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**Opportunistic Politicking and
“Necessary Nationalism” in Romania:
Anti-Semitism in the Context of the 1879 Revision of
the Constitution**

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INTRODUCTION

It is generally admitted that the process of modernization in its manifold manifestations was a constant of the 19th century European history. Synchronously, within this broad process, historical phenomena like the industrialization, occurring in the context of a rampant capitalism, the emergence of urban bourgeoisie with its specific political agenda – entailing, among other things, the ascension of liberal and democratic parliamentary regimes – and the rise of national ideologies affected all the European states, albeit in different periods of the 19th century. Concurrently, since the ordered society of the Ancien Régime was perceived as incompatible with the model of citizenship characterizing the modern state, throughout 19th century, western states had to back, out of pragmatic necessity or simple emulation, social and political emancipation as necessary means to build a new citizenship¹. In this context, Jewish emancipation was considered a consequence of the modernization, therefore it occurred at different times and at varying intensities in the European states.

In the case of the newly emerged states of Europe, the modernizing efforts were synchronically doubled up by an intense nation-building process. In a matter of decades, sometimes years, states like Greece, Serbia and Romania enacted a constitutional political system, set the basis for a national economy and culture and took measures to legally codify a new citizenship. Under these circumstances, the emancipation of the Jews was also brought up on the political program, especially since it represented a hot issue on the international agenda at that time. In the case of Romania, undoubtedly a latecomer to modernization, this issue encountered serious

¹ For the necessity of the Jewish emancipation in the modernizing context of 19th century, cf. Salo Baron, “Ghetto and Emancipation”, in Leo W. Schwarz (ed.), *The Menorah Treasury* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1964), 60.

setbacks culminating with unprecedented outbursts of anti-Semitism in public and political discourses whenever the circumstances imposed a reappraisal of the legal status of the Jewish population residing in the country. The purpose of the present thesis is to offer a synthesis and also a critical reconsideration of the corpus of Romanian anti-Semitic discourses in the 1860s and 1870s, that is during the period the Romanian state emerged. Since an exhaustive, contextual analysis of anti-Semitic discourses and policies occurring in that period would exceed the limits of this thesis, the focus will be mainly set on a specific historical moment which occasioned unmatched discursive anti-Semitism, namely the public debate on the legal situation of Romanian Jews following the 1878 Congress of Berlin. Furthermore, this selection is motivated by the fact that, as it will be argued in the following pages, the anti-Semitic discourses proffered in that specific moment recovered previous similar stances, thus standing out as an exemplification of a typical ideology as regards the nationality and the modernity².

The emergence of anti-Semitism in Romania must be placed in the broader context of nation-building and modernization. In the second half of 19th century, Romania emerged as a new entity on the map of Europe, rapidly undertaking far-reaching measures to totally modernize its social, economic, and national condition. If in 1866 - the year of the advent of Prince Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to the throne - the newly emerged state was politically dependent and had an archaic organization, after only 15 years, in 1881, it became already an independent kingdom endowed with a liberal constitution and democratic institutions.

² For the relationship between nationalism and anti-Semitism in general, see Shmuel Almog, *Nationalism and Anti-Semitism in modern Europe, 1815-1945* (Oxford : Pergamon Press, 1990), XVII-XVIII, 42-43. For the evolution of the concept of 'nationality' in 19th Romania, see Constantin Iordachi, "The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship: The Emancipation of 'Non-Citizens' in Romania, 1866 – 1918", *European Review of History – Revue européenne d'Histoire* (Vol. 8, No. 2, 2001), 157-186.

From the perspective of its thrust and abruptness, the Romanian modernizing process was even more traumatic than in Western and Central European states, which had already gone through gradual political, economical, and socio-cultural transformations.

When, in 1878, at the Peace Congress of Berlin, the Great Powers conditioned Romanian independency on the political and civil emancipation of the sizeable Jewish population living in the country, the Romanian Jewish question, that is the debate whether the Jews should be granted citizenship or not, took on added momentum. Although, initially animated by romantic nationalist and liberal feelings imported from the West, the Romanian intelligentsia was soon to discover that the *Realpolitik* of the Great Powers flagrantly contradicted its own national aspirations. Anti-Semitism and, to a certain extent, xenophobia, became endemic in newspaper articles, public debates and parliamentary discourses. The proposed solutions to the big question on the political agenda of the state codified a reassessment of Romanians' relationships with Western Europe and its perceived paradigm of modernity, which left a deep imprint on the subsequent evolution of the national ideology. The political instrumentalization of the Jewish question in that period offers the researcher a clue about the particular manner in which the fragile political balance of power was maintained. Furthermore, the Romanian response to the Jewish question is illustrative for the way the Romanian intellectual elite of 1860s and 1870s defined the nation. As a final point, given the position and the level of development of Romania in the second half of 19th century, the study of the public and political discourses occasioned by the Jewish question provides a relevant case in point for the local appropriation of the abrupt modernization process and may refine the general theories concerning the functions of European anti-Semitism.

In spite of the massive popularity and the obsessive media coverage attained at that time, few studies have hitherto addressed the issue of 19th century Romanian Jewish question and its subsequent political solution. Among them, it must be mentioned *Les Juifs en Roumanie, 1866-1919. De l'exclusion à l'émancipation*³, the capital monograph by Carol Iancu, and also a remarkable essay entitled *A Providential Anti-Semitism. Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth century Romania*⁴, written by William Oldson, which, even if it analyzes only the political and intellectual anti-Jewish reactions following the 1878 Congress of Berlin, offers indubitably an interesting perspective upon the functions of anti-Semitism in the building of Romanian nationalist ideology. In both works anti-Semitism is perceived as an endemic phenomenon in emerging Romania with strong socio-economical, ideological, and political underpinnings. Furthermore, unlike its western counterpart, which it formally imitates, Romanian anti-Semitism was supported by, and also supportive for, the local political establishment. In different manners, the above mentioned authors have insinuated that the Jewish problem emerged in Romania as a consequence of the conflict between a harsh and intense modernization of the political system and the persistence of an obsolete, archaic economic situation. The issue of the Romanian Jewish question and its 1879 solution was also analyzed in the works of other authors, like Beate Welter⁵ and Fritz Stern⁶. However, having the same

³ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie, 1866-1919. De l'exclusion à l'émancipation* (Aix-en-Provence: Éditions de l'Université de Provence, 1978). In the same respect, Carol Iancu edited *Bleichröder et Crémieux. Le Combat pour l'émancipation des Juifs de Roumanie devant le Congrès de Berlin. Correspondance inédite, 1878-1880* (Montpellier: Centres de Recherches et d'Études Juives et Hébraïques, Université Paul Valéry, 1987), in which he retraces the Romanian debates occasioned by the Jewish question from an external, western European and obviously philosemite perspective.

⁴ William Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism. Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth century Romania* (Philadelphia : American Philosophical Society, 1991).

⁵ Beate Welter, *Die Judenpolitik der rumanischen Regierung, 1866-1888* (Frankfurt am Main : Verlag Peter Lang, 1989).

⁶ Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichröder, and the Building of the German Empire* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

perspective upon the phenomenon and using a corpus of historical sources consisting for the most part in diplomatic and foreign documents, they reached more or less the same conclusions.

In default of a thorough contextual analysis of the phenomenon, some of the conclusions reached by the above mentioned authors as regards Romanian anti-Semitism in the 1860s and 1870s seem far-fetched, therefore arguable.

First, drawing on a theory developed by many contemporary scholars of anti-Semitism, previous studies concerning the Romanian case pointed out that anti-Jewish feelings of Romanian elite should be considered an illustration of their prevalent anti-modernist, illiberal and irrational attitudes. Indeed, within the framework of historiography of anti-Semitism, in the attempt to theoretically integrate the outburst of anti-Semitic discourses in the second half of the 19th century into a broader explanatory narrative concerning modernism, many scholars are inclined to consider it as an outstanding derogation from the principles of modernization. Therefore, anti-Semitism is linked to irrationalism and, in a broader sense, to anti-modernism and illiberalism. For instance, in an influential study about the rise of political anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria, Peter Pulzer concluded that the anti-Semitic stances, already present in 1870s, were triggered by the rejection of liberalism as it was politically and socially practiced at that time⁷. Shulamit Volkov, another scholar interested in the same object of research similarly argued that German anti-Semitism acted in 19th century as a cultural code, integrating several discursive strategies which emerged as reactions to a competing liberal, bourgeois, dynamic model of modernization⁸. Talking also about the German anti-Semitism, Hans-Joachim Bieber

⁷ Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria* (London: Peter Halban, 1988²), 27-30.

⁸ Shulamit Volkov, "Anti-Semitism as a Cultural Code", *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 23, (1978), 45-46.

wrote that “it developed as an anti-modern ideology of defense”⁹. Likewise, Steven Beller recently pointed out, following a long research tradition, a “quite strong link between German cultural irrationalism and anti-Semitism”¹⁰. In the case of Romanian anti-Semitic discourses of 19th century, usually analyzed separately from its western counterpart, the researchers reached the same conclusion: being anti-Semite almost necessarily involved the rejection of modernity and an illiberal as well as extreme nationalist stance¹¹. In addition, they accredited the idea that the policy toward the Jewish inhabitants was arbitrary, a mere result of caprice and nationalist bravado¹² of the Romanian political elite.

Second, the works analyzing Romanian anti-Semitism, more or less directly, imply a deterministic continuity between the discourses and policies perpetrated by Romanian elite in the 19th century and the interwar anti-Semitic ideology, which justified the subsequent Romanian Holocaust. For instance, in the 2004 *Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania*, one may read the following lines: “There are sufficient examples that can be cited in the political, cultural and religious spheres to support the notion that anti-Semitism must be dealt with as an integral part of the sweep of Romanian history.”¹³ Likewise, Leon Volovici, a reputed scholar of interwar Romanian anti-Semitism, began his analysis of the manifest anti-Jewish ideology promoted by 20th century intelligentsia with a

⁹ Hans-Joachim Bieber, “Anti-Semitism as a Reflection of Social, Economic and Political Tension in Germany: 1880-1933”, in David Bronson (ed.), *Jews and Germans from 1860 to 1933: The Problematic Symbiosis* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1979), 46.

¹⁰ Steven Beller, *Antisemitism. A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 55-56.

¹¹ “In surveying the 19th century intelligentsia’s development of an ideology of anti-Semitism, we will be struck by how illiberal even the most magnanimous (by Romanian standards, that is) supporters of Jewish rights sound to modern ears.”, in W. Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism*, 100.

¹² Cf. *Idem*, “Rationalizing Anti-Semitism: The Romanian Gambit”, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 138, No. 1 (1994), 25-26.

¹³ Cf. the online edition, http://yad-vashem.org.il/about_yad/what_new/data_whats_new/report1.html accessed on May 19, 2008.

concise survey of the 19th century anti-Semitic views¹⁴. In this manner, previous historiography on the topic accredits the idea of an alleged Romanian *Sonderweg*¹⁵, placing, almost exclusively, the Holocaust in the direct descent of the anti-Semitic discourses proffered in the 19th century.

As for Romanian historians, no recent work extensively approached the problem of anti-Semitism in 19th century. Most probably, this situation was determined by the communist restrictions and the post-communist historiographical interest limited to the 20th century anti-Semitism and Holocaust. However, the few works concerning this issue not surprisingly enforced a nationalist interpretation of the events, thus reproducing, without criticism, the line of thought of the 1870s Romanian intelligentsia. When not ignoring it completely¹⁶, some authors considered that the official Romanian attitude was not provoked by “pretended anti-Semitic tendencies”, but by the “national interest” of the new Romanian state¹⁷. Others viewed the cause the anti-Semitic outbursts in the large and still increasing number of Jews living in Romania at that time and their economic preponderance in certain regions¹⁸. Probably sensing the delicacy of this historical issue, the authors of widely known monographs on Romanian modern history, chose only to mention, without any further

¹⁴ Cf. Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Anti-Semitism: the Case of the Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1991), 1-16.

¹⁵ On the *Sonderweg* theory and its limitations as regards this topic, see Jurgen Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German *Sonderweg*”, *History and Theory*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (1999), pp. 40-50 and, more explicitly, Oded Heilbroner, “From Antisemitic Peripheries to Antisemitic Centres: The Place of Anti-Semitism in Modern German History”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (2000), 559-576.

¹⁶ See Anastasie Iordache, *Sub zodia Strousberg* [Under the sign of Strousberg] (Bucuresti : Globus, 1991). In this book dedicated to the Romanian political struggles in the 1870, the author manages to dispatch the issue of the Jewish question, a veritable keystone of Romanian evolution in those years, in only a quarter of a page.

¹⁷ Gheorghe Cliveti, *România și Puterile garante* [Romania and the Guarantor Powers] (Iași: Editura Universității „Al. I. Cuza”, 1988), 122. See also, Barbu B. Berceanu, „Modificarea, din 1879, a articolului 7 din Constituție” [The 1879 Revision of the Article 7 of the Constitution], *Studii și materiale de istorie modernă*, 6 (1979), 67-89.

¹⁸ Cf. for instance Ion Bulei, *O istorie a Românilor* [A History of Romanians], 4th edition, (Bucharest: Editura Meronia, 2007), 120-121 or Dan Berindei, *Societatea roâneacă în vremea lui Carol I (1866-1876)* [Romanian Society in the time of Carol I], 2nd edition, (Bucharest: Editura Elion, 2002), 178.

considerations, the general reluctance pertaining to the 1879 revision of the Article 7 of the Constitution¹⁹.

To conclude, it may be argued that the previous literature on the topic of Romanian Jewish Question and its ensuing anti-Semitic resolution offers divergent, incomplete, as well as ideologically biased, arguments. Without entirely refuting these type of findings as regards 19th century anti-Semitism, a study on this topic should depart from a different conceptual and methodological stance.

First, no previous study fully explained the central place Jewish question occupied in the public and political life after the Congress of Berlin. This thesis will prove that, alongside the nationalist obsession, this situation is equally determined by political reasons. Therefore, a complete understanding of the historical evolution of the phenomenon is impossible, if the circumstances and the politicking character of the anti-Semitic actions of that time are not fully exploited. The present thesis will encompass an attentive study of Romanian sources as regards the Jewish question – including newspaper articles, pamphlets, poems, parliamentary and electoral speeches – and a thorough contextualization of each discursive strategy employed in the public debates.

Second, from the perspective of the relationship of anti-Semitic discourses with anti-modernism and liberalism, one may easily point out that the previous studies are based on a contemporary meaning of the considered notions. As William Hagen cautioned, the historian should not exclusively confound modernity with liberal democracy²⁰. Alongside societies, concepts and ideas too are subject to a process of change over the centuries. Therefore claiming that anti-Semitism is a reflection of

¹⁹ See Keith Hitchins, *Rumania. 1866-1947*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 52-53, Frederick Kellogg, *The Road to Romanian Independence* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1995), rom. trans. *Drumul României spre Independență* (Iași: Institutul European, 2002), 298-305.

²⁰ William Hagen, "Before the "Final Solution": Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Anti-Semitism in Interwar Germany and Poland", *The Journal of Modern History*, 68 (June 1996), 378.

anti-modernism and irrationalism (in its contemporary meaning) does not necessarily prove that it was considered this way in the second half of 19th century. Consequently, this thesis seeks to nuance the anti-modernist interpretation of Romanian anti-Semitism. By analyzing the context, the forms, as well as the purposes of Romanian anti-Semitic discourses, in the late 1870s it will argue that, although denying liberalism, at least in its emancipatory effusions, this specific type of anti-Semitism enabled an evenly influential and modernist – for that time – paradigm of political and social thought, namely an equally radical, organicist and romantic, conception of the nation (*Volk*)²¹. Indirectly the findings of this thesis may question the homogeneity of the distinct dimensions of modernity as it was enacted in the mentioned period.

Third, this thesis will theoretically envisage the debate concerning the Jewish question in Romania after the 1878 Congress of Berlin as a political scandal. This approach qualifies the topic all the more as an appropriate research territory, since, as Byron said in a famous poem, “dead scandals form good subjects for dissection”²². However, a genuine theory of scandal is missing so far from the conceptual toolkit of intellectual history. The scandal, as a social phenomenon with complex causes and effects, has been conceptualized by sociologists. For Markovitz and Silverstein, the scandal represents a publicly perceived “violation of a due process”, meaning the transgression of legally or imaginary binding rules and procedures which govern the exercise of power²³. In an article published as early as 1954, the French ethnographer Eric de Dampierre detailed the effects of scandal on a

²¹ Maria Todorova, “The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism”, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1. (2005), 143.

²² *Don Juan*, I, 31.

²³ Cf. A. S. Markovits and S. Silberstein, *The Political Scandal: Power and Process in the Liberal Democracies*. (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1988), 1-17. See also J. B. Thompson, art. “Scandal” in Neil H. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioural Sciences* (Oxford: Elsevier Science Ltd., 2001), 13519-13522.

given community²⁴. First, it determines malaise with acknowledged values to a given public, relativizing, by its outburst, the set of values and beliefs of the group. At the same time with having a “dissolving action” upon them, it also reinforces the acquired moral values, simply by redundantly hinting at them. Second, the scandal creates its own public, it activates and reinforces a certain collective identity but also tends to concurrently divide its public in opposing camps, thus transforming itself into an affair²⁵.

From this perspective, the hypotheses of this thesis are: a) The astute instrumentalization of the Jewish question as a scandal, building upon a considerable corpus of anti-Semitic discourses, created the premises for an almost unanimous consensus within Romanian elites as regards the 1879 revision of the Article 7 of the Constitution. b) In the immediate post-1878 period, the two sides divided by the Jewish question seem to be the Romanian public and political sphere, adopting an anti-Semitic and a defensive nationalist stance, on the one hand, and the European public opinion and governments, demanding the instant and total emancipation of the Jews, on the other. This fact had a great influence on the future policy of Romanian state. Throughout this thesis, terms like ‘Western Europe’ or ‘Western Powers’ are used as practical denominators for those countries who constantly sustained the pressure on the Romanian state in the Jewish question and finally conditioned at the Congress of Berlin the independence of the country on the granting of civil and political rights – Great Britain, France, and to a certain extent Italy and Austria-Hungary. Their second sense is determined by their obsessive recurrence in the Romanian discourses of that time and refers to the local perception upon a model of

²⁴ Eric de Dampierre, “Thèmes pour l’étude du scandale”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 9, No. 3 (1954), 328 – 336.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 330-332.

modern civilization which is negotiated with difficulty. By the use of this terminology, the present thesis does not imply a normative distinction between two geographical entities - Eastern and Western Europe – but simply differentiates between the different actors of the Jewish question.

A last conceptual remark concerns the meaning conveyed by the notion of “public sphere” and its derivatives - “public opinion” and “public discourse” – which appear often in the pages of this thesis. Drawing on the work of Jürgen Habermas, the “public sphere” should be understood as “the sphere of private people come together as a public”, a field that mediates between state and society and a subject identical to educated people that carry an opinion on – perceived - common interest issues²⁶. In this sense, this thesis uses the notion of “public sphere” both as a generic designation of a specific type of discourses and a topical metaphor, designating the place of the educated elite in the society. The conceptual framework of the public and political scandal will hence allow the analysis of one of the most important moments in 19th-century history of Romania from a totally new perspective.

This thesis is structured in four main chapters. The first chapter is concerned with the historical perspective of the emergence of the Jewish question in Romania. A first sub-chapter briefly refers to statistical data concerning the demography and economic influence of the Jewish population residing in Romania in the second half of the 19th century. Further on, revisiting the most important events that shaped the adoption of the Article 7 of the 1866 Constitution and the political factors that determined the perpetuation of anti-Jewish legislation up until the late 1870s, with the concern of describing the ambitions of its main actors in quasi-constant opposition

²⁶ See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1989), 27. For an overview of Habermas’s definition of the ‘public sphere’, see also Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992), 1-48.

with the political stakes of the Great Powers, this chapter maps the main cleavages that provided the usable past for the options of the elite in the post-1878 period. The stipulation of the new Constitution of 1866 and the first signs of rabid political anti-Semitism in the subsequent period will therefore be treated herein, since these events represent the immediate context in which Jewish question gains relevance in the public life of Romania.

The second chapter elucidates the intricate aspects of international pressure exerted on Romania, due to the governmental measures enforced on Jews. A special emphasis is put on the activity of the members of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, who played a key role as regards the constant international pressure on Romania *vis à vis* the Jewish problem. Owing much to factual history, and built upon existing secondary literature, this chapter offers an account of the main political events that had a bearing on 1870s Romanian public life as a result of the Jewish question. Furthermore, the chapter explores the events occurring at the 1878 Peace Congress of Berlin. There, by an unilateral decision, the Great Powers set the conditions of the Romanian independence, thus marking the ambivalent climax of the political evolutions of the period.

The third chapter deals extensively with the discourses generated by all these events and their meaning in the perspective of nation-building. The specific concurrence between perceived economic difficulties and illegitimate immixture in the internal affairs by foreign powers and the construction of the local national self-image (inherent in every nation-building process) triggered the delimitation from what was perceived as otherness. As a consequence, anti-Semitic, and to a lesser degree xenophobic discourses, radicalized and generalized toward the end of the period. Almost with no exception the intellectual elite of the new state operated a

mutation towards a defensive nationalist mind-set. In order to strengthen its own ties, the incipient national elite created - and distanced from - the Others (strangers, capitalists, Jews etc.) and their values. These ideas are proved herein by an exhaustive analysis of the published pamphlets concerning the Jewish problem as well as of the opinions widely disseminated by the local press. Several case studies focus on the discursive inflexions of some public figures which later on will enter the Romanian cultural canon - M. Eminescu, Ioan Slavici etc. - in order to finally prove the capital importance of the Jewish question on their on their actual stance and, in due course, the political consequences of this type of discourse.

The final chapter explains the political resolution of the Jewish question and the revision of the Article 7, from the perspective of their determinants. The contextual analysis of the 1879 parliamentary discourses, displaying a wide range of anti-Semitic themes, forms the core of this chapter. The study of the reactions to the revised form of Article 7 eventually proves the hypotheses forwarded above.

Ultimately, this thesis elucidates an unclear aspect of Romanian modern intellectual history. Its aim is not and cannot possibly be the justification of the political events that led to the emergence of anti-Semitism in Romania. Rather than legitimize them, the present thesis aims to explain this turn of events from the perspective of political and intellectual history.

1. The emergence of the Jewish Question in Romania

An analysis of the anti-Semitic policies and discourses occasioned by the 1879 revision of the 1866 Constitution of Romania, must necessarily begin with an account of the events that led to the adoption of the Constitution and the emergence of the Jewish question in Romania. Indeed, had the article 7 of the 1866 Constitution, which ultimately barred Jews from citizenship, not been voted, the whole succession of events pertaining to the Romanian Jewish question would have been utterly different. The adoption of the 1866 Constitution is undeniably the starting point for the future consecution culminating with the decisions reached at the 1878 Congress of Berlin and the radicalization of the debates regarding the Jewish question in Romania, by the late 1870s. Additionally, the 1866 debates around the new Constitution set the context for the emergence of the Jewish question, and, in many respects, constituted an anticipatory prelude of the discursive and political strategies generalized at a later stage.

The present chapter analyses thus the circumstances of the emergence of the Jewish question in Romania. Its first section offers a description of the Romanian Jewish population of that time from a demographic and economic point of view. Subsequently, the political context determining the adoption of the article 7 of the Romanian Constitution is analyzed in detail on the basis of several sources available (press articles, parliamentary discourses etc.). The last section of the chapter provides an explanation of the anti-Jewish turn of the subsequent Romanian cabinets, from the same political perspective.

1.1 The dynamics of the Jewish population

In order to appreciate the stake of the Jewish question in Romania of that time, some historical background data are needed. The Jews settled in the Romanian Principalities in the Middle Age but grew in population from the 18th century onwards. Prior to the modernization era of the 19th century, the Jews, alongside Armenians, Greeks or Bulgarians, played the role of economic intermediaries between the social elite, the boyars, and the majority of peasants²⁷. Although subjects to a religious anti-Semitism, the Jews were accorded a recognized and distinct status that enabled them to thrive. After 1830, when the Principalities fell under the Tsarist influence, the situation of the Jews changed dramatically because the new Russian inspired legislation (*Regulamentele Organice*) considered all of them strangers, exploiters of the resources of the country and furthermore prohibited them from farming land or owning any rural properties²⁸. Later on, the liberal revolutionaries of 1848 tried to fully emancipate Jews, but in spite of their intentions²⁹, the status of Jews remained unchanged even after the unification of 1859.

Throughout the first half of 19th century, the continuous influx of Jews from Russia's Pale of Settlement and Galicia had a deep impact upon the demography and economy of Romania, especially in Moldova, which was in the immediate vicinity of the Russian border. In this respect, the 1859 census of the population gives suggestive data. In Moldova alone, the Jews represented 8.16 per cent of the total population³⁰. Further, Jews, because of the specific legislation directed against them, were mostly concentrated in the urban centers, representing thus 35.10 per cent of the whole urban

²⁷ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie...*, 23, 31-46.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 46-49.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 50-53.

³⁰ See the detailed tables provided by Beate Welter, *Die Judenpolitik der rumänischen Regierung*, 216-220

population of Moldova³¹. In Iași, for instance, the capital of Moldova, the 1859 census counted 46.33 per cent Jewish population. The proportion of Jews was even higher in the northern Moldavian towns like Fălticeni (62.97 per cent) or Dorohoi (50.10 per cent)³². Jewish presence in southern part of Romania (Wallachia) was much weaker. From a total population of almost two and a half million, there were only 9234 Jews – that is, 0.38 per cent. Overall, estimates of the Jewish population in Romania for the second half of 1860s and 1870s varied from 200,000 to 300,000 (that is 3 per cent) out of a total population of about 5 million³³. Comparatively, at the same epoch in all England there were only 46,000 and in all France around 50,000. The numerical significance of the Jewish population was backed, from a religious perspective by a considerable number of synagogues in Romania, reaching more than 600. The Jews formed therefore the second largest religious community in the country, after the Christian orthodox³⁴.

The Jewish demographic presence also translated into a strong economic activity. In Moldova, for instance, more than two thirds of the local craftsmen and merchants were Jewish³⁵. In a parliamentary speech of September 1879, the deputy Constantin Cristodulo-Cerchez, former mayor of Iași in 1870-1871 and in the first months of 1879, offered some statistical data on the Jewish economic influence in the ex-capital of Moldova. Thus, it seems that in 1866, the Jews represented 42.5 per cent of the Iași real estate owners (that is 1,146 from a total of 2,698) and 78.3 per cent the craftsmen and merchants (namely 2,209 as compared to 613 Romanians)³⁶. Foreign

³¹ Beate Welter, *Die Judenpolitik der rumänischen Regierung...*, *op. cit.*, 218.

³² *Ibidem*, 219.

³³ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie...*, 142.

³⁴ Cf. Ion Bulei, *O Istorie a Românilor*, 121.

³⁵ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie...*, 141.

³⁶ In the case of real estate owners data, Cristodulo-Cerchez warned that due to the restrictions imposed on them, the Jews bought real estates through the agency of Romanian citizens, therefore the number of Jewish owners was perhaps much bigger. Cf. his discourse in the Assembly of Deputies in *Românul*, XXIII, September 30, 1879.

observers as well disclosed the overwhelming Jewish influence on the Moldavian economy. After a voyage in Romania, the French historian Ernest Desjardins wrote: “The Jews are foreigners in Romania, not only because of their language and habits, but also due to their spirit. And they want to remain strangers. They do not send their children to Romanian schools, although education is free of charge for them. The totality of the small retail commerce with milk, meat, and fruits is in their hands, and they especially excel in the alcohol production. In Moldova, the Jew is tailor, cobbler, clockmaker, tinker, and chiefly pawnbroker. The Jew charges a monthly interest up to 50 per cent, and because of the lack of credit institutions, everybody comes to them in case of a bad harvest³⁷. Furthermore, a German consul arriving in Iași in that period remembered that “all trade was in the hands of Jews. By hard work, frugality, economy, and tight cohesion they prevented the rise of the Romanian merchants”³⁸.

The young prince of Romania, Carol I, depicts the Jews almost in the same manner. After his first voyage in Moldova in 1866, he wrote that the Jews were unpleasant and living in small and dirty towns. Moreover, they were increasing their numbers in a remarkable rhythm, while the Romanian population was decreasing. Besides that, the Jews were considered a real calamity for the Moldavian villages: “Only the Jew is taverner and grocer; he tempts the peasants to drink his falsified spirits and he is always ready to credit them, in order to totally ruin them afterwards”³⁹. It is no wonder that the young prince, after his own confession, came soon to comprehend Romanians’ dislike for the Jews⁴⁰.

³⁷ apud. *Memoriile regelui Carol I al României de un martor ocular* [The Memoirs of King Carol I of Romania by an eye witness], edited by Stelian Neagoe, Vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Scripta, 1992), 232.

³⁸ Cited in Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichröder, and the building of the German empire*, 372.

³⁹ Cf. *Memoriile regelui Carol I al României*, 100-110.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 100.

To conclude, during the 1860s and 1870s, the Jewish population of Romania was considerable. Established predominantly in Moldova, the Jews were generally city-dwellers with a substantial influence on local economy. Polarized between a small upper stratum possessing real estates and capital, and the vast, poor and uneducated majority who had to eke out a living by peddling or manufacturing diverse goods, the Jews were generally perceived as unassimilable and unwanted outsiders and stirred the overt antipathies of the Romanians.

1.2 The fragile political balance of power and the adoption of the article 7 of the 1866 Constitution

Prior to 1866, under Alexandru Ioan Cuza's regime (1859-1866), the Romanian United Principalities underwent a rapid and socially painful process of modernization mainly by means of legislative measures designed to adapt Romanian realities to western standards. However, Cuza's authoritarian tendencies determined the members of the political elite to ally against him irrespective of their conservative or liberal orientation. Cuza was thus forced to abdicate by the so-called 'Monstrous Coalition' of conservatives and radical liberals⁴¹.

The latter were lead by Ion C. Brătianu. Descending from an old boyar family of Wallachia, he completed his studies in Paris and was a former revolutionary of 1848, militating, among other things, for the immediate and full "emancipation of Israelites and political rights for all compatriots of other religion"⁴². Later on, after the unification of 1859, he got involved in politics being a strong proponent of radical liberal reforms. Equally, alongside his influential friend C. A. Rossetti, Brătianu

⁴¹ Apostol Stan, *Putere politică și democrație în România, 1859-1918* [Political Power and Democracy in Romania, 1859-1866] (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1995), 35-37.

⁴² Ion C. Brătianu, *Din scrierile și cuvântările lui I. C. Brătianu* [The Writings and Discourses of I.C. Brătianu] (Bucharest: Imprimeriile Independența, 1921), 16.

founded a radical liberal political group (the *Reds*) in the Parliament, advocating the acceleration of modernization in Romania. In spite of his liberalism, Cuza kept Brătianu's group in a quasi-perpetual opposition, therefore the impossible coalition between the *Reds* and the conservatives furthered his deposal and the election, in 1866, of Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to the throne of Romania. Brătianu's role in these events is crucial as he was the one sent to negotiate in the western capitals the legitimacy of the new foreign prince⁴³. From his first days in Romania, Carol realized the economic and political backwardness of the country⁴⁴ and finally gave the liberals - in fact, the ones who supported the most his advent to the throne - the chance to form the government. For the next five years Romania was governed by liberal dominated cabinets.

However, the Romanian political establishment was highly instable and fragmented at the time. The lack of a party system and the unsteadiness of the political elite (divided on personal and arbitrary grounds, rather than principles) undermined the implementation of the measures taken by governments⁴⁵. Liberal politicians were not organized into a proper party, instead distinct liberal factions were fighting each other for political power in the state⁴⁶.

Among them, the *Reds* led by Brătianu and Rossetti and situated at the left of the political spectrum, were relatively well organized. Having a network of local branches in the important cities of Wallachia and their own official gazette (*Românul* – *The Romanian*), this political group had a strong popular impact but still lacked the

⁴³ Ion C. Brătianu, *Din scrierile și cuvântările lui I. C. Brătianu.*, 579-581.

⁴⁴ In the first months after his advent, Carol found out that Romania was “a completely disorganized country from a moral and financial point of view”. Cf. *Memoriile regelui Carol I al României*, 90.

⁴⁵ See Apostol Stan, *Putere politică și democrație în România, 1859-1918*, 67-87.

⁴⁶ idem, *Grupări și curente politice în România între Unire și Independență: 1859 – 1877* [Political Groups and Currents in Romania between Unification and Independence: 1859 - 1877] (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1979), 177-208.

necessary parliamentary support in order to impose its views⁴⁷. Therefore, the radicals sought to form alliances with other political groups having similar liberal orientations. After a long period of vacillating negotiations, in March 1867, Brătianu reached an agreement with Mihail Kogălniceanu, the ex-right hand of Cuza and the leader of a center faction, having moderately liberal conceptions⁴⁸. As the experience has shown, this alliance was not enough to secure the support of the legislative bodies, hence the need to find even more upholders predisposed the *Reds* to major concessions.

On relatively similar radical positions as the radical liberals of Wallachia were the peculiar Moldavian liberals grouped around Nicolae Ionescu⁴⁹. The essence of their political doctrine was inspired by the teachings of Simion Bărnuțiu, an ancient Transylvanian '48 revolutionary who, after studying law in Vienna and Pavia, moved to Iași as a professor of philosophy at the local university. His teachings, based on the latinists' thesis stating the Latin purity of Romanians, aimed the restoration of Roman Law in the Unified Principalities. Therefore, Bărnuțiu militated for a republican system, a radical agrarian reform and against the foreign prince or any interference with the foreigners⁵⁰. After his death in 1864, his disciples perpetuated in the political sphere his ideas by creating the so called *Liberal and Independent Fraction* (*Fracțiunea liberă și independentă*) which soon gained a great deal of authority all over Moldova. Nicolae Ionescu, also professor at the University of Iași and the leader of this political group, was one of the few to vote against the election of Carol in

⁴⁷ Apostol Stan, *Putere politică și democrație în România, 1859-1918*, 71-76.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, *Grupări și curente politice în România între Unire și Independență*, 190-191.

⁴⁹ For an in depth description of their political agenda, see *ibidem*, 178-180.

⁵⁰ See Lucian Boia, *Evoluția istoriografiei române* [The Evolution of Romanian Historiography] (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 1976), 167-168.

1866⁵¹. Subsequently, as it will be illustrated in the pages below, the *Fraction* clearly manifested its anti-Semitic stance.

In order to govern the country radical liberals of Wallachia had to cope in a way or another with the *Liberal and Independent Fraction* of Moldova. The rapports between these two political factions will prove decisive in shaping the destiny of Romanian Jewry. The 1866 parliamentary debates around the new Constitution offered the perfect occasion for the eruption of the Jewish question.

The impetus for the emergence of the Jewish question was given in the eve of the advent of Carol. Still keeping up with their 1848 agenda and in order to adjust the image the new regime in Bucharest had in Western Europe, the Wallachian liberals maintained a position favorable to the emancipation of Jews. A first draft of Romanian Constitution, sketched in the spring of 1866 by a commission formed by *Reds* and conservatives, stipulated full political emancipation for the Jewish population⁵².

However, in the eyes of Romanian political elite, the emancipation of Jewish population was not self-evident. The public opinion, influenced by a several influent journalists and politicians began an intense protest against such scandalous proposal. This attitude was motivated by the alleged alarming socio-economical situation of the Jewry and by the general condition of the country. Romanian society was deeply polarized between the landlords, from whom the political elite emerged, and the vast majority of illiterate, semi-emancipated peasants. In-between, the appearance of a local bourgeoisie was endangered, the politicians feared, by the concurrence of this large Jewish cluster. The *Fractionists* from Moldova were afraid that the Romanian

⁵¹ Apostol Stan, *Putere politică și democrație în România*, 41.

⁵² See Constantin Iordachi, "The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship: The Emancipation of 'Non-Citizens' in Romania, 1866 – 1918", *European Review of History – Revue européenne d'Histoire* (Vol. 8, No. 2, 2001), 167-168.

nationality itself would be menaced by the emancipation of Jews, as this political statement would allegedly trigger an even greater invasion of foreigners in the country. Through the voice of the deputy Nicolae Voinov, the Moldavian radical liberals expressed their concern regarding Jewish emancipation and urged the adoption of restrictive laws against all sorts of foreigners in order to enforce the nationality⁵³.

The massive presence of Jews in Moldova and their increasing economic influence nevertheless strengthened the opinions of Moldavian radicals as well. Their envisaged project national identity, greatly influenced by Simion Bărnuțiu's xenophobic stance, drew on the idea of ethnic purity. In this respect, any officially sanctioned form of heterogeneity, was seen as questioning the social cohesion and, ultimately, the power of the nation. From this perspective, the Jews become the domestic enemy, the difference that cannot be integrated.

Several journalists and politicians in Bucharest obdurately maintained the same idea. Among them Cezar Bolliac, a member of the Parliament and the owner of the newspaper *Trompeta Carpaților* (The Trumpet of the Carpathians) stood out as the most prominent. In the pages of this journal, the anti-Jewish statements had a large coverage. The liberals were constantly accused of intending "to sell the country to the Jews", while the Jews themselves were portrayed as assailants on the point of a "hideous invasion"⁵⁴. Consequently, *Trompeta Carpaților* anathematized the governmental project, allowing the emancipation of Jews under certain conditions. The reasons put forth set a high standard on the nascent Romanian anti-Semitic discourse. The Jews were not Christians, they did not contribute to the welfare of

⁵³ See Apostol Stan, *Putere politică și democrație în România*, 49.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Trompeta Carpaților*, IV, no. 426, June 7, 1866.

Romania, and instead they invaded it and sucked its blood. Furthermore, “the Yids⁵⁵ do not give anything, do not do anything for the country; they do not have patriotic feelings. They only know the traffic, they only come among us to ruin, demoralize and *denationalize* us”⁵⁶. Instead of emancipating Romanian Jewry, Bolliac hence proposed a constitutional article that would prevent any Romanian government or Parliament to grant Jews such rights for a hundred years⁵⁷. In addition, the same proposal suggested that the Jews should be barred from settling in rural areas and from possessing any provision of food or alcohol, other than “what is necessary for their community”⁵⁸. The latter measure was evidently meant to stop Jews from commercial activities with Romanians.

Predictably, the debates that followed in the Constituent Assembly around this point were, to say the least, fierce. As it was expected, there were the Moldavian liberal deputies who opposed an arduous parliamentary resistance to the project. In their speeches, Jews were portrayed as a plague for the country, having economic dominance over the Romanian economy and literally invading the country, especially Northern Moldova. Instead of granting them emancipation, the radicals from Moldova suggested, through the voices of Nicolae Ionescu, Pană Buescu and Nicolae Voinov, that the “Russian and Galician vagabond Yids” should not be allowed to enter Romania nor to purchase properties in the countryside⁵⁹. The *Fractionists* realized just in time that undue anti-Semitic discourse was also easy to be transformed in an electoral and political weapon in towns in which Jews were overwhelmingly present.

⁵⁵ Throughout this thesis, the term ‘Yid’ translates the Romanian pejorative appellation ‘Jidan’ or its forms ‘Jădan’ and ‘Judan’, very much used in the public discourses of the time. The non-pejorative appellation was ‘Evreu’ (sometimes ‘Ebreu’), herein translated as ‘Jew’.

⁵⁶ *Trompeta Carpaților*, IV, no. 427, June 14, 1866.

⁵⁷ “Un secol de acum înainte, nimeni, nici guvern, nici corpul constituit al Statului nu poate să propună a se da drepturi politice Jidanilor în România.”, *ibidem*.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ Frederick Kellogg, *The Road to Romanian Independence*, 78.

Accordingly, an efficient propaganda movement in Moldavian towns accompanied and emphasized their anti-emancipation position in the Assembly. Because of their intense media campaign and direct political actions, urban population in Moldova was stirred against Jews and some Jewish quarters were pillaged. Even in Bucharest, with the mediation of influential, liberal, but anti-dynastic⁶⁰ journalists like Cezar Bolliac and Ion Eliade Rădulescu, a violent anti-Semitic riot culminated with the depredation of the Choir Temple. Bolliac's *Trompeta Carpaților* played a decisive role in instigating the mob. While the members of the Constituent Assembly who opposed the emancipation of Jews were considered, "real Romanian men and enlightened patriots", the mob that participated in the anti-Jewish riot was described in the pages of this gazette as "the most fine-looking and distinguished people of Bucharest: students, merchants, craftsmen, artists, priests. More than 10,000 took part in this demonstration, which had nothing to do with the impulsive some who pillaged a synagogue"⁶¹.

Simultaneously, the gazette obsessively published the petitions received from various regions in Romania – especially Moldova – in which the possible Jewish emancipation was fiercely opposed. The majority of the petitions proposed drastic measures as regards the Jews: interdiction to settle in rural areas, from leasing domains, from producing or selling alcohol or food, from peddling, from living near or owning a shop in the city centers. Their initiators justified the measures with economic, social and even salubrity reasons. Ultimately, this discourse was intended to thwart the alleged plan of the Jews "to build a new Palestine in Romania"⁶². For

⁶⁰ Therefore, in good relations with the *Fractionists*.

⁶¹ *Trompeta Carpaților*, IV, 434, July 8, 1866.

⁶² *Trompeta Carpaților*, IV, 435, July 11, 1866. In this nationalist, exclusionist framework, anti-Semites considered their action a work of justice: "We ask to be protected from a tyrannical oppression besetting us from all sides. We ask for the right to dispose of our property. We ask for the right to enjoy the fruits our work. We ask for the right to keep our religion unsullied our own faith which is today

example, a petition signed by some citizens of Bârlad, a small Moldavian town, protests against the “Jewish polycephalic hydra” endangering the welfare and the existence of the Romanian nation. The same petition lays the blame “not only on the Yids, but on those who are more Yids than the Yids themselves, those stepsons of the fatherland”⁶³. This is a clear indication that in the public space, the Jewish question was already instrumentalized with very precise political ends. National feelings and politicking made the instrumentalization of the Jewish question a powerful and effective political weapon. As foreign eyewitnesses would later testify, politicians and public figures deliberately orchestrated this series of anti-Jewish attacks. Emile Guimet for instance, considered that “no one was really against the Jews, except the aristocracy who stirred the intolerance for its own interest”⁶⁴.

As strange as it may look for a scholar habituated with the idea that the periphery of Europe appropriated its forms of public discourse exclusively by imitation of a western center, in terms of anti-Semitism, Romanian intellectuals of the 1860s seem to chronologically surpass in radicalism their western homologues. Many of the ideas conveyed by German anti-Semitism in the late 1870s, were already, as I have shown above, part of the public discourses around the new Romanian Constitution in the 1866. Intellectuals also took sides. In that same year, B. P. Hașdeu, a prominent historian of his time and also a liberal activist at odds with the Romanian political establishment due to his republican sympathies, characterized the Jews as a hideous synthesis of three negative traits: the tendency to get rich without really

dishonored by the denomination *Romanian of Jewish rite* consecrating on the altar of our national church the Judaism, alongside Christianity. We humbly ask for a place under the Sun who warms our Romanian land that was bought with the blood of our forefathers. Ultimately, we ask for justice.”

⁶³ *Trompeta Carpaților*, IV, 433, July 5, 1866.

⁶⁴ Emile Guimet, *L'Orient au fusain. Notes de voyage* (Paris, 1868), cited in Andrei Pippidi, „Ieri cu vedere spre azi. București în 1868”, *Dilema Veche*, no. 180-181, July, 2007.

working, the lack of dignity and the hatred towards all the non-Jews⁶⁵. For him, trade implied dishonesty; and the Jewish merchant, turned into the generic Jew, lived in the absence of any form of morality: “Yids only know no shame: the tender mirror of one’s feeling of dignity. Mocking the others’ respect, the Yid uses fraud in everything: the brandy is poisoned, the weight counterfeit, the merchandise putrid... Mocking the others’ respect, the Yid gets fat from speculations banned by the legislator or disapproved by the peoples’ conscience: money-lending, contraband, prostitution... Mocking the others’ respect, the Yid spreads around him the seeds of corruption: bankruptcy, espionage, bribe”⁶⁶. With such a portrait, the issue of granting them civil rights could of course no longer be subject to debate; instead, this description identified the culpable for all the evils in the social and economic life. Insisting on the notion that Jews helped each other at the expense of the other peoples, a notion later adopted by all partisans of the conspiracy theories, Hașdeu, launched the most serious accusation of all, accusing Jews of ingratitude and disloyalty to the very state whose citizenship they were asking for: “The Yid only shall never be a patriot! The Yid only shall not forget his blood! The Yid only repeats everywhere, invoking God’s name, the ungrateful synagogal prayer: “Next year in Jerusalem!” – considering the country whose bread he is eating a simple stop on his way, where he rests a day or two, until he has left his innocent host with nothing; then he goes on, hunting for a new prey!”⁶⁷. In the eve of the parliamentary session that had to solve the status of the Jews living in Romania, this type of discourse was already widespread and cherished by the public opinion.

⁶⁵ See Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, *Studiu asupra iudaismului. Industria națională, industria străină față cu principiul concurenței* [Study on Judaism. National industry, foreign industry and Jewish industry facing the competition principle] (Bucharest: Editura ziarului „Apărarea Națională”, 1901), 109.

⁶⁶ Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, *Studiu asupra iudaismului*, 111.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 112.

As a liberal as well as a member of the government, Ion Brătianu tried unsuccessfully to stop the anti-Semitic agitations in the country⁶⁸. The fact in itself proves that in that time 1866, he did not yet become an anti-Semite. Nevertheless, the inflection point of the attitude of the *Reds* toward emancipation occurs during the constitutional debates of 1866.

Aware of the balance of forces in the Constituent Assembly, Ion Brătianu, although considering that the anti-Semitic movement was concentrating “all the intrigues and passions in the country, with the sole aim of deceiving the people”, adopted a more defensive point of view. He declared that “the government does not have the intention to give the country to the Jews nor to grant them rights which will affect or affront Romanians’ interests”⁶⁹. What caused this sudden change of heart with regard to the Jewish question? According to Titu Maiorescu, a young conservative intellectual of that time, the reasons for such an attitude were all the way political. Brătianu, as the head of the radical liberals in Wallachia, noticed that only some conservatives, with serious financial motivations, favored the emancipation of the Jews. Conversely, the *Reds* utterly differed from the conservatives on the basis of their specific political platform, which instead had a lot of points in common with the program of the *Fractionists*. Therefore, Brătianu decided not to risk transmitting a negative message to some potential allies, as were perceived the Moldavian radical liberals, and chose to support the non-emancipation of Jews⁷⁰. Ultimately, the famous article 7 of Romanian Constitution, adopted in 1866, denied non-Christians access to

⁶⁸ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 67.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Apostol Stan, *Putere politică și democrație în România*, 49.

⁷⁰ Titu Maiorescu, *Istoria politică a României sub domnia lui Carol I* [The political history of Romania under the reign of Carol I] (Bucharest : Humanitas, 1994), 19.

naturalization⁷¹, permanently barring Jews from citizenship on religious grounds⁷². In other words, against the Great Powers' opposition, the first "liberal" Constitution of 1866 stated that Jews living in Romania were "foreigners not protected by a foreign power", thus forbidding them the citizenship and all the civil and political rights deriving from it.

1.3 Political instability and governmental anti-Jewish policy

Besides diverse and, nevertheless, pertinent economic and social reasons, the emergence of an anti-Semitic political discourse in Romania must be also linked with more prosaic political imperatives. The political instability was at that time a problem that could not be ignored. In the first five years of Carol's reign, equating more or less the first period of the cooptation of liberal factions into the government, there were ten distinct cabinets and another 30 ministerial reshuffles. In this context, and considering the already mentioned lack of party system, in order to resist to power one needed to establish a vast network of political alliances. Although a great politician highly appreciated by Carol de Hohenzollern, Brătianu was vulnerable and had to seek the support of the Moldavian *Fraction*. As the latter's political platform assembled, besides non-negotiable anti-Semitic ideas, some other subversive stances – as it militated for Moldavian separatism, republicanism and the rejection of the foreign prince – the *Reds* had no choice but to go along with what it seemed to be the least harmful of their political priorities, that is the anti-Jewish legislation.

In this light, the 1867 anti-Semitic decrees of Brătianu originate in political opportunism. Sensing that in this way radical liberal cabinet could gain the support of

⁷¹ The exact formulation was: "The status of Romanian citizen is acquired, maintained, and forfeited in accordance with rules established through civil legislation. Only foreigners belonging to a Christian confession can obtain naturalization."

⁷² See Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866-1947*, 16.

the Moldavian *Fractionists*, in April 24th / May 6th 1867, Brătianu, as Minister of Interior, ordered all the prefects to fully apply the previous legislation regarding “the helpless, filthy Jews” who could not provide for themselves the material means to survive⁷³. Basically, this meant the expulsion of all Jews who did not have an occupation or lived in the countryside. Such a measure meant a reenactment of some stipulations from the Organic Laws, which, as Émile Picot noticed at the time, were already abolished by Romanian state in its further laws⁷⁴.

Simultaneously, the Wallachian liberals performed a strategic discursive inflection. Under the public pressure, they adopted a rabid anti-Jewish type of discourse. Through the voice of their uncontested leader, Ion C. Brătianu, Jews were portrayed as a “social plague” for Romania, “that ...pure and simply because of their large number threaten, as everyone acknowledges, our nationality.... Only strong administrative measures can save us from this calamity and prevent this foreign underclass from invading our country”⁷⁵. Furthermore, as his anti-Semitic stance sharpened, Brătianu laid blame on Romanians who hired Jews for creating a situation in which “they have latched on to our land so tightly that we will never be able to get rid of them”⁷⁶. Likewise, he laid blame on the Jews for bringing down the wrath of the Western Great Powers on Romania and serving as agents of the nation’s enemies⁷⁷. In 1870, he would still maintain, in accordance with the majority of Romanian political

⁷³ Frederick Kellogg, *The Road to Romanian Independence*, 84.

⁷⁴ Emile Picot, “La question des israélites roumains au point de vue du droit”, *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, no. 14, 1868, 77.

⁷⁵ *Monitorul Oficial*, June 19 and 20, 1866.

⁷⁶ Again the Jewish question is used with political ends, since those accused by the liberal leader, were, for the most part, conservatives. Brătianu, *Din scrierile și cuvîntările lui Ion C. Brătianu*, Vol. 1 (Bucharest: Carol Gobl, 1903), 441.

⁷⁷ “Jews, even when they commit crimes, are better treated than others.... Not because Jews have greater morality than Christians, at least when it comes to fraud, but because whenever you lay a hand on a Jew, all Israelites, not only in Romania but abroad as well, come screaming.... If you lay a hand on a Jew, even one caught in a crime, a Consul comes to you and says, “This is my subject.” Whether he is or is not a foreign subject, a Consul always appears to say he is.... This is what the enemies of our nation are doing today; they are taking the Jews and using them to attack us.”, *ibidem*, 445-446.

elite, that “the goal of the Jews is nothing less than to put an end to our national existence”⁷⁸.

In addition to the expulsion decree, Brătianu implemented also some legislative measures concerning the interdiction of certain civil rights to Jews and their sanitary state. The decrees of May 1867, restated that Jews were barred from holding land, from living in villages, or from owning inns, thus seriously afflicting their economic situation. Consequently, visiting a Jewish hospital in Iași, Brătianu was badly impressed by the poor hygienic situation of the establishment and of the Jewish quarter in general, and ordered that “security and sanitary measures” should be immediately be taken⁷⁹. Although the sanitary measures were motivated by the crude reality of the *cloaques funestes* in which Jews were living in the towns of Moldova⁸⁰, they were nevertheless applied in an abusive way. Iași’s local authorities, in fact *Fractionists*, soon declared the Jewish quarter a health hazard and expelled some Jews, including wealthy ones, as vagabonds. This official policy encouraged the liberals in Moldova to take firmer actions against the Jews. Politically instigated anti-Semitic riots, which included pillages and violence directed against Jewish communities, emerged in many Moldavian towns - Iași, Tecuci, Galați etc. Some

⁷⁸ *Monitorul Oficial*, January 4, 1870.

⁷⁹ Frederick Kellogg, *The Road to Romanian Independence*, 84.

⁸⁰ Emile Picot, the French private secretary of Carol at the time and also an advocate of the emancipation of Romanian Jews, wrote in this respect: « Ces quartiers juifs se composent d’un assemblage de maisons et de baraques construites sur des fondrières d’une fange immonde. Dans ces affreux cloaques, les voitures ne peuvent pas avoir accès, et les immondices s’élèvent à une hauteur considérable. Des porcs [*sic*] se traînent d’une boue fétide, n’ayant pour nourriture que le fumier et la chair des animaux morts. Ces quartiers existent à Jassy et dans toutes les villes de Moldavie ; partout on voit plusieurs familles s’entasser dans une même chambre. En 1866, c’est dans ces foyers d’infection que le choléra prit naissance, et on se rappelle avec quelle rapidité il se propagea dans toute la Moldavie. » (Emile Picot, “La question des israélites roumains...”, 53). Picot argues with good reasons, that Jews were not different in that matter from the Romanian majority, the peasants. Prince Carol, instead, perceived in a totally biased way the subject. In a discussion with the French consul in Iași, the Jews were the expression of foreign defects: « Leur extérieur, habituellement malpropre, m’a paru d’autant plus repoussant, que celui des paysans des montagnes se distingue au contraire par un air d’aisance et de propreté. » - cited in Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 129.

Jews died during these riots or in the course the expulsions that followed⁸¹, triggering the unanimous protest of all foreign powers, except, quite obviously, Tsarist Russia.

Why did Brătianu, as the Minister of Interior, initiate this legislation? As a very astute politician he could have instantly realize that his action would certainly trigger a vehement response from the part of the Great Powers, thus jeopardizing the stability of the internal political regime - based on the election of a foreign prince - that he was so ardently trying to impose, from 1866 onwards. The only rational reason for such a course of action was the perceived far more dangerous risk represented by internal political instability and general opposition to his liberal government. Without the parliamentary help of Moldavian *Fractionists*, his own liberal faction could not form the cabinet.

Observers of the time also noticed this reason behind governmental anti-Semitic actions. For the editorialist of *Le Temps*, Brătianu's decision was triggered, among other factors, by the need to thwart the separatist movement in Moldova by gaining popularity for the government⁸². Emile Picot also, noticed the political pragmatism behind anti-Jewish legislation of 1867. He advised the Romanian government to follow the general trend in European law regarding Jewish emancipation but still admitted that generally "it is not the observance of justice that makes the ministers popular"⁸³. Later on, Ernest Desjardins would conclude that the

⁸¹ See Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie...*, 73.

⁸² «Inquiet des aspirations séparatistes qui se manifestent en Moldavie depuis quelques temps, et désireux de donner un autre cours aux tendances populaires, le ministère roumain n'a pas craint de flatter les instincts les plus fâcheux des masses, en organisant des persécutions contre les juifs. », *Le Temps*, June 4th, 1867.

⁸³ « En un mot, ce qu'il faut recommander avant tout, c'est le respect de la justice. Il est vrai que ce n'est pas toujours le respect de la justice qui rend les ministres populaires. », Emile Picot, "La question des israélites roumains au point de vue du droit », 76.

Jews and the politics directed against them in Romania were seen as political weapons used in the fierce internal polemics of the ruling elite⁸⁴.

A more intimate observer of Romanian political realities was Titu Maiorescu, a young conservative who was living back then in Iași as a professor at the university. He too seized the role of politics in the adoption of a anti-Jewish legislation, considering that the planned alliance of the *Reds* with the Moldavian radical liberals was a major cause of it. Brătianu's *Realpolitik* is though sanctioned as being paradoxical - a *contradictio in adjecto* - and, ultimately, imprudent and disastrous, because it did not solve the political problems in⁸⁵ Romania. Conversely, the governmental anti-Semitism was soon counteracted by a strong international protest that will add more pressure on the political establishment already full of tensions in Romania which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

To conclude, the solution given to the Jewish question in 1866, which was reasserted several times in the following years, should be envisaged as the result of the political instability of the country. For the liberals and their political adepts, anti-Semitism provided the means to assure the necessary coherence needed to make the post-1866 Romanian state governable. Born out of opportunism and necessity, political anti-Semitism was in the late 1860s a reliable way to assure governmental support, at least in the Moldavian districts of Romania. As one scholar showed, in the case of the liberals, the need to politically unify the country became more urgent as the country faced pressure and humiliation from outside⁸⁶. The debates on the Jewish question also led to the outburst of anti-Semitism in the public sphere. Given its

⁸⁴ « Mais ce qu'il faut savoir pour juger une semblable mesure, c'est que le Juifs en ce pays sont un instrument dont les partis hostiles au gouvernement, et dont le gouvernement lui-même sont amenés à se servir. » Ernest Desjardins, quoted in Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie...*, 127.

⁸⁵ Titu Maiorescu, *Istoria politică a României...*, 19.

⁸⁶ See Edward Kanterian, "The Malaise of Modernity: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals", in Bogdan Murgescu (ed.), *Romania and Europe. Modernization as Temptation, Modernization as Threat* (Bucharest: Allfa, 2000), 98.

various potential instrumentalizations, this type of discourse perpetuated. In the late 1870s, when the Jewish question has once again emerged on the political agenda of the Romanian state, the moment of 1866 was considered as a prelude of a problem that was still to be solved. Likewise, as it will be argued in the following pages, the anti-Jewish discourses emerged in 1866 represented the raw material of the late 1870s public debate.

2. THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON ROMANIA

The solution given to Jewish question in 1866 and the ensuing governmental measures adopted by the liberal cabinet out of a strategy of politicking sharpened the divergences between Romania and Western European states. This chapter surveys the evolution of the intricate rapports between Romanian governments and the Great Powers, from the perspective of the Jewish question. The understanding of the immediate political situation that made necessary the reactivation of the Jewish question in Romania and the revision of the Constitution is impossible without an analysis of the reasons behind Great Powers' decision at the Congress of Berlin.

2.1 The activity of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and its consequences

Simultaneously to the emergence of political anti-Semitism in Romania, the western Jewish associations and governments deployed an unprecedented effort to determine the Romanian political elite to cancel the already adopted anti-Jewish legislation. Already in 1866, in the context of the debates around the new Constitution, Jewish associations in the West, especially *Alliance Israélite Universelle*⁸⁷, urged the governments of the Great Powers to compel Romanians to grant emancipation for Jews. In that context, Adolphe Crémieux, the founder and the president of the *Alliance*, also known as a reputed French politician of the time, even came to Bucharest and gave a touching pro-emancipation discourse in front of the

⁸⁷ Founded in 1860 by a group of French Jews, this organization aimed to the goal to protect the rights of the Jews as citizens of countries where they live through education, professional development and international political lobbying. For a concise presentation of the organization and its activity, see Michael Graetz, *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France. From the French Revolution to the Alliance Israélite Universelle*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 249-288.

Constituent Assembly⁸⁸. Moses Montefiore⁸⁹, another prominent defender of the Eastern European Jews, came to Bucharest in August 1867⁹⁰ in an attempt to alleviate the condition of his coreligionists living in Romania. His goal was to make sure that “the Jews dwelling in all parts of the United Principalities shall enjoy perfect protection in all which concerns the safety of their persons and their property”⁹¹. In spite of his assurance that the Jewish bankers of all Europe would credit Romanian economy if the emancipation would be granted, Montefiore’s, as well as Crémieux’s efforts were in vain. Hence, the governmental decrees of 1867 represented the last straw for the western public opinion and the negative discourses regarding the Romanian way of dealing with the Jewish question reemerged more arduously as before.

Western newspapers condemned vigorously Brătianu’s political actions all the more as he was seen as a democrat and a partisan of liberalism. For the western public opinion, or at least for the editorialists of the major journals, the Romanian anti-Jewish legislation was a barbarous act. For example, *Le Temps* clearly showed disappointment with the radical liberals of Romania and doubted the capacity of the Romanian people to modernize its society; therefore, a favorable, modern solution of the Jewish question, would lie exclusively in the concerted action of Great Powers⁹².

⁸⁸ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie...*, 65. However, the journal *Trompeta Carpaților* reflected the event differently. Some prominent political leaders who received Crémieux with this occasion, including the conservative president of the Deputy Assembly, M. C. Iepureanu, and the liberal minister of the Cults C.A. Rossetti, were qualified as “traitors who sell our country to the Yids”. Cf. *Trompeta Carpaților*, IV, 433, July 11, 1866.

⁸⁹ Baronet Moses Montefiore was one of the leading figures of the British Jewry and a very active philanthropist, militating the cause of his coreligionists. A detailed account of his philanthropic and militant activity may be found in Sonia Lipman and V.D. Lipman, *The Century of Moses Montefiore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1985.

⁹⁰ In the viewpoint of the Romanian press, the real aim of the visit was “to make here a new Palestine, to take away the land and its wealth from Romanians”, see Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 84.

⁹¹ Cf. *Special Service to celebrate the safe return of Sir Moses Montefiore, baronet, from Roumania and the Success of his Mission* (Synagogue of Spanish and Portuguese Jews: London, 1867), 3, cited in *ibidem*.

⁹² « Il ne faut pas oublier que le ministre qui vient de se laisser aller à ces actes de persécution sauvage, se pique d’être démocrate et libéral, et semblait offrir ainsi plus de garanties qu’aucun autre. En réalité,

All western liberal press, who saw in the Romanian anti-Semitic policy rather a sign of backwardness and religious intolerance than an effect of political instability and opportunistic politicking, shared this vision.

Referring the situation of Jews in Romania, Adolphe Crémieux made, in 1867, a harsh indictment of the Romanian liberals, who were erroneously considered already an unified party: “I am obliged to say that in Romania, the liberal party, who highly defends the most advanced visions and who sympathizes the most the principles of the 1848 revolution, is still, in respect to religious and social issues, in the 15th or 16th century”⁹³. Willing to correct this state of affairs, Crémieux lobbied the French emperor against the Romanian government and for the emancipation of the Jews there. As a result, the French government, and the emperor personally, used their influence to bully prince Carol and Romanian authorities. For example, Emperor Napoleon himself telegraphed to Carol: “I cannot leave your Highness unaware of how public opinion is troubled by the persecutions of which it is reported that the Jews have been victim in Moldavia. I can still not believe that the enlightened government of your Highness is authorizing measures which are so contradictory to humanity and civilization.”⁹⁴ Furthermore, there were not only the French asking for a change in the Romanian policy towards the Jews. All major Jewish lobby groups in Europe militated for the same goal. Persuaded by very influential and financially potent Rothschilds and Bleichröders, British and Prussian governments also warned

il n’y a de garantie, que dans le droit. Les puissances européennes se doivent d’agir de concert auprès du gouvernement roumain pour obtenir que le principe de la liberté religieuse soit reconnu par la Constitution des Principautés. En refusant plus longtemps aux Israélites l’égalité devant la loi, la Roumanie reculerait devant l’application du principe premier des sociétés modernes et désintéresserait de ses destinées l’Europe libérale », *Le Temps*, June 4, 1867.

⁹³ Quoted in Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie...*, 68.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 71.

the Romanian authorities about the potential risks that the country might encounter while the anti-Jewish policy was still enforced⁹⁵.

For the Romanian liberal side, it seemed that the entire world was trying to instruct the government on how to behave with the local Jews. Brătianu realized that without gaining support in Western Europe the position of his government was highly vulnerable. However, even as a sharp politician, he was unable to understand that his delicate political position was in fact the direct result of his own idiosyncratic perception of modernity, which, albeit encompassing *Realpolitik*, was disregarding the true balance of powers in Europe and its influence upon Romania. As early as the autumn of 1867, as a member of the government, he visited on his own expense⁹⁶ the western capitals in order to seek support for his government. From the letters he sent to his wife, it is obvious that Brătianu did not realize the deep impact that his legislation had upon western governments. He even underestimated the power of Jewish lobby, considering that the cause for his negative image was the result of the “intrigues orchestrated by the boyars”, in other words, by his political enemies, the conservatives⁹⁷. While for Brătianu, the anti-Semitism was a measure of politicking, in order to assure the parliamentary majority and the public support for the *Reds* reforming project, the governments of the Great Powers saw Romanian anti-Semitism as an insolent defection from the liberal principles on which modernity itself was built. For the moment, Brătianu did not seem to realize that different perspective and stubbornly continued to stick to a very narrow vision of politics, seeking for internal enemies and trying to revert the propaganda. In this respect, he pointed out Emile Picot, the private secretary of Carol, otherwise an outward friend of his family, as one

⁹⁵ See Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron...*, 355-357.

⁹⁶ Because the state was not able to cover the cost of his diplomatic tour, he even sold one of his richest domains just to assure the financial needs for it. See Ion Nistor (ed.), *Din corespondența familiei Ion C. Brătianu* (Bucharest: Imprimeriile “Independența”, 1933), 85.

⁹⁷ Ion Nistor (ed.), *Din corespondența familiei Ion C. Brătianu*, 88.

of his hidden personal enemies, who was dishonestly compromising the image of his master in Paris⁹⁸. Also, realizing the power of the press in western political affairs, Brătianu used all his influence to persuade the major French liberal newspapers (*Le Siècle*, *Le Temps*, *L'Opinion nationale*, *La Liberté* etc.) to support his cause⁹⁹. Since he started from a wrong premise, his efforts have also proven to be in vain.

The reality was that Romania was not in the position to freely state a politics of its own. The state ruled by Carol was extremely vulnerable to Great Powers' pressure. The anti-Semitic policy of the liberal government determined a strong reaction in Western Europe, which could ultimately endanger even the status of the country. As a consequence, of the protests of *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, Carol was obliged to order some formal governmental reshuffles each time the repression of Jews in Moldova reached a peak. Although the Great Powers demanded the resignation of I.C. Brătianu, Carol kept him, and his faction, in power. The prince really believed that the radical liberal project, as the Reds sketched it, was best suited for Romania. Additionally, he considered that Brătianu was the most capable politician in the country, "the man of the context and of the future" and saw in him his only trustworthy confidant¹⁰⁰. Again, the internal perspective upon the situation differs from the external one. While for the Great Powers, Brătianu and his group of radical liberals represented a big disappointment because of the anti-Semitic policies they initiated, in Romania they were perceived by the prince and by a good deal of the public - except for the conservatives - as a prospect for the future. That happened exactly because they were able, even in a political turmoil, to assure themselves a relatively large support – albeit through anti-Semitic measures.

⁹⁸ Ion Nistor (ed.), *Din corespondența familiei Ion C. Brătianu*, 91.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁰ See Dan Berindei, *Societatea românească în vremea lui Carol I*, 166 – 168.

In 1868, the western point of view would finally triumph over the internal perspective. The occasion was given by an even harsher anti-Semitic draft legislation that the Moldavian *Fractionists*, encouraged by the government, brought to the attention of the Parliament. Supported by 31 parliamentary representatives of the *Fraction*, the new legislation was intended to prevent the Jews from settling in villages, possessing real estates or exercising any form of commerce or industry without a special authorization, subject to repeal at any times by the local authorities¹⁰¹. Even if rejected in Parliament, the project had a huge impact in Moldova where in some regions authorities started expelling or confiscating the properties of the Jews. These measures determined an unprecedented reaction from the part of *Alliance Israélite Universelle* and Western governments upon Romania. Adolphe Crémieux wrote to several ambassadors of the Great Powers in Paris, asking for their intervention on this issue¹⁰². For example, in a letter to the French Foreign Ministry, he even asked for the prosecution of all those who persecuted the Jews in Moldova and the dismissal of political leaders who instigated it¹⁰³.

As a result of the Romanian policy towards his coreligionists, a former president of the *Independent Order of B'nai B'rith*¹⁰⁴, the American of Jewish origin, Benjamin Peixotto arranged to be appointed Consul of the United States in Romania. As Carol Iancu has argued, Peixotto's activity in Romania was unique in diplomatic history, because his appointment was made with the sole purpose to alleviate the situation of the local Jews¹⁰⁵. His action was mainly dedicated to arousing the interest of the Western Powers in the Romanian Jewish question, thus increasing the pressure

¹⁰¹ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 87 – 95.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, 92.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, 89.

¹⁰⁴ Founded in 1843, at New York, this organization engaged in philanthropic activities as regards the Jewish communities. Besides assisting hospitals and awarding funding Jewish education, the *Independent Order of B'nai B'rith* had as objective the promotion of Jewish rights at a political level.

¹⁰⁵ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 106.

on Romanian cabinets. As he would declare in a letter from 1871, his efforts were fairly successful: “I have set all Europe ablaze with the cause of our Romanian brethren. All the great journals of England, Germany, Austria, France and Italy teem with articles on the persecutions and oppression of our people, and not only have parliaments been moved, but cabinets, and (...) some great results must follow.”¹⁰⁶ All these concerted actions destabilized even more the position of the Romanian liberal government.

Realizing that the future status of Romania was in stake, and the necessity to find some foreign capital to sustain the ongoing economic modernization plans for the country, prince Carol finally renounces to count on radical liberals. In November 1868, Brătianu and his faction were forced into opposition and a new government, controlled by moderate conservatives and liberals was instated¹⁰⁷. *Alliance Israélite Universelle* with the help of the Western cabinets managed to convey a genuine warning to the Romanian politicians. The policy on Jewish question was essential in maintaining a good relationship with the West. The action of the *Alliance*, together with the Western cabinets slowly but firmly determined a change of the party in power in Romania. As it will be shown below, this forewarning was understood by Romanian politicians who thenceforth treated the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* as an important factor conditioning the stability of the political hierarchy in the country. Although the measures taken by Brătianu would never be canceled and the anti-Semitic stance would be informally maintained, the next governments made less use of manifest anti-Semitic legislation.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Max J. Kohler and Simon Wolf, *Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States*, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1916), 22.

¹⁰⁷ Dan Berindei, *Societatea românească în vremea lui Carol I*, 167.

2.2 The anti-Jewish legislation up to 1878

In an attempt to gain political support, the subsequent Romanian cabinets maintained an anti-Jewish stance. As early as 1869, the minister Mihail Kogălniceanu, a former 1848 revolutionary who militated at the time for the political emancipation of Jews, took up the policy of expulsions from the rural areas, which was initiated by Brătianu. His discourse also sharpened to the point that the Jews were envisaged as the “scourge of the countryside”¹⁰⁸. Synchronically, Kogălniceanu identified with his predecessor in this matter, aiming thus to achieve an equal level of political capital. In December 1869, he declared proudly during a parliamentary speech: “According to everything he (Brătianu) says, I believe that as a Minister of Interior I have done much more than him or anyone of you; yes, gentlemen, I have ordered everything a minister could order; I have cleared the villages of the Jews by every means”¹⁰⁹.

The policy of discrimination vis-à-vis the Jews became a common governmental practice. This was justified not only by the obsessive anti-Jewish feelings cherished by the large majority of Romanian elite, but by a political necessity also. Different governments needed support in the Parliament for their envisaged reforms, therefore, in order to assure the collaboration of the Moldavian deputies, were ready to pass anti-Semitic measures. Consequently, in the same line with the previous liberal governments, the Romanian moderate cabinets enacted discriminatory measures as regards the Jews¹¹⁰. As a consequence of this, in 1868, the Jews were excluded from the medical profession¹¹¹. The next year, the Jews were barred from

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 95-97.

¹⁰⁹ *Monitorul Oficial*, December 21, 1869.

¹¹⁰ It worth to mention that not all the legislative or governmental measures that were perceived as discriminatory by the Jews, were exclusively directed against them. Some measures had broader means and stakes, but their stipulations implied also limitation of the few rights civil rights the Jews have had. For an overview of the Romanian legislation as regards the Jews, see Isidore Loeb, *La situation des israélites en Turquie en Serbie et en Roumanie* (Paris: Paris: Joseph Baer et C^{ie}, 1877), 112-127.

¹¹¹ This measure was revoked in 1871.

being tax farmers in rural communes. In some cities, as Focșani and Roman, the local authorities have put an extra tax on kosher meat¹¹². Also, in 1869, which was an year characterized by an unprecedented political instability and accordingly a peak of political anti-Semitism, Jews were prevented from being apothecaries in Romania, except where there were no Romanian apothecary¹¹³. In February 1872 that is under an exclusively conservative cabinet a law that raised the protests of many Romanians as well, stipulated that all dealers of tobacco in Romania must be Romanians¹¹⁴. One year later Jews were forbidden to sell spirituous liquors in rural districts since the licenses might be given only to electors¹¹⁵.

The constant discursive anti-Semitism in Romanian public life backed the anti-Jewish legislation. In 1869, Mihail Kogălniceanu had the audacity to write in an official letter to the French consul in Bucharest that he refuses to consider Jews as Romanians, but as foreigners and outlaws. Furthermore, instead of denying the persecutions, the Romanian minister of Interior, revolted again the Western interference in the internal affairs of the country¹¹⁶. In 1870, the Moldavian deputy I. C. Codrescu, a member of the *Fraction*, used more violent words to illustrate the same idea: „The term Romanian Jew is an insult hurled at our nation. (...)Whatever the Yid is, Yid he will remain. Must we really resign ourselves to permanently seeing an enemy population such as this among us? Gentlemen, the growth of this element has always proven so dangerous for all countries that no people has hesitated to take the most energetic steps, and often the most crude, to get rid of them.”¹¹⁷ Ion Ghica, a moderate liberal several times appointed prime minister in that time, had a slightly

¹¹² Cf. Loeb, *La situation des israélites...*, 127.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*, 125.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 120.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 188.

¹¹⁶ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 96.

¹¹⁷ I.C. Codrescu, *Cotropirea judovească în România* [The Jewish Invasion in Romania] (Bucharest: Noua Typographia a Laboratorului Român, 1870), 9.

different view on the Jews. From his perspective, “the Jewish disproportionate proliferation is not only a moral and hygienic plague determined by their lack of honesty in financial matters and the filthiness in which they live, but also a political issue, because the Israelites who incessantly come to us from the North (...) are the precursors of Germanism, the harbingers of a silent denationalizing conquest”¹¹⁸. First published in 1870, this text establishes a link between rabid anti-Semitism and xenophobia. The Jews were considered outsiders, representatives of foreignness, and according to the Romanian elite of the time, everyone that was not intrinsic to the nation must be evicted and abhorred.

Consequently, the expulsions and the abuses on Jews continued. One of the most significant happened in Darabani, an exclusively Jewish town in Northern Moldova. Peasants from the vicinity attacked the houses and shops of the dwellers on June 9th 1877. The investigation of the authorities, as in most of the similar cases, found no one guilty¹¹⁹.

Faced with this policy of constant repression, the international Jewish associations organized several meetings with the intention to find solutions for the alleviation of the situation of the Romanian Jews. Therefore, in Brussels (1872) and Paris (1876 and 1878), the representatives of the Jews from Western Europe discussed the condition of Romanian Jewry. Peixotto offered a good description of the atmosphere reigning in these reunions: “It was a spectacle never to be forgotten to witness this conference of the best men drawn from all lands to deliberate for the emancipation of the down-trodden masses in Romania”¹²⁰. Apart from raising funds, in these conferences was decided the intensification of the lobby around Western

¹¹⁸ Ion Ghica, *Scrieri*, Vol. 1 [Writings] (Bucharest: Minerva, 1914), 198-199.

¹¹⁹ Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 105.

¹²⁰ Max J. Kohler and Simon Wolf, *Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States*, 26.

cabinets as regarded the legal status of the Jews living in Romania and the increase of the media coverage in the major journals of the discriminations afflicting them¹²¹.

2.3 The Treaty of Berlin and the reactivation of the Jewish Question

As a result of the quasi-official anti-Jewish policy and of the activity of the international Jewish associations, Romanian state was soon to confront a new escalation of the Jewish question. In 1876, in the context of the radicalization of the Oriental crisis in the Balkans, the imminence of a new war between tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire entangled the possibility for Romania to renegotiate its international status that is to obtain the independency. After participating in the war, Romania expected the Western Powers to sanction its self-proclaimed independence as recognition of the belligerence.

On the other hand, the same context encouraged international Jewish associations - the most prominent still being *Alliance Israélite Universelle* - to intensify their lobbying with European governments for the cause of Romanian Jews. Consequently, it was expected that by intense press coverage of the repressions inflicted on Romanian Jewish population and as a result of powerful diplomatic pressure, Romanian government would eventually grant full emancipation to the Jews living in the country.

Adolphe Crémieux for instance, engaged in an intense correspondence with Western diplomats in favor of the Jews of Romania. In a 1878 letter to the prime-minister of Italy, he wrote: "There is a nation who's political religion consists in condemning people who were born in the country but venerate a different God; a nation who stubbornly excludes from political, and to a certain extent, civil rights all

¹²¹ Max J. Kohler and Simon Wolf, *Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States*, 25-39.

the members of the Israelite cult. This nation is Romania, who parts company with the other European nations through this detestable superstition”¹²². At the eve of the Congress of Berlin, the Jewish lobby reached its peak. In a similar way as shown above, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* contacted all the Western European governments¹²³. Gradually, the governments were won by the idea of radically improve the civil and political condition of the Jews residing in Romania. For instance, in an answer to the numerous petitions in this respect, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck promised “to support all efforts made to grant to the members of all religious groups in the countries concerned the same rights as those guaranteed by the German constitution”¹²⁴.

At the Congress of Berlin, *Alliance Israélite Universelle* forwarded a memorial in which almost beseeched the emancipation of the Jews from Eastern Europe¹²⁵ and suggested that the young states in the area should be obligated to comply with it. Ultimately, the Great Powers accepted this point of view. At the insistence of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, William Henry Waddington, the representatives of Great Britain, German Empire, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Turkey and, with a certain reluctance Tsarist Russia, conditioned, among other things, the independence of Romania by the granting of full political and civil rights for the non-Christian residents that is primarily the Jews. The exact formulation the Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin was:

¹²² Cf. Carol Iancu, *Bleichröder și Crémieux*, 214.

¹²³ Cf. *idem*, *Les Juifs en Roumanie*, 153-159.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, 156.

¹²⁵ “In the name of the Israelites, in the name of humanity, we respectfully address Europe in favour of our unhappy coreligionists of Bulgaria, Serbia, Roumelia and Romania. We wait with her for the end of their sufferings. Her protection to her is almost indispensable in the present and in the future. May Europe cause her powerful voice to be heard, may she proclaim the equality of men, independent of all religious beliefs and may she enforce the insertion of this principle in the constitutions! May she at length be a vigilant guardian over them!”, cited in Max J. Kohler and Simon Wolf, *Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States*, 107.

“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. 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.”¹²⁶

This decision, which fully surprised Romanian politicians, entailed the abrogation or the revision of the article 7 of the 1866 Constitution and was perceived in Western Europe as a great achievement of liberalism and humanism. The Jews cherished and saluted the article 44 of the Treaty. In the assent of all his coreligionists, the editor-in-chief of the *Univers Israélite* wrote due to the efforts of the Great Powers, “the holy cause of freedom of conscience will triumph in regions which are still half civilized”¹²⁷. Likewise Narcisse Leven, one of the original founders of *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, at the time its general secretary declared that “the Congress of Berlin introduced into international law the principles which the French Revolution had put into the Declaration of the Rights of Man; united Europe had sanctioned them. (...) These principles became, by the wish of Europe, the basis of public law for the new governments and for the others, the condition of their

¹²⁶ Thomas Erskine Holland (ed.), *European Concert in the Eastern Question. A Collection of Treaties and other Public Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 301.

¹²⁷ Cited in Carol Iancu, *Les Juifs en Roumanie*, 153-159.

independence. That was a benefit for all the peoples, and, for Judaism, a unique act in its history”¹²⁸.

It may be concluded that the constant antagonism between Romanian political anti-Semitic policy triggered by anti-Jewish public stance and political instability, and the liberal views of Western Europe, inculcated in this respect by the international Jewish associations, largely determined the reactivation of the Jewish question in the country after the Congress of Berlin.

If the partisans of liberalism in Western Europe saluted the stipulations of Article 44, the Romanian public sphere was utterly appalled by them. The next chapter will focus on the study of the Romanian public attitude on the new emergence of the Jewish question after the 1878 Congress of Berlin.

¹²⁸ Cf. Max J. Kohler and Simon Wolf, *Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States*, 70.

3. ANTI-SEMITISM IN ROMANIAN PUBLIC DISCOURSES AFTER THE 1878 CONGRESS OF BERLIN

As explained in the previous chapters, the Romanian Jewish question gained momentum as the theoretical emancipation of the Jews was stipulated by an earlier draft of the 1866 Constitution. Due to the violent opposition of a considerable part of the political elite and of the public opinion, hastily instigated by a hitherto unmatched press campaign, the final form of the article 7 of Romanian Constitution, adopted in 1866, denied non-Christians access to naturalization, permanently barring Jews from citizenship on religious grounds. Subsequently, the strategy of politicking adopted by the liberal leaders in search of necessary parliamentary support in a time of chronic political instability, determined a recrudescence of governmental anti-Jewish measures. Ultimately, this triggered the reaction of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* and of the Western cabinets who exercised a powerful pressure on the Romanian governments, thus increasing even more the instability of the domestic political system. The climax of the Jewish question was reached in 1878, when the Great Powers, under the influence of prominent Jewish lobby groups, refused to officially recognize the independence of Romania until it revised the 1866 Constitution in order to grant full access to political and civil for all the inhabitants of the country irrespective of their religious creeds.

The present chapter analyzes Romanian public reactions to this stipulation of the Treaty of Berlin as it manifested in the press and pamphlets published on this occasion. Since the number of sources available for such study is considerable, a selection based on the criterion of representativeness was inevitable. Among the numerous newspapers published at the time, this chapter focuses for the most part on the liberal official gazette *Românul* and its conservative counterpart *Timpu*, both very

influential and illustrating articulate and pertinent opinions on the issue. As for the published materials dealing with the Jewish question after 1878, the analysis deployed in this chapter builds upon a large variety of pamphlets, covering the whole Romanian spectrum of political opinions and representing diverse streams of view in an expressive manner.

The study of these sources seeks to identify the answers to three main research questions: 1) How did Romanian public opinion perceive the Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin and the principle of its enactors? 2) What arguments were invoked against the stipulations of the Article 44? 3) What was the dynamic of the public anti-Semitic discourse in 1878 and 1879?

In order to answer these questions, some considerations on the character and influence of public space are necessary. The 1866 Constitution guaranteed the freedom of press in Romania and the subsequent governments did not use censorship as an instrument of repression. As a result, in the following year, there existed the premises of a certain inflation of publications. For instance, between 1866 and 1876, the socio-political press alone consisted of around 250 periodicals¹²⁹. In this context of a rich offer of publications and a relative limited number of educated readers, the journalists were often questioning their real social impact and representativeness. B. P. Hașdeu, an influential figure of 1860s anti-Semitism, as it was shown above, questioned already the social role of the publicist, thus envisaging the closed public space with no real influence on the incipient Romanian modern society: “The publicist, down to the very last man, always speaks in the name of the entire country, proclaiming himself to be the most complete expression of the nation. And, you will well observe that nobody can prove him wrong in this respect, except another

¹²⁹ Cf. Berindei, *Societatea românească în vremea lui Carol*, 249-253.

publicist; for only he has the mandate to represent all those who do not know him, have never seen him, never spoken with him, nor, possibly, ever even heard his name”¹³⁰. Although pertinent, Hașdeu’s picture is not exactly accurate. As it was already argued in the first chapter of this thesis, the press and, more generally, the public sphere, albeit not yet full-fledged, exerted a decisive influence on the official policy regarding the Jewish question in 1866.

Additionally, it should be noted that the majority of the socio-political publications of the time, and surely the most influential, were owned or influenced by key politicians¹³¹, therefore the discourses conveyed by these publications preceded and tested the arguments put forth at an official, political level.

To conclude, considering the antecedents in the late 1870s, the actors of Romanian public sphere were confident enough to assume a stance in the – once again – most important issue on the political agenda of the country, namely the Jewish question.

3.1 The protest against Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin

In the summer of the 1878, the Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin seems to have surprised all the members of the Romanian elite. Already embittered by the loss of Southern Bessarabia, annexed by Tsarist Russia by dint of another controversial resolution taken of the Congress of Berlin, Romanian intellectuals expressed their dismay as regards decisions reached in Berlin on various tonalities. The first hasty reactions oscillated between anger and denial. Emmanuel Crezzulesco, a former Romanian diplomatic agent in Paris with liberal sympathies, bluntly expressed his

¹³⁰ B. P. Hașdeu, „Ziarele din România”, *Satyrul* [The Satyre], No. 9 (1866), apud. Alex Drace-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture. Literacy and the development of National Identity* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006), 173.

¹³¹ See Berindei, *Societatea românească în vremea lui Carol*, 251.

bewilderment apropos of the Article 44 in a pamphlet entitled *Les Israélites en Roumanie*: “It is impossible for the European cabinets to demand the Romanian state to let itself drown by the evermore invasive flood of a foreign population”¹³². Already at the end of the Congress, *Românul* emphatically declared: “The Jewish question was solved in the same way as the question of Bessarabia. The Jews were placed in a position similar with that of the Russians, of domesticators of the wish of Romanian nation. If the European Areopagus believes it made a service to the Jews of Romania, it makes a big mistake”¹³³. In the same newspaper, some months later the liberal S. Periețeanu-Buzău wrote “It is a shame for Europe to impose us her will, in a question that time would have solve it anyway.”¹³⁴ The conservative at that time, I. Tanoviceanu, added in reply to the actions of the Great Powers and *Alliance Israélite Universelle*: “There was never a people such unjustly and harshly insulted!”¹³⁵

Gradually, Romanian intellectuals accepted the result of the Congress of Berlin as a *fait accompli* determined by the *Realpolitik* of the Great Powers, even if this also meant coming to terms with their own nation’s paralysis and lack of power. Em. M. Porumbaru, a liberal young intellectual and future senator on the lists of the National Liberal Party, admitted, in a work suggestively entitled *Un Pêché du Congrès de Berlin*, that “whatever may happen, at this moment we are facing a *fait accompli*”¹³⁶. Vasile Boerescu a centrist who became, from the summer of 1879, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Brătianu’s liberal cabinet, concluded, after his diplomatic voyage in all the European capitals: “Romania remains in the way like a

¹³² Emmanuel Crezzulesco, *Les Israelites en Roumanie* (Paris: Dentu, 1879), 57.

¹³³ *Românul*, XXII, July 3, 1878.

¹³⁴ *Românul*, XXIII, February 24, 1879.

¹³⁵ J. Tanoviceano, *La Question Juive en Roumanie au point de vue juridique et social* (Paris: Imprimerie Saint Michel, 1982), 16.

¹³⁶ Em. M. Porumbaru, *Un Pêché du Congrès de Berlin* (Vienne: Imprimerie W. Heinrich, 1879), 6.

poor spiny hedgehog, which any kid dares to roll with his foot...”¹³⁷. The conservatives also agreed with this point of view through the voice of their editor-in-chief, Mihai Eminescu: “Through the treaty of Berlin, Romanians were hog-tied”¹³⁸.

In addition to this self-pity attitude, Romanian intellectual elite also developed arguments to counterbalance the logical solidity of the decision taken at Berlin. First, Romanians spotted incongruence between the principles preached by the Great Powers and their own domestic policies. Romanians pointed out in numerous occasions, the affinities between the Jewish question and the contemporary problem of massive Chinese immigration in California. While American politicians took drastic measures to stop this immigration, Romanians were not allowed to do the same¹³⁹. Furthermore, in the context of the economic crisis affecting all European states from 1873 onwards, Germany and France enacted protectionist measures, which limited commerce and the free circulation of persons. However, Germany and France were not accused of being illiberal and anti-modern as was the case with the Romanian state¹⁴⁰.

In these circumstances in the Romanian public discourse contested even the right of intervention of the Great Powers in the domestic affairs of Romania. This idea was argued by the fact that the domestic, religious and civil matters were, according to the embryonic international norms the exclusive prerogative of the States¹⁴¹. For instance, in a moment of nationalist bravado more determined by wishful thinking

¹³⁷ „România rămâne pe calea mare ca un biet arici ghemuit în ghimpii săi, pe care orice copil îl rostogolește cu piciorul sau îi cântă cu cleștele ca să se salte în sus”, *Românul*, XXIII, September 5, 1879.

¹³⁸ *Timpul*, September 16, 1878.

¹³⁹ Cf. for instance, *La Question Israélite en Roumanie par un ancien député*, (Geneva, 1879), 17-20.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 20-21.

¹⁴¹ « Depuis longues années, dans la plus part des traités, la liberté religieuse, légalité civile et politique, étaient considérées comme du ressort des législations particulières; chaque État réglait à sa propre guise, selon ses convenances, les conditions auxquelles il admettait telle ou telle catégorie de citoyens ou de sujets à participer aux avantages de la vie civile et politique. (...) Le traité de Berlin a dérogé à cette tradition. », Crezzulesco, *Les Israélites en Roumanie*, 4.

rather than a clear-cut perception of the international balance of powers, the publicist from *Românul* wrote: “Here, we are the only masters. Romanians dominate the situation. We may do as we please!”¹⁴² Furthermore, Romania conquered its independence on the battlefields of 1877, therefore should not be humiliated and obliged to change its internal law in order to enjoy the rights it already *de facto* possessed¹⁴³.

Another point of convergence of all the public discourses concerning the Jewish Question is the exposure of the defamatory practices of *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, who deliberately would have disseminated calumnies as regards the policy of Romanian cabinets toward the Jewish population living in the country and, synchronously, has speculated the ignorance of the Great Powers as regards Romania, thus giving the impetus for the emergence of the Jewish question¹⁴⁴. Gheorghe Adrian, a liberal and¹⁴⁵ a former minister of War in the governments which first enacted anti-Jewish legislation in the late 1860s, considers these “contemptible calumnies” a mere stratagem to distract the western public attention from the real characteristics of Romanian people. In his viewpoint, Romanians are “heroic on the battlefield”, “the most hospitable”, “the most tolerant” and “the most sociable” and also possess “the finest customs”¹⁴⁶.

This reconsideration of the hierarchy of values and the discursive attempt to place Romania at an equal level of civilization with the Western states is a constant of the Romanian public attitudes toward the Jewish question and the West, at that time. Perceiving the alleged injustice of the Western policy towards Romania, the local elite

¹⁴² *Românul*, XXXIII, August 22, 1879.

¹⁴³ Cf. Porumbaru, *Un Pêché du Congrès de Berlin*, 22-23.

¹⁴⁴ See, for example, Gheorghe Adrian, *Quelques mots sur la question Israélite en Roumanie* (Paris: A. Parent, 1879), 4-5, 8.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Mihai Sorin Rădulescu, *Elita liberală românească* [The Romanian Liberal Elite], (Bucharest: Editura All, 1998), 42.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Adrian, *Quelques mots sur la question Israélite en Roumanie*, 5.

reacted by questioning the normative values of the Great Powers and by developing an alternative, more comforting hierarchy of values.

Therefore, in Romania “the press is as free as in England, the freedom of association is practiced as easily as in Berne or Geneva; the citizens of the Principality are as equal as the French citizens are as regards the law and the taxation; the electoral laws are at least as liberal as in Italy and Belgium, and there is no aristocracy – as in Austria – nor privileged classes – as in Germany”¹⁴⁷. Such assertions necessarily called forth the idea of the equal status of Romania, among other European states. In this line of thought, it was illegitimate for the Great Powers to impose on Romanians the precepts of a public law which is already observed in the Principality, even more strictly than in Western Europe¹⁴⁸.

The tendency to create a distinct normative identity observed in the public discourses of the Romanian elite immediately after the Congress of Berlin testifies to the quasi-unanimous¹⁴⁹ local irritation induced by the reactivation of the Jewish question.

3.2 The Jewish question as a social and economic problem

In order to escape the accusations of religious intolerance and to further legitimize their reluctance to grant civic and political rights to the Jews residing in the country, Romanian intellectuals employed the same explanatory strategy that was used since the emergence of the Jewish question in 1866. It should be noticed here

¹⁴⁷ Crezzulesco, *Les Israélites en Roumanie*, 11.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem*. Cf. also, *La Question Israélite en Roumanie par un ancien député*, 21, « Les mots de progrès et de civilisation, dans les colonnes de certains journaux, ont la prétention de devenir des arguments accablants contre nous lorsqu'on nous voit discuter la convenance ou l'opportunité de la question israélite. Les grands principes modernes sont mis par nous trop largement en pratique pour que l'on nous reproche de nous y vouloir soustraire ».

¹⁴⁹ It should be noted, though, that not all Romanian intellectuals adopted a defensive, anti-Semitic attitude. For example, Vârnav Liteanu, the Romanian diplomatic agent in Berlin at the time, considered that a full Jewish emancipation would be beneficial close the ties between Western Europe and Romania. Cf. Carol Iancu, *Bleichröder et Crémieux*, 100.

that, although Romanian Constitution barred Jews from political and civil rights on religious basis, religion in itself was not an important point of concern in the subsequent public debates regarding the Jewish question at the time, although it also occurred in some circumstances. Instead, it may be claimed that religion represented only the legal device, “an inventive but illiberal utilization of a local juridical practice, inserted into a Westernized legal framework”¹⁵⁰ that permitted the politicians to enact an anti-Jewish attitude with deeper and broader roots. In this respect, a rabid anti-Semite like the conservative Ioan Slavici would later admit openly: “It is not true that the Jews have no rights because they are not Christians.”¹⁵¹ For the liberal Crezzulesco, “the article 7 which we are going to take out from our Constitution was inspired by purely political preoccupations and a concern for social preservation”¹⁵².

This justification of a non-emancipatory policy as regards the Jews was socially motivated by the concern on exceptionally high percentage of Jews living in certain regions of Romania, especially in Moldova. As it was mentioned in the first chapter, the Jewish population reached probably 250.000 or more. However, the public discourses on the Jewish question speak constantly of 400.000-500.000 Jews residing in the country. In spite of this exaggeration, the demographical comparison provided by these intellectual remain valid, since even with a population of 250.000, Romania still had the highest percent of Jews per total population in Europe.

Therefore, a comparison between the Jewish question of Serbia or Bulgaria with the Romanian case is untenable since, as Tanoviceano argued, only in the city of

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Constantin Iordachi, “The Ottoman Empire. Syncretic Nationalism and Citizenship in the Balkans” in Timothy Baycroft and Mark Hewitson, *What is a Nation? Europe 1789-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 142.

¹⁵¹ Ioan Slavici, “*Soll*”și “*Haben*”. *Cestiunea ovreilor din România* [Soll and Haben. The Jewish Question in Romania] (Bucharest, 1878), 30.

¹⁵² Crezzulesco, *Les Israélites en Roumanie*, 51.

Iași, the capital of Moldova, lived 7 times more Jews than in all Serbia¹⁵³. Definitely, their number scared Romanian intellectuals, especially Moldavian ones, but there were other perceived Jewish “characteristics” which made the public discourse to shift on an anti-Semitic stance. Jews, especially those from Moldova, were considered total outsiders to the nation “because of their origin, beliefs, language, customs and habits”¹⁵⁴. Moreover, they constitute a “state within state” and pay no respect to the institutions nor the laws of Romania under the subtle guidance of *Alliance Israélite Universelle*¹⁵⁵. The newspaper *Românul*, hinting to this issue, cited Chancellor Otto von Bismarck who supposedly declared at Versailles: “Just dare to touch a Jew and you’ll instantly hear a heart-rending outcry from all over the place”¹⁵⁶.

The public discourse concerning the Jewish question preserved two distinct images of the Jew living in Romania, very difficult to juxtapose. The first envisages the Jew as a social menace who is not only a filthy outsider but also a mentally retarded, « excessivement arriéré »¹⁵⁷, generally not knowing to read or write. At the same time, the Jew was viewed as an imminent economic threat for the nation, who already seized the vast majority of the mortgage and commercial loans¹⁵⁸. By speculation and usury, this type of Jews would ultimately get hold of the entire country, degrading the Romanian nation. Although the two images of the Jew hardly fuse together, the idea of a social and economic Romanian Jewish problem gained widespread support in Romanian public life and was ultimately accepted even by several European parliamentarians. For instance, the senator and marquis Pepoli declared in the Italian

¹⁵³ Tanoviceano, *La Question Juive*, 37.

¹⁵⁴ Adrian, *Quelques mots sur la question israélite*, 9.

¹⁵⁵ « Pour nos juifs frauder la loi du pays c’est un droit ; d’après l’Alliance israélite c’est plus qu’un droit, c’est un devoir : mépris des lois, appel à l’étranger, voilà les conseils que donne aux juifs de notre pays leur véritable gouvernement. », Tanoviceano, *La Question juive en Roumanie*, 33.

¹⁵⁶ *Românul*, XXIII, September 1, 1879

¹⁵⁷ Tanoviceano, *La Question juive en Roumanie*, 33.

¹⁵⁸ *La Question Israélite en Roumanie par un ancien député*, 11.

Parliament in February 1879: “The Jewish question is not a religious question in Romania. It is a social question. The Jews from Romania are invaders! (...) The Jews impoverish Romania by means of usury and they do not even speak the Romanian language.”¹⁵⁹ A German official, von Radowitz, also expressed in a letter the flexibility of his government on this matter: “There is a widespread benevolence to take into consideration the discomfort caused in Romania by the *de facto* extension of the emancipation and nothing impossible to enforce would be asked.”¹⁶⁰

At this point, it may be concluded that almost all the intellectual elite envisaged the Jewish question as a serious social and economic problem of late 1870s Romania. As a result, anti-Semitic discourse with its xenophobic ingredient became radical and widespread.

3.3 The revival of rabid anti-Semitic discourses in the press

Irrespective of the political allegiance, Romanian intellectual elite, building on the previous anti-Semitic discourses developed since the 1860s in Romania, adopted a more or less radical anti-Semitic stance. These type of discourses were penetrated all the cultivated strata of the society, thus determining a genuine collective obsession on the Jewish question and its political resolution. A simple survey of the press of the 1879 testifies the public frenzy as regard this issue. All major newspapers wrote daily about the Jewish question from January until October, analyzing from the political, national, economical and social perspective the continual changes of the state of affairs. This outburst of public passion testifies the incessant media coverage and the influential impact of anti-Semitic messages during the period 1866 to 1879. The

¹⁵⁹ *La Question Israélite en Roumanie par un ancien député*, 16.

¹⁶⁰ *Independența României în conștiința europeană* [Romanian Independence in the European Consciousness] edited by C. M. Lungu, T. Bucur and I.A. Negreanu, (Bucharest: Arhivele Naționale ale României, 1997), 257.

Jewish Question reactivated by the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin was the culmination of an extensive and pervasive discursive tradition pertaining to anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

An 1874 textbook dedicated to the instruction of future elementary teachers offers a good exemplification of the recurrence and compelling character of anti-Semitic discourses. In this manual, the Jew is depicted as the perfect impersonation of the dangerous stranger: “In Romania, the outsider is most predominantly and deleteriously represented by the Jews (Yids), who are completely segregated from Romanians, because of their ignorance and vicious life. Therefore, we not only have no benefit from this cohabitation, but we started to be disadvantaged.”¹⁶¹ Conversely, the Jews may ameliorate their condition through compulsory education in Romanian state-sponsored schools, hereby learning “the Romanian language, the Romanian history and the Romanian customs”. Moreover, the author of the textbook is of the opinion that the Jews should be given political and civil rights in Romania, on the condition that they “romanianize” through education¹⁶². Hence, even before the Congress of Berlin, by messages like this one, anti-Semitism was already comprehensively disseminated in all the cultivated strata of the society.

In the context of the 1879 revision of the article 7, these discursive resources were recuperated and channeled in the public sphere. The liberal Vasile Conta, for instance, a university professor and former member of *Junimea*¹⁶³ circle, who left the

¹⁶¹ George Melidon, *Manualul învățătorului sau elemente de pedagogie practică pentru usul școalelor populare* [The elementary teacher's manual. Elements of practical pedagogy for the use of popular schools] (Bucharest, 1874), 120. apud. Mirela Luminița Murgescu, *Între „bunul creștin” și „bravul român”. Rolul școlii primare în construirea identității naționale românești* [Between the “Good Christian” and the “Brave Romanian”. The role of the Primary School in the Romanian National Identity Building], (Iași: Editura A '92, 1999), 219.

¹⁶² *Ibidem*.

¹⁶³ *Junimea* was a cultural and political movement formed by initially young Moldavian intellectuals with quasi-conservative views grouped around Titu Maiorescu and P.P. Carp. The group exercised a great influence in establishing the cultural canon of Romania and would be very active on the political scene in the last quarter of 19th century.

movement exactly because of his anti-Semitic excesses, emphasized in his speeches and brochures of 1879 all the anti-Jewish tenets of his time. As a materialist philosopher, he was well acquainted with the scientific corpus of his epoch and could claim therefore that his own anti-Semitic views, as well as the article 7 of the Constitution, accorded with “the modern science and ideas of our time”¹⁶⁴. Further on, he deployed the most virulent racial anti-Semitism, considering the Jews a distinct, unamenable and horrible race, with physical and psychical flaws.

The same ideas were on the lips of other prominent cultural personalities. The Romanian Transylvanian writer Ioan Slavici shared with Conta the same quasi-racist views, when he claimed that the Jews are not a nation but a different world with its own physical and psychological traits, utterly different from Romanian society¹⁶⁵. His anti-Jewish viewpoint, like that of many of his intellectual contemporaries, rised up to the standards of what Walter H. Sokel has called, onthological anti-Semitism, that is the “hostility toward the Jews that concentrates on their being rather than their religion or economic practices, or any one particular attribute”¹⁶⁶. In this logic, he insists on the already asserted idea of Jewish ‘unassimilability’ and considered them a social disease – nevertheless “caused by our own weakness”¹⁶⁷. Therefore, to accept them inside the nation equated with a social and national suicide for Slavici¹⁶⁸. Still, the concern with complying to Western standards of ethics were present thus far, since the main objective of Slavici’s pamphlet was to say that any refusal to accept the

¹⁶⁴ Vasile Conta, *Cine sunt jidanii? Primejdia jidovească* [Who are the Jews? The Jewish danger] (Bucharest: Librăria Românească, 1879), 2.

¹⁶⁵ Ioan Slavici, “*Soll*”și“*Haben*”, 10-11.

¹⁶⁶ See Walter H. Sokel, “Anti-Semitism in Nineteenth-Century Germany: From Schiller’s *Franz Moor* to Wilhelm Raabe’s *Moses Freudenstein*” in Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz (eds.), *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 154.

¹⁶⁷ “Until the end of time, the Jews will remain a foreign element among us, disturbing our social harmony”, Ioan Slavici, “*Soll*”și“*Haben*”, 25, 46.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 47.

conditions of art. 44 of the Berlin Treaty should be justified according to *modern* principles, accepted by the Great Powers¹⁶⁹.

The historian A.D. Xenopol, who later on would rise among the most illustrious theoreticians of positivist history in Europe¹⁷⁰, also considered in 1879 the Jews an extraordinary menace for the nation. Himself a liberal, Xenopol adopted a distant stance when it came to seize the role of European liberalism in the evolution of Romania. His writings provide a significant proof the anti-Semitism and xenophobia were peripheral nationalist reactions to an unappropriated model of modernity: “Like a bird in the claws of a falcon, our nation is writhing under the pressure of Europe who is set to impose liberalism at our expenses. The only curb that still thwarts the fatal invasion is the restriction of political rights”¹⁷¹.

In a text, which astonishingly anticipated by one year the tone and the arguments of Wilhelm Marr’s *Der Sieg des Judenthums über das Germanentum*, published in 1879, a Romanian liberal, D. Rosetti-Tezcano, employed a violent, quasi-medical jargon to characterize Jews and their influence. Accordingly, the Jew was perceived as an “unhealthy germ, bearer of epidemics”, a “real social virus that spread cancer in the midst of the nation”¹⁷². In addition, drawing on the theory of the organic character of the nation, he compares the Jews living in Romania with the

¹⁶⁹ Ioan Slavici, “*Soll*” și “*Haben*”, 29.

¹⁷⁰ In 1899, he published in Paris *Les principes fondamentaux de l'histoire*, a work praised, back then, as an original contribution to the epistemology of the historical discipline.

¹⁷¹ Cited in Nicolae Grigoraș, *Naționalismul antisemit al lui A. D. Xenopol* (Iași: Institutu Românesc de Arte grafice, 1942), 17.

¹⁷² “Le juif est un germe malsain, un porteur d’épidémie. Chaque fois don que l’Occident malade prend un émétique, il se penche sur la Moldavie et vomit le Juif par torrents. Oui, sachez le bien, élus de Dieu, vous êtes un virus social ! Là où vous pénétrez un ulcère apparaît bientôt suivi de phagédénisme et de tout le cortège hideux ; la vie se retire devant vous. La Roumanie est l’hôpital de l’Europe. A peine a-t-on cicatrisé la plaie au prix d’efforts inouïs que déjà la cachexie est aux portes. Voyez ces plaques livides qui s’étalent sur notre territoire : ce sont les repaires du juif, groupés en noyaux serrés. Elles poussent, se rapprochent, se donnent la main et finissent par transformer ce corps vivant en un amas de pourriture. Il n’est pas un village, un hameau qui ait échappé à la contagion. Le mal pénètre chaque jour davantage dans les profondeurs des tissus sociaux. Après avoir parcouru le cycle entier de son évolution, le judaïsme annonce sa victoire par des signes appelés tertiaires chez son congénère : la paralysie et un fait accompli.”, D. Rosetti-Tezcano, *La Roumanie et le Juif devant l’Europe* (Bacău: Imprimerie de „l’Independece”, 1878), 22.

feared parasite phylloxera, seriously menacing back then the vineyards of Europe, thus calling them *Roumanoxera*, a hostile and very dangerous race - « une race ennemie et dangereuse au suprême degré »¹⁷³.

Mihai Eminescu, the greatest poet of Romanians up to contemporary standards, also a rabid conservative and anti-Semite, codified in his late-1870s' writings a certain defensive regard reflecting the frustration caused by the sudden political and social mutations affecting the country expressed in a very clear anti-Semitic form. His obdurate opposition to "even the most insignificant juridical or economic concession to all Jews" was determined by a long list of arguments.

First of all, Jews were considered an unassimilable population, a veritable "state in state". By 1879, Eminescu was of the opinion that "there are no Romanians of Israelite rite because there are no Israelites who speak Romanian in their families or engage in marriages with Romanians; in other words, because the Jew is a Jew, feels himself as a Jew and, until this moment, has not wanted to be anything but a Jew"¹⁷⁴. Language, religion and distinct customs foremost prevented the Jews to integrate in Romanian society of the time.

Furthermore, Eminescu was worried about their increasing number and economic influence, and constantly warned about what he perceived as a veritable "invasion of Russian and Galician dirty yids"¹⁷⁵. Besides, in an elaborate study dealing with the Jewish question, he stated that the Jews did not represent a religious or racial menace, but a purely demographic and economic one¹⁷⁶. The conclusion he drew was that they were a parasitic population, which would eventually ruin the peasants and middle class of Romania. "Jews do not deserve rights anywhere in

¹⁷³ D. Rosetti-Tezcano, *La Roumanie et le Juif devant l'Europe*, 35-40.

¹⁷⁴ M. Eminescu, "Dacă proiectul majorității", *Timpul*, IV, July 7, 1879, reprinted in M. Eminescu, *Opere*, Vol. X. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1989), 291.

¹⁷⁵ M. Eminescu, "Dacă proiectul majorității", *ibidem*, 419.

¹⁷⁶ See *idem*, "Cestiunea izraelită", 239-256.

Europe simply because they do not work, since traffic and usury are not work. (...) The Jew is always a consumer, not a producer. If legislative circumstances, as it is the case in Romania, compel him to produce, he does a damaging and superficial work. His slogan is “cheap and flimsy” until he ruins the Christian craftsman. The slogan changes to “expensive and bad” when he finally remains the sole master of the market.”¹⁷⁷

A last, but still important, accusation concerns Jews’ inclination towards conspiracy and their innate opportunism. They represent “an economic army, a race of associates against everything non-Jewish”¹⁷⁸. Furthermore, “they always tend to collaborate with the ones in power, never with the lower classes, and join efforts to exploit the positive resources of the people”¹⁷⁹. His portrayal of the Jewish population is thus completely negative. Jews are seen as immoral, corrupted, corruptive, segregated and also monopolists – the epitome of bad influence¹⁸⁰. For that reason, instead of granting Jews emancipation, Eminescu urges for a more drastic policy as regards to them¹⁸¹.

Eminescu’s poems brilliantly prolonged the apocalypse like vision, already propagated by Conta and Rosetti-Tezcano. In *Doina*¹⁸², which later on became an anthem of extreme nationalism in Romania, the poet’s xenophobic tendencies are explicitly stated:

¹⁷⁷ M. Eminescu, *Opere*, Vol. X, 241.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, 304.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, 301.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸¹ “Let’s see how oppressed are the Jews in Romania! Commerce and capital are in their hands, urban real estate is mainly in their hands, tobacco and alcohol commerce is, illicitly, in their hands, import and export trade is in their hands... What is the oppression and why are they complaining? And if they are complaining why do they not emigrate to other countries where they would enjoy full political rights like Austria, France, Germany etc.? Why? Because there is no oppression nor persecution (in Romania). They do not even deserve the rights they have.”, Mihai Eminescu, “Evreii și conferința”, *Curierul de Iași*, X, No. 2 (January 9, 1877), in idem, *Opere*, Vol. IX, 302.

¹⁸² *Doina* (Lament) was written in 1878-1879 and published in 1883. Romanian version is available in M. Eminescu, *Opere*, Vol. 1 (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1939), 182-183.

He who loves strangers
 May the dogs eat his heart
 May the waste eat his home
 May ill-fame eat his name!

In the name of a romantic nationalist, backward-looking ideal, itself a modern product, Eminescu rejects outright most of the admitted forms of 19th century modernity, such as liberalism and emancipation. Obviously the Jews found an important place in this pessimistic picture. In a poem written shortly before the poet went insane, the message of the anti-Semitic discourses of his time was recovered once again in an imprecatory manner, in so far as Jews were depicted as invading and exploiting Romania with the complicity of its ruling class:

The scourge of the earth, the dirty Jewry
 Is evermore pullulating and nobody stops it
 With venom and death
 The fatherland's blood is filled by them
 While its sons coldly let it happen.
 A filthy, greedy and blood sucking people
 Is eating you and nobody is mourning.¹⁸³

Obviously the discourses about Jewish question implied also some envisaged solutions. In the case of Eminescu for instance, the answers are ambiguous. The scholars who analyzed his anti-Semitic articles tend to believe that the poet “backed the use of nonviolent, legal restrictions on Jewish access to equal rights”¹⁸⁴. Additionally, he envisaged a gradual emancipation as long as they would speak Romanian language in their families and synagogues and engage in inter-confessional

¹⁸³ See Mihai Eminescu, *Opere*, Vol. III, 21. The translations are mine.

¹⁸⁴ William Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism...*, 121.

marriages with Romanian citizens. This equated of course a full romanization of the Jewry living in Romania. Ambiguously enough, Eminescu noted that “Jews are not and cannot be Romanians, as in general they are not and cannot be German, English, French, Italian.”, thus drawing once again on the preconceived idea of the ‘unassimilability’ of Jews.¹⁸⁵

However, following a more general trend, Eminescu’s discourse changed drastically after the Berlin Peace Congress of 1878. Frustrated by the decisions concerning Romania taken there, Eminescu radicalized his anti-Semitism and his ambiguous expressions seem to codify his acceptance of a possible and desired total extermination of Romanian Jews as Slavici did. At the time his best friend and colleague, Ioan Slavici, himself a writer and a journalist with conservative beliefs, wrote some months earlier a very rabid anti-Semitic text in which, in almost similar terms proposed Romanians the extermination of the Jews irrespective of consequences, as solution to the Jewish question: “In the last resort, at a given sign, we might have to close our frontiers, cut the Jews down and throw all of them into the Danube so that nothing of their seed remains. This is the one and only solution which, in a sound mind, is left to a durable people in circumstances such as those prevailing today.”¹⁸⁶

Is there an explanation for these intellectuals’ anti-Semitic opinions? To answer this question, one has to look at the broader intellectual context of Romanian public sphere. The most comprehensive and widespread critique of Romania’s recent

¹⁸⁵ Interestingly enough, the same ambiguity may be discovered in Treitschke’s antisemitic discourse. On the one hand, he declared that “Jews should become Germans. They should feel themselves modestly and properly Germans.”, on the other he negated this possibility “A cleft has always existed between Occidental and Semitic essences. There will always be Jews who are nothing more than German speaking Orientals.”, Heinrich von Treitschke, “Ein Wort über Unser Judenthum”, in *Antisemitism in the Modern World. An Anthology of Texts*, edited by Richard S. Levy (Lexington: Heath, 1991), 72-73. Besides, later on, at the beginning of 1880, Eminescu enthusiastically translated and published integrally in the conservative paper *Timpu*, this influential article of Treitschke.

¹⁸⁶ Ioan Slavici, “Soll” și “Haben”, 73.

development was made at the time by Titu Maiorescu, a leader of *Junimea*. He believed that modernization of the country had only taken place at a superficial level and that the adopted western models had merely a formal influence and not an essential one, thus inclining to accord a prominent role to peasantry, “the only real social class of the country”¹⁸⁷. Eminescu, Slavici and other important figures of the public scene, including liberals, adopted this point of view.

In addition, Eminescu’s intellectual structure and artistic temperament were for instance closest to German romanticism in whose spirit his nationalist ideology was crystallized. Other actors in the Romanian public life shared the same sympathies. Both Romanticism and German Nationalism have their roots in the work of Johann Gottfried von Herder. In 1784, the latter published *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* [Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind], in which he suggested that every nation was different, and that every nation had its own particular specialty (of “genius”). By this logic, Germany, for instance, should not copy France, but pursue its own particular national genius and identity. Herder invoked the *Volk* (the people) as the root of the true national culture and special nature (*Volksgeist*) which every nation should try to express. Herder did not mean his ideas to apply only to Germany, but to all nations¹⁸⁸.

¹⁸⁷ William Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism...*, 113. A passage from an article of Titu Maiorescu, the founder of Junimea circle is illustrative of his conception: “Apparently, judging by the statistics of outside forms, the Romanians have now almost the entire western civilization. We have politics and science, journals and academies, schools and literature, museums, conservatories, theatres and we even have a constitution. But in reality all these are dead productions, pretensions without a fundament, ghosts without a body, illusions without a grain of truth, and thus the culture of the Romanian high classes is null and worthless, and the abyss that separates us from the people in the lower classes is becoming deeper and deeper every day. The only genuine class in our case is the Romanian peasant, in his reality is his suffering, which he endures the phantasmagoria of the higher classes.”, Titu Maiorescu, “În contra direcției de astăzi în cultura română” [Against the Contemporary Direction in Romanian Culture], *Convorbiri Literare*, II, no. 19 (December 1st, 1868), 306.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Victor Neumann, “Volk (people) and Sprache (language) in Herder’s Outlook. The Speculative Theory of Ethno-nation”, *Studia Hebraica* (Issue 5, 2005), 141-160.

During the 19th century, these ideas were appropriated and disseminated by other German philosophers, therefore by 1870s already, the students of the cosmopolitan German universities considered Herder, alongside Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, a pillar of their radicalism¹⁸⁹. It was also the case of the university of Vienna, where young Eminescu and Slavici like many other Romanian intellectuals studied. Their anti-Jewish reaction must therefore be understood in a much broader radical, thus modern, perspective encompassing also a certain political stance – conservatism – and a specific national ideology – centered on the traditional values of the *Volk*. In Shulamit Volkov's terms, their anti-Semitism acted as a cultural code¹⁹⁰, integrating several discursive strategies which emerged as reactions to a competing liberal, bourgeois, dynamic model of modernization. However, their stance, albeit backward looking, should not be considered reactionary. Their claims aimed to slow down the process of modernization and to orient it in a different direction, not to cancel it¹⁹¹. Ultimately, the viewpoints expressed by Romanian intellectuals of the time on the Jewish question, although radical and revolting – from the contemporary perspective – were also part of the paradigm of 19th-century Romanian modernity.

To conclude, these samples of rabid anti-Semitic ideas developed in the context of the debates around the Jewish context by some subsequent great figures of Romanian culture, fully reveal the extreme forms reached by public discourses and the dramatic passion of its agents. The public sphere extensively conveyed and tested the various discursive strategies associated with the debates around the Jewish question. Anti-Semitism from its mildest forms to the most radical was almost unanimously adopted thus leading to a tense backdrop for the political debates around

¹⁸⁹ William J. McGrath, „Student Radicalism in Vienna”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, (Vol. 2, No. 3, 1967), 183-201.

¹⁹⁰ Shulamit Volkov, “Anti-Semitism as a Cultural Code”, 45-46.

¹⁹¹ See Ion Bulei, *Sistemul politic al României moderne. Partidul Conservator* [The Political System of Modern Romania. The Conservative Party] (Bucharest: Editura Politica, 1987), 477-478.

the revision of Article 7 of the 1866 Constitution. The previous events, with the public sphere brutally interfering with the politics, already created the precedent. However, the politicians were this time forewarned on the possible disastrous consequences of an escalation of passions.

4. THE JEWISH QUESTION “RESOLVED”

In the previous chapters, it has been shown how the Jewish question reemerged after the 1878 Congress of Berlin and the obstinate way Romanian public reacted to it. In the eyes of the Romanian elite, the Great Powers committed a great injustice by conditioning the independence of the country on the emancipation of the Jewish population therein. In reaction, drawing on the preceding instances of the Romanian Jewish question, a multifaceted and widespread anti-Semitic discourse abruptly emerged. In this tense context, the Jewish question came to a provisional political resolution in Romania.

In the following pages, I explain the political mechanism that led to the revised version of the Article 7 of the Constitution and the outcome of all this public scandal. First, the attitudes of Romanian politicians vis-à-vis the Jewish question are analyzed building on the abundant corpus of parliamentary and electoral discourses on this matter. Second, by contextualizing the stages of the Constitutional revision, I point out the factors that led to the exact form of the revised Article 7 and the political instrumentalization of the Jewish question under these circumstances.

First of all, at this point it is necessary to make some remarks concerning the characteristics of the Romanian political system. At the time the Jewish question reemerged, Romania was governed once again by a liberal cabinet, with Ion C. Brătianu as Prime Minister. Previously, in 1875 the different liberal groups, including the *Reds* led by C. A. Rossetti and I. C. Brătianu, the moderate liberal factions of M. Kogălniceanu, Ion Ghica, A.G. Golescu and Grigore Vernescu and the Moldavian *Fraction*, set the basis for what will be known as the National Liberal Party¹⁹². With a

¹⁹² Cf. Apostol Stan, *Grupări și curente politice în România între Unire și Independență*, 410-413.

common political platform, the party managed to seize the power in 1876, but soon it became clear that the *Reds* dominated the party. Although Romanian historians maintain that the National Liberal Party was potent and homogeneous since its creation, it is wiser and safer to argue that at least in the first years after its creation, the dissensions between still distinct liberal factions and constant defections from the party practically hindered the party to function as an individualized actor on the political scene. In point of fact, the *Reds*, the various groups of moderate liberals and the Moldavian *Fraction* preserved a good deal of their previous autonomy, therefore had divergent opinions on many political issues. As it will be shown in the following pages, the Jewish question offers a good case in point in this respect.

At their turn, the so-called conservative side was divided by many criteria. The groups around the former Prime Minister Lascăr Catargiu or M. K. Iepureanu, the young Moldavian conservatives led by Titu Maiorescu and P.P. Carp or the moderate conservative group of Vasile Boerescu represented as many autonomous voices on the political scene¹⁹³. As an illustration of the laxity of political allegiances in that time, suffice is to say that M. K. Iepureanu, a self proclaimed hardcore conservative, did not hesitate in 1875 to be a founder member of the National Liberal Party alongside Brătianu, Rossetti and the others¹⁹⁴.

On the whole, at the time the Jewish question reemerged, the balance of the Romanian political scene was highly unstable, divided between many actors. Neither the conservatives nor the liberals were capable to form a true political party¹⁹⁵. In

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, 416-428. The author, although trying to demonstrate the convergence of opinions between different self-entitled conservative groups, specifies that they were completely autonomous in the late 1870s.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 411.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Anastasie Iordache, *Originile conservatorismului politic din România și rezistența sa contra procesului de democratizare: 1821-1882* [The Origins of Political Conservatism in Romania and its resistance to the Process of Democratization: 1821-1882] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1987), 262-284 and Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866-1947*, 22-25.

these circumstances, like in 1866, the political struggle was fierce and the compromise became a common and necessary practice.

4.1 The convergence of the political stances regarding the Jewish question

For the Romanian political class and especially for the liberal government in power the Article 44 of the Congress of Berlin came as a shock. The fact that two of the most ardent anti-Semites of the late 1860s - Ion C. Brătianu as prime minister and M. Kogălniceanu as Minister of Foreign Affairs - were now asked by the Great Powers to enforce the civil and political emancipation of the Jews adds more irony to the situation. Indeed, the liberal government of Brătianu was once again in a very delicate position, which supposed a double risk. On the one hand, to accept the conditions imposed at Berlin implied the adoption of a positive legislation pertaining the Jews. This would have left the cabinet without the support of the Moldavian *Fraction* and of diverse conservative groups who a priori rejected any alleviation of the status of the Jews. Furthermore, given the state of the public opinion, already analyzed in the last chapter, such a legislative measure, if at all possible, might have led to serious popular uprisings menacing the social stability of the country. On the other hand, refusing to comply to the decisions of the Great Powers, would have entailed the full deterioration of the already poor image the liberal cabinet had in Western Europe. In either case, the *Reds* and their allies risked again, as it had happened already in 1868, to lose the power. For that reason, the instrumentalization of the Jewish question required a lot of diplomacy, address, and patience from the part of the politicians in power

Under these circumstances, the tactics employed by Wallachian liberals were complex and very effective. Initially, the government tried to postpone as much as possible the parliamentary demarches concerning the revision of article 7 and avoided systematically to offer any official suggestion for revision. At the same time, the gazette of the liberal party was pleading the cause of this deliberate delay which supposedly offered the necessary time for the public to make out “the danger represented by the claims of *Alliance Israélite Universelle*” and to realize that “the reasons for exclusion are not religious, but economic”¹⁹⁶. Ultimately, this strategy proved successful. As it has been shown, the public discourse concerning the Article 44 and the Jewish population residing in Romania became vituperative and unanimous by the time the Jewish question was put on the political agenda of the Parliament.

The politicians irrespective of their doctrinal affiliation adopted almost entirely the public point of view. In the enthusiast parliamentary debates on the Jewish question, this fact stood out with clarity. The impetus for these debates was given at a relatively late date. At the end of November 1878, addressing a message to the united chambers of Romanian Parliament, Prince Carol formally advised the politicians to remove the principle of political inequality on religious grounds from the Constitution, since it was “no longer in harmony with the spirit of the century”¹⁹⁷.

The reactivation of the Jewish question scandalized the entire political class. The first reaction of the politicians was to vehemently condemn the Great Powers for what they perceived as an unjust demand. For instance the moderate Kogălniceanu, viewed the decision taken at Berlin as a “significant encroachment on Romania’s

¹⁹⁶ *Românul*, XXIII, February 15, 1879.

¹⁹⁷ Quoted in Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 163.

sovereignty and a major inquiry to her dignity”¹⁹⁸. Titu Maiorescu, at the time a conservative deputy who passed as a philo-Semite, was of the opinion that the lobby of *Alliance Israélite Universelle* has been very unusual, and the pressure exercised by the Great Powers was simply revolting. That is why he considered a defensive stance in the Jewish question as “the best solution against the illegitimate and unjust requests which violate the will of the country”¹⁹⁹. The radical liberals were also outraged by the attitude of the Great Powers as regards Romania. The concessive ones laid the blame for the Article 44 on the calumnies continuously launched by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* who surprisingly managed to deceive all the cabinets of Western Europe²⁰⁰.

The most virulent protesters, like the liberal Aristide Pascal qualified the demand of Europe as a joke. In his words, Western Europe “has a guilty conscience because of the numerous persecutions it inflicted on the Jews, and now tries to make a clean breast of the whole thing”²⁰¹.

In a parliamentary motion advocating the keeping of the Article 7 of the 1866 Constitution in an unaltered form, eight deputies qualified the decision of the Treaty of Berlin as illegal. In conformity with all accepted international norms, they argued, the right to legislate in domestic affairs, therefore in the citizenship policies also, was the exclusive prerogative of the state, be it autonomous or independent. Consequently, the unrevisionists considered that Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin contradicted all

¹⁹⁸ W. Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism*, 41.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, 113.

²⁰⁰ This was the point of view of the deputy Gheorghe Missail: “The Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin is the exclusive effect of the calumnies launched by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*”, in *La Question Juive dans les Chambres Roumaines* (Paris: Typographie Ch. Marechal, 1879), 46.

²⁰¹ Cf. *Românul*, XXIII, April 28, 1879.

established juridical norms and motivated on this as well their own radical stance vis-à-vis the Jewish question²⁰².

To sum up so far, after Congress of Berlin, the Jewish question came to be seen as a public and political obsession and even those who did not have strong feelings against the Jews, opposed the idea of emancipation resenting the interference of the Great Powers in the internal affairs of the country²⁰³. The article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin determined a staunch opposition from the part of the Romanian elite. Irrespective of their political allegiance, the actors of the Romanian public and political scenes shared a strong resentment toward the Great Powers, which allegedly betrayed Romanians in an unjust manner. In this respect, anti-Semitism played a double role. On the one hand, because of its latent dissemination in Romania starting from 1866, it largely determined this negative reaction; on the other, anti-Semitism, as well as specific type of nationalist ideology, must be seen as by-products of the Romanian perception on the reactivation of the Jewish Question.

In the course of the Kafkaesque parliamentary process that finally led to the revision of the Article 7 of the Constitution, the Romanian political class developed a different opinion on the Jewish question. During the debates of 1879 concerning the Jewish problem, politicians were not divided, as today one would imagine, between anti-Semites and adepts of emancipation, namely reactionaries, conservatives and liberals, but between radical anti-Semites and more moderate anti-Semites. The differences lied only in the degree.

In order to thwart the exact application of the Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin, politicians put forth a series of counterarguments, which exposed their anti-Semitic views. First, the Jews were unanimously perceived as strangers to the

²⁰² Cf. *Moțiunea nerevisioniștilor în cestiunea israelită* [The Motion of the Unrevisionists on the Jewish Question] (Bucharest: Typografia Curții, 1879), 3-8.

²⁰³ This wise observation was made by Keith Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866-1947*, 52.

Romanian nation, with different customs, traditions and aspirations. In this sense, the unrevisionists considered the Jews “a nation which, although scattered around the world, has nevertheless its own past, customs and aspirations to which it clings.”²⁰⁴ The liberal leader, Dimitrie Ionescu asserted the same idea during an electoral meeting in April 1879: “Neither Europe, nor a Romanian can claim that 500,000 strangers from the country, as regards their language, mores, habits and aspirations, can become all of a sudden Romanian citizens.”²⁰⁵ Since all politicians adhered to a specific idea of the nation, which supposed a community sharing the same origin, language, beliefs, mores and aspirations, the Jew was from the outset perceived as the embodiment of the outsider.

Second, with few exceptions, the politicians were convinced that the Jews were unassimilable and represented a *nation within nation* in Romania. Vasile Conta expressed this idea in a quasi-racial form during a speech in the Constituent Assembly²⁰⁶ while the *fractionist* Nicolae Voinov emphatically declared: “Irrespective of the country they reside in, the Yids remain Yids and do not assimilate. They make a nation within nation and remain in an immobile state of Barbarism”²⁰⁷. The Jew was also considered a traitor of the nation, who chose to address to the Great Powers although he knew this would create trouble for the whole country. Therefore, as a Wallachian liberal said: “The Jews despise us! They ask rights from the strangers, not from us!”²⁰⁸. The Romanian diplomatic agent in Paris, Nicolae Callimachi-Catargi publicly answered to an accusatory letter of Crémieux by admitting that “one of the most important accusations the Romanians made as regards

²⁰⁴ *Moțiunea nerevisioniștilor în cestiunea israelită*, 7.

²⁰⁵ *Suplement al Românului*, April 28, 1879.

²⁰⁶ *Moțiunea nerevisioniștilor în cestiunea israelită*, 24-26.

²⁰⁷ *La Question Juive dans les Chambres Roumaines*, 52.

²⁰⁸ *Suplement al Românului*, April 28, 1879.

the Jews is that they obey an authority hostile to their own country”²⁰⁹, that is the *Alliance Israélite*.

Furthermore, prolonging the ideas already in the air in the public discourse, the politicians considered the Jewish population a great menace from the perspective of its considerable size, level of culture and economic potential. In their discourses, all Romanian politicians spoke of a consistent number – ranging between 400,000 and 550,000²¹⁰ – of Jews living in the country. This exaggeration almost doubling the actual size of the Jewish population strengthens the fears and the reticence of the Romanian politicians as regards the Jewish question. In addition, the Prime Minister Brătianu, although admitting the emancipatory ideals as desirable for Romania, considered that the Jews living in Moldova had a very low cultural condition and therefore “can not become mature enough for the civil and political equality, other than gradually”²¹¹.

As for the economic and social threat the Jews represented, the Moldavian liberal Nicolae Voinov put it bluntly: “Because of the Jews and their disloyal competition, the beginning of Romanian economic development was repressed.”²¹² Another Moldavian, Rosseti-Tețcanu, militating against the Jewish emancipation, considered the Jews of Romania a cause of decadence and domestic disarray²¹³. The fractionist I. Codrescu also pointed out the social and economic peril represented by the Jew, and rhetorically linked the political resolution of the Jewish question with the public anti-Semitic agitations: “Bearing in mind the perspective of the

²⁰⁹ « Un des plus vifs reproches que les Roumains font aux Juifs, c’est d’obéir à une autorité hostile à celle du pays. », *Le Temps*, October 5, 1879.

²¹⁰ At the end of a phantasmagoric calculus, the unrevisionist Vasile Alecsandri concluded that in 1879 there were 335,800 Jews in Romania, a number which is rounded to 400,000 for rhetorical ends (cf. *Ibidem*, 160). The Prime Minister I. C. Brătianu believed the correct number was between 4 and 500,000 (cf. *La Question Juive dans les Chambres Roumaines*, 31), while the fractionist Andrei Vizanti advanced a total of 550,000 (see *ibidem*, 11).

²¹¹ *Românul*, XXIII, April 5, 1879.

²¹² *Românul*, XXIII, March 2, 1879.

²¹³ *Moșunele nerevisioniștilor în cestiunea israelită*, 24-26.

emancipation of Jews *en bloc*, bearing in mind the perspective of seeing the Jews, who already exploit our peasants with their taverns, exploiting them as mayors and taxmen, how could we not find well founded and legitimate the anxieties of the people?”²¹⁴

In fact, the most extreme apprehension of the Romanian politicians was that *Alliance Israélite Universelle* would plan to transform Romania into a new Palestine, a completely Jewish country. This fear was expressed by Nicolae Blaremburg in the Parliament²¹⁵ and was to all appearances sustained by the liberals in power. In their official gazette, the Jews are systematically equated with a “foreign solvent” endangering Romanian nationality²¹⁶. Interestingly, the Russian agent in Bucharest backed this scenario and confirmed that the *Alliance Israélite* was seeking to establish a new Palestine in Romania by “massive immigration and purchase of properties for the Jews”²¹⁷.

In the context of obsessive media coverage of the Jewish question, these ideas must have become evident even for the most versatile politician. While the alarming proportion of the Jewish population, its ruthless economic practices and the imminence of a national catastrophe were vividly and obsessively asserted, anti-Semitic attitude was not an option, but a necessary reaction to facts. As it will be shown further, the resolution of the Jewish question depended also on another important factor.

²¹⁴ *La Question Juive dans les Chambres Roumaines*, 52.

²¹⁵ *Moțiunea nerevisioniștilor în cestiunea israelită*, 41.

²¹⁶ Cf. for instance *Românul*, XXIII, June 3, 1879.

²¹⁷ See Frederick Kellogg, *Drumul României spre Independență*, 301.

4.2 The revision of the article 7

The strategy of temporization, although relatively secure for the liberal government, was not understood very well in Moldova, where politicians feared the worst: “Our capital has already become a Jewish town. Now the Wallachians want to grant citizenship to Jews, in spite of our will. (...) Moldova is fed up with the red administration.”²¹⁸ Such radical discourses, which could be heard even in the halls of the Parliament, made explicit the possible disintegration of the recently created Romania. The conservative press organ *Timpul* bitterly observed: “The Deputy Chamber is not anymore divided between the opposition and the governmental supporters, but between Moldova and Wallachia. (...) At least in that question, the Wallachians should let themselves led by the Moldavians - since the Jewish question is a Moldavian question”²¹⁹. Even *Românul* cites some “enemies of the government” who declared that “The Wallachians are incapable to assess the illness we suffer because of the Jewish invasion affecting us. They are going to sacrifice us, (...) we must seek our own interest irrespective of the national interest”²²⁰. Later on, in a discourse in the Constituent Assembly, M. Kogălniceanu admitted that the Jewish question divided the country: “A civil war takes place at the moment through letters, journals and petitions. It is in our power to prevent it in the streets”²²¹.

The liberals in power answered with a series of articles and public speeches, which accredited the idea that the Jewish question is of national importance, beyond any party interest and strategy of politicking. In this logic, there existed no Moldavian economic and social problems, but national ones²²². The Jewish question was the

²¹⁸ *România Liberă*, January 3, 1879.

²¹⁹ *Timpul*, July 10, 1879.

²²⁰ Cf. *Românul*, XXIII, June 13, 1879.

²²¹ Cf. *Românul*, XXIII, September 29, 1879.

²²² *Ibidem*, cf. also *Românul*, XXIII, January 8, 1879.

perfect occasion for the liberals to demand the unity of all those patriotic politicians preoccupied by the fate of the country. This discursive shift placing the Jewish question at the heart of the national agenda set in fact the context of the parliamentary debates around the revision of Article 7.

To say the least, the political process that led to the revision of the Article 7 in the Constitution was intricate. It began in February/March in the Parliament with a long debate over the means to comply with the stipulations of Treaty of Berlin. At that moment, Romanian politicians had to choose between changing the Article 7, and completely defying the will of the Great Powers by preserving the same restriction as regards the access of Jews to citizenship. Finally the perspective of obtaining the independence prevailed and the Parliament voted for the revision of the Constitution but not without a fierce dispute. In the general eagerness to solve once and for all the Jewish question, on March 25/April 6, 1879, prince Carol dissolved the legislature thus opening the way for the election of a new Constituent Assembly²²³. The electoral process was expectedly characterized by a multitude of discourses on the Jewish question. Since the public opinion did not favor the Jewish emancipation, the politicians promised at this point not to grant Jews civil and political rights out of a strategy of politicking or personal conviction²²⁴. Ultimately, in autumn, the different proposals for the revision of the Constitution were discussed and a new version of the Article 7 was adopted. From the point of view of the employed political strategies and anti-Semitic standpoints, the types of discourses delivered throughout that period by different political groups practically maintain the same line of argumentation.

²²³ *Românul*, XXIII, March 29, 1879.

²²⁴ Cf. Constantin Bacalbaşa, *Bucureştii de altădată, Vol.1 (1871-1884)* [Bucharest in the former days], (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 2007), 316. "The country was against the political emancipation of the Jews and the revision of Article 7 as it was demanded by the executive and the Treaty of Berlin. Therefore anybody who promised to vote against the revision was likely to be elected."

Both during the parliamentary debates on whether Article 7 from the Constitution should be revised or not – in February and March 1879 – and in the period of the actual debates on the revision – September and October 1879, the appeals to the patriotic feelings and the unity of the political class became recurrent in the discourses of the *Reds*. For instance, in *Românul* from February 28, 1879, after the proposal of the revision of article 7, was voted by the Deputy Assembly, it was published the following message: “This question is not a party question, but a national one, on which all the parties in perfect agreement should meet. Their unity would be also a message to those abroad who want to make laws in our country without consulting us”. As a Prime Minister, Ion C. Brătianu employed a similar discourse in front of the Parliament. The plans of the government were prevailing as long as the legislative power was unanimous; “this would be the force for our country”²²⁵.

This strategy must be interpreted in two complementary ways. First, the Jewish question, by the drastic opposition it determined between Romania and Western Europe, put a great burden on the cabinet. By appealing to the unanimity of the political class, the government was thus trying to remove a part of the responsibility from its shoulders. Second, the manifest unanimity of the political class on this issue prevented open conflicts and legitimized better the governmental actions, therefore enabling the *Reds* to remain in power.

Later on, in July 1879, when in spite of all efforts, unanimity on the Jewish question seemed improbable, the government resigned. Without hesitation, Carol nominated as Prime Minister the same Brătianu. In his viewpoint, the *Reds* and especially their leader, were the only capable of solving the Jewish question and

²²⁵ *La Question Juive dans les Chambres Roumaines*, 52.

therefore benefited from all his support²²⁶. In the attempt to ensure the support of the Parliament, Brătianu co-opted the two leaders of the moderate conservatives into the new cabinet formed in July 1879. Thus, Vasile Boerescu and Nicolae Krețulescu were appointed as Minister of the Foreign Affairs, respectively, Minister of Cults and Public Instruction²²⁷. At the same time, as the liberals from Moldova, especially those close with the *Fraction* were opposing any change in the Constitution, the *Reds* were insistently advocating the compromise between the different liberal groups, in order to save the country from “serious internal and external threat”: “We conjure yet again all the members of the liberal party which unwillingly, are serving the interests of the reaction by fatal circumstance; we conjure even the liberal factions which are opposing this cabinet to reach as soon as possible a compromise with the majority of the Chamber on this vital issue”²²⁸. All these efforts and discourses envisaged to create the necessary support for the liberal government, in a moment when its remaining in power seemed improbable.

Likewise, since the Jewish question was considered of national interest and the opinions on the Jews converged in assigning to them a catastrophic image, any discourse favoring in the slightest way the Jews living in Romania was vehemently labeled as anti-national. In the context of the political struggle of 1879, anti-Semitic discourses became a norm and the Jewish question an electoral weapon.

²²⁶ In his private letters Carol noted that “(On the Jewish question) the so called Conservatives are behaving like revolutionaries and traitors to their own country. (...) They play a dangerous game since I do not need them in power. Instead the liberals are a force.” - Cf. Sorin Cristescu (ed.), *Carol I. Corespondența personală (1878 – 1912)* [Carol I. Private Correspondence (1878-1912)], (Bucharest: Tritonic, 2005), 71. In other letter, when referring to the conservatives, he declared: “Thank God that they are not in power, because they would have been incapable of solving the Jewish question as they have been incapable to wage the war.” – *Ibidem*, 66.

²²⁷ Cf. Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 167.

²²⁸ *Românul*, XXIII, October 4, 1879. See also *Românul*, XXIII, September 27, 1879: “The only interest that unites the opposition [formed by “extreme conservatives, extreme liberals, neutrals, ambitious personalities and some deluded men of good faith] is the thirst for power, the desire to overthrow the actual government by all means”.

Philo-Semitism was the gravest accusation against political enemies while anti-Semitism and promoters of anti-Semitic actions were perceived as great patriots and defenders of the national interest. All parties blamed the others of being philo-Semites. The liberals in power accused the conservatives that in their attempt to seize the power were willing to make concessions for the Jews adding that “it is not a secret that the conservatives opened the borders of Moldavia for the Jews, colonized their domains with them, thus creating Jewish towns, and attempted to make them the middle class of Romania”²²⁹. Besides “opening the of Moldova for the Jews”, the conservatives were also accused of having protested against the measures taken by the liberal governments in 1867/1868, thus overthrowing the liberals from power and allowing the Jewish invasion in Moldova²³⁰.

At the same time, conservatives accused the liberals of similar actions. Through their official gazette, they accused that “the liberal cosmopolite organization has transformed Romania into a gutter in which all the social ordure of the West and of the East flows”²³¹. In reaction, liberal gazettes published *in extenso* the 1866 anti-Semitic discourses of I. C. Brătianu, in which the Jews were portrayed as a plague for the country, having economic dominance over the Romanian economy and literally invading the country, especially Northern Moldova²³². By bringing in the public memory the anti-Semitic past of their leader, the liberals wanted to create for Brătianu a vivid image of a rabid anti-Semite which would help the party in the domestic political struggles. Of course, outside the country, Brătianu and his collaborators were trying to abstain from any anti-Semitic excess, acting only as true nationalists

²²⁹ *Românul*, XXIII, June 24, 1879. Such accusations are constant in this journal throughout the whole year 1879. Nevertheless, there were also liberal owners who used to invite the Jews to settle on their domain, like M. Kogălniceanu, the actual Minister of Interior (see Carol Iancu, *Les juifs en Roumanie*, 42), but the liberals of course minimized this aspect.

²³⁰ *Românul*, XXIII, June 15, 1879.

²³¹ *Timpul*, IV, February 27, 1879.

²³² Cf. *Românul*, XXIII, April 26 and 28, 1879.

concerned by the future of the country. In a Senate meeting, the conservative senator M. K. Iepureanu declared: “The true reason why the government do not show us any solution to the Jewish question is linked with its false position. Abroad, the cabinet wants to pass as philo-Semite (*ebreofil*), while here it tries to be anti-Semite (*ebreofag*).”²³³

Although not officially through the voice of the government, the liberals adopted a strong anti-Semite position, affirming, with politicking ends, their patriotism. At an electoral meeting in May 1879, the liberal Emil Costinescu asserted in total agreement with the audience: “Granting political and civil rights to Jews would mean an economic and national suicide. If we won’t take the right measures, the Jews, as a people completely foreign to us, with different language and traditions, will be for ever a dissolving element in our society, weakening our nationality.”²³⁴ Another liberal politician, Nicolae Flea, manifested the same hostility toward the Jews: “I am against the Jews. As for granting them rights *en masse*, like all the Romanians, I would rather prefer to die fighting than to suicide ourselves”²³⁵. Brătianu himself acknowledged in a Parliamentary discourse that he would not have advocated the revision of the Article 7 if the stipulations of Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin did not suppose a danger for the country²³⁶. Furthermore, the Prime Minister insisted that he would never naturalize the Jews *en masse*, because this equated national suicide. Those who asserted this possibility, that is his political enemies, the conservatives and the radical liberals of the *Fraction*, made a “monstrous and inadmissible supposition, which can only be understood as a political weapon”²³⁷. The conservatives made use of the same type of anti-Jewish discourse. “Romania has no

²³³ *Românul*, June 8, 1879.

²³⁴ Cf. *Suplement al Românului*, May 13th, 1879.

²³⁵ Cf. *Românul*, April 28th, 1879.

²³⁶ *Monitorul Oficial*, February 12, 1879.

²³⁷ *La Question Juive dans les Chambres Roumaines*, 31.

debts to the Jews other than a good rope and some posts, especially designed for certain local members of the *Alliance Israélite*.”²³⁸

In the eve of the revision of article 7, anti-Semitism has become a real virtue for the Romanian politicians and the Jewish question the main fixation and political weapon of those interested in politics. Nevertheless, the politicians agreed that the Constitution needed revision for two reasons. First, by modifying the Article 7, Romania would finally be recognized as independent, the ideal of every Romanian patriot. Second, barring Jews from citizenship on religious basis was now perceived as an obsolete and ineffective error. The politicians unanimously admitted that the Article 7 did not solve the Jewish question. This was plainly acknowledged by the conservative Titu Maiorescu: “In 1866, the Article 7 of the Constitution was an anachronism. At that time, it defended the Romanian nationality and not the orthodoxy”²³⁹. The leader of the liberal party added that, besides its anachronistic form, it was also inefficient, forasmuch as it did not stop the Jewish immigration, but on the contrary, led to an intensification of it²⁴⁰.

Under these circumstances, the more or less emphasized anti-Semitism circumscribed the alternative answers to the Romanian Jewish question. In the name of the national preservation, absolutely all Romanian politicians envisaged solutions that did supposed the *en masse* political and civil emancipation of the Jewish population in Romania. While hardcore conservatives like M. K Iepureanu favored only the granting of civil rights, provided that they would be barred from acquiring the demesne – *i.e.* the landed property of the peasants and the domains of the elite -²⁴¹,

²³⁸ *Timpul*, IV, June 19, 1879.

²³⁹ *Monitorul Oficial*, February 25, 1879.

²⁴⁰ *Monitorul Oficial*, February 28, 1879.

²⁴¹ Cf. *La Question Juive dans les Chambres Roumaines*, 66. For the most part, this was also the solution proposed by the moderate conservative, now Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vasile Boerescu. See *ibidem*, 61.

moderate liberals like the former 1848 revolutionary Gheorghe Magheru suggested the emancipation of only certain categories of Jews²⁴². Titu Maiorescu considered that given the situation, a gradual and individual naturalization based upon individual request, under the auspices of the Prince and the Parliament was a fair solution. If the prominent conservative considered that emancipation - albeit gradual - was necessary only in order to keep the pace with western liberalism²⁴³, other politicians adopted intransigent anti-Semitic stances. As it has been shown, an important part of the Moldavian parliamentarians did not support a revision of the Article 7, arguing that the Jews endangered Romanian nationality and economy.

The Liberal Party instead, considered the Jews as incurable aliens to the nation²⁴⁴ and therefore considered all of them foreigners. In this quality, they could become citizens only upon individual request submitted to the prince and accepted through vote by the Parliament. In addition, special legislative measures would prevent foreigners in general from buying landed property in Romania and declare inalienable the peasants' land. This additional legislation was intended to make sure that the Jews could not acquire land in the rural areas²⁴⁵.

The new version of the Article 7 proposed by the government to the debate of the Constituent Assembly took up a good deal of the aforementioned ideas. Gradually, after a harsh political struggle in which the rhetorical manipulation reached a peak,

²⁴² See *Românul*, XXIII, June 19, 1879.

²⁴³ This was obviously a derogation from his own line of thought, as Maiorescu, otherwise a respected and influential cultural and social critic and founder of *Junimea*, believed that modernization had only taken place at a superficial level in the country and that the adopted western models had merely a formal influence. See William Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism...*, 113.

²⁴⁴ In an electoral meeting at the Romanian Athenaeum, Emil Costinescu, a prominent figure of the National Liberal Party, declared: "Being a 'Romanian Jew' supposes being a Jew who does not differ from Romanians as regards their language, mores and feelings. (...) There are Jews who are Romanian subjects but, with very few exceptions, there are no Romanian Jews". in *Suplement al Românului*, May 13, 1879.

²⁴⁵ This type of solution was already hinted by Ion C. Brătianu in February 1879. He refuted even the emancipation of a small number of Jews – 5,000 – because this might represent "a real Trojan horse inside the national citadel". Instead he advised: "You must take other defensive measures, without giving any pretext for our enemies to accuse us of religious intolerance". Cf. *Monitorul Oficial*, February 28, 1879.

the Constituent Assembly adopted in the revised Article 7 in the form proposed by the cabinet. In its new form, the article was as follows:

“Distinction of religious belief or membership will not constitute in Romania an obstacle to the acquisition in Romania of civil and political rights and their exercise.

Paragraph 1: A foreigner, whatever his religion and whether he stands under foreign protection or not, can be naturalized under the following conditions:

a) He sends his request to the government, stating his capital, the profession, or industry in which he works, and his desire to establish a domicile in Romania.

b) Following such a request, he must reside in the country for ten years and prove by his actions that he is useful to the country.

Paragraph 2: The following may be excused from this period of probation:

a) Those who have brought industries or useful inventions into the country or who have outstanding talents; those who have established large business or industrial enterprises.

b) Those who, having been born and raised in the country, were never under foreign protection.

c) Those who served in the armed forces during the War of Independence; these may be naturalized collectively at the request of the government, by a single law and without other formality.

Paragraph 3: Naturalization can only be granted by a law on an individual basis.

Paragraph 4: A special law will determine the manner in which foreigners may take up domicile in Romania.

Paragraph 5: Only native or naturalized Romanians may acquire rural property in Romania. Rights already acquired will be respected. International agreements which already exist remain in force with all their clauses until the expiration date²⁴⁶.

The revised Article 7, in accordance with the stipulations of Article 44 of the Treaty of Berlin, removed the religious allegiance from the prerequisites of naturalization. However, this liberalization was illusory since the Jews residing in Romania were *en masse* declared foreigners who had to pass a long, bureaucratic, and restrictive procedure of individual naturalization, equating though with a modern secular ‘expiation’²⁴⁷. In addition, all foreigners were barred from buying rural properties in Romania, a clear manifestation of nationalism and economic protectionism. An important question referring to the way in which foreigners could take up domicile in the country was deliberately imprecisely addressed in paragraph 4. In this way, Romanian politicians left the door open for future legislative persecutions of the Jewish community, as well as of other unwanted categories of legally ascribed foreigners.

In addition to the revision of Article 7, Romanian parliament conceded, after another intense debate, the immediate emancipation of a list of 888 Israelites, former combatants in the recently finished war with the Ottoman Empire under the flag of Romanian Army²⁴⁸. Envisaged as a sign of the intention to fully comply to the stipulations of Article 44, this singular gesture did not remove the general impression that Romanian politicians were only parading the loyal application of the decision

²⁴⁶ Cf. Carol Iancu, *Les Juifs en Roumanie*, 175-176. The translation is taken from idem, *Jews in Romania 1866-1919: From Exclusion to Emancipation*, english translation by Carvel de Bussy (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996), 105-106.

²⁴⁷ For a concise study of the revised form of Article 7, see Constantin Iordachi, “The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship...”, *art. cit.*, 170.

²⁴⁸ *Românul*, XXIII, October 14, 1879.

made at Berlin, without enforcing any substantive change in the condition of the Jews living in Romania²⁴⁹.

To conclude, the new article 7 of the Romanian Constitution, by not stipulating the immediate emancipation of all Jews living in Romania, satisfied the covert anti-Semites of the time and testified the rise of an internal conception on the nation, privileging exclusionism, defensiveness, and protectionism.

4.3 The triumph and consequences of modern anti-Semitism

By avoiding the instant naturalization of the Jews as it was requested by the Great Powers, by granting instead only an individual access to naturalization and still managing to obtain the international recognition of the independency, the Romanian anti-Semites won the diplomatic battle of 1879. Furthermore, the instrumentalization of the Jewish question by the Liberal Party in Romanian public life of 1879 proved successful from the specific political point of view of its initiators but also from a national perspective. First, the liberal government managed to remain in power. Second, the last voices contesting the union of Wallachia and Moldova were silenced as all the politicians finally united their efforts to escape Moldova from an alleged “sure death”.

The solution given to the Jewish question, namely the revised version of the article 7, satisfied nearly every political group in the country. In proof of this, the conservative Titu Maiorescu concluded in the last days of the parliamentary debates on the Jewish question: “We accept the proposal of revision [that is the adopted version of the new Article 7] as it is the only one possible”. Addressing to the Jews, he reasserted his true feelings: “Do not carry it too far! (...) I consider that their [the

²⁴⁹ See W. Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism*, 73.

Jewish] attitude is damaging, as it upsets the national feeling”²⁵⁰. A month later, *Timpul* enthusiastically claimed that “the revision of the article 7 of the Constitution was made in a conservative spirit. In order to remain what we are, that is Romanians, and to accomplish the historical mission God gave us from the day emperor Trajan set foot on the left bank of Danube, we need to make sure that all the members of our state are native Romanians or at least fully Romanized. This theory is entirely conservative.”²⁵¹

Faithful to his own plan and strategy of politicking, Brătianu himself expressed several times his satisfaction with the solutions adopted: “Is it a bad thing that Mr. Boerescu, Mr. D. Ghica, Mr. Maiorescu, Mr. Carp and even Mr. M. K. Iepureanu, who passes as one of the biggest philo-Semites of the country, are agreeing with us on the point that the Jewish question is an economic, social and national question which can only be solved in a accordance with the national interests? By acting unanimously we will be stronger in front of Europe”²⁵². Likewise, after the final vote on the Article 7 in October 1879, the gazette *Românul* proclaimed in a triumphal manner: “This country has a great and bright future in front of her, if she managed to solve such a burning issue as the Jewish question calmly, liberally, by the union of all [politicians], including the most embittered enemies”²⁵³. Ultimately the unanimity of the politicians on the Jewish question is fully demonstrated by the results of the voting. In the Deputy Assembly, the new Article 7 was voted by 133 out of 144 deputies, while in Senate by 56 out of 58 supported the revision²⁵⁴. Evoking the year

²⁵⁰ Cf. *Monitorul Oficial*, September 12, 1879.

²⁵¹ *Timpul*, IV, October 14, 1879.

²⁵² *La Question Juive dans les Chambres Roumaines*, 36.

²⁵³ *Românul*, XXIII, October 7, 1879.

²⁵⁴ Cf. *Românul*, XXIII, October 7 and October 13, 1879. The few politicians who did not support the revision of the Constitution (including N. Blaremburg, D. Rosseti-Tețcanu, P.P. Carp, V. Alecsandri, N. Voinov) also represented all the political spectrum: conservatives, liberals, *Fractionists* and centrists.

1879 and its political stakes, a leading liberal and an ex-minister wrote: "We may congratulate ourselves today on having solved the Jewish question in a national sense and that – we may now avow loudly – contrary to the manifest will of the Powers and even contrary to the spirit of the Treaty of Berlin"²⁵⁵.

All in all, Rossetti's opinion would be correct if the expression "national sense" would be replaced with the words "anti-Semitic sense". In the context of the intense parliamentary debates on the Jewish question, having patriotic feelings equated with manifesting anti-Semitic views. The slightest remark in favor of Jews was on the contrary labeled as anti-national and while its author was discredited. Indeed, at this point it may be argued that in 1879 manifest political anti-Semitism has become a mark of Romanian nationality or, in the line of William Oldson, "being fittingly anti-Semitic had become identified with acceptability as a Romanian nationalist"²⁵⁶.

How can the turn of events as regards the Romanian Jewish question be interpreted? The fact that the anti-Semitic discourse was employed on a large scale in Romania by intellectuals from various political traditions (liberals, as well as conservatives) undermined its ties with specific political agendas and, on the other hand, underlined the importance of its strong nationalist and politicking foundations. Under these circumstances, the Romanian solution to the Jewish question functioned as a tool of identity assertion. The imperative nation-building agenda of Romanian intellectuals triggered the problem of self-defining. Therefore, Romanian politicians felt the need to assume a satisfactory posture vis-à-vis the West²⁵⁷. Consequently, when the conflict of opinions on the Jewish question emerged, the situation escalated

²⁵⁵ These is the opinion of C. A. Rossetti, see *Românul*, XXV, December 25, 1881.

²⁵⁶ Oldson, *A providential Anti-Semitism*, 103.

²⁵⁷ This is, in fact, a typical reaction for intellectuals of economically backward countries. See Mary Matossian, "Ideologies of Delayed Development" in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 218.

and reached the proportions of a real scandal between the “will of Western Europe” the specific national aspirations of Romanians. Although educated in the West and cherishing the western values, Romanian politicians and intellectuals rejected the decisions taken at Berlin Peace Congress, because they perceived them as a flagrant immixture in the domestic affairs. Xenophobia and anti-Semitism were among the results of this attitude. To a large extent, Romanian intellectuals and political elite, like, for example, its German counterpart²⁵⁸, situated, at least in the problem of anti-Semitism, in a distinct position as compared to a recognized western center. Their anti-Semitic stance had though an identitary purpose and a *relationable* function, that is it acted as means to ascribe distinct positions in various (cultural, intellectual, political) systems of relations.

As any scandal²⁵⁹, the Romanian Jewish question strengthened the ties among the public actors on the same side. In the pages above it has already been shown how the Jewish question ended up by determining the unanimity – in anti-Semitism – of Romanian public scene. Synchronously, the Jewish question divided between Western Europe, who advocated an inclusive, liberal and emancipatory type nationalism and Romanian politicians who were in turn the proponents of a defensive, exclusive and organic form of nationalism, who was determined and determined anti-Semitism at the same time. This conflict soon translated into resentment and disillusionment with the normative role of Western Europe.

²⁵⁸ That is why the historian Heinrich von Treitschke, for instance, emphatically declared “When, with disdain the English and French talk of German prejudice against Jews, we must answer: *You don’t know us!* You live in fortunate circumstances that make the emergence of such “prejudices” impossible. (In Germany) however, year after year, out of the inexhaustible Polish cradle there streams over our eastern border a host of hustling, pants-peddling youths, whose children (...) will someday command Germany’s stock exchanges and newspapers.”, Heinrich von Treitschke, “Ein Wort über Unser Judenthum”, in *Antisemitism in the Modern World. An Anthology of Texts*, edited by Richard S. Levy. (Lexington: Heath, 1991), 70. This “You don’t know us!” is also a leitmotif in Romanian anti-Semitic pamphlets and has definitely a role in forging a distinct identity trait.

²⁵⁹ See Eric de Dampierre, “Thèmes pour l’étude du scandale”, 330 – 332.

These feelings are obvious in the discourse of an unrevisionist like Blaremburg: “It seems that Western Europe, with its reprisals on Romania, has decreed at the Congress of Berlin, the death of the Romanian nationality. As a supreme proof of humiliation and contempt, (Europe) decided we must die by the hand of the Jew”²⁶⁰. The official gazette of the liberal party prolonged the same line of thought: “Who took Bessarabia from us? Who endangered our own [national] existence? (...) The Great Powers deliberating at the Areopagus in Berlin...”²⁶¹

Under these circumstances, the ostensible set of ‘modern’ values advocated by different Western European countries was appropriated through the bias of multiple ideological operations – relativisation, inversion respectively negation.

For instance, P.P. Carp relativized the stipulations of Europe by claiming that they were pernicious, if not impossible, in the context of the undercivilized 1870s Romania: “The modern ideas are a nice thing, but they can not change a social situation in 24 hours, therefore we can not apply abruptly the modern ideas because this would lead to a crisis that will surely put into peril the very basis we envisage for these modern ideas. All we can do is to erase the art. 7 from the Constitution and then, gradually, to search for means to change the 16th century with the 19th”²⁶². A much tenser opposition is determined by the deliberate inversion of the ideas enforced through the Treaty of Berlin. A part of the Romanian political elite was convinced that it represented an advanced an outpost of modernism, even compared with the more advanced states of the West. Through the voice of Vasile Alecsandri, yet another poet of the Romanian romantic-classicist literary pantheon, in the epoch also an active moderate liberal senator, the accusation regarding the discrimination of the Jews was

²⁶⁰ *Moțiunea nerevisioniștilor în cestiunea israelită*, 10.

²⁶¹ *Românul*, October 13, 1879.

²⁶² Cf. P.P. Carp, *Discursuri parlamentare* [Parliamentary Speeches] (Bucharest: Editura “Grai și suflet – Cultura națională”, 2000), 77.

only a calumny, while the whole dialectic center / periphery needed a reevaluation: “Here we are, stigmatized in the eyes of the world based on simple calumnies! Stigmatized! For article 44’s stipulations contain an implication: they qualify us as an intolerant, barbarian and persecuting nation. Who is being branded with this insulting name? Us! The Romanian people! Us, who can rightfully claim the title of the most liberal, the most emancipatory of all the peoples in the modern world!”²⁶³. The last way of negotiating the Jewish question scandal and the values conveyed by Article 44 was to totally negate their sense. Yet again, *Românul* offered a relevant illustration of this ideological operation. Referring to the stipulations contained in the Article 44, the newspaper concluded: “All these injustices and nonsense, as the Treaty of Berlin in general explain themselves by the words of Beust: ‘I do not see Europe anymore!’”²⁶⁴

Exactly at the moment when the country obtained the independence, the Jewish question of 1878-1879 determined these disillusioned stances and a reevaluation of Romania’s rapport with the European states. More importantly, the Jewish question and the ensuing diplomatic and political agitations caused the reemergence of anti-Semitism, non-inclusive nationalism, and xenophobia, which from the beginning, stood in a relation of mutual interdependence.

²⁶³ *Moțiunea nerevisioniștilor în cestiunea israelită*, 164-165.

²⁶⁴ Cf. *Românul*, XXIII, October 13, 1879. Friederich von Beust was at the beginning of the 1870s the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary. These words were said after the Franco-Prussian war, in the context of the emergence of a new balance of powers in Europe. See David Wetzel, *A Duel of Giants. Bismarck, Napoleon III and the Origins of the Franco-Prussian War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), XI.

CONCLUSION

This thesis proposed a historically grounded explanation of the Jewish question and the ensuing outburst of anti-Semitism in Romanian public and political life after the 1878 Congress of Berlin. As it has been pointed out in the previous pages, the Jewish question and the intense debates it generated represented a crucial aspect of the Romanian history from 1866 to 1879, an aspect which can not be overlooked by the researchers interested in modern Romania. To conclude this thesis it is necessary to summarize its findings in order to proceed to a discussion as regards the intricate relationship between anti-Semitism, nationalism and modernism.

Since its emerging in 1866, the Jewish question generated a vigorous public anti-Semitism with social, economic and political underpinnings. The constitutional solution given to the Jewish problem under the circumstances of a massive popular dissent and a fragile, underdeveloped political balance of powers, enabled the perpetuation of anti-Semitism on the political scene. In the Romanian case, anti-Semitism manifested as an obstinate refusal, based on economic, social and often ideological and nationalistic arguments, to make any legal concessions for the numerous Jews living in the country. In the context of a very unstable political system, anti-Semitism proved from the start an important instrument in the hands of politicians aspiring for a large support. What started out as a strategy of politicking assuring a certain internal political coherence, ultimately turned out to be a way of reinforcing a specific identity as Romanians as well. In this respect, the Jewish question was caught in the middle between the aspirations of a patriotic Romanian elite, the exponent of the emerging modern state, and the discourse practiced in the West, affirming a definite type of modernity – based on contradictory principles of nationalism, liberalism and *Realpolitik*, for instance. Therefore, practicing an internal

Realpolitik came inevitably in contradiction with the western imperatives of liberalism. What was possible in the center, became impossible in the aspiring periphery.

Therefore, the rise of political anti-Semitism in Romania should also be envisaged as the result of the political instability of the country, at its turn generated by a still partial nation-building process. Anti-Semitism provided the means to assure the necessary coherence needed to make the post-1866 Romanian state governable. Because of the external interference, this political project apparently failed. In fact, the intervention of the Great Powers in the Jewish question offered the means for the Romanian intellectuals to establish a connection between anti-Semitism, independence and nationalism. In those years, anti-Semitism irremediably became an asset of the public and political discourses, offering the raw material for the post-1878 developments of the Jewish question.

After the Peace Congress of Berlin, where Romania's independence was conditioned upon granting citizenship to non-Christian inhabitants of the country, the Jewish question reemerged. The analysis of the internal political context of the late 1870s underlined that the anti-Semitic solution to the stipulations made in Berlin were triggered once more by an unprecedented public reaction and the necessities of politicking manifested by the yet unstable political establishment.

The various political discourses discussed in this thesis, proved that late 1870s Romanian anti-Semitism had a fundamental role in the strategies of politicking of the politicians in power in Romania. Instrumentalizing the Jewish question as a scandal, in a national sense, the liberals were able to remain in power and to strengthen a specific nationalist canon. The political instrumentalization of anti-Semitism, out of a

tactic of politicking, has also led to the cohesion of the political establishment by creating unanimities and asserting common national values.

The quasi-consensus of Romanian politicians on the revision of article 7 proved that anti-Semitism reinforced the nascent nationalist ideology. Equally, it is undeniable that nationalist feelings gave an important impetus to the emergence of public anti-Semitism. Its underpinnings seemed to be certain economic, social, and political ideologies with a deep impact in 19th century like protectionism, *völkisch* nationalism, even racism. As much as liberalism and democracy were perceived as elements of modernity, these theories were also part of it. If 'modernization' is understood as a process of permanent adjustment to the most recent and best adapted social solutions to the changes of history²⁶⁵, ethnic nationalism for instance – in its organic dimension, built on the philosophy of Johann Gottfried von Herder, with its emphasis on the *Volk* (the people) as the root of the true national culture and on the special nature (*Volksgeist*) which every nation should try to express – must be seen as an ideological tactic designed to provide a suitable resolution to the challenges of 19th century. This ethnic form of nationalism formed an alternative ideological strategy, which should equally be considered as modern in the context of 19th-century Romania.

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In the post-1878 context, the Romanian Jewish question was a perfect illustration of the intricate way the peripheral countries of Europe related to the ostensible set of western modern values. According to a theory developed by Edward Kanterian, underdeveloped countries, as was the case of Romania throughout the 19th century, encountered the modern world in the form of pressure and humiliation by the

²⁶⁵ Bogdan Murgescu (ed.), *Romania and Europe. Modernization as Temptation, Modernization as Threat*, 2.

West. Local elite sought to diminish this pressure by importing Western values like the nationalism - especially its non-integrative form. Internalizing these values, some politicians and intellectuals developed a nationalist discourse claiming the independence and the traditional originality of their country, thus the risk of coquetting with radicalism²⁶⁶. By envisaging the nation as a community sharing the same origin, language, beliefs, mores and aspirations, Romanian anti-Semites manifested a radical ideology²⁶⁷ at the time.

Writing on Eastern European nationalism in general, Maria Todorova expressed the idea that contrary to modernity – in its western sense – with its obsession with change and newness and despite its past-oriented rhetoric and organic tenets, nationalism in its practice was an equally radical futuristic project²⁶⁸. In this context, anti-Semitism, as well as xenophobia, were *pensable* within modernity, as long as their ideological conditions of existence were “in the air”, as long as “ethnic nationalism”²⁶⁹ provided their grounds. Indeed, in the Romanian case, this mixture of ethnic nationalism and defensiveness, made anti-Semitism an essential part of being a

²⁶⁶ See Edward Kanterian, “The Malaise of Modernity: The Case of Romanian Intellectuals”, in Bogdan Murgescu (ed.), *Romania and Europe. Modernization as Temptation, Modernization as Threat*, 98. In a somewhat different manner, Liah Greenfeld reached similar conclusions when claiming that shared *ressentiment* (by definition a reaction to the values of others) was of major sociological importance because it may lead to the “transvaluation of values”, namely “the transformation of the value scale in a way which denigrates the originally supreme values”. This model of interpretation may equally explain the intricate relationship between nationalism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in the context of late 1870s Romania. Cf. Liah Greenfeld, “Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity”, in John Hutchinson and Anthon D. Smith, *Nationalism. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2000), 571.

²⁶⁷ Cf. the chapter “Anti-Semitism as a radical ideology” of a book by Robert Wistrich, *Between Redemption and Perdition: Modern Antisemitism and Jewish Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), 31-42.

²⁶⁸ Maria Todorova, “The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism”, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1. (Spring, 2005), 143.

²⁶⁹ see Shmuel Almog, *Nationalism and Antisemitism in modern Europe, 1815-1945* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1990). 6-11.

nationalist. Espoused by the whole cultural elite, anti-Semitism became soon normal and fully justified in the intelligentsia²⁷⁰.

Undoubtedly, Romanian anti-Semitism, inasmuch as part of the nationalist tenet, acted in the late 1870s as a specific cultural code, in the sense attributed by Shulamit Volkov²⁷¹. But instead of following the line of thought of previous studies on the topic which favored an irrational, anti-modern, and illiberal interpretation of anti-Semitism, thus purging it from modernity and relieving the foundations of the contemporary world from a terrible and embarrassing burden, it is probably more stringent and wise to emphasize its place within modernity itself. Anti-Semitism in that period had the characteristics of a cultural code circumscribed by modernity; it represented an internal critique within modernity rather than a divergent strategy completely eluding it. In this respect, William W. Hagen's finding²⁷² (that is the fact that "aggressive anti-Semitism was intrinsic to successful social modernization and nation building") is fully validated by the Romanian case in point.

Indisputably though, placing anti-Semitism inside 19th century modernity renders the scholarly efforts to elucidate the latter even more difficult, and emphasize the inner contradiction within it. Hence, Western modernization should not be candidly used as a normative or ethical concept nor as a model of global applicability²⁷³. To use Tilo Schabert's expression, the idea of 'modern civilization' "embodies a paradox" since 'modernity' itself may account for the crisis of modern

²⁷⁰ Although following a different line of argumentation, William Oldson has reached the same conclusion, See William Oldson, , *A Providential Anti-Semitism...*, 9 and *idem*, "Rationalizing Anti-Semitism: The Romanian Gambit" in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* (Vol. 138, No. 1, 1994), 25-26.

²⁷¹ See Shulamit Volkov, "Anti-Semitism as a Cultural Code", 45-46.

²⁷² Cf. William Hagen, "Before the "Final Solution", 380.

²⁷³ Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship. Studies in our Changig Social Order* (New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 384.

civilization²⁷⁴. In that case, anti-Semitism, as a modern product, is a perfect illustration for the chronic plural and conflicting nature of modernity.

Finally, by contextual analysis of the specific conditions of emergence of Romanian anti-Semitism in the studied period, that is by emphasizing its particular political and ideological factors, this thesis aimed to argue against idea of an alleged Romanian *Sonderweg*, which establishes a direct determinism between the discursive anti-Semitic outbursts of the 19th century and the tragic events of the 1940s. In this respect, the present thesis opens the way for further studies on the topic. Through the use of contextual analysis, other cases in point of manifest anti-Semitism in the history of Romania may be analyzed in a similar manner in order to discover their particularities. A further comparison of the research result would definitely verify the accuracy of this argument.

²⁷⁴ Tilo Schabert, "A Note on Modernity", *Political Theory*. Vol.7, No.1, (1979), 134..

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