyy vuosilta 1913—1914, kun Britannian juutalaiset kampanjoivat yhdessä romanialaisen juutalaisjohtajan Adolf Sternin kanssa. Stern matkusteli ympäri Eurooppaa neuvottelemassa eri juutalaisjärjestöjen kanssa, ja painostustoimintaa suunniteltiin tiiviisti yhdessä.

Britannian ulkoministeriön asenne

Britannian juutalaisjohtajien ennakko-oletus oli, että Britannian hallitus oli Romanian kysymyksessä samalla puolella kuin Conjoint Committee. Tämä tulkinta piti paikkansa tiettyyn rajaan saakka: molemmat tahot olisivat toki halunneet

Romanian muuttavan juutalaispolitiikkaansa. Kuitenkin Britannian ulkoministeriön ja juutalaisjohtajien intressit erosivat joskus toisistaan. Näkemykset Romanian juutalaisten auttamisen tärkeydestä erosivat; juutalaisjohtajille kysymys oli oleellisen tärkeä, kun ulkoministeriölle se ei ollut erityisen keskeinen tavoite. Tästä seurasi myös erimielisyyksiä siitä, kuinka voimakkaasti Romaniaa tuli painostaa parantamaan juutalaistensa kohtelua. Britannian ulkoministeriö suhtautui Romanian juutalaisten koettelemuksiin sinänsä myötätuntoisesti. Toiminta oli kuitenkin pidättyväistä, sillä vaikka ulkoministeriö ei halunnut suututtaa juutalaisjärjestöjä, se ei toisaalta myöskään halunnut ärsyttää Romaniaa ja vahingoittaa maiden välisiä suhteita. Tällainen varovaisuus oli Britannian oman politiikan kannalta kaikkein järkevin toimintatapa.

Britannia liitti Romanian juutalaisten tilanteen tiiviisti Berliinin sopimuksessa vuonna 1878 luotuun Balkanin alueen kansainväliseen järjestelmään. Mikäli vallitsevaan tilanteeseen tehtäisiin muutoksia, kaiken täytyisi tapahtua suurvaltojen yhteisen toiminnan kautta. 1900-luvun alkuvuosina Britannian hallitus oli verraten halukas toimimaan Romanian juutalaisten puolesta. Kun Yhdysvallat lähetti vuonna 1902 Romanian juutalaisten huonoa kohtelua koskevan Hayn nootin, Britannia otti noottiin myönteisen kannan ja tiedusteli muilta suurvalloilta, ryhtyisivätkö nämä toimiin Romanian juutalaisten puolesta. Tunnustelu ei johtanut tuloksiin. Kun vuosikymmen läheni loppuaan, Britannian asenne tuli varovaisemmaksi. Passiivisuutta perusteltiin usein nimenomaan vuoden 1902 tapahtumilla: muut suurvallat eivät olleet halunneet toimia silloin, joten ne eivät luultavasti suostuisi toimimaan vastaisuudessakaan. Eroa vuosisadan muutaman alkuvuoden ja myöhempien vaiheiden välillä ei kuitenkaan tule liioitella, koska Britannian asenne oli koko ajan pidättynyt ja varovainen.

Tutkimuskirjallisuudessa on joskus viitattu juutalaisvastaisten asenteiden vaikutukseen Britannian ulkoministeriön asenteiden muotoutumisessa. Antisemitismi ei kuitenkaan ollut ulkoministeriön toiminnassa ratkaiseva asia — ainakaan Romanian tapauksessa. Joskus yksittäiset virkamiehet saattoivat esittää hieman epäasiallisia kommentteja juutalaisista ja ajoittain Romaniassa asemapaikallaan olleet diplomaatit saattoivat omaksua romanialaisten selityksiä ja asenteita sellaisinaan. Kuitenkin näiden seikkojen vastapainoksi täytyy huomauttaa, että virkamiehet esittivät ylemmyydentuntoisia ja halventavia kommentteja myös romanialaisista, todennäköisesti vielä enemmän kuin juutalaisista. Ulkoministeriö ei siis missään tapauksessa ollut Romanian ”puolella” juutalaisia vastaan.

Romanian argumentit pysyivät samoina koko tarkastelujakson ajan. Romanialaiset vetosivat siihen, että kun suurvallat olivat tunnustaneet Romanian itsenäisyyden vuonna 1880, ne olivat samalla luopuneet interventio-oikeudestaan. Suurvallat olisivat siis tämän tulkinnan mukaan hyväksyneet sen, ettei Romaniassa myönnetty juutalaisväestölle maan kansalaisuutta. Romania kiisti, että maassa vainottaisiin juutalaisia. Juutalaisvastainen lainsäädäntö puolestaan oli tarkoitettu suojaamaan romanialaisia ulkomaisten valta-asemalta. Romanian hallitus pyrki ajoittain levittämään omaa tulkintaansa tu-

kevaa propagandaa Britanniassa, esimerkiksi julkaisemalla pamfletteja tai välittämällä tietoa diplomaattikanavia pitkin. Britannian ulkoministeriö ei uskonut näitä väitteitä. Kaikesta tästä huolimatta maiden väliset suhteet olivat kuitenkin kohteliaat, joskaan eivät erityisen läheiset.

Suunnilleen vuodesta 1907 alkaen Britannia alkoi ottaa entistä enemmän huomioon suurvaltapoliittiset näkökohdat, kun se päätti politiikastaan Romanian juutalaisia kohtaan. Britannia oli solminut liitot Ranskan ja Venäjän kanssa, eikä se halunnut Romanian tiivistävän yhteistyötään Saksan ja Itävalta-Unkarin kanssa. Tämä saattoi lisätä Britannian hallituksen haluttomuutta puuttua Romanian juutalaisten kohteluun.

Romanian juutalaisten siirtolaisuus

Romaniasta lähti vuosien 1899—1904 välisenä aikana siirtolaisiksi yli 40 000 juutalaista ja koko ensimmäistä maailmansotaa edeltävällä ajalla vähintään 70 000. Laivalippujen hintakäytännöistä johtuen suuri osa tästä joukosta kulki Englannin kautta Yhdysvaltoihin. Britanniaan asettui pysyvästi kuitenkin vain noin 120 000 Itä-Euroopan juutalaista, joista romanialaisia noin 5 000. Juutalaiset olivat sitä mieltä, että siirtolaisuus johtui pääasiassa Romanian juutalaispolitiikasta, antisemitismistä ja juutalaisvastaisesta lainsäädännöstä, joskin vuosisadan vaihteen talouslamalla oli myös vaikutusta. Romanian hallituksen tulkinta poikkesi tästä: Romania syytti kansainvälisiä juutalaisjärjestöjä siirtolaisuuden rohkaisusta ja piti lisäksi juutalaisten väestönkasvua keskeisenä tekijänä.

Kauttakulkusiirtolaisten suuri määrä pelästytti Britannian vakiintuneen juutalaisyhteisön; eihän ollut selvää, kuinka suuri osa kauttakulkijoista jäisikin saarivaltioon. Yhteiskuntaan tiiviisti integroituneet juutalaiset pelkäsivät oman asemansa puolesta, sillä suuri maahanmuuttajien määrä voimisti muukalaisvihamielisyyttä ja rotuvihaa, ja sitä kautta uhkasi myös vakiintuneen juutalaisväestön asemaa. Britanniassa suunniteltiin samanaikaisesti siirtolaislainsäädäntöä, ja siirtolaisuuskeskustelu oli kiivasta — liittyen nimenomaan juutalaissiirtolaisuuden yhteiskunnallisiin ongelmiin. Niinpä juutalaiseliitti vastusti suurimittaista maahanmuuttoa Itä-Euroopasta, ja koetti parhaansa mukaan hillitä siirtolaisvirtoja. Juutalaisjärjestöt lähettivät siirtolaisia takaisin Manner-Eurooppaan ja eteenpäin Atlantin yli. Joillakin Britannian juutalaisilla oli eriäviä mielipiteitä siirtolaispolitiikan jyrkkyydestä ja taloudellisen avun määrästä, mutta perusasenne oli kuitenkin kaikilla sama: juutalaisten asemaa tuli parantaa Itä-Euroopassa, jotta alueen juutalaisilla ei alun perinkään olisi tarvetta lähteä siirtolaisiksi.

Tässä valossa ei olekaan yllättävää, että juutalainen diplomatia oli Romanian kysymyksessä erityisen aktiivista juuri 1900-luvun ensimmäisinä vuosina, kun siirtolaisuus Romaniasta oli huipussaan. Kun Conjoint Committee harjoitti painostustoimintaa, se ei kuitenkaan korostanut yhteyttä siirtolaisuuden uhan ja Romanian juutalaisten huonon aseman välillä erityisen näyttävästi. Tämä oli huomattavissa nimenomaan juutalaisjohtajien yhteydenotoissa Britannian hallituksen suuntaan. Sen sijaan silloin kun Britannian juutalaiset keskustelivat siir-

tolaisuuden aiheuttamista ongelmista keskenään, siirtolaisuuden ja Romaniassa harjoitetun sorron yhteydet tulivat hyvinkin selviksi.

Suurvaltapolitiikka ja poliittinen tilanne Balkanilla

Britanniasta käsin katsottuna Romanian tilanne oli ollut muutaman vuoden ajan taka-alalla, kun Romaniassa puhkesi vuonna 1907 talonpoikaiskapina. Juutalaisten maanvuokraajien toiminta oli kapinan syttymisessä tärkeässä roolissa. Kapinassa ei kuitenkaan kuollut juutalaisia, vaikka heidän omaisuuttaan tuhottiin ja tuhannet juutalaiset joutuivat pakenemaan asuinpaikoiltaan. Britannian juutalaiset aloittivat kapinan jälkeen kampanjan Romanian juutalaisten puolesta, ja vaativat Britannian hallitusta puuttumaan Romanian tilanteeseen.

Britannian juutalaisjärjestöjen aktiivinen toiminta jatkui vuonna 1908. Kun Balkanin alueella tuli rajamuutoksia ja valtasuhteiden muutoksia, muutokset antoivat aihetta juutalaisaktivistien kampanjoille. Lucien Wolf nousi nyt voimakkaasti esille Conjoint Committeen politiikan muovaajana. Suurvallat suunnittelivat vuonna 1908 kokousta Balkanin tilanteesta sen jälkeen kun Bulgaria oli julistautunut itsenäiseksi ja Itävalta-Unkari liittänyt Bosnian itseensä. Tässä yhteydessä Conjoint Committee vaati, että Romanian juutalaisten asemaa käsiteltäisiin konferenssissa muiden Balkanin asioiden ohella, kun Berliinin sopimuksen määrittelemään tilanteeseen oli joka tapauksessa tulossa muutoksia. Tämä oli epärealistinen toive, minkä juutalaisjohtajat tuntuivat ymmärtävän itsekin.

Balkanin sotien yhteydessä vuosina 1912—1913 tarjoutui jälleen mahdollisuus ehdottaa Romanian juutalaisten tilanteen uudelleenkäsittelyä kansainvälisellä foorumilla. Perusteluna Conjoint Committeella oli tässä tilanteessa ensiksi se, että Romania oli saamassa lisäalueita, mikä tulisi merkitsemään juutalaisten sorron ja epätasa-arvon maantieteellistä laajenemista. Jatkossa vaadittiin myös koko Balkania koskevaa, rauhansopimuksen liitettävää uskonnonvapauslauseketta sekä sitä, että Britannian hallitus ei tunnustaisi epätyydyttävää Bukarestin rauhansopimusta elokuulta 1913. Vuosina 1913–1914 Britannian juutalaisten kampanjointi Romanian juutalaisten puolesta oli erittäin aktiivista, mutta kesällä 1914 syttynyt maailmansota merkitsi toiminnan keskeytymistä.

Juutalaisen diplomatian arviointia

Britannian juutalaisten ulkopoliittisten johtajien päätavoite oli Romanian juutalaisten emansipaatio. Tämä tavoite liittyi kansainvälisoikeudelliselta kannalta vuoden 1878 Berliinin sopimukseen. Britannian juutalaiset vaativat, että Romania täyttäisi Berliinin sopimuksen ehdot ja myöntäisi koko juutalaisväestölleen kansalaisuuden. Juutalaisten kansalaisuus johtaisi samalla juutalaisvastaisen lainsäädännön kaatumiseen, kun juutalaisia ei enää voisi kohdella maattomina muukalaisina.

Romanian juutalaisten täysi tasa-arvo olisi johtanut myös Britannian juutalaiseliitin maailmankuvan mukaisen ideologisen tavoitteen toteutumiseen. Mikäli Romanian juutalaisten emansipaatio olisi toteutunut läntisten mallien

mukaan, juutalaiseliitin maailmankuva olisi vahvistunut. Romanian juutalaisista olisi tullut yhteiskuntaan integroituneita hyödyllisiä kansalaisia. Samalla siirtolaisuus olisi loppunut ja juutalaiskysymys olisi ratkaistu paikan päällä itäisessä Euroopassa, aivan kuten Britannian juutalaisjohtajat halusivat.

Juutalaisen diplomatian tuloksia arvioidessa tulee väistämättä mieleen, että toiminnalla ei juuri ollut vaikutusta. Romania tosin suostui tekemään myönnytyksiä juutalaisille juutalaisvastaisten lakien soveltamisessa, esimerkiksi vuonna 1902, mutta nämä kompromissit eivät olleet juutalaisen diplomatian suoranaisia seurauksia. On kuitenkin huomattava, että juutalaisen diplomatian ansiosta Romanian juutalaisten tilanne sai varsin runsaasti huomiota Britannian ulkoministeriössä, ja Britannian hallitus myönsi, että Romanian juutalaispolitiikka oli tuomittavaa. Tämä saattoi hillitä Romanian juutalaisvastaisia toimia. Britannian juutalaisten rooli oli merkittävä siinä, että he toivat kansainvälisen vähemmistöjen suojelun näkyvästi esille useaan otteeseen. Siten heidän toimintansa on tärkeä osa vähemmistöjen suojelun historiaa.

Romanian juutalaisten asema ei parantunut näkyvällä tavalla ennen ensimmäistä maailmansotaa. Romanian juutalaisten emansipaatio toteutui vasta sodan jälkeen, kun Romanian joutui allekirjoittamaan ns. vähemmistösopimuksen, jossa annettiin määräykset juutalaisten kansalaisuudesta ja tasa-arvoisesta kohtelusta.

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APPENDIX

Romania, 1878-1914

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