

Goga, Octavian

(1881--1938), One of the leaders of the antisemitic movement in Romania.

Goga's antisemitic ideas were very influenced by the nationalist conflict between the Romanians and Hungarians in Transylvania. He believed that the Jews as a group were hopelessly pro-Hungarian, and thus should be removed from Romania. During the 1930s Goga became close to Alexandru Cuza, who touted a similar antisemitic ideology, and began supporting the Nazis. The two men formed the Christian National Party in 1935. The Nazis considered Goga someone worth investing in: like them, Goga always referred to the Jewish problem in his speeches, and his party's thugs attacked Jews and political opponents.

At the end of 1937, Goga became prime minister of a short-lived Romanian government. As the first Romanian leader to come to power on an obviously antisemitic platform like that of the Nazis, Goga focused his energies on carrying out his antisemitic policies. In January 1938 he passed the Law for the Reexamination of Citizenship of the Jews, in which he cancelled the civil rights of one-third of Romanian Jewry. However, he was forced to step down one month later due to French and British pressure. Goga, of course, blamed this on the Jews.