

SORIN ARHIRE, *The Goga-Cuza government and the "Jewish Problem". British perceptions*

Abstract: The government presided by Octavian Goga was officially appointed on 28 December 1937. The implementation of the promised anti-Jewish policy started already on the second day of this government. The democratic newspapers *Adevărul*, *Dimineața*, and *Lupta*, being considered Jewish, as well as all newspapers published in Yiddish and Hebrew were suspended. On 1 January 1938, although it was a national holiday, Casa Națională de Asigurări (National Insurance House) fired all its Jewish employees, followed by the immediate publication of the list of Romanians who replaced them. These actions were in accordance with the statements of the Labor Minister, Gheorghe Cuza, son of A. C. Cuza, the one who declared that the Romanian was enjoying the right to work, and "from this point of view only those Romanians can be considered as Romanians if they had ethnic Romanian origin, Romanian soul, Romanian blood, and not the Romanian citizens". The government Goga-Cuza exerted its rule by issuing decrees and in one of these forbade the Jews to employ Christian servants under the age of 40, considering that "the Jews using in their homes Romanian women do it in order to draw them into prostitution". A greater influence had the 22 January decree, which stipulated that the citizenship of the Jews in Great Romania was to be revised, regardless of the length of their families' residence in the country. From a total of 203.423 Jewish families which submitted applications for revision of citizenship, 73.253 lost it, representing 36% of the Jewish population of Romania. In view of this surge of anti-Semitism in Romania, the British government had to react, especially because Great Britain subscribed to the Treaty of Protection of Minorities, signed on 9 December 1919, by which Romania accepted the obligation of giving equal terms to all its citizens. The news regarding the violence and persecution of the Jews in Romania disgusted the British public, an unsurprising phenomenon given the sensibility of the English public opinion towards any form of injustice.

The Jews from Romania, and mostly the British Jews, as well as the international Jewish associations reacted to the measures of Goga government, seeking to put pressure on it in order to mitigate its anti-Semitic policy. There were numerous complaints addressed to the international organization from Geneva. The Universal Israelite Alliance, the International Jewish Congress, the Committee for the Defense of Jew's Rights in Central and Eastern Europe, centered in Paris, the Jewish minority in Romania submitted documents which described the persecutions of the Jewish population in Romania. There was even a protest signed by the representatives of women working in industry in Great Britain, organizations which spoke in the name of 1,5 million persons.

On 10 February 1938, after 44 days in power, Octavian Goga presented his resignation, as requested by King Charles II. However, through its policy towards the national minorities, the government of the National-Christian Party represented a turning point in the interwar Romanian history. Even though it did not have the time necessary for the implementation of its projects, its "heritage" was employed by the next governments from Romania.

Keywords: anti-Semitism, decrees, Great Britain, Romania, League of Nations, Charles II.