

The Semitic, Anti-Semitic, Xenophobic Magazines

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Abstract: The Lower Danube, an economic region par excellence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, is always an example for intercultural communication which has characterized this area for centuries to come. In the cities on the Danube, especially Braila and Galati, the understanding between ethnicities, who lived, worked and developed business activities, was proverbial. Hebrew, Greek, Armenian, Lippovans, Bulgarians, all lived in harmony with Romanians. However, the occurred phenomena in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when some historians consider that Anti-Semitic and xenophobic politics became state politics, have reached this area as well for a while, an area that seemed to be immune. It first appeared the Semitic magazines, which were struggling to gain political rights for Hebrew or the establishment of Palestine, after that the anti-Semitic and xenophobic magazines, in the early twentieth century and then between 1920-1930, it occurred as a reflex of the phenomena at national level. In 1905 it was released the first xenophobic magazine against the Greeks, *Jos Asasinii/Off with the Assassins*, urging the commercial strike and the refuse to make any trade with the Greeks; then the Anti-Semitic was released in 1906, and *Revista națiunei/The Nation Magazine* in the same year. Several magazines were then published in the interwar period. Interesting enough is that they did not last very much, being only momentary outbursts, previously softened, as the understanding between ethnicity and the insurance of prosperity has proven to be stronger than the stereotypes promoted at national level.

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Lower Danube area was par excellence an area of good understanding between different nationalities, for the major interest was the economical one, an area where the multiculturalism was a feature, and intercultural communication phenomenon has been fully manifested long before the phenomenon would come into the attention of researchers. Practically in all Lower Danube ports it has always been a multicultural society due to economic and political conditions. The common interest was trade, exchange of products, on a larger or smaller scale, and the

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cultural differences mattered little under these conditions, on the contrary, there were done a lot in order to have an effective communication, and its results by mid-nineteenth century appeared in several languages, in addition to Romanian and Italian, Greek as well. Port condition compelled them to these things, if they wanted prosperity. The alien, was seen mostly as dangerous, from where it resulted the intolerance, the Lower Danube ports were seen as an opportunity for a better life. When this perception changed, the xenophobic or anti-semitic magazines have appeared. This happened with the Greeks and Jews in the early twentieth century. *Fărământările Nationale/The National Inquietudes* influenced the Hebrew problem and influenced the serene atmosphere of the Danube. So there were released a series of anti-semitic, xenophobic magazines, the latter especially against the Greeks, that marked the atmosphere of the local press.

Jews became a problem for Romanians in the XIXth century, when their massive presence could not be ignored; they reached being the only ethnic minority with special social weight. Historian George Plato say that Jews have played an important role in the economic development, but their struggle for political emancipation, fought for 50 years, had major social and political implications.

In the XIXth century, the Russian expulsions led to a Hebrew invasion in Romania. Over 300,000 Hebrew stopped in Moldova; following a census it was found that they represented more than 10% of the population. In the Romanian Country the situation was simpler in the sense that Jews represented only about 2% of the population. King Carol sustained as well the position of the majority of the Romanian population, not granting rights to Jews, expelling them further, so that some historians have come to believe that it was an anti-Semitic state policy. While the Romania fought on the European scene for independence, the international Hebrew circles annihilated any position. Romania's representatives argued that this was not the case, it was in fact the issue that the Jews did not have political rights, and in a country so young, it cannot be granted unless the country would have to suffer severely. By the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, it was dedicated the individual emancipation of the Jews. Thus, there was given the status of Romanian citizenship to 888 Hebrew who had fought in the War of Independence and then they granted that right to other 85 people. "The contradictions between the legitimate aspirations of Jews and limited possibilities of the Romanian state to fully meet their demands, gave rise to continuous friction, exacerbated by outside interventions. They were increasingly situated on the political field, creating an internal line of anti-semitic current. (...) Towards the end of the century, there was a massive emigration of

Jews to the United States of America, where it had shifted the center of gravity of the defense of Jewry world. Between 1899 and 1904, in Romania, 50,000 of Hebrew emigrated. By the World War I, the number rose to 90,000, which represented one third of the whole community". (The history of Romanians, 2003, p. 73)

Following this political and social context, there have appeared in Romania in the early XXth century a number of Semitic and anti-Semitic magazines, an expression of the political situation in the country and the Lower Danube made no exception to that, although this anti-Semitic and xenophobic media had a much shorter life than the rest of the country. In addition, the Semitic newspapers did not respond to these attacks. These issues are the result of interculturality better structured than in other areas due to the universal language of trade which removed disputes, barriers that arise in the communication between two ethnic groups. Interestingly to see is that they spoke of Hebrews then as it is discussed today of gypsies/Romanies, and the study of the phenomenon could help us not repeat the mistakes of the past.

The first kept newspaper whose matter was circumscribed to the mentioned political-social situation is called *Drepturile/The Rights* and is a local political body whose first issue appeared on January 1, 1897 in Focsani. It was led by M. Botoșeneanu, he defended the Jewish rights earthlings, that it the faction that sought to establish in Romania and obtaining the political rights. T. Dumitrescu was listed as administrator. At Focsani the first eight issues were released, after which, on 8 March 1897 in Galati it is released under another name, *Pământeanul/The earthling*, in response to the inactivity of the Central Council of the General Association of Israel people. The Dorobantul section of Galati broke the ties with the Association and changed the name, as the newspaper *Drepturile/The Rights* was the name used by the Association for its newspapers from other cities, also from Bucharest. From June 28, after 25 issues, the newspaper announced that it will appear twice a week. Starting with July, it increased the format, medium to high. In its issue of July 27, 1897 announced that the newspaper *Universul/The universe* quoted them, which is likely to argue the importance of the publication fighting for the civil rights of the Jews. From May 31, 1897 is subtitled "organ of the Association of Jewish rights who satisfied the recruitment law". The last seen number is 45 of December 7, 1897. The articles are signed by: Pincu Schwartz - known journalist who has collaborated with *Dorința/The Desire* newspaper in Bucharest, Cioc, S. Rathaus. Then, in May 1901, the appeared publication *Corespondența mensuală a comitetului de organizație și*

propagandă sionistă din Brăila/ The monthly correspondence of the organizing committee and Zionist propaganda of Braila. The text was located on the first page in German, being taken from *Die Welt/The World*, the official journal of Zionist organizations, and it is focused on Zionism. There are local articles on the matter, all in German, but there are texts in Romanian as well, mobilizing for the Zionists. There are published also the correspondence with Zionist organizations across the country, including Bucharest. There are no literary or cultural texts. In January 1904 it appears in Galati the *Buletinul Comitetului Federațiunei Zioniștilor din România/The Bulletin of Zionist Federation Board from Romania*, a monthly publication which first appeared on January 15, 1904 with the aim of facilitating communication with Zionist propaganda bodies through the regular publication of circulars, notes and discussions to inform at regular intervals, the supporters and sympathizers of the movement's development in the country. It is published in Romanian, German and Yiddish.

Campaigning for the return into Palestine of the Hebrew people. Seven issues were released, the last being in October 1904 and there were not published cultural and literary texts. *Purim* is a festive newspaper of the Zionist Cultural Circle newspaper published in March 1905, on the feast of Purim. It declares that the Jews fight for a country of their own, called Palestine. It includes mobilizing texts in German. The articles are signed by: Sam Pineles, Leon W, Henry, Jacob Rabbi Margulies. The next two issues appear in April with signatures: Sam Pineles, Enric Braunstein, A Axelrad, J Goldenthal, M. Pineles, Henry, Morris Rosenfeld. Number 4 is in July 1905. In this issue sign: Marcus-Ami, I. Freier, Ioseph Frisch, Henry, Isac Goldenthal, Leon Lewenter, Sam Pineles. This was the last number stored in the collections. Review was noted for mobilizing texts, propaganda. For propaganda purposes it was printed also the *Bulletin no. IV Maccabees Section Dr. Theodor Herzl*, in Braila, which appeared until number VII. Number IV appeared in November 1905 and then the following issues on January 1, 1906. The articles were signed by Josua, Ben David. Some of the articles were in German, and others in Romanian. The texts provided information on the Jews movement and propaganda.

Over the quite tense situation of Jews in Romania overlapped the Greek problem. In 1905 Sultan Abdul Hamid II issued a document in favor of Aromanians in Greece which stated from the legislative point of view the existence of the Romanian education in the Balkans, at the Aromanians, an act which stated the facts. In the Ottoman Empire there were over 100 schools and dozens of churches

financed by the Romanian state. Moreover, the act ensured to the Aromanians the recognition as a distinct community, with cultural rights and the possibility to establish specific forums of representation. Greece did not want to recognize the act and in the first stage the reaction of Bucharest was vigorous and determined to support the Aromanians, but the result was disastrous for the communities of Aromanians in the Balkans that the Romanian state gave cultural support. Therefore, this decree of the Sultan caused the national oppression of the Aromanians. Greek terrorists commandos began to execute among Aromanians leaders, a situation to which Romania officially condemned it. There were over 400 casualties among the Aromanians and the situation led to the severance of diplomatic relations between Greece and Romania. A very critical attitude towards the Greeks, that in 1866 since there was a Constitution enjoyed all the rights, had the writer Eugeniu Botez (Jean Bart), its assessments being written in a holograph journal kept in Mures County National Archives. "The life of ports and all trade was in Greeks' hands. This explains the large fortunes made by the Greeks in Romania and the exodus that has not stopped yet on the Danube ... In most major ports in the world there are Greek capitalists, but relatively few, compared to Romania, Egypt and the U.S.A., what is striking is the large number of Greek immigrants ... there are people born and raised here, work, earn, get rich in Romania, but serve the army and sends the fortune in Greece. Danube was the California for the Greeks. (...) I've known Greeks for 15 years, from the office boys, boatmen, suppliers of food to cars, reached to be multi-millionaires. They went to Greece, gone to schools and churches, and today they are politicians and members of the Hellenic Republic ... People with two homelands. From one they feed and serve the other"¹.

In this context it was natural to experience a xenophobic publication. In October 1905, the first issue appeared in Braila, and only one it appears in the research conducted so far, the publication *Jos Asasinii/Off with the Assassins*. The front page was a fervent appeal to all Romanians to speak and participate in the rally against the Greeks. "Greek banditry riot our peaceable nature, because we cannot stay indifferent, to the savagery that gangs give themselves to be protected and maintained by the Greek government against our brethren in Macedonia. We have watched and suffered enough! I thought that the Greeks will come to their senses, but today we see that their madness has no limits. (...) Romanians! It is our duty to

¹ Jean Bart, *Jurnalul/The Diary*, from the Mures County National Archives, apud www.foaienationala.ro/aromnii-si-atitudinea-prigonoare.grecilor-la-1905.html.

ask than to defend our brothers”.¹ On page two of the publication it is printed an editorial about a rally at Braila in support of Romanians in Macedonia, as were organized others in the country. It is signed Navas, alias unknown. On the same page then it reproduces an article from a foreign newspaper, *Trgorinski Glasnic* of Belgrade on violence committed in Macedonia on Romanians. Are then articles about “the Greek dare”, on the political situation between Romania and Greece. All Romanians’ frustration turned towards the Greeks from Romania that made fortunes in our country. “All vagrants from Greece, all deranged, unbalanced people in conflict with morality and justice, all yeast and dejections of Greece and Phanar have found in us an asylum. We defy the Greeks to show us a single Greek who came with capital from Greece in to our country? (...) Facing this sad state of things all Romanians should break the friendship and trade relation with them and our motto should be: 1. Break any the relation with the Greeks, 2. No longer greet the Greeks, 3. Do not buy anything from the Greeks”². Last page of the newspaper is still full with a call to Romanian to attend protest rally against the Greeks. This first number is the only one printed and discovered.

Meanwhile, the attitude of the Romanian Government has gone softer and perhaps such xenophobic newspapers have not been released because it damaged the Braila’s trade, and this was not convenient for anyone, regardless of ethnicity, the call to commercial strike one could say it was even suicidal, considering that Braila’s prosperity was based exactly on trade, and that the Greeks had an important share. At the same time, Galati continued the Hebrew Zionist propaganda by publishing the journal *Sionistul /The Zionist*, the official organ of Zionist Federation in Romania, which occurred twice a month since May 28, 1906. *Primul cuvânt /The first word* says that by their appearance they want to focus and coordinate the activity of the Zionist movement, to communicate all Zionist sections. Articles call for Jews to obtain their rights. It is published an extract from the report received from the Federation Committee, the signature of Carl Reinhorn. There are published local news, news from abroad. In no. 8 of September 7, 1906 it writes that Zionism is the creation for the Hebrew people of a home ensured by the public law of Palestine and Syria. It had eight pages. The last number appeared in the July 21, 1907, then it appeared for one year and two months. Hebrew aggressive propaganda and external pressures on the rights of Jews, has triggered an anti-semitic journal in Braila as well, even called *Antisemitul/The Anti-Semit*,

¹ *Jos Asasinii/Off with the Assassins*, Year I 1905, no. 1, p. 1.

² *Ibidem*, p. 3.

for which it was responsible N. Stefanescu. The first number was printed on July 1, 1906, and the article says that the emergence publication schedule is a reaction to the fact that the Jews have taken over all the Romanian Country. "Off with the Jews in our country let us cry incessantly until we will see inside Russia, fleeing to where they see the eyes (...) Off with the Jews in our country let us cry incessantly until we will give the knee to the back to the last individual of Jewish race". The article is signed *The Anti-Semit*. Next, still on the front page an article entitled *Bestie Jidănească/Jewish Beast* where it is presented the case of Ignatz Rappaport Jew would have raped 14 peasant girls from his estate, after which he would have fled from the police across the border and call into question the generalization of the situation, the humility peasants who have dared to turn him in. Another article *Virtute Jidănească/Jewish Virtue*, which talks about what Jews do not have, military virtue, courage, discipline in page two. It also discusses Romanian-Greek conflict, which he considers unfounded and compares the Greek with the Jews that, should be banished, not the Greeks according to the author of the article. On page three questioning Jew Tip - arrived at Braila that set up a news agency before any other business, being about Leo Margulies. Article is signed Otelo. May be the poet and journalist Emil Maur, he appears under the pseudonym Othelo *Dicționarul de pseudonime/The dictionary of nicknames*, but since he published in 1918 in the *Danube* of Galati, *Flori de câmp/Field flowers* in Braila in 1911, he may have done so and Braila 1906 under the name Otelo. He was born in 1886, so he would have had 20 years. On page 4 there is a story about the exodus of Jews from Russia, the Timetables of shipping in port and of trains. In the second edition of the publication which appeared on July 28, 1906, the feature article discusses the solution of sending all the Jews in Palestine, and another article speaks of the invasion of Jews in Moldavia and Wallachia. On page two are other articles by the pseudonym Emil Maur alias Otelo or Othelo. On page three newspaper N Stefanescu, enters into the polemics with the *Îndrumarea/The Guidance* newspaper because an article written by some Fermo who was friends with Leo Margulies. It also published a literary text entitled *Deja!/Already!*, dialogue type, but is unsigned. On page four there are published cultural information. They state that since the second issue, the newspaper has a circulation of 20,000 copies and it was distributed throughout the country. Still here it is published a poem dedicated to Constantin Mille who writes in a Jewish newspaper, *Adeverul / The truth*, called Adivor. And in the following numbers, one in less than two weeks, it continued the harsh criticism of Jews and lay open their so-called crimes. The articles are signed by the responsible guarantor N. Stefanescu, or Emil Maur signing some interesting

creations: a poem with popular influences, *Monolog în galop/Galloping Monologue*. Interestingly enough is that in the “Editorial” there are names throughout the country not only from the Lower Danube area, thus the spreading of the newspaper was quite high. Since August, the newspaper began to appear as a weekly newspaper and addresses not only the Jewish problem, but also the Greeks that terrorize the Romanians from Macedonia.

In number six of 27 August it is discussed the Greek expulsions, on a magazine about the Jews and take an article from another newspaper comparing the situation of the Jews with the Greeks. A lot of importance is given to a death threat letter to the editor received by the guarantor N. Stefanescu. It is published also a poem by Dem. C. Negrișianu in number six of 27 August. In the next issue, from September 13, another poem, *Frați români/Romanian Brothers*, sees the light of day as G. M. Bălănescu’s signature, and a poem by *Pușculița lui Ițic/Itzik’s Moneybox* signed Bibilciul. In the number eight the Jewish issue becomes very serious for those that take out the newspaper and makes a call to Charles I to solve the problem. Number eight of 17 September contains articles and information about Jews in Tulcea, in Sulina, and it is also published a correspondence from Giurgiu. It is also published a poem by Demetrius Negrișianu of Tulcea, *Dulce Românie/Sweet Romania* and it reveals the pressures that the Jews force upon in several towns of Wallachia for the paper no to sell any longer. The last number of collections held by libraries is 9 of 19 November, in which an article is taken from the *Neamul Românesc/Romanian people, Adevărul/The Truth* about the links with the Hebrew companies, and another poem by George M. Bălănescu, *Vocea Moldovei/The Voice of Moldova*. This is a Romanian newspaper and it promoted our literature, even if it was anti-semitic.

This fact was accepted at the highest level. Another anti-semitic publication was printed in Braila. *Revista națiunii/The Review of the Nation* first appeared in August 1906. There were announced monthly appearances and it was drafted by a committee. There is no explanatory article in the first issue. Feature article discusses the situation of foreigners in Romania, especially Greeks and Jews, the attitude towards them is different, that is the acceptance of Greeks and rejection of Jews. The position against Greeks is due to events from Macedonia. And the second article of the magazine is also against Greeks. In the next the language gets tough, the Greeks were appointed as parvenus. In the next issue there is an article net in favor of Jews, *Cum și de către cine s’a format curentul antisemit în România/How and by whom was formed the anti-Semitism in Romania*. There are

presented qualities of Jews compared to those of Romanians, an interesting study of social psychology of whose conclusion is that anti-semites instead of spending time with incitement against the Jews, they should spread good and sound ideas among Romanians. In this no. 2 it is indicated that the magazine is under the direction of engineer G. Vasiliu.

In the collection it was preserved a Commemorating Issue Theodor Herzl, a Zionist publication, which appeared in January 1908. It advocated for the creation to the Hebrew people of their land in Palestine. The texts were signed by Sam Pineles, Conrad J Goldstein, Mark Nadels. It is also published the Max Nordau's speech at the 7th Congress of Zionists in Basel. For this early period of the twentieth century they have been publications on the Hebrew and Greek issues. The disputes with the Greeks solved quicker, but the Hebrew problem was solved only by the Constitution of 1923, when the universal suffrage was established, but the debates within the community whether to go to Palestine or to assume the condition of people without a country, have continued for quite a while.

After that date, the research has shown that in the area at least the anti-Semitic publications have disappeared. This trend, however, was revived after 1925 due to National Socialist ideas in Germany, which considered Jews a problem for which there was one solution, extermination.

In Romania Legionnaires appeared promising a better future for young people. Exponents of these ideas were few magazines. *Paza țării/ The Guard of the country* occurred in Braila on September 15, 1924 in response to Bolshevik pressure, the tendency of disappearance of national consciousness said its initiators. Nationalist magazine called democratic country *Paza țării/ The Guard of the country* was written by Mihail G. Perlea representative of students in Iasi, which, together with the Christian Defense League and *Unirea/The Union* newspaper, body of Christian Democratic Nationalist Party led by A.C. Cuza, "wanted to fight against the Jewish element". It was a magazine legion, anti-Semitic, where it had signed also Radu S. Campiniu. All articles were anti-Semitic or anti-Semitism justified by "Jewish invasion". It was sought a cultural magazine, but it had only propaganda texts. *Frăția de cruce/Cross Fellowship*, published in spring 1926, was a national-Christian culture magazine that came under the care of the *Cross Fellowship Committee* (FDC) Galati, Braila. He wanted to be a magazine that would address to youth, to provide superior spiritual food, a magazine with a belief of the national ideal. The articles are Legionary propaganda and signed by Mircea Străjeru, Stella Felix, Rolland, Pompilius Focșani, Eduard Drumont, P. Costin, O Șt Odin, C.N.N.,

N. Philippide, I.P.I., P. Petri, C.M. Gallus, Fevronia D., M. B. Wallody. Some articles are taken from Caragaile's *Moftul român/The Romanian Fad*. Latest numbers 5-6 appeared in August 1926. In response, a silent one though, appeared at the same time *Informatorul/The informant*, a periodic of Braila Zionist organization, appeared in the local Zionist Organizing Committee. It contains information about the Jewish life, Zionism current issues, events affecting them, such as conferences, cultural events, courses in Yiddish.

The first issue appeared on March 20, 1926. It continued to appear for eleven years, the latest issue of the Academy collection being from December 2, 1936, the year XI. Systematically there were avoided polemics with anti-Semitic magazines. *Veghetorul /The Watcher* was also a Hebrew publication interests from Galati, the owner director being Henry Grunberg. It was a manifesto of just two pages appeared on September 30, 1926 which dealt with Jewish administrative, social issues. At the literary text it can be placed the portrait of Marco Birnberg, entitled *Un idealist/An idealist*, unsigned text.

From 1927 it appeared *Ivria/Ivri*, review of literature, art, science, publication of the Ivri circle, is the result of intellectual life Hebrew, and it was especially addressed to young people for their education. It was published: M. Grünstein - *Cercul Ivria /Circle Ivria*, Ben Iehuda - *Tineretul sionist/Zionist Youth*, H. Zukermann - *Lumini de Hanuca/Hanukkah Lights*, X.- Sârb / *Serbian*; Jean Cohn - *Lyrics*, Professor H. Pick - *Reîntoarcearea la judaism /Return to Judaism*, M. Brod - *Evreul internațional și evreul concret /International Jew and Concrete Jew*. These articles appeared in December 1927, it is the only known issue. Columns, propaganda, information, not literary texts. Such publications have appeared in Tulcea as well in the same period. *Oglinda Tulcei /The Mirror of Tulcea*, information political, economic and commercial body, that appeared in April 3, 1927 until December 19, 1939, weekly.

The director was Gh. Cihodaru. It was a nationalist anti-Semitic newspaper, which featured numerous local information, legionary propaganda, unrelated to the literary creations.

Conclusion

From studying these newspapers and magazines we can conclude that their formation was due to the lack of communication between nationalities. Greeks problem solved much faster because there was an intense communication at cultural level, and from the religious point of view both ethnic groups have the same landmark, so understanding and acceptance was much easier than for Jews, where there are major contradictions at religious level, that transferred into the daily routine and turned into various complaints and reproaches to the Hebrew community. That is why it was possible that after almost 15 years of Hebrew problems, it would recur and along with them, the anti-Semitic magazines.

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