

# JEWISH REALITY

**To ask,  
to be  
realistic,  
to act  
for life**

The lecture of Great Rabbi *Menachem Hacohen* held at the Jewish Community Center, recently renovated through the joint efforts of F.J.C.R and Joint, was a regal of Jewish spirituality offered by one of the great scholars of the field and achieved the symbiosis between tradition and modernity – as Dr. *Aurel Vainer*, president of F.J.C.R., remarked in his prefacing words, when he also presented a short curriculum vitae of the lecturer, “*passee partout* in the contemporary Jewish world”. The main ideas of the lecture: ● the Judaism – a way of life; ● more questions than answers, more doubts than certitudes, more visible than invisible; ● the balance between feeling and logic; ● the value of a man is not stated through his birth, but through what he achieves himself; ● the belief in God and in people is a unity, one involving the other; ● to be a Jew = to be an ethical model; ● the essence of Judaism: do not impose on someone else something you wouldn't like to be imposed and the commandments are meant for life, and for death.



## The International Bookfair “GAUDEAMUS” 2007

The International Bookfair “Gaudeamus - Learning Book”, the 14<sup>th</sup> edition, organized on November 21-25, 2007, at Romexpo, was inaugurated by **Maria Toghina**, president general director of the Romanian Broadcast Society, by **Liviu Ion**, director of “Dacia-Renault” Group and **Vlad Epstein**, executive director of the “Gaudeamus” Bookfair. The cultural interest for reading was the shared note of the speeches, even more after the recent survey data that indicated that more than 50%, a surprising number, of the Romanian people never open a book. This is a general state of things for many countries of the world. Still we witnessed a great number of visitors, an increasing number of exhibition stands and of events, the premiere manifestations, and the continuation of a successful tradition. The interest generated by “Hasefer” Publishing House had its roots in the specialty and interesting volumes. “Hasefer” released the monograph on Mihail Sebastian at his centennial, by Iulian Baicus; “Motl the Match Maker”, by Iacov Tihman (Republic of Moldova), translated in Romanian by Theodor Magder; “Lost in America”, by Isac Bashevis Singer. Stefan Iures, writer and director of “Hasefer”, Professor Paul Cornea, Ioan Constantin Popa and Willy Auerbach, literary critics, recommended the volumes. The creativity and the good taste of the organizers transformed this edition too in a pact of the visitors and buyers with the Good and the Beauty.



## The Reinauguration of the «Beth Israel» Synagogue in Ploiesti

The re-inauguration of the “Beth Israel” Synagogue in Ploiesti on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007 began with the revealing of the entrance plate, the installation of the mezuzah, the intonation of the national anthems of Romania and Israel, the ritual songs of the prime cantor Iosif Adler. The messages received from the communities' presidents from Oradea, Arad, Iassy, from the responsible with the provinces section of the Department for the Social and Medical Assistance, from cultural personalities of the city were read. Local authorities, leaders of F.J.C.R., of Joint, presidents of the Jewish communities from Brasov, Piatra Neamt, Focsani honored the re-inauguration. The action belongs to the “program of valorization of our sacred patrimony”, as underlined by Dr. *Aurel Vainer*, president of F.J.C.R., who expressed his gratitude for the aid received from the Romanian government for the renovation of some synagogues, historical monuments. Great Rabbi *Menachem Hacohen* outlined the fact that there is a correspondence between the re-inauguration of some synagogues and the renewal of the Jewish religious life in Romania, young Rabbi *Shlomo Sorin Rosen* being the warrant for this. The mayor *Emil Calota* spoke about the Jewish community, which catalyzes positively the harmonious social collaboration. The ceremony was completed by two lectures on the importance of the synagogue in Diaspora (*Max Kurtzberg*) and on the history of the Jewish community from Ploiesti (*Dr. Laura Geala*). The soul of this renovation, *Gilu Luftaru*, relived moments related to the life of this synagogue. A small concert offered by the students of the Art High School from Ploiesti offered additional emotions to the event.

## The responsibility to ourselves and to the future generations

The three-day Conference “The Fight Against Discrimination and the Promotion of the Mutual Respect and Understanding through Acknowledging the Tragedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Holocaust and Gulag; the New Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” in Comanesti and Slanic Moldova (November 16-18, 2007) included: ● a field seminary – the visit at the School n. 7 from Comanesti, rebuilt with the aid of the “American Jewish Committee” organization and F.J.C.R. after the flood from summer 2005, where a memorial plate was revealed with the participation of the local authorities and the F.J.C.R. president; ● an introductory scientific session



at the Ethnography and Folklore Museum “Dimitrie Ghika”, where the lecturers (teachers of universities and high schools, museum researchers, students) approached the methods of teaching the Holocaust history, considering the education as being the most efficient prophylactic method against the ethnic and religious discrimination; ● a course for knowledge enrichment for the teachers of the Holocaust history in schools organized by researchers from the Center for the Study of the Romanian Jews' History, from the National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania, from the Center for Judaism of the University from Bucharest, by representatives of the civil society. The Conference demonstrated once again the relation between life and memory.



## 30 Years from Foundation of the Center for the Study of the Romanian Jews' History

The 30 years of activity of the Center for the Study of the Romanian Jews' History were celebrated through a three-day scientific session, with remarkable guests from the country and from abroad. The president of F.J.C.R saluted the reunion and appreciated the center creation as an

authentic act of courage for the period. The presentations of the Romanian and foreign researchers revealed many new aspects of the Romanian Jews' and other inedited aspects related to the Jewish studies as well. Inciting debates followed the presentations.

## The World of Otto Adler

In the interview with Professor **Otto Adler**, Sc. D., president of The Association of the Romanian Jews Victims of the Holocaust, the reader has the opportunity to follow the story of an exceptional life. A lucid spirit with a remarkable power, Otto Adler survived in Auschwitz where he was deported at the age of 15, and also in the period after the Second World War, which in Romania, maybe more than in other communist countries, became one of the toughest periods of the contemporary world history, with an astounding steadiness and a smile on his face. As remarked by the interviewer, the courage, the wisdom and the self control of Otto Adler, the intelligence, the detachment and his humor are character traits which not few of us would like to attain; Otto Adler represents a model worth to be followed in a world that lost a significant part of its moral essential references.



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