



Anti-Semitism in Moldova (2009 – 2012)

Due to the difficult Moldovan political and social situation in recent years compared to the situation in the mid-2000s, incidents of anti-Semitism, particularly vandalism, have become more frequent. Moldova also seems to display tendencies to justify or even glorify the actions of Romanian radical right or Fascist figures from the 1930-1940, such as Ion Antonescu or Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

On the night of March 1, 2009, unknown persons broke into the Bendery synagogue and trashed it. The night before, someone wrote the number 14 in silver paint on the gate of the Jewish cemetery, signifying the so-called “14 words of David Lane,” a neo-Nazi slogan in code.

On August 8, 2009, unidentified culprits wrote anti-Semitic slogans in the Dacia microdistrict of Beltsy city.

On September 12, 2009, a Holocaust memorial was desecrated in the city of Bendery.

On September 18, 2009, several buildings of the Moldovan capital's Chekany district were covered in posters dedicated to the 110 anniversary of the leader of the Iron Guard, a Romanian Fascist organization active in 1920s-1930s, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

At the end of June 2009, the leader of the Jewish community of the cultural-religious center Agudath Israel der Moldova, Rabbi Yisrael Lifshitz, was beaten at the Panasheshty village of Strashensky Region. Even though the media described the incident as anti-Semitic, the Jewish community itself believes it to be just common crime. The locals, having attacked under the influence of alcohol, did not even identify their victim as a Jew. Since the hooligans seemed to come to their senses and honestly regret their actions, their victim forgave them and withdrew his statement.

On December 13, 2009, in the very center of Chisinau, a group of Russian Orthodox fundamentalists centered around the Orthodox Society of the Blessed Moscow Matron, who are oriented towards the most reactionary, marginal group of Russian Orthodox “dissidents” (especially in the person of defrocked former Russian Orthodox bishop Diomid), turned over and disassembled a Chanukiyah erected in honor of the holiday as well as organized an anti-Semitic rally accompanied by insulting shouts and anti-Semitic slogans. The incident received wide coverage and resonance in society.

The man who organized the disassembly of the menorah, archpriest A. Chibrik was fined 600 lei (about 50 USD) for hooliganism, but Chibrik was able to successfully dispute the fine in

court.

On February 10, 2010, unknown persons wrote anti-Semitic slogans in the center of Chisinau, on Pushkina street, next to a Holocaust memorial. A grate, one of the symbols of the Iron Guard, was drawn near the memorial, as well as a swastika and a slogan "Stop fooling people with the holocaust. Get out of our country!"

On February 21, an act of vandalism took place at a Jewish cemetery: gravestones were desecrated and destroyed, and a Fascist swastika was drawn on the fence of the cemetery.

In March 2010, anti-Semitic articles were published on the official website of the Orthodox Society of the Blessed Moscow Matron (the site was later radically reworked to remove all corresponding material). At that same time, in March 2010, a group of aggressive youth gathered before the Embassy of Israel and shouted slogans directed against the Jewish Dor le Dor Charity Fund.

On March 15, 2010, during an attempt to take over the Chisinau hotel, which belonged to the First Hotel company directed by Jewish businessmen, a group of people shouted anti-Semitic insults and called for expelling the Jews from Moldova; the group also utilized the "Kikes, leave Gaza!" slogan.

In the summer of 2010, as a continuation of Acting President's Mihai Gimpu's decree for naming June 28 Soviet Occupation Day, the Mayor of Chisinau Dorin Chirtoacă expressed an initiative to create a Holocaust Museum and a Museum of Soviet Occupation. The Jewish Congress of Moldova made an official statement on this initiative, stating that it does not believe that any parallels can be drawn between a Fascist, human-hating regime and the social order to which similar responsibility is now being ascribed for repressions towards its own people.

At the same time as these events took place, Acting President Mihai Gimpu told deputy Oleg Reidman that he is "a disgrace to the Jewish people" as Gimpu "has known smarter Jews."

In August 2010, the Moldovan Academy of Sciences awarded a PhD title *Honoris Causa* to historian Paul Goma, and the town hall of Chisinau awarded him with the title of honorary citizen of Chisinau. Goma is a well-known anti-Semitic historian, author of the book "The Bloody Week of June 28 – July 3 1940 or Bessarabia and the Jews," a prominent Holocaust denier. The author accuses the Jews of implanting Communism and of "attacking the retreating Romanian military" in 1940. The author sees the Holocaust as merely "the Romanian having vengeance on the Jew," an "eye for an eye" event. Notably, the Jewish community of Moldova had filed a petition with the public prosecutor's office with the aim of instigating criminal proceedings against Goma on charges of xenophobia and inciting interracial hatred, also aiming for a ban on the book in Moldova. Even though criminal proceedings were not instigated, disseminating the book was banned.

On September 12, 2010, the Chisinau synagogue was defaced with Fascist symbols (the swastika, the double lightning bolts that were the SS symbol, and the Celtic cross which was the symbol of the Iron Guard) and slogans reading "Bessarabia is Romanian Land!"

On September 29, 2010, the district council of the Codru suburb of Chisinau decided to name one of its streets after Fascist dictator and Hitler's companion-in-arms Ion Antonescu. The decision was revoked following pressure by the Jewish community of Moldova and other public organizations.



In June 2012, a memorial cross was erected in the city of Orgeev. The main element of the cross was the prison grate that was an Iron Guard symbol. Officially the cross was erected to honor the memory of “the victims of the Communist regime.” One of the sponsors of erecting the sign was the Noua dreapta organization, a radical right group of Iron Guard followers whose activity is officially prohibited in Moldova. Due to widespread indignation in society, the prosecutor's office reached a decision on December 17, 2012, that the memorial was erected illegally and charged the city authorities with removing it within a month. However, on the next day, December 18, the Orgeev Town Council (at the initiative of Mayor Vitaliy Colun, a representative of the Liberal Democratic party) decided “retrospectively” to authorize the cross's erection. According to the media, the decision was made under pressure from the radical right group National Christian Legionary Movement.

In January 2013, the Moldovan Writer's Union nominated the anti-Semite writer P. Goma (see above) for the Nobel Prize in literature.

In May 2013, a presentation of the book “The Iron Guard in Bessarabia. Documents” took place at the Moldovan Ministry of Defense Center for Military History and Culture. According to representatives of the Moldovan Jewish community, the authors of the book, Alexandr Moraru and Benedict Chebotar, deny the anti-Semitic character of this movement and the definition of the Iron Guard as a “Fascist” movement.

In early June, unknown vandals drew a swastika on the memorial to Holocaust victims located on Ierusalimska str. in Chisinau.
(<http://www.actualitati.md/ru/sobytiya/v-kishineve-oskvernili-pamyatnik-zhertvam-holokosta>).