

Defending the Rights of Others

THE GREAT POWERS, THE JEWS, AND INTERNATIONAL
MINORITY PROTECTION, 1878–1938

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Prologue
The Congress of Berlin

“We can only do a human work, subject like all such work, to the fluctuations of events.”

Otto von Bismarck

International minority protection, which reached its apogee after World War I, had nineteenth-century roots. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the delegates combined the two principles of territorial readjustments and external control over internal affairs. The Great Powers not only checked tsarist Russia’s drive into Southeastern Europe by imposing the old rules of compensation and the balance of power; perceiving the dangers lurking within the new borders they had drawn, the Powers also placed a stiff price on the recognition of four successor states of the Ottoman Empire. The heated debates, the conditions they imposed, and the subsequent results all mark the beginning of a new stage of modern European diplomacy.

CURBING RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

Tsarist Russia went to war with the Ottoman Empire on April 24, 1877. The immediate cause was the Turks’ crushing of the Slavic uprisings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, suppression of the Bulgarian insurrection, and the rout of Serbia and Montenegro. This eighth Russo–Turkish War, extending over almost two centuries, was not only the continuation of Russia’s efforts to seize the Straits but also represented a new form of tsarist expansionism. Spurred by the rise of Balkan nationalism, Russia’s leaders espoused the pan-Slav and Orthodox mission to liberate the lands and peoples of European

Turkey, with the goal of transforming the land bridge to Constantinople into a region of satellite states.¹

The nine-month war, which lasted until January 1878, was an unexpectedly evenly matched contest.² After the Turks held the fortress of Plevna for five long months against Russia and its reluctant ally Romania,³ the exhausted tsarist army reached the gates of Constantinople. But failing to achieve a decisive military verdict – a Königrätz or a Sedan – Russia had neither seized the Straits and Constantinople nor evicted Turkey from Europe.

Russia's newest *Drang nach Süden* also challenged the three Great Powers. Great Britain and France, the nominal protectors of the Ottoman Empire, were determined to deny Russia access to the eastern Mediterranean, whereas Austria–Hungary, with its own large Slav and Orthodox population, was insistent on retaining the status quo in Southeastern Europe.⁴ All three were outraged by the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878), dictated by pan-Slav General Nicholas Ignatiev, which rearranged the map of the Balkans, creating a huge Bulgarian client state that stretched from the Danube to the Aegean and from the Black Sea to Albania and split European Turkey in two.⁵ Faced with British threats and keenly aware of Russia's economic and military weakness, Tsar Alexander II retreated from the pan-Slav gambit at San Stefano and submitted to Europe's demands.⁶

Europe's third major congress of the nineteenth century opened in Berlin on June 13, 1878. It lasted only one month because its agenda was limited and almost everything had been prepared in advance. Among the participants were the two exhausted combatants and five fresh bystanders determined to solve the "Eastern Question" – the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire –

1. Full details of works with abbreviated titles are given in Sections 1B and 2 of the Bibliography. The standard study is Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans*; see also Geyer, *Russian Imperialism*, pp. 64–79; Durman, *Time of the Thunderer*, pp. 158–206; Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, pp. 143–73; MacKenzie, *Tsarist Russian Foreign Policy, 1815–1917*, pp. 68–81; LeDonne, *The Russian Empire*, pp. 137–40, 265–9, 324. A revisionist work by Weeks, "Russia's Decision for War With Turkey," describes a weak, politically divided regime that reluctantly took up arms against an obdurate Ottoman Empire, primarily to salvage its "national honor."
2. Despite the dire state of Ottoman finances, British loans enabled the Porte to purchase armaments from Germany and the United States. Rich, *Great Power Diplomacy*, p. 224.
3. Lying across Russia's most expeditious southward invasion route, the United Principalities (Romania's official name until 1878) tried to limit the damage of tsarist occupation and war with the Turks by characterizing its actions as a struggle for national independence.
4. Haselsteiner, "Zur Haltung der Donaumonarchie," and Dioszegi, "Die Anfänge der Orientpolitik Andrásys."
5. Among the treaty's other terms, Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania were to gain independence, Bosnia and Herzegovina were to become semiautonomous provinces within the Ottoman Empire, and Russia's Romanian ally was to return southern Bessarabia to Russia.
6. Durman, *Time of the Thunderer*, pp. 219–44; Jelavich, *Russian Foreign Policy*, pp. 181–2; Goraïainov, *La question d'Orient*, pp. 229–51.

by a calibrated multinational partition, thus setting the tone for the next Berlin Conference on Africa seven years later.⁷

The results were a triumph of Disraelian firmness and Bismarckian discipline. Reaping the main rewards of its aggression, Russia extended its Black Sea coastline by regaining southern Bessarabia in the West and by annexing Ardahan, Kars, and Batum in the East. As to the Balkans, the congress agreed on full independence for Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania, and autonomy for a greatly reduced Bulgaria. But the other side profited as well. The Ottoman Empire retained Macedonia⁸ as well as control over the Straits, through which the British Fleet could pass at will into the Black Sea. Moreover, the Turks' defenders amply rewarded themselves, with Britain taking Cyprus, Austria–Hungary occupying Bosnia–Herzegovina, and France given the green light to occupy Tunisia.

The congress modified the Treaty of San Stefano in another significant way. Whereas Russia's dictated treaty had been silent over minority rights, the Powers were determined to impose conditions regarding religious freedom and civic rights in all the new states.⁹ In bringing forth a new political order in the Balkans, the Great Powers added a major new ingredient to the agenda of European diplomacy¹⁰ (see Map 1.1).

THE DANUBIAN PRINCIPALITIES, THE JEWS, AND THE GREAT POWERS

Among the four newly liberated states, Romania was by far the principal object of international concern over the issue of minority rights. The principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which formed the strategic triangle separating Russia and the Habsburg monarchy from the mouth of the Danube and the Straits, had over the past generation established the region's most dismal record.

Romania's ethnic and religious problems were shaped by its geography, history, and national culture. Following four centuries of Ottoman rule, the

7. See the critical appraisals by Munro, *The Berlin Congress*, and by Lord, "The Congress of Berlin," pp. 47–69, prepared on the eve of the Paris Peace Conference by a key participant in the Polish Commission of 1919.
8. As distinct from the ancient kingdom of Alexander the Great, this Ottoman province since the fourteenth century was a heavily mixed region of Greeks and Slavs as well as of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, which, after 1878, became a caldron of national rivalries, repression, and terrorism.
9. The accord between Austria–Hungary and England signed on June 6 made this statement: "Les deux Gouvernements se réservent la faculté de proposer au Congrès des mesures tendantes à assurer la protection des populations." Austria. Haus- Hof- und Staats Archiv, Great Britain, VIII, fasc. 170, quoted in Gelber, "German Jews at the Berlin Congress," p. 221.
10. Preconference agreements in Medlicott, *The Congress of Berlin and After*, pp. 4–35; pessimistic verdict in Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans*, p. 565.



Map 1.1. Southeastern Europe after the Congress of Berlin, 1878.

Danubian provinces in 1828 came under Russian control. Over the next four decades, tsarist officials introduced laws and administrative practices that promoted economic modernization but also imposed an exceptionally harsh regime over Romania's sizable Jewish population.¹¹ During this critical incubation period of local nationalism, the poets and publicists, following the trends of European romanticism, defined "Romanianism" in terms of native virtues (blood, soil, and orthodoxy). These they contrasted with the negative images of pagan Turks, avaricious Hungarians, Austrians, and Russians, predatory Greeks, and, especially, the alien Jews whose numbers had swelled under Ottoman rule to about 10% of the population and almost half the population of the Moldavian capital Jassy (Iași).¹² For a brief period in 1848, liberal and patriotic Jews and Romanians joined in the struggle for freedom and a unified country, only to be crushed by tsarist and Ottoman troops.¹³

In 1856, the Romanian question moved to Europe's center stage. Russia, after its humiliating defeat in the Crimean War, was forced to evacuate the Principalities, cede the mouth of the Danube (southern Bessarabia) to Moldavia, and renounce its claim as the protector of Christians in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴ However, when the victors failed to agree on a new government, the Romanians took matters into their own hands. In 1858 the assemblies in Wallachia and Moldavia established identical regimes and a year later elected a single ruler, Alexander Ion Cuza. Despite the fiction of Ottoman suzerainty and the blandness of the new official name ("The United Principalities"), Romanianism had triumphed. Europe, pre-occupied elsewhere, followed France's lead and bowed to this peaceful defiance¹⁵ (see Map 1.2).

But not without reservations. Since 1815, general statements on national rights, religious toleration, and civil equality had become a standard condition in international diplomacy. For example, in the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna, Britain and France had induced a pledge from the three partitioning powers to "preserve the Polish nationality"¹⁶; in 1830, in return for recognizing Greece's independence, the Powers had mandated freedom

11. Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 46–50.

12. Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism*, pp. 4–5.

13. Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 50–4; Djordjevic and Fischer-Galati, *Balkan Revolutionary Tradition*, pp. 111–12; Cohen, "The Jewish Question," p. 202.

14. Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain, and the Crimean War*; Curtiss, *Russia's Crimean War*; Baumgart, *The Peace of Paris*.

15. Hitchins, *Rumania*, pp. 6–7; Iancu, "Napoléon III et la politique française."

16. Webster, *British Diplomacy*, pp. 287–8, 290–1, 306–7; Müller, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Wiener Kongresses*, pp. 203–97; Straus, *Attitude of the Congress of Vienna Toward Nationalism*, pp. 123–45.



Map 1.2. Evolution of Romania's frontiers, 1856–1920.

for all religions; and in 1856, the Powers bound the Ottoman Empire to respect the rights of non-Muslims.¹⁷

To be sure, these humane stipulations were largely unenforceable. Not only were powerful states such as Russia and Turkey fiercely resistant to outside interference, but also small states were jealous of their sovereignty.¹⁸ Moreover, even a powerful guarantor, such as Great Britain, was more reluctant to sow disorder than to fight for justice and human rights in

17. Claude, *National Minorities*, pp. 7–8; Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, pp. 159–60.

18. Pearson, *National Minorities in Eastern Europe*, pp. 130–1.

the East.¹⁹ Thus, against Russia's egregious violations of Polish freedom in 1830 and 1863, there were only sterile diplomatic protests; and when several thousand Maronite Christians were massacred in Lebanon in 1860 and hundreds of rebels slaughtered in Crete in 1866, the western powers were silent. Only the threat of Russian intervention over the "Bulgarian horrors" sent western emissaries scurrying to Constantinople in a futile plea for reforms.²⁰

The Jewish question in European diplomacy was an entirely different matter. It too begins at the Congress of Vienna, where German-Jewish notables had sought international support in their vain struggle to maintain the rights they had gained under the French occupation.²¹ Instead of state power, Jewish diplomacy relied on the talents, courage, and connections of private individuals who believed in the solidarity of their people. Newly emancipated themselves, and having only recently achieved economic and political success, these West European Jewish intercessors set out to support the rights of their coreligionists in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe and to persuade their rulers to introduce more liberal regimes. By the mid-nineteenth century, two leaders stood out, the British stockbroker-philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) and the French jurist and statesman, Adolphe-Isaac Crémieux (1796-1880), who had joined forces in 1840 to combat a ritual-murder accusation in the Ottoman Empire.²² During the Crimean War, the Rothschild bankers in

19. After several candid interviews with Alexander II over the repression in Poland in 1863, during which the tsar parried expressions of public outrage in England and in France with his accusations of the Socialist and Democratic plots against Russia hatched in Britain, British Ambassador Lord Napier gave this advice to Earl Russell: "I prefer what I believe to be the interest of England and Germany to the aspirations of the Polish race . . . The Russian Empire is passing through a great transformation . . . under a respectable Sovereign and an improving administration. A great error, nay a great crime, has been committed in Poland, but we are justified in hoping that it was an exceptional wrong in a general course of justice and conciliation . . . I see in the cessation of the Polish revolt, in the subordination of European interference to moderate aims, and in the maintenance of peace, the best guarantees for the solid progress of representative principles of government in Poland and in Russia." Napier to Russell, St. Petersburg, April 6, 1863, in Bourne and Watt, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Part I, Series A (Russia), p. 36. For the diplomacy of the 1863 Polish crisis, see Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 133-41.

20. Krstitch, *Les minorités*, pp. 172-7, 181-4; also Harris, *Britain and the Bulgarian Horrors*; Pundeff, "Bulgarian Nationalism," especially pp. 118-9.

21. Although the Jewish emissaries gained Prussian, Austrian, and even Russian support for an emancipation article in the constitution of the new German Confederation, the opposition of key German states and the lack of British support produced the empty, unenforceable Article 16. Kohler, *Jewish Rights*; Baron, *Die Judenfrage*; Wolf, *Diplomatic History of the Jewish Question*, pp. 12-15, 17-18.

22. Frankel, *The Damascus Affair*. Montefiore and Crémieux also interceded, unsuccessfully, in the case of Edgardo Mortara of Bologna, who was seized by the Catholic Church in 1858 after an alleged baptism by a servant girl and subsequently became a priest. Kertzer, *Edgardo Mortara*; Iancu, "Adolphe Crémieux et la défense des droits des juifs," pp. 252-4.

Britain and France urged their governments and the Porte to include Jewish rights in the peace treaty.²³

Romania's clash with the Great Powers began in 1856. On the eve of the Congress of Paris, Austria, Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire met in Constantinople to draft peace terms with Russia. Without warning, French Ambassador Edouard Thouvenel introduced several clauses pertaining to Moldavia and Wallachia that called not only for equal treatment and protection of all religions, but also for equal access to public employment, equality of civil rights, particularly the right to property in all its forms, for natives *and* foreigners, and equal political rights for all inhabitants not under foreign protection. Although mentioning no specific groups, Napoleon III's emissary had clearly endorsed full Jewish emancipation in Romania.²⁴

Hailed by the British and French Jewish press, this proposal created an uproar in the Danubian provinces. The ruling princes of Wallachia and Moldavia bombarded the diplomats in Paris with protests and complained directly to the British and French governments that granting civil, political, and property rights to the Jews would "bring the country to certain ruin." These threats, strongly endorsed by the French and British consuls in Jassy (Iași) and Bucharest, struck a sympathetic chord among the Powers, which beat an unceremonious retreat.²⁵

Having won the first round, Romania revealed its future course by forbidding the Jews to vote for the two assemblies that decided the country's future. The National Liberals, deserting their 1848 Jewish allies, assumed a strongly anti-Jewish stance in their "practical politics."²⁶ In Moldavia, with its larger Jewish population, political leaders called for restricting citizenship to Christians, halting Jewish immigration, and even curtailing Jewish religious practices.²⁷

Two years later, in response to the merging of the two principalities, the European powers tried again to dictate terms to Romania. Once more it was France, prodded by Baron James de Rothschild, which called for full civil and political rights to all inhabitants without distinction of origin

23. Feldman, "Jewish Emancipation"; on the Rothschilds' importance in the financing of the Crimean War, see Ferguson, *House of Rothschild*, pp. 71–82.

24. Feldman, "Jewish Emancipation," pp. 46–7; texts in Ubicini, *Principautés devant l'Europe*.

25. Article 23 of the Treaty of Paris in 1856 contained only the conventional provision on freedom of religion without specifying equality of civil and political rights. Feldman, "Jewish Emancipation," pp. 48–9; Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, p. 57. Compare Riker, *Roumanie*, pp. 22–108.

26. On the growth of Romanian chauvinism, see Emerit, *Victor Place et la politique française en Roumanie*, pp. 80–1; Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 59–61; Fischer-Galati, "Romanian Nationalism," especially pp. 384–6.

27. Feldman, "Jewish Emancipation," pp. 50–4.

or religion.²⁸ This time it was tsarist Russia that thwarted the effort by castigating the “moral and social” deficiencies of the Moldavian Jews.²⁹ In an awkward compromise, Article 46 was inserted into the 1858 Convention of Paris:

All Moldavians and Wallachians are equal before the law and in matters of taxation, and shall have equal access to public employment in each of the principalities . . . Moldavians and Wallachians of all Christian faiths shall equally enjoy political rights. The enjoyment of these rights can be extended to other religions by legislative enactment.³⁰

Not unexpectedly, Romanians and Jews interpreted this text in opposite ways. Whereas the former denied that any special form of Jewish protection had been granted, the latter insisted that their existence and legal rights were now recognized.³¹ To be sure, the seven signatory powers had cloaked their disagreement over Jewish emancipation in ambiguity. After excluding Jewish inhabitants from the category of “Moldavians and Wallachians” entitled to full civil and political rights, in the last sentence they proposed a specific, if unattainable, remedy.³² For the next two decades, this terribly vague article locked Romanians, Jews, and the Great Powers in a public debate over its meaning.

The reign of Alexander Cuza between 1859 and 1866 brought a brief golden age to the United Principalities. The compromise candidate of the conservative landowners and the more-Nationalist-than-Liberal Forty-Eighters, Cuza quickly alienated his patrons by promoting a series of progressive, modernizing measures.³³ A protégé of Napoleon III, he also

28. On July 16, 1858, the son of Baron James de Rothschild forwarded the petition of seventeen Moldavian Jews to Foreign Minister Count Alexandre Walewski, chair of the Conference of Paris, who offered firm assurances of France's support; *Ibid.*, p. 57; Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 57–8.

29. Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, p. 58.

30. Text in *British and Foreign State Papers*, Vol. 48, p. 120; minutes, pp. 81–132.

31. Text of petition to the Romanian Chamber of Deputies in 1872, in Kohler and Wolf, *Jewish Disabilities in the Balkan States*, App. I, pp. 98–101. Western Jews went even further, maintaining that the article not only recognized the existence of non-Christians and accorded them civil rights but also constituted an international obligation by the United Principalities; *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, Oct. 11, 1858, pp. 571–2.

32. Feldman, “Jewish Emancipation,” pp. 58–63.

33. These included fairly sweeping electoral, legal, and agrarian reforms; the expansion of public education and establishment of universities in Bucharest and Jassy (Iași) and the nationalization of the estates of the monasteries, which placed a quarter of the country's territory under state control. Fischer-Galati, “Romanian Nationalism,” especially pp. 384–5; Hitchins, *Rumania*, pp. 7–10.

Despite Cuza's reforms, the state and the landowners still held about 66% of the land whereas the peasants only a little over 33%, and usually the poorest properties in marshlands, sandy soil or the steepest terrain. Otetea, *Romanian People*, pp. 388–9.

attracted foreign capital that built up the provinces' railways, harbors, and industries.³⁴

Cuza's reign also brought about some minor improvements in the condition of Romanian Jews.³⁵ The Civil Code of 1864 granted the right of certain categories of Jews to participate in municipal elections³⁶; but no progress was made on the issue of citizenship, and restrictions in rural areas mounted.³⁷ The Cuza era also witnessed an escalation of verbal and physical violence. In April 1859, a ritual-murder charge triggered a bloody pogrom in Galați (Galatz), during which the synagogue was destroyed, its torah burned, and numerous Jewish houses sacked. Instead of disciplining the culprits, the authorities arrested eleven Jews who were freed only after the protests of foreign consuls. In 1865, twenty years before Édouard Drumont's notorious book, *La France juive*, A. Kălimănescu published the brochure, *Jidanii în România*,³⁸ which termed the Jews "corrupt and corruptors," the destroyers of the wealth and soul of Romania; Kălimănescu pleaded with his readers to retrieve their nation's industry, capital, and commerce from the Jews. Another influential anti-Semite, Dionisie Pop Martian, attacked the Jews as "foreigners, exploiters, and usurers."³⁹

The seven tumultuous years of Cuza's reign also altered the structure of Romanian Jewry. In 1862, his government dissolved the local Jewish councils that had regulated the community's fiscal and legal affairs without replacing them with an arrangement similar to the French *Consistoires*. The result was to fracture the Jewish community into religious, social, cultural, and ethnic factions, with traditionalists vying against progressives and the more numerous Yiddish-speaking masses of Moldavia contesting their less numerous, more assimilated coreligionists in Wallachia, who aspired to emulate their western counterparts in becoming "Romanians of the Jewish faith."⁴⁰

In February 1866, a coalition of disgruntled radicals and conservatives ousted the reformer. Cuza's French patron, distracted by his embroilments

34. Cameron, *France and the Economic Development of Europe*, pp. 322–4, 498–500; Riker, *Roumania*, p. 436.

35. At the beginning of 1864, the prince assured a Jewish delegation, "I would give you everything but I cannot," while promising to work for "gradual emancipation." Segel, *Rumänen und seine Juden*, p. 38.

36. These included individuals who had performed military service and obtained the rank of junior officer, graduated from a Romanian college or university, received a certificate or doctoral degree from a foreign university, or founded a factory or manufacturing plant useful to the state and employing at least fifty workers.

37. Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 59–60.

38. *Jidan* was a pejorative expression comparable to *Yid*.

39. Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 60–1, 281–2.

40. *Monitorul Oficial*, Dec. 7, 1864, quoted in Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, p. 62.

in Mexico, Italy, and Germany, acquiesced in the coup and in the election of a foreign ruler. The chosen candidate was the shrewd and ambitious twenty-seven-year-old Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, who not only drew the Principalities into the Prussian orbit but also onto the local and European stage.⁴¹

Charles' arrival in the Principalities, which coincided with the convocation of a constitutional convention, stirred a momentary hope among Romania's Jews that emancipation was at hand. In June 1866, the aged Crémieux journeyed to Bucharest to plead with the legislators and the prince.⁴² The response was an immediate eruption of "spontaneous" anti-Jewish demonstrations, which included attacks on the new Bucharest synagogue and a virulent press campaign against "selling Romania to the Jews" that fueled legislative opposition to the modest measures proposed by Prince Charles. Ion C. Brătianu (1821–91), the former Forty-Eighter who had become Romania's most powerful nationalist politician, inaugurated the era of official anti-Semitism. The Jews, according to Brătianu's passionate speech to the chamber, were a "wound" and a "plague" to Romania not because of their low level of civilization,⁴³ but because their huge numbers created social disorder; Romania's salvation lay in discriminatory legislation.⁴⁴ The appeals by Romanian Jews to the Protector Powers, who were absorbed in the Austro-Prussian war, were of no avail. The notorious Article 7 in the Romanian Constitution of 1866 not only excluded foreign Jews from ever becoming citizens but also worsened the status of indigenous Jews by reducing their civil liberties and civil protection.⁴⁵

Worse was to come. In September 1866, the Romanian government revived the clause in the tsarist Organic Statute providing for the expulsion of native *and* foreign Jews on the grounds of "vagabondage." The ensuing wave of roundups and deportations in the towns and countryside created an

41. Chiriță, "România și Conferința de la Paris"; older works include Djordjevic and Fischer-Galati, *Balkan Revolutionary Tradition*, p. 140; Otetea, *Romanian People*, p. 390; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p. 160; Henry, *L'abdication du Prince Cuza*.

The assemblies' first choice in the spring of 1866 had been Count Philip of Flanders, the brother of the king of Belgium, who declined the offer. Charles, who was distantly related to Napoleon III, was the second son of Charles Antony of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, the head of the southern German and Catholic branch of the ruling house of Prussia who had entered its service. A Catholic with a Protestant wife, Charles, whose election was almost unanimously ratified in a national plebiscite, agreed to bring his children up in the Orthodox faith. Kremnitz, *Aus dem Leben König Karls von Rumänien*, Vol. 1, pp. 3–100.

42. Crémieux, reminding his interlocutors that in 1848, as a minister in a provisional government, he had drafted the legislation freeing the black peoples in the French empire, urged generosity at this significant moment for Romania. Posener, *Adolphe Crémieux*, p. 186.

43. Brătianu reminded the legislators that the gypsies were to be granted citizens' rights.

44. *Monitorul Oficial*, June 20, 1866, quoted in Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, p. 68.

45. Welter, *Judenpolitik der rumänischen Regierung*, pp. 17–46.

uproar among French and British Jews who demanded Brătianu's resignation and the restoration of basic civil rights. Backed by the British and French governments, the eighty-three-year-old Montefiore journeyed to Bucharest in August 1867, only to receive empty assurances from Prince Charles and criticisms from the local reactionary press for his attempt to create a "new Palestine" in Romania.⁴⁶

For the next decade, the Jews of Romania became targets of a "cold pogrom" of systematic exclusion by laws, edicts, and restrictions as well as of disenfranchisement and threats of expulsion. Under the aegis of Mihail Kogălniceanu, another Forty-Eighter who had once helped draft the emancipation edict in Moldavia, circulars were drafted to "purge" the villages of Jews. Prohibited from residing permanently in the countryside, Jews could not own farms, vineyards, houses, or taverns; the bankrupt rural families who poured into the towns were arrested for spreading crime and infection. No better off were the urban Jews, who were restricted in their rights to own homes and movable property, barred from pleading in the courts, and prevented from becoming professors, lawyers, pharmacists, state doctors, and railroad employees. Although subject to military service, Jews could not become officers.⁴⁷

After 1866, the exclusive mission of Romanianism gave precedence to state creation over economic and social reform, thus sacrificing the peasants as well as the Jews. Anti-Semitism offered an easy excuse for the principalities' poverty, corruption, and despotism. Under the slogan "Romania for the Romanians," Romanian nationalism became synonymous with a virulent anti-Semitism based on ancient religious prejudice and contemporary economic competition, political power struggles, and xenophobia.⁴⁸

To the outside world, Romania became the prime exemplar of Balkan despotism and violence. Its actions not only defied the norms of tolerance and enlightenment that were being established in Western and Central Europe⁴⁹; they represented as brutal a regime as in the dark days of Nicholas I of Russia.

Yet despite its German prince, Latin heritage, and Francophile tendencies,⁵⁰ Romania was an essentially small, undeveloped Balkan country located in a remote, but strategic corner of Southeastern Europe. Still under

46. Kremnitz, *Aus dem Leben König Karls von Rumänien*, Vol. 1, p. 201; Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 69–85.

47. Welter, *Judenpolitik der rumänischen Regierung*, pp. 46–64; Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, Chap. 5.

48. Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 119–34; Fischer-Galati, "Romanian Nationalism," especially pp. 385–6; also Chirot, *The Creation of a Balkan Colony*; Iancu, "Races et nationalités en Roumanie," especially pp. 405–7.

49. Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*, p. 87; Stern, *Gold and Iron*, p. 355.

50. By the 1870s Bucharest referred to itself as the "Paris of the Balkans."

multilateral control and nominal Turkish sovereignty, its leaders waited impatiently for full independence, which could be granted only by the Great Powers. Nevertheless, in the decade of Romania's informal entry into the European arena, a distinctive diplomatic pattern of interventionism and defiance had developed.

“A TEST CASE FOR JEWISH POWER”

In 1860, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (*Alliance*, or AIU) was founded to provide an international defender for the beleaguered eastern Jews, and Romania was its prime concern.⁵¹ Crémieux, the *Alliance*'s first president, assembled copious evidence of discrimination and violence, confirmed by foreign emissaries, and implored the signators of the Paris Convention to protest.⁵² In a letter on August 3, 1867, to Prince Charles' private secretary, the French jurist Émile Picot, Crémieux vented his outrage and frustration, giving this warning:

Romania is a recent creation. . . . [There is] much to be done in this new country, above all measures of conciliation not acts of violence and hatred. . . . If there is no immediate solution to this brigandage against the Jews we shall have to expose this entire affair to all of Europe and to all the civilized nations; we will demand an active intervention, which will not be refused.⁵³

Romania became “a test case for Jewish power” just as a radical transformation was occurring within the international Jewish community. Following Prussia's victory over France in 1871, the *Alliance* ceased to be the exclusive spokesman of Jewish diplomacy, which was now dispersed among individuals and organizations in London, Vienna, Berlin, Frankfurt, Rome, Brussels, Amsterdam, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, as well as in Paris. This burgeoning Jewish leadership, animated by the liberal values of the era between 1789 and 1871, insisted that universal Jewish emancipation was just, practical, and inevitable.⁵⁴

Special committees for Romanian Jewry sprang up, with the main one in Berlin. On the initiative of German-Jewish leaders, an international congress was convened in Brussels in October 1872 to coordinate their efforts. Thirty deputies from eight countries⁵⁵ dedicated themselves to the goal of achieving

51. Szajkowski, “Jewish Diplomacy.”

52. Iancu, “Races et nationalités en Roumanie,” p. 398.

53. Quoted in Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, p. 77. The occasion for this protest was the murder of a Jewish prisoner in Galați on the pretext of his attempt to flee. See also Iancu, “Adolphe Crémieux, l'Alliance Israélite Universelle et les juifs de Roumanie.”

54. Stern, *Gold and Iron*, p. 369.

55. Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, and the United States.

“by all legal means, civil and political equality” for their coreligionists in Romania. Their three-part program consisted of direct political action by Romanian Jews (petitioning Parliament for rights); humanitarian aid and melioration efforts from outside to combat the backwardness of Romanian Jewry through education and “moral improvement”; and the acceleration and coordination of their lobbying efforts with their governments and with Bucharest.⁵⁶ This first “Jewish summit” in modern times provided as much a grist for Romanian and other European anti-Semites as a demonstration of Jewish power and Jewish influence.⁵⁷

Another “solution” came from an unexpected source. The United States, which was neither party to the various treaties nor a major trading partner with Romania, had been a bystander until 1870. But following a direct appeal by Jewish leaders, President Ulysses S. Grant dispatched an unpaid Jewish consul, subsidized by the American-Jewish community, to do “missionary” work among his oppressed coreligionists in Romania. The emissary, Benjamin Peixotto, a thirty-six-year-old Jewish lawyer of Sephardic background from Cleveland and an activist in Jewish affairs, became imbued with the mission of emancipating Romanian Jews.⁵⁸

Immediately after his arrival in Bucharest in February 1871, Peixotto dedicated himself to improving the condition of Romanian Jewry. Despite cautions from the State Department, huge expenses, and the attacks of the anti-Semitic press, the novice diplomat plunged into local and national affairs. In the winter of 1872, it was Peixotto who sparked the protests by foreign emissaries and foreign Jewish organizations over the riots in Ismail and Cahul and the wrongful sentencing of several Jews.⁵⁹ An advocate of “self-defense,” Peixotto preached the virtues of Jewish dignity and Jewish solidarity. His most notorious deed occurred in August 1872, when he impulsively sounded out the Romanian government on a proposal by American benefactors to facilitate the emigration of Romanian Jews to America. The Romanian Council of State gave a clever, noncommittal response and offered free passports. The Jews of Romania and abroad were shocked by Peixotto’s initiative, which was roundly condemned by the Brussels Conference in October.⁶⁰

56. Iancu, *Bleichröder et Crémieux*, pp. 28–9.

57. Stern, *Gold and Iron*, pp. 370–1.

58. Gartner, “Consul Peixotto”; Iancu, “Benjamin Franklin Peixotto”; also Quinlan, “Early American Relations with Romania”; Funderburk, “United States Policy Toward Romania,” especially pp. 309–11.

59. Both Ismail and Cahul were in southern Bessarabia, ceded by Russia and joined with Moldavia in 1856.

60. Gartner, “Consul Peixotto,” pp. 79–92; Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 109–11, 115.

Population removal was not a new idea. Throughout the Middle Ages, Europe's Christian kingdoms had expelled the Jews; and in the seventeenth century, Louis XIV had forced the Huguenots to leave France. In the nineteenth century, it was the nation-state that turned an unfriendly eye on seemingly "unassimilable" religious and ethnic groups that stood in the path of political and economic progress. The United States, for example, not only initiated the forced removal of its indigenous peoples but periodically contemplated the possibility of returning black Americans to Africa. In Europe, government officials on the one hand and philanthropists, businessmen, and religious leaders on the other devised colonization schemes to remove dissident religious groups or to rescue the oppressed by filling the distant, "empty" lands of Russia and Palestine.⁶¹

Peixotto's endorsement of large-scale emigration to America created a crisis in the Jewish world. By ignoring the problems of logistics and expense, his rash initiative led to confusion and disappointment among potential immigrants. It also delivered a precious propaganda weapon to the Romanian anti-Semitic press, which rejoiced in the Jews' dilemma and the inevitable benefits to the homeland: By leaving for foreign shores, the Jews would free the land of their scourge; and by remaining they offered a public denial that they were being persecuted.⁶² But the most damaging aspect of Peixotto's scheme was its blow to the *Alliance's* long struggle for political and civil equality in Romania and Eastern Europe. Indeed, the prospect of uncontrolled hordes of impoverished, unassimilable immigrants struck as sensitive a nerve among western Jews as among non-Jews.⁶³

The European governments, which had midwived the United Principalities' birth and remained Romania's legal guardians, continued to monitor its internal turmoil. Their consuls were far more active in Romania than in other parts of the Ottoman Empire as observers, critics, mentors, and

61. See Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, and Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, pp. 1–42. On Russia, see Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers*, Chap. 1; on Palestine, see Nawratzki, *Jüdische Kolonisation Palästinas* especially pp. 110–20; also, Ferguson, *House of Rothschild*, pp. 278–80.

62. "The American initiative places the Jewish invaders of Romania . . . before a dilemma which is most favorable for Romania: if the Jews emigrate in sufficient numbers to relieve the country of hundreds of thousands of parasites who live off the work of the Romanians, the country will be saved from its greatest scourge; if they do not emigrate, which, unfortunately, is quite probable, they will thus prove to the world that they are not so unhappy and persecuted here and prefer to remain instead of departing, even at our expense, to America rich and egalitarian par excellence". *Românul*, Aug. 7–8, 1872, reprinted in Iancu, *Juifs en Roumanie*, pp. 296–8.

63. Until the end of the nineteenth century, western Jewry opposed anything but a "controlled movement of selected, vocationally trained young men." Gartner, "Consul Peixotto," pp. 93–4; also Gartner, *Jewish Immigrant in England*, pp. 40–56; Szajkowski, "Attitude of American Jews to East European Immigration." Peixotto left Romania on June 18, 1876, on the eve of the next Balkan crisis. Burks, "Romania and the Balkan Crisis."