

THE
JEWS IN ROUMANIA

BY

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One of the main objects of the Federation of the Roumanian Jews of America is to acquaint the world with the true conditions of the Jews in Roumania and to expose the inhuman treatment to which more than a quarter of a million of our people are subjected to in that country.

We hope that the facts presented in this lecture will attract the attention of the civilized world and that public-spirited men will interest themselves in the fate of our unfortunate brothers and sisters.

THE FEDERATION OF THE ROUMANIAN
JEWS OF AMERICA.

THE JEWS IN ROUMANIA.

BY LEO WOLFSON.

In the history of Israel, the chapter devoted to the Roumanian Jews is indeed one of the saddest. In no land, not even excepting dark Russia, is the condition of the Jew so pitiable, so heart-rending, as that of the Jew in Roumania; for, in the country of Amalek, he hopes no more, feels as if his doom were sealed, and his bitter fate inevitable.

Roumania is a small Kingdom situated in the southeastern part of Europe, known as the Balkans. It is bounded on the east by Russia, on the northwest by Austria-Hungary, from which it is divided by the ranges of the Carpathian Mountains, and on the south by Bulgaria and Servia, the Danube being the dividing line. Its area is about 48,307 square miles. The last census taken in 1900 shows its population to be about six millions, including 269,000 unfortunate Jews.

The Roumanians claim descent from the Romans left after the conquest of Dacia by the Emperor Trajan and his legions. Its population, however, besides the Latin element, is a mixture of Slavs, Russians, Poles, Turks, and remnants of the various peoples that once passed through it from the barbaric invasion downward.

The territory now known as Roumania was formerly divided into two principalities, each ruled by a separate Prince. Both of them were at various times under the sovereignty of Russia and Turkey, mostly the latter. In 1860, they united under one Prince, and later in 1881 became a Kingdom. Now Roumania is ruled

by a King, and is a constitutional monarchy, having a parliament divided into two branches, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and a Ministry responsible to the King and the Parliament.

Our people are found in Roumanian territory at the very beginning of these principalities. Historians assert that Jews lived in these places as early as the Dacian period, and that they came there after the destruction of the Temple. It is said that the Dacian King, Decebal, treated them very kindly and permitted them to settle and establish a city, and they established the City of Talmaci.

As early as the year 379, C. E., one of the Roman Emperors granted them protection and permission to build their places of worship. In the 8th Century, during the flourishing reign of the Kingdom of the Khazars, it is said that many of them invaded the principality of Moldavia—the northern part of Roumania, and with the Jews already there, established many villages. There can be no question as to the invasion of the Khazars, for they have left an indelible impression upon Roumanian folk-lore, poetry and tradition.

The Principality of Wallachia, the southern part of Roumania, was founded in the year 1290 by the Prince Radu Negru, and the chronicles mention that, among those who escorted him, many were Jews.

Both Principalities were very sparsely settled, and from time to time appeals were issued by the reigning Princes, calling upon the Jews, especially those of Russia and Poland, to settle there. Many came and they were granted charters, guaranteeing them the rights to establish cities and settlements, the free exercise of their religion, and many other privileges; in return they were to pay a small annual tax. Many of the oldest cities in Moldavia were thus established and even at present are mostly populated by Jews, such as the cities of Dorohoi, Botoshani, Folticeni. In fact, Moldavia owes its present civilized status to the Jews, as

the Roumanians are still very crude.

During the reign of the Moldavian Princes, Roman I, Alexander the Good, and Stephen the Great, the Jews received many valuable decrees guaranteeing them many rights, privileges and concessions. They were permitted to establish themselves all over the country, to carry on trades, commerce and industries, and generally were very well treated.

In Wallachia, little is known of the early Jewish settlers. This is also true of the history of the country generally, since few records have been found relating to those times. However, it is known that during the reign of Vlad Tzepesh in 1456, they were very cruelly treated. This ruler was one of the most cruel and barbaric that ever reigned there; his name is even now used to inspire terror. He imprisoned many Jews and extorted large ransoms for their lives from the congregations or Jewish communities. He received his name Tzepesh, or the Impaler, from the cruel method of killing that he used.

At about this period, the latter part of the 15th Century, both Moldavia and Wallachia came under the rule of the Turkish Empire, and from thence dates the settling in many cities of Turkish Jews, who later became a very important factor in the politics of the principalities. The rich Turkish Jews of Constantinople were very powerful and many of the Princes owed their thrones to Jewish influence with the officials of the Sublime Porte.

In the 16th Century, during the reign of the various Princes, both in Moldavia and Wallachia, the numerous wars necessitated the imposition of heavy taxes, and the Jews were made to suffer. To get the money that was needed they were heavily taxed, then persecuted so as to make them purchase privileges, and finally killed and robbed. Under several rulers they fared better, but it was only for short periods, as the Princes were very often changed by command from Constantinople, the highest bidder receiving the power to rule over the Principality.

In the 17th Century, for the first time, the Jews came in contact with the Russian Cossacks. The latter had received permission to cross the country in the Russo-Polish war and while passing through the Jewish settlements and cities, massacred, killed and robbed hundreds of Jews. During this century the Jews were also the prey of the reigning Princes, and were at all times made the scapegoats for all kinds of atrocities. Documents and chronicles show (and mention) that they were extensively engaged in business, and that the provisions for the army were furnished by Jews. Many papers were found showing that they loaned money to the reigning Princes and to many nobles. The documents are written in a very pure Hebrew and indicate that the Jews of that period possessed a very high degree of culture.

The beginning of the 18th Century, 1710, marks the first blood accusation against the Moldavian Jews. In the city of Neamtz, a Jew was accused of having killed a Christian child in the courtyard of the synagogue, to use its blood for ritual purposes. For five days the Jews were massacred, their houses and stores pillaged and robbed, and many were imprisoned and tortured. Strong influences were used to bring about an investigation, which showed that the accusation was false. The guilty persons were discovered and were severely punished; it is needless to add that they were not Jews. From this date begins the anti-religious feelings against the Jews, largely due to the instigations of an ignorant and fanatic clergy.

In 1714, another blood accusation was brought against the Jews and several were hanged, but the timely discovery of the real culprit averted a great calamity.

In Wallachia, under the reign of Prince Cantacuzene, a massacre of the Jews took place. Jewish houses were burned and the great synagogue of Bucharest was destroyed.

In the latter part of the century, the ritual murder accusation was made very frequently against the Jews and every time it brought with it massacres, devastations, pillages and tortures

on the heads of our unfortunate people. At about the same time many Jewish children were seized by priests and forcibly baptized.

The Russo-Turkish conflict (1769-1774) brought more trouble to our people and they were made the scapegoats of the natives as well as of the invaders, each doing their utmost to crush and humiliate them.

The beginning of the 19th Century is but a continuation of the same oppression and persecution, as the Russo-Turkish war was still going on. One only wonders that there was yet Jewish blood left to be spilled.

The spirit of 1848, which like a glorious sun shone over all Europe and brought about a feeling of brotherhood and freedom, made it seem for a moment as though the blood-blot was about to be wiped off. It spread rapidly and reached these principalities also. Both Moldavia and Wallachia at that time were under the sovereignty of Turkey and with the spirit of the time they demanded their independence and were very eager to obtain their freedom from the Turkish yoke. Liberty, equality, freedom, independence and other such sentiments had taken a strong hold of the Roumanian people and active propaganda to gain them was undertaken. The Roumanian patriots for once forgot their imaginary grievances against the Jews and their demands for emancipation included the emancipation of the Jews. In their enthusiasm and thirst for national independence and in order to increase the moral force of their demands numerically, they included as Roumanians the Jews also. The leaders of this movement made memorable speeches calling upon the people to emancipate themselves and also to recognize the rights of the Jews. Boerescu, Epureanu, Costoforu, Cogalniceanu and a host of other Roumanian patriots advocated the recognition of the Jews as Roumanian citizens. The proclamation of June 11, 1848, calling for the independence of the principalities and providing various planks of organization, demanded that "the Roumanian people declare themselves for equal political and civil rights for every-

body, the emancipation of the Jews and of every compatriot of whatever religion."

Boerescu, in one of his memorable speeches pleading for the Jews, eloquently said: "We must not make religious beliefs a bar to citizenship. Do you know in what century we live? Do you feel the spirit of the time? Gentlemen, do not the Jews pay taxes as we do? Do they not bear the burden of the country as we do? I say to you that whoever helps bear the burden, whoever contributes his mite to this country, must be given the rights we all have. You say that they are foreigners, that they are not worthy of political rights; I say to you, make them worthy of the same. You can only do so by emancipating them and by lifting them up from the degradation into which we have unwisely placed them. The Jews are Roumanians as we are. Once and forever we must do away with a system which bars people from citizenship because of their religion. Times have changed. The Jews must and should be emancipated without delay."

Costoforu finishes one of his speeches by saying: "Gentlemen, do not ask any conditions of the Jews. Place them on an equal footing with Roumanians. I assure you that you will never have cause to regret it."

Beautiful sentiments, beautiful words, undoubtedly sincere, yet even the spirit of 1848 could not and did not emancipate the Jews. True, their condition improved, some laws were passed giving them some rights, but it did not bring them what it should. The Jews still remained merely inhabitants of the country, subjects to be dealt with separately and apart.

As a result of the spirit of 1848, the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia united under one ruler and it is since then only that Roumania practically exists. Alexander Ioan Cuza was the first reigning Prince of the United Principalities. During his reign the Jews were treated mildly and were permitted to live in peace. In 1864, Prince Cuza, receiving a delegation of Jews, among many things said: "The Roumanian Jews will have

reason to congratulate themselves; gradually you will be emancipated. Wherever you have been I have loved you and I never have made nor shall make any difference between you and the others, because of your religion."

As the new constitution of the United Principalities was then being drafted, it was demanded of the Jews that they pay nearly one half million francs, about \$100,000, in order to insert therein an emancipation clause. Somehow, the money could not be raised so, when it was not forthcoming, a clause was inserted therein excluding from political rights all those who were not Christians.

With the ascension to the Roumanian throne of Carol of Hohenzollern in 1866, another dark age commences for the Roumanian Jews. Immediately after he had become the reigning Prince in June, 1866, the great synagogue of Bucharest was demolished and many uprisings against the Jews took place. A new draft of a constitution was being made and the Jewish question was again heatedly discussed. Many Roumanians favored their emancipation and the insertion of a plank or section providing that the Jews should become Roumanian citizens. The opponents of the plan stirred up several manifestations in various cities and infuriated mobs invaded the Jewish Ghettoes, and caused immense damage. Stores were robbed, Jews beaten, synagogues were devastated and the government made it appear as if it were yielding to popular sentiment in excluding the emancipation of the Jews, and the new constitution provided that none but Christians could become citizens. This clause afterward became famous under the designation of Article 7 of the Roumanian Constitution and was the subject of memorable debates at the Berlin Congress held in 1878.

John Bratianu, the liberal premier, was instrumental in bringing about the various outrages against the Jews and as a continuation of his devilish work, caused the state archives to be ransacked and searched, and with unequalled diligence unearthed and brought to light every old law, decree and ordinance which

affected or concerned the Jews, and with a harshness that has never been matched, issued orders right and left demanding of every official, their most stringent enforcement. It is impossible to describe the many untold miseries and annoyances to which the Jews were subjected as a result of this activity on the part of Bratianu. The Jews were ordered to leave the rural districts at very short notice and many remained penniless. Vested rights in property and other privileges were all taken away and at once they became the object of oppression and blackmail and for every little favor or every courtesy, they were forced to pay large sums of money. Outrages and crimes unmentionable were perpetrated against the Jews. Many were forced to leave the country by crossing the Danube, and, when Turkey refused them admission, they were actually thrown into the river and drowned. The inhuman and harsh treatment of the Jews in Roumania became a topic of the day, and the European governments, shocked at these outrages, remonstrated with Prince Carol. The Liberal party and Bratianu were dismissed from power and was succeeded by the Conservative party, with Rosetti at the head. The change of ministers, however, did not bring any relief to the Jews. They were still oppressed, still persecuted, and the laws against them continued to be enforced, but it was done under a cover of mildness and sugar coating.

In 1877, during the Russo-Turkish War, Roumania allied herself with Russia, and having materially helped to crush the Ottoman power at the termination of the war, declared her independence. In 1878, the Berlin Congress, undertaking to settle the Balkan question, and the powers of Europe, well remembering the position of the Jews in Roumania through the instrumentality of Lord Beaconsfield and Cremieux, stipulated as a condition to ratify the independence of Roumania in Article 44 of the treaty that the Jews of Roumania should receive full citizenship. In substance this article read: "In Roumania religious belief shall not constitute a bar to the enjoyment of civil and political

rights, admission to public office and honors and to the free exercise of trade, commerce and professions." Roumania, through its representatives, signed and accepted the treaty and its conditions and solemnly undertook to carry them out, and promised to amend Article 7 of the Constitution accordingly.

However, the good intentions of the European governments were foiled. Roumania has failed and still fails to keep the agreement then made. Roumania has by trickery made the solemn pledge given at Berlin ineffectual. To-day, Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty is a famous diplomatic "jest."

Needless to add that while the Treaty of Berlin article attempted to guarantee to the Roumanian Jews their emancipation, and was intended and designed to ameliorate their condition and to give them a fixed legal status and political rights, nothing was accomplished thereby. On the contrary, this article brought forth in Roumania a storm of protest against the Jews; they were bitterly accused of lack of patriotism and of using the Jewish moneyed influences against the country. Endless dissensions and bitter fights were started and a big question mark covered all Roumania, the question being, what should be done with the Jews? Everyone answered in his own way, and whichever way, it meant ruin and disaster for the Jews and their interests. Campaigns were started amongst the Roumanians to force the government to expel the Jews. Others tried to threaten the Jews into signing petitions, making them renounce their rights. Traitors to Jewish interests were found who declared that the Jews did not need nor care for emancipation. However, Roumania, to save her face before the European powers, emancipated the Jewish soldiers who had served in the war, numbering about 850, and amended the famous Article 7 of the Constitution, and provided that foreigners residing in Roumania under no alien protection might individually become naturalized by applying directly to Parliament, and Parliament was authorized to grant such naturalization only to such individuals as might prove satisfactory to it.

This amended Section 7 of the Roumanian Constitution, innocent as it may appear from its phraseology, is the most cruel piece of legislation that a parliament has ever enacted. With its adoption, the legal status of the Jews was immediately changed, and from Roumanian Jews who up to that time had been con-

sidered as Roumanian subjects, they became foreigners residing in Roumania, but not subject to any alien protection. Every Jew in Roumania became a foreigner and since then the legal status of the Jews of Roumania is one of the curiosities of modern political and social organization. Every Roumanian Jew, although born there, although his father and grandparents were born there, although he can count several generations of his family as Roumanians, pays taxes, is forced to perform military service, is and remains a foreigner not subject to any alien protection.

The Roumanian government was not satisfied with making the Jews foreigners but has since pursued a policy of treating and considering them as foreigners and has continually enacted laws specifically dealing with this newly created foreign element. A new cry was raised and is still being kept up that the country must guard itself against the foreigners, or as it is now phrased: "Roumania must belong to the Roumanians." Since the adoption of the amended Article 7 every law or act that passed through the Roumanian Parliament contained some reference to the foreigners and most of them were expressly and advisedly passed to affect the foreigners and hit directly at the Jew.

In every branch of the Roumanian Laws, constitutional, civil, military, commercial, sanitary, educational, industrial, religious, enacted since 1881, provisions were made affecting the Jews.

Jews cannot become citizens except by express act of Parliament and even then, none of the minor children of a naturalized Jew become citizens. Jews cannot hold state offices nor any office in any of the villages or cities. They are not permitted to reside in the rural districts nor live on farms, or own any, nor work on same. Jews are forbidden to own, operate or manage a pharmacy, or to be employed therein, unless there are already a certain number of Roumanian employees employed there. Jews cannot practice the profession of law nor act as secretaries to attorneys. They are enrolled as soldiers in the army and are compelled to serve three years, but they are not permitted to hold any military office, nor become officers, non-commissioned or commissioned. Public works cannot be awarded to Jews unless there are no Roumanian competitors, and if there are, the bid of the Roumanian contractor even though it be five per cent. higher than that of the Jew, must

be accepted. The majority of directors in private commercial or industrial companies must be Roumanians. Vessels sailing under the Roumanian colors must have two-thirds of its officers and crew Roumanians. Jews are not permitted to own, operate or manage distilleries. They are not permitted to act as custom brokers or importing agents unless some member of the firm is a Roumanian. Jewish merchants cannot become members of the Chamber of Commerce of the various districts. Jewish workingmen cannot become members of the trade guilds and unions. Factories owned and operated by Jews must employ at least one-third Roumanian help. Jewish children cannot go into the public schools unless there is room for them and in all cases upon the payment of an annual tax. The trade schools, as well as the high schools, state colleges and other institutions, accept Jews only in a small percentage upon payment of an annual tax. Jewish patients cannot be cared for in a Roumanian hospital if the room is needed for a Roumanian. The oath of a Jew is not binding unless it be in the form of More Judaico, one of the most insulting and degrading that can possibly be imagined. And so I could go on telling of the laws upon laws which were made to exclude the Jews from every possible chance of making a living, and from developing themselves intellectually or otherwise. One of the most diabolical laws is the Public Safety law, which enables the Minister of the Interior to expel any foreigner within 24 hours from the place where he is residing. This law is being used whenever occasion presents itself and when the government desires to get rid of Jews who dare to demand their rights or protest against any injustice. Dr. Moses Gaster, now Chief Rabbi of the Portuguese congregations of London, and Dr. Elias Schwartzfeld, now of the Alliance Israelite, were expelled from Roumania under this law.

All these laws were enacted gradually and as each came into force was a severe blow to Jewish welfare and safety. While ostensibly they are framed against foreigners and in their text have only reference to foreigners, they are rigorously applied to the Jews only, the Christian foreign element of the country rarely if ever being made to suffer thereby.

It is impossible to picture to you how the enactment of these various laws has affected the Jews and the conditions which they created. They were thrown out of old spheres and occupations and made to stand the graft, persecution, oppression,

and annoyance of every official from the lowest to the highest. The Roumanian Jews have felt and still feel as if the sword of Damocles was hanging over their heads, not knowing where it may fall, what fresh wound it may inflict, how many more tears and wails of despair it may bring.

In fact, the last thirty years have been, for the Jews in Roumania, full of bitterness and of a persecution that is the worst kind of torture imaginable. The situation to-day is such that the Roumanian legislators and politicians are at their wits' end, and it has made a Roumanian member of parliament say: "I think that we have every possible kind of legislation against the Jews. There remains only one thing for us to do, to drive them out of the country."

The growth of Anti-Semitism in Europe spread very rapidly to Roumania, especially among the higher classes. It is now reigning supreme in every nook and corner of the country. Ministers, high officials, judges, professors, the clergy, teachers, students, pupils in the public schools, every one in fact seems to be suffering from Anti-Semitism. It is preached to the masses in every possible way and several Anti-Semitic papers are published, one of them being the "Anti-Semitic League," the most virulent and biting. Everywhere and on every occasion this Anti-Semitism is flaunted in the face of the Jews. They are insulted in the streets, in their business, in their places of worship. Often they are attacked when passing through a Christian neighborhood. In short, this Anti-Semitic feeling has contributed more to making the life of the Jews unbearable than even the drastic legislation. Even Carmen Sylva, the Roumanian Queen, in an article which she wrote for the Century Magazine (1906) about the Jews in Roumania, refers to them only as foreigners and upbraids Europe for not minding its own business, asking that Roumania be left in peace to deal with her "foreigners" as she thinks best. I cannot give you a better illustration of the Anti-Semitic spirit reigning there than the following incident, which is true in every detail: A colonel in the Roumanian Army boarding a car desired a place to sit down. He looked around and then approached a bench on which an old man and a lady were seated. In not very courteous language he ordered them to get up. The old man remonstrated at this impertinent action and without much ado the colonel struck him in the face. The gentleman took out his card case

and handed the colonel a card stating that he would send his seconds later in the day. The colonel glanced at the card and to his dismay saw that the name was that of a Roumanian attorney, and stammering his excuses, began by saying: "I thought you were a Jew." The affair was patched up in some way, but imagine if the man had really been a Jew!

As a result of conditions, which made life almost unbearable, thousands of Jews left Roumania. From 1882 down to the present time, it is estimated that over 100,000 Jews have emigrated from Roumania. Their destination is every place upon the face of the earth: Europe, America, South Africa, Australia. The exodus of the Roumanian Jews can only find its equal in the other exodus of the Jews from Spain. I know of no sadder spectacle than when an emigrant party leaves. With all the harsh treatment that the Jew receives in Roumania, with all that is done to make him hate it, he still feels an intense sorrow on leaving the places of his childhood, his many relatives and friends, and the graves of his forefathers. The pain is more intense in the knowledge that those he leaves behind will still continue to suffer and that there are many dangers lurking around them. Who can tell in what city an uprising against the Jews may take place and how many of his dear ones may fall or suffer thereby.

The Jewish emigration dates from 1881, and it has continued since, increasing year after year, but in 1900 it reached its climax. That year is memorable in the annals of Jewish emigration. Europe was flooded with Roumanian Jews. From almost every Roumanian city emigrant groups numbering from 100 to 200 started together: men, women and children. They walked on foot for hundreds of miles, asking and receiving assistance so as to get to a haven of refuge. Every charitable organization of Europe and particularly the Alliance Israelite Universelle were doing their best to help these unfortunates, except the Roumanian Government. It was so glad to see them go that it prepared itself by issuing special passports marked good for exit only, expressly prohibiting Roumanian officials to accept them for re-entering the country.

Europe was again shocked to hear of the conditions in Roumania, but this time it did nothing, and has done nothing since. Only the United States, through the late Secretary of State John Hay, protested against these atrocities and called

upon the European Powers to see that the Berlin Treaty pledges were kept. Thus far nothing has been done, and the emigration of the Jews from Roumania still continues, though not in such large numbers.

The last census of 1899 showed that there were at that time 269,000 Jews in Roumania. It is estimated that from 1900 to date at least 65,000 Jews have emigrated, and that the actual Jewish population in Roumania at present must be between 223,000 and 250,000. Most of them live in the northern part of Roumania, particularly in the large cities, Jassy being the largest Jewish centre with about 33,000 Jews. In the southern part there are fewer. Bucharest only, the capital, has a Jewish population of about 32,000. Most of these Jews were born in Roumania and their families have lived there for generations.

The Roumanian Jews may be divided into three classes: the upper or rich class, the middle class, and the poor class.

The upper class is composed of the rich Jews. They are engaged in business and are the largest manufacturers and merchants as well as bankers in the country. They live as a rule in the large cities, in luxury and wealth. Some were naturalized in 1878, or have since obtained naturalizations for eminent services, such as developing the country in commerce or industry or through political influence. However, it may be noticed that not even one of the rich Roumanian Jews has at any time attained any public office or honor. Most of them have assimilated themselves and preach assimilation as the only salvation of the Jews, and have remained Jews in name because the Anti-Semites refuse to look upon them otherwise. Many have returned to the fold of Israel, have asserted themselves and are the real Jewish leaders, and take a very active interest in Jewish affairs. The houses of the Jewish rich lack a real Jewish atmosphere and sometimes the assimilation spirit makes them distinctly un-Jewish.

The young men and the young women of this class are very cultured, having studied at the foreign universities. They form a class by themselves, as they cannot mix with the gentiles and do not care to mingle with the lower classes of their own faith. They take little interest in Jewish affairs, but devote themselves sometimes to philanthropic work and help maintain some institutions where they try to carry out their ideas, acquired in foreign lands. Many amongst them are accomplished writers

and musicians as well as painters. They do their utmost to receive naturalization, but in most cases without effect, and many are connected with Jewish organizations which try to obtain rights for the Jews. They intermarry amongst themselves and very often with the wealthy Jews of Austria and Germany. Many rich Roumanian young men live in Europe, occupying influential positions as well as holding many assistant professorships and fellowships at European universities. The people of this class speak mostly Roumanian and French, and in some instances German is used in the home exclusively.

The middle class is composed of merchants, professionals, small manufacturers and agents. Their lives are wrapped up in a continuous economic struggle. Stores, shops, offices are open at all times from the early hours in the morning until eleven o'clock in the evening. Undivided attention is given to business. They live in fairly good houses and under fairly good conditions, largely depending upon their means. Usually they live together in one part of the cities and form the Ghettoes. Their homes are mostly religious, the tone as a rule being given by the wives. Yet there are very many who have severed their connection with every form or manifestation of Judaism. Most of them take an interest in one form or another of Jewish activities. One of their most prominent virtues is the *Gemilith Chesed*. Hundreds of thousands of francs are passed from hand to hand without interest or even promissory notes, just to help each other in need. In some cities co-operative banks have been formed to aid Jewish merchants and manufacturers, as it is difficult to deal with the Roumanian banks. The people of this class form the mainstay of the Jewish communities in Roumania, and freely contribute to its institutions. They also form most of the membership in the societies, lodges, and other organizations. When not engaged in business they spend their time with their families or in some public activity, or in the café.

The young men and young women of this class are usually educated and many are highly cultured. Almost all of them have attended some school, and very many at great sacrifice have attended the gymnasium and lyceum. The universities of Roumania are also mostly frequented by them to a great extent. They aid their parents in business or are engaged in business for themselves; only for the last few years are they willing to take up

various positions with merchants or in shops. Formerly to be in the employ of someone was not looked upon with favorable eyes and in some way reflected upon the financial standing of the parents. Happily, in a large measure especially in the larger cities, this narrow view has been done away with. The young element is very idealistic, and in their earlier phases go through almost every "ism" imaginable.

It is hard, indeed, to be poor anywhere, but the lot of the poor in Roumania is indeed the hardest one can ever meet. The poor people in Roumania are not old and feeble, but strong and healthy men and women. There are those who labor for a pittance, fourteen to sixteen hours a day, and those who cannot find any work at all. The supply of help far exceeds the demand and the rate of wages is very low. Most of them would gladly leave the country if they could get the necessary travelling expenses, and as they do not have them, they live under conditions which are pitiable. In the large or small cities, wherever they live, they live under very sordid and squalid conditions in the outskirts of the Ghettoes. The streets are narrow, dirty, unpaved, with marshes and pools of water here and there, from the last rain. The homes are small, dingy, ill-ventilated and over-crowded. Their despair makes many of them irreligious. All in all, though, they are a very orderly element, trying their utmost to better their conditions. The charitable and philanthropic organizations extend to them such help and assistance as is possible in each instance.

The young men and women of this class, having received some education in the Jewish schools, struggle bitterly to earn a livelihood in spite of the harsh laws which make it almost impossible, and their hope is that some day, in some way, they will be able to escape this tyranny and poverty by going out into the world.

Bitter is the lot of the children. They are ill-clad, ill-fed, pale, emaciated, very often the target of persecution of the Gentile children and of their own better situated little brothers. The Jewish private schools have proven to be a providential boon to them, for it is the only place where they can get an education, the Cheder in many instances supplies inadequately the need. The other Jews do their utmost to help these poor children in every way. In many instances, little children are trying to earn

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some kind of living by working in stores, and otherwise doing some odd little jobs that bring them in a few pennies. It goes to help their parents.

The lives of the middle classes and the poor are very much embittered by official and social persecution. Woe to the Jew, especially he who is not rich, who falls in the net of the Law. He is so insulted, so abused, so degraded, that words can hardly picture it, and deep in his heart he feels it, resents it, and often despairingly asks: "Whence will come my help?"

Naturally, a mass of more than a quarter of a million Jews living together have a certain community of interests and some communal organizations. The fact that they suffer makes them keep in close contact with one another and look out for the general needs which affect them individually and collectively. Communal organizations exist in thirty-two principal cities in Roumania, and, in nineteen cities, communal affairs are attended to by special organizations. Curious is the fact that in the largest Jewish centres of Bucharest and Jassy, the Jewish communities are not organized. The reason is that many personalities are being kept up and too much power and influence is sought by many who would make better followers than leaders. The income of all the Roumanian Jewish communities amounts to about 560,000 francs or about \$112,000 and is derived from a tax on meats and poultry, the rent of the bath houses, as well as bequests and legacies. The same is spent in salaries to the Rabbis, Schochetim, and other clerical help, and for the establishment and maintenance of hospitals, homes, and partly for schools. In fifty-two cities in Roumania, including the capitals of the district and every town of any importance, there are reported to be the following institutions: Ten hospitals, the principal one of which is found in the city of Jassy with 120 beds; seven homes for the aged and two for orphan children. Ninety-seven societies of mutual aid, burial and endowment; clothing for poor children, and other charitable and philanthropical institutions; forty educational and literary societies; forty-eight Zionist clubs. There is also in each city at least one Synagogue, and in the larger cities there are from three to ten Synagogues; in Jassy there are over one hundred and in Bucharest over fifty. There is the Choral Temple in Bucharest and a Temple in Galatz for the more reformed Jews. Each town has also its Chevra Kadisha and its cemetery,

a bath house, and a night lodging house. In the larger cities such as Bucharest, Jassy, Galatz, there are public kitchens in the style of the Volk's Kuche of Vienna.

One of the most effective activities of the Roumanian Jews is their private school system. When the Roumanian Public School laws were enacted in 1893 requiring that children of foreigners should not be received in the public schools unless there were room, and then only upon the payment of an annual tax, the Jewish communities were confronted by the difficult problem of providing educational facilities for the children. There was no other opportunity given them, they must either pay the taxes and wait until there would be room for the children, or let them grow up without any education. To the credit of the Roumanian Jews, they refused to yield to the inevitable and to accept either alternative, but with an energy and earnestness which is indeed commendable, they started out to work out their own salvation. Each community undertook to establish private schools, where besides Roumanian Hebrew, many other Jewish subjects were taken up. Public spirited Jews organized themselves into educational societies, many young men and young women collected moneys, and various funds were established for the organization and maintenance of these schools. They had a very hard struggle until the schools were properly organized. They did not have the right teachers at the beginning, nor did the directors know how to direct schools, but all these difficulties have now passed into history. The private Jewish schools are now models of such institutions. They are graded into four classes with a curriculum arranged by excellent pedagogues, and in many respects they are superior to the Roumanian public schools. In all of these schools Hebrew is being studied and in every one of them Jewish history and religion are given particular attention. In fact, these schools have been a blessing to the Jewish children, especially the poor children, and have implanted and are still implanting in them a healthy Jewish ideal which will prove to be of great use and benefit to the Roumanian Jews. In some cities where they cannot afford to maintain separate schools for boys and girls, the co-educational system prevails. They are trying, however, to keep them separate.

In speaking of the Jewish schools in Roumania, one ought not to forget to mention the aid and assistance these schools

have received from the ICA. With a keen realization of the great needs, the ICA has generously responded to this educational work and has greatly helped and assisted it with money and otherwise, through its able representative, Mr. I. Astruc. Leaders in this educational work were almost all prominent Roumanian Jews. There are at present seventy-five Jewish schools in Roumania, about thirty of which have their own buildings. There are also two Jewish high schools, a commercial school, and a trade school, "Ciocanul," in Bucarest, endowed through the generosity of the well-known philanthropist, Adolph Solomon.

The Roumanian government, thinking that it would deal a death blow to the Jews by enacting the school law, did not relish this activity on the part of the Jews providing themselves with schools at their own expense, for the Roumanian government did not and does not contribute one cent towards their maintenance, sought to hinder this work by legislation. At first it tried to introduce certain rules in their management, then interfered with the curriculum, afterwards placed them under the supervision of special officials, and finally compelled the Jewish communities to engage Roumanian Christian teachers and pay them salaries. There are now many Roumanian teachers in the Jewish schools living on salaries which the communities are compelled to pay them after the government fixed the price. In spite of it all the schools make good progress and are doing splendid work.

Most of the Roumanian Jews, and especially those living in the north, are orthodox, and are by origin Askenazim, but in the Muntenia, there are also several Spanish Jewish congregations which adhere to the Sephardic rite. The reform spirit has also penetrated Roumania and there are several reform congregations and some beautiful temples. The synagogues of the Roumanian Jews may be divided into the Great Synagogue in the principal cities, Beth-e-Midrashim and Klaus. Most of the buildings are owned by the communities or by the congregations. Some of the buildings are very imposing and costly, but many are very modest. In the Beth Hamidrash, many Jews are still found assiduously studying the Holy Scripts and the Talmud, and in very many of them valuable collections of Talmudical books are to be found. The Roumanian Jews are fond of hearing a good chazan, and flock to listen to one when he comes into their city. In fact, many of the celebrated chazanim of Russia and Galicia

make very profitable tours in Roumania, especially in the northern part.

Roumania claims the distinction of being the cradle of Chasidism, as it is said that Israel Bal Shem Tov, the founder of this sect, was born there. Authorities, however, dispute the claim. Nevertheless, the influence of Chasidism is still felt among the Roumanian Jews. Several Rabbis or Gute Yuden, as they are called, reside in Roumania and they have very many admirers, partisans and disciples who come to visit them at their palatial residences or courts at least once a year, bringing with them many gifts. The well known Rabbinical family, Friedman, has several branches there, the principal one residing in the village of Buhusi. There at all times of the year, visitors from all over Roumania, especially women, are found, each having come with the special object of seeing the Rabbi, to ask for advice or relief in their many troubles. Many will save on necessities to be able to go to the Rabbi. Several others reside in Podul Iloiei, Stefanesti and various other places. The life at the residences of the Rabbi is Chasidic in every respect and the adherents of the Rabbi carry it in their own households.

To the Jewish world, the Roumanian Jews have given some valuable contributions. In the first instance, the Jewish Theatre. Roumania is its birth place, and there were performed the first plays written by the late Abraham Goldfaden and Prof. Hurwitz. Almost all the prominent Jewish actors, the genial Mogulescu, Mme. Kalish, Mme. Lobel, the late Mrs. Karp, the distinguished German tragedians, Maurice Morrison and Rudolf Schildkraut, made their initial attempts at some theatre in Roumania or are of Roumanian Jewish origin. The Roumanian Jews are very fond of the theatre and many of the American Jewish stars pay them yearly visits and play to crowded houses. They have also given to the Jewish world some great men, among whom stands out pre-eminently Prof. Solomon Schechter, President of the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, one of the most distinguished Hebrew scholars of the day. Prof. Schechter is a native of Roumania, and spent his early days there and acquired his first Hebrew learning in his native city. Dr. Moses Gaster, Chief Rabbi of the Portuguese Congregation of London, is also a Roumanian Jew. Dr. K. Lippe of Jassy, a famous Zionist; the late Dr. Julius Barasch, Dr. Elias Schwartzfeld, the Sec-

retary of the Alliance Israelite Universelle of Paris, and many others, each rendered eminent services to Judaism in general.

The earliest Roumanian school books were written by Jews, the late Dr. Julius Barasch and Schwartz. The most approved grammar of the Roumanian language was written by a Jew, H. Tiktin. A dictionary of the language was compiled by Lazar Shaineanu, also a Jew. Roumanian folk-lore literature is indebted for its collection to Dr. M. Gaster. The masterpiece of Roumanian poetry, the poem "Radu," was written by the Jew, Ronetti Roman. Other distinguished Roumanian poets are: Dr. A. Steurman, A. Vereá, Axelrod, Cruceanu, Giordanu, Carp. The best play written in the Roumanian language, "Mannase," was also written by the late Ronetti Roman. The best of Roumanian journalists, art critics and feuilletonists, Branisteanu, Fagure and Ghelerter are also Jews, as are the editors of the powerful French organ, "L'Independence Roumaine." The greatest literary critic, Gherea, is also a Jew. In painting, several Jews have distinguished themselves, Mr. Mitzner, the foremost impressionist Roumanian painter, being a Jew. In music, the leading men are Jews, such as the well-known violinist, Mr. Cohn Lenaru, and the famous tenor, Mr. Nadolovici. In medicine, many Jews have distinguished themselves and become famous the world over, such as the late Dr. Tausig, Dr. Lippe, Dr. Rosenthal, Dr. Burstin.

In Roumanian industries and commerce the Jews have the lead and the foremost merchants and manufacturers are Jews. In fact, the first factories were opened by Jews and Jewish capital.

The publishers of Roumanian literature who have largely aided and encouraged its development are Jews, amongst whom may be mentioned Goldner, Saraga, Alcalay, Samitca and others. Without them I doubt if there would be any literature at all, for very few Roumanians are printers.

Even in the law profession, in which there are very few Jews, as the law practitioner must have obtained his naturalization first, almost everyone of them are recognized leaders at the bar. Dr. Adolph Stern, of Bucharest, a Jewish attorney, has the honor of being Counsel to the United States Embassy and to the Embassy of Great Britain, Dr. Rosenthal and Dr. Goldenthal are among the foremost members of the Bar.

It is interesting to note that only recently the best exposition of the law on mortgages in Roumania was written by Mr.

Birnberg, a Jew, and one of the principal Roumanian papers reviewing the book pronounced it to be the best of its kind and yet never mentioned the name of the author because he was a Jew.

One of the prizes of the Roumanian Academy on a certain legal work was also recently awarded to a distinguished jurist, Mr. I. Finklestein, and there is great doubt whether he would have received it had not the names of the authors in the competition been identified through numbers and the real names withheld until after the award of the prizes. What is indeed sad is that both of these distinguished and learned jurists cannot practice law because they are Jews, although they were born and educated there and have their degrees from the University of Bucharest.

There is a distinct Roumanian Jewish literature. Dr. Barash, J. B. Brociner, Morris Schwartzfeld, the late Psanter, have written the history of the Roumanian Jews and have made extensive researches therein. The late Benjamin and Wilhelm Schwartzfeld have written some valuable contributions to Hebrew Philology. Dr. K. Lippe has written extensively on Talmudical subjects. Jewish fiction has been written by Dr. Elias Schwartzfeld, A. D. Rosen and the Jewish military life has been eloquently depicted by S. Janovici, under the name of Tributo.

Morris Schwartzfeld has issued for the last twenty years a weekly Roumanian Jewish paper, "*Egalitatea*," a very valuable publication. Jacques Schwartz is also issuing a weekly paper, "*Vocea Dreptatei*" to which the veteran and able writer, J. B. Brociner is a very frequent contributor; *Cronica Israelita* is also a well-known weekly paper. The Hatikwah Literary Society is issuing a splendid translation of foreign Jewish literature. Many Roumanian Jews are frequently contributors to the Hebrew press and M. Braunstein, Mebaschan, is well known for his able and erudite essays and disquisitions.

Among the prominent religious leaders of Roumanian Jews, Dr. Beck, Rabbi of Bucharest; Dr. Niemerower, Rabbi of Jassy, and Dr. Nacht of Fochsani, are the most prominent and exert a powerful influence over the Jews and enjoy the esteem and respect of everyone, even of the Roumanians.

It would be strange, indeed, if the Roumanian Jews would not have among over five and one-half million Roumanians, some friends and that there would not be some Roumanians who had learned to know the Jews and sympathize with them and would

like to see them emancipated. At all times and even to-day there are such Roumanians and it is only regrettable that there are not more. The late Cogalniceanu and George Panu may be mentioned among the foremost friends of the Jews. Many Roumanians dare not come out openly in favor of them, as the Anti-Semitic clique will bitterly assail them, accusing them of having sold themselves to the Jews. Nevertheless, now and then many prominent Roumanians say a kind word about the Jews and wish that their position would once for all be alleviated. Messrs. P. Carp, Vasile M. Cogalniceanu, Diamandy, Constantinescu and the able editor of the daily paper "*Adeverul*," Mr. Constantin Mille, and several others are now and then agitating the Jewish question and do their utmost to bring it to a solution, but so far they have met with much opposition and little success.

Such is the condition of the Jews in Roumania. I have tried to give a faithful picture of their life and activities. I should consider my work in vain if I had been unable to awaken in your hearts a feeling of sympathy for this quarter of a million people, and to induce you to be ready and willing to help these unfortunates whenever you may be called upon to do so. I hope that I have accomplished both.

What has become of the thousands of Roumanian Jews who came to these shores? I shall attempt to explain briefly.

While we find Roumanian Jews immigrating to this country as early as 1840, the real immigration began after their hopes had been shattered by the Roumanian Government when it refused to carry out the terms of Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty, and when Article 7 of the Roumanian Constitution was adopted. From 1878 to 1882 there was a continuous and increasing immigration of Roumanian Jews. And since then, every act of oppression, every devastation, every massacre, every unfriendly manifestation made our people leave the places where they were made to suffer and seek refuge under the stars and stripes. In fact, the condition of the Jews in Roumania can be easily ascertained by looking over the immigration records. Increasing immigration shows positively that they were persecuted and otherwise driven out. The years 1900, 1901 and 1903 were record breaking years. During that period it is estimated that over 30,000 Roumanian Jews came to the United States. The earlier immigrants went to the West and the South, but the later remained in New York,

mostly on account of family connections.

At the beginning when they were few they became easily absorbed by the other Jewish population, but as their numbers increased a distinctive Jewish Roumanian life began to be formed and organized. They congregated into one part of the city, where there is now a very large colony. Then they introduced into the colony cafes, wine cellars, oriental restaurants—replicas of the places they had at home. They also organized themselves into mutual aid societies, then adapted themselves to the fraternal order system prevailing here, and formed and joined numerous lodges. One of the distinctive features of these lodges and societies is that they are named after the city and town of Roumania from which the members, or most of them, came. To-day almost every Roumanian city is represented by one or two organizations bearing its name. One of the first organizations of the Roumanian Jews was a congregation, which is even now in existence and is about twenty-seven years old. When they realized that they were citizens of this great country, which was a unique and pleasant sensation for them, they organized political clubs. At first most of them were Republicans, but now the Eighth Assembly District, in which the Roumanian colony is situated, is a strong Democratic district. There are still, however, many Republicans amongst them.

The Roumanian colony, through the numberless societies and lodges as well as congregations, is identified with Jewish affairs of the city and contributes to the many philanthropical and charitable institutions. Each organization tries its utmost to help a distressed member. The Roumanian Hebrew Aid Association, one of the oldest charity organizations in the colony, besides helping many needy Roumanians freely, extends a helping hand to every one who applies to it. It has done very much to alleviate misery in times of distress, and is one of the best institutions of its kind.

The pride of the colony is the First Roumanian American Congregation Shaarei Shumaim, with its beautiful and imposing building at No. 91 Rivington street, New York. The influence of the congregation is very strong. Besides providing the colony with a place of worship, it maintains a Talmud Thora, the Lucas religious classes, several auxiliaries who provide clothes for poor children, a mutual aid system, and a cemetery. It has succeeded

in gaining a very large membership and in occupying a very prominent place.

In the course of years, as the interests of the Roumanian Jews have become more varied and more extensive, a need was felt for a central organization to deal with these. About three years ago, prominent Roumanian Jews discussed the advisability of organizing a federation of the Roumanian Jews, but nothing came of it. Nevertheless, as the need for it was pressing and the Erste Romaner Kranken und Unterstuezungs Verein issued an appeal to the Roumanian societies to organize, the result of which was that on March 8, 1908, the "FEDERATION OF THE ROUMANIAN JEWS OF AMERICA" was formed. It is at present composed of over fifty branches in New York, with branches in Pittsburg, Detroit and Cleveland. Efforts are being made to establish branches in Chicago and other western cities.

The Federation has undertaken the work of identifying the Roumanian Jews with every Jewish activity in the city of New York, and of making them an influential and valuable element in Jewish affairs and Judaism in general. For some time it published a monthly magazine known as *Der Yiddischer Geist*. One of its distinctive aims is to aid the Jews in Roumania, and to use its influence to bring about a solution of the Jewish question there. The Federation is determined to bring the condition of the Roumanian Jews before the powers of Europe and to interest our State Department, so that Roumania may be compelled to emancipate her Jews. Thus far we have met with success and encouragement everywhere and our efforts promise to be of great value to them and to the Roumanian Jews here.

In the city of New York there are about 60,000 Roumanian Jews, and throughout the United States about 35,000 more.

The social and economic condition of the Roumanian Jewish immigrant is far better here than in Roumania. When they land here and for some time afterwards, they lead the hard life of every immigrant, later, as their conditions improve, they live well and comfortably. There are in New York, as well as throughout the United States, many Roumanian Jewish bankers, merchants, manufacturers, lawyers, physicians, dentists, pharmacists, engineers and followers of many other professions and callings. Most of them, however, are working at the various trades, trying their utmost at one time or another to become business men,

although the younger element prefer to become professional men.

The social life of the Roumanian Jews in the city or elsewhere does not differ from that of the other Jewish population. In this respect they have become cosmopolitan and readily mingle with their neighbors, no matter what their nationality is.

There are many other Roumanian Jewish communities in the United States. Next of importance to New York, is that of Philadelphia, numbering about 15,000. They are also organized in the same way as those of New York, having a Federation, societies, lodges and congregations, and several charitable institutions.

In Chicago, Pittsburg, St. Louis, Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, San Francisco and in many cities in the South there are colonies of Roumanian Jews, some of which I have had the pleasure of visiting in connection with my work for the Federation. Their condition is good, both financially and socially. Wherever they are, they are thriving successfully in business and at trades, live comfortably, are affiliated with the activities of the place, and are generally esteemed and respected, and form a very valuable element in the community.

In the West and in the South, the Roumanian Jews readily lose themselves in the other Jewish population and do not differ in any manner from them, nor do they have any of the institutions peculiar to the Roumanian Jew. The next generation of the Roumanian Jews in the United States will be part of the American Jewry that is now developing here and will, I hope, add only credit to it.