

FOREWORD

Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Roma, Ukrainians, Turks, Tatars, Albanians, Armenians, Bulgarians, Croats, Greeks, Jews, Italians, Poles, Lippovan Russians, Serbs, Slovaks, Czechs, Macedonians, Ruthenians – they are citizens of Romania in 2005 and before long citizens of the European Union. Romania's large array of national minorities, who intermingled for centuries with the majority population, inspired us to conceive Romania as a small scale reproduction of the European mosaic of ethnicities, languages, cultures, beliefs and traditions. This is why we intituled this book *Romania, a Europe in miniature*.

We are bound to Europe through the respect and the openness towards ethno-cultural diversity and the commitment to the same values; therefore we believe in the value we can add to the European human and cultural heritage. Since this is a book about national minorities, it is worth mentioning that the Romanian experience in managing interethnic relations is internationally recognised as a positive practice. Cooperation with other countries and European institutions and organisations in the field is extremely rewarding.

The statute of national minorities in Romania is carefully observed since it is one of the political criteria Romania needed to fulfil for accession to the European Union. The steps taken so far have been appreciated accordingly and brought Romania closer to the integration in the European Union. *We dedicate this publication to the event of 25 April 2005 when Romania signed the Treaty for accession to the European Union, an event celebrated both by majority population and national minorities.*

We thank all who made a contribution to producing this publication, launched on Europe Day and included in the *Diversity Week in Romania*. We thank the European Commission for the support in publishing this book, which is a statement – we hope – that we all are *For Diversity, Against Discrimination*.

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Romania, a Europe in miniature Brief presentation of national minorities.

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The Albanians

“Close cousins of the Romanians” if we are to believe Iorga, the Albanians have been present for many centuries on Romanian territory where they have been living in good peace and friendship. It is here where they could organize and start the national liberation movement. However, nowadays the number of Albanians living in Romania is very little and they struggle to keep their specific language and culture.

Brief historical background

Descending from the old Iliri, the Albanians are the ancient inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula, being here long before the coming of the Slavs. They knew and they were part of the Greek, Roman and Byzantine civilizations, and afterwards they were under the domination of the Ottoman Empire for five centuries, domination that led to a process of complete islamization of this people.

In an important moment of East-European history, at Kossopolje, in 1389, in the battle of the Christian Balkan peoples against the Turks we will find the Albanians fighting on the same side as the other Christian populations. Another crucial moment is marked by the 15th century, when under the ruling of the national hero - Gheorghe Castiotul Skanderbeu, most of the Albanian feudal principalities united temporarily in an independent Albania, with the capital at Kruja. In the fight against the Turks' advancing in Europe, the project of a junction between the Christian armies led by Skanderbeu and those of Iancu of Hunedoara was registered.

After Skanderbeu's death in 1468, there starts the process of disintegration of independent Albania and at the same time the process of emigration of the Albanians who didn't want to

remain under the domination of the Ottoman Empire. Many Albanians took to Italy, especially those from the northern Balkan territories belonging to the rich walks of society: noblemen, military and religious leaders, intellectuals and merchants. They took with them goods of the cultural and national patrimony so as not to get in the possession of the Ottomans.

Others took to the Romanian countries, the first paper to mention the presence of Albanians on Romanian territories dating from 12/24 March 1595, written by Giovanni de Marini Poli, the messenger of the Habsburg emperor Rudolf the 2nd in the Romanian countries, sent from Alba Iulia to Bartolomeu Pezen, imperial counsellor at the court of Wien. This paper shows that Mihai Viteazul allowed a number of 15,000 Albanian souls (men with their families) to settle down in the north of the Danube, in the Romanian Principality. It is considered to be the first paper that proves the beginning of the existence of Albanians as a distinct community on Romanian territories. For the next two centuries the documents refer to Albanians (mercenaries) and Albanian merchants, to the reign of the voivodes from the Ghicas and to the reign of the prince of Moldavia, Vasile Lupu, also named the Albanian (1634-1635). In 1602, the voivode Simion Movila renewed in an act the privileges offered by Mihai Viteazul to the Albanians settled in Calinesti village, Prahova county, acquitting them from tributes and taxes for another ten years.

Thus, attested for over 400 years on the present Romanian territory, the Albanian community has been an active and remarked presence all this time. As they came from the Romanian countries because of the persecutions of the Ottoman administration, the Albanians, especially the soldiers, merchants, and high officials will easily integrate in the political and cultural life due to some similarities of the language and habits. Named by Nicolae Iorga “close cousins of the Romanians”, the Albanians will become here merchants, artisans and skilful workers, mercenaries in the royal guards, men of science and culture. In the cities, the Albanians were especially tradesmen, owner of restaurants, confectioners, grocers, many of them becoming intellectuals.

But the golden century of the Albanian community is considered to be the 19th century. At the time, Bucharest was an important centre of support for the liberation movement and national rebirth of the Balkan peoples. The Albanians in Romania took part in the revolutionary movement in 1821, both in Tudor Vladimirescu’s army as well as in Alexandru Ipsilanti’s (a Greek prince).

The patriot and scholar Naum Panajot Veqilhaergi, native of southern Albania, but one of the most respectable citizens of Braila, will be a forerunner of the movement for Albania’s national rebirth, known as Rilindja Kombetare Shqiptare. He will also be the author and the publisher of the first Albanian primer, published in Romania in 1844.

The Romanian Princess of Albanian origin Elena Ghica (1828-1888, known as Dora d’Istria) published many articles to make known the Albanian national cause to the public opinion. She also drew up the first monograph of the Albanians in Romania, entitled “Gli albanesi in Rumenia” published in Florence in 1873.

In the volume “The history of the Albanian community in Romania”(1992) the scholar Gelu Maksutovici says about Dora d’Istria that “she is the most brilliant star on the sky of unhappy Albania”, carrying on a tenacious and laborious activity in defending the national rights of the

Balkan peoples, as well as acting towards women's emancipation and expanding knowledge of the folklore in this region.

After the Congress of Peace in Berlin (1878) which refused to take into account the requests regarding the autonomy of Albanian territories, the League from Prizren in Kosovo was formed, acting as national government, but was defeated by the Ottoman military intervention. The Albanians from Romania will form cultural societies with the obvious aim of supporting the Albanian National Liberation movement. These cultural societies will operate on a cultural and political level in order to acquire the state independence of Albania.

In this period the number of Albanians increases to over 30,000, inhabiting especially cities like Bucharest, Braila, Constanta, Ploiesti, Craiova, Calarasi, Iasi, Focsani. They are registered as merchants, craftsmen, but also as doctors, lawyers, architects, constructors as well as mercenaries (guardians in the boyars' guards). Among the Albanian cultural societies in Romania we mark out "The Albanian Writing Society" founded in 1881 as a branch of the one in Constantinople, "Drita" (The Light) society 1884 with branches in many more towns, under whose care functioned a normal school training teachers that were sent to the Albanian schools in Albania as well as to an Albanian-Romanian institute.

The tradition of Albanian publications starts in the 19th century, when books of major importance for the Albanian culture were published in Romania.

In 1881 the renaissance scholar Jani Vreto (1820-1900) came from Constantinople to Bucharest to lay the foundations of the first printing house that was to print books in the Albanian language. Here, the Albanian poet Naim Frasheri published for the first time his literary works that constituted the foundation of the Albanian literature. It was then that many publications were published, among which the newspaper "Drita" in Braila, 1887, publication followed a year later by the magazine "Shqiptari" (The Albanian), published by the Albanian national patriot Nikolla Nacio. All these publications were in the Albanian and Romanian and they were spread in the Albanian Diaspora. The society "Dituria" (Science) founded in 1887, but others too, played an important role in the printing of history and literature textbooks. All these societies merged in 1906 under the name of "Bashkimi" (The Union).

The greatest Albanian poet of the 20th century, Lasgush Padeci (1899-1987) publishes his first two volumes of verses at Constanta and Bucharest. Victor Eftimiu is another name that cannot be ignored. Born in 1889 in Bobosita (Albania), Eftimiu and his family will establish in Romania where, through his literary work, over 200 thousands verses, of which 1180 sonnets – he became an important Romanian writer of Albanian origin.

In 1905 an Albanian school is founded in Constanta under the care of Dr. Ibraim Temo, which functioned with day and evening classes, especially for training the newly come Albanians. Among the teachers of this school there was also Asdreni (Aleks Stavri Denova) who became secretary of the Albanian Community. It was he who drew up at the beginning of November 1912 the official report of the Albanians' gathering in Bucharest, where, under Ismail Qemali's leadership the decision to declare Albania's state independence was taken (28 November 1912).

The Albanians in Romania supported the National Liberation Movement and the State Independence of Albania. Beside Naum Veqilharzi, the author of a manifesto of national awakening, Ioan Mihailide and other Albanians in Bucharest sent money to support the Albanian schools of Albanian language and the societies "Drita" and "Dituria" published books about the Albanian patriots and spread them to the Albanians all over the world. Last but not least Dr. Ibrahim Temorea, acknowledged as a supporter of the Enlightenment not only by the Albanians but also by the whole Muslim world of Dobrogea, stimulated the Albanians' unity for achieving the country's independence, starting with 1905, under Prince Albert Ghica's leadership.

After the World War I, the coming of a new wave of Albanians was discerned, coming from all the Albanian territories, but especially from the Yugoslavian Macedonia on economic reasons, but also in order to study in the Romanian schools. This time they settled in towns from Transylvania, such as Oradea, Cluj, Medias, Sibiu, Sighetul Marmatiei, Baia-Mare, Targu-Mures, as workers and artisans (sellers of millet beer and confectioners). During the inter-war period, many of the Albanian intellectuals were trained in Romania, some of them holding important positions in Albania. The merchant Pandeli Vangheli became Prime-minister and President of the Senate, and Dimitrie Berati became Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The life of the Albanian Community was invigorated especially in Bucharest and Constanta by the activity of the "Bashkimi" society, but also of others founded on religious and geographical criteria. Among the publications of this time it is worth mentioning "Shqipëria e Re" (The New Albania) published continuously between 1919 and 1935.

Current affairs

Starting with the Communist regime in Romania the life of the community here deteriorated continuously, especially after the abusive abolition of the last organization of the Albanians in Romania in 1953. At the same time the borders were closed, family relations were broken, some Albanians emigrated to the U.S.A. or Turkey, and others went back to Yugoslavia (especially those who had come from Macedonia).

After World War II there was no publication to contain information about the life of the community, and some Albanians, afraid of the national oppressions feared to acknowledge their nationality. Only in Bucharest, at the initiative of several intellectuals short manifestations were organized on the occasion of the Independence Day of Albania.

Under these circumstances, unsurprisingly, the life of the Albanian minority degraded continuously and was reflected in the permanent numeric reduction. So, if in 1893 there were almost 30,000 Albanians in Romania and in 1920 almost 20,000 in Bucharest only, in 2002, according to the results of the latest census, only 447 admitted their ethnical affiliation (below 0.10 0/0 from the population of Romania).

After 1990, part of the Albanian community in Romania grouped around the Cultural Union of the Albanians (founded on 24th may, 1990) that was active culturally by publishing books and magazines and organizing manifestations. It printed "The Albanian" (a newspaper) and published the yearly periodical of the same name. 1996 meant the entry in the Romanian Parliament of the deputy chosen by UCAR, Oana Manolescu. In 1999 the association the League of the Albanians

in Romania (ALAR) was set up, whose president became Professor Oana Manolescu. In 2002 the parliamentary elections were won by this association, which also became member of the Council for National Minorities. In 2004 ALAR won the elections again through its president.

Starting with July 2001 ALAR has received the financial support of the Romanian Government for activities to promote the culture and traditions of the Albanian community. Even from its foundation, ALAR has been concerned with solving the social and humanitarian situation of the Albanian natives in Romania. Another concern that the organization has tended to is that of facilitating accommodation for the pupils and students who came to study in our country.

Even from 1999 ALAR initiated an ample activity of identification and promotion of the cultural inheritance of its forerunners. It has organized socio-cultural meetings in towns where Albanians acted as an active minority (Bucharest, Constanta, Craiova, Ploiesti, Giurgiu, and Rm. Valcea.) ALAR has organized exhibitions of plastic arts, book launches, shows and specific manifestations. It has taken part in festivals of minorities among which the most important is ProEtnica from Sighisoara.

The League of the Albanians has published, through its own publishing house – Privirea (The Look), volumes of translations, feature reports and interviews, prose and poems of its members. The Song Ensemble “Serenade” has promoted in the last 4 years Albanian country music in concerts and shows, while the dance ensemble brought in front of the Romanian public dances specific to the folkloric regions in Albania. ALAR publishes every month the magazine “The Albanian’s Friend” in the pages of which the cultural traditions of the community are promoted as well as the literature, the history of this ethnic group and of the Albanian people, the ancient connections between the two peoples.

As for their religious affiliation they are in a great part Christians. Most of the families come from Korcea town and its neighbourhood.

Language, holidays and national symbols

The Albanian language (shqipe) is an Indo-European language with particularities of Illir origin, with two dialects (tosk and gheg) united in one literary language in the latest centuries. The Albanians from the south of this country speak the tosk dialect, and those from the north, in Macedonia and Kosovo, speak the gheg dialect. Presently they struggle to learn the present literary language.

The red flag with the two-headed eagle was adopted by the “Bashkimi” (the Union) society, with the society’s inscription on top. From the first decade of the 20th century the Albanian flag was raised on important Romanian and Albanian holidays at the residences of the Albanian cultural societies or at different manifestations.

The Albanian national anthem is “Cantecul steagului” (The Flag’s Song), text written by the Albanian poet from Romania, Asdreni (Aleks Stavri Drenova) on the notes of the song “Pe-al nostru steag e scris unire” (Union is written on our flag) of the Romanian composer Ciprian Porumbescu. It was sung in Bucharest for the first time in 1907, being adopted by the Albanians in 1912 as national anthem at the proclamation of State independence.

On 28th of November, “the Day of the Flag” the proclamation of State independence of Albania (The National Day) is celebrated.

On 23rd of April – St. George’s Day - Gheorghe Costariotul- Skanderbeu’s name day is celebrated, his equestrian portrait being compared to St George’s icon. The Albanians also keep the Christian orthodox holidays such as Easter and Christmas as well as the Muslim ones: Kurban, Bayram and Ramazam Bayram. These are occasions of mutual visits, congratulations, common parties, equally respecting the traditions.

The Albanians from Romania honour their monuments and institutions: we mention here Victor Eftimiu’s bust in front of his former house in Bucharest and the Orthodox Church “Dintr-o zi” (Bucharest) that was used by orthodox Albanians between 1912 and 1947.

The Armenians

Proud people with oriental features reflecting the border between Europe and Asia, profoundly religious, with merchant's and diplomatic proved skills- that helped them survive against the vicissitudes of life- the Armenians are one of the minorities with a very visible and appreciated presence in Romania.

Historical background

In 301 Armenia becomes the first Christian state in the world. Subdued to the vicissitudes of history, many Armenians will leave in exile, the first Armenian colonies on the Romanian territory being those from Moldavia, that probably date from the 9th century, when merchants used the way of transit from southern Poland, through Moldavia to the Black Sea.

As a consequence the first Moldavian voivodes (the 14th century) invited them to contribute to the economic development of the towns, with that end in view, offering them medieval privileges. Till the 17th century, the trade controlled by the Armenians offered the Moldavian State an important income. In the towns with a high number of Armenians, they had the right to elect their mayor, Botosani being managed both by Romanians and Armenians. On the frontispiece of the Armenian Church in Iasi there is the oldest lithographic documentary attestation of the Moldavian town. Despite the merchant's traditions, some of the Armenians became landowners; others became artisans and owners of manufactures.

Extremely important is the monument of Alexander the Good, Prince of Moldavia, from 30 July 1401, by whom the Bishopric of the Armenian Church was founded in Suceava. From 1401 until now the Romanian counties have been shepherded by 41 high prelates (bishops and archbishops).

In Muntenia the Armenians came in the second half of the 16th century, establishing themselves in Bucharest, where an Armenian school was founded in 1800, Pitesti, Craiova. In the Principalities the Armenians obtained civil rights in 1858, when the Conference from Paris of the seven great guarantor powers of the Romanian Countries stipulated that the United Principalities admitted the equality in rights of the citizens belonging to different confessions.

The presence of the Armenians in Transylvania is attested at the time when Hungary was Christianized (the 10th – 11th centuries). In a 1281 document of the Hungarian King Ludovic the 4th "Terra Armenorum" and an Armenian monastery in Ardeal are mentioned. To avoid conflicts with other traders, the Armenians founded autonomous towns - Gherla (Armenopolis) and Dumbraveni (Elisabethopolis) in the context of the extension of the Habsburg domination in Transylvania. But the Austrian authorities conditioned the granting of these rights on their conversion to Catholicism and a great part of Armenians submitted. The two Armenian towns were declared free royal towns in 1711 (Gherla) and 1733 respectively (Dumbraveni), having the right to administrate themselves, to have trial courts and their own laws, to have free commercial relations with foreign countries, to organize fairs/ emporiums being subjected to the Prince of

Transylvania only from a military and financial point of view. Only some religious traditions have been kept; even today, in the Armenian Catholic churches the liturgy is held in the Armenian language, though the believers don't understand it anymore. In 1931 the Bishopric of the Armenian Church in Romania, with residence in Bucharest, was set up again.

Current affairs

According to the 2002 census the number of the Armenians in Romania is lower than 1780 (under 0,1% of the population), lower than the 1957 counted in the 1992 census. Most Orthodox Armenians live in Bucharest and in Constanta (almost 1400), and others of Catholic belief in Transylvania.

In 1990 after the fall of the communist regime, in Bucharest the Armenian Union from Romania (AUR) was reactivated as a non-profit organization with a socio-cultural character.

Politically the representatives of the Armenian Union from Romania played an important role in the Commission for Minorities of the National Front of Salvation (1990), in the decision regarding the representation by three representatives in the Provisional Council of the National Union of each national minority legally constituted. The Armenian Community is one of the minorities represented in Parliament even from the first legislative body (1990-1992). In the parliamentary debates the Armenian ethnics' representatives had an extremely important role in the inclusion in the Constitution, and later in the electoral law, of the right of the national minority organizations to be represented in Parliament.

Part of the AUR are a publishing house and a printing house that have published over 90 titles of books written by or about Armenians; the publishing of the first text books of Armenian language, history and religion is worth mentioning. The Union manages a system of social benefits by which the elderly are assisted, as well as students. After a 30-year-break, the Armenian school reopened its gates. The AUR organizes constantly numerous cultural events, school and community festivals.

The periodical publications (appeared in Bucharest) "Nor Ghiank" (both in Armenian and Romanian), "Ararat" (bimonthly Romanian publication) have been continuously published for fifteen years. The Romanian Radio-Broadcast Society through the Constanta territorial studio broadcasts 30 minutes in Armenian.

Armenians gave birth to numerous personalities who became remarkable in the field of culture (Garabet Ibraileanu, Gheorghe Asaki, K Zambaccian, Ioana Kassargian, Cik Damian, Grigore Trancu-Iasi, Virgil Madjearu, Vasile Mortun, Manuc Bey Mirzaian, Arax Savargian, Gabris Zobian, Vasile Conta, David Ohanesian, Anda Calugareanu), science (dr. Dumitu Bagdasar, Ana Aslan), politics (Varujan Vosganian- senator, Varujan Pambuccian- deputy) and not only. Varujan Pambuccian was re-elected again in 2004 as the representative of the Armenian minority in the Romanian Parliament.

Important events

15 August represents for the Armenian minority from Romania a most important religious holiday, being celebrated at the monastery with the *Assumption of the Virgin* patronage, in Hagigadar, near Suceava. During this holiday, which has become traditional in the 18th century, to have their wishes come true the Romanian and foreign pilgrims climb the hill on their knees, and go round the monastery three times. After the service all those who arrive at Hagigadar monastery are served a traditional Armenian soup of the so-called “urechiuse” and traditional pilaff and meat.

Another religious reference is the 30th of July when the Armenian clergy celebrates the foundation of the Armenian Bishopric in Suceava, in 1401.

When it comes to religion we should not avoid mentioning the problem of retrocession of the properties that belonged to religious cults before 1989, which is possible according to law 501/2002. The representatives of the cults are confronted with problems related to the normative system, the collaboration with local authorities, and last but not least with the specificity of each retrocession file. Such a case is Ana Melik house, presently the Theodor Pallady Museum that is claimed by the Armenian community.

The trial had started before the law came into force, when the Armenian Church asked the abolition of the document of donation by which the house of Ana Melik became State property. In the early 1900 the house was donated to the Armenian Church to provide shelter for old Armenian women (it was used to this purpose for a while).

The house of Ana Melik hosts now Theodor Pallady Museum, which is a part of the National Museum of Art. It is the oldest building in Bucharest preserved in its initial forms, dating since 1760, according to the data of the National Museum of Art.

Even though it has no religious character, one of the most tragic events in the history of the Armenians is related to the commemoration of the holocaust of this people.

Every year, on the 24th of April the moment when in 1915 the nationalist regime of the “Young Turks” decides the deportation of the whole Armenian population in the deserts of Syria, Iraq, and Arabia, is commemorated.

Every year, on the 24th of April the all-over Armenian community honours the memory of the victims of those tragic events that took place between 1915 and 1920, which were called the first genocide of the 20th century.

The Bulgarians

The southern neighbour of our country for many centuries, the Bulgarians are not to be found in great number in Romania, where they form a differentiated community, religiously speaking, united by language and cultural traditions.

Brief historical presentation

The Bulgarians from Banat- Romania, also named Bulgarians from Banat or “pavlicheni”-Bulgarians represent one of the oldest Bulgarian Diaspora in the world, certainly being the oldest in Romania.

At the time of their emigration from Bulgaria to Tara Romaneasca and later to Transylvania and Banat, the Bulgarians’ ancestors (oppressed by the Ottoman Empire) had not only skilful and clever leaders but also great strategists.

These Bulgarians who emigrated from Bulgaria, from historical reasons at the end of the 17th century – in order not to be practically destroyed by the Ottoman Empire, in order to survive as a nationality, to keep their belief – were from the north of Bulgaria, especially from Cyprus, Nikopole and its neighbourhood.

The Bulgarians from Ciprovti named “Ciprovceni” dealt with gardening and trades, being skilful goldsmiths, whereas the Bulgarians from Nikopole and its afferent zones, named “pavlicheni”-Bulgarians, practiced both agriculture and gardening.

Both the former and the latter were of Romano-Catholic belief and fervent believers. They all had the same destiny, travelled the same odyssey - starting with their emigration from Bulgaria, crossing the Danube towards north, in Tara Romaneasa where they were welcomed by Constantin Brancoveanu; because of the impending Ottoman danger they established themselves in Transylvania and Ardeal. The “pavlicheni”-Bulgarians, native of Nikopole and its neighbourhood, founded in 1738 a settlement named Bresnova Veche (Old Bresnova) the present Duestii Vechi (Timis county). In 1741 Bulgarians coming from Cipovit set up a locality, Vinga, nowadays in the Arad county, that gained in that time the title of town - Theresiopolis by an order given by empress Maria Tereza.

After several decades, at the end of the 18th century and all along the 19th century, the Bulgarians settled in Banat, Duestii Vechi and Vinga created other localities or settled down in other localities from the historical Banat of that time. Thus we can enumerate the following localities: Bresta, Denta, Telepa (the present Colonia Bulgara-the Bulgarian Colony), presently, all these being situated in Banat - Romania; Ivanovo, Lisenhaim or Torontal Erzsebetlak (present Belo Blato) , Nemet - Ecska, Modos, Lukacsfalva, Kanak, Dzvarniak (Rogendorf), Veliki Becskerek in the Serbian Banat and last but not least Szenthubert (Suntuber), Szeged, Budapest in Hungary.

In the 20th century compact masses of Bulgarians from Banat can be found in Romania not only in Dudestii Vechi, Colonia Bulgara, Brestea, Denta, Vinga but also in the towns: Sannicolau Mare, Deta, Arad and Timisoara counties - urban settlements relatively close to the already mentioned.

It is also in the 20th century – in a certain historical situation - the Treaty from Craiova - that part of the Bulgarians from Banat who had expressed their wish had the possibility to go back officially to their ancient home, Bulgaria. The Bulgarians from Dudestii Vechi settled down in Bardaski, Gheran, Gostilia, Dragomirovo (localities in Bulgaria), whereas those coming from Vinga established themselves in the Bulgarian locality Asenovo. Nowadays, the Bulgarians as national minority acknowledged in Romania keep and develop their own culture and civilization. We would also like to mention the existence of the isolated Bulgarians from Banat who neither ignore nor deny their origin, no matter where they are in Europe or in the world.

All along their odyssey- a journey full of vicissitudes - the emigrating Bulgarians from Bulgaria set up their first organization - “Corul de cantece bisericesti”(The Choir of Religious Songs) in 1688, year that marks the beginning of emigration from Bulgaria. After a while, when they had already settled down in Besenova Veche (1738) and Vinga (1741), they organized “Corul de cantece bisericesti” (The Choir of Religious Songs) in Besenova Veche (1738) and in 1742 - “Organizatia corala din Vinga” (The Choir Organization in Vinga). It is now that the country song ensembles came into being in these localities.

After several years organizations like “Fratia” (The Brotherhood), “Asociatia Agricola” (The Agricultural Association), “Canarii” (the Canaries) - song ensemble, were founded. “Organizatia dascalilor” (The Teachers’ Organization) and “Formatia de pompieri voluntari” (The Voluntary Firemen’s Band) - in Vinga. In Besenova Veche they organized: “Ansamblul de cantece populare” (The Country Song Ensemble)- man’s choir, “Sezatoarea” (The Social) - theater group, “Fanfara”(The Fanfare - formed by wind instrumentalists), “Asociatia mestesugarilor de pe langa Casinoul din Besenova Veche” (The Association of the artisans near the casino in Besenova Veche), “Asociatia de invatamant, instruire, educatie a dascalilor” (The Teachers’ Association of teaching, training and education), “Formatia de pompieri” (The Firemen’s Band), “Asociatia de intrajutorare comerciala” (The Commercial Mutual Aid Association), “Sport- Besenova Veche”, football and skittles association. Later on, organizations, ensembles, associations, and bands were formed in the following Bulgarian villages: Brestea, Denta, Colonia Bulgara (Telepa), Ivanovo, Lukinoselo, Belo Blato (Liznait) and Modos (the present-day Jasa Tomici).

In Brestea, a village with an almost exclusively Bulgarian population the following organisations were set up as part of the Town Hall: “Organizatia bisericasca” (The Church Organization), “Ansamblul de cantece laice, dansuri populare si teatru popular” (The Ensemble of Secular Songs, country songs and theatre), the song ensemble “Vocea din Brestea” (The Voice from Brestea), and like in the other villages “Formatia de pompieri” (The Firemen’s Band). In Denta, the Song, Dance and Humour Ensemble “Sezatoarea” (The Social) was set up as part of the Town Hall.

In Colonia Bulgara (Telepa), the County Songs Ensemble was conducted by the well-known Anton Calapis. The Association of the Agricultural Mechanics was also set up. In the historical Banat, copying the already existing pattern from Besenova Veche, different cultural and

economic organizations were formed. For instance, in the localities with Bulgarian population from the present Serbian Banat such as the Bulgarian district from Modos the Coral and Theatrical Ensemble was organized.

All along their peregrination, starting with their emigration from a dominated Bulgaria, crossing the Danube, wandering through Transylvania and Ardeal, finally settling down in Banat, the Bulgarians travelled a road full of dangers. However, despite this, they had the strength and wisdom to form and consolidate organizations like the above mentioned. It is remarkable that the Bulgarians formed on the territory of the present Romanian Banat many public institutions, schools, churches and church foundations that were meant to satisfy the spiritual, material and social needs of their daily life.

To emphasize the already mentioned things, we could also underline - apart from the imposing Romano-Catholic churches that the Bulgarians built in the localities from Banat, the churches from Alvint (Vintul de jos) and Deva, churches built with the accept of the bishop of Belgrad, after 1724.

The building of these two churches as well as two others, previously built, was possible due to the financial support and the efforts of the ancestors of the Bulgarians from Banat. It is worth mentioning the families involved: Puenin, Kaciamagov, Petrandenov. The wealthier Bulgarians from Banat together with the whole community they were part of created a multitude of Bulgarian foundations. The series of philanthropic foundations is remarkable because it marks the importance paid to the preservation and development of the national conscience of the Bulgarians from Banat.

An incursion in the history of the Bulgarians from Banat, having as starting point their ancestors' resistance against the Ottoman subjection, continuing with their odyssey to Banat, and last but not least with their gradual evolution could provide the subject for an interesting encyclopaedic paper.

A detailed presentation, including all field of life (culture and civilization) can be found fragmentarily in different articles and books.

Among the Bulgarians from Banat - good, hard working men, there were also intelligent people, genuine coryphaeus. Throughout history, the Bulgarians from Banat, as a national minority, from their settling to nowadays, have made an essential contribution to the national rebirth and prosperity of both the Bulgarian localities and Timisoara county, from a social, economic, educative and scientific point of view.

No one can deny the blessing of the national Bulgarian minority established in Banat, a rich, fertile, picturesque zone. They were gifted with the capacity for work, tolerance, loyalty and open-mindedness in their relations with other citizens, no matter their nationality or belief. The Bulgarians succeeded in keeping these features without pondering over the political context. They were remarkable farmers, talented gardeners, gifted artisans, as well as veritable intellectuals. Among the personalities from the times of the exodus and their settling in Banat we would like to mention Bogdanov, Stanislavici, Peiacevici, Parcevici, Gheorge Kaciamag, Nicolae Stanislavici, the Tomianins, the Bibicis, Stefan Duniov, the Topiciovs, the teachers Toma Dragan, Iacob Rancov, Telbis, Leopold Kasilkov, the poet Sofia Hailemans, Toma Dragan, the

notary Anton Ciocan the academician Eusebius Fermendjin, doctor in law Karol Telbis- imperial councillor and mayor of Timisoara between 1884-1914, doctor Lehel Telbis, chorister Ivan Frmendjin, agricultural engineer Anton Dermendjin, Francisc Stepanov, Florian Stepanov, doctor Petru Telbis, Peter Serban, Anton Avreli- doctor in economics, Karol Telbis- professor and journalist, Luca Uzun – journalist.

A survey of the activities undertaken by doctor in law Karol Telbis would be telling for the above mentioned things. Karol Telbis was a scholar of his epoch. He was born in 1852 in Cenad Timisoara county (dead in 1914, buried in the graveyard from Cetate district, Timisoara). His parents were Bulgarian natives from Besenova Veche. His family, having an average social level, being artisans, struggled for their son to become a learned man. Karol Telbis was the mayor of Timisoara for 29 years. Bulgarian of Romano-Catholic belief, Karol Telbis graduated the Faculty of Law, becoming lawyer with a title of “doctor in juridical sciences”. However he chose an administrative career. According to the customs of those times, in order to become a famous representative of the public life of Timisoara, a person had to have a noble title. Thus, Karol Telbis, coming from a village family, was given the aristocratic title of “nemes” by the Imperial Palace in Vienna thanks to his personal talents. The Hungarian demands of the epoch aimed that the persons involved in a public position should re-adapt their names. Karol Telbis didn’t agree to deny his roots, refusing to change his surname.

The only thing that he agreed with was the nickname “Besenoveanul” –“Obesenyoi”, near his name. The nickname revealed his origin (from Besenova Veche). His name became Obesenyoi dr. Telbis Karol. This underlines one of his moral features - dignity.

His moral qualities, his human feelings and his struggle for perfection in the professional field were important factors that propelled him in the public life and were decisive in his periodical re-election as mayor of Timisoara. Thus, he made proof of excellent leading skills in the administrative field, substantially contributing to the socio-economic development of Timisoara, being esteemed and appreciated by its inhabitants.

Without inheritors he gave his life fortune for the development and prosperity of the city whose competent counsellor he was. Both in the inter-war and post-war period, the Bulgarians from Banat – loyal citizens of Romania and dignified representatives of their class – lived in harmony together with the other citizens without considering their class affiliation, belief, etc. They also developed prolific socio-economic, cultural activities.

It is important to remind the organization of the “Primul comitet al bulgarilor banateni” 1938-1939 (beside different organizations, associations, and foundations with certain lucrative fields) that aimed at a more efficient cohesion of the Bulgarians from Banat. The publication “Glasul Bulgarului Banatean” (The voice of the Bulgarian from Banat), journal of the Bulgarian minority from Banat in the inter-war times, widely recounted the beneficial initiative of the Committee, whose initiators were: Dr. Petru Telbis – president, lawyer Anton Lebanov – vice – president, Karol Telbis, PhD economics – secretary, Ivan Fermendjin – president of the cultural department, engineer Anton Dermedjin – president of the agricultural department, Nicolae Lebanov – cashier, “Twtka” (Hailemans Sofica) – president of the social department.

During 1845-1989 different activities, especially cultural and artistic programmes were organized.

There are also Orthodox Bulgarians in Muntenia and Oltenia. Their destiny is strongly related to that of the mother-country, both geographically and religiously. Like their Catholic brothers, the ancestors of the Orthodox Bulgarians from Romania emigrated in the north of the Danube, during the wars against the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century. On the other hand, some of them were interested in finding better social conditions. According to the official statistics, in 1838, in Tara Romaneasca 11,652 immigrating Bulgarian families were registered, almost 100,000 persons. Considering the socio-cultural relations and the good- neighbour policy, the Romanian Principalities played an extremely important role in the Bulgarian movement of national liberation. Bulgarian national heroes such as Vasil Levski, Hristo Botev, Liuben Karavelov and Gheorghii Rakovski lived a long time in Bucharest and Braila where they printed Bulgarian publications and organized armed groupings that infiltrated in the south of the Danube. The first Cyrillic primer is printed in 1824, in Transylvania, Brasov, and in 1869, in Braila, the Bulgarian Literary Society, The future Bulgarian Academy, was founded.

The process of natural assimilation of the Bulgarians from Muntenia and Oltenia was more emphasized than of the Bulgarians from Banat; thus, at the 1992 census only 2000 people declared their belonging to this community.

Current Affairs

According to the 2002 census, the number of Romanian citizens of Bulgarian origin was 8025 (less than 0.10 per cent) than 9821 (again less than 0.10 per cent) recorded at the 1992 census. Most of them live in the west part of the country, in Banat, almost two thirds in Timis county and 10 per cent in Arad county. The others are located in the south of the country: 10 per cent in Dimbovita , as well as in Bucharest, Constanta and Tulcea counties.

Nowadays this population is composed of two main communities, different from a historical, cultural and organizational point of view: the Bulgarians of Catholic belief from Banat, and the Bulgarians of Orthodox belief from the south of Romania, respectively from Oltenia and Muntenia.

These two groups of the Bulgarian Diaspora share common features such as the ethnical origin, the agrarian character and some similarities in the traditional culture. However they differentiate from one another not only geographically or religiously but also from certain cultural particularities and specific dialects, historic destiny and the way of keeping their ethnical character. There are also Bulgarians in the north of the country, in Sighetul Marmatiei, part of the amount of 0.55 per cent of the minorities in the town, together with the Jewish, German, Slovenian, Czech, Armenian people living here.

Since the fall of the communist regime in 1989, the Bulgarians from Romania benefit from the State financial and material help, of a coherent framework for the development the activities meant to keep the national identity. Two organizations emerged on religious and geographical grounds. The Bulgarian Union from Banat –Romania having its headquarters in Timisoara, was

founded in Banat, whereas in Bucharest the Bulgarian Cultural Association was initially registered, and later turned into “Brastvo” – the community of the Bulgarians from Romania. The Bulgarian Union from Banat was constituted in Timisoara, on the 31st of December, 1989, on the suggestion of a Bulgarian group from Banat, led by professor Ivanciov Carol- Matei. On the 5th of March, by the effects of the sentence 87/1990 of Timisoara Trial Court, the Union gained legal personality.

According to the post-1989 constitutional warrants, the Bulgarian minority takes part actively in the Romanian political life, being ensured a place in the Chamber of Deputies starting with the first legislation 1990-1992. The Bulgarians were alternatively represented by both communities. During 1990-1996 the representative of the Bulgarian minority in the Chamber of Deputies, was the president of the Bulgarian Union from Banat, Carol Ivanciov. At the 1996 elections the Bulgarian minority gained a place in the Romanian Parliament by the representative of “Brastvo” Community, Florin Simion who got 5395 votes given the 4114 votes of the Union. In the 2000 vote, Petru Mirciov was elected representative of the Bulgarian minority, running for UBB-R. Four years later Nicolae Mircovici became deputy.

Financially speaking the amount for 2002 for the Bulgarian minority was almost 6 thousand millions lei, whereas in 2004 it was 8.6 thousand million lei.

Mother tongue education

Even from the period of their emigration, the Bulgarians realized that a dignified future could be ensured by the education of the young generations.

The first teachers were priests and the enlightened people of the community. When they settled down in Banat, they immediately built schools and churches. The most famous, by their greatness and beauty, are the Romano-Catholic church in Duestii Vechi and the Romano-Catholic cathedral in Vinga, both historical monuments and symbols of this people’s creative spirit. We must underline the fact that in all the localities founded by Bulgarians from Banat, or others where they settled down, there were built churches that even today prove the strong belief of a nation oppressed so many times by the vicissitudes of history.

The first schools founded by the Bulgarians from Banat existed near churches and parishes. Later the secular education was separated from the religious one and the schools were out of the guardianship of the Church.

The first teachers in the Bulgarian schools were genuine apostles of sciences and culture for the Bulgarian children and teenagers. These teachers trained many generations of young-men willing to learn, after textbooks imagined and written by them. Many of the latter became famous coryphaeus like those already mentioned at the beginning of the work. It is worth mentioning that one of the Bulgarian textbooks was awarded in Paris with the occasion of the festivities on the Eiffel Tower inauguration.

Presently, in the localities where the Bulgarians from Banat live, the curriculum also includes the teaching of the literary Bulgarian language. Thus, the Bulgarian language (literature and language) is taught four times a week at the elementary school in Duestii Vechi, Brestea and

Vinga. As for the high school, it taught three times a week in Duestii Vechi high school. Bulgarian is also taught at a high school in Bucharest. The study of language and literature is done on the basis of the curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education using the books approved by the same ministerial authority. Starting with the 2005-2006 school year the 6th and 7th grade will be taught another subject “The History and Customs of the Bulgarian Minority”.

As for the cultural aspects, we must highlight that, just like all the other national minorities, the Bulgarian minority has as coordinates of identity: the language, the costume, the country song and dance, the customs, the religious belief and the old traditional beliefs. In order to keep and promote the traditional costume, the song and dance, the old Bulgarian customs and habits, there are song and dance ensembles that function in the branches of the Bulgarian Union from Banat-Romania. Some of these ensembles took part and were awarded at various national and international country festivals. They brought the beauty of the Bulgarian traditions in countries like: Romania, Serbia, Hungary, Germany and they were also the messengers and proof of the good relations among different nationalities.

The keeping of the mother tongue as a determinant element of their ethnical identity is part of the family education, the children continuing their education in schools, learning to read and write. But a decisive factor in the keeping, development and promotion of mother tongue among the Romanian citizens of Bulgarian nationality is the printing and publishing Bulgarian books, as well as the existence of some publications in this language. They also aim at promoting relations of good living together and respect towards the countrymen of different nationalities, thus contributing to the preservation of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural spirit that characterize both Banat and the people living there.

Loyal to this principle and following the forerunners' long tradition of printing and publishing books, the Bulgarian Union from Banat-Romania supports the activity in this field, offering moral and financial support to those writers who enrich the Bulgarian book patrimony by their works. From its coming into being till now the Bulgarian Union from Banat-Romania has published a series of Bulgarian books among which: Bulgarian folklore from Banat, vol. 1, Country songs, collected and registered by professor Ivanciov Carol-Matei, Bulgarian folklore from Banat, vol. 2, Paremiology, Proverbs and sayings, by professor Ivanciov Carol-Matei and professor Ivanciov Ana-Carolina; Mihai Eminescu – Poems (translated in Bulgarian by professor Ivanciov Carol-Matei), Izdanqui – poems by professor Ivanciov Carol-Matei, Stapunqi u nipuzn'tu (Steps in the unknown) by Uzun Toni, Mojita manena Biblija (My little Bible) - Bible for children, Brestea –150 years bilingual monography of Brestea village, Timis county, Tabletqi by professor Anton Manea, Short stories by Stefan Velciov; The deportation camp, Pages from the camp of Baragan 1951-1956, bilingual volume (Romanian-Bulgarian) by Rafael Mirciov. In the following period of time books of literature and folklore were published.

As for journalism, the Bulgarian Union from Banat- Romania has three publications: a bimonthly Bulgarian publication for culture “Nasa Glas” (Our Voice), a monthly Bulgarian literature magazine “Literaturna miselj” (Literary Thinking) and a quarterly “News bulletin of the Bulgarian Union from Banat –Romania”. Through these publications the BUB-R accomplishes one of its aims, namely the promotion of the Bulgarian minority's culture and language in Romania Weekly, there are Bulgarian shows on Timisoara radio and bimonthly shows on TV Arad.

Customs

Bulgaria's fall under Ottoman domination at the end of the 14th century determined the accentuation of our south neighbours' struggles to keep their traditional cultural values. One of the most famous Bulgarian holidays is "Mator" similar to the Romanian tradition.

The legend of the "martisor" is very old, dating back to the time of he who led the Bulgarians to the territory of their present country in 681, Asparuh the Khan. While his sister Huba and his brother Boian were prisoners, he sent them a hawk tied with a white thread letting them know that he would help them escape. The two succeeded in escaping but near the Danube bank, Boian was killed by his pursuers. Huba let the hawk fly, with the white thread reddened by her brother's blood to inform Asparuh about their brother's death. When hearing the news the Khan ordered his soldiers to wear a thread of white wool and thread of red wool to be protected against all troubles, event that happened on the 1st of March 681.

The two coloured or multi-coloured "martisor" filled with magical significance represents a talisman especially in the archaic civilizations. The white colour of the thread represents the woman, symbolizing long life, and the red thread is the man symbolizing physical strength. On the two twisted threads there are hung coins, hair from the horse's tail, glass beads, garlic snail shells, and other things, thus making a protective amulet ("martenita") against the evil spirits.

Just like in Moldavia and Bucovina, in some of the Bulgarian communities there is the tradition that the girls offer their lovers a simple two-coloured thread. The Bulgarians wear "martisoare" all March long, either on the lapel of the coat, or tied at their wrist. There are also social particularities: the unmarried women wear them on the left of their dress, the single women who passed their thirties, on the little finger of their left hand and the married men on their right sock.

The taking out of "martisoare" is related with the weather previsions, being hung in the trees that are to bloom. Thus it is marked the transition from winter to spring and everybody's faith that everything will be better in the starting year. The most spectacular holiday in the traditional Bulgarian calendar is "Baba Marta" (Mother Marta), which personifies spring, just like "Baba Dochia" (Mother Carey). At the end of February the Bulgarians clean their houses because Mother Marta visits only those whose houses are clean. On the last day of February the children in the countryside make a fire as big as possible and they cry "Mother Marta I warm you today, you'll warm me tomorrow". They gather around the fire with satirical extempore verses and when the fire has died out they trot on the ashes. The fire has to burn as long and as high as possible to warm Mother Marta, who personifies the sun that can burn the people's faces.

The Bulgarian Carey is a helpless old woman who is always carrying with her an iron walking stick. The Bulgarians think that the old woman's temper is very changing: when she smiles the sun shines in the sky, and when she is angry with somebody the weather is bad for several days. It is believed that the one who wears "martenita" will be healthy all year, the saying going like this: "If you don't wear martenita Mother Marta will bring evil spirits in your house."

The Bulgarians have a real cult for roses and the old must remember the Bulgarian perfume with its sweet fragrance.

The Croatsians

Population of south Slav origin and of preponderantly Catholic belief, the Croatsians from Romania represent a homogeneous community with specific customs and habits.

Historical background

Scientists from Croatia, especially the linguists, are very interested in the specific language of some Croatian communities from Romania, the so-called “carasoveni” who in their opinion represent one of the few living proofs of the old Croatian language.

Beside the spectacular aspect, this thing proves that the presence of the Croatsians on the Romanian territory is a very old one and the preservation of the language and customs occurred in very good conditions.

The Croatsians’ immigration on these territories took place in three successive waves. The first wave immigrated during the 13th – 14th centuries in the north-west of Bosnia, its members being known under the name of “carasoveni” or the Croatsians from the “carasovenesc” region. They settled down on the north plateau of the Caras, near Resita, in seven localities with compact population of 92-98 per cent. Carasova (Karasevo), Clocotici (Klocotic), Lupac (Lupak), Nermed (Nermic), Iabalcea (Jabalce), Rafnic (Ravnic) and Vodnic (Vodnik) and a partially populated locality at the end of the 19th century by Croatian ethnics –Tirol – south-west of Bocsa.

Beside the above mentioned localities, in this area there were also three more localities of Croatian population: Seliste, Talva and Jaszenovacz. The inhabitants of the first moved to Carasova, those of the second to Lupac. As for the destiny of the inhabitants of the third locality nothing is registered.

Carasova, the oldest of the localities, is registered as existent in the 13th – 14th century official cartography, and the others starting with the 16th century. The north-east side of the town is guarded by the ruins of Carasova fortress, known in the local customs as the “Turk’s Fortress” (Turski grad), built in the Roman times as point of observation, consolidated during the Hungarian kingdom and rebuilt in the time of Timisoara pashalic (1552-1717).

In the west part of Carasova there is the famous cave of Socolovat (Sokolovacka pecka) that constituted a refuge in times of tribulation. The cause of this immigration wave is supposed to have been either the Ottoman danger that loomed over this part of the Balkans or the religious oppression, the inhabitants having been shepherded by Franciscan monks for centuries.

The second wave of Croatsians emigrated in the 16th – 17th centuries, either in the time or at the end of the Ottoman domination in Banat. This wave is known as “Raci” or “Sokti”. Linguistically speaking they have similarities with the language in the east Slovenia, around Vincovici.

A second hypothesis is that they might have come from Hrtzeg, Bosnia and Dalmatia, taking as marking point the folkloric traditions. This wave settled down in two regions: in Arad county, all around Radna and Lipova being known as Lippovan Croats (lipovacki Hrvati ili Sokci) and near Timisoara, in Recas (Rekas) where they live together with Romanians, Hungarians and Germans. The Lippovan Croats left behind inscriptions in the graveyards from Radna and Lipova, melting in the populations it had been living with, by demographic rarefaction.

The third wave includes population that settled at the beginning of the 19th century in Checea, and afterwards in Cenei, Timis county. This group originates from the south-east of Croatia, Pokuplje region, part of this group also settling down on the territory of the Yugoslav Banat, population known as "kaikavien" Croats, the others being "stokavien" Croats. The group descends from the Croatian noblemen transferred by a change of goods from the region of origin to this part of Banat. The transfer was caused by the military reorganization of the Habsburgic Empire that started during Maria Tereza's reign (in the middle of the 18th century).

According to the 1992 census the Croatian minority numbered 4085 people. Ten years later the official data registered 6786 people, which represents a spectacular and hardly explainable increase. Most of the Croats live in Caras-Severin county, and the others in Timis county.

The "carasoveni" (karasevici) are another Slav group from Banat, their ethnical origin being disputed by the Bulgarians, Serbians, Croats and even by the Czechs. The main rural settlements are at the foot of the Semenic Mountains: Carasova (Karasevo), Clocotici (Klocotic), Lupac (Lupak), Nermet (Nermid), Rafinic (Ravnik), Vodnic (Vodnik) and Iabalcea (Jabale). The spoken language, the customs and costume show common elements to the Balkan ones.

Political representation

Without an autonomous presence until the beginning of the '90s, because, traditionally they were part of the same group as the Serbians, the Croats make their presence felt in the political and cultural field, only after 1991.

The organization that represents the interests of the Croatian minority is the Union of the Croats in Romania, as legal successor of "Karasevski ogranak" organization, as part of the Democratic Union of the Serbians, without continuing the programme of the former.

As to symbolism the flag of the mother country is red-white-blue and the specific emblem of the Union is the tower of the redoubt on a peak symbolizing the ruins of Crasovia fortress.

The aim of the Union of the Croats is to keep and develop its ethnical identity in all its ways of manifestation, the cultural patrimony, in accordance with the foresights of Romania to support the economic development of the Croatian community in Romania and to establish good relations with Croatia and the world. The Union proceeds for the research and development of the traditions, the learning of the mother tongue and its culture, the setting up and support of the education in the native language at all levels, conformably to the legislation of Romania; keeping the right of religious affiliation and education; the keeping, research and promotion of the oral and written creations as well as all the other artistic creations of the members of the community in these regions, the monolingual and bilingual editorial activities, radio and TV mother tongue

shows, friendship relations with both the majority population and the national minorities, the development of the internal and external relations in the educational, cultural and religious fields.

The leadership organs of the Union are: the General Assembly, the Communal and Regional Conference (31-61 delegates), the Congress, the Council Boards of the local Organizations, the Coordinating Council, the Executive Bureau (5 members), the Auditing Commission (3 members), the Labour Commissions (3 members), the "Karasevska Zora" cultural-artistic organization from Carasova.

The parliamentary representative of the Croatian minorities in the present legislation is the leader of the Union, Mihai Radan, secretary of the permanent commission for education.

According to the relating of the press in his electoral run for votes, Mihai Radan facilitated obtaining the double citizenship and Croatian passports for the members of the organization. This is how we can explain the significant electoral leap registered by the UCR: at the 1996 elections it got 486 votes, in 2000 –14,472 and in 2004, 18,100 votes.

At the 2004 local elections the UCR got a mayor mandate and six local councillor mandates after it was refused by the Central Electoral Bureau the registration of the proposed emblem.

Cultural specificity

The Croatians speak a Slav language from the south Slav languages. The writing of the Croatian language is the Latin one, the Croatians from Romania using it in church, schools and everyday life.

As native language it is used by 93,12 per cent of the Croatian natives, 4.85 per cent using Romanian, and 2,03 per cent another language. Religiously speaking 3954 (of 7156) are Romano-Catholics. As for the age, 18 per cent are between 0-14 years, 60.5 per cent between 15-59 years and 21.5 over 60. From the total of the Croatian population from Romania 1.9 per cent has no education or has not declared it, 33.7 per cent have primary studies, 62.6 secondary and 3.3 (0.70/0) per cent superior studies. (41.7 per cent of the Croatian natives are employed in the secondary sectors.

The Croatian educational network is made up of 3 kindergartens and 2 units (sections) with I-IV form, having 144 (118) students and 73(82) children under school age, 71 (36) at the primary school taught by 5 (6) cadres, 3 educators and 2 (3) teachers. There have already been collaborated 6 titles of textbooks (language and mathematics) and other 3 are being elaborated. A number of almost 600 students that attend the Romanian schools have chosen to study the native language.

The representatives of the Croatian organization have taken part traditionally in the festival "The days of national minorities from Romania - ProEtnica" from Sighisoara, since its first edition in 2001.

Last but not least it is worth mentioning the monthly bilingual magazine "Hrvatska grancica" in Carasova, published by the UCR with subventions from the statal budget.

The Jews

“There is a people which is wide-spread among all the people from all the provinces of its kingdom. Its laws are different from other nations’ laws and it does not obey the royal decrees; thus, it is not proper for your majesty the King, to tolerate it.” (Estera 3:8)

The archaeological researches certify Jewish presence in the Romanian Dacia starting with the 2nd century A.D. The Roman Army, having come to conquer Dacia, included a multitude of ethnic groups from the Empire’s provinces as well as Jews. This is proven by some inscriptions from Sarmisegetuza, the funeral texts concerning Jewish divinities from Orsova, the Jewish coins from 133-134, noticed by B.P.Hasdeu.

After a hiatus of almost a millennium, they are reminded by the sage traveller Benjamin from Tudela, who describes the good relations between the Vlachs from south of the Danube and the Jewish communities from Byzantium; judging from some commercial papers of early Middle Age, during the 12th century Jews appeared among the merchants who were practicing commerce between Byzantium, Russia and Poland, crossing Bulgaria and the regions of the Danube. Their part in this commerce was also remarked by historian Nicolae Iorga who was writing in the History of the Romanian Commerce:”Only the Jews were travelling on these roads before 1480, coming from Constantinople.”

In Transylvania, the Jews have been present since the 11th – 12th centuries during the reign of King Ladislau. In 1251, Bela the 4th, who is mentioned in the Jewish documents for his favourable attitude towards the Jews, stimulates their settlement in Hungary, thus also in Transylvania.

An entire complex of historical and geographical circumstances encourages the appearance of the first stable communities on the Romanian territories only in the 14th-15th centuries. According to a documentary testimony there was a Jewish community at Cetatea Alba from the first half of the 14th century.

M. Kogalniceanu and B.P.Hasdeu notice that, at the end of the 14th century, the Romanian Principalities became the main asylum for the Jews chased from Hungary by the King Lewis 1st for not having converted to Catholicism.

It seems that even Dan 1st, the King of the Romanian Principality (1383-1386), wishing to develop trade links, facilitates the Jews’ coming from Hungary and settling in Muntenia” allowing them to buy land yearly but not for ever” (M. Kogalniceanu - The Romanian Archive, p.180).

But in two, three centuries, in a Hungary strongly influenced by a prince like Gabriel Bethlen (1613-1629), Jewish merchants from the Ottoman Empire will be invited in order to develop

trade. In 1623 he gave out a Diploma of privileges that mentioned the Jews' right to settle down, the ensuring of work, the freedom of cultural practice and other things.

But these privileges proved to be only on paper. The privileges given by the Romanian voivodes interested in the development of the trade favoured the multiplication of Jewish settlements.

The Jewish historian Dr. M. A. Halevy, relying on both primary sources and the references in some historical books places the beginning of a steady trade with the Romanian Principalities at the middle of the 16th century.

It is also in this epoch that information emerged about a Jewish community constituted mainly by Sephard Jews (the name of the Jews banished from Spain in 1492), coming from Constantinople, Salonic, and other localities from the Balkan Peninsula. But the Jews' fleeing to the Romanian Principalities occurred not only from the south, but also from the north and west of the European continent, where the so-called "Ashkenazi" Jews (name given to the Jews from the German counties, Poland and Russia). They settled down especially in Moldavia, playing an important role in the commercial transit on the Moldavian way between the Ottoman Empire and Poland.

The documents of the time mention in the 17th century a Jewish community life especially in Iasi, Moldavia where a synagogue functioned and where there was a Jewish cemetery.

The beginning of the Jews' involvement in the autochthonous social relations is specified in "Pravila de la Govora" (1640) from the time of Matei Basarab's reign and in the legal provisions enclosed in "Cartea Romaneasca de invatatura" (1646) written during Vasile Lupu's reign.

In the same time in Transylvania, the Jews from Ardeal, counting on an increase in their businesses were soon disappointed by a series of restrictions of the right to settlement, and to extend their import-export activities in the foreign countries.

At the end of the 18th century, King Joseph the 2nd offered the Jews the right to settle in all free royal towns and to practice freely their trading activities. However there were still enough restrictions against the traditional way of living that the Jews wanted to have.

During the 18th century the Jewish immigration in the Romanian Principalities increased. The phenomenon is tightly related to the new path the Romanian society engaged in. In this context the Jews had their contribution to the formation of the domestic market; the Jewish artisans and merchants played an important role in the continuing and regularity of the exchange, in the continuous flow of the goods, in the integration of the new economic organ in the European market. The Jews got used easily to the civilization, trade, occupations and the incipient capitalism, useful to the Romanian society. The role and the importance of the Jewish population in the Romanian society are acknowledged by the voivodes especially in the Phanariot epoch. The Jewish community was ensured a legal status by virtue of which it benefited from the freedom of religion and self-administration. The leaders of the community, named "Hahams or Rabbis" were named and acknowledged by the Romanian princes and they enjoyed various privileges, being exempted from taxes, fiscal and custom duties, having high official's prerogative.

Many princely documents from the 18th century prove that the Jews were asked to come and populate villages and towns and to set up markets. The immigrants were given land to build houses, synagogues, ritual bathrooms, schools etc. It is a specific characteristic for Moldavia, where localities with a preponderantly Jewish population, named “stetl” (meaning townlets in Yiddish), developed.

Generally the Jews in Diaspora watched the keeping and cultivation of their tradition, always and everywhere. That is why the licensed rights were conditions of existential importance for both the Sephardic Jews and for the “Ashkenazi”, named after their origins, the former coming from the Ottoman Empire and the Iberian Peninsula, and the latter from the north, north-west and east of Europe.

Their moral and legal behaviour, their traditional religious life were regulated by the same morality in the Thora (the Old Testament) and Talmud (the New Testament).

The Jews in the Romanian Principalities took full advantage of these specific rights to live their cultural life, their community life, enjoying the support of the Phanariot princes. However they promoted anti-Jewish laws: the Jews had no access to land property; their testimony against an Orthodox Christian had no value in the court.

At the beginning of the 19th century, together with the publication of Calimachi’s Code (1817) in Moldavia and Caragea’s Code (1818) in Tara Romaneasca, new regulations emerge concerning foreigners in general, and Jews in particular. Calimache’s Code, in article 1430 licensed Jews the right to buy houses and stores in the towns, but forbade them to buy any property in the countryside.

These dissociations in the Jewish legal statute, naturalized rather by the law of the land rather than by written law, were in force until the introduction of the Organic Regulation (1831-1832) where for the first time the fact that non –Christians could not benefit by civil and political rights was mentioned. Generally, the Organic Regulation had a series of restrictive and discriminatory foresights regarding the Jews in the Romanian Principalities: each Jew who could not prove an existential source was considered a tramp and were likely to face expulsion.

The Haham guild and corporation was abolished, the Rabbi did not take any advantages from the system of privileges, a community organization subordinated to the state authority. There was only one favourable measure for the Jews: state education.

Despite some restrictive measures against the Jews, their number increases during the 19th century, especially after the peace of Adrianopole (1829) when the Romanian Principalities receive western capital. Prince Mihai Sturza develops a policy of attracting Jews to Moldavia. Thus, if at the 1803 census there were almost 12,000 Jews in Moldavia, in 1856 there were almost 13,000, representing 3% of the total population. Between 1838 and 1859, in Muntenia the number of Jews increases from 1960 to 17,000. At the same time Jews undergo a process of socio-economic integration and acculturation specific to the modernization of the Jews in the Diaspora.

If some spokesmen of the anti-Semitic doctrines considered the Jewish integration in the Romanian society a real tragedy, the exegetes of the foreign capital for the development of Romania underlined the Jewish beneficial contribution in this historical context. The leaders of the 1848 Revolution, on the basis of the acknowledgement of the role of the Jews, require in the “Dorintele Partidului National in Moldova” the Jews’ gradual emancipation, and in the Proclamation from Islaz, at point 21: “The Jews’ emancipation and political rights for all fellow countrymen of different belief.”

These claims came into being immediately by the appointment of the Jewish banker, Hillel Manoach, in the Town Council in Bucharest. At the same time many Jewish intellectuals joined the 1848 Revolution: the painters Barbu Iscovescu and Daniel Rosenthal, the latter being the author of the famous painting “The Revolutionary Romania”. Some Jewish bankers such as Hillel Manoach and Davicion Bally gave important amounts of money to support the revolution.

The defeat of the revolution prevented the Jewish process of emancipation in the Romanian Principalities. However, after the revolution, the Jews benefited from some civil rights. After the Union of the Principalities (1859), Prince A.I. Cuza, who named the Jews “Mosaic-cult Romanians”, did his best to speed the process of emancipation of the “Jewish Romanians”.

But A.I.Cuza’s removal from power and Carol of Hohenzoller’s arrival meant the setting up of a new regime of vexations, because the first modern Constitution adopted in 1866 did not legalize the right of citizenship for the Jewish inhabitants considered natives but turned them into stateless persons according to article 7. Initially, Ion Bratianu promised the license of citizenship for Jews. But finally, under the pressure of some serious anti-Semitic street revolts and because of the parliamentary protests paragraph 2 was introduced to article 7, in the following terms:”Only Christian foreigners can get naturalized”; thus the Jewish problem in the modern Romanian society became official. Even though obliged to serve in the army, to obey all the rules of the country, to pay all contributions and taxes like all other inhabitants, Jews became foreigners, subdued by a restrictive and discriminatory regime.

During the Romanian Independence War, the Jewish population worked together with everybody to obtain the State independence. Many Jews were mobilized and took part actively in the military operations on the battlefields, some of them standing out by deeds of bravery. In the material support of the war, all over the country were formed Jewish committees of help that collected important amounts of money and payment in kind.

In 1878, after the War of Independence, under the pressure of the Congress of Peace from Berlin, article 7 of the 1866 Constitution was modified. According to the new article non-Christian inhabitants could also receive Romanian citizenship. However, in the last analysis the modification was formulated in such a way by Romanian legislators that new restrictive measures were introduced. The new article mentioned: “One can become naturalized individually and by law”. This meant the license of naturalization was to be granted by Parliament, which as a rule refused petitions of naturalization systematically. The only ones who became immediately and collectively naturalized were the 888 Jews who took part in the War of Independence.

Through the modification of Article 7 of the Constitution, Jews remained without citizenship, becoming the victim of the restrictive legislation concerning foreigners. The Jews were not

allowed to practice certain professions and trades, and they had limited access to state education. The worsening of the Jewish population's situation at the end of the 19th century caused a great wave of emigration especially among artisans. Thus, if at the 1899 census there were 299,632 Jewish inhabitants in Romania, at the 1912 census there were 239,967 souls, the percentage decreasing from 4.5 to 3.4.

But the Jewish abolishing policy was many times in contradiction with the objective needs of the socio-economical development, which could not give up Jewish capital, the professional experience of Jews in the field of organization and administration of the industrial and trading industry, the bank chains etc.

Pointing out the importance of Jews for the Romanian economy, economist Gheorghe Tasca underlined their qualitative contribution through their dynamic force, having an important share in the upper and lower bourgeoisie of the country, as well as in the cultural life.

Active factors in the dynamics of the Romanian society, despite all the inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts, the Jews considered themselves Romanian-Jews, appropriated the Romanian language and culture, accomplishing many times an original symbiosis between their Jewish tradition and culture, of their experience in Diaspora on one hand, and the Romanian spirituality on the other hand. The Jews took upon themselves the historical destiny of the Romanian people, involving and participating actively in the great economic and cultural events of this country.

Even though most of them were not Romanian citizens, they took part in the First World War. Almost 23,000 Jews were enrolled in the Romanian army, representing almost 10 per cent of the Jewish population. According to data published in "Monitorul Oficial" 822 dead, 740 wounded, 449 prisoners and 3,043 missing persons were registered. For their bravery on the frontline, 825 Jewish soldiers and officers were decorated.

The Jews gave their adhesion to the 1918 Great Union, internationally supporting Romania's right upon the integrated provinces. The 1918 Union led to the increase of Romania's population, generally the number of Jewish inhabitants becoming triple. According to official figures, at the beginning of the 20th century, 267,000 Jews lived in Basarabia, 89,000 in Bucovina and 181,340 in Transylvania. The Union led to an increased number of Jews, namely 750,000 according to the 1930 census.

The increase in Jewish population within the Romanian population and the collective naturalization of the Jews born in Romania, by special legislation adopted in 1919 and legalized by the new constitution of 1923, favoured and amplified the process of modernization of the Romanian society.

According to the information published in the Romanian Encyclopaedia, in the inter-war Romania the Jews had 31.14% of the industrial and commercial factories. In the same time the Jews continued to be artisans and workers; in some regions such as Maramures and Basarabia, they were farmers, and breeders, especially sheep breeders. One can notice a greater orientation towards the intellectual professions. On the eve of the World War II out of almost 8,000 doctors existing in Romania, 2000 were Jews. Over 2,000 engineers were registered in the Association of the Romanian Engineers, and around 3,000 lawyers in the Bar Association.

In the inter-war period Jews took part in the political life of the country, contributed to the consolidation of the national unity of the Romanian state and to the development of political pluralism. The democratic forces rallied, fighting the extreme right led by the Iron Guards and the Cuzists who promoted an aggressive anti-Semitic policy of slandering and accusing the Jewish population, many times resorting to violence and fights especially in higher education institutions.

The Jews were remarked both through their adhesion to different socialist and democratic - bourgeois parties and through their own parties and organizations, such as the Union of the Romanian Jews, (founded in 1909, with the name of the Union of the Native Jews, changed into URJ in 1923), the Jewish Parliamentary Club, (1928), the Jewish Party (1930), many Zionist organizations and the Union of the Jewish Community from the Old Kingdom (1928), transformed into the Federation of the Romanian Jewish Community in 1937.

During the 1926, 1928, 1931 and 1937 elections, between 4-5 Jewish deputies were elected in Parliament as representatives of the Jewish organizations. Jacob Neimirower, as the great Rabbi of the Mosaic cult in the Old Kingdom was senator till 1939, when he died, being replaced by the great Rabbi Dr. Alexandru Safran.

The history of the Jews was not only a political or a socio-economic history of integration in the Romanian society, but also a community-cultural history and a cultural-spiritual one.

Lots of synagogues were built in Bucharest and in other towns, hundreds of cultural institutions were created; institutions of assistance and education; hundreds of Jewish newspapers and magazines were published in Romanian, French, German, Hungarian, Yiddish and Hebrew; books on Judaism were published, reflecting the variety of Jewish currents and ideologies, from Hasidism and Orthodoxy, Enlightenment and Integrationism, from assimilation and socialism to cultural autonomism.

Many Jewish scientists, writers, actors, painters, composers and musicians enriched with essential works the Romanian scientific, literary, cultural, spiritual, and artistic life.

The creative activity in the Romanian social context was suddenly interrupted by the dramatic events on the eve and during the World War II. In the context of the territorial cutback and of an international isolation, in Romania, fatally pushed under the Nazi's influence, power was grabbed by the right wing; thus anti-Semitism and the systematic annihilation of Jews from the social body of the country became state policy.

In January 1938, the Goga-Cuza government introduced the citizenship revision law of all the Jewish inhabitants. Abusively, Romanian citizenship was withdrawn from the almost 220,000 Jews who, entering under the jurisdiction of the restrictive laws concerning foreigners, lost their right to work and property.

The Holocaust

In 1940, during the Gurgu Government a legal status for the regulation of the Romanian Jews' situation was approved. The Jews were turned into second-class citizens. They were excluded from the army, faced restrictions in practicing certain professions and in rural property rights.

Pogroms took place in Dorohoi (July 1940) and other localities in North Moldavia, hundreds of Jews were killed just because they were Jews.

The Anti-Jewish policy extended after the setting up of the national state possessions led by the Iron Guard in September 1940. Anti-Jewish legislation was elaborated and applied for purging the Jews from the Romanian socio-economic, political and cultural life, expropriating them of real estates and possessions.

The Iron Guard regime of terror was a constant threat to the existence of Jews. During the rebellion organised by the Iron Guard on 21-23 January 1941, 120 Jews were killed in Bucharest. The Anti-Jewish policy continued after the demise of the government controlled by the Iron Guard (23 January 1941) and, especially, after Romania entered the war alongside the Nazi Germany on 22 June 1941. The government led by Marshall Antonescu started the slaughter of Jews in Bessarabia, Bukovina and, partially, Moldavia, which culminated with the pogrom of Iasi and the death trains of 29 June and 6 July 1941 when 10,000 Jews were massacred.

Only 600,000 Jews remained registered with the Romanian administration after North Transylvania had been ceded to Horthyist Hungary on 30 August 1940, and half of them lived in Bessarabia and North Bukovina, which later were occupied by the Soviet Union between June 1940 and June 1941.

According to German military reports issued by the Strategic Studies Office and also to Romanian records, a third of the 300,000 Jews living in Bessarabia and North Bukovina at that time were deported by the Soviets to Syberia, incorporated in the Red Army or withdrew with the Soviet authorities. Therefore, when Romanian and German troops entered Bessarabia and North Bukovina, they found around 200,000 Jews. In line with the ethnic cleansing policy led in these territories by Marshall Antonescu, the head of state, ten thousands of Jews were executed by the Romanian gendarmerie or Romanian and German troops in the first months of the war. The survivors were interned in transit concentration camps and ghettos in Bessarabia and North Bukovina. Later in the autumn of 1941, they were deported to Transnistria; excepting the 20,000 Jews concentrated in the ghetto of Cernauti (4,200 of them were later deported in the summer of 1942). According to the reports of the General Inspectorate of Gendarmerie during 1941-1942, 126,000 Jews were deported, and only 51,000 of Romanian Jews were alive on 1 September 1943. Also according to sources of the German Embassy in Bucharest during the war, between 160,000 and 185,000 Jews were deported to Transnistria.

In Walachia, the Jews were sent to forced labour, deprived of any civil rights and often maltreated, evacuated from place to place, but not systematically exterminated; excepting the 8,000-12,000 victims of the pogrom of Iasi and the 7,000 Dorohoi Jews who died on their way to Transnistria (of the 12,000 Jews deported at that time), and the 587 Jews also deported in Transnistria for their intention to repatriate in 1940 in the Soviet Union, later executed by Germans on their deportation way. All the Jews from South Bukovina and over 2,000 Jews from Walachia and South Transylvania were deported to Transnistria.

Antonescu's authorities agreed with the Nazi Germany to deport over 4,500 Romanian Jews, found in Belgium, France, Germany and Austria at that time, in concentration camps in Poland.

Both internal and external circumstances, produced in the autumn of 1942, determined Antonescu's regime to end the deportation of South Transylvania and Walachia Jews to Transnistria and to keep away from the pressures of Nazi Germany to deport Jews to the Belzec extermination camp. These intended deportations did not happen eventually. In 1943 and 1944, certain categories of the Jews deported to Transnistria were repatriated. By all means, all these actions sustained the survival of half of the Jews living in Romania.

In the last two years of war, Marshall Antonescu lost faith in the victory of Nazi Germany and tried to "cleanse" the country by encouraging the migration of Jews to Palestine. Nevertheless this process implied high risks since Great Britain interdicted the migration of Jews to Palestine, while Nazi Germany was against the immigration of Jews from Romania. One third of the 3,000 Jews lost their lives when two ships loaded with immigrants sank in the Black Sea.

The above narrated facts about the number of the Jews killed during the Holocaust under Ion Antonescu's regime require few explanations. According to latest investigations, the International Research Commission for the Romanian Jews Holocaust concluded that the extermination regime led in Transnistria killed between 280,000 and 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews living at that time in the Romanian controlled territories. Statistician Marcu Rozen determined that 155,000 Romanian Jews and 115,000 Ukrainian Jews living in Transnistria were exterminated. Therefore the number of the Jews exterminated under Antonescu's regime increases to 270,000 persons. (Marcu Rozen, *Historical and Statistical Facts about the Jews' situation under Antonescu's regime (1940-1944)*, Bucharest, 2003, pg. 88).

The Jews from North Transylvania, which was under Horthyist rule at that time, were deported to Nazi concentration camps after Nazi Germany occupied Hungary on 19 March 1944. Almost 85% of 150,000 Jews died.

The evocation of the Romanian Holocaust cannot be complete without bringing about the generosity and human solidarity of tens of non-Jews who risked their lives in the attempt to save Jews from the death trains, being deported to Transnistria or intended for deportation to Auschwitz from occupied North Transylvania. The state of Israel offered them the title of "the peoples' Righteous".

Demographic data

Compared to the total population, the Jews represent 0.5 per 1,000 inhabitants in nowadays Romania, while, according to estimates and censuses, they counted 4.5% in 1899, 4.4% in 1920, 4.2% in 1930, 3.8% in 1939 and also on 1 June 1940. Gradually the number of the Jews living in Romania decreased from 756,930 in 1930, to 428,312 in 1947 and 9,000 in 1992 (according to the 1992 population census). The census registered 146,000 Jews in 1956, 42,900 in 1966 and 24,700 in 1977.

Since these figures are results of the registered persons' free declaration (i.e. some Jews declared themselves as Romanian and Hungarian), certain adjustments need to be done according to existent Jewish community data, even if incomplete or deficiently collected.

If it were to consider these data, Romania was home to over 350,000 Jews in 1945, 450,000 in 1947, 170,000 in 1956, 60,000 in 1966, 35,000 in 1977, 18,000 in 1990 and 15,000 in 1992. In 1995, the estimates showed a number of 14,000 Jews, of which only 3,000 were "active", while in 2005, the number decreased to 8,000, of which one third was active. According to the above figures, the Jewish population living in Romania decreased 75 times compared to 1930 and 43 times compared to 1947.

Almost 400,000 Jews immigrated during the first half century since the World War II: 300,000 settled in Israel and 80,000 in different countries in the West.

Considered numerically the second ethnic group living in the Romanian kingdom at the end of last century and the fourth in the 1918 united Romania, the Jews are now amongst the least numerous ethnic communities. If in the past this community featured a balanced age-pyramid with an active population predominantly middle class layered – such as merchants and craftsmen – today almost three quarters are elderly people, while the active population is formed mainly of professionals and intellectuals.

Until the creation of the state of Israel, the Jews living in Romania moved mainly to North America. After the World War II, almost 80,000 Jews moved from Romania to West to join their relatives and families. Until 1930, about 225,000 Jews emigrated from Romania to all the above mentioned countries and only 10,000 to Palestine; after 1930, they preferred to settle in the country which later, in 1948, became the state of Israel. Between 1919 and 14 May 1948, a number of 41,105 Romanian Jews arrived there, of which almost 30,000 during 1945-1948. From 15 May 1948 to 1951, 117,950 Jews immigrated to Israel (the highest rate of Jews emigrated from Romania to Israel registered in 1951). During 1952-1960, following a short discontinuity in the immigration process, the Romanian state agreed with a new exodus, when 32,462 Jews left Romania. Following a new short rupture, almost 63,459 Jews immigrated to Israel in only 4 years (1961-1964). During 1965-1971, the Jewish population living in Romania counted 60,000 persons and one third, respectively 22,635 persons, immigrated to Israel. Another 18,418 persons followed between 1972 and 1979.

Only 24,700 persons registered as Jews at the 1977 census, although estimates confirmed a number of 35,000. These estimates also explain the 20,000 Jews who immigrated to Israel and the 15,000 Jews who remained in Romania. Non-Jew family members who immigrated to Israel did not exceed few hundreds.

Literature, arts, public figures

Throughout centuries and especially in the last century and a half, few generations of Jewish scholars and artists contributed to Romanian culture and spirituality as well as to Judaism and the Jewish culture.

The first group of scholars includes scientists and outstanding pedagogues such as Emanoil David, L. Edeleanu, M. Haimovici, M. Bercovici, I. Blum, T. Revici (technical and university)

education); I. Barasch, F. Zicman, I. Fuhn, A. Kanitz (biology); A. Haimovici, I. Barbălat, A. Hollinger, T. Ganea, I. Schoenberg, A. Sanielevici, I.S. Auslander, S. Sternberg, E. Soru, E. Marcus (technical sciences); N. Blatt, R. Brauner, M. Cajal, M.H. Goldstein, S. Iagnov, A. Kreindler, L. Meierosohn, B. Menkeş, M. Popper, A. Radovici, O. Sager, L. Strominger, A. Teitel, M. Wortheimer (medical science); J. Byck, Al. Graur, M. Gaster, L. Săineanu, I.A. Candrea, H. Tiktin (linguistics and philology); E. Barasch, A. Schwefelberg, I. Rosenthal, W. Filderman, A. Stern (juridical sciences); C. Dobrogeanu – Gherea, H. Sanielevici, I. Brucăr, M.A. Halevy (social sciences and philosophy). And the list may continue.

Spiritual profile

Formed of relatively distinct communities – more oriental in Moldova and Bessarabia, more occidental in Walachia and Central European in Transylvania and Bukovina (of course the boundaries among them were not inflexible), the Jews from Romania featured different traits with regard to spoken language, way of living, standing, traditions, level of acculturation, degree of integration, among others, all reflected by correspondent ideologies. Also secularization and modernization faced different paces from one province to another. In Moldova, the Haskalist movement (i.e. modernization) started later than in the West of the country; Jewish culture and knowledge were less developed than in Bessarabia. On the contrary, the Jews from Walachia, especially the Sephardic, displayed wealth and an ideology superior to those of the Ashkenazi, thought to have left the countryside for the country's capital city or other cities in Wallachia.

All these idiosyncrasies were found also at political and cultural levels; in Bukovina, the beginning of the century marked a cultural and political movement based on the Yiddish values, which led to the creation of the Jewish National Popular Party, guided by Beno Straucher, an outstanding promoter of the Yiddish values and the extraterritorial national autonomy. Unlike the “Bund” and the “Poale Zion” in Bessarabia, these organisations had not a socialist approach.

In Bessarabia, the “Agudat Israel”, led by the Rabbi I.L. Zirelsohn (1860 – 1940), developed as a political and religious organisation. This organisation also operated in Transylvania, particularly in Maramures, where it had an anti-Zionist influence. Here, Hasidim fanatics, especially their rulers, **Tzadikims**, were famous for their opposition to any kind of emancipation, secularization and public life of the Jewish communities.

In this respect, Satmarer-rebe, whose opposition towards integrationism and Zionism exists even today, gained a negative reputation.

Therefore, the Jews in the Greater Romania were diversified on grounds of birth place and dominant point of reference: the followers of the Jewish nationalist policy in the territories of the new provinces and also of the Jewish integrationist policy in the Walachia.

The Jewish communities during the interwar period were divided between the Orthodox rite and the Neologue rite (in Transylvania). The Reformats (the Neologues) were the followers of several modernizations of rites. The Israeli community of Spanish rite, formed in 1730 as a religious, education and charity organisation, kept on existing as a rite up to present days.

The Jewish Communities Union was created in Walachia in 1928. The Jews were led by a Chief Rabbi in Bucharest who represented the Jewish community in the country's Senate during the

interwar period. The Jewish community was formed of Ashkenazi, arrived from the North and the West of the continent, and Sephardim, arrived from South and South-West.

In 1930, mosaic believers represented 4.3% of the total population. There were 922 synagogues and prayer houses, and 731 Rabbis. In 1937, the Federation of the Jewish Communities Union was set up (FJCU), which functioned until December 1941, when its activity was forbidden by a Decree of the state ruler. Between 1942 and 1944, the only Jewish organization created and recognized by Antonescu's regime was the Central of Jews in Romania (CJR).

According to the organizational statute of the Mosaic Cult approved in 1949, the confessional activity of the Jewish minority in Romania is led by (Mosaic) FJC: it comprises all communities in the country.

The 40-year history of the (Mosaic) FJC started with a first step of community rebuilding after the Holocaust (1944 - 1948), followed by a period of domination of the community by communist leaders (1948 - 1964), and by several other periods (after 1964), during which Rabbi Dr. Moses Rosen was the head of FJC and determined its development. In 1967 Dr. Moses Rosen obtained the Romanian Government's permission to create an aid scheme supported by the "Joint" organisation. At the same time, several approvals were obtained for reviving cultural and Judaic acts. In 1956 the Magazine of the Mosaic Cult was set up, in 1978 the History Museum of Jewish Communities in Romania was opened, and the Centre for the Study of Jewish History in Romania was established. For young people, courses of Talmud Tora Judaic initiation were organised, as well as choirs with Jewish repertoires. FJCR became a member of the main Jewish organizations worldwide, and Dr. Moses Rosen took part in their activity.

After December 1989 when the communist dictatorship was abolished, the community and religious life of the Jews became increasingly diversified. In the new liberal context of the country besides the aid scheme cultural and social activities became very important as well. In 1991 the Hasefer Printing House was set up; in the decade that has passed since its founding, it edited hundreds of books concerning Jews in Romania. In 1995, the periodical The Mosaic Cultural Magazine became a bi-monthly publication, with a very diversified content, entitled The Jewish Reality.

The Centre for Studying Jewish History extended its area of research and publication. The History Museum was rebuilt and modernised; a Holocaust Museum was also opened in Bucharest, whilst in Iași, Bacău and Cluj local museums were set up. A Cultural Centre develops an intense cultural activity in Bucharest.

Holidays

Rosh Hosanna – New Year (approx. September - October)

It is written on the reel of the first day of the Tisr month that "On Rosh Hosanna it is written, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed in Heaven who will live and who will die..." this sentence from a prayer explains the whole meaning of the celebration of the New Year, and explains why Jews begin their New Year not by partying but by praying.

This is why Jewish religious belief established ten days of piety between Rosh Hosanna and Yom Kippur, when everyone prays to God. Pure, sincere, heartfelt prayer, complete repentance and

help towards the needy influences the Heavens, so that on Yom Kippur, when the fate is sealed, there are reasons to ease God's forgiving. Because, as most prophets said, the Creator asks only that man renews his heart, and he will be forgiven. Due to this trial of each soul in Heaven the Jewish New Year is also called Yom Hadim - "Judgement Day".

Yom Kippur – Day of Forgiveness (in October generally)

The most symbolic of all Jewish Holidays is Yom Kippur, because on this day the Almighty decides not only the fate of the individual, but that of the whole Jewish people. The Judaic conception by deciding the place of the individual in society tied him to the collectivity, so that the fate of the whole people depends on everyone's life.

History from ancient times until today has confirmed this thesis, and established that the sin of one individual will be reflected on the whole people, so that the piety of one person can save the whole nation. For this reason, on the eve of Yom Kippur the Jew is required to make peace with his enemies, fulfil his duties towards the state and community. Only after this can he come before God.

Succoth – „Holiday of the huts” (in October, generally)

To remember the fact that when they left Egypt, Jews lived for a while in huts – which in Judaic were called Succoth, Moses decided to perpetuate this tradition.

By this – as on many other occasions – the Prophet only wanted Jews to remember the miraculous exit from Egypt. As all important Jewish days, this holiday was connected to land labour. For this reason perhaps it does not have a fixed date.

The Succoth remained in the Jewish tradition since the day Israelites received their country, three and a half millennia ago. On autumn days they lived eight days in a hut, called Succoth, to remember that their ancestors lived in such homes when leaving Egypt. This is where the name of the holiday comes: Succoth (the huts).

A Succoth was made up of four beams, assembled together by slats and having shingles as walls, while the roof was made up of mace reed and leaves, through which one could see the sky with its frozen autumn stars. Inside the hut was decorated with carpets and bunches of grapes and fruit. A Succoth had only a table and some chairs as furniture. Here the landlord and his family dined and blessed the wine, singing hymns to God afterwards. Believers used to sleep in the Succoth, convinced that God protected them and even appeared in front of them, just like He appeared in a hut to the Patriarch Avraam.

„Hosanna Raba; Semini Ateret; Simhat Thora” (in October, generally)

The last days of Succoth are called Hosanna Raba, Semini Ateret and Simhat Thora. The seventh day of the holiday of the huts received the name of Hosanna Raba. For the first time this holiday was celebrated under the second temple of Jerusalem. Huge processions took place during prayers and expressions of gratitude to God for giving rain when needed. Semini Ateret is the eighth day of Succoth.

In biblical times the celebration of the huts ended with a religious gathering. Today, out of all ancient customs, only the prayers remained. Two of them are characteristic: the prayer for timely rain and thanking God for blessing the land with crops. The only Jewish celebration that involves ceremony is “Simhat Thora” – the joy of receiving Thora.

„Hanukah” (in December, generally)

Jews do not have national celebrations. Even those generated by the memory of a national act were actually related to the belief in God. National events that did not involve God’s celebration did not resist throughout history.

Thus the national event of leaving Egypt is celebrated at Easter, as the exclusive work of God, while the conquest of Canaan, which did not take place with the help of divinity, is not considered to be a holiday; the same happened with the conquest of Jerusalem.

In memory of the miracle that happened then, eight candles are lit in every home, one on the first day, two on the second, and so on.

The candles are lit in the synagogue, between the Minha and Maariv prayers, and at home after the Maariv prayer.

History and customs related to Hamiřa Asar Biřvat (in February, generally)

Hamiřa Asar Biřva last 15 days in the month of Sevat and is one of the most important Jewish children’s holidays – the Trees’ New Year. (Rosh Hosanna at Iilanot).

No mention of this day occurs in the Bible; it seems however that its roots are ancient. Some scholars believe this was the day when the planting of trees began in Palestine, thus being a celebration of the Palestinian agricultural worker. The Jewish peasant was moved by the renewal of nature and thanked God for preparing for him again all he needed to live.

„Purim” – the celebration of destiny (in March, generally)

Purim is the only lay celebration of the Jewish people. Indeed, whilst all Jewish holidays are related to a religious service in a synagogue, Purim is related to small family and friend gatherings. Moreover, whilst all holidays were ordained by God, Purim was established by one man. This man was Mordecai, the hero of the Book of Esther; in this book the name of God is not mentioned, divinity being replaced by the phrase “pure” (fate, destiny), giving the name of Purim.

Purim owes its existence in the Hebrew calendar to some memorable events, more legendary than historical in character.

At the palace of the King of Persia there was a rivalry between two courtiers: Haman, a Babylonian, and Mordecai, a Jew. Because of this rivalry the Jews in the country of Ahařveroř suffered immensely, and the situation became so serious that Haman, who was a favourite of the emperor, obtained an order that decided that the 13th day of Adar all Jews in the Kingdom should be exterminated. Esther, Mordecai’s niece, was announced of this. While all Jews fasted, she went to the king and obtained clemency for the Israelites. Jews believed this salvation to be a miracle of the destiny.

„Pesah” – The celebration of the Jewish Soul (in April, generally)

Pesah commemorates the exit from Egypt, the day when Jews became a self-standing people, the day when the history of the mankind recognized the national existence of the Israeli people. Could there be a greater day in the life of a people?

Jews are the only ones to consider this day as a purely religious event. It was a national event, fulfilled by divine will. This conviction was so strong, that at the time when the ancestors of the Jews lived in the country on the banks of the Jordan, they left their homes on the eve of this holiday and went to Jerusalem, to sacrifice the Easter lamb to God.

Pesah lasts eight days. The first two days are complete holidays; in the first two evenings the Seder is celebrated at home; then four days of semi-celebrations follow, called the Hol-Hamoed, and after these follow two days of synagogue celebrations. On the last the Iscor prayer is said – the commemoration of the dead.

„Sevuot” (In May, generally)

On the third day of the third month the descendants of Israel arrived in the Sinai desert. This is where God decided to appear to people and to give them the divine law. Waiting for this event, Moses ordered that for three days Jews should cleanse their bodies and their souls to properly receive the Thora.

Sabbath

Sabbath played an important role in the history of the Jews. It gave content to their national life, offered them strength at times of hardship and it is only due to the Sabbath that the Jews remained a people.

Achad Haam says in his renowned work on the Sabbath: „Sabbath preserved the Jews more than Jews preserved Sabbath.” Due to their religion, Jews did not lose their national character; through its spiritual character and its traditional form, Sabbath maintained the Jews at a high spiritual standard; through its originality, it renewed and advanced the Jews, not allowing them to fall into decadence. Sabbath was not only a holy day of recollection and rest, but also a day when life was to be enjoyed.

Current Affairs

The Federation of the Jewish Communities in Romania (FJCR), the leading and representative body of the Jewish population in Romania is headed by a committee made up of 45 members having as president between 1994-2004 Acad. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Cajal (deceased in 2004), and as secretary general Iulian Sorin, lawyer. The religious department of FJCR is headed by the Great Rabbi Menachem Hacohen; honorary members are Rabbi Eliezer Glanz (deceased) in Bucharest, and Dr. Ernst Neuman (neologue) in Timișoara (until he passed away in 2004).

Currently FJCR coordinates the activity of 40 communities, totalling 10,876 members, of which 4597 in Bucharest and 6279 in the rest of the country. One fifth of the community members are represented by young people that enjoy specific types of activities: a youth organization, Judaic

education, culture, informatics etc. specific activities are organised for middle aged people as well.

FJCR cares for 801 cemeteries, of which 105 are still functional. Of the 681 closed cemeteries, 621 are situated in localities without Jews. On Romania's territory there are 106 temples, and synagogues of which 15 are declared historical and architectural monuments protected by law, such as the Choir Temple and the Great Synagogue in Bucharest, the Great Synagogue Iași, the Citadel Temple in Timișoara, the Old Temple in Botoșani etc.

Social and medical aid, achieved through funding from "Joint", consists of nurseries for the elderly, in București, Arad and Timișoara, ritual restaurants, the medical centre in Bucharest and medical units throughout the country.

Considering all the above it is evident that the community system in Romania develops efficient and useful activities. For such a small Jewish community the diversity and quality of the material, religious, and cultural services places it among the most dynamic in Eastern Europe.

A limited number of intellectuals and specialists continue to rise from the ranks of this shrinking community, contributing to the development of science, arts, philology, economic management etc.

Good Romanian-Israeli relations attract an increasing number of Jews, many of them originating from Romania, who return here as investors or Romanian-language writers that publish their works in local printing houses for the Romanian reader.

The Germans

They are hard-working, honest, good craftsmen and householders, but also promoters of an exceptional culture. This is how the Romanian majority thinks about a minority who has lived in Transylvania for centuries and has been constantly concerned about preserving the past and promoting its own culture and traditions. Everything is thoroughly made, no doubt.

Traditions

When spring comes in March, the Germans from Romania celebrate the new season with a masked carnival, the *Fasching*, on the Grey Wednesday just after the Shrove Tuesday. This is the last celebration before the Lent. People handcraft masks for the occasion, reproducing fairy tales characters, with the most successful ones being awarded at the end. Bunches of friends gather and are welcome in every house with sausages, drinks, money and, most of all, with doughnuts.

Spring's celebration continues with the Confirmation, an important religious event for the Lutheran Evangelists, on the Palm Sunday (*Palmsontag*). On the occasion, the children aged between 14 and 16 pass an exam after they were previously made for by a priest. Earlier, they had visited relatives and friends to ask for forgiveness for all the trouble they had made. Following the religious celebration, the boys receive their first suit as young adult.

Also planting a tree on the Palm Sunday or young men offering an adorned tree as a gift to their future brides are kept as traditions.

During the whole week between the Palm Sunday and Easter, children collect the greenery for making the nests for laying Easter's red eggs. On the Saturday before the Resurrection, people do not eat the whole day and attend the Resurrection service in the evening.

On Easter Sunday, children look for the nests with eggs and gifts in people's yards and afterwards the whole community attends the religious service. After they return from the church, they participate in a banquet with traditional food, sponge cakes and an egg-breaking competition.

On the day after the Easter, the girls are welcoming with food, red eggs and cakes the boys who come to sprinkle perfume or water on them. Afterwards, they choose among their homes the one where they all meet for eating traditional food, red eggs and drinking eggnog. They later attend the Ball, which is the first occasion to party after the Lent.

Historical background

Transylvanian Saxons

These spring traditions are celebrated each year by all Germans living in Romania. They first settled on these lands a long time ago as the founders of localities and traditions and the promoters of an outstanding culture. Today, they count only a small minority interested in preserving the past and promoting their spirituality in the future.

How did the Saxons arrive in Transylvania? With the conquest of Transylvania, achieved during many stages (the 10th and 12th centuries), the Hungarian kings called for German colonists. The first wave settled alongside the Middle Danube in the 9th century. The following century, the German colonists came to Transylvania. The Hungarian Chancellors named this group *Saxones*, i.e. the Saxons. Their kin-country was located on the Rhine and at the West of Rhine.

The colonization of Transylvanian Saxons in the Intra-Carpathian highlands was initiated by King Geza II (1143-1163). The Saxons were the subjects of the king and therefore of the central power; they functioned under the German unwritten law and then chose freely their county lords and priests. Explicitly asked to serve the crown, they had to give a part of their income to the royal treasury and complete the military service. According to the Andrean Diploma (diploma andreana) of Andrew II (1224), the Saxons settled “from Orastie to Drauseni” had to be a sole people and follow a county lord named by the king.

Starting with the 14th century, the autonomy of the Saxon self-governed territory extended until Matei Corvin ordered in 1486, in compliance with the Silesian rule, the unification of all Saxons living on “royal territory” under “the Saxon University” (Universitas Saxonum). This event marked an important step in the evolution of the Saxons as a political nation.

In this position, they formed one of the three states of the Diet alongside the Hungarian nobility and the Sekler upper class. At an early stage, Saxons became committed to educating the youth so that every village had its own school and teacher since the 14th century. At the end of the century, the graduates of these schools were registered in an increasing number as students with the European universities.

The existence of the Saxons encountered two major events in the first half of the 14th century. After the defeat at Mohacs against the Turks, the Hungarian kingdom collapsed and Transylvania became an autonomous principality in 1542 under the lax authority of the Ottoman Gate. Consequently, the role of the Transylvanian Diet increased, therefore the Saxons, as the people promoted the state, shared responsibility for the public affairs.

The second major event was the Lutheran religious renewal. By separating from the Catholic Church, the Saxons acquired a new religious life, complementary to their political existence, which led to a greater autonomy. The Reform, the Humanism and the development of the Saxon cities as important commercial centres represented the most important features of the Saxon history of the 16th and 17th centuries.

In 1688-1689, Austria conquered Transylvania. Although the Leopoldine Diploma (1691) had recognized the fundamental rights and the liberties of the Saxons, the Austrian Imperial House struggled to manage the empire from the core and to withdraw the autonomy of the newly conquered territories. Transylvania, although considered a defined principality at the time, led an independent existence, but its importance in Eastern Europe constantly decreased ever since. The

competition with the more industrial Austrian hereditary territories and its position at the Empire's periphery led Transylvania to reduce its role from manufacturing and trading goods to providing raw materials. Therefore, the Saxon crafts and commerce, once prosperous, stagnated.

The Austro-Hungarian dualism inaugurated in 1867 had devastating effects on the Saxons. As vassals to the Hungarian rule, the Saxons were obliged to adopt a defensive stance. In the Eastern half (Hungarian) of the monarchy, there were enacted decree-laws against all non-Hungarians. Nevertheless, the Saxons' wealth managed to boom due to their efforts to fight the Hungarization.

Soon after Transylvania united with Romania on 8 January 1919, the Saxons declared their adhesion to the newly founded state in the basis of a majority resolution of their representatives. In short time, trusting the resolution of the Romanian National Assembly of Alba Iulia turned into political delusion: Romanian parties and political personalities did not recognize the rights given to the Saxons and the Szeklers by the Treaty of Versailles.

The Saxons maintained, nevertheless, some autonomy in the fields of economy, association, education and culture. By 1939, there were 250.000 Saxons out of 750.000 Romanian citizens of German origin. They had schools with tuition in their mother tongue, banks and community organizations, associations and a significant culture.

Following the World War II, the deportations to forced labour in the Soviet Union, expropriations and the leveling of any national feature that came with the Communism, the Saxons living in Romania started to question, after 800 years, their will to continue to exist in Transylvania. Also Ceausescu's regime influenced this state of affairs by deliberately leading a policy that encouraged Germans' mass departure; this included bargaining them with the Federal Germany.

Banat Swabians

They are a Germanic group with distinct linguistic and cultural traits who settled later in the Western part of Romania. Their existence in Transylvanian Banat was not the result of a spontaneous mass migration but rather of the decision of the Austrian state. The successful war that Austria fought against Turkey (1716-1718), the victory of Prince Eugene at Petrovara and the conquest of Timisoara on 13 October 1716 forced the Turks to leave Banat. The annexation of Banat to Austria happened following Karlowitz Passarowitz peace negotiations. Therefore a new Austrian administrative territory was formed under the name of "Timisoarean Banat" and the rule of the central authorities from Vienna. As a territory of the Crown, it was ruled by a Governor and became a colonization space for the Austrian state to get higher income from taxes. Most of those settled in Banat were from the West and South-West of the German Empire.

The colonization of Banat, acquired in three stages, started in 1718 and ended 70 years later. The colonization was entirely the art of the state and met lots of difficulties with the new colonists, mostly peasants and mine workers, since Wien was interested in surpassing the industrial hegemony of England, France and the Netherlands. Also many German princes opposed to the migration of qualified workforce. In the end, the process proved successful: within a century, the Western parts of Romania recovered the disadvantage they had compared to Transylvania and

also, in certain fields (mining, transportation, industry), they exceeded the territories inhabited by the Saxons.

The highlands of Banat were mostly colonized by miners from the Austrian province Steiermark (Stiria).

The name of Swabians comes from the German region called Swabia, the land of origin for most of Banat's colonists. They were Catholic, since this was a requirement for being recognized by the Habsburg Imperial House. Once conformed to the Hungarian rule, the new German colonists were more receptive than Saxons or Romanians to the Hungarian policies. Sharing the same church with the Hungarians, their attempts at Hungarianization proved more successful. After 1918, they hesitated in declaring their adhesion to the Romanian state since their will was to continue sharing the same state with the Swabians settled alongside the Danube; the latter divided between Hungary and Jugoslavia.

Satmar Swabians

Although they are not the first German community in Satmar, Satmar Schwaben settled there in 1712 following the request of Count Alexander Karolyi, who wanted to repopulate some territories devastated by the "kurutz wars" in the beginning of the 18th century.

Satmar Swabians lived in approximately 40 settlements that were either entirely German or mixed Romanian-Hungarian-German. Nevertheless, they had a tough life: once settled on nobiliary lands, they were compelled to forced labour, while the attempts at Hungarianization in the 19th and 20th centuries – to which they were intensively exposed, since they were Catholics and formed an ethnic-unbalanced community with no core of intellectuals – had powerful effects.

During the 13th century, the Germans from Zips arrived in Maramures (Sipser Swabians). Among them, there were peasants, craftsmen and mine workers, who contributed to the development of the region. German colonists from Eastern and Western Europe followed in the 18th century and together they preserved their ethnicity despite all the difficulties encountered.

Germans from Bukovina, Bessarabia

Germans arrived in North-East Bukovina in the 18th century. They were mainly peasants and craftsmen, but also mine workers, and came from Zips, Rhine-Main and Baden-Wurttemberg. Following one of the Austrian-Turk wars during the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire had to cede Bukovina for Austria's benefit (1775). The "popularization" led by Austria followed the same pattern as in Banat: professional soldiers and administrative public servants, followed by Germans, Polish, Hungarians, Jews and Armenians.

Their existence in Bukovina (considered the Switzerland on the 19th century) was productive. The region was multilingual and German, as the official language, was spoken by anyone who was socially above the average.

At the German University of Cernauti, both students and professors came from different countries – a pattern lost after 1918. Following the annexation to Romania, Bukovina and the University of Cernauti were Romanianized, but the final stroke occurred in 1940, when North Bukovina was ceded to the Soviet Union.

Russia colonialized the Germans from Bessarabia, when took over Bessarabia from the Turks following the Peace of Bucharest in 1812. Approximately 80.000 Germans lived in Bessarabia in 1919 (of a total population of 2.3 million in the region). After the annexation of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union, the majority of the Germans were sent “home”, in the German Reich.

Germans from Romania after 1918

After the union of 1918 Germans became the second minority in Romania, outnumbered by Hungarians. According to the 1919 statistics, the percentage of the Germans living in Romania counted 4.1% of the total population and 9.87% of the ethnic population living in Transylvania (still outnumbered by Hungarians).

The Germans from Romania struggled to organize themselves countrywide in order to better lobby for their rights and preserve their culture. The Union of Germans from Romania set up in 1921, which included different cultural, economic and religious organizations and aimed at solving economic, social, political, cultural and religious issues this minority confronted with. The Union’s political exponent was the German Party, which published its own written press such as the *Kronstädter Zeitung* and the *Siebenbürgisch Deutsches Tageblatt*.

Politically, the German Party adopted the tactics of collaborating with authorities since it perceived this way as being the easiest to meet basic demands related to education and the Church. The Party’s leaders always took part in electoral coalitions with the party in power or successful in elections. The German Party shared few disagreements with the Hungarian Party because of the Catholic Church that struggled to find among Germans proselytes of the Hungarian culture. Political disagreements within the German Party occurred with the rise of the extremist group led by Fritz Fabricius, an Adolf Hitler’s nationalist ideas enthusiast.

In 1922, all national minorities published 256 publications countrywide, of which 71 were German publications; in 1929, there were 67 periodicals published in the German language.

Between world wars, although the German deputies in the Romanian Parliament represented all Germans living in Romania (approx. 750.000 Germans in 1938), German organizations and groups did not display unitary thinking.

Also between world wars, the tensions emerged in relation with the new state made the Germans living in Romania vulnerable to nationalist-socialist ideas. The intervention of Hitler Germany in the issues of the German minority – such as displacing Germans from Bukovina, Bessarabia and Dobrudja, inculcating a nationalist-socialist leadership upon the ethnic group, enlisting 60.000 Germans in the *Waffen-SS* – led, after the war, to the deportation of 70.000 German men and women from Romania to the Soviet Union and expropriation of private and community properties and temporary suspension of civic rights for those remained in the country.

Current affairs

After 1950, the Germans living in Romania regained the right to vote and recuperated part of their private properties and households in 1956. Following an agreement between Romanian government and the Federal Germany, the 70s marked the massive “export” of the Germans

living in Romania to their kin country. This also came with a drastic decrease of the number of Germans living in Romania; in 1989, records counted approximately 250.000 persons, aged and reconciled with life. Things got even bulkier since Germans continued to emigrate to their kin country in the '90s. To such an extent that the census showed just 60.088 Germans were living in Romania in 2002, corresponding to 0.28% of the country's total population.

The ethnic minority is represented in Romania both politically and culturally by the Democratic Forum of Germans from Romania (DFGR). According to the DFGR's programme, the Forum "makes efforts to create politico-juridical, linguistic, cultural and economic premises for continuing the existence of the German minority in Romania and ensuring the German minority, a loyal component of the Romanian society, the right to express and participate in decision-making on issues of interest".

The Democratic Forum of Germans from Romania has branches in all the localities with significant German population. These branches are organized in five regional associations in Transylvania, Banat, North Transylvania (Satu Mare area), Bukovina, and Wallachia. DFGR has approximately 30,000 members all over the country. The German community organized 70 meeting centres and boarding schools, two social care institutions (i.e. the "Adam Muller-Guttenbrunn" House in Timisoara and the *Diakonisches Werk Rumänien* with the "Dr. Carl Wolff" Hospital for the edery in Sibiu).

Currently in Romania there are 157 kindergartens with tuition in German that register approximately 5,600 children, 100 German schools and education units (approx. 10,038 pupils) and 14 university units with tuition in German for approx. 1,600 students, all of them state-owned.

The cultural legacy of the Germans, particularly of the Transylvanian Saxons, is exceptional: they set up a myriad of Transylvanian towns (Brasov and Sibiu are some of them), built up medieval fortresses, gave the world many scholars and artists and promoted the model of a civilized and hard-working society.

Today, their cultural heritage is encouraged through performances by the state-owned German Theatre in Timisoara, an education unit in the state-owned "Radu Stanca Theatre in Sibiu and the Puppet Theatre in Sibiu. They have publications such as the Bucharest-published "Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung fur Rumänien" newspaper, the Sibian "Hermannstadter Zeitung" monthly and the "Curier FDGR", DFGR's bi-monthly informative bulletin.

The public television airs between 1 and 1.5 hours of German programmes every week, while the public radio company broadcasts an hour of emission every day and two regional programmes in Timiosara and Targu Mures.

The Germans are represented in the Parliament by Ovidiu Gant, MP, since November 2004. It is also worth to mention Sibiu as one of the Romania's important cities, whose mayor is a German elected constantly in the past years for his good management qualities. This is not a singular case though, since there are smaller localities in Transylvania and Banat that share the same administrative pattern.

“We do not hate the Greeks; on the contrary, we love them because we hold the same legacy: to create a nationality; we have the same interests, the same pains, the same hopes; when we say that ‘we love them’ we do not use the words in vain but uphold them with proofs: in essence Romania is kind to the commerce with the Greeks from all over; thousands of Greeks are welcome here with a shake hand ...” (Dimitrie Bolintineanu, 1863).

Historical background

Myriad contacts with the Greek civilisation and its representatives took place long before in the antiquity through the Greek colonies settled on the Black Sea shore, among which Istros (i.e. Histria), Callatis (i.e. Mangalia) and Tomis (i.e. Constanta) were the most prolific. These colonies exerted economic and cultural influence on the majority population, especially starting with the 8th century BC. The colonists arrived from Millet, Rodos, Megara and Corinth. More or less intensely according to political evolutions in the Mediterranean, the Greek colonies from Dobrogea maintained links with their kin until the rule of Alexander the Great.

The Byzantine civilization (in terms of institutions and culture) spreads in the Romanian Principalities by direct contact in Dobrogea (11th and 12th centuries AD) and by ecclesiastic relations with the Ecumenic Patriarchy of Constantinople and other religious centres (i.e. the Mount Athos, Meteore and Sinai). After the fall of Constantinople (1453), when the Byzantium exerted an outstanding influence on the Orthodox space, capitulations of Romanian monasteries with all their related wealth and properties marked the moment by their impressive number. Historian Nicolae Iorga named this period “the Byzantium after the Byzantium” since Byzantine forms of life made known their existence also after 1453.

They were present in all the three Romanian Principalities starting with the 16th century either as merchants or as boyars at the courts of Moldavia and Walachia. During the 17th century, their number increased since the rule of the Ottoman Empire favoured the Constantinopolitan Greeks to reach outstanding economic positions and domains.

The Greek Diaspora from Moldavia and Walachia featured distinct particularities also because of the Greeks who arrived from different regions such as Tessalia, Epir, Macedonia, the Aegean and the Ionian Islands or in the Minor Asia (especially Constantinople, Trapezund and Sinope) and integrated in the socio-political life of the two Romanian Principalities becoming locals in time. In Transylvania, until 1742 – when the Empress Maria Theresa granted the Greeks who arrived in the Habsburg Empire the right to receive Austrian citizenship and to bring their families – neither the Greeks from the companies in Sibiu and Brasov nor those outside them, who often travelled to Vienna with business, had the right to buy property and to hold domains (except of those knighted such as Kalo Iani Pater, for example).

The Greek merchants were the most numerous and active category within the Greek Diaspora living on Romanian territory. They came from the biggest economic centres of the Ottoman Empire (such as Constantinople, Trapezund, Ianina, Castoria, Melenic, Filipopol, and Tarnovo) but also from Crete and the Aegean and the Ionian Islands. Together with others in the Balkans, they formed an interest network of commercial routes from East to the centre of Europe. Some of these merchants accumulated fortunes and bought domains in Moldavia and Walachia, mixed with local boyar families, gained high ranked positions in the court and even took Romanian names.

Many Greeks financed different cultural activities in the Romanian Principalities. During the 17th century, the Greek became the language often spoken at the courts of Moldavia and Walachia since the connections with the Constantinopolitan world developed and the number of Greeks who could be found at the courts of Romanian rulers, some of them of Greek origin as well, increased. It was common sense for the sons of voivodes and boyars to speak Greek. This was the moment when a new category of intellectual appeared, the private teachers, such as Ierimia Cacavela, and the teachers of the Cantacusino and Constantin Duca's children.

Dimitrie Cantemir acknowledges that the ruler Vasile Lupu ordered Greeks monks to be brought to "all important monasteries" to teach Greek to the boyars' children. In 1646, the Greek scholar Paisie Ligaridis and Ignatie Petritis of Hios played key roles in the settlement of the first humanist higher education institution in Targoviste. The voievodal Academies of Bucharest and Iasi are important both for the Greek and the Romanian cultures. As part of the reform of the Academia of Iasi in 1728, Hrisant Notara brought "a teacher of Moldavian, namely Romanian", according to the scholar patriarch, in the program of study.

The belonging to the Orthodox Church, supported both political and material by the Romanian rulers, favoured the presence of Greek high hierarchs, some of them being formed as intellectuals in the Western cultural centres.

In Transylvania, the two Greek companies from Sibiu and Brasov started in 1660 to bring priests from the religious centres of Jerusalem, Sinai and Mount Athos – according to the written proofs found in the libraries of these companies, they were also teachers and bearers of Greek manuscripts. Representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Church, high priests or other ecclesiasts (monks, priests, and so on) advocated for the creation of schools and printing houses; they also brought books thus contributing to the progress of the Greek and Romanian cultures.

Settling up Greek printing houses in Moldova and Walachia was made at the initiative of a group of the Orthodox Church hierarchs, among them Hrian Notara being a notable figure. They were meant to print, most of all, books necessary to protect the Orthodox Church and to deliver to the Eastern Church. Alongside with the religious literature, prevailing in the printed products, there were also published legal, philosophical and didactic texts, which added to the promotion of laic literature.

Some Greek intellectuals who lived within the Romanian territory, such as Nicolae Chiparisa, Anastasie Comnen Ipsilanti, Dionisie Fotino and Daniel Philipide (during the 18th century), wrote chronicles.

Romanian libraries kept records of a large number of Greek books, most of them being registered as such. During this period, many voievodes, boyars and merchants founded libraries; to name a few: the library of the High Steward Constantin Cantacusino in Margineni, the library of Brancoveanu in Hurezu, the library of the Mavrocordats in Vacaresti, the library of the Barnovschi Monastery, the libraries of the Greek commercial companies in Sibiu and Brasov, the libraries of boyars Iordaki Rosetti-Roznovan and of the Bals family, and the library of the merchant Grigorie Antonie Avramios in Iasi. Examining some registers of Greek books at the Universitary Central Library in Iasi, but also other sources such as notes and letters, helps shape the preferences for reading at the time and reveal places of provenience.

In addition, it is essential to record the existence of myriad translations. Translations into Neo-Greek from Classic Greek or Byzantine were predominant during the 17th century and also from Italian at the end of the same century. Most known translators of the time are the Greeks Ioan Aranos, Ieremia Cacavelas, Marcos Porphiropoulos, George Chrisogov and Mihai Christaris, and the Romanians Radu Greceanu and Eustate Logofatul.

The Phanariot regime in the Romanian Principalities represented an utmost example of Ottoman exploitation. However, some Phanariot rulers (such as Constantin Mavrocordat and Alexandru Ipsilanti) played an outstanding role in developing Moldavia and Walachia through administrative and fiscal reforms. There were Phanariot rulers that supported the fight of the Romanian Principalities, and implicitly of the Greek people, against the Ottoman Gate. A momentum of the Romanian-Greek cooperation was the revolutionary movement of 1821 against the Ottoman rule and all the following adjoining activities. Representatives of other peoples from the Balkans, merchants and even Romanian boyars joined the Greeks in the Friends Hetaeria initiated in 1814. Ephors were settled in Bucharest, Iasi and Galati. Not by accident, the revolutionary Anti-Ottoman movement broke out on Romanian territory.

Following the revolutionary movement of 1821, the Greeks who had settled in the Romanian Principalities took part in the most important political events of the time. Squads of Romanian pandours were involved in the fights of the Russian-Turk War in 1828-1829, which ended with the Peace of Adrianopole that led to the recognition of Greece's autonomy.

Since 1829, the favourable circumstances created following the Peace of Adrianopole generated the arrival of new masses of Greeks and thus increased the Greek Diaspora living in Romania. They settled particularly in the harbour-towns on the Danube such as Galati, Braila, Giurgiu, Constanta, Tulcea, Sulina, Calafat and Corabia, where they practiced commerce.

The Greek playwright and actor C. Aristia participated in the preparations for the Revolution of 1848 in Walachia as a member of the Filarmonic Society.

After gaining her independence, Greece continued to run traditional economic, political and cultural relations with Romania. Greek vessels were present in the harbours on the Danube and also in Constanta; therefore, together with other European states, Greece took the decision to open a vice-consulate in Braila in 1835.

It is of notoriety that independent Greece had general consulates in Bucharest and Iasi and a vice-consulate in Galati since 1834. Greek diplomacy proved united with Romania on key occasions

during the 19th century such as the Revolution of 1848, the unification of Principalities, and the War of Independence; of course, this solidarity was also a result of the establishment of Greek communities following the decree of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza in 1860, which emerged as a continuation of a very long presence of Greek Diaspora on Romanian territory.

In the second half of the 19th century, the two independent states continued to maintain cultural links. All this time, the Greek communities from Romania developed a vibrant cultural activity. In Moldova and Walachia, schools became public institutions through Organic Rules; classic Greek was taught in public gymnasiums and high-schools during 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Tuition in neo-Greek appeared only in the form of private education, therefore a series of Greek, Romanian-Greek and Greek-German private schools and academies for young ladies flourished in the second half of the 19th century.

Since private schools appeared and disappeared ceaselessly, it is difficult to have a sufficient statistics of the Greek schools from Romania. According to the figures of the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Public Education from 1891-1892, there were private schools for boys in Braila, Constanta, Galati, Tulcea and in Vlasca county and for girls in Braila, Constanta, Galati, Bucharest, Turnu Severin, Tulcea and Sulina. The 1910 edition of the Register of Private Schools reveals that the first Greek newspapers (approx. 31 newspapers and magazines) were printed in Romania at the beginning of the 19th century.

Neither the Greek-Romanian relations, in general, nor the evolution of the Greek communities in the 20 century, in particular, have been methodically researched so far, especially when it comes to archive investigations. The Greek communities established in different parts of Romania continued to exist due to the new waves of Greeks coming from all Greek regions.

Most members of these Greek communities originate from Epir, Macedonia, the Ionian Islands (Ithaca, Corfu and Cephalonia) and Cyclade. At the end of the 19th century and during the 20th century, the economic, social and political situation of the Greek communities depended mostly on the relations between the Romanian and the Greek states. In 1900, Romania and Greece concluded their first commercial convention; this convention comprised a protocol according to which the Greek churches had legal statute on Romanian territory.

Greece and Romania were allies during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), whereas their relations between featured a preference for concluding a regional political and military alliance between wars. During 1930-1934, a Balkanic agreement is concluded at the suggestion of the Greek Prime Minister Papanasiu and the Romanian Prime Minister Nicolae Titulescu.

The cultural exchanges between the Romanian and Greek peoples continued also in the 20th century. The Anthology of Greek poetry (1800-1930) and the Anthology of Greek literature were translated from Greek to Romanian. Complementary the works of Panait Istrati were translated from Romanian to Greek. And these examples reveal only some swaps that stayed at the origin of the Romanian-Greek cultural trade at the beginning of the 20th century.

After World War II, Romanian-Greek commercial relations revived after a period of calmness, when the two countries signed a commercial convention on 19 May 1954. Diplomatic dialogue revitalized in 1956.

The last Greek immigration wave took place during the Greek civil war, when Romania, with the help of the Red Cross and of other small governments, offered protection to an important number of children, war wounded, women and old people. On that occasion, Romania received almost 12,000 Greek refugees and offered them shelter in Bucharest, Pitesti, Oradea, Hunedoara, Targoviste, Constanta, Falticeni, Botosani, Maneciu and Ungureni.

The Romanian communist regime confiscated the properties of Greek communities and forced those who did not want to give up the Greek citizenship to emigrate to America, Australia, Canada, Germany, Scandinavia, France and Greece.

After 1990

The Greek Union from Romania is the organization representative for the Greek community living in Romania. The organization founded in Bucharest on 28 December 1989 and registered as legal person on 26 February 1990. The Greek Union from Romania represents 20 territorial communities in different municipalities, towns or communes and fights for “the right to preserving, developing and expressing ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identities of its members”.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Union set up classes and courses for studying Greek (more than 2,000 persons attended such courses only in 1999-2000), and the Romanian public education provides mixed classes with tuition in Greek (four hours per week) since 1999 in Bucharest, Braila and Constanta. Tuition in Greek is also provided in Tulcea.

The Greek Union from Romania – whose emblem is revealing an ancient warrior surrounded by a crown of laurels – organizes every year various cultural events, such as celebrations of the national days of Greece and Romania, the celebration of 28 October 1940 (when the Greek people repulsed the invasion of Italian fascism), religious celebrations of Easter and Christmas and also Greek folklore, dance and poetry festivals.

The representative of the Union in the Chamber of Deputies is Sotiris Fotopolos who was elected for two running mandates in 2000 and 2004.

The Greek Union from Romania has delegates in the World Council of Greek Diaspora, an independent body set up in 1996 with the support of Greece, and also in the Coordinating Committee of Greek Youth in Europe.

The Greek Union from Romania publishes a bilingual magazine, called “Elpis-Hope”, since 1993 and a monthly newspaper, called “Dialogue with the Time”, since 1999. Also it edits an electronic bulletin since 2001.

The Union also edited studies about the history of Greek culture and traditions in Romania: Cornelia Papacostea-Diamantopolu’s “Greek communities from Romania in the 19th century” and Olga Cicanci’s “Greek written press from Romania in the 19th century”.

After 1990, the Greek Union from Romania succeeded in gaining some of the properties confiscated during the communist regime: the “Elpis” Theatre in Constanta and the Greek Cinema and the “Olimp” Restaurant in Galati.

There are also Greek personalities who enriched the Romanian culture, such as the writer Ion Luca Caragiale, the director Gheorghe Vitanidis, the composer Gherase Dendrino and the critic Dimitrie Panaitescu Perpessicius.

Traditions

Greeks are dignified, ambitious and religious people. They managed to overcome the differences between them when it is about a common cause. They have faith in the Church; they are numerous (more than 7 million live outside the national borders) and united in pride and education.

Their commercial and innovative spirit and the fact that they were and still are, at least in part, the “sea masters” – which brings out their genuine preference for freedom and brotherhood – outstandingly contribute to defining a Greek unity typology.

The most long-standing Greek community from Romania settled two hundred years ago in the village of Izvoarele, near Tulcea. People here kept the beauty of Greek traditions but also borrowed from Romanian and Bulgarian traditions. They wear Romanian names and speak Greek, while their costumes resemble to those in Bulgaria. They took the custom of “weting the groom” from the Bulgarian culture (newly wed men are soaked with their heads in a trough full of water) or the “old woman’s day” (a day when women spend their time as they please, without their husbands, until the next morning).

There are few Greek traditions left, such as the *Dragoman*, when young men enter the houses of their future brides riding beautifully adorned horses and vow their love with sweet promises and knot-shaped breads. Other Greek tradition is the *Lazarel*, on Palm Sunday, when 16 years old girls sing and receive eggs, money and flour and roll the bolter for a rich summer. On *Horhumbal*, boys compete for making the highest fire on the hills and on *Elefterio*, women spin and tell stories around a hole full of embers.

The Italians

They came to Romania more than a century ago because they were excellent handicraftsmen and scholars. Nowadays, although a small community of just several thousand, Italians in Romania try to maintain and promote their traditional values.

A small town

An Italian community over 100 years old lives in Dobrogea, near the Măcin Mountains. Stonemasons for generations, they keep their Italian language, their Catholic faith, their spaghettis, canzonets, and their seven-step dances. Unfortunately the young leave and the community gets older every year, without much hope of revival.

Their village is called Greci, and here it is that the only Italian peasants in Romania live. They are good at making wine and at gardening, but the thing they are best at is carving stone. Seventy families live nowadays in Greci.

On Sundays, on Santa Lucia days, or on the occasion of the most important religious holidays, (Babbo Natale) Italians from Greci meet at Salon (Cabanone) and share the food they bring from home. They tell jokes, sing canzonets (“Il mazzoin dei fiori”, “Arrivata la bella biondina”, “Il canto del paisan”), tell old tales, dance their folk dances (“Sette passi”) and play various fun games: quintillio, bocce or toni (bowling).

After living together for more than 100 years, Romanians and Italians have borrowed from each other customs and recipes: sarmale and home-made cakes, order and work discipline, cleanliness of the home, and the garden. Italians have however kept only a few popular traditions. For treating diseases they mostly use the garden sage and castor oil. Pork dishes are cooked just like in the Italian region of Rovigo: dry salami and prosciutto- meat dried in the attic after a special technique. Nowadays there is no mixed family in Greci wherein the Romanian husband or wife did not change his/her religion and learn Italian.

The Italians brought a new craft: that of stonemason. This is a tough and dangerous occupation. Many died while working in the “cava” – the quarry. Those having escaped explosions and stones falling do not reach old age because of silicosis. Carving stone is often synonymous to death.

Drinking is good for effort, but also against silicosis, they say. They are proud that they do not stay too long in hospitals, and the only logical explanation is their apricot brandy.

Among others, Italians brought to the village gardening: the vineyard resembles an orchard of small unsuspected apple trees; perfectly lined pepper and tomato plants, and the apricot orchards.

They are very proud to speak about themselves and they use their nicknames. Giovanni Senza Paura (the fearless) was a braggart. Giovanni Scorcon was a swindler. Cuivit comes from “cucuvea” (owl), while Sachettoni means that the man was so thrifty that he tied a little sack (sachettoni) at the hen’s bottom, so that she won’t lose any eggs.

Short Historical Background

On the current territory of Romania, Italians first came on business, especially to harbours such as Galați, Brăila, and Constanța, or after being invited here by Romanian princes in their capacity as doctors, arms teachers, or music teachers. Starting with the 18th century, Italians came in significant numbers to Romania, especially as builders, painters, sculptors, decorators, and bricklayers.

One of them managed to stay around 18th century Romanian princes and brought his remarkable contribution to Romanian culture and spirituality. Nicolae Iorga wrote that “One of the most precious gifts Italy ever gave us with regard to our past is the book of Brâncoveanu’s secretary, Del Chiaro.” This was Constantin Brâncoveanu’s Italian language secretary, who had studied law, medicine, and philosophy, and spoke Greek Latin, and French. In 1718 he managed to print “**Istoria delle moderne rivoluzioni della Valachia**”, which is a “passionate and impassionate incursion in the morals, lifestyle, socially differentiated mentalities, a description of social strata, of the relations with the Ottoman rulers, of the moral outlook of the country’s inhabitants, of their values and spiritual preoccupations, of folklore creators and of the elites” (Gheorghe Macarie, “Italian-Romanian Spiritual Interferences”). His book is an invaluable resource about the Romanian Principality between 1710 and 1716.

In the following years the influence that Italians had on Romanian culture was just as important; decorative architectural elements of Italian inspiration are to be found in the Brancovenesc style. Other Italians, coming from poorer areas such as Friuli or Veneto came to Romania looking for work. Many of them chose to stay here and start a family.

Italians settled everywhere on Romanian territory; there are several areas with significant numbers of Italians:

- **Hațeg**, where villages Clopotiva, Râu de Mori, Sântămăria, and Orlea have a predominantly Italian population. They came around 1850 to work in the timber industry.
- **Greci**, a village in the Tulcea county, and some other villages in the area, where Italian stonemasons settled and contributed to the building of local bridges over the Danube.
- **Craiova**, especially in the surrounding villages, where large numbers of Italian stonemasons chose to settle.

Ethnic Italians have been very present in Romanian public life, famous personalities are Doctor Pesamosca, the literary critic Adrian Marino, actors Ileana Stana Ionescu and Mișu Fotino, director Sorana Coroamă-Stanca, painter Angela Tomaselli, composer Horia Moculescu, and sports commentator Cristian Țopescu.

Current Affairs

In the 1992 census the Italian minority was registered under the heading “Other minorities”; however, in the 2002 census 3,331 Italians were counted (less than 0.10% of the total population). The Italian community estimated an unofficial number of 9,000 persons in 2001.

After 1990 the majority of Italians in Romania became members of the Italian Community in Romania, which was founded in Iași in 1990. The association has as a main objective the preservation of the national identity of the minority. The main activities developed by the Italian Community are the celebration of Italy’s National Day (2 June), the Festival of the Italian Minority, the publication of the bilingual periodical “Columna”, and the publication of various other books. Worth mentioning are the following books published until now: “Vicenzo Puschiasis – Stone Carver” by Giovana and Gheorghe Munteanu (Piatra Neamț), “Sentimental Vademecum – The History of Italians in the Hațeg Area” by Eugenio di Gaspero, “Italian-Romanian Cultural Relations over centuries” by Gloria Gabriela Radu (Târgoviște), and “Tales with Italians” by Gina Modesto Ferrarini (Bucharest).

Presently the Italian minority is represented in Parliament by Mircea Grosaru, who was elected in 2004 on behalf of another ethnic organization, The Association of Italians in Romania.

The Macedonians

Macedonians are among the latest national minorities to be officially recognized by the Romanian state, although, paradoxically, Macedonians belong to a millennia-old people with ties to the Romanian people and with Dacians going far way back in history.

Short historical background

Contemporary European history abounds in historical theories concerning the origins and ethnic belonging of Macedonians, which do not necessarily take into account what Macedonians have to say about themselves. Political statements take precedence over historical proofs, which are abundant throughout Macedonia.

In short, there is now an independent state called the Republic of Macedonia¹. Here live approx. 2 million inhabitants, three quarters of which are Macedonian speaking a Slavic language (Macedonian). The rest of Macedonia's inhabitants belong to various ethnic minorities: Albanians, Vlachs, Turks, Roma etc.

The name of Macedonia comes from the old name of the ancient state that gave history such names as Alexander the Great and Philip. Over this ancient Macedonian population Slav tribes settled during the 6th century, thus creating the current Macedonian people. Macedonians consider themselves the direct descendants of ancient Macedonians while at the same time acknowledging the strong Slavic influence.

The Republic of Macedonia is not recognized by all states; Greece for instance claims the right over the name of Macedonia. For this reason sometimes the name used is that of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

Throughout history Macedonia was in turn considered a region or an annex of its neighbouring states and of the great empires such as the Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria, Serbia, the Ottoman Empire, Greece, and Yugoslavia. Macedonia won her state independence in 1991.

For people living here, the Romanian Principalities represented the ideal of religious and social freedom; permanently, successive waves of Macedonians settled on Romania's territory. The first documented settlements date around 1300.

¹ Romania recognized in a bilateral treaty of 2001, ratified by the Parliaments of the two respective states, the official name of the Macedonian state the Republic of Macedonia. By the same treaty national minorities in the two states are mutually recognized.

One of the first settlements on Romanian territory is the locality called Macedonia (in Timiș county); it is documented under the name of Machadonia in the Papal tithe evidences of 1332-1337.

Worth mentioning is the coming of Nicodim of Tismana (1340-1406), who was born in Prilep, Macedonia, the founder of monachism in the Romanian Principality and the founder of the monasteries in Tismana, Vodița, Prislop, and Vișina.

Macedonians' fight for national determination continued for centuries, which also created successive waves of migration in the 19th and 20th centuries.

One has to mention the involvement of Macedonians in the fights of Tudor Vladimirescu and in the Pasoptist Movement in Romania. Also important for the Romanian-Macedonian relations is the fact that in the 19th century the fight for national emancipation of Macedonians found its roots in Romania, among Macedonians settled here; their fight did not have a happy ending.

Last but not least, Macedonians settled in the Romanian Principalities also as a result of the good relations they had with Aromanians, a minority population in Macedonia, also known under the name of Wlachs or Macedo-Romanians (Machidons).

Current Affairs

According to the census of 2002, there are 695 Macedonians living in Romania. Although their number is very low, participation in parliamentary elections of Macedonian organizations was surprisingly intensive.

The Association of Slav Macedonians took part in the elections of 2002 and obtained over 8,000 votes. Four years later three organizations took part in the elections; among them they obtained over 25,000 votes. The competition was won by the Association of Macedonians in Romania (AMR), now represented in Parliament by Liana Dumitrescu, who is also the secretary of the Parliamentary Group of National Minorities in the Chamber of Deputies.

Disputes within the Macedonian community represent a good example of how Romanian legislation allows the transformation of the electoral process into a business, as one can find sometimes candidates for minority places in Parliament who have nothing to do with the respective minority.

The best known such case is that of Vasile Savu, MP, representative of the Slav Macedonian minority in the Chamber of Deputies between 2000 and 2004. Savu was a well-known union leader from Jiu Valley; he entered Parliament on the Association's electoral list but was later on strongly contested by both the Association and by the Embassy of the Macedonian Republic to Bucharest. Although he accessed the electoral list based on his declaration of belonging to the Macedonian minority, less than four months after the 2000 elections, he declared in front of the members of the Association that he was not Macedonian and had nothing to do with this ethnic group. This statement led to de-facto war against Savu within the Macedonian minority – this was occasionally reflected in the media. According to the media, the place as MP was a reward for “betraying Miron Cozma during the last uprisings of the miners”. This did not stop him from candidating again for a place in Parliament as representative of the Macedonian minority; he set

up his own organization, the Cultural Association of Macedonians in Romania, a clone of the League of Mining Unions from the Jiu Valley.

Another organization, the Democratic Association of Slav Macedonians, set up in September 2004, also tried to promote to Parliament a person who publicly admitted he had no Macedonian origins.

However, the organization currently representing Macedonians' interests in Parliament, the Association of Macedonians in Romania, is the only one who really deals with the specific interests of this minority; it was recognised as a representative organization by both authorities in Bucharest and Skopje. It was founded in 2000, and since 2001 it is member of the Council of National Minorities, together with the organizations representing all other minorities in Romania. The Association has 29 branches in 11 counties and is about to become affiliated to international Macedonian organizations.

The objectives of the Association of Macedonians in Romania is that of publicly representing, promoting, and protecting the interests of the Macedonian community in Romania, of promoting the Macedonian culture, language, and history, of defending and extending the individual and collective rights of the members of the Macedonian minority in Romania, as well as strengthening collaboration between Romania and Macedonia.

Several organizations are active within the Association: the Women's Organization is very active and represented the source of recruitment of the current leadership of the Association; the Youth Organization is however the main supplier of voluntaries for all activities of the AMR.

The activity of the Association focused on promoting the contribution of Macedonians to public life in Romania and on promoting their identity. The AMR aimed from its beginnings to organise seminars, debates and roundtables, so as to enable its members, members of other minorities, and the majority, to know the specific problems of this minority. Other activities included supporting children in assuming their identity by involving them in life of the community; in this respect, AMR organised competitions, camps, festivals, trips, offered prizes and published children's artistic creations.

Cultural Institutions

Throughout the four years of activity, part of the objectives of the Association has been reached; numerous cultural institutes promoting Macedonian culture and artists have been created.

- The **Macedoneanul** Publishing House, set up in 2001, undertakes a strong publicistic activity; it publishes the most representative periodicals of the Macedonian minority, as well as books by Macedonian writers or referring to Macedonians;

- The Ethnography and Folklore Group - Biser Balkanski, active since 2001; it has gathered for the first time 150 years old songs. This group had the initiative of setting up a museum of ethnic Macedonians in Romania which will not only display instances of the Macedonian culture and folklore, but also its interactions with Romanian folklore;

- The theatre group „Micul Macedonean”, set up in 2001, won numerous awards in theatre festivals;

- The Macedonian Poets' and Writers' Club - Alexandru Macedonski, was set up in 2001, and develops a rich poetic activity; it has also had several editorial events;
- The Club for Plastic Arts, set up in 2001, contributed to the launching of many Macedonian plastic artists through permanent exhibitions at its headquarters;
- The Vocal and Instrumental Ilinden 2002 Ensemble, was set up in 2002 and took part in many festivals and competitions. Mihnea Vlădescu is active in this ensemble, and has already recorded a first CD with 18 traditional songs in Romanian and Macedonian;
- The Macedoneanul Dance Group set up in 2002 in the Urzicuța branch;
- The Vocal and Instrumental Ensemble „Raze Macedonene,” set up in 2003 in the branches of Timiș and Arad.

On the other hand, the Association of Macedonians in Romania has been publishing the bilingual monthly periodical “Macedoneanul”, in 1000 free copies.

Between 2003 and 2004 four manuscripts of ethnic Macedonians were published; also, three phonographic materials (CDs and audio cassettes) with contemporary Macedonian poetry in Romanian and Macedonian were published.

Also during 2003-2004 two albums with Macedonian music, a Mihnea Vlădescu album containing 18 songs, and an album of the Raze Macedonene” ensemble containing 5 songs were published.

The Hungarians

No other national minority in Romania had a more tensioned relationship with the Romanian majority. Hungarians and Romanians have nevertheless lived together for centuries. For Hungarians in Transylvania the most important thing has been the recognition of their past, of their values and specific traditions in a context wherein their cultural, linguistic, and spiritual distinctiveness and diversity is not denied.

Short Historical Background

Hungarians have a long, rich history and cultural tradition, which makes their presence dating back to 8th-9th century on Romanian territory (Transylvania, more specifically) difficult to overlook.

Of the multitude of facts worth mentioning, one has to remember the fact that King Stephen the Holy (997-1038) christened the Hungarians and laid the foundations of the Hungarian kingdom; the Ardeal was from the very beginning an integral part of the kingdom. The first document to mention the name of Ultra Siluam (beyond the woods) dates back to 1075. The name of Partes Transsilvaniae (the parts beyond the forests) emerged in the same century and from then on the Ardeal was called by the name of Transylvania in all documents issued by the Hungarian Kingdom, which at the time were written in Latin. The popular name was an exact translation of the Latin name into Hungarian – Erdőelve -, which in Romanian was transformed into Ardeal.

In 1526 the Turkish army defeats the Hungarian king in the battle of Mohács. The Hungarian kingdom is divided into three parts: the centre, retained by the Turks, the west and the north – included in the Habsburg Empire, and Transylvania – which despite some payments it had to make towards the Ottoman Empire, was an independent state – at least administratively – until 1690. In 1568 at Turda, the Transylvanian Diet proclaimed – for the first time in the world – confessional freedom, stating that “each man is free to choose his religion”.

After the Turks were driven out at the end of the 17th century, Transylvania was conquered by Emperor Leopold Habsburg of Austria. In 1693 the separation of the Ardeal Chancellery from that of Hungary was made official, and Transylvania started to be practically ruled from Vienna. In 1867, Austria and Hungary become “equal partners” within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, so that Transylvania becomes part of Hungary again.

Hungarians in Romania after 1918

In 1918 national minorities were present at the popular gatherings from Alba Iulia, where the unification of Transylvania to Romania was decided. Saxons meeting in Mediaş on 8 January 1919 and Schwabs meeting in Timișoara two days later, as well as representatives of the Jews and the Roma adhered to the unification between Transylvania and Romania; the leaders of the

Hungarian minority on the other hand waited, hoping that the Peace Conference in Paris would not recognize this unification.

The Peace Conference in Paris of January 1919 however recognized the unitary Romanian state; inhabitants from Bukowina, Basarabia and Transylvania received Romanian citizenship. Thus Treaty of Trianon of 4 June 1920 also recognized the unification of Transylvania with Romania. According to the statistics of 1919, in united Romania there were 28% Romanian citizens belonging to national minorities. Of these, the greatest weight belonged to the Hungarians, with 7.9%. The same situation was to be seen in Transylvania, where alongside the 52.12% Romanians there were 26.46% Hungarians. In 20 of the 23 counties in Transylvania the Hungarian population was majoritarian.

The great majority of Hungarians initially adopted a position of “passive resistance” towards the unification of 1 December 1918, hoping that the Peace Conference of Paris that took place after the end of WW1 would not endorse the unification of Ardeal with Romania.

After the signing of the Treaty of Trianon, representatives of the Hungarian minority abandoned their initial position and started to organize itself to better defend its interests. To this end, the Hungarian Union was set up in 1921, and in 1922 the Hungarian Popular Party was set up, and in the same year merged with the Hungarian National Party, thus forming the Hungarian Party of Romania. The main media of the party was the newspaper “Keleti Úság”. The leadership of the party was ensured by the old Hungarian aristocracy; its financing came from solid banking institutions, from the church, from numerous cultural associations, as well as from a strong network of cooperatives.

The Hungarian Party saw itself as the defender of the interests of the whole Hungarian minority in Romania, although there were ethnic Hungarians of a different political orientation, who chose either the Communist Party of Romania, or the Federation of Socialist Parties. The Hungarian Party, like other political organizations in Romania, had numerous internal fights.

In the summer of 1927 a group of scholars led by Kecskeméthy István, Professor at the Protestant Theological Institute, and by Kós Károly, writer, made an appeal to the Hungarian people in Ardeal wherein they stated that they had been constantly slandered by Hungarian politicians who no longer represented the interests of the Hungarian minority, and consequently announced the creation of the Hungarian Popular Party. This new party did not have many chances to survive, and leaders of the Hungarian Party managed to annihilate the tendency towards division of Hungarians from Romania.

Between 1918 and 1921 an ample agrarian reform took place in Romania, following which 206,265 Romanian citizens belonging to national minorities were put in possession of land; 46,069 of these were Hungarians. In the application of this reform another problem emerged, that of “optants”, concerning the 260 great landowners from Transylvania who opted for Hungarian citizenship and who, according to agrarian law in Romania, were expropriated. They accused the Romanian state that it deprived them of their property simply because they were Hungarians and asked to be exempted from the scope of the law. The Hungarian Party, supported by the Budapest government, undertook an ample campaign abroad accusing the Romanian government of violating the provisions in the Treaty on minorities and in the Treaty of Trianon. This matter was

brought to the League of Nations and to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. In fact, under the pretext of the issue of optants, the Hungarian Party and the Budapest government tried to promote at international level the idea that there existed a “Transylvanian problem” left unsolved by the Treaty of Trianon. For seven years, Romania faced this problem of Hungarian optants whose cause was supported by the Hungarian government.

With the unification of 1918 Romanian became the official language of the newly created state. Using Romanian did not constitute a problem for other minorities; however, some officials of Hungarian ethnicity refused to learn and use the Romanian language. If before 1918 there was no school with teaching in Romanian funded by the Hungarian state, after this date the Romanian state financially supported all state schools with teaching in the languages of national minorities.

In 1920 the Hungarian University in Cluj became a Romanian university, and continued to be attended by large numbers of students belonging to national minorities. Part of the discontent was related to the “Romanianisation” of the Hungarian university and to the dismantling of some state schools with teaching in Hungarian. Despite these divergences, cultural and social life of Hungarians in Romania continued as usual. For instance, in 1922 there were 144 publications in Hungarian (in 1929 there will be 192 of them) and approx. ten theatres. There were more than 560 primary schools.

In the same period ten Hungarian theatres were also authorized to function.

WW2 would trouble the whole of Europe. In 1940, following the Vienna Dictate, Northern Transylvania was ceded to Hungary. On this territory, according to the 1941 census, there lived 2.5 million people, of which 52.1% were Hungarians and 41.5 Romanians. On the other hand, in the part of Transylvania still belonging to Romania there lived half a million ethnic Hungarians.

With the end of the war after the signing of the Peace Treaty of Paris on 10 February 1947, all of northern Ardeal was given back to Romania. In 1951 following a new territorial division (entrenched in the Constitution of 27 September 1952), and following Soviet pressures, Romania agreed to create the Autonomous Hungarian Region in the areas where the Szeklers were the majority. The capital city of the region, which was functional for eight years, was Târgu-Mureș.

The 1956 events in Budapest brought important changes in the relations between the government in Bucharest and Hungarians in Transylvania. An event that had a negative effect on the Hungarian community took place in 1959, when communist authorities decided the dismantling of the Hungarian University in Cluj and all schools with teaching in Hungarian are integrated into Romanian schools.

In the second half of the 1960s the pressure on ethnic minorities increases through the promotion of national-communism. Under the communist regime all Romanian population was harmed (whether politically or materially), but the life of ethnic minorities – especially the Hungarian – was made harder by a series of premeditated measures of the authorities: transfers of Romanian population to areas mostly inhabited by Hungarians, the ever lessening use of Hungarian as mother tongue in schools, unofficial discrimination in the access to schooling or public functions, expropriation of community goods, censure of publications etc. Last but not least, one has to note the efforts of communist authorities to cut the natural ties between Hungarian communities and

traditional churches; the latter massively contributed – despite confessional divisions – to the preservation of the Hungarian consciousness.

Under these circumstances, the silent, unorganized opposition to the communist regime had special features among the Hungarian population. “In the case of Hungarians in Romania, the issue of resistance was much more complex; it was often associated not only with ideological adversities, but had also a national and even a state-belonging charge.”

The situation after 1990

According to the 2002 census, the number of those who declared themselves Hungarians was of 1,434,377, representing 6.6% of the total population. By comparison, in the 1992 census their weight was of 7.12% (1,624,959 persons). Of these most live in the Harghita, Mureş, Bihor, Covasna, and Cluj counties.

Immediately after the fall of the communist regime, on 25 December 1989, the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania was founded (DUHR), and aimed to represent the interests of the Hungarian community in Romania. DUHR is made up by territorial organizations, platforms, and associate members. Associate members are social, scientific, cultural, and professional groups. The Union functions based on the principle of internal self-administration, separating decisional, executive, and control bodies. The supreme decisional body of the Union is the Congress.

Although the first years after 1990 were marked by a certain inter-ethnic tension (worth mentioning are the events in Târgu Mureş of March 1990), and although until 1996 the DUHR – and implicitly all problems and wishes of the Hungarian community – were marginalized, the Hungarian issue was diffused by the signing of the Romanian–Hungarian Treaty of Friendship in 1996, by the absence from power of nationalistic parties, and by the fact that the Union participated to various government coalitions (with the Democratic Convention and the Democrat Party between 1996 and 2000, in partnership with the Social Democrat Party in the following four years, and again partner in a governmental coalition since 2005).

DUHR took part in all elections after 1990 on its own electoral lists. Following the elections of 2004, the Union is represented in Parliament by 22 deputies and 10 senators.

Symbols and holidays

The Hungarian flag is made up of three equal horizontal lines, downwards red, white, and green, with no coat of arms. The first similar flag was used in the 9th century. The red colour belonged to the Árpád voivodal (and subsequently royal) family, while the alternating horizontal lines were often used on flags, shields, and various other objects. In its current form, the flag emerged during the rule of Matei of Habsburg. During the bourgeois revolution of 1848-1849 the strips were also used vertically, after the French model. Until communists seized power in 1947, the Hungarian flag also had a traditional coat of arms, whose elements are to be found on objects from the Royal House of Árpád (rings, armours, shields). The double cross coat of arms (belonging to the bishop), and the coat of arms with horizontal white and red stripes occurred alternatively as symbols of the Hungarian Royal House, and of Hungary respectively.

In its current form, but without the crown, the coat of arms appeared in the 18th century and contained the two traditional symbols: the double cross and the white and red stripes. After the founding of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy the so-called “great coat of arms” was also used, containing the traditional coat of arms surrounded by the coats of arms of the provinces belonging to the Hungarian Kingdom (Croatia, Transylvania, Slavonia, Trieste etc.).

The main holidays of ethnic Hungarians in Romania coincide with those of Hungarians everywhere and are celebrated on 15 March (marking the Revolution of 1848-1849), on 20 August (St. Stephen’s Day), and 6 October (marking the commemoration of the martyrs of the 1848-1849 revolution in Arad).

Many of the most important Hungarian and universal personalities have Transylvanian origins. Worth mentioning are thus Gáspár Heltai (1510-1574), of Saxon origin, typographer who published a series of papers in Hungarian; Ferenc Dávid (1510-1579), one of the most original thinkers of the Hungarian reform, the founder of the Unitarian Church; Péter Pázmány (1570-1637), arch-bishop of Esztergom, cardinal, important personality in the counter-reform in Hungary, one of the fathers of literary Hungarian language.

Among those who studied at universities abroad worth mentioning are Albert Szenczi Molnár (1574-1639), reformed priest, author of psalms, religious writer, and translator; János Apáczai Csere (1625-1659), teacher, one of the most important pioneers of Hungarian culture, pedagogy, and science; Ferenc Pápai Páriz (1649-1716), doctor, scholar, author of dictionaries; Miklós Tótfalusi Kis (1650-1702), typographer and famous writer, who elaborated the modern Hungarian spelling; Sámuel Gyarmathy (1751- 1830), doctor, linguist, the first Hungarian representative of comparative linguistics; János Kótsi Patkó (1763-1842), who set up in Cluj the first Hungarian theatre company in Transylvania; Sándor Körösi Csoma (1784-1842), from Treiscaune, linguist, founder of Tibetan philology; Miklós Jósika (1794-1865), one of the most important representatives of the Hungarian novel from Transylvania; Sámuel Brassai (1799-1897), college teacher, then university professor; János Bolyai (1802-1860), one of the most original mathematicians of all times, who founded non-Euclidian geometry; Zsigmond Kemény (1814-1875), novel writer and politician; Endre Ady (1877-1919), one of the greatest Hungarian poets; Béla Bartók (1881-1945), pianist and musicologist, world famous composer etc.

The Poles

“If the Poles did systematically what they do spontaneously, they would be perfect“.
(Marian Hemar – Polish poet, writer, composer and translator).

The Poles on the Romanian territory

Destinies of the Poles on the territory of Romania faithfully reflect the history of the Romanian and the Polish people, as well as the relationships established between them over the centuries. More than 600 years ago, king Casimir the Great had pushed the borders of Poland up to the frontiers of Moldavia, his purpose being that of gaining control over the main commercial route that crossed Europe from north to south.

The first information about the presence of the Poles on the Romanian territory dates back to the 13th century, from Transylvania. It was known that Polish stone masons took part in the building of many churches from Bistrița, Sic, Unguraș. The circulation of reputed masons was a common thing those days. Thus a man born in Transylvania, in Hărău, near Hunedoara, Veit Stass, went to Cracow, where, under the name of Wit Stwosz, got famous as the author of the renowned altar from the Santa Maria church.

After the first division of Poland, in 1772, many Poles came to Moldavia but their migration was soon stopped by the Austrian authorities. The discovery of the salt deposits led to the opening of the salt mines from Solca (1784), Cacica (1785) and then from Slatina Mare, Slătioara, Pleșa. In 1792, after the underground working from Cacica was inaugurated, the Austrian authorities brought there 20 Polish families of experienced miners who were familiar with the technique characteristic to such mines. The village grew up fast. In 1810 it got to 305 inhabitants and eight years later it became a township where the people were almost all Poles, yet with a school where subjects were taught in four languages: Polish, Romanian, German, and Ukrainian. Besides school, the church built between 1807 and 1810 due to the efforts of father Jakub Bogdanowicz, priest whose salary was paid by the mine, played an important role in the life of the inhabitants of Cacica.

The Polish uplanders coming from the Beskid Mountains in Silesia founded compact townships in Bukovina. They had first emigrated to the Cadca region in Slovakia but, because of the harsh conditions they gradually moved, starting from 1803, to Cernăuți, (the Caliceanca district), Cacica, Siret, and Stara Huta. In 1834, 30 families of uplanders, initially settled in Hliboca founded the township called Solonețul Nou. Two years later, the uplanders from Caliceanca migrated south and they founded the village called Pleșa. People coming from Tereblești and Stara Huta joined them. In 1842, other Poles from Tereblești and Stara Huta founded, together with about 30 families of Sudeten Germans, the township called Poiana Micului.

In the second decade of the last century the largest Polish colony on the Romanian territory was constituted in Valea Jiului, first in Petritu, then in Lupeni. This was established by the miners coming from **Silesia**, as well as by those coming from around Tarnobrzeg. In 1928 the Polish community had around one thousand families, had a Roman Catholic church, its own school and library. Even though they represented a very united community, the Poles managed to integrate themselves in all the spheres of the Romanian political and social life.

The Polish political emigration was under the influence of some dramatic moments from the history of Poland. It did not form compact communities on the territory of Romania, but by means of its dynamism and its personalities, it amplified the echoes of the presence of the Poles in a space that was friendly to them. After the defeat of the insurrection led by Tadeusz Kosciuszko (1794), followed by the third division of Poland (1795), a lot of Poles came to Moldavia and Walachia following the call "*He who loves his country should go to Walachia*". Thus, in 1840 50 officers and non-commissioned officers organized by general Ksawery Dabrowski took refuge in the Principalities. They formed in Bucharest the first organization of the Poles from the Romanian Principalities: "The General Confederacy of the Republic" meant to restart the fight for national freedom.

In Moldavia, Julian Lukiasiewski, excellent organizer and reputed doctor, commissary of the national government of the insurgents, founded "The Society of the Polish library" (1866 – 1892), in Mihăileni, gathering around it numerous Poles. Even if between 1869 and 1870 a part of the emigrants benefiting from the granted amnesty went back to their country, a lot of them remained here.

In 1918 Poland gained its independence. In November, doctor Stanislaw Kwiatkowski, president of the newly founded National Polish Council, participating in the meeting of the Romanian National Council, affirmed on behalf of the Poles that Romania had a historical right over Bukovina. There began a new period when new rapports had to be established between Romanians and Poles.

Even though after the rebirth of the Polish state many immigrants, especially intellectuals, chose to go back to their original country, the signing of the Romanian-Polish convention in 1921 led to a revigoration of the activity of the Poles all over Romania. Thus, the National Polish Council from Bukovina, founded in 1918 to replace the Polish Circle, extended its influence transforming itself into the National Council from the Great Romania (1925) and from 1926 into the Union of Poles from Romania. At the beginning of World War II, the greatest wave of Polish immigrants came to Romania. It is certain that the Polish officials together with president Ignacy Moscicki, 2500 military and very many civilians passed through Romania. The population as well as the authorities had a more than friendly attitude towards the Polish refugees. Thus the Central Polish Committee, with the headquarters in Bucharest, was formed in order to help the refugees. The Central Polish Committee organized in only a few months 54 local committees locally.

Numerous professional associations are founded, reunited as the the Union of the Poles' Associations from Romania, which, on 19th December 1939 becomes the Union of the Poles from Romania having as president senator Tytus Czerkawski and in Suceava, in 1903 "The Lecture Society" is founded.

After the events from December 1989, the Polish minority from Romania started the organization process. Continuing the traditions before the war and having as a model the Polish Society for Fraternal Help and Lecture, which in 2003 celebrated one hundred years of existence, after 1990 there were founded Polish associations in different localities. They formed the Union of the Poles from Romania, initially, up to the First Congress, with its headquarters in Bucharest, and from 1992 the headquarters was located in Suceava, because most of the Polish minority was in Bukovina.

The Union of the Poles from Romania (UPR) has 15 filiations – associations, out of which 11 on the territory of the county of Suceava, and the rest in some big towns: Bucharest, Constanța, Iași, Craiova.

The main task of UPR is to coordinate the different local organizations through the Administration Council and the Executive Committee. The Union of the Poles from Romania is led by a president, Ghervazen Longher, who is also a deputy in the Romanian Parliament, and by two vice-presidents.

Education

The keeping of the mother tongue as an element of national identity is one of the fundamental objectives of the activity of the Polish organization. With the help of the County School Inspectorate of Suceava, Polish is taught in eight schools (3 – 4 classes per week to which one class of history and one about the traditions of the Polish minority from Romania). In addition to these, courses of Polish are organized by Dom Polski (The Polish House) in Suceava, Siret, Constanța, and Bucharest. Approximately 1,000 children in Romania learn Polish.

Being aware of the fact that it is absolutely necessary to harmonize the preserving of the national identity through language, traditions and religion with the demands of the contemporary world, the education project “Bukovina’s Children” was started in the school year 2002 – 2003. It is a project meant to improve the conditions in schools and to raise the preparation level of the pupils and students. The project was initiated by the Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Bucharest and its beneficiaries are children belonging to the Polish minority as well as their Romanian colleagues or colleagues belonging to other ethnic groups from 9 localities and 10 schools from Bukovina.

Cultural activities

The main objective of the activities of the Union of the Poles in Romania is represented by the cultural one, their purpose being to preserve the traditions of their forefathers. Another purpose is that of making the Poles living in Romania familiar with the history and the cultural values of their elders’ homeland.

The three folk ensembles “Mala Pojana” from Poiana Micului, “Solonczanka” from Solonețul Nou and “Kwiaty Bukowca” from Păltinoasa (Bucovăț) founded immediately after 1990 are messengers of the traditions handed down for over two centuries. Their repertoire comprises genuine, authentic and unaltered songs and dances of the uplanders from the original area of Czadec. The ensembles perform in shows in the Polish communities from Bukovina, they participate in inter-ethnic cultural activities organized in the county of Suceava, in the festival “Wiosna Polska w Moldawii” (“The Polish Spring in Moldavia”) from Kishinev and in the Folk

International Festival “ Bukowinskie Spotkanie” (“Bukovinean Gatherings”), organized, for the last 15 years in Jastrowie, Poland. These ensembles have also performed in the Ukraine and Slovakia.

Ample national cultural activities are organized at “Dom Polski” (The Polish House) from Suceava. Two of these are for children and young people. These national cultural activities are carried out with their participation. We refer here to the contests of reciting from Maria Konopnicka’s poems, in May and from Adam Mickiewicz’ poems, in November and in which participate around 70 – 80 contestants from all over the country every year. The laureates represent Romania in the respective festivals that take place in Poland.

The most ample cultural activity organized by the Union of the Poles from Romania is the “Days of Polish Culture”. The general theme is the Polish-Romanian relations in different contexts, and the slogan is “Closer to each other”. During three days, in the middle of September, there take place symposia organized on two sections: history and philology, and which are attended by researchers and university professors from Poland and Romania. There also take place book presentations, people watch Polish movies, they attend folk shows and visit exhibitions (of photography, of graphics, of posters), go on trips and participate in meetings with the Polish communities from Bukovina. The main purpose of these activities within the Days of the Polish Culture is to make known the Polish culture among the inhabitants of this region and also to contribute to a better knowledge and understanding of the two peoples.

The Polish media in nowadays Romania has a consequent tradition, its beginnings dating from the last decades of the 19th century. Continuing these traditions, especially those of the press from the inter-war period, in November 1991, in Bucharest, there appeared the first issue of the bilingual publication Polonus. In the article-program there was stated the desire that the publication should be a “platform for a better mutual knowledge between Romanians and Poles”.

In the activity of the publication one can distinguish two phases: the Bucharest one (November 1991 – December 1994), A3 format, issued quarterly, and having a circulation of 500 copies; and the Bukovina one (January 1995 – up to the present moment), A4 format, issued monthly, 1,000 copies, colored pages.

From 1997, the editor-in-chief has been Stanislava Iachimovschi. The publication has two functions: to inform and to educate, it wants to be a mirror of the life of the Polish communities from Romania but, at the same time it also educates the readers to appreciate patriotic, civic and moral values.

From an editorial point of view its achievements are more modest, in the sense that only in 1997 did UPR issue a volume of verse in Polish entitled “Wcielenie slowa” (“The Embodiment of the Word”) written by the young poet Bolek Majerik from Pleșa. Starting with 2000, the publishing started to grow, thus four anthologies of papers presented during the symposia organized in order to celebrate the “Days of the Polish Culture”, the paper written in Romanian “The history of the Poles from Bukovina” the authors of which are two young historians from Bukovina: Florin Pintescu and Daniel Hrenciuc and a second volume of verse by the same Bolek Majerik, bilingual, entitled “Pomiedzy bogow, drzewa I ludzi” (“Among Gods, Trees, and People”).

Religious life

The Poles in Romania are Roman-Catholics. After many years the religious service is officiated in Polish (too). The church has played and is still playing a very important role in the life of the Polish community, the priests enjoying authority. The sanctuary from Cacica, called The Assumption of the Virgin, is representative for the religious life of the Poles in Bukovina. The church built in neo-gothic style was dedicated in October 1904. Every year when the The Assumption of the Virgin is celebrated (15 August) a lot of pilgrims come from the country but, there also come pilgrims from Poland, the Ukraine, Germany in order to pray to the icon of Virgin Mary – the Madonna from Cacica, a copy of the black Madonna from Czestochowa. From 2002, the church was promoted to the rank of basilica minor.

Holidays and traditions

The most important holidays of the Poles in Romania are connected to the Birth and the Resurrection of the Savior. During the Shrove Tuesday (*Zapusty*) there take place meetings at the Polish Houses and traditional meals are served: bigos (cabbage and meat, sausages, smoked meat and bacon) and donuts. The Ash Wednesday that follows marks the beginning of the Lent when, during a specific liturgy, consecrated ash is sprinkled on the heads of the believers. The tomb of Jesus is made in the churches and it is guarded by two guardsmen – known as “*baiasi*”, this word making reference to the Roman guards.

During the second day of Easter, the Poles meet at the Polish Houses, in the presence of the priests, in order to share the consecrated egg and to wish one another health, happiness and prosperity. The Monday of the Easter, also known as the Wet Monday (*smigus – dyngus*) is the day when the lads sparge the girls with untasted water from the fountains as a sign of abundance.

In Poland, during the day when Saint Andrew is celebrated there is the custom of pouring melted wax through the cast of a keyhole. The wax had been brought by each of the young girls. The shape that forms in the water is interpreted by a wise old woman who foretells the future of the girls for the incoming year.

Being an epicurean people, enjoying the laughter, the songs and the dances, the Poles have traditions that are very similar to those of Romanians. Their defining characteristics are: adaptability, sense of improvising and the ability to profit fully from the advantages that are offered by all that exists at a given moment. Somebody once said that good Polish cook is the one who makes a soup for epicureans from a rusty nail.

The Roma

Their image is usually one of defiant people, living beyond usual social conventions. Although very present in everyday life and all the more so in the collective mentality – where they are most often negatively labelled – the Roma represent both a problem and a challenge.

A Definition

Brits and Americans call them *Gypsies*, Germans - *Zigeuner*, Hungarians – *czigány*, French people – *gitan/tsigane*, Italians *zingaro*, while most Romanians continue to call them *țigani*. All these names are derived from the Greek *athinganoi*, meaning “untouchable” and designating a population of probably Indian origin, mostly residing in Eastern Europe. **Țigan** most commonly carries a pejorative connotation and is mostly used by persons outside this ethnic group; its members prefer the name of “rrom”, which in the original Sanskrit meant “man”, “married man”, and in a larger sense meant “person belonging to our group” (us).

On the other hand, using the term *rrom* is related to the contemporary strategy of opinion leaders and of political representatives, who thus try to mobilize the members of the community regardless of their category to form a single national community. Several experts, including Professor Gheorghe Sarău, consider that „rrom” represents a more exact transcription of the root word in the Romany language.

Most often described through terms related to their social and economic status, rather than through their cultural characteristics, the Roma are widely unknown to the Romanian population. They belong to those transnational minorities without a territory of origin and which constantly borrow features from the cultures and characteristics of the countries they reside in. Their collective consciousness is thus different from that of other minorities; their lifestyle is distinctive and marked by their belonging to informal groups – family, neighbourly and professional ties prevail.

Always on the fringes of history and of the host societies, the Roma have benefited in the last decade of increased attention and care; these stem less from the need to know and care for the “other”, and more from Romania’s obligation to consolidate its institutional and administrative capacity concerning the protection of minorities.

Short Historical Background

There are several theories concerning the date when the Roma came to the present-day territory of Romania. Their presence here is first documented in 1385, but it is highly probable that members of this ethnic group arrived in the Romanian principalities much earlier.

Opinions diverge on the issue of the origins of Roma enslavement. Some historians believe that the Roma, once prisoners of war of the Tartars, followed them to the banks of the Danube during

the Mongolian invasion in the 13th century. After being defeated by the local population, Tartars became slaves themselves and thus the fate of the Roma remained unchanged.

The Roma remained slaves for several centuries, either as slaves to the rulers of the Romanian principalities, or as slaves to the clerics or the boyars. In the two principalities by the Danube and especially in Transylvania several measures to secularize and civilize the Roma were taken; this was however never fully achieved.

It was only in the first decades of the 19th century – under the influence of European Enlightenment ideas that the Roma were finally freed. In 1837 the Divan of the Romanian Principality decided to free all Roma belonging to the state and colonised them in boyars' villages. The Roma received arable land and started to be treated as free peasants. In Moldova as well, in 1844, the People's Council adopted a project to abolish slavery of the Roma enslaved to the clergy and for those practicing various trades in the cities.

The freeing of all Roma, including those that were the property of the boyars, was decided in Moldova in 1855 and in the Romanian principality one year later. For almost a century the Roma continued to live on the fringes of Romanian society. It was only in the inter-war period that a coagulation of the identity consciousness emerged. In April 1933 **Calinic I. Popp Serboianu** set up the first Roma organization. "The General Association of Gypsies in Romania", whose main purposes were the culturalization and education of the Roma (by setting up kindergartens, by ensuring their access to education, their professional training and the preservation of their traditions), as well as their social integration (through free medical and legal assistance, converting nomads to sedentary life by giving them property rights over land etc).

Shortly afterwards divergences occurred among the leaders of the Association, so that one of them, A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică set up in September the same year "The General Union Of Roma in Romania", with identical aims and purposes. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică proved to be much more active and was elected "Voivode" in the first Congress of Roma in Romania on 8 October 1933. Honorary President was Grigoraş Dinicu, a renowned musician, descendant from an old family of musicians. Last but not least, Lăzărescu-Lăzurică managed to raise public awareness for the first time with regard to the use of the term "rrom" instead of "țigan".

The Holocaust Issue

Once with the coming of authoritarian regimes in Romania after March 1938 (the royal dictatorship, the national legionary state, and Ion Antonescu's rule), the situation of the Roma worsened as well.

In November 1940 the Home Office following a recommendation issued by the Health Ministry forbids any travel of nomad Roma, as they were said to transmit typhus. The next year a secret census counted 208,700 Roma, who were said to contaminate "the Romanian race". A 1942 royal decree set spoliation rules and criteria for deportation of the Roma. First, goods were confiscated through the National Centre for Romanianization. On 11 August the inspector general wrote to the Home Minister that the deportation of nomadic Roma which had been decided on 1 May was almost completed – 84% of these had reached Transnistria. Sedentary Roma followed. One of the criteria for deportation of the lack of goods; however, ownership of land or of a house did not save too many from deportation. The evacuation started on 12 September 1942.

The deportation of the Roma in the Transnistria region is not yet sufficiently researched by historians; thus controversy abounds. Some authors speak of a catastrophe of the size of the Holocaust (Pojramos in Romany); however, the only reliable documents available reveal the deportation of approx. 25,000 Roma. Of these, several hundreds or thousands died as a consequence of living conditions, lack of food, cold, etc.

The Communist Period

After WW2, many ethnic Roma were used by the communist regime to consolidate its popular power, but with the change in state policy in the 1960s, later continued by Nicolae Ceaușescu, more and more Roma became victims of the official policy of ethnic homogenization. Under the pretext of creating a unique model of the new man the concept of “social uniformity” was implemented, as a justification of the policy of forced assimilation practiced by the communist regime especially with regard to the Roma. From this point of view, the Roma were regarded as allogeneous elements that needed to be Romanianised, as their identity was assimilated with a culture of poverty and underdevelopment.

Officially the Roma did not exist, as their specificity was associated to an inferior status. They worked in miserable conditions, and were usually assigned under-qualified jobs. Until the fall of the communist regime, almost half of the Roma workers were employed in agriculture, in agricultural cooperatives and state-owned farms. Trading is officially forbidden, and traditional manufacturing activities take place at the fringes of legality. Many of them fall under the incidence of Decree 153/1970, which made “social parasitism”, “social anarchy”, and any other “devious behaviour” punishable by imprisonment and forced labour.

The communist government tried to “Romanianise” the habitat of the Roma by sedentarising them and by trying to eradicate nomadic lifestyles. As soon as the policy of forcefully “systemising” villages was enforced, the Roma are moved in homes at the outskirts of cities (or in the houses left by Saxons, in Transylvania); conditions here were not always much better, and in addition to this they have difficulty in adapting to this new lifestyle.

This integration policy included their education, but despite the fact that school became compulsory for all the incidence of illiteracy among the Roma remained high. The reasons why this happened were the extreme poverty of many families, who preferred to send children to work rather than school; also, the fact that many children could only speak Romany created many difficulties for them in schools.

Despite the official policy of integration many Roma continued to live in extreme poverty. At the end of 1989, the majority population continued to believe that the Roma had benefited from the same rights as the rest of the population, but that they refused to make use of these rights and consequently refused to work, to maintain cleanliness, go to school, etc.

Current Affairs

In the general context of Romania’s efforts towards EU accession the Government adopted the National Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Roma in April 2001; this is a complex document setting a series of objectives and measures whose final purpose is that of improving living standards and access to education, and diminishing stereotypes about the Roma minority.

The strategy is accompanied by affirmative policies (such as promoting ethnic Roma to public administration positions, creating special places for Roma in high schools and universities, organising training courses for teachers of the Romany language and culture). Also, numerous Roma political and cultural organizations are set up; currently there are over 200 such non-governmental organizations trying to improve the economic and educational level of this minority.

On the other hand, starting with 1992, ethnic Roma designated a political representative in Parliament; Mr. Nicolae Păun, of the Social Democratic Roma Party was trusted with this mandate in the latest elections.

In short, the problems of the Roma can be summarised in four main categories as follows: precarious economic situation, high levels of illiteracy and the lack of a consistent strata of intellectuals; the intolerance and discriminatory attitudes of many non-Roma; divisions among Roma communities, resulting in a conflictual situation which stems from the lack of homogeneity and sense of belonging to the same ethnic community.

Last but not least, another delicate matter is that of the exact number of ethnic Roma in Romania. Compared to the 1992 census, which identified 409,000 Roma, the census that took place ten years later counted 535,250. Roma representatives consider that the real number of Roma exceeds 1.5 or 2 million persons.

The Social Democratic Roma Party publishes in Bucharest the “The Ace of Clubs” magazine; many other publications appear sporadically, especially at the initiative of non-governmental organizations. At the same time, there are several broadcasts in Romany on the national television and in local radio and TV stations.

The Lippovan Russians

Short Historical Background

Lippovan Russians have an extremely rich history which is however little known to the Romanian public. Its beginnings are to be found in the dramatic events that unsettled Russia during the second half of the 17th century, leading to a divide in the Russian society, and which provoked a religious and social crisis whose effects are to be felt even today. Proofs of this are the communities of Starover Russians spread all over the world.

The reform of the religious cult and practice inspired by Tsar Aleksei Mihailovici (1645–1676) and promoted by Tsar Nikon (1652–1658) provoked a wave of discontent and protests among clerics and believers of the Russian Church; they felt that the measures taken by lay and ecclesiastic authorities in Russia were an unacceptable intrusion in the teachings and canons. Changing certain elements of the Russian rites, such as making the sign of the cross with two fingers, as well as the alleged “correction” of religious books following the Greek models of the time led to internal strife in the Church and in particular to a loss of trust of believers in Russian ecclesiastical hierarchy; this culminated with a schism (in Russian - raskol) which occurred as a consequence of the decisions of the Great Orthodox Synod in Moscow in 1666-1667, which approved the liturgical and ritual changes introduced by Patriarch Nikon, and anathematized proponents of the old customs, as well as the holy texts and rituals they used.

After this date, Russian state and ecclesiastical authorities followed a systematic policy of persecuting and even executing the “raskol” and the “raskolnics”, as Starovers (followers of the old Orthodox faith) were called in official texts. This determined them to seek refuge in the least accessible areas of the Empire, near the border or in neighbouring states such as Poland, the Ottoman Empire, or the Romanian Principalities. Thus began the mass exodus of believers of the old rites – the *Starovers* or *staroabreadt*; the earliest settlements beyond the borders of Russia of the time date back to the second half of the 17th century.

On Romanian territory - by which we understand Moldova with Basarabia and northern Bukowina, Muntenia and Dobrogea – the first Staroveri Russians, which are here called Lippovan Russians, arrive in the last decades of the 17th century. However, the first attested mention of a Lippovan locality is to be found in a petition to the prince of Moldova from 1742; the petition is signed by the inhabitants of the Socolinți village (currently Lipoveni village in Suceava county) who state that they live there since 1724.

As far as Dobrogea is concerned, things are not entirely clear as to the social origin and the departure areas in Russia of the Staroveri that settled here. In principle, it is agreed that Lippovans settled in Dobrogea and Moldova came from southern and central Russia.

There is a controversy in the specialized literature with regard to the potential belonging of the Dobrogea Lippovans to the community of Nekrasovite Kazaks; this was a group separated from the great Kazak army on the Don, following the defeat of the revolt led by hetman **Kondrati Bulavin** in 1707–1708. After his death, the legendary hetman **Ignat Nekrasov** became the head of the revolted Kazaks and led them beyond the southern borders of the Empire to the Kuban, a territory then under the rule of the Crimean Khan Kaplan Ghirai. After Nekrasov's death (1737 or 1738 – there are different dates in different sources) Kazaks settled gradually in the areas of the Danube Delta, northern Dobrogea, first in Sarichioi and Dunavăț, then in Jurilovca, Slava Rusă, Carcaliu (Kamen), near Măcin, Ghindărești (Guizdar-chioi), near Hârșova and in several localities in the Danube Delta: Sfiștovca, Periprava, and Chilia Veche.

It is very hard to establish whether Nekrasovites founded these localities or whether they simply settled next to an existing Tartar population (as is the case in Sarichioi and Ghindărești) or to a Staroveri Russian population. It is certain that the migration of Staroveris from Russia towards Moldova and Dobrogea continued over the 18th and 19th centuries; immigrants obviously settled in localities where there were others of the same religious background, be them Kazaks, or people belonging to various social categories, usually Russian peasants or soldiers trying to escape the oppression of their rulers and the military service which was at the time very long and very demanding.

It is also uncertain, for lack of proper documentation, whether Staroveris settled in Moldova or Dobrogea in localities founded by Pravoslavnic Russians before the Raskol. It is however certain that they had some knowledge – especially the Kazaks - of the Romanian areas where they settled. In Kazak folklore the Danube (Dunaj) had a significant place together with “father Don” (Don – batiușca, Don Ivanovici). Concerning the above-mentioned controversy, the two opposing points of view – the one claiming that Lippovan Russians are not related to Nekrasovite Russians and the one sustaining their descending from the Kazak groups that once constituted “the great army of Ignat Nekrasov” – can be conciliated, provided that researchers take into account the meaning of the terms in documents of the time as they were used by the writers of these documents.

It is worth mentioning that an important group of Nekrasovite Kazaks settled in Bukowina, where there already were several Staroveri settlements. In the last decades of the 18th century, after Bukowina's annexation by Austria in 1775, the government in Vienna and Emperor Joseph II granted them, through an imperial licence on 9 October 1783, the right to settle and practice their religion freely; at the same time all Lippovans in the area were exempted from military service and some financial obligations towards the state. Thus localities inhabited by Lippovan Russians emerge, such as Climăuți and Fântâna Albă (mentioned in various documents in 1780, respectively 1784), and later on Lucavăț and Mechidra.

Throughout the 18th century documents mention localities inhabited by Lippovan Russians in all of Moldova: in 1730 Lippovans are to be found in Iași; in 1740 Manolea (in the Suceava county) is attested in documents; in the same year, Lippovans are to be found in Dumasca (Vaslui county), and in the following years in Lespezi, Bălărești, Brătești, which are to be found in the former Baia county, in Târgu Frumos, Hârlău, Botoșani, Roman, Piatra Neamț, practically in most towns and boroughs of Moldova.

Lippovan Russians are distinguished in Romanian society through their unconditional attachment to the Orthodox faith in its smallest details inherited from their ancestors. Even their rituals folk customs are deeply rooted in the Christian teachings and faith.

Thus the great events in their history are connected with the spiritual side of their existence. This is why the most important historical event of Lippovan Russians in the 19th century was the creation in 1846 of the Old Rite Metropolitan Church in Fântâna Albă (this locality is now in Northern Bukowina, at the border between Ukraine and Romania). 1846 was a crucial moment, since the revival of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Starovers influenced decisively the ulterior evolution of religious, cultural and social life of believers of old rite everywhere; Ambrozie, their first Metropolitan priest, is the symbol of the spiritual rebirth of this ethno-confessional community.

The unification of the Principalities, the independence war and Dobrogea's annexation to Romania, as well as the Great Unification of 1918 are all important moments for Lippovan Russians; these steps mark the passage towards their full integration in Romanian society and the opening up of Lippovan communities towards Romanian cultural and civilisational influences.

There certainly were less pleasant and beneficial periods, such as the legionary governing and the Antonescu regime, when authorities thought Lippovan Russians were suspicious and treated them in a discriminatory manner; their suspicions were not based on real nor credible data. During communism, Lippovan Russians were subjected, like all Romanian citizens, to a political regime that undermined the very basis of their ethnic and religious existence. Although the Orthodox Church of Old Rite was formally recognised by the Romanian state in 1946, its possibilities for open expression were minimised; the only permitted forms of manifestation were religious services – under the strict supervision of the authorities. Atheist propaganda and the Church's lack of any possibility to counteract its effects had a negative influence on the spiritual cohesion of Lippovan communities.

From the point of view of ethnicity, the official policy of assimilating minorities led to a dramatic decrease in the use of Russian as a mother tongue; paradoxically Russian as studied as a modern language in state schools.

Current Affairs

After the events of December 1989, hope was reborn with the creation of the Community of Lippovan Russians from Romania, which is the promoter of the material and spiritual values of this ethnic group, with the aim of revive Russian as a mother tongue, the Orthodox faith of old rite, the culture, customs, and traditions of Lippovan Russians in Romania.

Until 1989 the existence of the community of Russian Lippovans was not officially recognized by the Romanian state; nowadays, according to the official data of the 2002 census, the estimated number of Lippovans in Romania is 36,400; there are also 8,900 Russians, which represents 1.7% of the country's population. Their vast majority – over 20,000 - lives in Tulcea county, but also in the Constanța, Iași, Suceava, Brăila counties and Bucharest.

On 14 January 1990 the Community of Lippovan Russians in Romania (CLRR) gains legal status, as an organization aiming to preserve the ethnic identity of Lippovan Russians and whose representatives in Parliament act towards ensuring the proper political representation of this minority. Mr. Miron Ignat was elected deputy on behalf of the CLRR in 2004; he was also given a mandate in the previous elections.

Lippovan Russians give special attention to mother tongue education, since there are no schools with teaching in Russian. The number of pupils studying in the official educational framework is low. There are only 1.800 pupils studying in secondary schools, in 24 educational units with only several tens of teachers.

CLRR is especially active in the field of culture; every year, books presenting the history and traditions of this minority are published. Since November 1990 “**Zorile**”, a bilingual periodical is also published on a monthly basis (chief editor is Svetlana Moldovan); since September 1998 the monthly socio-cultural bilingual magazine „**Kitej-Grad**” is also published (its chief editor is the well-known writer Nichita Danilov). In addition, CLRR organizes annual Russian-language competitions, national Russian folk song and dance festivals, national seminars and international scientific symposia on issues such as old rite Orthodox culture and faith.

Although they are better known to the Romanian public through its sportsmen (Ivan Patzaichin, the boxer brothers Cuțov, Mitică Pricop, Alina Astafei and Petre Astafei etc), Lippovan Russians have given Romanian culture numerous scholars – philologists, teachers, writers, historians, ethnologists, actors, etc.

Almost unknown to the general public is the plight of Lippovan Russians deported during WW2. Many of the Lippovans in the Sulina area in the Tulcea county had to leave their homes because their ethnic origin was considered by the authorities of the time as a threat to national security. Former victims now seek archival evidence to prove their suffering. Survivors’ tales are touching: “At the beginning of WW2 the frontline had reached the Danube Delta at the present-day border with Ukraine. In Sulina, Lippovan Russians were not tolerated by Romanian authorities engaged in the war alongside Germany; this was a strategic area. There must have been directions that ethnic Russians should not be stationed in an area where they could extract information for the Russian enemy.”, says Petre Mocenco, one of the war survivors and founders of the CRRL; to this date, he cannot understand what he was considered to be guilty of.

Traditions and specific customs

A decisive role in the preservation of the Lippovan Russian identity was played by the Church. Religious service is carried out in Slavonic even today and old religious books are also carefully preserved and transmitted from generation to generation; they are written in Slavonic script and use the Julian calendar (13 days delay as compared to the Gregorian calendar). All religious holidays are strictly celebrated. Even the New Year has a predominantly religious character. The only Christmas carol (Christmas is celebrated on 7 January) is a religious song. Lengthy services are offered in Orthodox churches of old rite. On the first morning of the New Year people go “sowing” to Stroveri homes. Housewives prepare traditional dishes such as *jarkovia* (a dish with pickled cucumbers and meat, specific to the northern area), *holodeț* (meat jelly, served with horseradish and vinegar) and many cakes.

Characteristic of this Slavic population is the maintenance of the old Russian language, wherein Ukrainian and Romanian words have entered, as well as the maintenance of centuries old customs and traditions.

Probably related to the geographical characteristics of the space inhabited by most Lippovan Russians, the steam bath carries a sacred significance. This type of bathing, in addition to offering bodily cleanliness, is considered to be a true panacea – a unique human invention in the cultural space between the Carpathians and the Danube.

Ruthenians

Motto: „I was, am, and will be Rusyn” (Aleksander Duchnovyc, poet)

Short historical background

Ruthenians or Rusyns are a population descending from a Slavic branch belonging to Indo-European populations. The attestation of the names of Ruthenian and Ruthenia takes place in the *Gesta Hungarorum*, also known as *The Chronicle of the Anonymous Notary of King Béla*, although here the connotations are not completely clear; and later on, by chronicler Anton Verancsis.

The most revealing name given to them was that of Carpatho-Rusyns or Rusyns, by Aleksander Duchnovyc in the 19th century. He says in a poem “I was, am, and will be Rusyn”, and this expression has become the popular Rusyn creed. The same term is to be found in the folk anthem: “Sub-Carpathian Rusyns, wake up from your deep sleep.”

The ancestral territory of Ruthenians is the Trans-Carpathian region, or Sub-Carpathian Russia, extending in the borderline areas of Ukraine, Slovakia, and Poland.

The main occupation of this population was cattle grazing, involving the moving of the cattle, which caused them often to be called Vlachs. They also practiced home manufacturing, processing wood and weaving.

In the 17th century, following the peace of Karlowitz (1699), large parts of the Rusyns are integrated into the Habsburg Empire. The *Leopoldine Diploma* of 16 February 1699 refers to Romanians, Greeks, and Ruthenians in Hungary, Croatia, Slavonia and Transylvania. Part of them will join the Orthodox believers who recognized the Pope as the head of the Christian church, thus becoming Greek Catholics.

Joining with the Church of Roma occasioned the emergence of publications such as the *Catechism* of 1726, published in Târnavia for the use of united Ruthenians. Since then, Rusyns (Ruthenians) are either Orthodox, or Greek Catholics.

The revolutionary movement of 1848 in Europe led to claims for autonomy of territories inhabited by Ruthenians. The Rusyn leader Adolf Dobrianskzj presented in Vienna a plan for creating an autonomous province – Ruthenia; with the suppression of the revolution, the plan was never put in practice.

1818 is the year when the affirmation of the national identity of Rusyns reached its climax. Rusyn National Councils were set up in Ungvar, Prešov and Sighet. After this date, Rusyns remained scattered throughout Central and Eastern Europe without succeeding in creating a national state.

In Czechoslovakia an autonomous region of Rusyns functioned between 1919 and 1938. after World War II the only change was that Sub-Carpathian Russia was taken over by the USSR, respectively by Soviet Ukraine. In the Prešov region of Czechoslovakia the National Ukrainian Council was set up in 1945, to function until 1949 when it was abolished by the Prague government. It follows then that one couldn't talk of Rusyns, as they had to take a new identity, that of Ukrainians.

Rusyns live on the same territories after 1989 as well, in Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, parts of the former Yugoslavia, and Croatia. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Carpatho-Rusyns start to take action to regain their historical statute and autonomy. In the Ukrainian referendum of 1 December 1991, 78% of the inhabitants of Transcarpathia voted for self-governance within the Ukrainian state.

In 1993 an Interim Government of the Republic of Sub-Carpathian Russia was formed, and in the summer of 1994 the National Council of Trans-Carpathia was set up, formed of 51 members. An interim government is formed, headed by Ivan Turjanya. In Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary Ruthenians benefit from cultural autonomy, with numerous cultural associations functioning even before 1990. Their purpose is the recognition of Carpatho-Rusyns as a distinct nationality; in this respect, the Centre for Carpatho-Rusyn Research from the United States of the America has given them substantial support.

Language and culture

The language spoken by Carpatho-Rusyns is east-slavic, with influences from the Polish, Slovak, and Hungarian vocabulary. The script is Cyrillic. The first publications were written in ancestral Rusyn or in the Slavonic used in the liturgical language of religious sermons.

In the 19th and 20th centuries a gradual transition to Russian and Ukrainian takes place, thus determining two approaches towards the affirmation of national identity. The first approach - the Rusyn -, distinguishes Ruthenians as a distinct national entity. The second one claims that they are Ukrainians and that there is no self-standing Rusyn nationality.

After 1989 the Rusyn national feeling was reborn. In Slovakia and Poland efforts are made to ensure the use of literary Rusyn in education but also in publications. In Vojvodina this language was used continuously in schools and publications since the beginning of the 20th century.

In November 1992 the first Congress of the Rusyn Language took place, bringing together over 50 Rusyn language writers, journalists, and scholars from Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. A Rusyn Orthographic Guide, a Dictionary of Linguistic Terms for Rusyn, Russian, Ukrainian, Slovak, and Polish, and an Orthographic Dictionary for Rusyn appeared in 1994. All these, together with an ABC Book and a vocabulary, constituted the basis of the new grammatical norms of Rusyn.

On 27 1995 the Society for the Revival of Rusyns in Slovakia proclaimed the existence of a new Slavic language.

The literary tradition of Rusyns manifested itself as a distinct entity starting with the 1800s, when writings in Rusyn, Liturgical Slavonic, Russian and Ukrainian appeared. Dramatic creation is marked by the professional theatre „Aleksander Duchnovicy” of Prešov, the semi-professional theatre „Deadea” from Cristuru Rusin and Novi Sad, the amateur theatre of the Lemkin Association of Legnița (Poland).

Rusyns have maintained their folk culture, mainly visible in their sewing, dyed Easter eggs, folk music and dance, religious paintings, and in the architecture of wooden churches. In the first half of the 20th century, Ruthenians built the school known as the “Sub-Carpathian Barbizon”, producing painters famous all over Europe. Also, Nikifor Drovniac, naïve painter, is well-known.

Ruthenians in Romania

The 2002 census does not register any member of the Ruthenian community in Romania; all are included in the Ukrainian minority.

However, in 2002 the Cultural Union of Ruthenians was officially registered. Dr. Gheorghe Firczak took part in the general elections and obtained a mandate as deputy; he was re-elected in the 2004 elections.

The aim of the Union is that of learning, maintaining and popularizing Ruthenian history, traditions, and cultural values.

On 21 October 2004, Gheorghe Firczak, MP, participated to the World Council of Ruthenians in Poland, of special importance to Ruthenians in the whole world. On this occasion, an older project was implemented, that of granting Ruthenians in Romania a seat of vice-president of the World Council of Ruthenians. “Our cultural activities demonstrated to the World Council of Ruthenians and to Ruthenians all over the world that we promote the reviving of the consciousness of Ruthenians in Romania, just as it is happening all over Central and Eastern Europe.”, stated Dr. Gheorghe Firczak.

Between 18 and 20 February 2005 another meeting of the World Council of Ruthenians took place in Prešov (Slovakia); this meeting prepared the ground for the works of the eighth world congress of Ruthenians, to take place on June 2005. Dr. Firczak, the representative of Ruthenians in Romania, took place in the meeting; according to him, participants were very appreciative of the fact that Romania is the only country in Central and Eastern Europe to grant parliamentary representation to Ruthenians.

The Serbs

It is said that throughout history Romania held friendly relations with only two of its neighbours: Serbia and the Black Sea. Good neighbourly relations, mutually beneficial cultural influences, help in times of need: these are the coordinates of the presence of Serbs on Romanian territory.

Short Historical Background

The Slavs, ancestors of the Serbs, started to settle on the current territory of Romania since the early Middle Ages. Serbs from the north of the river Sava and the Danube, as well as those that went towards the Balkan Peninsula in the 7th century, were christened in the second half of the 9th century.

In creating the spiritual unity of the Serb population north and south of Sava and the Danube a special role was played by archbishop Sava Nemanici, especially after the proclamation of the Serbian Orthodox Church as an independent body in 1219. With the approval of the Hungarian Court the dominance over the Serb population in the Pannonic field was then achieved.

This was reflected, among others, in the building of the first Serbian Orthodox churches in the Banat pass, in Baziaş and Zlatiţa.

Serb migrations to present day Romanian territory took place after the tragedy of the Serb people at Kosovopolije in 1389, which led to the defeat of the Balkan Christian armies by the Turks; the migration intensified after the fall of the Medieval Serbian kingdom (Despotia) in 1459.

Answering to the invitation of the Hungarian king to form a defence wall against Ottoman attacks, the nobility and the Serbian people moved on the Hungarian territory and settled there (over 200.000 persons, according to Hungarian documents). Many Serbian aristocratic families received large possessions on the territory of present day Romania.

Between the second half of the 14th century and up to the beginning of the 16th century numerous Serbian scholars arrive in the Romanian Principalities and in Moldova. Among them worth mentioning are Nicodim Grcici the founder of the first Romanian monasteries, Macarie, who set up the first printing house, and Metropolitan Maxim Brancovici, the founder of the Romanian Metropolitan Church.

During the fall of the Hungarian Kingdom, following the 1526 battle of Mohacz, the Serbs from the Lipova area started a movement for freedom under the rule of Tsar Iovan Nenad, who set up the first Serbian state in the Pannonic region.

Serbian migrations continued to Banat and Crişana after Ottoman conquests as well, so that Serbs became the majority population in the region. Contemporary writers call this area Noua Raşca. Around 1690 took place the heaviest Serb migration, when Serbian population, headed by

Patriarch Arsenie III Cearnovievici and by Serbian noblemen received from Emperor Leopold special privileges.

The Pecs Patriarchy, rebuilt in 1557, constituted the spiritual centre of the Serb population in the Balkan Peninsula and in the Pannonia Fields. Many Serbian eparchies on the territory of present-day Romania were then subordinated to the Metropolitan Church in Belgrade. Fighting against Ottoman rule, the Serbs revolted many times, trying to obtain supplementary rights or even complete freedom. The best known revolt was the one in 1594, led by Bishop Teodor Tivodarevici, which ended in bloody defeat. To escape Turkish revenge, Serbs move to Ardeal, where Serb population already lived in significant numbers since the first half of the 15th century.

Following the Austrian-Turkish War (1683-1699) the border between the two Empires was moved along the Tisa and Mureş rivers, thus the Banat remained within the Ottoman Empire, while Crişana remained under Austrian rule. In this region, in 1701, the Mureş border was formed, and was later to become part of the defence area of the Tiso-Mureş military border. During the Rakoczy (1703-1711) revolt, the Serbs suffered the worst genocide in their medieval history.

After Banat was freed from Turkish dominance in 1718 all Orthodox peoples (Serbs, Romanians, Greeks) became subordinated to the Karlovaţ Metropolitan Church, enjoying all privileges previously obtained by the Serbs. Worth mentioning is the fact that Romanians and Serbs shared a common church until 1864.

The dissolving of the Mureş border led to more Serb migration, this time towards Russia. Part of the population headed however towards the Danube, where the new military border was formed, in the second half of the 18th century. Around the 1870s, through the efforts of Teodor Jankovici Mirievski, a reform was carried out - in the spirit of the European rationalist pedagogy - in Serbian and Romanian elementary schools throughout the Timiş part of Banat.

Wealthy nobility and well organized bourgeoisie lived in Banat. Due to their economic power, they exercised an overwhelming influence over the whole political strategy of the Serbian people within the Habsburg monarchy. This was obvious especially in 1790 at the meeting in Timişoara, where the long term Serbian national programme was outlined, containing political, religious, educational, and cultural claims.

Serbs in Banat and Crişana had a special role in the setting up and the subsequent activity of their greatest national institution, the Matića Srpska. From the territory of present day Romania came many of the most famous Serbian donors – first and foremost Sava Tekelia, the president for life of the Matića Srpska and the founder of the Tekelianum, then Iovan Nako, Iovan Palik - Ucevni and Pavle Iovanovici. In this context it is worth mentioning that in 1827 Dimitrie Tirol edited the “Banat Almanach”, and in 1828 set up the Society of Admirers of Serbian Literature.

The second half of the 18th century and the whole of the 19th century marked a progress of Serbian culture, especially in the territories of present day Romania and Hungary, where a remarkable cultural Serbian movement occurred, highlighting the activity of painters Stefan Teneţki, Arsa Teodorovici, Konstantin Danil, Nikola Aleksici, of the great historian Iovan Raici, of the naturalist Pavle Kenghelaţ, and of the first woman writer of the Matićei Srpska, Eustachia

Arsici. Worth mentioning are scholars Dositei Obradovici, Vuk Karadgici, Ioakim Vuici, as well as numerous bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, who were active in the Bezdin monastery and in the school set up here.

An important role in the 1848 revolution was played by the Banat Serbs, who fought for the national liberation together with their co-nationals volunteering from Serbia. During the existence of the Principality of Serbia and of the Timiș Banat (1849-1860), the administrative headquarters was in Timișoara.

After the signing of the Austro-Hungarian agreement and the forming of the dualist Austro-Hungary in 1867, the programme of the National Freethinking Serbian Party was drafted. This was the basis of the collaboration with the Romanian National Party, especially in the Banat and Crișana regions, where Serbs and Romanians lived together for centuries.

The Serbs in Romania took an active part in the great gatherings especially important for Serbian history, such as the meeting occasioned by the Annunciation (1861), the forming of the United Serbian Youth (1866), the setting up of the Radical and Liberal Parties (1887). Apart from this, Serbs on the territory of present day Romania enrolled in the 1860s workers' movement; later on, following the foundation of the Social-Democratic Party of Hungary in 1890 they activated within the Serbian committee for instigation.

At the end of World War I, Serbs on Romanian territory chose their delegates to take part in the great popular meeting which proclaimed the annexation of the Banat, Bacika, and Barania regions to the Kingdom of Serbia at Novi-Sad on 25 November 1918. All these territories became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which was formed on 1 December 1918.

The territorial delimitation between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and the Kingdom of Romania was carried out based on the decision of the Peace Conference of Paris of August 1919, when the largest part of Banat was handed over to Romania. At the time, approx. 50.000 Serbs lived here in over 60 localities.

Many Serbs on the territory of present day Romania took an active part during World War II by fighting in the Yugoslav liberation army, but they also supported the royal Serbian army and the movement led by the legendary general and martyr Draja Mihailovici. Through international agreements signed between the two world wars, the situation of national minorities in both countries was regulated.

Current Affairs

Shortly after the fall of the communist regime, on 19 February 1990, the Democratic Union of Serbs in Romania was set up; the organization aimed to revive cultural activities and traditions of the Serb minority, to promote teaching and literature in Serbian, to maintain customs and to celebrate the main events in the life of the community.

The tragic events in the neighbouring Yugoslavia, where an inter-ethnic war was in full swing, had its effects on the Serbian community in Romania. At the beginning of 1997, ethnic Croats withdrew from the Democratic Union of Serbs and Carasovens in Romania, named as such in

April 1992; as a result, on 12 April 1997, the organization changed its name to the Union of Serbs in Romania (USR).

Another political event that would affect the lives of Serbs in our country is related to the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia throughout 1999. Immediately after the NATO attacks were launched over Belgrade and other Serbian towns, the deputy representing the Serbian minority in the Romanian Parliament, Slavomir Gvozdenovici, expressed the willingness of his community to receive refugees and to send humanitarian aid to Serbia, emphasizing that this was their duty as “human beings and Christians”. Also, Gvozdenovici was present at the protest of 7.000 people in the Unity Square in Timișoara against the attack of the Alliance and publicly asked for the attacks to stop; he also condemned the attempt by NATO to force the leaders of the Yugoslav state to sign a document through which to yield the Kosovo region. The leaders of the Serbian community manifested together with their co-nationals in Arad, București, Reșița and other cities against the bombing of their kin-state.

It was emphasized that Serbs in Romania, loyal citizens of the state support their brothers in their refusal to sign the document that would mark their capitulation and their forever losing “the holy land of Serbia”. In the Romanian Parliament, the Serbian deputy opposed – in the name of the Serbian community – the draft declaration concerning the military conflict in the neighbouring country, requesting Parliament to take a “more balanced” position. The representative of the Serbian minority left the room in protest to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair’s speech.

The Serbs in Romania helped their Yugoslav co-nationals that were affected by war as best they could.

During the democratic transformations in Serbia the Serbian community acted in solidarity with the Serbian people, welcoming the fact that this democratic transformation took place without bloodshed.

One last episode: when Parliament in Bucharest approved in 2001 the Decision concerning Romania’s participation along with NATO states to actions to combat international terrorism, there was only one abstaining: that of Deputy Slavomir Gvozdenovici. He stated that “terrorism must be fought by starting with Albanian terrorism in Kosovo”, and expressed the hope that the United States of America would reconsider its position “towards the terrorist organization of UCK, the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army of ethnic Albanians.”

Cultural Life

Beyond the Baziaș and Bacița monasteries, built by St. Sava in the 12th-13th centuries, when the great monasteries of Kosovo and Serbia were also built, beyond the tens of folklore books printed over the years, beyond the hundreds of fiction books, newspapers, and periodicals printed by Serbs on the territory of present-day Romania, the ties between the two countries are much more profound.

Many great names of Serbian literature are connected one way or another to the Romanian space. “They were born in Banat, or they studied in Timișoara or Arad, or they held various jobs, including in the diplomacy, the great Serbian men of culture had contacts with this country”, says

Slavomir Gvozdenovici. In a brief enumeration, one should remember Sava Tekelija, the greatest benefactor of the Serbian people, who was born in Arad; Dimitrie Tirol, the founder of the first library in Belgrade was also from Timișoara; so were the greatest poet of the Serbian Romanticism, Branko Radicevici, the great writer of the history of the Serbs Miloș Trnjanski, the poet Dușan Vasiliev, other scholars from Serbian churches or schools; Iovan Ducici, “the prince of Serbian poetry” was the first Serbian ambassador to Bucharest; this diplomatic and cultural tradition was continued by novel writer Milan Rakici and Ivo Andrici, laureate of the Nobel prize.

An important event was registered in October 1998, when USR organized in cooperation with the World Union of Serbs the first meeting of Serb minorities in Europe.

There is practically no important personality from the Serbian culture and literature that wasn't in one way or another related to Timișoara, Arad, Sînnicolau Mare and the current Banat territory in Romania. This way Serbian history, culture, and tradition demonstrate once again that they have roots and traditions related to the cultural and spiritual life of Serbs in Romania.

The Union of Serbs in Romania is currently one of the most active minority organizations in our country; it organizes annually over 80 cultural, scientific, and educational activities – among them, the celebration of the St. Sava day, The Marathon of Serbian Folk Song and Dance, The Choirs Festival, the celebration of St. Vid day, The Days of Serbian Culture in Bucharest, The Children's Theatre Festival, The Festival of Danube Theatres, Dositei's Days, Customs and Traditions Today, The Border Meeting of Writers etc.

The Union of Serbs in Romania publishes the weekly Nașa reci” (Our Say) and the literary periodical “Knjizevni zivot” (Literary Life), prints 20 books annually etc.

Currently Serbian intellectuals and writers from Romania, as well as Serbian cultural and artistic bands take part in numerous meetings, symposia, cultural meetings in Romania, Europe, and the United States, thus demonstrating the richness and value of Serbian culture in our country; this culture integrates in the cultural activity of all other national minorities in Romania, and all of them in the cultural activity of our country.

USR supports local authorities in the functioning of schools with Serbian language teaching (especially the high school “Dositei Obradovici” in Timișoara); one of its main concerns is that of maintaining teaching in Serbian, which has a tradition of over 200 years in more than 50 localities in Banat, and in some cases a tradition of more than 3 centuries.

In the 2002 -2003 school year there were 35 institutions and departments in the pre-university educational system with teaching in Serbian or with teaching of Serbian as a modern language in schools with teaching in Romanian; here studied 1033 pupils. Also, there are 290 preschool children studying in the 29 preschool units (kindergartens) with teaching in Serbian.

The Union of Serbs has 49 local branches and approximately 5500 active members. If, according to the census of 1992 in Romania there were 30.000 Serbs and 2.275 Carasovens, today, according to the latest census in Romania there are 22.561 Serbs (out of which 2.775 Carasovens), representing 0.11% of the total population. Most Serbs live in Timiș county – 13.273 persons, in Caraș Severin - 6.082, Arad – 1.217, Mehedinți – 1.178 etc.

The Czechs and the Slovaks

The Czech-Slovak minority – a Slav population whose state structure is of recent origin – has brought to Romania the respect for work and education, as well as a deep religious belief. All these values are still present today in local Czech-Slovak communities in Transylvania.

Short historical background

Slovaks settled on the territory of present-day Romania in three independent waves. The first (after the second half of the 18th century) had as a result the settling of Slovaks in the fields of the Arad county and of the Banat region, in the mountainous areas of the Bihor and Sălaj counties, in the fields and mining towns of Satu Mare and Maramureş counties, and in the north-eastern part of Bukowina. These areas were at the time under Habsburg rule.

The first Slovaks arrived in Arad and Banat in 1747, setting up the town of Mocrea. In 1803, a large group of Evangelical Slovaks colonized Nădlacul, then Butin, Vucova, Brestovaţ etc.

Another wave, that took place in the form of a primary migration of Roman-Catholic Slovaks, started in 1790 through the setting up of the Budoi and Vărzari towns in the forest areas of the Plopiş mountains, and was followed by the setting up of localities such as Şinteu, Făget, Şerani etc. in the first half of the 19th century.

These colonization episodes were rather economic in character, since the weakly populated areas of Arad and Banat forced rich landowners to colonize them with land workers that had the necessary means for independent farms. Colonizers were granted certain privileges.

The high birth rates of the newly settled population, the continuous influx of new settlers, as well as the emergence of social strata caused even more migration and the setting up of new Slovak towns.

Regarding the Slovaks that had settled in Arad and Banat, it is worth mentioning the fact that they settled in localities with populations of a different ethnic background, and did not set up new localities. This had an important impact on the natural process of acculturation. In each of the newly established localities, not only did a process of cultural levelling of the Slovaks occur – they were coming from ethnographically different and well-defined areas, but also a process of forming specific manifestations occurred, especially in the realm of material folk culture, under the influence of the multicultural space where they settled and lived.

The third wave, which was also a primary migration, took place in the Bukowina area, in the second part of the 19th century, when Slovaks settled in the towns of Poiana Micului and Soloneţ. They were however assimilated by the Polish inhabitants in the area.

The communist period

Following the re-emigration of part of the Slovak population to Czechoslovakia in 1946-1948 and the instauration of the communist regime, important changes occurred in the life of Slovak communities. Approximately 20.000 Slovaks left during those times, leading to a considerable de-population of local communities.

In addition, the policy of communist authorities was that of dismantling national Slovak institutions, such as the Evangelical archbishop's office, cultural societies and the Czechoslovak Union in Romania. Teachers from Slovakia that had taught in Slovak schools left Romania.

The setting up in 1945 of the Slovak high school in Nadlac, which until 1956 functioned as a pedagogical school training numerous Slovak teachers and intellectuals in Romania, meant that the system of schools with teaching in the Slovak language was consolidated. In this period, the first authors of Slovak language and literature textbooks, and the first translators from Romanian textbooks emerge, all from the ranks of graduates of the Nadlac high school. All Slovak schools in Romania functioned with staff trained here.

In the 1960s the Slovaks around Bihor and Sălaj started to emigrate – on economic grounds – to Arad and Banat. At the same time, a phenomenon of assimilation of Slovaks took place in small towns, where schools with mother tongue teaching were dissolved. On the other hand, from professional reasons, the number of Slovaks in cities such as Arad, Timișoara, and Reșița increases.

In Nadlac, during the 1970s, the first Slovak literary creations emerge, as well as the first Slovak writers who in 1976 set up the literary circle “Ivan Krasko” (currently the Ivan Krasko Cultural and Scientific Society).

The Contemporary Period

After 1989, national life of Slovaks in Romania receives new dimensions. The Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania (DUSCR) is set up in Nădlac, new cultural societies are set up, the Slovak Evangelical Archbishop's Office is restored, and four magazines in the Slovak language emerge.

Local DUSCR branches are set up in neighbouring towns, where Slovak inhabitants develop cultural activities while at the same time participate to the social and political life of the community through representation in local councils. Concomitantly, due to a decrease in economic activity, a decrease in the Slovak population is registered, as young people and families travel abroad for work especially to Slovakia but also to the Czech Republic.

The Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania (DUSCR) emerged in 1990 as a forum of the Czech and Slovak minority. Despite the dissolution of Czechoslovakia on 31 December 1992, the Union continues to exist as such, benefiting from regional autonomy both for the Slovak and Czech minority.

Activities organized nationally are coordinated by DUSCR, while regional branches have their own autonomy. Even local branches function autonomously within regional branches. The DUSCR Bucharest branch has 31 members and is affiliated to the Arad region. DUSCR is first

and foremost defined as a cultural-social organization. However, one of the basic activities of the Union is ensuring the proper political representation; in this respect, following the 2004 elections, UDSCR is represented in Parliament by Adrian-Miroslav Merka.

According to the official data contained in the 2002 census, in Romania there are 17.199 de Slovaks and 3938 Czechs.

Cultural Activities

The main publication of the DUSCR is “Our Works” (“Naše snahy”), which started to be republished after more than 50 years of silence. “Our Works” is a monthly publication comprising articles in Slovak and Czech. It is only important legal regulations and documents of the DUSCR that are translated. The magazine includes an MP’s column, articles of general interest, as well as short stories, poems and studies. It also has a more avant-garde literary supplement, Naše snahy plus”.

Annually, 15 books by Slovak authors from Romania are printed, as well as 5 books translated into Romanian. The Slovak Ministry of Culture offers financial assistance for publishing works by Slovak poets and writers, as well as grants for cultural projects targeting regions that include areas inhabited by Slovak population in Yugoslavia, Romania, and Hungary. In 1991 a fully equipped printing office was brought from Czechoslovakia to Romania.

Regarding Slovak writers, six of them are members of the Writers’ Union in Romania, eight are honorary members of the Writers’ Association in Slovakia, and two are honorary members of the Writers’ Society in Slovakia.

The “Ivan Krasko” cultural and scientific society also develops research projects. It has published the “Cultural Atlas of Slovaks in Romania”, an ethnographic and cultural album containing over 1000 pages and 600 maps. The atlas was assessed by the Institute of Ethnography in Romania as the first of its kind to be published in Romania.

The “Ivan Krasko” Society undertakes also translations from Slovak literature into Romanian, as well as from Romanian literature into Slovak. In this regard, the bilingual magazine “Parallel Mirrors” – published 4 times a year, now in its 10th year since the first number appeared – aims to present texts from contemporary Slovak and Romanian literature. The Society has also edited for the past 10 years a trimestrial joint magazine of Slovaks in Romania, Voivodina, and Hungary, “Dolnozemsky Slovak” (“Slovaks o the Lower Counties”).

In Nădlac one can also speak of Slovak language theatre. Approximately 5 premieres are introduced every year from Slovak, Romanian, and world drama. Here in Nădlac there is also a Slovak Ethnographic Museum.

Nationally, DUSCR organizes every two years the “Slovak Folk Festival” and alternatively the “Czech Folk Festival”, in towns inhabited by these two minorities; in Nădlac an international competition/parade of Slovak folk singers is also organized.

The Slovak community has a school network with teaching in Slovak throughout all localities inhabited by Slovak speaking citizens. With regard to educational projects, the Slovak state grants 10-20 scholarships every year for study in Slovakia for graduates of the two high schools in Romania where teaching is done in Slovak – the “Josef Gregor Tajovsky” high school in Nădlac, and the “Josef Kozacek” high school in Budoï. Also, a programme of the Ministry of Education in Slovakia offers periodic training for Slovak teachers in Romania.

Religious Communities

Public life of Slovaks, both of Romano-Catholic rite and of Evangelical-Lutheran rite, was formed and developed in all Slovak communities around the church. Until the end of the 19th century the church initiated and developed school education, as well as various forms of economic association, charities, and at the end of the last century the church initiated various national-cultural associations. In the area of Bihor and Salaj, religiously subordinated to the Roman-Catholic diocese of Oradea, new Slovak communities functioned mainly as branches of the already existing ones. Shortly however, large communities formed their own parishes.

This was the case of Budoï, where the independent parish started to function in 1829, and of Sinteu, where an independent parish was set up in 1844. In all other Slovak communities in the area independent parishes appeared much later: in Făget in 1891 and in Borumlaca only in 1939 (its own church was built in 1972). Smaller Slovak communities continue to function as branches even today, even if some of them built their own churches.

Due to the fact that the Roman-Catholic diocese of Oradea was Hungarian, most church schools in Slovak localities in the area were until 1921 – the year when church schools were nationalised by the government of the Greater Romania – of Hungarian language teaching. This is why until then one couldn't speak of the involvement of the Church in national-cultural activities or in local economic activities. Singular cases where Slovak was used in teaching are those where schools were set up and managed by specific communities; in such schools learned local Slovak farmers acted as teachers.

Singular cases of involvement by the Roman-Catholic Church in activities of national emancipation appeared for the first time in Budoï in the inter-war period, where local priest Vladimir Hribik attempted to introduce religious choirs in Slovak. Of a Slovak character of religious communities in the region one can only speak in the 1960s, under priests such as Vavrinec Ferencik, Alexander Bohac and later on Jan Mucha, and finally with the emergence of new Slovak local priests such as Peter Kubalak, Augustin Albert, Martin Rolnik, Josef Svejdik, and Jan Maskara.

The evolution and life of newly established Evangelical communities in Ardeal and Banat were determined both by the relative autonomy of this church in Hungary and by the more favourable economic conditions of larger Lutheran Evangelical communities.

In each of the newly established Slovak communities a praying house and a church school were immediately built. In the case of Nădlac, colonising Slovaks brought along a priest and a teacher.

The same thing happened in the case of all other Evangelical communities, so that these religious communities emerged at the same time with Slovak communities. Where these communities were

large, churches were shortly erected (Mocrea - 1791, Butin - 1818, Nădlac - 1822, Vucova - 1858, Tipar - 1892), while smaller communities either went to existing German Evangelical churches or went to praying houses. Priests functioning in these communities were largely important personalities in the Slovak context of the time.

After 1918 Slovak Evangelical communities affiliated themselves to the Evangelical Church of Saxons in Romania, to the diocese of Sibiu, despite efforts by the Hungarian Evangelical diocese to bring them under its influence. At the time of the signing of the affiliation document, whose initiator was priest Ludovit Boor, the subsequent setting up of a Slovak Evangelical diocese was agreed. However, due to the passing away of the priest, and because of internal fights, the Slovak diocese was only set up in 1933; its first archbishop was Jan Kmet, the priest of Nădlac.

After communists seized power, part of the wealth of Slovak Evangelical communities (all farm land, and in Nădlac also part of the real estate) was nationalised; immediately afterwards in 1953 communist authorities dismantled the Slovak Evangelical diocese. Slovak Evangelical communities were included in the Hungarian Evangelical diocese of Cluj, and the situation remains unchanged today.

The Slovak diocese was re-established in 1994. Its headquarters is in Nădlac; its first archbishop was Dușan Sajak. Presently, the archbishop is Juraj Balint.

At the end of the 19th century, several families from eastern Slovakia were colonised; their confessional belonging was Greek-Catholic, thus consolidating the Romanian Greek-Catholic community in Nădlac. When, after the communists seized power, the Greek-Catholic church was dismantled, part of the believers was assimilated to the Orthodox rite, while part of them was assimilated by the Lutheran Evangelical church. After 1989 some of them, especially those who had passed to Orthodoxy, returned to the Greek-Catholic church.

After World War II part of the Evangelical Slovaks turned to the Pentecostal Church, constituting a stable community to this day.

In the Slovak Evangelical community of Nădlac, the first charities appeared at the end of the 1800s. The first emerges in 1869, the Burial Society, whose activity ceases in the 1950s. In 1865 the Church Granary is set up; later on it will be transformed into the Society for Reciprocal Help. In its turn, this society will be transformed in 1876 in the Savings Bank of Nădlac, which will then be transformed into the Popular Bank of Nădlac, one of the most powerful Slovak financial institutions of the time; it will function until the beginning of the communist regime.

The Tartars

A long standing presence in the Romanian collective memory, bearing a negative connotation owing to the fame of conquerors of their ancestors, Tartars are a homogeneous ethnic group living peacefully in the Dobrogea area for hundreds of years. Here they are mainly concerned with the preservation of their traditions and culture.

Short historical background

The Tartar group from the north-Pontic steppe started to become known in the 13th century. The victory of the Russian knezs in 1223 opened their way to Europe and stretched their rule up to the springs of the Danube.

The first documented mention concerning Tartar settlements in Dobrogea refers to a land allotment during the rule of Genghis Khan (13th century). During the 14th century, tribes of Tartars and Turks came together from Anatolia (Asia Minor); with this occasion they converted to Sunni Islam.

Then under the rule of Timur Lenk Khan, 100,000 Tartars settled in Dobrogea and in the Edirne and Filipopoli areas.

In 1525 more groups of Oguz Turks and Tartars arrived in Babadag. Ottoman chronicles mention four groups of Tartars on the territory of Romelia (in the Eastern Balkans) – to which Dobrogea belonged: the Aktav Tartars, the Tırhala Tartars, the Ianbolu Tartars and the Bozapa or Bozata Tartars. These groups were included in the same registers as Oguz nomads and enjoyed the same privileges and held the same duties as these towards the Ottoman state.

Tartar belongs to the Turkish branch of Altaic languages. The setting up of the Ottoman administration in Dobrogea had as an effect the assimilation of the Tartar population, the Kapceac language of the Tartars being replaced by the Osman, which is a western Turkish language.

After accepting the suzerainty of the Sultan Mehmed II in 1457, the language of Crimean Tartars was osmanized as well, so that Tartars coming to Dobrogea from Crimea also developed their cultural life in the language of Osman Turks.

At the end of the 16th century foreign travelers called Dobrogea a “Tartar land”. In 1596, under the rule of one of the Khan’s brothers an additional 40,000 Tartars settled in the area between the sea and the Danube.

After the Tsar’s occupation of the Crimean Peninsula (1783), numerous Tartars from this place of origin of the once feared Golden Horde found refuge in the Dobrogea area. This process of emigration continued until Dobrogea united with Romania in 1878. Because of the frequent

Russian – Turkish wars, Tartars had to constantly seek refuge and left Dobrogea three times, but kept returning here.

After 1878, the situation of Tartars was generally similar to that of the Turks, meaning they were marginalized but were not assimilated.

Tartars within the Romanian state

A first evaluation of the size of the Tartar population in Dobrogea was done by the Ubcini scholar immediately after the Romanian Independence War. His results from 1879 are quite imprecise, since Tartars were included alongside Turks in the Muslim religious group. Nevertheless, at the time there were approx. 134,000 Muslims in the Romanian part of Dobrogea.

The first precise evaluation of the number of Tartars dates back to 1911, when 25,086 persons are registered, representing 7.3% of the province population.

Dobrogea's unification with Romania meant that a new era began for the Tartars; modern public education, cultural and Islamic religious institutions were created according to the needs of this minority. Among these, the Muslim Seminary initially functioned in Babadag and was later transferred to Medgidia in 1901. Also, the "Emel" (The Ideal) magazine represented during the post war period a truly Renaissance school, disseminating among Tartars the generous ideas of the great Crimean humanist Ismail Gasprinski and of the national poet Tatar Mehmet Niyazi.

Connections with the land of origin – Crimea – never ceased to exist; even during World War II many Crimean Tartars found refuge in Romania. Stalin's reprisals against Crimean Tartars had an impact on Dobrogea Tartars as well, some of them becoming victims of the communist regime.

On the other hand, with the passing of time, some of the Dobrogea Tartars (although not many) moved to other areas inside Romania. (Bucharest, Braşov).

Current Affairs

According to the results of the latest census (2002), there are 24,137 Tartars in Romania (0.11% of the total population), almost the same as in the previous census of 1992, when 24,596 Tartars were registered (0,11% of the total population). Most ethnic Tartars live in the Dobrogea counties of Constanţa and Tulcea, while a small group lives in Bucharest.

Various representatives of the Tartar minority estimate that the real number of Tartars is almost double as that resulting from official censuses, placing it at around 55,000 persons.

Immediately after the 1989 revolution, the Turkish-Muslim Democratic Union of Romania was set up, proclaimed as an "ethno-confessional organization of the Turkish and Tartar population in Romania". Shortly afterwards, however, this union divided into two organizations, namely the Turkish Democratic Union of Romania and the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tartars in Romania (DUTMTR). In 1995 the Turkish and Tartar Federation is also set up.

DUTMTR is an ethno-confessional organization aiming to promote “the preservation of the Tartar nation by reviving its specific spirituality” by strengthening the ties with Tartars from Crimea and elsewhere.

The Union is made up of 27 branches in the most important localities with Tartar population: Constanța, Medgidia, Mangalia, Valu lui Traian, București, Techirghiol, Basarabi, Ovidiu, Brașov, Tulcea and others.

Over the years DUTMTR had several MPs; presently Aledin Amet is the Union’s representative in Parliament. Worth mentioning is the fact that in the local elections of 2004 DUTMTR obtained three mayor’s mandates.

Tartars in Romania consider themselves to be part of the Diaspora of Crimean Tartars. Consequently, appealed to Parliament, the Presidency and the Government of the Republic of Ukraine requesting the immediate addressing of the 1998 inter-ethnic problems in Ukraine, in accordance with international law.

At the last general election in the Ukraine, the Tartar population in this country joined the majority population in its fight for real democratization.

Traditions

Dobrogea Tartars created their own culture by drawing on their history and traditions. National holidays such as the Nawrez and the Kidirlez, as well as religious celebrations such as Kurban Bayrami and Ramazan Bayrami, largely spread throughout the Turkish and Tartar world, are among the most important themes.

As far as religious life is concerned, Tartars are under the protection of the Mufti of the Muslim Denomination in Romania. In the 1990s local branches of the DUTMTR contributed to the building of several mosques in Constanța and Eforie Nord. In 1995 following the signing of a protocol between the Romanian and Turkish states the Muslim seminary of Medgidia was transformed into the Theological Muslim High School Kemal Ataturk, also sponsored by the Ankara government.

Towards the end of the 1990s there were approx. 80 places of worship, among which one mosque, for the Muslim religious service.

Various artistic groups were set up in Valu lui Traian, Constanța, Medgidia, Mangalia, Mihail Kogălniceanu, in the wish to preserve the Tartar folklore traditions; the Festival of Turkish-Tartar National Dress, Dance and Songs reached its 10th edition in 2004. Representatives of the Tartar community take part constantly in the ProEtnica Festival in Sighișoara.

DUTMTR also contributed to the setting up of a network of pupils of Turkish and Tartar ethnic origin who study the Turkish language and Islamic religion intensively. A Tartar language training programme for teachers was also initiated. More recently, the Education Commission of the DUTMTR concerned itself with drafting a strategy to revive Tartar culture and traditions.

An important part of the Union's activity is represented by organizing symposia dedicated to Tartar personalities such as Hamdi Giraybay, Ismail Gasprinski; other symposia marked the centenary of the Muslim Seminary of Medgidia, and periodical commemorations marked the passing away of the national Tartar poet Mehmet Niyazi.

The Tartar Union publishes books by classical and contemporary authors, as well as two monthly periodicals - "Karadeniz" ("Black Sea") and "Caş" ("The Young"). In the field of linguistics, an important achievement was the publishing in 1996 of the "Tartar – Turkish – Romanian Dictionary", containing 10,500 words, edited by Kerim Altay. Also, the Tartar language was the subject of a BA dissertation at the Faculty of Letters of Constanța by Omer Ozgean.

The Romanian Radio-Communications Society airs Tartar language broadcasts through its territorial studio in Constanța and through Radio Vacanța.

The Turks

Descendants of a great nation ruler of three continents, Turks in Romania have long inhabited this land, constituting a minority with a very particular spiritual and religious profile, settled mainly in the Dobrogea area.

Short History

The first documented attestation of a constant presence of pre-ottoman Turks on the current territory of Romania is 1264 AD, i.e. 662 years after Hagira, when following Mongolian attacks on the Selgiucid Anatolian Empire 12,000 soldiers led by Sultan Keykavuz II withdrew to Dobrogea. They crossed the Bosphorus and were sent by King Michael VIII the Paleologue to defend the borders of the Byzantine Empire from foreign invasions. Their new settlement was called Babadag, which means “Father of the Mountains”. An important figure of those times was the humanist Muslim ruler **Sarî Saltuk Dede**, who died here in 1304; he bore an overwhelming influence in the islamicization of the Turanic peoples from the Black Sea.

His influence was so great and so much acknowledged in this town that even today a mausoleum is maintained in his memory, and in 1641 when the Christian traveler Petru Bogdan Bagsik visits Babadag he will confuse him with St. Nicholas. After the conquest of Varna in 1444 a new wave of Ottoman Turks will arrive in this region; more will come with the increase in economic exchanges between the Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire. At the end of the 19th century most villages, boroughs, and towns in Dobrogea had Turkish names.

Many years, Babadag was both a military garrison and a cultural centre through the opening of a **Medrese** / *Trusteeship* for training teachers and mullahs, as well as through the setting up of a **Kadiat**/ *Tribunal* for Islamic and civil law litigation, both functional until the 1900s. Specific for these times was the existence of **vakîf** / *Foundations*, non-governmental, Islamic and non-profit institutions which greatly contributed to the cultural and spiritual development of this minority. The best known were the Mangalia vakîf, set up by Princess Esmahan Sultan in 1590 and the Babadag vakîf, set up in 1610 by Gazi Ali – Silistra Pasha. Mosques / churches built by these vakîfs are functional even today. Administrative information concerning their activity, also translated into Romanian, was put down by Ottoman chronicler Evlia Celebi. Turks have always been careful with the educational levels of their children, even if the pedagogical model of the time was rather religious in character and all schools in any Turkish community functioned within churches / mosques.

With time, in addition to primary schools special schools for higher education were set up. Such a school was the Turkish Trusteeship in Babadag within the Babdag vakîf; in 1891 it will move to Medgidia, under the name of the Muslim Theological Seminary but undertaking the same task of training teachers and mullahs for the local community.

Slowly the old glory of the Ottoman Empire faded away, and periodic migration decreased the size of this community in Romania. Thus, if in 1900 there were 238 mosques in Dobrogea, today there are only 72 in the whole of Romania; out of these 7 are in urgent need of repair, for which reason they are closed; 3 are in the process of construction. The new Muslim Theological Seminary of Medgidia functioned until 1963 when the communist regime closed it down.

Of a development of Turkish intellectuality one could speak about only in the inter-war period. This is when most newspapers and magazines are published, initially only in old Osman Turkish in Arab script. After 1930 new Turkish writings in Latin script appear, including Romanian bilingual ones. The press of the time included *Hayat / Life* which first appeared in 1921 in Constanța. A bilingual newspaper in Constanța was published under the name of *Halk/People* between 1936 and 1941, and was edited by Mr. Hamdi Nusret. In this period, poets such as Mehmet Niyazi, Iusuf Isa Halim, Ismail Ziyaeddin, writer Ulkusal Mustecip – initiator of the *Türk Birliği / Turkish Union* (1930 -1940) and founder of the *Emel/Ideal* magazine – were representative for this time; other publishers were Dr. Ibrahim Temo, Mustafa Lutfi, Ismail Ergun – editor of the *Tuna / Danube* (1936), Habib Hilmi - founder of the *Hakses / Authentic Voice* newspaper, which appeared in 1929 in Medgidia.

Between 1935 and 1940 a Turkish theatre functioned in the south of Dobrogea, in Bazargic (today on Bulgarian territory). During this period the Turkish community underwent its most profound transformations; for instance if until 1932 Turkish students still wore uniforms characteristic of the Ottoman times, with the founding of the Republic of Turkey and under the influence of Kemal's reforms, uniforms of Turks in Romania received a European appearance. At the same time, in addition to Turkish in Latin script, Romanian will also be introduced in schools.

The post-war period between 1945 and 1990 was marked by the migration of Turkish intellectuality from Romania to Turkey; schools with teaching in Turkish functioned until 1954, after which they were closed for the entire duration of the communist regime. Even the Turkish Language Department of the University of Bucharest was suspended after 1980.

Current Affairs

According to the latest censuses, the estimated number of Turks in Romania was 29,800 in 1992, while in 2002 it was 32.596, representing approx. 0,2 % of the country's population.

Ethnic Turks live mostly in the Constanța county, but also in Tulcea, București, Călărași, Brăila. Unlike most national minorities, the Turkish minority registers a constant increase in its numbers. One should note however that after the fall of the communist regime the Turkish community started to re-organize itself so as to better preserve its cultural specificity and to be able to better protect its rights.

In 1992 the Turks in Romania set up in Constanța the **Turkish Democratic Union of Romania – TDUR**, whose main purpose is the revitalization and passing on of the cultural and traditional values of this community. Presently the Union has over 20 branches, each organizing various activities; below are mentioned those with international participation:

- in 2000, Symposium, "*Turkish Culture and Civilization in the Balkans*", in Galați

- in 2001, Festival, “*Grigore Keazim*“, in Măcin -Tulcea
- in 2002, Symposium, “*The Day of the Republic of Turkey*“, in Medgidia
- in 2003, Performance, “*23 April – Chld’s Day in Turkey*“, in Constanta
- in 2004, Symposium, “*The Turkish Woman in the Balkans*“, 2nd edition, in Constanta
- in 2005, Community Festival, “*Nevruz*“, 4th edition, in Constanta

Since its founding the Union participated in all parliamentary elections in Romania and benefited from the parliamentary representation of the following deputies: Fevzie Ruşit in (1992-1996), Osman Fetbi (1996 –2000) and Metin Cerchez (2000-2004). After the parliamentary elections of 2004 the representative of the TDUR in Parliament is Mr. Ibram Iusein.

The Union publishes on a monthly basis the newspaper *Hakses/Authentic Voice* and *Genç Nesil/ Young Generation*, which comprise papers concerning the tradition, history, and current affairs of the Turkish minority. Other publications in Turkish are the newspaper *Hayat/ Life* and the magazine *Zaman / Time*.

In addition to this Union, other organizations were set up within the Turkish community. They are representative of the approx. 9,000 businesses, as follows: *The Association of Turkish Businessmen in Romania - TIAD* (1993), the *Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry* (1994) and the *Association of Turkish Investors in Romania – TUYAB* (1998). Their activity brought a rapid development, in a modern framework, to present-day Romanian-Turkish relations. After 1995 the Muslim Theological Seminary was re-organized as well; it will re-open within the *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk* Pedagogical High-School in Medgidia and will preserve its attributions.

Traditions

The most important annual celebration, marking the unity of the Turkish world, as well as of the Dobrogea Turks, is the *Nevruz*, a celebration over 5000 years old. “Nevruz”, as translated from Persian, means “new day”, from “nev” – new, and “ruz” – day. It marks the coming of a new day of the year when nature revives and people celebrate the coming spring.

In present-day Romania over 66,000 Turks and Tatars celebrate the **Nevruz** every spring on the 21 March, although the festivities do not begin on the same day and at the same first minute of the morning for all. Throughout the Muslim world however this celebration takes place just before the beginning of the Aries zodiacal sign. For some peoples it lasts between three and seven days, while for others it can last up to fourteen days. From China to Asia and Europe, each Turanic people has its own legends about the *Nevruz*. One of these legends says that thousands of years ago, due to some natural disaster, the Turks were isolated in the Erghenegon Mountains, which they could not cross. They continued their life here, extracted coal, raised cattle, and one day saw a wolf coming in and out of the gorge. That day, it is believed, the Turks spread throughout the world.

Sunni Muslims relate the *Nevruz* to the birth of Ali, one of Mohamed’s sons in law. This celebration starts with a general house cleaning; people throw old clothes in the fire and buy new ones, thus symbolizing old troubles being thrown away with the clothes. Also, open-air meetings take place where participants, especially the young, jump over the fire. Seven dishes are cooked, for seven is a lucky number. Many cakes, lamb dishes, traditional Turkish foods are also cooked.

Young people adorn a tree branch with snowdrops, embroidered handkerchiefs, spring flowers, and go carol-singing from house to house to bring the *Nevruz*, that is to announce the coming of the spring. They are rewarded with sweets, cakes, and nickels; these small gifts are called “nevruzii”.

The symbols of the *Nevruz* are wheat sprouts, signifying the New Year, the fire present in all homes; in all corners of the rooms candles are lit. Young people make bonfires around which they dance and recite poetry.

Dobrogea Turks also have another confessional spring celebration – the **Hidirlez**, when Muslims go out in the open air to celebrate spring. On this occasion women prepare lamb soup, cheese or meat pies, cookies/ çörek etc. the dead are not forgotten either. The graves are cleaned, flowers are planted, prayers are said and the poor are fed.

However the most important celebrations are those surrounding the *Ramazam Bairam*, which mark the end of the 30 days of fasting (*ramazam*) and the beginning of the 3 days of festivities. In the Turkish world *Remezam Bairmam* is also called *Seker Bairam / The sweet Bairam*, because on every Muslim’s table one will find honeyed baklavas filled with nuts, almond cakes, halva and sweetbread, fruit juice, pistachio, Turkish delight, etc. Two months and ten days later the *Kurban Bairmam* follows, meaning the *Sacrifice Day* when the dead are remembered by slaughtering a ram and offering it to the poor; only a quarter will be kept by the owner for his own consumption. This moment also signifies the *Islamic Christmas*.

In the last week of the *Ramadam Bairam* young people go carol-singing to the houses of the community members, reciting sacred texts from the Koran, such as *The Month of the Sacred Ramadan*, *The Evening Divine Service*, or *The Farewell Service*. All texts of the carols sung during Ramadan end with the verse “May Allah give us health, so that next year we can meet again healthy and happy”. According to the tradition, during these holidays believers greet each other by saying *Bairam Hairli Olsun! / May the new celebration bring you many fulfillments!*. On this occasion at 7.45 in the morning, after a 30 day fasting period all men of the Islamic faith gather at the nearest Mosque, where a short religious service called *Bairam Tas* takes place until 8.15. Only the men in the community take part in this service. After the service, tradition requires all men and women to go to the Muslim cemetery, where the dead will be commemorated, especially those that have passed away in the last year. The same tradition requires that all believers should first visit the old and the sick, kiss their hand and wish them good health in the year to come. This is when children receive sweets and money.

Şeker Bairamul, which lasts three days, is a moment of reconciliation among believers of the Islamic faith. The 3 days of fasting will have no relevance if Muslims will not reconcile among themselves.

Another important traditional event in the life of any Muslim believer is the obligation to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, which is also specific to the Turkish community in Romania. The pilgrim who has returned from Mecca will receive the noble title of Hagi/Holy Man, thus becoming a new man, highly regarded in the community.

The Ukrainians

Although they live in a neighbouring country, little was known about Ukrainians in Romania. Bibliographical data is scarce, despite the fact that Ukrainians are the Slavic people with whom Romanians had the most numerous contacts throughout history. This lack of knowledge about Ukrainians, a people of great historical and cultural traditions, can be explained by the fact that they had been included in the Tsarist and Austrian empire for a long time as well as by the fact that information about them arrived through intermediaries.

Short history

The name of Ukraine – derived from **okraina**, the border land – is of recent origin; throughout history, Ukrainians called themselves and were called Russians, Rosins, Ruthenians, from the state of Kievskia Rus. The name of Ukraine appears during Kazak rule.

Relations between Romanians and Ukrainians go a long time back in history; in this respect, it is worth mentioning that the oldest known Ukrainian ballad speaks about Stephen the Great. Moreover, the epos “About Igor’s Army”, reclaimed by both Russians and Ukrainians as a very important literary document of their respective nations, was discovered and made public by Moldovan boyars that had taken refuge in the Tsarist Empire.

Even if relations between Ukraine and Romania have had their ups and downs – the main reason for dispute being the ownership of northern Bukowina and of the counties currently in the southern part of the territory of the Republic of Moldova) - political difficulties have been largely overcome by signing a bilateral treaty.

A large Ukrainian minority resides on Romanian territory, as revealed by the 2002 census; the population number is 61,353 persons, which amounts to 0.28% of the total population of Romania. Ukrainian representatives believe however that their numbers far exceed the census results. Most Ukrainians live in Maramureş county, as well as in Suceava, Caraş-Severin, Timiş, Tulcea, Arad, Botoşani, and Satu Mare counties. The presence of Ukrainians on Romanian territory goes back to 14th – 15th century, when they resided mostly in the northern part of the country (Maramureş and Suceava). Some historians claim that the presence of the Ukrainian population in these places goes even further back in time.

Current Affairs

Political interests, as well as cultural and historical traditions of the Ukrainian community in Romania are represented by the Union of Ukrainians in Romania (UUR). UUR has five regional branches and 45 local organizations. Ukrainians are represented in Parliament by Ştefan Buciuta; in the 2004 local elections two mayors, two vice-mayors, and 29 communal councillors. Publications of the Ukrainian community include “Curierul ucrainean” (“Ukrainian Courier”, in

Romanian), “Ukrainkyi visnyk” (“Ukrainian Journal”), “Vilne slovo” (“Free Word”), “Nas holos” (“Our Voice”) – magazine of Ukrainian writers, and “Obrii” (“Horizons”) – annual publication for Ukrainian culture, literature, and philology.

Ukrainian Ethnic Communities

- Ukrainians of Maramureş and Bukowina
- Ukrainians of Dobrogea
- Ukrainians of Banat

Ukrainians of Maramureş and Bukowina

Ukrainian dwellings in northern Moldova and Maramures, situated in the neighbourhood of the ethno-linguistic Ukrainian bulk are the oldest in the country. Archaeological and linguistic evidence demonstrate that an eastern Slavic population settled here in the 6th century, living together with autochthonous Romanian population, while most of the villages inhabited today by Ukrainians are mentioned in old historical documents (Slavonic in Moldova and Latin-Hungarian in Maramureş) since 14th and 15th centuries.

In 1998, for instance, the village of Ruscova in Maramureş celebrated 625 years since its first documented attestation. The linguistic, cultural, and spiritual identity of Ukrainians in Maramureş and Moldova was ensured and maintained by an ethnic adding from Transcarpathia, Galitia, Pocutia, and northern Bukowina.

The Hutuls, also called Hutans by Romanians, are those living in the mountainous area of Bukowina, on the upper valleys of Suceava, Moldova, Moldoviţa și Bistriţa Aurie rivers. When they settled here in the 17th century, they found favourable conditions for practicing their traditional occupations: raising cattle and forest work, setting up an important number of villages that they inhabit to the day. In old Bukowina writings they are called “Russians”. The language of the Hutuls is related to Carpathian Ukrainian and Bukowina languages, which in their turn are an integral part of the common Ukrainian language.

Famous for their horse raising skills, the Hutuls are at the same time excellent masters of manufacturing and decorating wood, leather, horns, and also of weaving and embroidering. Decorating Easter eggs (which is customary especially in the villages of Ulma, Lupcina, Paltinul, Brodina, Breaza, Moldoviţa) has brought them international recognition.

Ukrainians of Dobrogea

Ukrainians’ settling in Dobrogea (in the Danube Delta and surrounding areas) is related to some of the most tragic moments in the history of the Ukraine: the destruction and liquidation in 1775 by Russia’s Tsarina Ekaterina the 2nd, of the Sica Zaporojana, the century-old cradle of the longing for independence and freedom of the Ukrainian people. To avoid reprisals, 8000 Zaporojan Kazaks settled, with Ottoman consent, in the Danube Delta.

Here at Dunavățul de Sus, they set up in 1813 the military camp “Zadunaiska Sici”, which functioned for 15 years, until it was destroyed by the Turks. In the second half of the 19th century

this is the place where groups of peasants from southern Ukraine come, hoping to escape forced labour and recruitment in the tsarist army. They set up towns, build churches and take up occupations such as agriculture, fishing, hunting, and cattle raising. To distinguish them from their Russian Lipovan neighbours, local people call them Hahols.

Ukrainians of Banat

The Ukrainian community in Banat, consisting of several villages around Lugoj, Caransebeş, and Arad, was created mainly between 1908-1918, through the colonization of some large domains in the south of the then Austro-Hungarian Empire sold by their German and Hungarian owners. Ukrainian colonists who bought the land came from poor mountainous areas of Transcarpathia, from towns situated on the right bank of the Tisa, while few others came from the Hutul area in Bukowina.

Their exodus continued after 1918. After 1970 numerous young Ukrainians from villages in Maramureş buy the farms of emigrated Germans, thus populating many villages which in time become mostly Ukrainian (Pogăneşti, Dragomireşti, Stiuca, Remetea Mică, Bârsana etc). In the last 15-20 years a mass movement of Maramureş Ukrainians towards Banat took place; they were moving away from an area of forests and hayfields into an area where agriculture was possible.

Culture and religion

If one asks any Ukrainian in Romania who is the personality he/she mostly identifies with, or who is the personality that represents his/her national spirit, the answer will almost inevitably be Taras Sevcenko.

A classic of Ukrainian literature, Sevcenko is much appreciated for marvellously depicting the tumultuous history of this nation. "Sevcenko has many memorable poems. There are very, very many of them, but I will only mention the descriptive poem "Catherine", where he says "The large Niprus sighs and tosses". It is the key to the meaning of the ballad, which speaks about the tumultuous history of the Ukrainian people. It resembles a prayer. Usually, when these verses are sung, the audience rises. The ballad is a metaphor of the Ukraine, pictured as a girl without luck in love, and who is sent away to foreigners who abuse her – here the foreigners represent Russia", says Professor Ioan Rebuşapcă, PhD, of the Slavonic Languages Department of the Faculty of Foreign Languages within the University of Bucharest.

Teaching in the Ukrainian language has a long history in Romania. Following the 1948 reform of public education general compulsory education in the mother tongue was introduced in the areas inhabited by a majority of Ukrainians. Gymnasiums were opened in Siret, Sighet, Tulcea, and in 1954 in Suceava. Two 4-year pedagogical schools were opened in Siret and Sighet, as well as a Department of Ukrainian language and literature of the Faculty of Philology in Bucharest. 8825 pupils learnt in Ukrainian in 1956. After only 15 years, Ukrainian schools are transformed in schools with teaching in the Romanian language, while Ukrainian is taught as an optional subject in only a few remaining schools.

After 1990, teaching in Ukrainian was revived by training teachers for kindergartens and pedagogical schools in three towns in Romania: Sighetu Marmăţiei, Suceava and Tulcea. In several Maramureş schools classes and groups with teaching in Ukrainian are set up, and in 1997

the “Taras Şevcenko” Bilingual High School of Sighetu Marmăţiei is opened again. Also, within the “Mihai Eminescu” Pedagogical High School in Suceava special classes have been set up where future teachers are trained for schools in Ukrainian localities. Currently 63 primary schools offer teaching in Ukrainian to 7,360 pupils.

Apart from the Department for Ukrainian language of the University of Bucharest, two more similar departments have been set up at the universities of Suceava and Cluj-Napoca. Large numbers of graduates of these departments are sent to study in the Ukraine by the Ministry of Education and the Union of Ukrainians in Romania.

Ukrainians are also cultural promoters. Ukrainian elites (comprising writers, literary critics, scientists, sketchers etc.) publish on average a book every month. The fame of Ukrainian literature and science in Romania has gone beyond Romanian borders. Such is the case of Ştefan Tcaciuc, Ion Ardelean, Ion Robciuc, Ion Covaci and others.

As far as religion is concerned, most ethnic Ukrainians in Romania are Orthodox Christians. In 1950 the Ukrainian Orthodox Vicariate in Sighetu Marmăţiei was set up. This is an administratively autonomous institution of the church, under the canonical jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Church. It comprises two archbishops (Sighet and Lugoj) and 36 parishes served by Ukrainian priests. After the revival of the Greek-Catholic Church, in 1990 the General Ukrainian Greek Catholic Vicariate was set up in Sighetu Marmăţiei. It is canonically subordinated to the Romanian Dioceses United with Rome and comprises several parishes in Suceava (Radauţi, Siret, and Cacica) and Maramureş (Sighet) counties.