

JEWISH REALITY

BUCHAREST,
February 14-16,
2005

**THE VISIT OF THE LEADERS OF THE
CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF MAJOR
AMERICAN JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS**



SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT FOR THE ROMANIAN JEWS

TRAIAN BĂSESCU,
President of Romania

**WE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM,
AGAINST EXTREMIST MANIFESTATIONS**

As mentioned in the press release of February 15, 2005, Traian Băsescu, President of Romania reaffirmed "the will of the Romanian authorities to fight against anti-Semitism, against the extremist manifestations and to firmly apply the recommendations of the International Committee of Historians for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania".

**CĂLIN POPESCU
TĂRICEANU,**
Romanian Prime
Minister

**WE WANT TO BROADEN AND TO STRENGTHEN
RELATIONS BETWEEN ROMANIA AND USA, ISRAEL AND
THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS**

The visit of the high guests from USA represents "a historical premiere for Romania in the framework of the special relationship established by our country with the great international Jewish organizations, as well as with USA and Israel", said in a press release from February 15, Prime Minister Călin Popescu Tăriceanu.

**MIHAI
RĂZVAN
UNGUREANU,**
Minister of
Foreign Affairs

**AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW
OUR FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES**

In the same time it is an opportunity to make ourselves known, to present our foreign policy priorities, to strengthen the bilateral relationship between Romania and USA, between Romania and Israel, expressing not only our availability, but our friendship and interest, as well.



Eng. OSY LAZĂR,
president of J.C.B.

**"WE ARE CONVINCED
OF YOUR HELP
AS A GUARANTEE
TO A LASTING JEWISH
LIFE IN ROMANIA"**

"[...] You are in the Choral Temple, one of the most important architectural buildings of the country, considered a historical monument, founded more than 150 ago. I bring you the gratitude and affectionate thoughts of those who help to lead a Jewish life in dignity, those that couldn't welcome you now: people assisted in the nursing home. I assure you, particularly the rabbis included in your delegation, that we love and respect the Torah words [...]. We believe you are going to help us to keep Judaism alive in Romania."

**Great Rabbi
MENACHEM
HACHOEN**

**"YOU ARE THE SPINE
OF THE JEWISH FORCE
OF USA!"**

"[...] In this week commentary, there is the moment God asks Moshe to build the Menorah. It should have three arms to the left, three arms to the right and one in the center. Each of the six arms, those in the left and those in the right, has to aim the light to the center. Menorah symbolizes the Jewish people, with left and rightwing opinions, but that all start from the same root and all return to the center. No matter the opinions, right or left, look to the center! Do not join the extremist currents! [...] As presidents of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, you are the spine of the Jewish force from USA. And the Jewish force from USA is the spine of Israel existence and of the Jewish people existence. Therefore I am very grateful you came to visit us [...]."



On February 14-16 we had the honor of receiving the visit of an important delegation of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, led by James Tisch and Malcolm Hoenein, chairman and respectively, executive vice-chairman of the organization. The visit with an overwhelming importance for our community, expressed a Talmudic perception: each Jew is responsible for the other. After the Holocaust, after half century of totalitarian regime, in an era of great economical difficulties, the fact that all the Romanian Jews in difficulty have the guarantee of an existence in dignity, is due to the fund raising of these organizations. In their welcome words adv. Iulian Sorin and eng. Osy Lazăr, leaders of F.J.C.R. and of the Jewish Community from Bucharest outlined this fact. The delegation visited Bulgaria and Romania, new member countries in NATO, aspiring to EU integration. Its presence in our country confirm the good relationship between Romania and USA, the will to strengthen them and to fight against any form of extremism, as underlined by the words of Great Rabbi Menachem Hachoen. James Tisch, Eugene Ribakoff, president of JOINT, Dr. Zvi Feine, director of the JOINT program for Romania, expressed their gratitude for the impressive reception, with religious and secular music. The leaders of the delegation received as present from Great Rabbi Menachem Hachoen a Siddur

**"WHAT WE'VE SEEN IS
BEYOND THE EXPECTATIONS.
WE ARE PROUD OF YOU"**

(Carolyn Greene)

edited by the young Jews from Romania. They offered a Kiddush cup to His Eminence as well as to Rabbi Naphtali Deutsch and Abraham Ehrenfeld. Dr. Zvi Feine and Alex Sivan, general director of F.J.C.R., received from the guests a raising funds box. Her Excellence Rodica Radian Gordon, Ambassador of Israel in Romania and Tom Delare, deputy chief of the diplomatic mission of the USA Embassy in Romania, representatives of the Romanian branch of Jewish Agency, of the Association of the Romanian Jews Victims of the Holocaust, members in the leadership committee of F.J.C.R., presidents of the communities of the country also participated to the reception ceremonies at the Choral Temple and at the Community Cultural Center. The delegation visited the new location of the Social and Medical Assistance Department and the new food store. The visit at the History Museum offered for the guests the opportunity to acknowledge the six centuries of organized existence of the Jews in Romania. This was followed by an infusion of lucid optimism offered by the Jewish Theater: a Jewish folklore performance and fragments from musicals "Haloymes Sellers" and "Fiddler on the Roof". The guests met with Traian Băsescu, President of Romania, with Prime Minister Călin Popescu Tăriceanu, with Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mircea Niclea, Education and Research Minister, Mona Muscă, Minister of Culture and Religions, Teodor Meleșcanu, vice-president of the Senate, Ștefan Giavan, president of the Foreign Policy Commission of the Chamber of Deputies. During the explanations received by the guests at S.M.A.D., we saw tears in the eyes of the descendants of the Holocaust survivors who emigrated to America, who knew what hard life is. We saw the overwhelming joy and optimism provoked by the children and youngsters songs... We think we found the essence of this visit in the words of a participant, Carolyn Greene, associate executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations: "We knew you have a very well organized community, with leaders exceptionally devoted to elderly suffering people, with great care for young and adult persons. But what we've seen is beyond the expectations. We are proud of you!"

JEWISH REALITY

63 YEARS FROM THE SINKING OF SHIP "STRUMA"

The Jewish Community from Bucharest commemorated on February 24 the tragedy of "Struma", the ship where 769 Jews from Romania found their death in the waves of the Black Sea, in their journey to Eretz Hakodesh. The impressive article written by Baruch Tercatin remembers the script of this dramatic episode from the Holocaust years. He builds an interesting parallel between the biblical episode and the recent history of the Jewish people, starting from the fact that on the 7th of Adar is the day of the birth and death of Moshe Rabeinu, saved from the Nile waters by Batya, the Pharaoh's daughter. And, Baruch Tercatin, the known scholar, writes this article from a personal perspective as well, as the legal executor of his brother's will, Isac Tercatin, Zionist leader from Iassy, one of the Kedoshim who found their death down in the attack on "Struma". "One could only hope that the governments of Romania, Turkey and Israel would collaborate in the search of "Struma" in order to bring a moral satisfaction to the families after 63 years of pain", the author ends.



JAMES TISCH,
Chairman of
the Conference
of Presidents
of Major
American Jewish
Organizations

**"JEWS FROM
ROMANIA
ENJOY ONE
OF THE BEST
STATUSES
IN EUROPE"**

"You are a small but very dynamic, active, powerful community which JOINT helps and will continue to help. In the highest-level

meetings with the Romanian authorities, in the frank, open, stimulating talks, we spoke about the relationship between USA and Romania, which are very good, and about the will to strengthen this partnership. We also witnessed the close relationship between Romania and Israel, the interest and the proper orientation of Romania in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which have now new opportunities. I think the Jews in Romania enjoy one of the best statuses in Europe. Another topic at the meetings with the Romanian authorities was the reactivation of the anti-Semite phenomena, felt in Romania, too. We hope, as the Romanian authorities assured us, that these manifestations would be eradicated."

**EUGENE
RIBAKOFF,**
President
of JOINT

**"WE'LL MAKE
WHATEVER IT TAKES
TO CONTINUE TO
HELP YOU"**

"The attention you pay to the children, to the young and middle age generation, is very important for the future of your community. I was very impressed by the new location of the Social and Medical Assistance Department, by the permanent improvement of the services quality to the suffering elderly. You are fortunate to have intelligent, educated and dynamic leaders of the community. We'll make whatever it takes to continue to help you. We were welcome by the Romanian state authorities with kindness and understanding. I think that the authorities position regarding the Holocaust in Romania is correct and I appreciate the study of the Holocaust in schools."

Dr. ZVI FEINE,
Director of the
JOINT Program
for Romania

**"I TRUST YOU
WILL DO
WHATEVER YOU
CAN TO GIVE THIS
COMMUNITY
CHANCES IN THE
FUTURE"**

"From the bottom of my heart I make an appeal to you, leaders of the 52 great American Jewish organizations, who assure the financial support of this small, but warm, attractive, strong community, a community that had a tragic fate through the Holocaust years and the 50 years of totalitarian regime, a community confronted now with great economical difficulties. These difficulties affect the life of all the inhabitants of the country, and implicitly, of the Jewish population. But the great part of this population is old, suffering, with very low retirement income. I do not address you only as managers who organize fund raisings, but as ambassadors of Life, priests of the Good. Your action of financial support represents a deep saving gesture for a community that makes huge efforts in its will to maintain and perpetuate the flame of Judaism in Romania. I trust you'll make whatever you can to make this community succeed in the future too."

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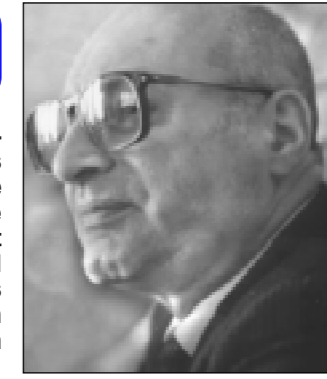
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**SOLOMON
MARCUS** 80

On the 1st of March the academical Solomon Marcus celebrates his 80th anniversary. On this occasion we went over the original career of the scientist who knew how to put together mathematics, philosophy and literature and the review publishes the opinions of some well-known personalities, from Romania and from abroad, regarding his works.



A DOUBLE MEETING WITH PROFESSOR MOSHE IDEL

On February 4, 2005, the Center of Hebrew Studies of the University of Bucharest hosted two cultural events: the lecture "Maimonide and the Jewish Mystic" of Moshe Idel, teacher at the Hebrew University from Jerusalem and a



book release, Moshe Idel's *Kabbalah and Eros* published by "Hasefer" publishing house. University staff, students, as well as Her Excellence Rodica Radian Gordon, Ambassador of Israel in Romania, adv. Iulian Sorin, interim president of F.J.C.R., and others participated to the events. "Kabbalah and Eros" is the third Idel's work translated and published at "Hasefer" publishing house, and the fifth in Romania.

**"MEN WHO WERE WITH US,
MEN WHO STAY WITH US"**



**THEODOR
BLUMENFELD**

**A REFERENCE
POINT IN THE
CHRONICLE
OF THE
ROMANIAN
AFTER-WAR
JEWRY**

Starting from this edition we are opening a column dedicated to our community personalities, "men who were with us, men who stay with us", and we present the portrait of one of the leaders who lightened the life of the Romanian Jews during the difficult years of the totalitarian communist regime. We are remembering Theodor Blumenfeld z.l., for almost twenty years the president of the Jewish Community from Bucharest and general secretary of F.J.C.R., who would have been 90 this year. Before getting involved in the community life, Theodor Blumenfeld occupied important leadership positions in the Ministry of Transportation and Communication. After a short period as a honorific counselor of F.J.C.R., Theodor Blumenfeld became in 1978 president of the Jewish Community from Bucharest, and later, general secretary of F.J.C.R., and he had a constant influence on the daily life of the Romanian Jews.

"NESHAMA YEHUDIT" - A SEMINARY AS A SOUL MEDICATION

On February 17 - 20, 2005, in Timisu de Sus, the first edition of the seminary "Neshama Yehudit" took place, a manifestation which tried an approach to Judaism from different perspectives and to the Jewish identity in the modern world. The topics proposed for the debate of the 33 participants on the occasion by the Youth Department of F.J.C.R. coordinated by Sandra Segal, regarded the Romanian Jews' history, the modern currents in the Jewish religion, the religion in the life of the contemporary society. During the four days, the members of the community from different generations had the opportunity to enrich their knowledge and to initiate a dialogue in a very pleasant atmosphere, on various themes.

**THE "JEWISH REALITY"
INQUIRY CONTINUES**

**HOPES,
THOUGHTS,
PERSPECTIVES
FOR 2005**

We continue to publish in this issue too achievements and projects of our community leaders, of our collaborators and readers. We included in this issue the Romanian writers from Israel and Diaspora. The inquiry of the "Jewish Reality" will continue over the year and represents a testimony regarding the creative force of a small, but powerful and active community that maintains its contribution to the Romanian culture and civilization.

In this edition several personalities answered to our questions:
eng. Nilu Aronovici □ Dr. Miriam Bercovici □ Shaul Carmel □ Ticu Goldstein □ Gilu Luftaru □ eng. Pincu Kaiserman □ Dr. Irina Marin (Cajal) □ Dan Mizrahy □ Emil Nicolae Nadler □ Andrei Oişteanu □ Alma Redlinger □ Felicia Waldman □ Henri Zalis.

**THE CHRONICLE
OF ANTI-SEMITISM**

The "Chronicle of Anti-Semitism" page describes the intensification of the anti-Semitism phenomena, bringing as an example



the boost of the anti-Jewish manifestations in Argentina. We also publish the warning of Paul Spiegel, president of the Jewish Community in Germany about the extreme right-wing danger in his country, as well as the protest of some American Jewish organizations against some anti-Semitic sites on the Internet.

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