

The alya from Romania

Oltean, Anca

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Oltean, A. (2012). The alya from Romania. *Annals of the University of Oradea - International Relations and European Studies*, 4, 99-110. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-60492-6>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/1.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/1.0>

THE ALYA FROM ROMANIA

Anca OLTEAN¹

Abstract: *This paper deals with the problem of Romanian Jews' emigration in Israel as revealed by a few of historical writings and in published documents. The Romanian Jews' emigration in Israel was a continuous process in spite of the communist regime established in Romania after the war and it was one of the main priorities of Romanian-Israeli diplomatic relations. The research focused on the years 1945-1953.*

Keywords: emigration, Romania, Israel, Jews, postwar, diplomacy, communism

I. General considerations

Harry Kuller defines the movement of Jewish emigration from Romania as follows: "The postwar *Alia* in Romania that begun modestly with the first emigrant ships that transported in 1944-1945 mostly refugees and returnees, continuing with illegal emigration in 1945-1947, and then with the legal emigration –after the proclamation of the Jewish state and to "the day"–is a chapter both unique and ample in the history of the Jews on these lands. When about 95% of the country's Jewish population was transplanted–even to their "New Old" country, but not only- that migration process goes beyond its "classic" form, proving to be almost unprecedented" (Kuller, 2002:69) Some communist leaders like Ana Pauker or Emil Bodnăraş got involved in the emigration process of Romanian Jews, helping to accelerate migration.

Although some authors have considered the Jewish Democratic Committee (CDE) as a pro-communist organization, Harry Kuller says that, at least initially, it was not opposed to emigration: "In late 1947 and still in 1948 the Zionists' activity continued unhindered and towards the end of 1948 a wave of migration of about 4000 people took place right under the auspices of CDE—a well known Party body tackling Jewish problems" (Kuller, 2002:69)

Romania was a country where emigration to Israel was possible in almost all stages in a period when the USSR were raising more and more obstacles to emigration: "Zionist parties, Zionist youth organizations, Zionist re-stratifications centres, Zionist literature and newspapers pertaining to this current of thought and action, are all realities of the time with addressability to large Jewish circles, especially the Jewish youth. What today appears to be surprising is the fact that, although Zionism and Zionists were in disgrace or even suppressed in the Soviet Union, a "post-liberation" Romania rendered by the Soviets—and all the way towards 1949—allowed a revival and an active diversification of the Zionist activity" (Kuller, 2002: 70) This ongoing migration process in Romania could be explained by the fact that the Romanian Communists wanted to maintain a connection with the West and with the state of Israel.

Due to factors such as anti-Semitism, identification of communism with Judaism, and failure of integrating the Jews within the socialist state and economy, shows Harry Kuller (Kuller, 2002:71), the emigration to Israel was revived after 1950.

After 1949 the Jewish Democratic Committee began a campaign against Zionism and against emigration. The Romanian State through its repressive law enforcement authorities tried to convince the Jews about the futility of emigration: "Jews are visited at their homes and urged to withdraw their <<papers>>, but they invoke the most diverse reasons to maintain their decision to <<leave>>: family restoration, finding employment, finding a Jewish spouse (husband, wife), faire to adapt to trends of de-confessionalization and de-ethnicization" (by restricting religious education, the number of cult servants etc.) Of caution, no one invokes the essential reason –refusal to keep on living under a totalitarian regime. (Kuller, 2002)

¹ Research assistant, Institute of Euroregional Studies, Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Science of Communication, University of Oradea, Romania.

Romanian *Alya*

Year of <i>Alya</i>	Absolute numbers	Year of <i>Alya</i>	Absolute numbers	Year of <i>Alya</i>	Absolute numbers
0	1	2	3	4	5
General total 1919-1995	313.396	1943	186	1968	215
Total 1919-4.5.1948	41.105	1944	3.856	1969	1.394
Total 15.5.1948-1995	272.291	1945	1.348	1970	5.265
1919	-	Clandestine <i>alya</i> 1939-1945	1.334	1971	1.651
1920	331	1946	4.353	1972	2.627
1921	424	1947	4.727	1973	3.617
1922	285	1.1.1948-14.5.1948	7.102	1974	3.231
1923	364	15.5.1948-31.12.1948	17.678	1975	2007
1924	431	1949	13.602	1976	1.996
1925	1.764	1950	46.171	1977	1.380
1926	728	1951	39.046	1978	1.172
1927	168	1952	3.759	1979	996
1928	98	1953	92	1980	1.093
1929	326	1954	70	1981	1001
1930	313	1955	253	1982	1551
1931	235	1956	729	1983	1310
1932	487	1957	665	1984	1996
1933	1425	1958	8785	1985	1358
1934	2056	1959	9670	1986	1327
1935	4111	1960	9262	1987	1671
1936	1.542	1961	20.800	1988	1.436
1937	348	1962	9149	1989	1517
1938	615	1963	11437	1990	1201
1939	632	1964	24 244	1991	520
1940	701	1965	9817	1992	472
1941	748	1966	3044	1993	393
1942	94	1967	731	1994-1995	344

In her book on *Romanian-Israeli Relations 1948-1978*, Cristina Păiușan Nuică makes a description of the Romanian-Israeli relations during the years 1948-1953. She considers that the Romanian-Israeli relations were held under the tutelage of Moscow: “Romania’s foreign policy and thus the policy conducted in the Middle East was decided in the Politburo of the CC of PMR (Policy Office of the Central Committee of the Russian Workers’ Party) focused on Moscow’s directions, being applied in a strict manner by the Romanian representatives in Tel Aviv” (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 25) In Cristina Păiușan Nuică’s opinion, the main prerogatives of the Romanian-Israeli relations were to develop positive contacts and to sustain communist propaganda abroad. In the years 1948-1953, in Romanian-Israeli relations were influenced by the Cold War and by the conflicts in the Middle and Near East. The Romanian-Israeli relations were based on the trade agreements between the two countries (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 25) The Romanian state was considered a satellite of the powerful Soviet Union, and the state of Israel a satellite of the American power. Cristina Păiușan Nuică states that an important role in the Romanian-Israeli relations was with the dissemination of the Romanian culture and achievements: “The streamlines of the Romanian foreign propaganda had evolved from the beginning towards the popularization and dissemination of Romania’s culture and achievements. Since 1950, the Romanian legation had followed the Soviet model and published

a *Quarterly Newsletter* that was sent to all ministries, newspapers and legations in Tel Aviv, and to notable figures of cultural and scientific life”. In this line of events, the author emphasizes the important role played by the Israel-Romania Friendship League.

Cristina Păiușan Nuică accurately captures the background of these diplomatic relations: “The Romanian legation was among the first ten legations in the new Jewish State, and the contacts with the State ministries in training were sporadic in 1949; these contacts gradually become regular. In the first year, the Romanian diplomats had more contacts with the Soviet diplomats sent to Tel Aviv than with the Israeli diplomats, as the Jewish diplomatic structures were incipient and the Soviets had been among the first to arrive in Israel and thus had managed to establish tutelage on all the diplomats coming from the Soviet sphere of influence. But even after finalization of the Romanian legation structure, the Romanians received the <<advice>> from the Soviets in any planned action”. (Păiușan Nuică, 2008:26) The diplomatic relations between the two countries emerged through the exchange of diplomatic notes and direct meetings between their respective representatives. The diplomatic documents of the time that reflected the situation of Romanian-Israeli relations were primarily concerned with the acceleration of migration and with the increasing number of people who wanted to restore their families, or were protests from the Israeli diplomats when the Romanian diplomacy made attempts to put an end to emigration.

The author captures in overall the Jewish vision on emigration in the early years of the Romanian communism:”In the first years after the creation of Israel and its recognition by the international community, 1948-1950, emigration broke the barriers of ethnic and political options, becoming an ideal of all Jews who after a long suffering went to fight and to work in their own state. This is why the Romanian-Israeli diplomatic relations were closely related to the emigration process, which was an essential factor for the state of Israel, factor linked to the national security. The Israeli diplomats understood that only the increase in number of own citizens would ensure the very state existence, Israel’s existence as an independant state being related to the Zionist ideology of recovering the Jewish cradle” (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 29)

The communist leaders of Jewish descent were often criticised by the State of Israel and by Israeli public opinion. The Israeli media was leading a strong anti-communist campaign. Despite the conflicts that occurred within the Romania-Israel relations, these relations were continuous and uninterrupted. The author states that Israel was critical of the difficulties encountered by the Romanian Jewry with reference to emigration because its aim was to raise the awareness of the American public and to get American funding (Păiușan Nuică, 2008:30), interpretation with which we disagree. Israel needed at this beginnings American help to develop, but the motivation of Jewish migration to Israel gained more depths after the Holocaust, the Jews shared a great solidarity and a desire to have their own state where they could feel protected. Israel accused the Romanian authorities in Bucharest of human rights violations. We are aware of the fact that in order to be allowed to emigrate from Romania, the Jews had to face a series of vicissitudes, ranging from the immediate loss of employment, the endless waiting in front of the Romanian authorities in Bucharest of human rights violations. We are aware of the fact that in order to be allowed to emigrate from Romania, the Jews had to face a series of vicissitudes, ranging from the immediate loss of employment, the endless waiting in front of the Romanian authorities for their passports to be issued, to their travelling to Israel sometimes in improper ships, to the arrest of Zionist leaders, of the loss of housing and loss of most goods except for a minimum luggage, etc.

The author recalls a fact confirmed by the epoch documents listed in the volume coordinated by Victor Boștinăru, namely that the Romanian Communist Party was in close collaboration with the Israeli Communist Party that was in minority in Israel. (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 31) The Israeli communist party was the only party in Israel that did not criticise the Romanian communist policy. The Romanian legation in Israel, recalls Cristina Păiușan Nuică, maintained a privileged relationship with the Soviet diplomats to Israel, fact confirmed by documents from the Boștinăru collection to which the author brought her contribution. Thus, the Soviet diplomats were considered by the Romanian as “best friends” (Păiușan Nuică, 2008:31) The Soviet policy towards the Jews had repercussions in Romania, too. The mock trials conducted in USSR against Jewish intellectuals or the “white gowns affair” against Jewish doctors in the USSR, against Jewish intellectuals, had repercussions in Romania, too. The mock trials conducted in the USSR against intellectuals, or the “white gowns affair” against Jewish doctors in the USSR, had repercussions in the Romanian public sphere too, maintaining anti-Semitic atmosphere. According to Cristina Păiușan Nuică, “between 1951 and 1954 the Romanian diplomacy continued to operate under the auspices of the Soviet Union diplomacy. The period between 1952 and 1953, until Stalin’s death, is extremely tense because of two major anti-Semitic trials: that of Hebrew intellectuals considered spies and traitors, in December

1952, and that of the white gowns, in February 1953. This anti-Semitic line left an echo in Romania too, but not even close to the vehemence claimed by the Israeli propaganda that was continuing its campaign of accusations taken from anti-communist publications of the Romanian diaspora". (Păiușan Nuică, 2008:33)

Cristina Păiușan Nuică brings forward the Foreign Minister of Romania in 1948-1952, Ana Pauker, and her deputy, Ana Toma, who is delegated by Pauker as a representative to all discussions involving the Romanian policy towards Israel, fact also confirmed by documents relating to Romanian-Israeli relations from the collection coordinated by Victor Boștinaru; the documents are mostly about these two figures of the Romanian diplomacy.

The People's Republic of Romania cultivated close ties of friendship with the Israeli Communist Party. These two communist parties were led by the Kremlin: "The Israeli Communist Party was formed at the initiative of Soviet leaders, who approved the emigration of certain Jewish communists sent to build a strong Communist party in Israel. But this party has shown since beginnings a lack of viability, the Soviet Strategy imposing the blaming of Zionism, thus coming in contradiction with all Israeli parties and with the tradition of building the national state with major contribution from Zionist organisations" (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 50) Important leaders of the Israeli Communist Party were invited to specialization in Romania since 1949.

The support given to the Israeli Communist Party was a matter of dispute in the Romanian-Israeli relations: „Helping the Party led since 1949 to tense relations between the Romanian Legation and the Israeli government, the Israeli authorities stating that Israeli laws provided that political parties in Israel could be funded with money only from within, not coming from a foreign country, an act seen as a direct and brutal interference in its internal policy" (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 51) Cristina Păiușan Nuică shows that the leaders of the Israeli Communist Party had hoped to increase their influence in Israel through the emigration of certain progressive elements of Jewish descent from Romania (Păiușan Nuică, 2008).

Another fact confirmed by documents in the collection of Victor Boștinaru is that between the Romanian Legation in Tel Aviv and the Israeli Communist Party there were continuous and fruitful contacts. The Romanian legation spread cultural and documentary materials from Romania, together with Romanian political information: "Between 1949 and 1956, the ICP leaders wanted to control the activity of the Romanian Legation work, sending on the political line information on the life and work of Romanian members of the Legation, criticizing them, or approving their actions and behaviour. The same type of information about the Romanian Legation activity they would send to the Soviet Legation as well, to demonstrate their utility and to receive large amounts of money to support their activities and living. If in the years 1949-1953, the Romanian diplomats would consult with ICP leaders, with a clear manipulation on the realities in Israel, since 1954 the role of these consultations decreased gradually, and by the early '60s, ICP and its leaders were regarded as profiteers of friendship in the name of Communism". (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 52) But in our opinion the Israeli Communist Party was a representative political organization in Israel, but the sincere adherence to the ideals of communism can be attributed to a minority in Israel, at the most.

Cristina Păiușan Nuică brings into question the work of the Jewish Democratic Committee, a pro-communist organization constituted in Romania. Unlike the Zionist organizations leading to JDC, like Hașomer Hațair World Union, "Mișmar" Party, "Ichud", Socialist Zionist Workers Party, "Leachdut Haavoda" Zionist Socialist Party, "Poalei Zion" who militated for the emigration of the Romanian Jews to Palestine, the JDC started off powerfully with the anti-Zionist campaign, fact that is confirmed by other authors too: "The Jewish Democrat Committee began in force in the anti-Zionist campaign in November 1948, making a detailed plan of their actions. The annihilation steps of any Zionist activity provided as a first stage the refusal to collaborate with Zionists by starting an anti-Zionist press campaign in every central and local publication, but also in the Jewish publications controlled by communist Jews" (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 59) The JDC would meet in towns and villages in order to criticize Zionism. Gradually, the Zionists were excluded from the component structures of the JDC. In a final stage, after exclusion of Zionists from the JDC, the liquidation of Zionist groups in the country followed as a consequence.

Cristina Păiușan Nuică described Ana Pauker's attitude to be hostile to the JDC; she was a supporter of Zionism and contributed to the emigration of Romanian Jews. Documents from 1945-1953 show her as playing a central role in the emigration process of Romanian Jews, and regarded by the Israelis as playing an exceptional role in the Romanian foreign policy: "Ana Pauker did not agree how JDC conducted their activities, the anti-Zionist and anti-emigrations zeal showed by some Jews placed in leading positions of a numerous and impoverished community, insisting in 1949 for the emigration to continue, as "consolidating communism in Israel". Paradoxically, her relationship with the JDC leaders was never too good; she

considered them demagogues and renegates, a way she never felt about herself. A small group of Jews, manipulated by those communists who do not approve emigration, had seized the destinies of a minority and used that power for the personal benefit while being obedient to those who had placed them at the head of the committee and never considering the needs of the people they were abusively leading” (Păiușan Nuică, 2008: 60) We would add that the Jews were nevertheless a minority in Romania greatly diminished after the war (see the percentage of Jews employed by the State Security Service offered by Liviu Rotman, percentage that was quite small) and that the phanatical supporters of communism separated themselves from the Jewish community and the Jewish religion, advocating for their communist ideals. Even today, the Jewish community still rejects any possible affiliation to these Jews.

Carol Bines makes an overall analysis of Romanian *alya*'s activity as a whole and since its beginnings in the nineteenth century. Thus “If we tried to define the *alya* in Romania from its beginnings until today we could state that its main feature is its continuous flow, in its continuity, in its permanence. The flow of the Romanian *alya* has never stopped. Sometimes its waves were tumultuous, sometimes more gentle. Only the outer obstacles, artificial, were able to stop it for a short time-as it happened in 1953-1957, when communist regime almost closed tightly the doors of the *alya*-but then it reignited with new forces (Bines, 1998: 86) The Jews had tried both legally and illegally, according to permissibility of political regimes of time to reach Romania. The beginning of the *alya* from Romania, shows Carol Bines (Bines, 1998: 87) dates back even before the Congress in Basel organizations that aim at colonizing Israel. Thus, even since 1882, 30 Jewish people from Moinești and 20 families from Galați and Bârlad set sail on the ship Tetis to Israel.

Carol Bines stated that even during the period when Romania was allied with the Nazi Germany, there were Jews who were able to emigrate to Israel: “During the British Mandate, between 1919 and May 14, 1948, 41.000 *olimi* from Romania entered Eretz Israel, the Romanian *alya* representing then 10% of total *alya*, third after the Polish *alya* with 172000 *olimi* (40% of the total *alya*) and the German *alya*, after Hitler came to power with 52000 *olimi* (14% of *alya*) (Bines, 1998:90)

Carol Bines shows that the period 1948-1951 is considered to be the period of massive *alya*, period during which Romania increased the population of the Jewish population in Israel by 18%, while in 1952 the emigrations are almost completely stopped; in the years 1953-1957, shows the author, emigration was prohibited and the Zionist leaders were investigated (Bines, 1998:92)

The table below shows the Romanian emigration to Israel during 1948-1995. During 1948-1951 most Romanian Jews immigrated to Israel. It was a time after the creation of the State of Israel when the emigration policy was more permissive.

Periods of *alya* from Romania 15.5.1948-1995

Periods	Alya from Romania		Annual average of the <i>alya</i>	Percentage of <i>alya</i> from Romania of the total <i>alya</i> of each period
	Absolute numbers	Percentages		
Total				
15.5.1948-1995	272300	100,0		
15.5.1948-1951	116500	42,8	29.100	17,2
1952	3800	1,3	3800	14,9
1953-1957	1800	0,7	360	1,1
1958-1966	106200	39,1	11800	29,2
1967-1968	1000	0,4	500	3,2
1969-1974	17800	6,5	3000	7,5
1975-1989	21800	8,0	1450	8,1
1990-1995	3400	1,2	550	0,5

Carol Bines shows that for the first years after the war a great share of the Jewish population came from Romania: „Within three and half years-since the creation of the state and by the end of 1951 Israel welcomed 688.000 *olimi*, which doubled the Jewish population of Israel. Among them came 117 000 *olimi* from Romania, which is the largest number of *olimi* from a European country. They totalled 17% of the total *alya* of those years”. (Bines, 1998: 95)

People who acquired a profession in Romania were able to make a smooth transition and integrated well in Israel. Before leaving the country, the Jews maintained good employment that the non-Jews who remained in the country were now happy to take over. The table below shows the occupational structure of the Jewish migrants from Romania who left during the mass *alya* and during the freeze on the emigration process:

Professional structure of *olimi* from Romania during the years of mass *alya* -1948-1952 – and of the Jewish population of Israel 1955

Professions	<i>Olimi</i> from Romania 1948-1952 (%)	Jewish population of Israel-1955 (%)
Total	100,0	100,0
Free lancers and technicians	7,1%	10,9%
Clerks	18,6%	16,8%
Merchants and vendors	16,7%	11,7%
Farmers	4,2%	14,4%
Industry workers	32,9%	29,1%
Other occupations	20,5%	17,1%

The research undertaken by Carol Bines is a sociological one, focusing for the period that interests us, i.e. 1948-1953, the gender composition of the Jews emigrated from Romania, the professional structure of this population, its geographical spread, age structure, level of education of the emigrated Jews, integration through work, the Hebrew language acquisition, their social contacts (with Jews from Romania, with Jews from Israel and from outside Israel), etc. The study is complex in terms of analytics of the social structure of the migrated Jews, having no connection with the historical field and international relations area, but interesting to analyze the integration of the Jewish population who emigrated from Romania to Israel.

II. Aspects of diplomatic relations between Romania and Israel in 1945-1953

We will present the evolution of diplomatic relations between Romania and Israel, as evidenced by documents published in the collection *Romania-Israel. Diplomatic Documents 1948-1989* (Bleoancă et al., 2000)

A consequence of the telegram of June 9, 1948 was the fact that the Israeli Foreign Minister asked the Romanian State to recognize Israel. From the beginning, the State of Israel shows its openness to the idea of emigration of Romanian Jews. So, this telegram is the means through which the decisions of the Jewish National Council are announced: “Conseil a declare que Etat israélien sera ouvert [á l] immigration [de] tous les juifs, se consacrera [au] développement du pays au profit de tous ses habitants, sera base sur les principes [de] liberté, justice et paix, maintendra égalité sociale et politique, [de] tous citoyens sans distinction de race, religion ou sexe, garantiera entiere liberté de conscience, education, langue, sauvgardera saintété et inviolabilité de sanctuaires et lieux saints [de] toutes religions, se dovouera [aux] principes Charte Nations Unies”. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:4) After a telegram sent by Ana Pauker, the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government of Israel, the Romanian government agrees to establish legatinons of the Romanian State in Israel (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 4-5) Reuven Rubin was appointed Extraordinary Minister of Israel to Bucharest.

The emigration problem of the Romanian Jews appears as a constant theme of negotiations between Romanian and Israeli diplomats. In a telegram dated 11 March 1949 the Israeli government expresses its concern regarding the emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe. The Israelis show their gratitude to the Romanian government for having authorized the departure of several thousands of Romanian Jews. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 6-10)

The State of Israel motivates its need for immigrants by its military situation (surrounded by hostile neighbours) and also by the fact that employees are needed to ensure economic development. This task requires not only a growth in Israel’s population, but also an increase in the quality of its people. The same telegram also shows that in the past, the first elements in Israel came largely from Eastern Europe. On several occassions, representatives of Israel requested guarantees from the Romanian government that the emigration process would continue. The aggressive attitude of the Romanian State towards the Zionist movement and the anti-Zionist campaigns in the Romanian press caused concern of the Jewish state for which the Zionists worked. It was a request for the emigration to Palestine of 5000 members of the Halutz movement for which emigration was the most important goal in life.

Meanwhile, the Romanian Legation in Tel Aviv issues periodic reports to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the country, Ana Pauker. The reports list daily facts, like the fact that they did not have enough money with them, or they did not receive money from the Israelis, or they were unhappy with the hotel that the Israelis had chosen for them. In dialogues with Israeli representatives, the Romanian referred to Romanian Jews more in terms of cohabiting nationalities rather than ethnic minorities (Bleoancă et al., 2000:13). Thus, the Romanian diplomats represent one of the first legations established in Israel after the ones of the Soviet Union, the US, Britain and France.

The Zionists were not persecuted only by Romanian Communists, but also on other Eastern European countries. In a discussion between Romanian and Russian diplomats, both had the opinion that the Zionists were nationalist bourgeois (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 14) At the same time, the documents tell fragments from the life of the Romanian embassy to Tel Aviv. Thus, members of the Legation in Tel Aviv had difficulties because they did not know English and Hebrew, and they hired a teacher of English and a young man who translated from Hebrew. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:17-19) They did not have a typist, nor a typing machine, they suffered from the absence of their families. Another problem that the Romanian diplomacy had in Israel in at the beginning was the lack of experience in the field of diplomatic work.

At the same time, documents of the collection *Romania-Israel. Diplomatic Documents* describe different situations of the Romanian-Israeli relations. Pauker enjoyed a great prestige in Israel. The Israeli foreign minister, Moshe Sharett called her „an exceptional woman”. She was always informed of developments in the Romanian-Israeli relations during her Office as the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The ad-interim President Sprinzak acknowledged to the Romanian diplomats the role played by the Romanian Jews to building the State of Israel. The documents describe aspects of the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv activity. The Legation had relations with the authorities, the political life, representatives of the economic area; they were trying to participate in the cultural life. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:24) The Legation representatives shared the daily responsibilities. They were involved in consular issues, daily payments, economic and cultural attributions, press relations. Ideological materials were sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which they should have read. Controversial aspects of Romanian-Israeli relations arose with respect to the problem of emigration of Romanian Jews. In a discussion with Romanian representatives in 1949, Minister Ben Gurion said: “I am concerned about the fate of the Jews who wishing to come to Israel were not allowed to do so by the Romanian government. Israel can not strengthen and develop only with the Jews here and is in need of the Jews abroad. The development of relations between the two countries depends on the economic relations and the emigration of Jews who would like to leave Romania. Please convey this message to the Romanian government”. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:26) The Romanian Ambassador promised in consequence that the Romanian State would therefore grant visas to Israeli citizens. In another discussion dated 19 October 1949, the Israeli Foreign Minister stresses the problem of emigration, because the People’s Republic of Romania stopped the emigration that started in 1948, continuing to issue visas to 100-200 people (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 27) The Jewish citizens of Romania could not take the boat *Eylath* which was in port and for which they had purchased tickets. The Romanian authorities forced them to take *Transylvania* ship, although it was damaged. Discussions continued around this problem. Meanwhile, the Romanian Jews were forbidden to emigrate in groups. As a consequence of Israeli officials’ repeated requests to accelerate emigration of Romanian Jews, the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew the following official conclusion: “I stressed, in order to be very clear, that the problem of the Jews who are Romanian citizens and who would like to emigrate to Israel is a matter concerning exclusively the authorities in RPR and it cannot be interfered with by anybody”. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 31) Moreover, protests were organized by the Israeli representatives against the arrest of Zionist leaders initiated by the Romanian State. Minister Sharett said that there could not be diplomatic relations between Romania and Israel if a consensus on emigration of Romanian Jews was not reached. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:33) In this respect, as a protest, Israel withdraws its diplomatic representatives to Romania, namely Rubin and Agami, wrote the Minister to Tel Aviv, Nicolae Cioroiu, in 21 November 1949. The relations between Israel and Romania depended on the attitude of the Soviet Union, “Sharett will need to use the UN presence in order to clarify with the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs on the issue of relations with the Eastern block”. (Bleoancă, 2000: 33)

The correspondance between the Romanian diplomats and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rises is the issue of setting a Romanian consulate to Jerusalem as there was the possibility of establishing the Israeli capital here (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 48)

After recalling the diplomat minister-Rubin to Tel Aviv by the Israeli state, the papers wrote that if the Soviet Government did not change its hostile attitude towards Zionism and Israel, Rubin's seat would remain unoccupied. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 49)

Moreover, the Romanian diplomats noted the hostile attitude of the Israeli media towards Romania. The Israeli Communist Party press was the only one that was not hostile to Romania. It was represented by the newspapers "Kol-Haam", "Al Itiahad", "Glasul Poporului", "Kol Hapoel", "Kol-Hanovar" and never stood against the emigration of Jews from Romania, never questioned Zionism, and always received materials for publications from the Romanian legation in Tel Aviv. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:50) One of the activities of the Romanian Legation stands out: an exhibition with Romanian paintings and Romanian books, magazines and newspapers. Romanian films were presented, such as the *Congress of Intellectuals*, *Youth Cup*, *The City That Never Sleeps* and *23 August*. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:51)

The Israeli media protested against the banning of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to Israel. Thus *Hațofe* newspaper published two articles on immigration policy condemning the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of Romania, and Hungary: "What has escaped the ovens is destroyed by assimilation. Emigration from Eastern Europe is a matter of life for us and it must be always on the daily agenda. If Israel fails to obtain emigration, we face a national catastrophe" (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 53)

A telegram of Romanian Legation in Tel Aviv addressed to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 18 January 1950, shows that Israel had decided to appoint a new Minister to Bucharest, but they had not decided on a name. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:55) In another document there is a description of the US Legation representatives, showing the „infiltration” of the United States to Israel. The Minister Plenipotentiary to Bucharest appointed by the State of Israel was Ehud Avriel, Minister Plenipotentiary to Prague and Budapest.

Incidents appeared and thus, the relations between Romania and Israel were put in jeopardy. On 23 February 1950, it was an announcement that the Romanian Embassy to Israel was broken and entered, and Legation property was lost. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 60) A new location for the Legation personnel was requested. Other aspects are frequently tense. Thus, the *Palestine Post* newspaper published a tendentious article – *tendentious* in the opinion of Romanian Legation in Tel Aviv- on the situation of the People's Republic of Romania, and of the situation of Israeli diplomats to Romania. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 62) Ben Gurion, in an interview, talked about the persecutions of cohabiting nationalities in Romania.

On 28 April 1950, a telegram of the Romanian Legation in Tel Aviv addressed to the Minister of Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of Romania stated that there had been a press release of the People's Republic according to which, effective May 3, 1950, the emigration formalities in the case of Israel had been relaxed. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 63) The documents show that the entire Israeli press wrote about Avriel's appointment as Minister to the Romanian People's Republic. Avriel's place in Budapest and Prague was proposed to be taken by Dr. Eliasiv, then director of the "Eastern Europe" department from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An Israeli counsellor to Moscow will be appointed to take Eliasiv's place. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 68)

The documents show reflections of the economic crises in Israel and the country is considered increasingly dependent on American politics. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 70) Descriptions are made of the situation in Israel. Thus, the Zionists were against the Israeli Communist Party, the workers demanded wage increases and the Israelis were suffering from hunger. Ben Gurion requested a loan of 35 million dollars from the Americans and asked at the same time, for the support of the American Jews. He held a conference in Jerusalem where he invited 45 wealthy Americans. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 71) The picture described is complex and probably deliberately exaggerated: "In this difficult economic situation, each new immigrant who comes in adds to the burden. Over 100.000 people in the camps have no accomodation, no place to work, they live without any perspective. And their number is constantly growing (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 72) The Jews from Israel often displayed criticism of the Romanian government: "The main attacks against us were fought on two issues: the domestic propaganda against leaving the country, and the arrest of Zionist leaders. I have wired you the information referring to these attacks" (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 72) There follows an explanation of the fact that the hostile attitude of the People's Republic of Romania is because of the deep ties that Israel has with America. Conferences and courses in Hebrew are organized in the migrant camps where the Romanian Jews were housed at first. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 73)

Moments of tension in the Romanian-Israeli relations continued to exist. Thus, the Israeli newspapers *Iedioth Ahronoth* (Latest News) and *Heruth* wrote that the Israeli delegation to the United Nations would vote in favour of a proposal from the Western powers to accuse Romania for failure to

comply with the ceasefire terms and for annihilation of individual rights in this state. The newspaper said it would accuse Romania of anti-Zionist repressions, of prohibition of emigration to Israel and of arresting leaders of the Zionist movement, all these being stated in a telegram wired by the Romanian Legation in Tel Aviv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Romania on September 21, 1950. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 75)

The Romanian Zionists arrests are a matter of conflict with Israel. Several published diplomatic documents in the Boștinăru collection record protests of Israeli representatives against these arrests which violated human rights. Israeli attacks against the Romanian state were regarded by the Romanian diplomats as manifestations of American imperialism. It is said that according to the repatriation law elaborated by the Ben-Gurion government, any Jew can immigrate to Israel.

Reflections of economic issues appear between Romania and Israel. Mrs. Weizmann, wife of the President of Israel, requested the Romanian diplomats that the People's Republic of Romania diplomats would sell oil to Israel. (Bleoancă et al., 2000: 90) The Romanian-Israeli relations documents show that on 11 February 1953, the Soviet government wanted to break diplomatic relations with Israel as a consequence of the fact that on 9 February a bomb exploded at the Soviet embassy district in Tel Aviv, despite the fact that the President condemned this act of terrorism and apologized to the authorities in Kremlin. The Russian-Israeli relations were restored on June 20, 1953. (Bleoancă et al., 2000:91)

To conclude the analysis of the collection of documents Romania-Israel, the diplomatic relations between the two countries appear full of difficulties, particularly on emigration of Romanian Jews, but also very tense because of the persecution applied by the Romanian state to the Zionist leaders after 1949.

Bibliography:

- Bines, Carol (1998), *Din istoria emigrărilor în Israel (From the history of the emigrations in Israel)*, Editura Hasefer, București.
- Bleoancă, Daniela; Nicolescu, Nicolae-Alexandru; Păiușan, Cristina; Preda, Dumitru (2000), *România-Israel. 50 de ani de relații diplomatice (Romania-Israel: 50 years of diplomatic relations)*, Editura Sylvi, București.
- Deletant, Denis (2006), *România sub regimul comunist (Romania under the communist regime)*, Fundația Academia Civică, București.
- Ianoși, Ion (2007), "Evreii și comunismul. O discuție cu profesorul Ion Ianoși" (*The Jews and the communism. A discussion with the professor Ion Ianoși*), în Costel Safirman și Leon Volovici (coord.), *Noi întâlniri la Ierusalim (New encounters to Jerusalem)*, Institutul Cultural Român, București.
- Ioanid, Radu (2005), *Răscumpărarea evreilor. Istoria acordurilor secrete dintre România și Israel (The ransom of the Jews. The history of the secret bargain between Romania and Israel)*, Polirom, București.
- Kuller, Harry (2002), *Evreii în România anilor 1944-1949. Evenimente, documente, comentarii (The Jews of Romania during the years 1944-1949. Events, documents, commentaries)*, Editura Hasefer, București.
- Păiușan-Nuică, Cristina (2008), *Relațiile româno-israeliene 1948-1978 (Romanian-Israeli relations 1948-1978)*, Editura Universitară, București.
- Rotman, Liviu (2004), *Evreii din România în perioada comunistă (The Jews of Romania in the communist period)*, Polirom, București.
- Rotman, Liviu (2006), "Spațiul paralel-un pericol pentru puterea comunistă" ("The parallel space-a danger for the communist power") in *Dilemele conviețuirii. Evrei și ne-evrei în Europa Central-Răsăriteană înainte și după Shoah (Dilemmas of cohabitation. The Jews and non-Jews in Central and Eastern Europe before and after Shoah)*, Cluj Napoca, Institutul Cultural Român, Centrul de Studii Transilvane.
- Tănase, Stelian (2006), *Elite și societate. Guvernarea Gheorghiu Dej 1948-1965 (Elites and society. The governance Gheorghiu Dej 1948-1965)*, Editura Humanitas, București.
- Wasserstein, Bernard (1996), *Vanishing Diaspora. The Jews of Europe since 1945*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd, London.