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### Jewish-Christian Neighbor Relations in Multinational Border Regions in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust: Romania as a Case Study

This study wishes to examine the question of bystanders in the ethnic-social complex that composed the state of "Greater Romania" in the Holocaust period, while relating to everyday life aspects of those "simple people" who experienced the storm in accordance with their ethnic-regional distribution. Can one point to a correlation between the ways in which the Romanian neighbors related to Jews in the various regions of the country and a connection with the ethnic dimension, comparable to the variance in the ways in which the government related to them? In order to answer the question of the "bystanders" in the Romanian case, which is so complex and diverse, it is important to have a human, social picture of the fabric of everyday life both of the Christian population of Romania and of its Jewish population in the context of their ethnic and regional affiliation and of the texture of the interrelationships that had been created.

#### Background Data

Compared to 1913, the territory of the Romanian state grew by some 50% towards the end of the First World War and after its conclusion. As a result, a large mix of significant minorities with a clear sense of national affiliation was added to the original population of the Regat: Hungarians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Germans, and Russians, who during this period comprised a third of the residents of Romania. The number of Jews also rose, from 240,000, constituting 3.3% of the total population in 1912, to 767,000 in 1930, when they made up 4.2% of all residents. About 420,000 Romanian Jews perished in the Holocaust, most of them from the territories gained by Greater Romania and not from the original districts of the Regat. This characteristic of the manner in which the

government handled the "Jewish problem" in Romania raises the question whether we must remove any examination of the approach toward "taking care of the Jews" from the national dimension and shift it to the ethnic dimension, which is related to multinational ethnic particularism. This characteristic constitutes a basis for my hypothesis that in a human-ethnic context, which is loaded and complex like that of Romanian society at the end of the 1930s and throughout a large part of the 1940s, the harm suffered by weak populations (like the Jews) in the wake of situations such as the strengthened connection to Nazi Germany and the war events will be much greater and more extreme in multinational "seam" areas than in relatively homogeneous areas, such as Regat. This is in no small measure due to existing hatred and hostility directed towards minority populations.

#### Topic Definition and Its Innovation for Research

Existing research trends on the subject focus principally on political or socio-political history, the history of organizations, parties, institutions, and leaders. Consequently there is a considerable lack of studies examining social issues from the personal sphere of Jews and Christians, and focusing on the changes that were generated in everyday life in light of legislation and anti-Semitic activity and in the face of deportations and murders. Obtaining a full picture of the context of the various interactions among Jewish and Christian social groups (in the form of neighbor relations, mixed marriages, church-synagogue relations etc.) will be possible only after gaining a deep familiarity with aspects such as: relationships in the family and the community; implications of the activity of women; shaping the world of children and youth; the place of the elderly in the social fabric under these circumstances; the place of businessmen as opposed to that of farmers; the weight given by the clergy of both faiths to crystallizing interaction.