

THE FOUNDING OF JEWISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MOLDOVA AFTER THE UNION OF THE PRINCIPALITIES

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Abstract. *At the middle of the 19th century, there were significant Jewish communities in all the boroughs and towns of Moldova. The largest one, counting around 31,000 Jews, was found in Iași. In 1860, the elites of the Jewish community from Iași, benefitting from the support of the local and national authorities, founded a Jewish – Romanian school. Having gained the parents' trust, a new central Jewish school was founded in Iași in the following two years, along with a dogmatic school in Târgul Cucului suburb, and two more public schools in Podul Lung and Păcurari suburbs. The money for the maintenance of schools and the teachers' salaries came from a tax introduced on kosher meat, gabelă or tacsie, of 4 parale per oca. As a result of the misunderstandings between the Jewish School Committee and the Jewish Hospital Administrative Council and the introduction, on the 3rd of July, 1862, of the veto in the decision-making process within the Jewish communities, the tax on kosher meat was eliminated. Therefore, the source of income for the hospital and the Jewish schools as well as for other charity acts disappeared, and soon, all the Jewish schools from Iași stopped functioning. Following the numerous memoirs sent to the Government of the United Principalities by the Jewish community, the Romanian School Committee of Iași managed to mediate the conflict between the two Jewish institutions. As a consequence, the gabela was reintroduced, thus ensuring the material support for the Jewish Schools of Iași which reopened on the 1st of December, 1864.*

The existence of the Jewish schools in the capital of Moldova stimulated the founding of other similar institutions in Galați (May 1860), Botoșani (after 1860), in Bacău (in November 1864), in Mihăileni, Dorohoi County (1865) and Cahul.

The founding of the Jewish Schools in the aforementioned towns was faced with difficulties generated by the mentalities of the time, the material shortages, the bureaucracy and the cumbersome legislation. Despite these difficulties, the Jewish public schools continued to function in the following years. Along these schools, there were also numerous confessional schools in almost all the towns inhabited by Jews.

The Jewish public schools of Iași and the other Moldavian towns and boroughs were part of the sustained policy of modernization of the Romanian society. These were the circumstances which provided the Jewish minority the proper conditions for the gradual development of an intellectual elite which brought a significant contribution to the Romanian science and culture.

Keywords: Jewish community, Jewish School Committee, the Jewish Hospital Administrative Council from Iași, Târgul Cucului, Păcurari, Bacău, Galați, Botoșani, Dorohoi, Târgul Mihăileni, the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction.

The historical conditions of the 18th century made it possible for the Jewish refugees from Russia and Poland to settle down in Moldova. Their entry path and settlement areas are bordered by the big cemeteries of Cernăuți, Siret, Mihăileni, Dorohoi, Botoșani, Fălticeni, Iași, Bacău, Buhuși, Bârlad, Tecuci, Galați. Favourable

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