

STUDII DE ATELIER. CERCETAREA MINORITĂȚILOR NAȚIONALE DIN ROMÂNIA
WORKING PAPERS IN ROMANIAN MINORITY STUDIES
MŰHELYTANULMÁNYOK A ROMÁNIAI KISEBBSÉGEKRŐL

Nr. 17

Gidó Attila

ON TRANSYLVANIAN JEWS

An Outline of a Common History



INSTITUTUL PENTRU
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Abstract

■ Many and from many angles have discussed the history of the Transylvanian Jewry. Yet the matter has not lost its topicality, and the possibilities of interpretation continue to be there.

The paper deals with the history of the Transylvanian Jews as a history of integration, and creates a synthesis of the body of knowledge gathered until the present day in the light of that point of view, as a function of identity/ies and loyalty/ies. It covers a large time frame from the first Jews settled in the Transylvanian territory to the present-day situation. The author describes and analyses the most important events like the 1623 Edict of Prince Gabriel Bethlen (1613–1629), or the issue of the assimilation in the 19th century. The paper deals with the modern anti-Semitism, Holocaust, identity problems and with the Zionism as well.

The paper makes an attempt to create a synthesis that can provide orientation in the matter for a larger audience, with only a sporadic knowledge about Transylvanian Jewry, as well as for the professionals of the field.

■ Mulți și din foarte multe puncte de vedere au încercat să prezinte unele aspecte din istoria evreilor din Transilvania. Totuși, tema respectivă n-a pierdut din actualitate, iar noi interpretări pot aduce noutăți. Lucrarea de față privește istoria evreilor din Transilvania ca o istorie de integrare și se vrea doar o trecere în revistă și pe alocuri o completare a informațiilor deja știute. Noutatea sa constă în prezentarea istoriei evreilor în lumina identităților și loialităților. Prima parte a lucrării relatează etapele stabilirii evreilor pe teritoriul Principatului Transilvaniei (Edictul lui Gabriel Bethlen din 1623). Prezintă problemele legate de reglementarea situației juridice a evreilor și procesul lor de asimilare în populația maghiară. Sunt consacrate capitole separate antisemitismului modern, Holocaustului, dar și mișcării naționale evreiești din Transilvania.

Studiul este o sinteză pregătită atât pentru publicul mai larg interesat de istoria evreilor din Transilvania, cât și pentru cercetătorii din domeniu.



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ON TRANSYLVANIAN JEWS

An Outline of a Common History

■ The history of Transylvanian Jewry has been discussed from many angles. In spite of this the issue did not lose its topicality, leaving room for new interpretations. The reason why the focus of my paper can still be justified is threefold: 1. First and foremost it perceives the history of the Transylvanian Jews as a history of integration from the perspective of identity/ies and loyalty/ies, synthesizing of the body of knowledge that had been gathered in the light of this perspective. 2. It brings to the forefront especially the present-day situation of the Transylvanian Jews. 3. It tries to create a synthesis providing orientation for a larger audience with only a sporadic knowledge about Transylvanian Jewry, rather than exclusively addressing the professionals of the field. It does not aim at completeness as that would not even be possible at this length. Through the referred literature of the paper the readers can gather more thorough information regarding details.

Which are the historiographic antecedents on which the present historical outline is built, in addition to my own research? The most complete, comprehensive work in the Hungarian language, the one that maps the most important moments of the history of the Transylvanian Jewry from the age of Prince Gabriel Bethlen until 1944, was written by the former Neologue Chief Rabbi of Cluj / Kolozsvár, Mózes Weinberger, presently known as Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995). Before Moshe Carmilly, Imre Szabó, a Jewish publicist had written a volume in 1938, entitled *The Jews of Transylvania* (Szabó 1938). The works dealing with the past of Transylvanian Jewry written by the Zionist Ernő Marton and Mátyás Eisler, the predecessor of rabbi Weinberger can also be considered standard scholarly achievements of the field (Marton 1941; Eisler 1901). In 2000 a collection of essays written by Mihály Sebestyén appeared in Târgu Mureş (Sebestyén 2000). The volume generally followed the time frame of Moshe Carmilly's book, presenting a few chapters from the past of the Transylvanian Jews. More recently an excellent analysis written by Zoltán Tibori Szabó was published on the times following the Holocaust and the evolutions of the identity of Transylvanian Jewry (Tibori Szabó 2007).

In 2008 appeared the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in North-Transylvania* in Hungarian language. The *Encyclopedia* includes all the North-Transylvanian localities with Jewish population and relates the History of these communities and their fate in the time of Holocaust (Braham 2008).

Several very important books written in Romanian, English and Hebrew were also published on the topic, occasionally these being translations of the works of the same authors. The names of Moshe Carmilly and Ladislau Gyémánt must be mentioned here. The latter dealt with the history of Transylvanian Jews in two bilingual, Romanian/English volumes. In his work published in 2000 he examined the age of emancipation, while in his latest volume he extends his analyses from the times when Jews settled in until our days (Gyémánt 2000, 2004).

Victor Neumann, a historian working in Timișoara collected the data referring to the history of Jews in the Banat region in a separate volume (Neumann 1996). The book of Maria Radosav on Hebrew and Yiddish language literature and book printing, dealing with a scarcely known topic of Transylvanian Jewry, was also published in Romanian (Radosav 2007). Romanian translations of selections from the writings of Ernő Marton, Mátyás Eisler and Jakab Singer are also available in matters of Hungarian Jewish culture (Benjamin 2002: 353–362, 393–409, and 535–537). Among the authors publishing in Hebrew, in addition to Moshe Carmilly, Abraham Zvi Jacob, Yosef Yitzhok Cohen and Yitzhok Perri wrote summaries about the Transylvanian Jews (Zvi 1951; Cohen 1989; Perri 1994, 1995).



There is an increasing number of source publications available for researchers on the topic. In matter of Hungarian publications the volumes of the *Hungarian-Jewish Archives* and the *Transylvanian Parliamentary Memories*, or the Hebrew source collections edited by Shlomo Spitzer and Géza Komoróczy have to be mentioned (Spitzer–Komoróczy 2003). The volume entitled *Izvoare și mărturii referitoare la evreii din România* published in Romanian that is available already in several volumes, promises to be a monumental undertaking. It started in 1986, and at the time the fourth volume dealing with the period between 1849 and 1867 is being prepared.

All major, but even the smaller Transylvanian Jewish communities have memorial volumes, most of which can be included into the series of Yizchor-literature (Yizchor = remembrance) that have been compiled after the Holocaust. Their scientific value changes on a case-by-case basis, yet they constitute an important part of our historiography (On community stories see: Féder 2004; Gyurgyák 2001: 626–627; Katzburg 1999: 201–225, Braham 2008).

From Sporadic Presence to Fulfillment

The First Jews

Several stages of settlement must be differentiated when talking about the formation of the Transylvanian Jewish community. According to sources Israelites had appeared here as early as the antiquity, yet the formation of a permanent community can only be dated to the time of the Principality, i.e. beginning with the 17th century. Therefore it is not possible to speak about a continuous Transylvanian Jewish history. Archaeological excavations provide evidence that Jewish soldiers of Palestinian origin came to and were garrisoned in Dacia together with the Roman legions. After the withdrawal of the Romans nothing is known about Jews, yet in the Árpáadian period they appear more and more frequently in the Western and Northern part of Hungary, also including Transylvanian territories at that time.¹

Rabbinic sources from Mainz and Speyer in the 11th and 12th centuries mention Jews mediating trade between German towns and Hungary. Like in other parts of Europe the first groups were interested in trade, or were employees or tenants of mint workshops (Gyémánt 2004: 152; Újvári 1929: 586). The Hungarian Kings Ladislaus I (1077–1095), Koloman (1095–1116) and Andrew II (1205–1235) restricted the rights of Jews living in the country. In the 13th century the first Jewish communities were formed and the Jewish population was consolidated. Following the Tatar invasion in 1251, aiming to reconstruct the economy, King Béla IV (1235–1270) issued a charter by which he placed the Ashkenazi Jews – that first came from Austrian and German territories – under direct royal protection, guaranteeing their personal freedom and the security of their property.² In addition to regularizing their legal status, they were granted the freedom to travel all over the country, to acquire property, and to practice their religion freely. Israelites belonged to the direct authority of the King. A Jewish judge of Christian origin was as-

1 Transylvania is a region of Romania, situated in the central part of the country. The territory includes three historical regions: Banat, Partium (Crișana and Maramureș) and historical Transylvania. Till the 16th century these territories belonged to the Eastern part of the Hungarian Kingdom. After the Battle of Mohács (1526) when the Turks defeated the Hungarian Army Hungary was divided between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empire. Transylvania became an autonomous principality with Ottoman sovereignty. The Principality's rulers were Hungarian Princes. At the end of the 17th century the Ottoman Empire had lost the influence on Transylvania and the region was officially attached to Habsburg-controlled Hungary. In the Habsburg era Transylvania was ruled by the Habsburg emperor's governors. From 1765 Transylvania had Grand Principality status under the rule of the Habsburgs. In 1867 the territory became part of Hungary again. Therefore till the end of WWI Transylvania was a region of the Hungarian Kingdom. In 1918–1919 the Transylvanian territories were annexed to the Romanian administration. On December 1, 1918 the Romanian population of the region proclaimed the unification of the lands with Romania. In 1920 the Treaty of Trianon reinforced the Union and the Transylvanian territories remained under Romanian rule till 1940. At this year the Second Viennese Resolution decided to give back the Northern part of the territory to Hungary. After WWII all the Transylvanian territories were left to Romania.

2 Ashkenazi Jews are considered to be the Jews from Germany and the Eastern Jewish community originating from there. On their history see: Baumgarten 2003.

signed to their internal disputes. He also fulfilled a mission of mediation between the community and the state power (Gonda 1992: 17; Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 18–19).

With the coming to the throne of the Angevin dynasty the situation of Jews changed radically. King Charles I (1308–1342) deprived them of one of their most important sources of income, i.e. the benefits deriving from occasional exchange of money. Around 1360 Louis I of Hungary (1342–1382) confiscated the properties of Israelites, cancelled the interests of the liabilities towards them and expelled them from the territory of the kingdom. On the other hand due to economic reasons in 1364 he allowed them to return, reinforcing their privileges. Following an European example, Louis I introduced a national Jewish administration, led by a *Judex Judeorum*, a high office-holder of the Royal Court. The first evidence referring to this function comes from 1371, while the last from 1440. The office of the *Judex Judeorum* was replaced in the era of King Matthias I (1458–1490) by the *Praefectus Judeorum*, which also meant that – in contrast with the European practice of the time – the major leader appointed to lead the Jewish administration was not Christian any more, but a Jewish person (members of the Mendel family were in office until Buda was conquered by the Turks) (Patai 1996: 62, and 88–90; Gyémánt 2004: 153).

Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1437) and King Matthias I reinforced the privileges several times, yet they were also the ones to systematize the financial exploitation of Jews. Both of them often cancelled the interests of the debts to the Jews by exercising royal grace, thus causing huge losses for the creditors. Following papal practice King Matthias I, levied taxes on the Jews on special occasions. Such a case was the coronation tax, or the king's ceremonious marching tax. The duality of the king's policy is illustrated by the fact that by accepting christening several Jews could build a political career. For instance, János Ernuszt was appointed treasurer in 1467, and became a Slavonian viceroy in 1473. Furthermore his name is linked with the implementation of the 1467 financial reform (Engel–Kristó–Kubinyi 1998: 238–239). Later Imre Szerencsés (Emericus Fortunatus) had a similar career: he appeared around 1510 at the Royal Court as money-lender. He was lending money also to the inhabitants of Cluj / Kolozsvár. (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 24).

Following the death of King Matthias the situation of Jews started to gradually deteriorate in spite of the fact that the earlier privileges were renewed. Nay, they often had to pay special taxes, and violent acts against them also became more and more frequent. The anti-Semitism of this period was of different incentive than the anti-Semitism of the 20th century. The anti-Jewish manifestations of the Middle Ages were nourished mostly by religious preconceptions and the Jews were considered “foreign bodies” in the feudal Christian societies, and thus the ecclesiastical and the lay legislature acted against them. Often, the segregated Jewish population persuaded occupations that were not practiced or were banned for the Christians. Thus many Jews were driven towards mercantile activities or finances. In the modern era, accordingly, the economic and later the political anti-Semitism built on the former religious anti-Semitism.

The history of medieval Jewry in Hungary ended with the Mohács defeat (1526), and with the seizure of Buda by the Turks. Suleiman I the Magnificent loaded the Jews of Buda on ships in 1541 and shipped them to Turkey. The Jews returning during the Ottoman rule laid the foundations of a different community.

Jewish Subjects of the Transylvanian Principality

The medieval Hungarian Kingdom that had also included the Transylvanian territories suffered a disastrous defeat in 1526 from the Turkish army. The Turks gradually conquered the Southern and middle parts of Hungary, and until 1541 they also occupied the capital city of Buda. The kingdom was split into three parts. Western and Northern territories went under the domination of the Habsburgs, the major part of the areas dominated by the Turks were occupied by the Ottoman Empire until the end of the 17th century, whilst the Eastern parts were organised as a separate state named the Principality of Transylvania.

Until the disaster of Mohács one could only scarcely find Jews on the territory of Transylvania. It is known that in the 13th century they took part in the salt trade along the Mures / Maros River, and in the following centuries Jewish names occur in connection with loans and forfeit affairs. Between the 14th and 16th century the sources already speak of Israelites that had been settled down in various towns of Transylvania for a longer time. In 1357, during a trial in Sibiu between the dwellers of Cisnădie and Cisnădioara, a certain Petrus Judaeus, heard as a witness is mentioned, but later on Jewish names also appear in connection with other legal matters in Sibiu, Braşov and Alba Iulia. In many cases merchan-

dise from the Ottoman Empire reach Transylvania through Jewish traders, while in the end of the 16th century they also appear in local markets, alongside with Greeks, Serbs and Armenians, that arrived following the Turks. Because of the large number of Israelites taking part in the market of Cluj in 1578, the Diet of Transylvania adopted restrictive measures, and in 1593 levied a head-money of 20 dinars on them (Gyémánt 2004: 155; Kovács 1998: 144; Gonda 1992: 28).

Following the short Transylvanian reign of the Romanian Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave, 1599–1600) several Jewish doctors turned up at the Court of the Princes.³ In addition to that they continued to trade among the Ottoman Court, nearby states and other Central European territories with salt, iron, and mercury. At the end of the century Samuel Oppenheimer, an important figure of Austrian economy got monopoly over salt trade in the Principality, and many others engaged in crediting activities or the management of treasury revenues (Gyémánt 2004: 158).

The foundation of the legal status of the Jews living in the Principality of Transylvania was laid by the 1623 Edict of Prince Gabriel Bethlen (1613–1629), which also created the legal framework for the settlement of Israelites in Alba Iulia. The charter issued in Cluj was a result of the initiative of Abraham Sarsa, who had earlier been in the service of Caspar Gratiani, the Prince of Moldova (1619–1620). At the time of the charter he acted as the court physician of Gabriel Bethlen. The document ensured free stay (in enclosed areas), freedom of worship and trade for the Jews, and determined the amount of their due taxes depending on the amount paid at the places of their earlier dwelling, also letting them to wear Christian clothing. The edict authorized a nobleman familiar with matters of the law to settle the legal disputes. He was the one to mediate between Jews and the Prince, too. Sources from the end of the 17th century prove the existence of a separate Jewish judge in Alba Iulia (Kovács 1998: 7).

Most of them settled down in Alba Iulia, mainly being interested in importing luxury articles from Constantinople. The immigration of Jews to Transylvania started essentially as a result of the charter sometime around 1625. Obviously this meant the arrival of a few families only. Most of them were so-called Spanish (Sephardic) Jews, while later, following the age of the Turkish wars, the newcomers to the region largely belonged to the Ashkenazi group.⁴ In the 17th century we find sporadic Jewish communities also in Timișoara, Urișor, Gherla, Sighișoara, Mediaș, Baia Mare, Cincu, Bistrița, Iernut, Sibiu, Cluj, Turda, Târgu Mureș. Yet effective, larger-scale immigration only started in the 18th century (Sebestyén 2000: 30–43; Imreh 1999: 86; Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 34–37).

The fact that in spite of the privileges no larger-scale immigration occurred, and the number of Transylvanian Jews continued to remain relatively low for a long following period, was due mainly to the Central European political and economic conditions of the time. Transylvania was far from the main trade-routes of Europe, and no larger mass migration of European Jews took place in Gabriel Bethlen's time. The wave of migration resulting from the expelling of the Spanish Jews had already faded by then, while the masses of Jews from Poland came only in the second half of the 17th century (Marton 1941: 39).

The rights of the Jews were curtailed following the death of Prince Gabriel Bethlen (1629). The Diet of 1650 made the wearing of Jewish clothing compulsory again. The *Approbatæ Constitutiones* issued by George Rákóczi II (1648–1660) restricted the right of Jews to settle down. According to the law-book, the Jewish community in Alba Iulia became the only recognised Jewish parish in Transylvania, and the rabbi of the community became the Transylvanian Chief Rabbi. At the same time, the community was placed under the authority and protection of the Roman Catholic Episcopacy. The law-book remained effective until 1848 (Gyémánt 2004: 156). From the second half of the 17th century restrictions over Israelite merchants became more and more frequent within the framework of an increasingly stronger economic competition. Products allowed to be brought in by the Jews were restricted; merchandise and goods were occasionally confiscated. In 1691 the County of Maramureș ordered the expulsion of Jews within 15 days, and a few years later Transylvanian diets forbade the Jews, Armenians, Serbians or other foreigners the distillation and selling of brandy. Prince Michael Apafi (1661–1690), at the request

3 Mihai Viteazul / Michael the Brave (1558–1601) was the Prince of Wallachia between 1593 and 1601. For a short time he ruled Transylvania (1599–1600) and Moldavia (1600) as well.

4 Sephardic Jews are the ones that originate from the territory of medieval Spain. As a consequence of the persecution of Jews in Spain that started in 1492, they settled down mainly on the territories held by the Turks (Northern Africa, South-Eastern Europe, Asia Minor). On their history see: Benbassa–Rodrigue 2003.

of Jews complaining of their worsening situation, renewed their earlier privileges several times, and guaranteed their physical and financial security (*ibidem*: 157).

We know relatively little about the internal self-organisation of the Jewry of this period. Most sources refer to their relations with the authorities, the court of the principality, as well as to the social role they fulfilled. We know from Rabbinic sources that a Jewish religious “court of justice” dealing with internal community affairs was to be found in Alba Iulia as early as 1591. Conrad Jacob Hiltbrandt, a Swedish traveler at the midst of the 17th century mentions a synagogue in the seat of the Prince (Alba Iulia), while a 1657 document alludes to a *Jewish street* (*ibidem*: 155, and 160).

Judaizers in Transylvania

In addition to the consolidation of Jewish presence, the 16th century also brought the appearance of Sabbatarianism (Şomrei Sabbat), a new religious movement emerging after the Reformation, as well as the development of a very significant Hebrew language culture and book printing (on the development of Hebrew language culture see: Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 51–54, and 191–202). The history of Sabbatarianism is not a Jewish story, yet it is closely linked to the latter, as it came about along a spiritual-religious trend that showed a new side of Hungarian-Jewish symbiosis. The Hungarian writer Zsigmond Kemény wrote a novel about its followers, while at the end of the 19th century, the Rabbi of Budapest, Samuel Kohn called the attention to them (Kemény 1858; Kohn 1889). Writers like Zsigmond Móricz and György Böződi wrote about the Sabbatarians (Móricz 1941; Böződi 1935), and in the second half of the 20th century Róbert Dán, László Németh, and literary historians Antal Pirnát and Mihály Balázs dealt with the issue. Recently Géza Szávai and the writings of the journalist András Kovács brought them to the forefront (Szávai 2000; Kovács 1981, 1999). Sabbatarianism is a peculiar dash of colour in Transylvanian history of religion. Its followers have been called over the centuries Sabbatarians, Sekler Jews and Judaizers. Few know about them, and there are even less who do not mistakenly identify the members of this religious community with the 7th Day Adventists at first glance.

Transylvanian Reformation did not end with the wide spreading of the doctrines of Giorgio Blandrata and Ferenc Dávid. At the end of the 16th century, similarly to earlier Judaizing movements in England, Bohemia and Poland, a theological idea more radical than any of the preceding ones was born. Sabbatarianism, the new tendency, grew out directly of Unitarian theology. It started with Matthias Vehe-Glirius, a theologian from Pfalz, highly persecuted for his radical views. His teachings were taken over and mixed with Unitarian theses by a rich Sekler nobleman, András Eőssi, who has for long been mistakenly considered to be the source of Sabbatarian ideology.

The new religion appeared in the 1580s, when the religious map of Transylvania finally seemed to finally become stable. New Protestant denominations succeeded to find their places both in the social and political life of the Principality. Yet within the Unitarian church a sharp conflict took place between those with a radical thinking and the conservative wing desiring the consolidation of the church. Innovators continued to develop the teachings of Ferenc Dávid who had been arrested in 1578. As a result, the domains of some Sekler barons (Gerendi, Kornis) became the refuge for ultraradical ideas and Sabbatarianism. Hence the first Transylvanian Sabbatarians emerged from circles of radical Unitarians. This also explains why Sabbatarian ideology is based on Anti-Trinitarian grounds to a large degree.

The accomplisher of the Sekler Sabbatarian ideology and dogmas, and the most significant leading personality of the new religion was Simon Péchi, who inherited his fortune and political influence from András Eőssi. Péchi, after being in the service of Gabriel Bethlen, was imprisoned in 1621 based on charges of disloyalty and set free three years later, in 1624. Withdrawing to his estate in Elseni he started to be preoccupied with Sabbatarian matters. Under Péchi’s leadership Sabbatarian ideology gained larger ground and soon it became well-known all across Transylvania, moreover, also in the Hungarian territories occupied by the Turks. Through the Sephardic Jews arriving after Gabriel Bethlen’s Jewish privileges they could have access to the Talmud books that had been secretly brought to Transylvanian territories earlier (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 67).

The main beliefs of the Sabbatarians started from the comparison of the two main parts of the Bible: the Old Testament and the New Testament. In contrast with the other Christian religions, the ideology of the new church was built exclusively on the Old Testament. Its starting point was that God is one and unitary. Accordingly to it people become sinful during their lives through their deeds, while God initially gives a clear soul to every human being. They considered that Jesus was a divine delegate who did not fulfill his mission and failed to perform his duty commissioned to him by God. Therefore Sabbatarians



lived in the hope of the coming of a second Saviour, who would bring along the era of the blessed empire to last a thousand years. In their view the New Testament had lost its force together with the death of Jesus and the Apostles, and laws of the Old Testament became effective once again until the coming of the second Saviour: "It is forbidden to eat the meat of unclean animals, all Jewish feasts should be observed, Christian dogmas and rites (sacraments, prayers, Trinity etc.) are to be rejected, and Saturday should be the day of the week to be kept as a holiday instead of Sunday" (Bitskey 1978: 109).

The Sabbatarians expanding to the detriment of the other Transylvanian churches quickly estranged themselves from church and lay dignitaries, who did everything to remove the "plague". A large wave of persecution started in 1638, and at the so-called *Terminus of Dés* Prince George Rákóczi I (1630–1648) sentenced Péchi and his followers to heavy imprisonment. By the end of the 18th century, the Sabbatarian ideology that had conquered most of the population of 32 Sekler villages lost more and more ground and believers. High-ranking Sekler families returned to the Unitarian, Calvinist and Roman Catholic Churches. A considerable community only survived in Bezidu Nou and Ernei. Escape from the persecution of the authorities practically could only be achieved by the fictitious conversion to some accepted religion. Under the cover of the Calvinist or Unitarian religion a considerable part of the converted Sabbatarians continued to practice their faith.

Together with the spreading of this new ideology, a Sabbatarian literature of significant value developed. Sabbatarian prose included religious articles, catechisms, original Hungarian prayers, the translation of Jewish prayers, the explanation of Biblical laws, theological treatises, polemical essays, sermons and almanacs. Still the greater part of literary memorials preserved for posterity consists of poetry: hymns, didactic poems, the Psalm translations of Miklós Bogáti Fazakas etc. The literary works of Simon Péchi are major sources, the prayer book connected to his name and numerous translations are significant works. Late descendants of the Sabbatarians in the 19th-20th century kept the prayer books signed by Péchi and their religious objects of piety hidden in corners of their houses as a precious heritage.

A Thriving Community Bound for Equal Rights

The changes in the status of Transylvania and the new direction of its history (a part of the Habsburg Empire beginning with 1690, a Grand Principality under Habsburg rule after 1765) had an influence also on the future of the Jewish population living in its territories. While we witness a slow changing process from a legal and economic point of view, the demographic and internal institutional development of Jewry accelerated in the 18th century. The life of the Transylvanian Israelite community had been determined by several regulations until the Hungarian revolution of 1848.

The Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I (Hungarian king between 1657–1705) introduced a Jewish tolerance tax in Hungary in 1698, which was renewed by his grand-daughter Maria Theresa (1740–1780) in 1743. The *taxa tolerantialis* remaining valid until 1846 was in fact the tax paid for tolerating the Jewish community in the empire, and its amount increased gradually. While Hungarian Jewry was obliged to pay 20,000 forints in 1749, by 1778 this sum went up to 80,000.⁵ On the territory of present-day Transylvania, the tax of toleration had only been applied in the Banat and in Partium, in regions that belonged to Hungary. Similarly, the *Judenordnung* emitted in 1776 also only had reference to Jews living in Timișoara and the region of the Banat (Gonda 1992: 40–41).

The intolerance against Jews characteristic for the age of Maria Theresa led to the issuing of the *Judenordnung*. The sovereign wanted both to include the Jews into the legal framework of the empire and to restrict their rights at the same time. The purpose was to prevent their growth in number, and to restrain their commercial activity. The document also set the framework of the internal governance of Jewish communities, conditioned marriages and prohibited the Jews to possess agricultural fields.

The 1780 plan of Samuel Bruckenthal, governor of Transylvania, submitted to the Chancellery of the Court also aimed at the reduction of the number of settling Jews. He proposed the expelling of the recently settled Jews and the restriction of the living conditions of the others. In his view only those Israelites should have been admitted to the country, which possessed at least a fortune of 500 forints

5 There had obviously been other tax burdens levied on the Jewish population in addition to the tolerance tax. Since the Middle Ages Jews have paid their taxes to the Royal Treasury, in a periodically changing amount. In addition to that, they also owed taxes to the landowner, bishop or local administration that had accepted them. Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 134–137

(Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 102–114). In the same year, following the general census of the Jews living in the Grand Principality (221 families), Maria Theresa decided to relocate the Jews that had settled down more than 30 years ago to Alba Iulia, and to expel newcomers. The death of the queen and the different policy of Joseph II (1780–1790) prevented the plan to be put in practice. The new sovereign tried to solve the situation of the Jews in his empire in the spirit of tolerance and pragmatism (Gyémánt 2000: 305).

The real integration of Jewry into society, the political and economic life of Hungary and Transylvania started with the reign of Joseph II. By the abolishment of the old restrictions, the promotion of lay schooling, and the stimulation of the transformation of occupation structure, the opportunity for a new stage of development was created. In 1783 Joseph II issued his decree of tolerance for Hungarian Jewry entitled *Systematica gentis Judaicae Regulatio*. Although a similar decree was not in use for the Transylvanian Grand Principality, two later draft documents, the *Opinio de Judaeis* and the *De Judaeis* were meant to regulate the situation.

The effect of the *Systematica* consequently did not reach historic Transylvania, but the regions of the Banat and Partium, i.e. the Western part of today's Transylvania. Most of its paragraphs served the promotion of Jewish modernization and integration, which was not always seen positively either by the Christian population of the towns, or Israelites themselves. The regulation that Jews could only issue documents in the language of the country among each other or in their interaction with official authorities, as well as the restriction of the Hebrew language to religious services served the ousting of Yiddish and Hebrew. The decree made them possible to enter Christian elementary schools and higher education institutions. It also created a Jewish school fund to be financed by the communities. In order to improve the employment structure and the living conditions, the decree stipulated that Jews were allowed to rent land in case they themselves were to work it. On the other hand it opened up for them professions that had been forbidden before, and granted them free settlement in the country, except for the mining towns (Sebestyén 2000: 52–53).

The *Opinio de Judaeis* bill that meant to solve the situation of Transylvanian Jews, turned out to be an unsuccessful attempt. The bill was prepared in 1791–1792 at the request of the Diet in Cluj, but it was never adopted. The basis of the document, which carried the tolerant mentality of the era of Joseph II. also included quite a few inconsistencies. Beside its intentions of improvement (authorisation of crafts and trades that had previously been forbidden for the Jews, disappearance of the efforts of Maria Theresa to concentrate the Transylvanian Jewish population to Alba Iulia or to remove them from the country etc.) it also included restrictive measures and its covert aim was to “guide Jewry to the adoption of Christianity.” It forbade the production of cereal- or fruit-based liquors, restricted the renting of inns and taverns, of itinerant trading and ordered the expulsion of persons with harmful occupation (*ibidem*: 59–64).

The other document issued in 1811, entitled *De Judaeis*, similarly to the previous one, only remained a draft, being refused in 1819 by the Court in Vienna. In addition to the regulations meant to ease economic activity and schooling, the non-redeemable obligation to perform military service, or the prohibition to process gold and silver also appeared in the draft. With the rejection of the *De Judaeis* the general solution for the situation of Transylvanian Jewry was postponed for decades. In the spirit of the *Approbatæ Constitutiones* most towns continued to deny Jews the right to settle. Those who succeeded after all to gain a foothold in one or other locality for a shorter or a longer period, were exposed to permanent harassment (Gyémánt 2000: 309). Due to the resistance of the Hungarian Upper House and the Court in Vienna, Law Article XXIX from 1840 only included just a part of the aspirations of the reform era (the civil emancipation of Jews, ensuring the same rights for them as for the common inhabitants of the country). Yet it meant an important move forward in the acceptance of the Jewry. Its greatest achievement was that it permitted the Jews to settle down freely in the towns of Hungary, with the exception of mining towns. The law permitted the Jews to settle down in towns to establish factories, to possess properties and to learn crafts (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 143).

All these legal regulations affected a Jewish community with a composition that had started to crystallise by the end of the 18th century. This was the time when the number of Jews arriving from the North-East and the North-West increased more significantly. Until the midst of the 18th century the increase in number of the Israelites in the Transylvanian Grand Principality was largely due to the same degree of immigration from the South and the West. The change can be seen mainly connected with the territorial growth of the Habsburg Empire and its policy towards the Jews, the immigration of the Jews from the Polish territories under Austrian control (Galicia, later Bukovina), as well as with small-scale



forced settlements (Marton 1941: 59–60). Count Sándor Károlyi brought ten Jewish families to his Carei estate in 1723, ensuring them free stay, the free practice of their religious lives and schooling. They were allowed to till the land, to operate taverns, and to choose their own judge. In exchange for these privileges they had to pay an annual amount of 300 forints. By 1740 the community reached 66 people.

The number of Jewish inhabitants of the Grand Principality increased from a few hundred to around two thousand by the end of the 18th century, and in the first decades of the following century grew over three thousand. In the Banat and Partium a far more significant Jewish community developed, reaching a number of almost seven thousand people in 1787, and 25 thousand in 1836. Until the beginning of the 19th century, most part of the predominantly rural Jewish population had been preoccupied by trade, the distillation and retail of brandy, renting (mills, distilleries, land), and the practice of crafts (tailors, tanners, butchers etc.). In parallel with their growth in number and the alleviation of legal restrictions, the structure of their occupations became more and more divergent (Gyémánt 2000: 233, *idem* 2004: 164–168).

The internal organisation of the community largely followed earlier patterns. The only officially recognised Transylvanian community continued to remain the one in Alba Iulia, under the protectorate of the current Roman Catholic bishop, its rabbi bearing the title of the Chief Rabbi of the country. The position was filled in for the last time by Abraham Friedmann between 1845–1879. A similar institution was to be found also in Banat. Their Chief Rabbis are known from the period between 1739–1859. Evidence is to be found about the functioning of rabbis in Partium: in Sighetul Marmăției, Carei, Oradea, Arad. The last community was led after 1789 by Aron Chorin, a man of Moravian origin, who became a leading figure of Transylvanian Jewish modernisation and the emancipation movement (*idem* 2004: 178–179; Újvári 1929: 170–171).

Israelites turned into Hungarians

Civil and Religious Emancipation

Until to the turn of the 18/19th centuries the Jews were considered gentiles, part of a nation living in diaspora (*natio Hebraica*) (Katz 1995: 7). The 19th century brought the eagerly desired equality in rights for the Hungarian and Transylvanian Jewry. The formerly very closed Jewish communities started to open. On the one hand this opening was due to the reforms of Joseph II and further reform attempts, on the other hand to the inner modernization of several communities. Jewish young people who attended different Christian schools and universities returned home with a new outlook and secular knowledge. This served the integration of the community.

By the middle of the century the earlier German orientation of the community markedly shifted towards Hungarians. This was associated with the endeavours of the Hungarian liberal elite aiming to emancipate of Jewry. Leading personalities of the age, such as József Eötvös, Ferenc Kölcsey, István Széchenyi took a stand for the integration of Jewry. Among the opponents we find Lajos Kossuth: he was willing to support emancipation at the cost of the linguistic, cultural and religious assimilation of Jewry. The thought of emancipation appeared with delay in Transylvania united with Hungary in 1848, as a result of the fact that the public opinion was more preoccupied with issues of nationality and matters of social, political and economic nature (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 147–148; Sebestyén 2000: 73).

At the outbreak of the Revolution of 1848, the Jews of Pest joined the Hungarian fight for independence in a proclamation, and the Chief Rabbi of Timișoara, Hirsch David Oppenheim greeted the new Hungarian Government together with the leaders of the other denominations in a thanksgiving service. Yet the initial enthusiasm was soon overshadowed by the March riots that broke out following the Diet of Pozsony (Bratislava). The Diet that debated the civil rights of the Jews living in free royal boroughs was compelled to postpone the issue of emancipation. The expulsion of the Jews was demanded in several towns of Transylvania. The Town Council of Cluj adopted a decision according to which the Israelites that had settled down in the town after 1837 would have to leave the locality within a couple of days, while the rest of them within a year. The mob attacked Jewish homes in Aiud and demanded their owners to leave (Újvári 1929: 663; Gyémánt 2000: 381–382).

The participation of Transylvanian Jewry in the Revolution of 1848 and the emancipation declared in 1849 – that did not become effective due to the fall of the revolution - created a common Jewish–Hungarian historical experience. Transylvanian Jewry united with its fellows of the same communion from Hungary, tried to express its utmost loyalty and generosity toward the Hungarian nation (by military service – participation in the national guard, later the Hungarian Army, voluntary contributions – money, corn, horses), in spite of frequent hostilities and atrocities. The behaviour toward the Jews seemed to become more relieved following the summer of 1848 (among others due to the conflicts with nationalities), thus they could join the Hungarian Army again (Carmilly-Weinberger 1946: 287–292). The draft on the emancipation of the Jews (*Law on Jews*), adopted at the last session of the National Assembly in Szeged (28 July 1849) could not be validated due to the fall of the revolution. The first paragraph of the law addressed the issue of the political and civil emancipation of Jews born in the country or settled down legally. It permitted mixed marriages, but the rights enacted in the law have been conditioned by the reforming of Jewish religion and the changes in the structure of the occupation of the Jews (*idem* 1995: 154).

The Neoabsolutist era following the defeat of the revolution did not only exclusively mean repression. The war indemnity of over two million forints levied on the Jews of Hungary was reduced to one million by Emperor Franz Joseph I (1848–1916), and the amount collected constituted the financial basis for the establishment of the National Institute of Rabbinical Studies (Budapest), the National Israelite Teachers' Training Institute and the model school in Timișoara. In spite of local opposition in several Transylvanian towns permission was granted to build synagogues. For instance, such towns were: Cluj (1850), Făgăraș (1858) and Dej (1863). At the same time, restrictions known from earlier times also were applied for longer or shorter periods: some towns tried to expel their Jewish inhabitants between 1850–1851, the Jewish Oath (*more judaico*) was once again applied in the jurisdiction (1852), property acquisition was forbidden (1853), Jewish teaching staff was banned from Christian schools (1856) etc (*ibidem*: 156; Újvári 1929: 196, 284, and 498; Gyémánt 2000: 392–395).

Civil emancipation was finally brought for Transylvanian Jewry by Article XVII of 1867, in the first year of Austrian-Hungarian Dualism. On the 25 November 1867 session of the Hungarian Chamber of Deputies the elaboration of the law on Jewish emancipation started with the report of Prime Minister Count Gyula Andrásy. The draft proposal came out with the following formulation:

„§1. The Israelite population of the country is declared to hold all the civil and political rights, alike to the Christian population.

§2. All legislation, customs and decrees that contradict the present law are herewith abrogated” (Gonda 1992: 117).

Both clauses have been received by general approval at the session of the chamber of deputies. One month later, on 22 December Ákos Radich presented the two bills on the emancipation of the Israelites to the speaker of the Upper House. These had already been adopted by the chamber of deputies together with the respective registration certificates. The following day the debate on the emancipation was open by the Lord Lieutenant of Bihar County, Lajos Tisza, and after further contributions to the discussion, the speaker asked the House to vote. 64 voted in favour and 4 against the motion. The official report was certified by Baron József Eötvös, the minister of religious affairs and public education (*ibidem*).

The period of emancipation of Hungarian/Transylvanian Jewry did not end with the realisation of civil emancipation. The acceptance of the merely tolerated Israelite religion was followed by the debates on the recognition of mixed marriages, respectively the issue of converts. The problem came to the forefront in 1890, in connection with the issue of the civil marriages and civil registration, but the Upper House refused the endowment of the Israelite religion twice. The turn eventually came in 1895, by the sanctioning of Article XLII from 1895 (*idem*: 159–162; Gyémánt 2000: 419).

Modernisation and Parish Community Organisation

The stages of civil and religious emancipation of 19th century Jewry was closely connected with the aspirations to modernisation within the Jewish communities. *Haskalah*, the Jewish reform movement starting in Germany at the end of the 18th century reached Hungary in the early 19th century and different spiritual-religious slants were to develop due to this. As Mihály Sebestyén notes, Transylvanian relations were characterised by two types of Jewish intellectuals. *Maskils* were the adherents of Jewish enlightenment (e.g. Áron Chorin, the rabbi of Arad) who had taken up the enlightened ideas of the age.



They were critical to the traditions of Judaism, yet they had not detached themselves from the community. The other group was made up of the members of the rising Jewish bourgeoisie, who had adopted the values of enlightenment as a status symbol (Sebestyén 2000: 75; Gyurgyák 2001: 215).

The fundamental divergence, that could also be projected geographically, appeared between the conservative side and those open to reforms. The North-Eastern part of Hungary, including the regions of Satu Mare and Maramureş from present-day Transylvania, became the cornerstone of Orthodoxy. Followers of *Hasidism* prevailing here refused to accept Jewish modernisation, just as they rejected Zionist ideology later on. By the turn of the 19/20th century, in addition to Sighetu Marmatei, the town of Satu Mare turned into a major centre of Transylvanian Hasidism, and thus it became famous all over the world after World War II. Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum survived the Holocaust, and established a dynasty in Brooklyn, New York (On Hasidism see: Schön 1997; Weiss–Neumeister 1995).

No decision was adopted regarding the matter of the emancipation of Jewry at the national assembly in July 1848 either. The successive postponing of the case of emancipation mobilised the Jewish groups that supported a more radical religious reform. Due to this the first reformed association of the country was founded in Oradea in 1847 (Reformed Israelite Church). Following this, during 1848–1849 similar associations took roots in Pest, Arad, Nagybecskerek and Pécs (Gonda 1992: 85).

A total of eighty invitations were sent out for the general assembly of the traditionalist rabbis (Nagymihály, 1865), yet only twenty-four attended the gathering. The general assembly forbade all kinds of religious innovations (holding religious sermons in foreign languages, building towers, keeping choirs etc.), and its decision sent to Hungarian parish communities was signed by 71 rabbis altogether, including the participants. Among the Transylvanian subscribers there were rabbis from Satu Mare, Marghita, Sighetu Marmatei, Reghin, Beclean, Sângeorgiu de Meseş, Şimleu Silvaniei, Cluj, Negreşti-Oaş and Mociu (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 205–206). The conflict between the conservative and reformist sides reached its apogee at the 1868–1869 Universal Jewish Assembly, which marked the division of Hungarian Jewry. The assembly was held at the proposal of the Minister of Education, József Eötvös. In February 1867 Eötvös proposed to create a unified religious community organisation for Jewry in Hungary. Several conservative/Orthodox parish communities also accepted to take part in the gathering, including the ones in Oradea, Cluj and Carei. The previous fights between the two sides went on during the congress in Pest, held on December 11, 1868. In the view of the Orthodox representatives the decisions violated the law of the Jewish religion and endangered the existence of Jewry. As a protest, a total number of 56 representatives left the congress.

On 18 March 1870 the Hungarian Parliament adopted a bill. This admitted that the decisions of the congress with regard to parish organisation, rabbis, education, were not binding for the Orthodox parish communities. There was a straight road from here to the establishment of a separate Orthodox organisation, which indeed occurred at the congress in the same year. The fundamental rules elaborated by the delegates of 130 Orthodox parish communities were taken over by Emperor Franz Joseph in 1871. Due to these the Jewish community of Hungary fell apart from a religious point of view into two major and one smaller stream: Orthodox, Neologue (those in favour of the decisions of the 1868–1869 congress) and those with a status-quo ante standpoint (trying to reinstate the status-quo before the 1868–1869 congress) (Gyurgyák 2001: 221–222; Gyémánt 2004: 221; Katzburg 1999: 92–93).

The ideology of most Transylvanian parish communities were defined by the rabbi disciples or followers of the chief rabbi of Pozsony (Bratislava), Moses Schreiber. Therefore these adhered to Orthodoxy. Yet by the end of the 19th century the Neologue community also gained ground in more and more Transylvanian settlements. Occasionally – and this was the case in Cluj – the Neologue community came into being by the transformation of the existing status-quo ante parish. On the other hand the status quo communities changing their orientation later on rather joined the Orthodox slant. Between the two world wars, among the 115 Transylvanian parishes there were one Sephardic, eleven status-quo, twenty-three Neologue and eighty-four Orthodox communities (Gaal 1991: 1029–1034).

Assimilation and the Jewish Issue

The Hungarian assimilation model followed more or less the Western-European patterns: the receiving political elites, going arm in arm with the greater part of the intelligentsia, expected full integration and assimilation from the emancipation of Jewry. On the other hand the expectation led to division within Jewish society and Christian societies, eventually preparing the emergence of Zionism (modern Jewish national movement) and the unfolding of political anti-Semitism. Both ideologies questioned

the alleged success of assimilation. Before addressing the issues of the two ideologies so decisively influencing the fate of Jewry in the 20th century, and the social changes connected to these ideologies, it is worth taking a closer look at how the Jewry took part in the structure of Hungarian society.

The Israelite population of Hungary and Transylvania dramatically increased in the 19th century. A number of 105,000 Israelites lived in 1869 on the territory of present-day Transylvania, 542,000 in Hungary. Their proportion among the whole population increased to 4 %. By the turn of the century their number increased to 180,000 in Transylvania (Gyémánt 2004: 238; Gyurgyák 2001: 63).

Along with the growing number of people, the predominantly rural Jewish community migrated in an ever increasing proportion into the towns forbidden before. By 1910, 44 percent of the Jewry in Transylvania was living in towns, and the proportion of the urban population continued to grow even more by 1923 (Sulyok–Fritz 1930: 112). In 1840 a number of 528 Israelites lived in Cluj (representing 2.8 percent of the population). In 1880 their number was 1,624 (5.1%), while in 1910 7,046 (11.6%). A similar growth occurred in the cases of Oradea, Timișoara, Arad, Satu Mare, Sighetu Marmăției. The proportion of Jewry surpassed 37 percent in Maramureș by 1910 (in 1941 their proportion represented 39.1 percent) (Kepecs 1993: 180–181, and 191).

By means of the mobility careers provided by emancipation, native Jewry took better and better part in the development of economy and culture. The significant majority of Jews got a situation in trade, industry and liberal professions. In Transylvania they played a major role in food, alcohol, wood, textile, metal and garment trade. In these areas important factories were established with Jewish capital in Arad, Oradea, Cluj, Câmpia Turzii, Satu Mare and Reșița. In 1912 38 out of the 51 factories in Oradea were owned by Jews. At the 1867 world exhibition in Paris and the Budapest Millennium Exhibition (1896), Transylvanian industry was represented by the president of the Cluj Jewish community, Vilmos Farkasházy Fischer (Gyémánt 2004: 240; Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 160; Katus 1992: 92–105).

The cultural and linguistic Magyarisation of Jewry were promoted by the public schools open for the youth, yet most educational institutions operated by the parishes themselves also contributed to the process of assimilation. By the beginning of the 20th century the number of Jewish schools reached 56. *Overschooling* and *compulsion for overperformance* became key notions of the age (Karády 1997: 79). While the proportion of secondary school graduates exceeded 33 percent among the Israelites, it did not reach 9 percent in the case of any Christian denomination (*idem* 2000: 232–239). The poet József Kiss from Arad and the playwright Lajos Bíró from Oradea were among the illustrious authors of literature. In Cluj Jenő Janovics distinguished himself with his theatrical and film-making activity. Janovics was the one to lay the foundations of Transylvanian film production (Gyémánt 2004: 245; Katzburg 1999: 152–153).

This notable intertwining, the assimilation can be observed not merely in the previously outlined processes, but also on bare census data. By the eve of World War I Hungarian became the mother tongue of 70–73 percent of Transylvanian Jewry and the Yiddish gradually lost ground. In addition to that many Jews changed their names into Hungarian. First they started to support the parties representing national issues (in the reform era and in 1848–49), later on turning to political conformism (Gyurgyák 2001: 205; Karády 2000: 29). Assimilation achieved most significant results with the Neologues, but was also quite advanced, except for Hasidic circles, in the communities of Orthodox Jewry. Still, Orthodoxy was much more characterised by devotion to traditions and religion.

The first serious challenges of assimilation came from the side of modern anti-Semitism. Although conservative circles from within the Jewry itself and the ideology of Zionism appearing at the end of the 19th century also questioned the necessity and successfulness of assimilation, these came from within and did not threaten the physical existence of Jewry. On the other hand anti-Semitism did. The Tiszaeszlár blood libel showed that acceptance was not complete on behalf of Hungarian society. In 1882 the dead body of an adult woman was drawn out of the Tisza River in Tiszaeszlár, being identified as the corpse of Eszter Solymosi, a girl that had disappeared earlier. Anti-Semitic agitation started and local Jews were accused of ritual murder. Although the accusations were not supported, a whole anti-Semitic literature on blood libel originated from the case and an Anti-Semitic Party was established in 1883 with the leadership of Győző Istóczy (Katzburg 1999: 129–138; Kövér 2004: 37–58).

The Zionist movement starting at the end of the 19th century - also as a consequence of anti-Semitism - also emphasised that assimilation could not be maintained and that the establishment of a Jewish state was a necessity. It found almost no response in Hungary, a somewhat keener interest toward this ideology appeared only in the territories later to be lost. The most significant Transylvanian/Hungarian Zionist personality was a lawyer of Blaj, János Rónai, who participated at the first Zionist Congress held



in Basel in 1897 together with a few Hungarian Jews. Rónai was also elected president of the Hungarian Zionist Organisation established in 1903 in Pozsony (Bratislava). At the initiative of Rónai, who returned home from Pozsony, the first Transylvanian Zionist associations were founded in Alba Iulia, Sibiu, Aiud, Cluj, Baia Mare and Bistrița. The president of the Mizrahi, the organisation of religious Zionist Jews in Hungary, established in 1904 was the Orthodox Chief Rabbi of Cluj, Mózes Glasner (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 266).

Proselytes – in a New Community

The history of the Sekler Sabbatarians driven to religious and social periphery after Jewish emancipation is interesting not only from the perspective of their exclusion and fight for survival, but also from the point of view of their relationship with Hungarian Jewry. Permanent persecutions and emigrations (to Wallachia and Turkey) continuously reduced the number of the followers of this religion that was shaped at the end of the 16th century as a result of radical Reformation. By the midst of the 19th century the only significant Sabbatarian community was in Bezidu Nou. In the 1860s they constituted one quarter of the population of the village, meaning about forty families, i.e. 170–180 people. Furthermore, a few Sabbatarian families continued to live in Ernei and the settlements nearby (Kohn 1889: 348).

In the 18–19th centuries Sabbatarians moved more and more away from Christianity, in fact they fully broke away from it. They removed all hymns of Christian nature from their hymn-books, and they even avoided to mention the name of Christ. Their religion, dogmatic beliefs, habits were entirely adjusted to those of the Jewry, being separated from them only by formal conversion. The turning point in the history of Sekler Sabbatarians (already transformed into Jews in their religious practices, body of beliefs, yet under the coercion of belonging to one of the Christian denominations) constituted the law on the civil emancipation of Israelites. This was made public on 28 December 1867 (Article XVII from 1867). By misinterpreting the law in 1868 a number of 28 families in Bezidu Nou (111 persons) left their Christian denomination and converted to Jewish religion (*ibidem*: 367). The fever of conversion drew the powerful opposition of the churches and of the lay authorities of the Sekler Seat of Odorhei. Sabbatarians were often persuaded by threats to give up their chosen faith. A change was brought by the September 1869 decree of Religious and Educational Affairs in which József Eötvös forbade Governor-General Manó Péchy to force Sabbatarians to reconversion.

Making use of the security provided by the ministerial decree, Judaizers soon established the Israelite–Proselyte Parish of Bezidu Nou. During the 19th century Europe the one and only institutionalised proselyte (converted) community existed in Bezidu Nou. In the beginning the parish numbered 136 souls (Patai 1996: 160). The synagogue was started to be built in 1870 and the congregation used a provisional prayer hall for worship until the construction was completed in 1874. The ritual bath with an important role in the religious life of Jewish women also started to function in 1870, yet it was increasingly difficult to maintain it due to lack of funds, therefore it deteriorated in a few years. Budapest university professor Lajos Arányi, visiting Bezidu Nou in September 1874 found the synagogue unfurnished and reported about the modest life circumstances of the proselyte community (Arányi 1875: 454–455, and 467).

The conversion of Sabbatarians coincided with the accelerating Jewish assimilation following the 1867 emancipation, and created a peculiar situation from a Jewish perspective: The „accepted” Hungarian Jewry also undertook an accepting role by taking notice of the Sabbatarians in Bezidu Nou in the 1880s. The tried to strengthen the parish. This was primarily done by the Neologue communities further on the way of the process of assimilation (although the parish of the converting Sabbatarians joined the Orthodox slant), not the least to prove their belonging to the Hungarian nation.

By accepting in principle the Sekler Sabbatarians, a new possible channel of identification with Hungarians opened up. This seems to be reinforced by the concept of the presentation of Hungarian Jewish history at the 1896 Millennium exhibition where Sabbatarian literary memories were presented emphatically to demonstrate Hungarian–Jewish symbiosis. The Hungarian Jewish Museum opened in 1916 took that concept further, continuously extending its stock referring to Sabbatarianism. The scientific and critical review entitled *Libanon (Lebanon, 1936–1943)* published by the Museum also published several articles on the history of Sekler Sabbatarianism. In the 1930s and 1940s Imre Szabó, György Bözödi, and later Zsigmond Móricz tried to call the attention to this peculiar dash of colour of the Transylvanian society (Szabó 1931: 161–163; Bözödi 1935; Móricz 1941: 1–5; Gidó 2006a: 162–181).

Communities within the Community. Transylvanian Jews in Romania

Parallel Life-frames

Following the Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Hungary lost a part of the Banat, Partium and the whole of historical Transylvania. They were integrated into Romania. Henceforth throughout my paper Transylvania will refer to the totality of these territories. If one can speak of parallel histories and historiographies, then perhaps the best example is that of the European Jewry, and within it the Romanian Jewry. Jewish history is characterised by the fact that in the *Galut* (diaspora) each and every community followed a different historic, cultural path, and needless to say that they shaped their situation and relationship with the accepting nations in a different way. Undoubtedly religion, and since the end of the 19th century the Zionist movement have been the ground on which various Jewish communities have been able to build their common identity. In many cases even these two factors were enough to create stronger linkages among the inhabitants of Jewish origin living in different countries or territories. A tell-tale sign and example for that is the interwar Romania: in this case Jewish communities with different languages, culture and status, even belonging to different Israelite religious slants ended up within the same administrative borders.⁶ Transylvanian Jewry that spoke Hungarian in a proportion of 70–80% had little connections with the Jews of Old Romania, still fighting for emancipation, speaking Yiddish and Romanian in half-and-half proportion.

Before 1918 the connections between Transylvanian Israelites with a Central European culture and their fellows from the old Romanian Kingdom (of primarily Ashkenazi and to a small degree Sephardic origin) were working in the best case only on the level of trade. The relations of Bessarabia and Bukovina to the Old Kingdom were similar. Even the Yiddish- or German-speaking Jews of Bukovina benefited of the rights of the 1867 emancipation law, while the days of their Yiddish- and - to a very small percentage - Russian-speaking fellows were characterised by the strict jurisdiction of the Tsar and by pogroms.

In my view the overtly visible difference between the Jewish communities living in various parts of the country, the survival of the “regional identity” of Jewish communities in Greater Romania had an effect that can still be perceived, in spite of continuing linguistic homogenisation. All the same, the history of Transylvanian Jewry following 1918 – with the exception of a shorter, Northern-Transylvanian intermezzo between 1940–1944 – is no longer an exclusively Hungarian, respectively Hungarian–Jewish history, but a common historic experience of triple interdependence (Hungarian–Jewish–Romanian), and a new history of integration.

Legal Frames

When Transylvanian Jewry became part of Romania in 1918/1919, the legal security they had enjoyed in the Hungarian Kingdom was replaced by legal insecurity and defencelessness. The Citizenship Law named after Mârzescu and adopted in 1924 (respectively the revision of citizenships in 1938) deprived twenty-three thousand Transylvanian Jewish families and single persons of their citizenship. The *Statute on Jews* issued in August 1940, which degraded Jews into second-class citizens, had effect on Northern-Transylvanian Jewry for a transient period of only one month. Consequently the legal situation of Jewry in Romania before 1940 was regulated by the 1923 Constitution, the 1924 Citizenship Law and the 1938 Law on the Revision of Citizenship, respectively the 1940 Statute on Jews. These constituted the basis for the adopted decrees and laws.

Article 133 on the emancipation of Jews, of the 1923 Romanian Constitution was in fact based on three decree laws adopted during 1918–1919 and on point 7 of the Minority Treaty signed on 9 December 1919. These were built into the text of the Constitution. Article 133, recognising earlier enactments, ensured the political rights of the Jews living on the territory of the old Romanian Kingdom, and theoretically also offered a solution for the citizenship issue. On the other hand in order to acquire citizenship

6 The existence of Jewish communities belonging to different cultural circles is not an unparalleled phenomenon in the region for that matter: it is enough to think of Poland, Czechoslovakia or Latvia.

people were expected to „opt“ for it, the constitution did not allow for the collective endowment of the Jewish community with equal rights.⁷

The Romanian Government issued a separate enactment on the citizenship of minorities living in the annexed territories on October 23, 1923. This meant a step back compared to earlier regulations. Pursuant to the decree those minority inhabitants were recognised as Romanian citizens who had had their permanent residence on the territory of Transylvania⁸ or Bukovina at the time of the coming into force of the Minority Treaty and who did not opt for other citizenship (Iancu 2000: 97). Further restrictions came into force regarding the legal situation of minorities together with the adoption of the law on *the acquisition and forfeiture of Romanian citizenship*, submitted to Parliament by Justice Minister Gheorghe Mârzescu in January 1924. This became one of the most important provisions of law in the matter (*ibidem*: 98).

At the end of December 1937, the king entrusted the National Christian Party with the task of establishing a government, although it had only obtained 9.1% at the parliamentary elections. The government led by Octavian Goga (December 1937–February 1938) was openly anti-Semitic, and started to issue a series of anti-Jewish decrees soon after its investment. Certain Jewish publications were forbidden, the free railway tickets of Jewish journalists were withdrawn, and they tried to clean the Romanian media of minority correspondents. Labour Minister Gheorghe Cuza forbade the employment of Christian servants under the age of forty by Jewish families (*ibidem*: 257).

The decision with the most serious consequences on the Jews of the Goga–Cuza government was undoubtedly the *decree law on the revision of citizenship* published on 21 January 1938. It was elaborated due to an alleged situation: several hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees or immigrants had been granted citizenship after the war, without being entitled for that. The law ordained revision *ex officio* in the case of Jews. In the case of Christian inhabitants this was only necessary if the inclusion in the citizenship register had been done by dishonest means (Nagy 1944: 81).

The law decree distinguished three categories: the first group included those living in the annexed territories, i.e. Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia, while the second and the third included the Jews of the Old Kingdom. Town Halls had the task to compile lists with the people whose citizenship turned out to be questionable within thirty days. The lists were prepared in two copies: one was displayed at the Town Hall and the other was deposited at the court of justice. Jews included into the first category had to obtain the documents to prove they were entitled to citizenship within thirty days, while those from the Old Kingdom had only twenty days for that. It was a fundamental feature of the law that it did not oblige the courts to certify the issue, but those considered to have a questionable citizenship had to prove their rights. All those whose case was judged positively were reinforced in their citizenship, while the rest lost it, and became *foreigners* (AnceI 2001: 80).

In addition to these restrictions, the exclusion of the Jewry from the economy and from various liberal professions started in the 1930s. The main demand of the radical right was to restrict the participation of non-Romanians in intellectual, liberal professions and the economic life. Their argument was based on a few stereotypes widespread in public thinking: the Jews in the Old Kingdom and the Hungarians and Jews in Transylvania controlled every aspect of economic life. At the factories and firms owned by strangers preference was given to minority employees. Liberal, intellectual, legal, medical professions were saturated; therefore a *numerus clausus* was introduced to solve the situation.

The *numerus clausus* movement, with perhaps the most severe consequences on the intellectual elite of Jewish origin was applied to those in the legal profession. From 1935 the claim to exclude minority lawyers became general. A returning topic at lawyers' congresses was the issue of *numerus clausus*. A few months later, at the conference held in Cluj on 1 June, the most important topics debated by

7 Text of Article 133: „The following decree-laws are ratified: No. 3,902 from 29 December 1918, published in the Official Bulletin No. 223 from 30 December 1918, on the bestowment of citizenship rights; No. 2,085 from 22 May 1919, published in the Official Bulletin No. 33 from 28 May 1919, and No. 3,464 from 12 August 1919, published in the Official Bulletin No. 93 from 13 August 1919, on the bestowment of citizenship on the Jews that had stayed in the Old Kingdom. At the same time all decree laws on the individual bestowment of citizenship adopted before the aforementioned decrees are ratified. The Jewish inhabitants of the Old Kingdom, who will not have regulated their citizenship within the time line set by decree law No. 3,464 from 12 August 1919, will have the possibility to opt for citizenship in accordance with decree law No. 2,085 from 22 May 1919, within three months from the proclamation of the present Constitution.“ (Nagy 1944: 255–257)

8 The text of the law uses the terms of Transylvania, the Banat, Körös region (Crişana), Szatmár (Satu Mare), Măramaros (Maramureş).

Transylvanian chambers of advocates were the overcrowded nature of the legal profession, the financial situation of lawyers and the issue of retirement pensions (Situția materială 1935: 11–18).

At the end of 1935 several delegates at the national lawyers' association demanded the Romanianisation of the chambers, respectively the removal of Jewish professionals (Ancel 2001: 57). Certain chambers of advocates in the Regat (the Old Kingdom) made steps for proportionment, disbarring several of their Jewish members. By 1937 the situation was pushed to the extreme to such an extent that the national conference summoned in May adopted a decision on disbarring of Jewish lawyers valid for all the chambers of advocates (Iancu 2000: 249; Nagy 1944: 165). As a result of the *numerus clausus* movement, minority members were gradually excluded from the leadership of the chambers of advocates. On the spring of 1938 there were nine Romanian, two Hungarian members and one Jewish member of twelve in the leadership of the chamber in Cluj. As a result of the elections held in April, only Romanian lawyers were appointed to leadership (Gidó 2006b: 37).

The excluding (economic, social) legislation affecting the Jewish population was not devoid of foreign influences. It was the Nazi Germany of the 1930s that primarily served as a pattern without a special pressure put on Romania in this respect.⁹ The legislation indirectly restricting the economic activity of the population with a Jewish or other non-Romanian background until the 1920s became a threatening reality in the following decade. The law *regulating the employment of Romanian personnel* published on 24 July 1934 specified the percentages of minority employees that could be employed by an enterprise. According to the law at least 80% of their employees and 50% of the leadership of commercial, industrial or trading companies with more than twenty people had to be of Romanian ethnic background (Iancu 2000: 239).¹⁰

The frames of community life were defined by the laws on education and practice of religion. The law on cults initiated by the Liberal Minister Alexandru Lapedatu (1928) regularised the legal status of Jewish parish communities on the territory of the country, allowing only one parish per locality. Sephardic and Orthodox communities were exceptions, as these could continue to organise themselves separately. The latter conditioning was important mainly from the point of view of Transylvanian Jewry that belonged to different Israelite religious slants (Orthodox, Neologue, and those based on status quo ante).

The private education law of 1925 made by Anghelescu had an outstanding importance with respect to schools sustained by minority churches and public institutions. The law proclaimed that the language of education in Jewish educational institutions be either Romanian or "Jewish". This led to a double interpretation: the schools were free to decide if they would not want to introduce full Romanian language education, and whether they would teach in Yiddish or Hebrew. The 1928 law on secondary schools permitted Jewish religious classes to be held in public schools (Nagy 1944: 134; Gyémánt 2004: 249; Vago 1994: 29–57).

In addition to the new legal regulations another important change occurred in the life of Transylvanian Jewry: as subjects of the Kingdom of Hungary, Jews did not have a nationality status. In contrast with that, the Romanian power did not treat them as a denomination, but as an independent nationality, hence trying to weaken the positions of Transylvanian Hungarians.

Change of Empires and the National Movement

The Union of Transylvania with Romania resulted in deep changes within Jewish society. Between 1918–1940 the Jewish population of Romania was around 750 thousand people (4.2 percent), out of which 190,000 lived in Transylvania. Bessarabia had 200,000, Bukovina 90,000, the Old Kingdom 260,000 Jews (For exact figures see: Iancu 2000: 52; Mendelsohn 1987: 181). After 1918 processes of self-organisation and institutional development were going on independently from one another in the different parts of the country. In addition to the fight against anti-Semitism they all thought their main task was to stifle assimilation and to achieve the recognition of Jews as a nation. The endeavours of the Jews living in the annexed territories met the support of the homogenising policy of the Romanian State. While in Transylvania and Bessarabia the Romanian Government recognised Jews as a separate nationality, thus trying to detach them from the Hungarian or Russian minority, at the same time they tried to

⁹ Romania was important for Germany primarily from an economic point of view, the solution for the „Jewish problem” had only a secondary importance. Ancel 1994: 57–58.

¹⁰ I deal with the issue of economic and social exclusion in more depth in: Gidó 2006b: 17–58.



hamper the national evolution of Jewry living in the Old Kingdom (Livezeanu 1998: 182–209). In the Old Kingdom the decisive factor of Jewish public life was the Association of Romanian Jews, an organisation that followed a moderate assimilation policy. In contrast to it in the annexed territories this role was fulfilled by Jewish national organisations (the Transylvanian Jewish National Alliance in Transylvania), and later on, the Jewish Party from 1930/1931 on.

Between the two world wars the institutional system built up by Romanian Jewry connected to the European Zionist movement provided the background for cultural and linguistic resurrection. The schools sustained by the parish communities and the educational institutions connected to the Tarbut-system (Tarbut meaning culture in Hebrew), where in addition to the education in general Jewish history and literature, Hebrew (Ivrit) was also taught, played an important role in this respect. A Tarbut-type institutional network could primarily unfold in Bessarabia, where it included about 75 kindergartens, elementary schools and secondary schools (Mendelsohn 1987: 199). Apart from Bessarabia, only Poland and Lithuania had such a large number of Tarbut-institutions. In other regions of Romania the number of Tarbut schools was significantly lower, and the education of that nature was performed mainly in schools sustained by the parish communities.

Community Institutions and Political Representation

A significant change in the area of Jewish community institutions occurred compared to the situation before 1918. While Transylvanian Jewry, similarly to the Jews living in Hungary, had primarily been organised on a religious basis before WWI, and parishes had been the basic pillars of community organisation, after the change of empire the number of lay and Zionist institutions have grown. The *Transylvanian Jewish National Alliance* established in the autumn of 1918 in Cluj fought for the recognition of the national rights and the self-organisation of Jewry and against anti-Semitism. The establishment of most lay Transylvanian Jewish institutions is connected to this organisation.

The Jewish Lyceum in Timișoara started to function in 1919 as a result of the contribution of the National Alliance. The Alliance founded in 1920 Tarbut secondary schools for boys and girls in Cluj. It also established a Jewish Association for Fostering Orphans with branches in several towns (after 1925 the Association provided industrial training in its apprentices' hostels for Jewish youngsters planning to work as skilled labourers at home or in Palestine) and it ran several periodicals and publishing houses.

By means of the daily paper *Új Kelet (New East)* (1918–1940) Transylvanian Jewish media publicity was created, and books serving the national resurrection and the cultivation of Jewish culture were published through the *Fraternitas, Kadima, Noar, Cionista Könyvtár (Zionist Library)* etc. publishing houses. In this age, as a continuation of the traditions of the era of dualism, major works were written based on Jewish religious and historic research. In Oradea Chief Rabbi Lipót Kecskeméti in Cluj, Chief Rabbis Mátyás Eisler and Mózes Weinberger, and in Timișoara Chief Rabbi Jakab Singer were the scholars of these domains (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 213–220).

Jewish cultural life was defined by various theatrical and non-professional groups, as well as by the *Hazamir* choral society in Timișoara and the *Goldmark Philharmonic Society* in Cluj. The Goldmark came into being as the cultural subdivision of the Neologue parish in Cluj in 1936 and developed into one of the finest artistic ensembles of Transylvania. The aim of the sports movement of the Transylvanian Jewish National Alliance was to bring up a new, vigorous Jewish generation. Jewish sport associations being born after 1920 (*Haggibbor* in Cluj, *Bar-Kochba* in Satu-Mare, *Sámson* in Sighetu Marmației, *Ivria* in Brașov) by opening toward mass sports stepped up as new organising forces, community institutions of Jewish youth. The sports associations moved large masses, and in addition to physical exercise they also ensured community programmes. Clubrooms, balls, festivals served for the meetings of the youth, and for the establishment of Jewish friendly circles (Gidó 2009: 79–86).

The political and social developments of the period between the two changes of empire affected Transylvanian Jewish community life to a large degree. The formulation of appropriate answers given to anti-Semitism manifesting itself from time to time and to the dissimilation pressure coming from the Romanian State became decisive in everyday life, and also the elaboration of life strategies. This let the individuals hold their ground according to their own choice on the desired path of identity, generating deep changes in the structure of Transylvanian Jewish population. The Second Vienna Resolution affected the Jewish community, which beside the slight religious differences was quite polarised also ideologically.

A gradual dissimilation of a significant part of Transylvanian Jewry from Hungarians occurred between the two world wars. This evolution had various reasons. One of the most important reasons was anti-Semitism, yet the gradual alienation from Hungarians was also inflamed by the events taking place in Hungary, including the white terror, *numerus clausus*, the progressive shift to the right of the Hungarian political leadership, and later by the anti-Jewish legislation. The pressure from the Romanian State was not favouring the survival of the Hungarian Jewish identity either.

Besides the Zionist side, with a growing number of followers, the number of those who continued to feel community of fate with Hungarians and for whom the assimilationist track remained the acceptable one, also remained significant. Numerous big entrepreneurs, economic operators of Jewish origin took an active part in the financial support of Hungarian cultural and social organisations, while there were quite a few who contributed to the functioning of Zionist, national structures. The participation of authors with a Jewish origin in Transylvanian Hungarian literature and cultural life remained significant. It is enough to mention the managing directors of the Hungarian Theatre in Cluj (Jenő Janovics, Imre Kádár), or writers like Benő Karácsony, Ernő Ligeti, Oszkár Bárd, György Szántó, Rodion Markovits. Hungarian Jewish politicians like Nándor Hegedűs, Sándor Weiss, Hugó Róth, Benő Gombos and Mózes Farkas were active in the *Hungarian Party* of Romania. The lawyer Hugó Róth and Benő Gombos were among the leaders of the Hungarian party from the time it had been established in 1922. Gombos was elected supervisor in 1922, while Hugó Róth member of the Management Committee. Hugó Róth was part of the leadership as a Presidential Councillor until the dissolution of the party in 1938 (György 2003: 412–417).

The *Romanian Jewish Party* founded in 1931 succeeded to send five representatives to the Romanian legislature at the parliamentary elections of 1931 and 1932. Two of the representatives, József Fischer and Ernő Marton, were Transylvanians. The majority of the party's constituency came from the Jewry of the annexed territories.

From Exclusion to Annihilation

The Antecedents of Destruction

The thriving Jewish cultural life before WWII (theatre, literary and debating societies, symphony orchestras, book printing, press) and the institutional system were gradually reduced and brought to ruin by the Romanian royal dictatorship, later by the anti-Jewish measures of the Antonescu-regime, respectively the Hungarian anti-Jewish legislation valid in Northern-Transylvania for a shorter period of time.

The growing Romanian antisemitism of the 1930s culminated in the 1940/1941 legionary state, when the pro-Nazi Iron Guard and Colonel Antonescu established a common government. By that time Romania had had important territorial losses. In 1940 the country was compelled to give up Bessarabia and Northern-Bukovina in favour of the Soviet Union, and Northern-Transylvania in favour of Hungary. The Hungarian administration superseding twenty-two years of Romanian power in August–September 1940 did not only bring for Northern-Transylvanian Jewry the desired return into the Hungarian state, but at the same time also the path to the gradual deprivation of rights (anti-Jewish laws), and later to annihilation.

Anti-Semitism as a social phenomenon or judicial practice had not been unknown for the Jewry of the region before 1940 either. On the autumn of 1922 the students of the university in Cluj demanded the introduction of *numerus clausus*, emphasising their claim by destroying the premises of the Jewish students' canteen, those of the daily Új Kelet, respectively those of the Transylvanian Jewish National Alliance. Perhaps the best known anti-Semitic manifestations were the student riots of 1927, when similar, yet more damaging events took place involving the youth returning from the Romanian student congress in Oradea.

Although hard times were about to come also for Southern-Transylvanian Jewry remaining under Romanian authority after 1940 (forced-labour service, forced domicile, Jew-baiting etc.), still it was worse for those ending up under Hungarian authority (On the fate of Southern-Transylvanian Jewry see: Ioanid 2006: 347–361). The Hungarian military administration lasting until November 1940 prohibited Jewish publications, associations, organisations and applied the first and second anti-Jewish laws adopted dur-



ing 1938–1939. The anti-Jewish laws introduced extremely severe restrictions in the area of the social and economic role of Jewry: the proportion of Jews in liberal professions, at the enterprises employing more than ten people was fixed first in maximum twenty, later in maximum six percent. Similarly to the 1935 Nuremberg Laws the second anti-Jewish law defined on a racial ground who had to be considered a “Jew”, restricted the political and civil rights of the Jews and made their living conditions impossible. The third anti-Jewish law (1941) forbade marriages between Jews and Christians (On anti-Jewish laws see: Braham 1988: 104–107, 125–132, and 164–165; Prebuk 1997: 156–157; Ungváry 2006: 111–140).

At the beginning of 1941 the Transylvanian Party was established. In fact this took the place of the Hungarian Party, the earlier Hungarian representation in Romania. An antisemitic reference came to be included in the programme of the new party. According to that it was desirable to remove Jews from the area of economy, education, mass media and the administration of justice. Several Hungarian representatives from Northern Transylvania greeted the contents of the third anti-Jewish law, among them Árpád Paál, Dezső Albrecht and Dezső László (Horváth 2006: 121–122).

Intensifying antisemitism became more and more widespread after 1941 in the Northern Transylvanian society. The number and the influence of far-right organisations have grown, and they had more and more followers. The Arrow-Cross (a Hungarian Nazi organisation) managed to recruit 2500 members in 1941 only in Cluj county. They enjoyed a similar popularity also in other parts of the country (*ibidem*: 123). Beside these organisations, printed press was also characterised by strong antisemitic feelings. The Head of the National History Department of the University of Cluj, Tibor Baráth became the main ideologist of the local extreme right. The university appointed no Jewish professors in the following period. Among others also Jews were excluded from the Transylvanian Carpathian Association, the Miklós Barabás Guild and the Hungarian Theatre of Cluj. In February 1941 unemployed Jewish actors established their own theatrical company and called it Concordia (Carmilly-Weinberger 1995: 261).

The attempts of exclusion urged the Jewry in Cluj to restart the Jewish Secondary School that had been discontinued in 1927. Similar institutions were founded in Oradea and Satu Mare. Besides public secondary schools universities also closed their doors in front of Jewish students: In the 1940/1941 academic year only 10 privileged Jewish students were admitted to the university of Cluj (in 1932/1933 there had been 443 Jewish students enrolled at the university) (Löwy 2005: 134). The consequences of the restrictive measures were aggravated by another fact. Due to the forced-labour service (around 15,000 Northern Transylvanian Jewish men were enrolled to forced labour after 1942) and the lawsuits against leftist intellectuals, the Jewish intellectual elite suffered a significant loss from 1942/1943 onwards (Tibori Szabó 2004: 78).

Most forced labourers were deployed in the first line of the Soviet front, with incomplete outfit and protection. Under such circumstances the death rate among them was high. Many Jewish forced labourers were used in the hinterland at various infrastructural constructions, in mines or war factories. A number of Northern Transylvanian Jews (from Cluj, Oradea, Sfântu Gheorghe) ended up in the Southern regions of Hungary, in the copper mines of Bor (today Serbia), of whom only a few outlived the horrors.¹¹ Common features of forced labour were hard living and working conditions, and ruthless, inhuman treatment against conscripts.

Destruction

By the spring of 1944 a major part of the economically weakened and terrified Jewish communities became the victims of the Holocaust. In March 1944 the German troops occupied Hungary, and Döme Sztójay, notorious for his anti-Jewish views, became head of the Government. The Germans advanced until the line of the Tisza River in the first phase of the invasion, while the occupation of Northern Transylvania occurred only at the end of the month.

The great majority of Northern-Transylvanian Jewry was aware of some sort of danger, yet they did not think of fleeing. The Hungarian-Jewish traditions of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, the connections with Hungarians and the disbelief in the sporadic news about annihilation made them stay. Until

11 A larger treatise is being written about the forced labourers of the Bor Camp (Serbia) by Tamás Csapody. See also: Ancheta Congresului Mondial Evreiesc privind holocaustul din România. *Arhiva Federației Comunităților Evreiești din România*, Fond III, file 8a-b, questionnaires 579 and 594, and file 9, questionnaire 783; Féder 2006: 114–115; Braham 1988: 257–273.

the very last moment Transylvanian Jewry thought the Hungarian State would protect them. Those few that perceived the political situation more critically, resorted to illegal crossing of the border toward Romania, or tried to hide (on saving Jews and the opportunities to flee see: Tibori Szabó 2001).

The events succeeded fast and decrees aimed at total exclusion and psychological humiliation were put to practice one after the other. Persons qualified as Jews lost their jobs, they were excluded from professional organisations, and their freedom of movement was greatly curtailed (e.g. interdiction to travel, prohibition to visit public baths, prohibition to use public transportation etc.) (Gyurgyák 2001: 176; See also: Vértes 2002).

From the perspective of the Jews this period was characterized not about their exclusion from the Hungarian community any more, but also about physical extermination. The Northern Transylvanian deportations in 1940 and 1941, which ended with the death of most of the Jews implied, already projected the final solution of 1944. At the end of 1940 the Hungarian authorities deported the Jews of the Seklerland – that had been declared stateless - to Galicia. The next year 16–18,000 expelled Hungarian Jews were shot to death near Kamenets Podolsk in Poland, among them many coming from the territory of Northern Transylvania (Braham 2008: 18).

The authorities ordered the compulsory wearing of the yellow star with effect from 5 April. On 3 May the forcing of the Northern Transylvanian Jewish population to ghettos started. The transfer to ghettos was done according to a previously determined system. In Northern Transylvania the execution and procedure of this had been decided on 26 and 28 April by state secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs László Endre (Braham 1988: 451).

The Jewish population of Northern Transylvania was forced in the 14 ghettos of the region, constituted on the territory of the 9th and 10th Gendarmerie District, belonging to the 2nd Hungarian ghetto zone: Cluj, Gherla, Dej, Şimleu Silvaniei, Satu-Mare, two in Baia Mare, Bistriţa, two in Oradea, two in Tg. Mureş, Reghin, Sf. Gheorghe. With a few exceptions the local authorities established the ghettos on the premises of brick factories. The Jewish population forced into an extremely small area (27,000 people were crammed in the central ghetto in Oradea, 18,000 in Satu Mare) had hardly any access to drinking water and washing. In the Cluj ghetto only four latrines were available for 18 thousand people, and one well with fifteen taps (*ibidem*: 449–464; Löwy 2005: 186).

The brutal treatment of the gendarmes experienced during the forced gathering did not cease in the ghettos either. Wealthy Jews, or the ones thought to be wealthy were tried to be persuaded to hand out their hidden valuables by torture. According to certain calculi Hungarian gendarmes tortured 30 percent of Jewish men and 10 percent of women in the ghettos. In many cases inhuman treatment drove sufferers to suicide (*ibidem*; Horváth 2006: 135; Tibori Szabó 2007: 23). Like in the other Hungarian ghettos, internal order and discipline was ensured by the Jewish Councils chosen from the influential personalities of the communities. The members of the Councils continued to calm down their fellow sufferers, encouraging them to obey the authorities. Only very few Jews terrified by the authorities and at the same time deluded by the Jewish Councils attempted to escape. Therefore Jewish leadership of the period was highly criticised after the war. Similarly, the Zionist lawyer from Cluj, Rezső Kasztner, who negotiated with the Nazis and concluded a bargain saving the lives of 1684 Hungarian Jews (among them 338 from Northern-Transylvania) was also facing heavy accusations (Karsai 2001: 267).

During May–June 1944 a number of 45 lifts of carriages were sent from Northern Transylvania toward Auschwitz, under the aegis of the final solution. Some of the deportees were deprived even from seats in the overcrowded cattle-trucks, 70–90 people being forced into a wagon). The journey lasting several days had to be tided over with minimal portions of food and water. SS soldiers did not allow that the corpses of the dead to be buried, hence the stench of swollen and decomposing human bodies had to be endured by those surviving until their arrival to Auschwitz (Löwy 2005: 329–334).

Most of the Christian population watched the suffering and deportation of the Jews with indifference or hostility. Only a few of them tried to help. Common historical memory took note of the helping figures of the Roman Catholic bishop of Alba Iulia, Áron Márton, who raised his voice on 18 May, 1944 in the St. Michael church of Cluj against the persecution of Jews (*ibidem*: 403–405). The female politician, Margit Schlachta, founder of the Society of Social Sisters stepped up in favour of several persecuted Jews in Miercurea Ciuc in 1942. Jews escaped of deportation also thanks to Andor Járosi, Lutheran Dean of Cluj, and Sándor Vita, the representative of the Transylvanian Party (*ibidem*: 227–256; Tibori Szabó 2004).

The isolated attempts at rescue could not prevent the tragedy of Northern Transylvanian Jewry. The two-hundred-member Sonderkommando led by Adolf Eichmann entering along with the occupying German troops in Hungary would have not been enough to execute the deportation of Jewry, unless



the local bodies of officials, the gendarmerie and the police had not offered a helping hand in every respect. With a few exceptions the leading officials remained in their seats and executed unopposed all the depriving, anti-Jewish decrees and the orders to force the Jews into ghettos (Karsai 2001: 240).

The assertion on the individualization of the Holocaust can be applied for Northern Transylvania, too. Namely, the former anti-Jewish atrocities and decrees were directly the causes of the Holocaust. Zygmunt Bauman asserted that "hatred in itself is not a satisfying reason for any kind of genocide". (Bauman 2001: 59) Although the so called *purposivist stream* argues that a straight way towards genocide was opened once with the first anti-Jewish Nazi decrees, the *functionalist* gave more importance to the changes occurred during the Second World War (Prepuk 1997: 175). The decision about The "Final resolution", the extermination in mass of the European Jewry, was made only in the Wannsee Conference on 20th of January, 1942 and the systematic extermination/annihilation of the Hungarian Jewry started only in 1944.

Out of the 165,000 Northern Transylvanian Jews only 35–40,000 survived the Shoah, while of the approximately 600,000 Jews under Romanian authority 340,000 survived (40,000 Southern Transylvanian Jews among them). Consequently the total Jewish population in Northern and Southern Transylvania decreased from 200,000 to 80,000 following the war. The victims shared the fate of those 5–6 million European Jews who were destroyed by the Nazis (on the history of the extermination of European Jewry and the losses in Transylvania see: Yahil 1991; Tibori Szabó 2007: 24; Gyémánt 2004: 272–273).

Common Fate

During his Transylvanian tour in the summer of 1941 the Hungarian writer Zsigmond Móricz also paid a visit to Bezidu Nou, and gave an account of his experiences in the *Kelet Népe*. According to him in the beginning of the same year, just a few months after the re-annexing of Northern Transylvania to Hungary, Hungarian government commissioners tried to persuade Sabbatarians to return to Christian churches (Móricz 1941: 1–5).

During WWII anti-Jewish laws and the forced transfer of Jews into ghettos also had an influence on the lives of the Seklers that had turned into Jews. Although most Sabbatarians were exempted from the effects of anti-Jewish legislation (they received so-called Sabbatarian certificates), in many cases the authorities did not take the exempting documents into consideration and interned their owners or sent them to ghettos. This is the reason why a part of Sekler Sabbatarians shared the fate of the Jewry, to which they wanted to belong to.

In May 1944 the Sabbatarians dragged to the ghetto in Tg. Mureş could only be rescued with the help of the Roman Catholic parish priest in Bezidu Nou, István Ráduly. Yet the Proselytes not willing to desert their relatives that qualified as Jews had the fate of the deported, and were sent to death (Kovács 1999: 140–143; on the history of Sabbatarians during the Holocaust cf. Németh 2005: 69–88). The Sabbatarian community disappeared at a quick pace following WWII, similarly to the rapidly decreasing number of Transylvanian Jews surviving the Holocaust. The industrialisation started in nearby larger localities gradually drew away the population of Bezidu Nou, and many chose to emigrate also. In numerous cases the survivors abandoned their Sabbatarian religion and converted to one of the Christian denominations as an answer to the help of the local clergy during the Holocaust.

By the end of the 1980s Transylvanian Sabbatarianism practically ceased to exist, yet it continues to survive in the memory of the descendants up to this very day. Their perish and memory is closely connected to the destruction of their last resort, the village of Bezidu Nou itself. The resettlement of the population of the village started in 1985 with the aim of building a reservoir lake in the place of the settlement. The bed of the Cuşmed stream was dammed in 1989, and the collected water flooded most of Bezidu Nou – its churches included.

Recommencement

One of the most significant Jewish communities in Eastern Europe after the Holocaust has diminished by our time to only a few thousand people. This community can be considered the successor and the product of the "coerced community formations" on the territorial reorganisations following WWI. Jewish/Israelite communities with a different mother tongue and culture, and in a disparate stage of development along the process of integration into old state structures became fellows and tried to shape some sort of cooperation and common identity in the Romania of the years following 1918, or 1945.

By October 1944 the Soviet troops reached Cluj, and soon liberated the whole territory of Northern Transylvania from German occupation. On the other hand liberation also meant the creation of a new oppressive system and the loss of Northern Transylvania by Hungary. Right after the marching in of Soviet troops the Jewish institutional frameworks annihilated during the Holocaust were one by one started to be rebuilt. Although surviving deportees returned home only later, during 1945, the return of the Jews liberated from forced labour started with October 1944.

In November, when the earlier Zionist leader Ernő Marton, temporarily based in Bucharest visited Northern Transylvania on behalf of Joint (The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee), the Jewish Agency and the International Red Cross, he estimated the number of Jews living in the region to 7,200. Most of them lived in Cluj and Oradea (Tibori Szabó 2007: 79). The Jewish survivors returning to Northern Transylvania one by one did not even have the most fundamental conditions for subsistence. They found their earlier homes plundered, in many cases occupied by Christian occupants. Home-comers were received with mixed feelings by the local population and the signs of antisemitism re-emerged. The spreading of rumours similar to 19th century blood libels was not rare either.¹²

The years following WWII were characterised by recommencement all over Romania. Discontinued Jewish organisations, institutions were re-established one by one: in November 1944 the Central Orthodox Office of Transylvania and Banat, and the Association of Israelite Parishes of Western Rite began working. Social and educational institutions were gradually reorganised: the Jewish hospital was open in Cluj and in Oradea, the Márk Antal Student Association in Cluj, the Jewish Secondary School and the Transylvanian Jewish Orphanage started to function again. The Democratic Jewish People's Community was formed at this time in bigger Transylvanian towns, and the Jewish World Congress opened an office in Cluj (Tibori Szabó 2007: 79–81). The Association of Romanian Jews, the Zionist Association and the Association of Jewish Communities in the Old Kingdom were also reorganised in Bucharest.

The traumas caused by the Holocaust, and the frequent antisemitism manifesting towards the survivors urged many returning Jews to join the communist movement, which propagated internationalism and an ideology above nations. Although members of Jewish origin in leftist or far-left organisations had represented a significant proportion also before WWII, their number increased further after the Holocaust. They were present on the national level in the leadership of Romania (e.g. Ana Pauker, Leonte Răutu, Iosif Chişinevschi, Nicolae Goldberger, Valter Roman etc.) (*ibidem*: 39). However it also has to be seen that the proportion of Jews and other national minorities in the leadership of the Communist Party progressively decreased over the years following the initial period, due to the strong endeavours of Romanianisation. At the end of August 1944, at the time when Romania changed over to the side of the Entente and attacked its earlier allies, the Romanian Communist Party had around one thousand members, out of which 300 were Jews (*ibidem*). In 1947, following the party's accession to power, only 4.16% of its more than 700,000 members were Jewish. In 1949 a revision of membership was organised within the Party, which resulted in the further reduction of the proportion of Jewish members (*ibidem*). A similar phenomenon occurred also on the regional level: thus in the Seklerland, at the time of the build-up of the Communist Party organisation, Hungarians and Jews were in majority in the leadership. In 1946 in the Mureş County Party Committee the proportion of Hungarians was still 70%, and 13% were Jewish (in 1948 the Jewish population of the county represented 1.6%), yet in the coming years Romanians prevailed (Novák 2005: 380–397).

The accusation formulated by the extreme right, that communism had been brought upon Transylvania and Romania by the Jews, certainly cannot be confirmed, even if Jewry participated in the far-left movement above its numerical ratio. The majority of the Jewish population had the same aversion against the communist power (e.g. tradesmen deprived of their private incomes, traders, doctors, lawyers) as the Christian population (Tibori Szabó 2007: 39). By gradually seizing power, the Romanian Communist Party made the lives of minority organisations increasingly impossible and extended its control over these.

By 1948 the Democratic Jewish People's Association (later the Jewish Democratic Committee) falling under communist influence took over the control of Romanian Jewish community life completely, and through its people it also succeeded to infiltrate into the Federation of Romanian Jewish Community Associations (the Federation), which gathered together the communities of the different parts of

12 *Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale*, Fond 1037, file 2/1946, p. 127 (Let me express my thanks to Mihály Zoltán Nagy for making the source available for me).



the country (Kuller 2002: 101; Rotman 2005: 124–125). The Jewish organisations from abroad could not carry on their activities after 1948/1949 either. The regulations in that sense adopted by the Romanian Government were touchy for both the circles of Jewish lower middle-class and those relying on social benefits. (Between 1945–1948 the *Joint* suppressed in 1949 had delivered aid worth of several tens of millions of dollars to Romanian Jewish organisations.) (Tibori Szabó 2004: 83). Most part of the possessions of the suppressed foreign organisations were transferred into the administration of the Federation. In the 1950s this tried to integrate the Israelite population of the country as the sole remaining Jewish body. The Jewish Democratic Committee was dissolved in 1953 (Kuller 2002: 140; Rotman 1994: 287–333).

With the nationalisations in 1948 the whole Romanian Jewish life-world ended up under communist party leadership, and the remaining institutions entered the service of socialist education. The means of the preservation of Jewish culture and religious traditions were successfully turned monolingual by reductions and centralisation. For instance, together with several other Jewish media, the Hungarian language Jewish daily paper entitled *Új Út – New Way* (formerly *Egység – Unity*) ceased to exist in 1953. The “Jewish press” published after 1956 included only the Romanian language *Revista Cultului Mosaic* (Israelite Review). The Bucharest Jewish State Theatre and the IKUF Choir continued to function, regularly touring the country with their performances. The relative freedom of the communities and the synagogues remained all the time during the communist era, due to the bargains of the Chief Rabbi of Romania, Moses Rosen. In the same manner – in a unique way in the socialist block – several afternoon religious schools, kosher food distribution centres and kosher restaurants were allowed to function. The Joint organisation allowed to return to Romania again in 1967 sustained the social activity of the Federation with a significant amount of money (Gitelman 2000: 38). Actually, after 1989 renewed Jewish community life built itself upon these forms of support.

The Renaissance of Successors

Bargain and Exodus

The loss of ground of Jewish culture and life-world during the communist era were also partly favoured by emigration itself. Disappointment from the new world order, respectively the foundation of the Jewish State in 1948 made the majority of the Romanian Jewry to leave the country. Between 1948–1995 around 272,000 Jews emigrated to Israel from Romania (Bines 1998: 90). The first large wave of emigration occurred in the period between 1948–1951 (116, 000 people). Half of the roughly eighty-thousand Transylvanian Jewry also emigrated by 1952. Subsequently several hundreds of Zionist leaders and activists were arrested by the Romanian authorities, who practically close the borders completely in front of those planning the Aliya (*ibidem*: 92). The size of the exodus allowed again after 1958 surprised even Romanian authorities. Instead of the 10–20,000 estimated possible emigration requests about 130,000 were registered, and by 1966 a number of 106,000 Jews left the country (*ibidem*: 93). Following that, Romanian authorities demanded “head-money” for each and every emigrant. (3,000 USD/person on average) (Wasserstein 1996: 210; Ioanid 2005). By the end of the 1980s barely 15,000 people remained out of a Jewish community that had once seen several thousands.

It is undoubtedly true that the Chief Rabbi of Romania, Moses Rosen had a decisive role in making large-scale emigration possible. Yet the evaluation of his activity was not unanimously positive following 1989. His critics blame him mainly for cooperating with the oppressive regime that simply treated the Jews articles of merchandise. In addition to that he is often thought of as having entirely monopolised the control over community affairs. The portrait of Rosen had to appear in each issue of *Revista Cultului Mozaic*. For that reason, the paper was also called “Rosenblatt” in Jewish circles (Gitelman 2000: 38).

The census in 1992 registered 8,955 individuals of Jewish ethnicity in Romania, while the one in 2002 a number of 5,870 (Gyurgyík–Sebők 2003: 200–201). The Romanian association of parish communities has different figures compared to the official results of the censuses as they take into account the number of parish community members. It has to be noted though, that a part of these are not Jewish from a religious point of view, or are only partially of Jewish origin (spouses, children), not necessarily

declaring themselves Jews during the censuses.¹³ According to the account of the Federation, in 2002 there had been a little less than 11,000 parishioners on the level of the country. Out of these 71% had Jewish roots (Calendar... 2003: 134).

Reshaping Identity

After the fall of communist power in 1989, alike to the situation in other countries of the region, Jewish communities still being there were able to find themselves again. They could establish the institutional frameworks needed for the revival or the creation of their identity as an ethnic group. Characteristically for the diaspora, Jewish cultural rebirth and the historiography ensuring a decisive background of the process, have not occurred any longer with exclusive Jewish participation. This phenomenon can also be observed in Romania after 1989, where individuals without a Jewish identity or origin often actively partake in the formation of Jewish community and cultural life. It should not be neglected either, that while in 1989 and in the few following years the acceptance of Jewish existence and the adherence to traditions was more characteristic for the older generations, today more and more young people are involved in community life.

Depending on the communist regimes of the region, different Jewish communities lived their Jewishness differently, if they assumed it at all. Since 1990 they share the common feature that they are free to choose the way and the quality of their self-definition. Political systems are no more influencing factors, the impulses coming from the directions of integrating societies and states, respectively from the Jewry of the world and Israel can count more (Gitelman 2000: 35). Today we witness a reshaping Jewish identity in the Central and Eastern-European countries after the transformation of the political systems. At the base of that are the generations surviving the Holocaust and the world concept of the youth facing this terrible event as a grave and obligatory inheritance. A part of the Jewry remaining in Romania after the Holocaust turned completely away from religion and became "open for socialist and communist ideas devoid of nationhood. So much the more as along this path many people with troubled feelings of belonging could find a new refuge" (Borsi-Kálmán 2002: 189). The return of the generation without a firm identity, susceptible to new myths regarding its Jewishness generally took place through connecting to parish community life (*ibidem*: 190). On the other hand participation in parish community and Jewish community life in general did not go hand in hand with a changing attitude toward religiousness or religious faith. Judaism has become part of the community experience as a cultural heritage and as a Jewish past, not as a relationship with God, or a connection to the Creator. A part of the elderly generation becoming parish community members after 1990, and taking an active role in the community still assume their communist past, and to a certain degree even identify themselves with it. They see Judaism as a form of the cultivation of traditions. The Jewish identity passed on to the young people is therefore – and because of the complete lack of a charismatic religious leader – more and more a lay identity.¹⁴

The Frameworks of Community Life

Modern Jewish identity no longer builds on a religious community, but rather on ethnic affinity (Gitelman 2000: 36). The most important sign of that is that – even in larger Romanian Jewish communities – religious ceremonies have been retreated among the walls of prayer houses. With the exception of Bucharest and a few towns, synagogues are only opened at more important festivals or remembrance days. On Saturdays often even the number of men needed for the *minyan* is missing.¹⁵ The fact that parishes still remain the main driving force behind community organisation, is due to historic reasons.

13 According to the laws of the Halakhah those born by a Jewish mother are to be considered Jewish, or all those that converted to the Israelite religion following the rules determined by the Halakhah. In contrast to that, censuses classify people on grounds of declaration.

14 The Romanian Jewish community could not even 'produce' a rabbi until the very recent past. At present there are two rabbis in the country. The Chief Rabbi of Romania, Menachem Hacohen is of Israeli origin, and does not speak Romanian. Thirty-one-year old Shlomo Sorin Rosen has been performing as the rabbi of Romanian parish communities since the autumn of 2007. The only Transylvanian rabbi, Ernő Neumann (of Timișoara) died in April 2004.

15 *Minyan* number. According to Jewish religious rules a public church service can only be held if at least ten adult males come together (See Újvári 1929: 605).



These have always ensured continuity in community life and the connections with the state. During the decades of dictatorship they have been the supporters of the institutions, performing internal, social tasks and the distributors of *Joint*-support. And in addition to that, parish communities also assumed the fostering of Jewish traditions. Romanian parish communities have continued to preserve this feature up until today and their character of a religious institution is more and more headed toward secularisation. Earlier differences in Transylvanian Jewish religious slants (Orthodox, Neologue, Status-quo ante, Sephardic) have also disappeared as a result of the forced unification of Romanian parishes in 1949, when only one parish house of the *Mosaic faith* was allowed in each locality.

In the past 15 years the formation of Jewish life-world fell primarily on the 32 functioning parish communities, on the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania (*Federația Comunităților Evreiești din România*) with its headquarters in Bucharest, the umbrella organisation of these communities, as well as on the organisations functioning along it. Every larger initiative and event starts from Bucharest: this can be explained by the simple fact that Bucharest has the proper conditions for them. Half of the Jewish population of the country lives today in the capital city, which means 2,400 people according to census data (as an ethnic community), or 4,200 souls according to parish community organisation data (as community members) (Gyurgyík–Sebök 2003: 201; Calendar... 2003: 136). Even the largest Jewish communities, like the one in Galați, Bacău, Timișoara, Oradea, Tg. Mureș or Cluj only count 300–600 people,¹⁶ while the smallest ones are formed by only a few members. Without external assistance these cannot even collect the funds necessary for self-supporting. The funds coming from the Government and the foreign Jewish organisations are distributed by the Federation to the local parishes, which are hence able to sustain a relatively well-functioning system of institutions.

Almost every larger community has got a kosher restaurant, library, and the ones in Arad, Timișoara and Bucharest also operate elderly care centres. The Federation offers preferential recreation for the retired at various summer resorts of the country. For instance, the summer resort in Borsec is quite popular not only among the Jews of Romania, but also among Jewish tourists from abroad, partly because it is the only resort in Romania that has a ritual bath (Mikvah).

According to parish community data the Federation and Joint provide financial support for around 4,700 people in the whole country, 74 percent of whom are retired with a small pension. In addition to that around 1,600 people received winter and Passover (Pesach) cash relief, free meals, packages of food and clothing.¹⁷ In 2004, within the *Project Vision for Romania* programme, members listed in parish community registers benefited of free medical care in 28 consulting rooms in the country and at several Bucharest clinics (Calendar... 2003: 134).

The Federation designed a separate programme for the restoration of synagogues and the maintenance of cemeteries. In 1995 the Jewish Heritage Preservation Commission (*Comisia pentru Conservarea Patrimoniului Evreiesc*) was established with the aim of taking the stock of and renovating the synagogues and prayer houses in the country.¹⁸ Between 1996–2002 the Federation spent 470,000 US dollars on the renovation of Romanian synagogues (Brașov, Tg. Mureș, Sighetu Marmației, Rădăuți, Alba Iulia, Tecuci) and 175 thousand on the maintenance of cemeteries (Arad, Mediaș, Tulcea, Botoșani, Bistrița, Gura Humorului). Costs were covered from the support provided by the Ministry and *Joint*, respectively from private donations.¹⁹ Often synagogues not in daily use and buildings in parish community ownership are let out for exclusively cultural purposes. (Timișoara, Târnăveni, Oradea, Cluj, Satu-Mare, Bistrița, Sighișoara etc.)²⁰ For instance, in Bistrița theatrical performances and classical music events have been organised in the renovated building since 2007. In Cluj the former Poale Cedek prayer house (the church of Jewish manufacturers between the two world wars) is rented by the Tranzit Foundation and it functions as one of the best known cultural centres of the town. The building of the former Orthodox synagogue in Croitorilor Street was bought by the Babeș–Bolyai University and the Jewish Studies department of the Faculty of History–Philosophy moved in here. Long with the cemetery-renewal programme

16 According to the data of the Federation the parish community members in the 1990s summed up to 5,300 in Bucharest, 710 in Timișoara, 570 in Oradea, 540 in Iași, 512 in Cluj, 370 in Arad, 360 in Bacău, 280 in Brașov, 260 in Tg. Mureș and 252 in Galați. http://www.romanianjewish.org/ro/fedrom_01.html (accessed: 3rd February 2009)

17 Passover (Pesach) – Jewish Easter. The festival commemorating the Exodus from Egypt of the Jews. Újvári 1929: 706–707.

18 *Realitatea Evreiască* (RE) 16 July–15 August 1996, 32–33.

19 RE September 2002, 170–171.

20 *Ibidem*

of the Federation, the *Moshe Carmilly* Jewish Historical Institute established in 1990 in Cluj in cooperation with the Diaspora Research Centre of the Tel-Aviv University have also started to survey the 500 Transylvanian Jewish cemeteries (Gyémánt 1994: 194).

Generations

Efforts devoted for the preservation of Jewish culture and traditions seem to work. More and more young people of Jewish origin are successfully involved in community life. The members of the Jewish Youth Organisation (*Organizația Tineretului Evreiesc din România*) take active part in the organisation and arrangement of religious festivals (e.g. Purim, Hanukkah).²¹ On the other hand it is also true that these results are rather contradictory. If we take into account that the Jewish population is ageing, and the number of deaths surpasses by far the number of births, while the proportion of mixed marriages is around 70–80 percent, then there is no bright future, at least for Jewry in the countryside.²² Nay, the Youth Organisation was established only in 1998, i.e. nine years after the change of the political system, and apart from a few local groups, it only exists as a name. By 2002 they have established thirteen offices across the country, yet a part of these include only one or two people, and sustained club halls and the infrastructure (computers, multimedia collection etc.) lie largely unused. The Federation tries to assist by organising camps, leadership seminars for the Jewish youth. These can later be called in the work of the organisation. Camps for the 5–13-year old organised by the Educational Centre of the Federation aim to get them familiarised with Jewish culture and traditions.

A tender spot of the new generations, of the sustenance and further development of Jewish life-world is the issue of emigration. There is a contradiction stretching between the fight for survival of the Romanian Jewish Diaspora and the policy of Israel encouraging Aliya. It is characteristic that in April 2002 at the conference of the Tnuat Aliya Club organised in Timișoara around two hundred young Romanians attended.²³ At present the number of Jewish young people between 15–35 years of age is around 1000. The programme of the conference was to make emigration opportunities and present-day Israeli conditions known. The Zionist Association established in 2002 also set as a goal the popularisation of the thought of Aliya.

The Federation tried to regain the 40–50 year old Jewish generation socialised during the communist period, by creating clubs for them in Bucharest and in larger centres of the countryside. At present around 18 clubs for the middle-aged are in operation, their activities consisting of weekly reunions, the organisation of presentations on Jewish topics (Calendar... 2003: 24). Their inclusion into community life is also important, as the future Jewish community leaders will emerge from among them.

Jewish Culture and Education

In the area of identity preservation Talmud-Torah choirs, the Jewish Theatre, and the biweekly paper printed in Romanian, entitled *Realitatea Evreiască* (*Jewish Reality*, earlier known as *Revista Cultului Mosaic*) have fulfilled an important role over the last decades. Countrywide several choirs operate along with the parish communities. A greater part of their members are young people, under 35. Many do not only see the strengthening of the community and their identity in it, but also a preparation for the Aliya:

„They are seeking their own identity. Many of them do. And many of them feel that they can get closer to Jewishness through this. Others want to emigrate, and before going to Israel, they come here to learn about the culture, take part in it and after that - using it as a stepping-stone - they go away.”²⁴

21 Purim – Jewish rabbinical festival commemorating the deliverance of beleaguered Jewry in the Persian Empire under Ahasuerus. Hanukkah – Jewish feast commemorating the triumph of the Jews, under the Maccabees, over the Greeks (Újvári 1929: 164, 726).

22 At present about half of parish community members are above 60 years of age. In the 1990s in Bucharest there were over 3,500 parish community members over sixty, and only 530 between 16–35, while in Timișoara this proportion was 330:130. The same is characteristic to the other communities in the countryside. http://www.romanianjewish.org/ro/fedrom_01.html (accessed: 3rd February 2009)

23 RE, 16 April–15 May 2002, 162–163.

24 Verbal statement of K. H. (Cluj, 1950). (13 September 2004, Cluj), Recorded material owned by the author of the paper.



The choir movement tries to reach out to the young generations, just as *Realitatea Evreiască* also set up its own supplement for the young. This is edited by the members of the Youth Association.

After the revolution, respectively after the death of Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen the *Realitatea Evreiască* has improved considerably, its tone also changed in a certain way. While in earlier times the issue of the Holocaust could only appear in the paper in conformity with the official Romanian view of history (emphasising the Northern Transylvanian deportations), from the mid-1990s an increasing number of articles have been dealing with the crimes of the Antonescu-regime and the deportations of Transnistria. The paper also deals more and more frequently with Romanian antisemitism gaining strength recently (on anti-Semitism after 1989 in Romania see: Braham 2000: 11–26; Shafir 1994: 333–386).

At the time being *Realitatea Evreiască* is the only Jewish paper regularly appearing in Romania, yet there are quite a few periodical publications beside it. For instance, the Memento Buchenwald Association based in Cluj, whose founders include philosophers Miklós Kallós and Ernő Gáll has also been publishing its own paper since 1995. The members of the Association have had regular meetings and organised programmes for a long time. Their paper mainly publishes recollections of the deported, interviews with them, respectively writings about the issue of the Holocaust.

The *Hasefer* publishing house of the Federation has been functioning since 1990 in Bucharest, having published several hundreds of volumes by now. Their goal is primarily to popularise and spread Jewish culture in Romania, yet many of their publications are also used in university education. Their offer includes historical science, Jewish belles-lettres, Judaism and various dictionaries, and encyclopaedias. They receive support from *Joint* for their work, therefore they are able to sell their publications much below cost price. The Federation also has its own Internet page (www.romanianjewish.org).

The only Jewish kindergarten and school in Romania function in Bucharest. They belong to the Lauder Jewish educational network present all across Europe. The teaching of Jewish traditions, of Hebrew and other foreign languages have a stressed role in their curriculum. The recently founded Jewish Community Center in Bucharest (2007) and in Oradea (2008) offers a new way for the young Jewish generation to be able to integrate into the Jewish community life.

Urban Jewry

As it has already been emphasised, Transylvanian Jewish communities differ from their counterparts in the Old Kingdom in many respects, which is mostly due to different development over history. Although linguistic and cultural differences within the Jewry of the country dissolved to a large degree in the inter-war period and in the period of communism, hitherto these have not disappeared entirely. This kind of detachment, the gradual changes and the process of absorption into Romanian Jewry are reflected by the processes taking place in the Jewish communities of larger Transylvanian towns. One must primarily think here of Oradea, Timișoara, Satu-Mare, Sighetul Marmăției, Cluj, Brașov and Tg. Mureș.

Until the Holocaust the majority of the Jews living in towns, irrespective of their declared ethnicity (Hungarian or Jewish) and mother tongue (Hungarian, Yiddish etc.), had talked Hungarian and had had a Hungarian cultural background. After 1945 deep changes took place in the structure of urban Jewish communities (internal migratory movements, emigration), which resulted by the Hungarian background gradually changing into a mixed, Hungarian-Romanian Jewish life-world. Both general disillusionment with the success of Magyarisation resulting from the experience of the Holocaust, and the opportunities provided by integration into Romanian society contributed to that. The assuming of a double identity (Hungarian Jew) became almost absolutely impossible. Several solutions through giving up Hungarian Jewish identity were in practice to tackle with the problems of self-definition: to be absorbed by “the democratic masses of people”, to orientate towards Romanians, make the Aliya, or to emigrate to some other country but Israel (Tibori Szabó 2007: 204).

There had obviously been attempts to overcome traumas and carry on a double identity. K. H. is a music teacher, the leader of the choir beside the Jewish parish community in Cluj. She considers that her Jewish and Hungarian bonds are equally important:

„While I grew up, there has been little discussion about this at home. Of course, I knew my parents were of Jewish origin, but I have been linked to Hungarian culture since my early childhood. In fact even up to the present day I know a lot more about Kodály, Bartók and Hungarian folk songs than about this musical material. (She refers to the Jewish songs taught to the choir. – A. G.). I have learnt this slowly,

and already as an adult. Therefore I feel that people can have double identities. It is possible to belong here and also there, yet it is not easy. Sometimes it is not easy at all. (...) I feel at home here, but also there, and if somebody wants to take away from me one or the other, I stop talking to them altogether.”²⁵

Nowadays religious feeling is not characteristic at all for the Jewish community any more. Even the people carrying on a religious life, in a similar way to the other regions of the country, perceive Judaism more as a cultural heritage. In most cases it is the Holocaust experience of the parents, and to a lesser degree culture or religion which defines the transfer of the Jewish identity and of the Jewish past:

„I have two sons. They are around fifty. None of them are circumcised. I have not been, that is to say, I am not religious. They know almost nothing about Jewish religion, which they often reproach to me. (...) But it is quite out of question that they do not declare themselves Jews! They have read everything about the Holocaust, and everything else they could find. They have a Jewish identity, without knowing anything about Jewish religion.”²⁶

It is important that almost all of the members of the parish community and those partaking in the life of the community declare themselves to be Jewish, even if they are not religious. Most of Jewish individuals with a Hungarian or Romanian identity exclude themselves from the Jewish community. Only a very few of the growing children of Jewish families that moved to towns have acquired the Hungarian language. In parallel with that, “Romanianisation” became quite frequent among those with a Hungarian cultural family background. The phenomenon is visible mainly since the 1980s, and the youth movement starting after 1990 only enhanced it. The language of conversation within the local youth groups and at the various community activities is Romanian. Strictly speaking, only the organisation comprising the youth has got a functioning organisational life at a national level, and probably this is the only means through which spectacular results can be systematically achieved in the area of unification of the country’s Jewry (camps, leadership training conferences, choir meetings etc.). School, and not the least lodging environment obviously also contribute to that.

Jewish Studies

Including Jewish history into secondary school and university curricula, and establishing research institutes generated a whole process also in Romania. This led to openness toward the Christian population helping to reduce prejudices. Four larger centres should be mentioned here.

The first research institution in Romania Jewish issues following the change of the political system was established in October 1990 in Cluj, bearing the name of the Neologue Chief Rabbi of the town between the two world wars (Moses Weinberger /Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger). The institute operates within the framework of the Faculty of History–Philosophy at the Babeş–Bolyai University, with the aim of „studying Romanian Jewish history and making known its significance in the life of the country” (Gyémánt 1991: 7). In fact, the institute attempted to restart and reorganise the Jewish research and education that had been in a constrained interruption during the communist regime. Since 1991 the institution has been regularly organising international conferences, the materials of which are published in its *Studia Judaica* almanacs, also appearing since then. The work of the institution is carried on in two directions: education and research. As early as the beginning of the nineties the institute started to take stock of and store on microfilm the materials related to Transylvanian Jews in Romanian archives and libraries, and to map Transylvanian Jewish cemeteries. By 2001 they had taken the stock of and photographed approximately 200 cemeteries. In addition, they got connected to Jewish resource publication going on since the mid 1980s, and have published several works relating to Transylvanian Jews in the volumes of their *Bibliotheca Judaica* book series.

A research group of the institute including the author of the present paper has been carrying on exploring work in cooperation with the Yad Vashem Holocaust Archives since 2006. More than thirty

25 Verbal statement of K. H. (Cluj, 1950)

26 Verbal statement of M. K. (Oradea, 1926). (Cluj, 28 July 2004), Recorded material owned by the author.



thousand photographs have been taken over the period of one year about Holocaust-related materials in various archives of the country. The most valuable part of the documents that have come to light as a result of the research is the questionnaire collection of the survey conducted by the World Jewish Congress after the Holocaust. The questionnaires filled by survivors, several thousand in number, contain data about the persecution suffered, damages, lost family members and relatives. The questionnaires are processed in cooperation with the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities in Cluj, with the aim of creating a Holocaust-database.

The educational programme of the Research institute on Jewishness started within the framework of the institute, by various Jewish-related subjects mainly taught for the students of the university (Hebrew language, Jewish history, literature, culture), which became quite popular. While in the academic year 1993/1994 160 students from Cluj participated in the announced programmes, this number grew in 1997/1998 to 450 (*idem* 1998: 218). In 1998 an MA level programme on Jewish Studies was started at the university, in 2001 a complete university level programme was launched, and an extending library is functioning to provide support for these programmes. In January 1999 the Romanian Minister of Education ordered that separate history classes should be consecrated to teach the children about Holocaust in elementary and secondary schools. The preparing of Transylvanian history professors of secondary schools for this task is also done by the institute.

Apart from Cluj, research institutes of Jewishness have been established in connection with the universities of Craiova (1997), Bucharest (1998) and Iași (2003), with similar objectives and publications (*Studia Hebraica*/Bucharest, *Studia et Acta Historiae Judaeorum Romaniae/Iași*). The Romanian Jewish History Research Centre in Bucharest, operated by the Bucharest parish community is also active in Jewish research.

Besides official or educational institutions several Romanian organisations, foundations or others with a Romanian office have specialised in taking Jewish life-course interviews and collecting written records and documents on Jewish topics. In this area significant results have been achieved by the groups led by Smaranda Vultur in Timișoara (for a result of this work see: Vultur 2002), and the Vienna-based Centropa Jewish Family History Centre, which has been creating a database called *The Living Archive of the History of Central and Eastern European Jewry*, based mainly on old family photographs and the stories connected to these. Under the aegis of Centropa research work has been done until 2007 with the help of 10–15 interviewers in several Romanian cities (Tg. Mureș, Brașov, Cluj, Timișoara, Arad, Bucharest).

Anti-Semitism and Romanian Public Life

The issue of anti-Semitism is a problem that directly affects Romanian Jewish life-world. After 1989 the emergence of Eastern European anti-Semitism, smothered and concealed earlier with the slogan of proletarian internationalism is also characteristic for a Romania facing social problems. The generations of adults and literates grown up on a mythical Romanian history “washed clean” by specialised textbooks and manuals were shocked when they had to face the realities of the Holocaust, respectively of the role of Marshal Antonescu in the destruction of Romanian Jewry. The so-called negationists (deniers of the Holocaust) uphold the earlier position that there was no systematic Jewish genocide in Romania, or if there was one, then the number of victims is far exaggerated. This standpoint is represented by the often quoted and read historian, professor Gheorghe Buzatu. Incidentally, Buzatu was also a member of the Romanian Senate (2000–2004), representing the extremist Greater Romania Party, and he is also the President of the Marshal Ion Antonescu League (*Liga Mareșalului Ion Antonescu*). As a steady militant of the Antonescu cult, he is the author of several books preserving the marshal’s memory, and the initiator of a number of monuments (Florian 2002).

In the years that followed 1989 about 28 active Neo-Nazi organisations, groups have been operating in Romania, trying to address the younger generations (Andreescu 2003: 13–34; Lazar–Florian 2002). There are numerous intellectuals among their supporters who do not assume their views in public. It is not of minor importance that legionary publications are distributed freely to this very day on the news kiosks of towns. In many cases, public figures of the written and electronic media fail to delimit themselves properly from the phenomenon. Among other circumstances this was the reason for the temporary suspension of the broadcasting right of the OTV television channel. In 2002 the channel broadcast several programmes in which antisemitic or xenophobic, instigating remarks were delivered.

The results of a survey done by the Open Society Foundation in November 2000 are also food for thought, as 35 percent of those questioned declared that they would be disturbed if they had a Jewish

neighbour (Florian 2002). On the other hand an inquiry done two years later showed that the majority of the answering interviewees considered that Jews had a better life in the country than they had, and the economic situation of the country could best be improved if the model of Jewish business conducting was applied (Lazar–Florian 2002).

Although it does not consider the country antisemitic a 2002 report on antisemitism finds it troublesome that - given the proportion of the Jewish population - the issue is present in Romanian public life to an exaggerated degree (*ibidem*). At the same time, the report misses the open standpoint of the political elite, first and foremost of the 2002 government. According to it the driving force behind recent official statements on the matter was the adherence to Western expectations solely. It reckons that - in addition to the approaching NATO membership- this was the main reason for former PM Adrian Năstase to meet with Jewish communities during his 2001 visit to America. The next year an emergency decree was adopted that defined antisemitism and xenophobia as social phenomena, respectively indictable offences (*ibidem*). This was in complete contradiction with the communication dated on June 2003 of the Romanian Public Information Ministry, according to which there had not been a Holocaust in Romania between 1940–45. The statement was made in connection with the fact that the Romanian Government let the Washington Holocaust Museum to study WWII documents in Romanian archives. Needless to say that the statement produced general indignation both in the country and abroad.

In the last years several changes have occurred in connection with the denial of the Romanian Holocaust. In 2003 a commission chaired by Elie Wiesel consisting of recognised historians was created to study the Romanian Holocaust. The report of the commission was published in 2005. Among others it formulated proposals referring to the teaching of the history of the Holocaust, the spreading of research results, and the designation of a Holocaust Memorial Day in Romania (on 9 October every year) (Comisia Internațională... 2005).

The transformation of antisemitic and xenophobic discourse is a relatively new phenomenon in Romanian public life in the proximity of extreme political parties. A perfect example for that are Corneliu Vadim Tudor and the Greater Romania Party led by him, which in 2003/2004 decided to make a step totally in contradiction with their earlier politics, yet proving a good ability to assess the current situation. Vadim Tudor openly begged for the apology of the Jewish nation in connection with the antisemitic outbursts of his party and the publication with a similar name. In January 2004, as a proof for his “conversion” he unveiled the statue of Yitzhak Rabin in Braşov. Still, his deed causing the greatest indignation was the agreement he concluded with the Israeli businessman Eyal Arad on the organisation of his election campaign.

The list of extremist parties grew in 2004 through George Becali, a key-figure of Romanian football world, the owner of the *Steaua* football club, and his political formation. Xenophobic and antisemitic overtones have been missing from the discourse of the Party of New Generation from the very beginning, yet their chosen name and methods remind of the antisemitic Iron Guard and its ideologists in the interwar period (on the Iron Guard and the *new generation*, as the intellectual basis of the extreme right between the world wars see: Ornea 1996: 72–88). The title of the paper published by their branch office in Cluj – *Totul pentru Țară* (All for the Fatherland) – coincides with the name of the political party established by the Iron Guard in 1935. Following the patterns of similar parties in Western Europe, both the party of Vadim Tudor and of Becali, increasingly place the emphasis on religiousness (Orthodoxy) and on a dynamic appearance, hence they have achieved significant popularity.

Reshaping Community Perspectives

In his essay on reconstructing Jewish communities and reshaping Jewish identity, Zvi Gitelman divides the Jewry of the region into two categories: The first group includes the communities of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Bulgaria, which have reached at the brink of their dissolution. Into the second category fall the 80–100,000 Hungarian Jewry and the 5–8,000, yet viable Jewish communities of the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania (Gitelman 2000: 50). In the case of Romania the only question is the length of this viability since the kind of *revival* which characterises the Jewry of Hungary has not occurred here (for Hungarian Jewish revival see: Papp 2004).

In Romania we could better speak about the strengthening of Judaism, rather than a proper revival. The damages caused by communism, the assimilation and the policy of Israel encouraging emigration



are impeding factors. Even started institutionalisation and the various programmes cannot change the fact that Jewishness as a way of life, as lived identity is more and more driven back within the framework of institutional life. At the time being in Romania Jewishness is more „cultivated”, rather than lived (this mostly manifests itself in the area of *Jewish Studies* started 19 years ago and producing significant results), and this „cultivation” – with a few Transylvanian exceptions – has become entirely monolingual by today.

The Hungarian Jewish double identity described by the philosopher Ernő Gáll is true only for a diminishing community (Gáll 1991: 957–969). The question is, to what extent does the consciousness of origin of a “Jewry” with Hungarian (or Romanian) identity, absent from parish community/community life become part of self-definition? The cultural diversity characteristic to the Jewish community of the country will disappear together with the generation of the elderly. On the other hand these are still aware of their otherness much more than their fellows in the Old Kingdom:

„There is a feeling, too, that »you, Transylvanian Jews consider yourself more Hungarians, although you could see what the Hungarians have done to you.« (...) Of course there are differences in mentality. Transylvanian and Banat mentality, which leaves its mark on Jewish communities and on Jewry, too, is different.”²⁷

This is reflected by the cases of Cluj, Oradea or Timișoara, where the language of interaction in the community offices changes depending on who are present. Old parish community leaders talking Hungarian to each other discuss the daily routine in Romanian with the middle-aged secretary, and in the club of the youth organisation one can hardly hear any Hungarian.

The future of lived Transylvanian existence is shaped by five important factors: the slow, yet probably irreversible decrease in number; the fading and disappearance of regional and linguistic/cultural differences and by that the evolution of a uniform *Romanian Jewish identity*, where Transylvanian Hungarian Jewry is only present as a heritage of the past; the functionality of the system of community institutions; the cultivation of *Jewish Studies* thus intermediating toward Christian society, and the manifestations of the majority society.

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DESPRE INSTITUTUL PENTRU STUDIAREA PROBLEMELOR MINORITĂȚILOR NAȚIONALE

ABOUT THE ROMANIAN INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON NATIONAL MINORITIES

A NEMZETI KISEBBSÉGKUTATÓ INTÉZETRŐL

INSTITUTUL PENTRU STUDIAREA PROBLEMELOR MINORITĂȚILOR NAȚIONALE (ISPMN) funcționează ca instituție publică și ca personalitate juridică în subordinea Guvernului și în coordonarea Departamentului pentru Relații Interetnice. Sediul Institutului este în municipiul Cluj-Napoca.

■ Scop și activități de bază

studierea și cercetarea inter- și pluridisciplinară a păstrării, dezvoltării și exprimării identității etnice, studiarea aspectelor sociologice, istorice, culturale, lingvistice, religioase sau de altă natură ale minorităților naționale și ale altor comunități etnice din România.

■ Direcții principale de cercetare

Schimbare de abordare în România, în domeniul politicilor față de minoritățile naționale: analiza politico-instituțională a istoriei recente;
Dinamica etno-demografică a minorităților din România;
Revitalizare etnică sau asimilare? Identități în tranziție, analiza transformărilor identitare la minoritățile etnice din România;
Analiza rolului jucat de etnicitate în dinamica stratificării sociale din România;
Patrimoniul cultural instituțional a minorităților din România;
Patternuri ale segregării etnice;
Bilingvismul: modalități de producere, atitudini și politici publice;
Noi imigranți în România: modele de încorporare și integrare;

The ROMANIAN INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON NATIONAL MINORITIES (RIRNM) is a legally constituted public entity under the authority of the Romanian Government. It is based in Cluj-Napoca.

■ Aim

The inter- and multidisciplinary study and research of the preservation, development and expression of ethnic identity, as well as social, historic, cultural, linguistic, religious or other aspects of national minorities and of other ethnic communities in Romania.

■ Major research areas

Changing policies regarding national minorities in Romania: political and institutional analyses of recent history;
Ethno-demographic dynamics of minorities in Romania;
Identities in transition – ethnic enlivening or assimilation? (analysis of transformations in the identity of national minorities from Romania);
Analysis of the role of ethnicity in the social stratification dynamics in Romania;
The institutional cultural heritage of minorities in Romania;
Ethnic segregation patterns;
Bilingualism: ways of generating bilingualism, public attitudes and policies;
Recent immigrants to Romania: patterns of social and economic integration.



A kolozsvári székhelyű, jogi személyként működő NEMZETI KISEBBSÉGKUTATÓ INTÉZET (NKI) a Román Kormány hatáskörébe tartozó közintézmény.

■ Célok

A romániai nemzeti kisebbségek és más etnikai közösségek etnikai identitásmegőrzésének, -változásainak, -kifejeződésének, valamint ezek szociológiai, történelmi, kulturális, nyelvészeti, vallásos és más jellegű aspektusainak kutatása, tanulmányozása.

■ Főbb kutatási irányvonalak

A romániai kisebbségpolitikában történő változások elemzése: jelenkortörténetre vonatkozó intézménypolitikai elemzések;

A romániai kisebbségek népességdemográfiai jellemzői;

Átmeneti identitások – etnikai revitalizálás vagy asszimiláció? (a romániai kisebbségek identitásában végbemenő változások elemzése);

Az etnicitás szerepe a társadalmi rétegződésben;

A romániai nemzeti kisebbségek kulturális öröksége;

Az etnikai szegregáció modelljei;

A kétnyelvűség módozatai, az ehhez kapcsolódó attitűdök és közpolitikák;

Új bevándorlók Romániában: társadalmi és gazdasági beilleszkedési modellek.

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