

The Governing of Patriarch Miron Cristea and His Policy toward Jews: The Attitude of Great Britain

Abstract:

After a short period of rule by the National-Christian government, presided over by Octavian Goga, on 10 February 1938 King Carol II ended Romania's democratic experiment, by installing a regime of royal dictatorship. The leader of the Orthodox Romanian Church, Patriarch Miron Cristea, was named President of the Ministers' Council. Although, during his time in power, Miron Cristea did not adopt laws against the Jewish population, he did preserve all the anti-Semitic legislation that he inherited from the previous government. As such, in accordance with decree-law number 169, from 22 January 1938, Romanian citizenship was withdrawn from a significant number of Jews. The claims of a persistent existence in Romania of a 'Jewish issue' were clear evidence that the new government formula was no less nationalist than the Legionary Movement, and this policy towards the Jews was cynically used to conciliate the numerous sympathisers of the Romanian extreme right. London officials were deeply interested in the situation in Romania, as Great Britain was a power named on the 1919 Protection Treaty of Minorities, a treaty signed also by Romania through its representatives sent to Paris, during the peace conference that followed the First World War. The existing situation in much of South-Eastern Europe regarding national minorities flagrantly defied the provisions of the document agreed in France, and the fears of the British were more than justified. The difficulties that the Romanian Jews faced in 1938 had important consequences, including raising a question over the official visit that King Carol II wished to make to Great Britain.

Keywords: *Anti-Semitic policy, Romanian Orthodox Church, Jews, emigration, League of Nations.*